

Space and Function

*Buddhist State Monasteries in Early Medieval
China and their Impact on East Asia*

LIQUN HE

BAR INTERNATIONAL SERIES 3110

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Abbreviations used in figures

A: Pagoda	E: Sutra Hall
B: Buddha Hall	F: Bell Tower
C: Middle Gate	G: Monks’ Quarters
D: Lecture Hall	H: Refectory

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Foreword

Liqun He's *Space and Function: Buddhist State Monasteries in early medieval China and their impact on East Asia* describes the evolution of the layout of Buddhist State Monasteries in China between the fifth and seventh centuries, and suggests possible reasons for it. The topic is both very specific and significant.

One might ask why the author focused on 'state' monasteries. The answer is rather simple; the political system of ancient China was highly centralized, and as soon as Buddhism arrived, it sought to secure the support of the imperial house; once it was granted, State Monasteries were usually built in the capital or in places directly connected with the imperial house and were the utmost expression of imperial support.

It's quite significant to note that the monasteries studied in this work, in spite of their limited number, exercised a decisive influence in the evolution of the Chinese-type monastery that gradually differentiated itself from those of India and Central Asia. Since the construction materials used in central China were mainly wood and earth, there are no physical remains of early buildings except for the foundations. Therefore, the book focuses on the layout of the highest-ranking monasteries as revealed by archaeological excavation, limited in most cases to the underground structures. It is these monasteries that influenced the layout of monasteries of lower rank in China, as well as those in Korea and Japan.

Previous studies, relying on a very limited number of excavated sites, had already traced the development of the Buddhist monastery layout and pointed out the crucial turning point in the period examined in this work. Here, Liqun He makes full use of recent archaeological excavations, especially those he has followed personally in Yecheng: the fundamental Zhaopengcheng Monastery where he directed most of the excavation from 2002 to 2012; the Hetaoyuan Monastery, built close to Zhaopengcheng; regular surveys of the caves of Xiangtangshan; and the finding of the largest Buddhist sculpture hoard in decades at Beiwuzhuang. The statues recovered at this last site, carrying detailed inscriptions by donors, have pointed out valuable data about the state of Buddhism in the capital. Only scholars who have been personally involved in archaeological excavations will fully comprehend how critical the knowledge acquired on the field is: the preparation for the excavation, the planning of each phase of the work, the daily work onsite, the growing feeling toward the monastery and its location within the context of the Northern Qi capital. Hence, Liqun He's archaeological campaigns that stretched over two decades and his assiduous study of relevant historical

sources and Buddhist texts can be considered the basis of this book.

The present work emphasizes the crucial role the development of doctrine played in the evolution of monastery layout. Changes in the layout of Buddhist monasteries were certainly determined by several factors, such as the political situation, economic conditions, cultural traditions, construction technology and urban planning. Yet the author has chosen to underscore the evolution of Buddhist belief and doctrine as a key factor that induced changes in the layout of Buddhist monasteries. In other words, the main reason for the evolutionary process of Buddhist architectural styles and of the layout of monasteries in China is not to be sought just in its outward form, but especially in the changes occurring in religious thought. In fact, the diversification of Buddhism in the late Northern Dynasties is reflected by the large number of translated sutras and the flowering of a variety of schools, in contrast with the somewhat monolithic Buddhism of the previous period, centered on the cult of Sakyamuni. The novel doctrinal developments called for a different monastery layout, since the object of worship progressively shifted from the pagoda to the cult of images placed in suitable halls.

The book takes into account also the monasteries of the corresponding period in Korea and Japan, many of which are known through excavations. They are related to the Chinese prototypes, and have been used in this research to detail the development of the monastery layout across East Asia. The picture that emerges has been codified under descriptive definitions: from the traditional layout with a 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' monastery (late fifth to early sixth century), through the 'Central Pagoda and Halls on Different Axes' monastery (mid to late sixth century), to the 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' monastery (to mid-seventh century).

The methodology employed here is somewhat traditional, but solid. One needs to appreciate the rigorous analysis of historical documents and Buddhist sources, as well as the professional use of archaeological data, especially the typological classification of the monasteries. The reader not familiar with Chinese terminology will benefit from the careful analysis and translation of technical terms, and of relevant passages from ancient sources, in some cases translated for the first time.

To me, the interaction between space and function, mentioned in the title, deserved to be further investigated, but I am also aware of the difficulty and danger of interpreting archaeological material from this perspective,

especially because of the fragmentary nature of the data available at this time. However, it is reassuring to know that the author intends to further explore the issue in the future. The spread of Buddhism from India to China described in the pages below follows a traditional spatiotemporal framework that has been recently challenged, and new paradigms are about to emerge; still, it's my conviction that they will not significantly alter the results of this work.

On a personal level, it is a great honor to write this introduction for a scholar that I consider a brother. We were classmates twenty-five years ago, and I benefited much from Liqun He's accompanying me in my early fieldwork in Xinjiang, from the visits at 'his' Zhaopengcheng and other sites in Yecheng, to the long discussions into the wee hours of the morning. Though we come from entirely different backgrounds and have our different ideas, the friendship that has developed through the years is based on mutual respect and a sincere appreciation of each other's values. Seeing him growing from a young student to a famed archaeologist working in some of the most important and complex Buddhist excavations recognized as major breakthroughs in Chinese Buddhist archaeology gives me much delight. I am pleased to see his work finally introduced to the international academic community.

Prof. Dr. Giuseppe Vignato
Peking University, School of Archaeology and Museology

Introduction

This book is a study of Buddhist State Monasteries (國家大寺) in medieval East Asia. It is based on archaeological evidence and focuses on how monastery layout developed with the evolution of Buddhist thought and practice.¹

Up to a few decades ago, physical evidence of early medieval Buddhist monasteries in China was very scarce, while much more evidence was available for monasteries in the Korean Peninsula and Japanese Archipelago, where the remains of a large number of early medieval Buddhist monasteries are well preserved. It is only in the last few decades that Chinese archaeologists have excavated a number of Buddhist monasteries dating back to the fifth to seventh centuries. These findings supply us with important physical evidence to discuss the layout of monasteries in China and their impact on those in Korea and Japan, which derived from Chinese ones.

I began my professional career by working on Buddhist caves in Kucha. Over the past decade, I was involved in the excavation of *Zhaopengcheng Monastery*, an early Buddhist monastery in Yecheng, the capital of the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi Dynasties, and therefore shifted my research focus from Buddhist caves to above-ground monasteries. Benefiting from cooperation with the Korean National Institute of Cultural Heritage and Nara National Institute for Cultural Properties of Japan, I had the opportunity to visit many monastery sites in Korea and Japan. This book relies heavily on these first-hand experiences, in addition to learning from previous research results.

Defining Buddhist Monasteries

‘Buddhist Monastery’ is a general term referring to a place where Buddhist monks and believers engage in religious activities. The concept was introduced to China from India when Buddhism came to China around the first century AD. In Sanskrit a variety of terms can be used to convey the same meaning, some of which designate the entire monastery, while others, technically speaking, refer to or emphasize one function or one part of the monastery. The following are some of the most common Sanskrit terms that have been translated into Chinese.

1. *Buddha-stūpa* (*futu* 浮圖), originally indicating the Indian *stūpa*; however, in the early days of Buddhism in Central China, it became an alternate appellation for

a monastery, especially for a monastery centered on a pagoda.

2. *Samghārāma* (*qielan* 伽藍), referring to a garden for community living and practice; it became a popular synonym of ‘monastery’ in China after the fifth century.
3. *Bodhi-maṇḍa* (*daochang* 道場), initially referring to the location in *Buddhagaya* where Sakyamuni achieved his full enlightenment under the bodhi-tree. Later, it referred to any place where Buddhist practice was carried out, and was therefore used as a synonym for ‘monastery’.
4. *Caitya* (*zhiti* 支提), referring to a *stūpa* without relics.
5. *Vihāra* (*pikeluo* 毗珂羅), meaning a residence for religious practitioners.
6. *Aranya* (*alanruo* 阿蘭若), referring to a secluded place suitable for monks to practice Buddhism and as a residence.
7. *Cāturdiśa* (*zhaoti* 招提), meaning a guest room for wandering monks.

Broadly speaking, the first three terms, used in different periods, refer to a complete Buddhist monastery. The last four do not mean a monastery in the full sense of the term, although they were used as synonyms for ‘monastery’ under certain conditions and in some historical periods.²

In Chinese, the term for ‘monastery’, *siyuan* 寺院, consists of two characters. From the Han Dynasty onward the character *Si* 寺 specifically referred to a government office.³ In Buddhist literature, it is recorded that the earliest monks arriving in China from India, or Central Asia, were accommodated in the *HongluSi* 鴻臚寺, a government office in charge of foreign affairs. Later, when freestanding Buddhist monasteries were established, the term *Si* was retained and used as a general term for a Buddhist monastery.⁴ In the beginning, the character *Yuan* 院 referred to a traditional Chinese courtyard surrounded by a wall or a portico. In the mid-seventh century, Emperor Gaozong of Tang issued an edict ordering the construction of the *Daci’ensi Monastery* 大慈恩寺, within which there

² Lan Jifu 1994, 2076, 2414, 4888, 1331, 3337, 3155, 2843.

³ Zuo Zhuan 左傳, 107, noted by Kong Yingda in Tang Dynasty: ‘Since the Han Dynasty, the offices of Three Councillors of State have been known as Fu, and the offices of Nine Ministers have been known as Si’ (自漢以來，三公所居謂之府，九卿所居謂之寺); Han Shu 漢書, 282, ‘Sites of government offices and the court are all known as Si’ (凡府廷所在，皆謂之寺).

⁴ *Da Song Sengshi Lue* 大宋僧史略, 236, ‘The monastery, interpreted as Si. [...] It was originally the name of a government office. The first western monks that came to China dwelt temporarily in government offices and later moved to other residences. In order not to forget their origin, they still marked the Buddhist monastery with Si. This is the source of Buddhist monastery’ (寺者，釋名曰寺，……本是司名。西僧乍來，權止司。移入別居，不忘其本，還標寺號。僧寺之名始於此也).

¹ This book is based on my PhD dissertation, ‘Buddhist State Monasteries in Early Medieval China and their Impact on East Asia’, completed at Heidelberg University, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Lothar Ledderose and Prof. Dr. Sarah E. Fraser.

was an enclosed compound called *Fanjing Yuan* 翻經院, a courtyard for master *Xuanzang* 玄奘 to translate sutras. From then on, the character *Yuan* began to be used as a general synonym for ‘monastery’ as well.

The concept of the monastery was understood differently in different periods. Before the seventh century, the term *Si* loosely referred to nearly all types of Buddhist architecture. This is the reason why tens of thousands of monasteries (*Si*) are mentioned in documents of every dynasty, in spite of the fact that the government regularly issued restrictions on monastery construction.⁵ Strictly speaking, not all Buddhist architecture can be called monasteries, since a complete Buddhist monastery should fulfill at least the following three requirements: there should be a fixed space of worship; a place that can host a substantial number of resident monks or nuns; and also a place where rituals are regularly performed. From this point of view, the most representative Buddhist monasteries in China were those sponsored by the emperor, called State Monasteries 國家大寺. Next were the Official Monasteries built by local governors, sometimes in compliance with imperial edicts or central government decrees. The construction of Official Monasteries could be financed by eminent Buddhist masters or by donations from prominent officials, aristocrats and magnates. Conversely, folk Buddhist architecture lacked a building code and building standards. In this case, it was the common people who undertook the construction, with those with money giving their money and those with strength giving their strength. This folk religious architecture corresponds to the Sanskrit *arāṇya*, *cāturdīśa*, *caitya*, *vihāra* or, in Chinese traditional locution, *Fotang* 佛堂. Although often referred to as monasteries, these were not Buddhist monasteries in the full sense of the term. A clear distinction between various types of Buddhist architecture is clearly implied in Tang Dynasty official records, while an even more explicit distinction emerged from Song Dynasty official documents. In the latter case, only the State Monasteries built following imperial edicts and Official Monasteries were bestowed with the title of monasteries, while those constructed by citizens were called *cāturdīśa* or *arāṇya*.⁶ My book acknowledges this conceptual distinction and will focus primarily on the study of Buddhist State Monasteries.

Defining Spatial and Temporal Boundaries

Early medieval China witnessed the golden age of Buddhism. After several hundred years, under the auspices of the upper classes and the advocacy of prominent Buddhist monks, Buddhism reached its apex between the fifth and seventh centuries, a period of intense construction of Buddhist monasteries throughout the country. However, as time went on, almost all the monasteries of this period were destroyed and buried underground.

The Chinese Buddhist monasteries discussed in this book were discovered and excavated by Chinese archaeological institutions in recent decades. Almost all of them were located in cities which had been the capitals of successive dynasties in North China between the fifth and seventh centuries, i.e. Pingcheng 平城, Luoyang 洛陽, Yecheng 鄴城 and Chang'an 長安. On the basis of archaeological surveys and excavations carried out over the last half century, the following eight monasteries will be analyzed and studied in depth:

1. The *Yungang Monastery* 雲岡佛寺, located on the top of the massif into which the *Yungang Grottoes* of Pingcheng, the early capital of Northern Wei, were carved.
2. The *Siyuan Monastery* 思遠佛寺, also located in Pingcheng, built by Dowager Feng in 479 AD.
3. The *Siyuan Monastery* 思燕浮圖, also built by Dowager Feng in the late fifth century; it was located in Feng's hometown, Longcheng 龍城.
4. The *Yongningsi Monastery* 永寧寺, located in Luoyang, the later capital of Northern Wei, built by Dowager Hu in 516 AD.
5. The *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* 趙彭城佛寺, located in South Yecheng,⁷ the capital of Eastern Wei and Northern Qi.
6. The *Linggansi Monastery* 靈感寺, located in Daxing 大興, the capital of Sui, built by Emperor Wen of Sui in 582 or 583 AD.
7. The *Qinglongsi Monastery* 青龍寺, built on top of the aforementioned *Linggansi Monastery* in the mid-seventh century by Princess *Xincheng*; it was one of most important Tantric monasteries in Chang'an.
8. The *Ximingsi Monastery* 西明寺, also located in Chang'an, built in 658 AD in compliance with Tang Gaozong's imperial edict.

All these Buddhist monasteries had imperial backing and belonged to State Monasteries recorded in ancient texts;⁸ they each not only represented a classic monastery type in their respective periods, but also had a profound influence on neighboring regions.

By and large this book relies on analyses of archaeological remains of the above-mentioned State Monasteries of North China, since not even one Buddhist monastery of the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties has yet been excavated in South China, where Buddhism was extremely popular and exerted a strong influence on North China, the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Archipelago. Because of the lack of archaeological evidence from South China, it has been deemed inappropriate to dedicate a full section to its monasteries. Instead, the large corpus of textual sources regarding South China's Buddhism have been analyzed

⁵ *Bian Zheng Lun* 辯正論, 502–09.

⁶ *Zi Zhi Tong Jian* 資治通鑑, 3000. ‘Officially recognized monasteries were granted the title *Si*, private ones were called *cāturdīśa* or *arāṇya*’ (蓋官賜額者為寺，私造者為招提、蘭若).

⁷ The site of Yecheng consisted of two adjacent parts. North Yecheng was the capital of the Cao Wei (220–265 AD), Later Zhao (335–350 AD), Ran Wei (350–352 AD) and Former Yan (357–370 AD) kingdoms, and South Yecheng was the capital of the Eastern Wei (534–550 AD) and Northern Qi Dynasties (550–577 AD).

⁸ *Bian Zheng Lun* 辯正論, 507–08.

and compared with physical evidence collected in North China to trace the origins and development of monastery layout in South China.⁹

Previous Research

The Buddhist monastery, one of the most important elements of ancient Chinese architecture, has repeatedly been an object of research for historians of art and architecture. Before the 1980s, due to a lack of unearthed evidence, researchers exploring early Chinese monasteries paid more attention to certain specific buildings, predominantly the pagoda. Related studies depended mainly on monastery remains in Japan and Korea. As early as 1942, while discussing the Buddhist architecture of Japan, Soper became conscious of the tremendous difference in architectural form between the Indian stone *stūpa* and the Chinese multi-story timber pagoda.¹⁰ In horizontal comparison, i.e. from a cross-cultural perspective, Seckel deemed the evolution from *stūpa* to pagoda to be the ‘translation’ of a foreign concept into Chinese architectural language.¹¹ Instead, in vertical comparison, i.e. from the perspective of the architectural tradition, Ledderose advanced the viewpoint that the prototype of the Chinese pagoda derived not only from the multi-story tower in its architectural form, but also from the *Mingtang* 明堂, a building used for state ritual in ancient China religiously and symbolically. At the same time, Ledderose emphasized the strong influence of secular architecture, in particular the Palace City, on the monastery layout.¹² His viewpoints have been corroborated by successive excavations.

In the mid-twentieth century, Liang Sicheng 梁思成, the founder of the modern study of ancient Chinese architecture, touched upon the architectural layout of Buddhist monasteries in his works.¹³ Archaeological material relating to monasteries before the seventh century was very scant at that time, and so it is understandable that he focused on the study of cave-temples and pagodas to analyze Buddhist architecture and monastery layouts. Liu Dunzhen 劉敦楨 continued the same approach, and although he devoted a full chapter to the study of monasteries, pagodas and cave-temples, his discussion of early monasteries still concentrated on cave-temples and individual pagodas, whereas descriptions of the overall structure and layout of the monasteries was limited to the extant monasteries built mainly after the

tenth century.¹⁴ Due to their different perspectives, their works paid attention mostly to the concrete analysis of building structures and components, rather than discussing the religious implications of Buddhist architecture. Nevertheless, the relevance of their research rests on the fact that they set up a model for the investigation of the architectural layout of early Buddhist monasteries.

In the 1970s, Fu Xinian 傅熹年, a disciple and long-term assistant of Liang Sicheng and Liu Dunzhen, wrote a series of articles about Buddhist monasteries in medieval China. By comparing the cave-temples of China to Buddhist monasteries of the Asuka and Nara periods in Japan, he suggested that the architectural layout of Chinese monasteries underwent an evolution, with a shift of focus from the pagoda to the Buddha Hall, an imitation of the imperial palace and government offices, which reflected the adaptation process of Buddhist architecture.¹⁵ In a later article, Fu Xinian carefully analyzed the construction techniques, materials and building code of Buddhist architecture in the Asuka and Nara periods; he discussed how ancient Japanese architecture reflected that of China between the Northern and Southern Dynasties and the Tang Dynasty. At the same time, he emphasized the irreplaceable reference value of Japanese architecture for the recovery of information about Chinese Buddhist monasteries buried for over a thousand years.¹⁶

A valuable approach was promoted by Xiao Mo 蕭默, who specialized in the study of ancient architecture as displayed in the Dunhuang 敦煌 wall paintings. Because of the abovementioned lack of archaeological material, he speculated that the architectural drawings in Dunhuang provided precious information about ancient architecture after the Sui Dynasty. The first chapter of his book discusses the typology and the layout of Buddhist monasteries in the Sui and Tang Dynasties on the basis of analyses of a large number of wall paintings depicting monasteries. In a word, he classified the layouts of the Sui and Tang monasteries into three types: the ‘one hall and two pavilions’ layout (*yita erlou shi* 一塔二樓式), the ‘U-shaped’ layout (*aozi xing* 凹字形) and the ‘courtyard-style’ layout (*yuanluo shi* 院落式). The last could be further subdivided into the ‘sole-court’ (*danyuan shi* 單院式), ‘double-court’ (*shuangyuan shi* 雙院式) and ‘triple-court’ (*sanyuan shi* 三院式) layouts. Moreover, he believed that the monastery layouts in the wall paintings not only described Buddhist monasteries in the Dunhuang area, but also contemporary monasteries in two capitals, Chang’an and Luoyang, as well as other monasteries throughout the country.¹⁷ The author also cautioned us to keep in mind that the drawings often show only part of the scene, rather than the complete panorama of the monastery. Furthermore, it cannot be ruled out that fictitious elements may have been inserted by designers or painters in order to better represent the theme or the

⁹ Since 2019, the Nanjing Institute of Archaeology has discovered a Buddhist monastery of the Southern Dynasties in Xiying Village, Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province (江蘇省南京市西營村). The base of the square wooden pagoda, the Buddha Hall, the cloister and the remains of buried *śarīra* have been excavated successively. This is the first large-scale excavation of a Buddhist monastery in the Southern Dynasties, and relevant information has not yet been officially published. Thanks to the invitation of the Nanjing Institute of Archaeology, I have had the honor of visiting the excavation site in 2020 and attended the demonstration meeting of the excavation results in 2021.

¹⁰ Soper 1978, 89–93.

¹¹ Seckel 1980, 249–56.

¹² Ledderose 1980, 238–48.

¹³ Liang Sicheng 2011, 80–92.

¹⁴ Liu Dunzhen 1984, 87–101, 128–55, 202–14.

¹⁵ Fu Xinian 1998.

¹⁶ Fu Xinian 1992.

¹⁷ Xiao Mo 2003, 35–81.

background in the light of the text of the Buddhist Sutras. At any rate, his work provides us with abundant visual evidence that remains an important reference for the study of the Buddhist monastery in the Sui and Tang periods.

One popular book is *Lectures on Chinese Buddhist Monastery Architecture* by Zhang Yuhuan 張馭寰. Based on decades of experience, the author offers a comprehensive introduction to the development of Chinese monastery, including the history of Buddhist monasteries, monastery layout, the structure of the main and auxiliary buildings, and some representative monasteries around the country.¹⁸ Though some important conclusions and controversial issues lack supporting data and annotation, it can be considered a work for the general public that may help us understand the history and status quo of Chinese Buddhist architecture.

The most recent book on the study of ancient Chinese Buddhist monasteries from the perspective of architectural history is *The History of Chinese Buddhist Architecture*, edited by Wang Guixiang 王貴祥 of Tsinghua University. This book collects a large number of historical documents related to the Buddhist monasteries of ancient China, and makes a comprehensive analysis and speculative restoration of the construction and distribution of Buddhist monasteries, as well as the development of monastery layout and architectural types over the past 2,000 years.¹⁹

In recent decades, several medieval Buddhist monasteries have been discovered and excavated, providing new material for research in this field. From the 1980s onward, Chinese archaeologists, benefiting from the excavation of various sites, began to study the layout of early Buddhist monasteries. Su Bai 宿白, a prominent archaeologist of Peking University, issued two seminal papers in relation to the layout of medieval monasteries by linking textual records to archaeological discoveries, which remain essential and enlightening. In the first paper, Su Bai divided the evolution of the monastery layout from the Eastern Han to the Northern and Southern Dynasties into two periods.²⁰ The first period (25–280 AD) includes the Eastern Han and Three Kingdoms; on the basis of textual sources, he presumed that the main monastery features derived from Indian sources, and that the *stūpa* occupied the center of the Buddhist monastery, although the *stūpa* had already evolved into a multi-layer square wooden structure, also known as a Chinese-style pagoda. At the center of the *stūpa* was a large gilded bronze statue of the Buddha, with a passage allowing devotees to carry out ritual circumambulation. The second phase (307–589 AD) corresponds to the period of the Eastern Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties, as proved by archaeological remains of the *Siyuan Monastery* and the *Yongningsi Monastery*, which were surveyed and excavated between the 1970s and the 1980s. Su Bai demonstrated that though the pagoda was still located at the center of

the monastery, another religious building began to gain prominence after the fourth century: a Chinese-style hall, which could either be a Buddha Hall or a Lecture Hall. In the meantime, other auxiliary buildings, such as Meditation Halls and Monks' Quarters, were also mentioned in the documents. The typical monastery layout of the second phase consists of buildings aligned along the central axis, with the Pagoda set at the center of the monastery and the Buddha Hall behind it. This is the so-called 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' layout.

In his second paper, Su Bai focused on the layout of monasteries of the Sui Dynasty. Su Bai affirmed that the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' layout was still dominant at this stage, while at the same time he analyzed the beginning of a new type of Buddhist monastery layout, the 'Central Hall and Twin Pagodas', with two pagodas in front of the Buddha Hall.²¹

Li Yuqun 李裕群 supported Su Bai's analysis and research method. He published an article discussing the characteristic monastery layout before the Sui and Tang Dynasties. He particularly emphasized the emergence of large-scale Buddhist monasteries which may have intentionally replicated the imperial palace between the late fifth and the early sixth century, as well as the impact of Southern Chinese cultural elements in the North in the late Northern Dynasty period.²²

By the end of the sixth century, the capital of the Sui and Tang Dynasties, Chang'an, had once more become the national Buddhist center. On the basis of textual sources and new material evidence emerging from the excavation of the *Qinglongsi Monastery* and the *Ximingsi Monastery*, as well as reports on surveys of other Buddhist sites in Xi'an, Gong Guoqiang 龔國強 published his *Studies in Chang'an Buddhist Monasteries of the Sui and Tang Dynasties*.²³ He took up and studied three issues in depth: first, the regular distribution of Buddhist monasteries and their relationship with the grid plan of Chang'an; second, different monastery layouts and their periodization; third, the source of the Chang'an monasteries and their contact with those of East Asia.

By carefully analyzing several Buddhist monasteries excavated in recent decades, I have discussed the evolution of Chinese monastery layout from the fifth to the seventh century in several articles. Focusing on the relationship between Pagoda, Buddha Hall and Compound, I have confirmed that the developmental process of monastery layout changed from a single compound centering on a pagoda to multiple compounds and halls. At the same time, I have proposed that the change in monastery layout during this period might be closely linked with changes occurring within the Buddhist doctrine.²⁴

¹⁸ Zhang Yuhuan 2008.

¹⁹ Wang Guixiang 2016.

²⁰ Su Bai 1997 a.

²¹ Su Bai 1997 b.

²² Li Yuqun 2009.

²³ Gong Guoqiang 2006.

²⁴ He Liqun 2010; 2011.

The Significance of the Topic

The significance of the topic can be briefly laid out. By the early Middle Ages, Buddhism had already become a highly developed religion and culture throughout the Asian continent. The Buddhist monastery, as a vehicle of Buddhist thought and practice, carries profound and complex implications. In other words, in the Buddhist monastery, various traditional elements of Chinese civilization come together, a fact calling for interdisciplinary investigation in archaeology, history, art history, architecture, theology and philosophy. Buddhist State Monasteries, which replicate the layout of the imperial palace, represent the highest architectural standard; at the same time, the evolution of monastery layout also reflects changes occurring in the sphere of religious creed. Therefore, State Monasteries are the main object of my research, a special angle from which to explore early Buddhist thought and architecture.

For various reasons, none of the early Buddhist monasteries before the seventh century in China have been preserved to date. In the past, research on ancient monasteries was carried out on copious written records, at times giving rise to controversies born out of different interpretations of the same records. Under these circumstances, new archaeological evidence is invaluable for our research.

In the early medieval period, the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Archipelago were undergoing a phase of social reforms and transitions, and increasingly absorbed the more mature laws and institutions of China. Buddhism, as part of the Chinese civilization and religious belief system, was introduced first to Korea and then to Japan, and was increasingly appreciated by the royals of both states. Thereafter, numerous Buddhist monasteries sponsored by royals and dignitaries were built according to the contemporary Chinese style. Many of these monasteries have survived to the present and are well preserved, or have been excavated in recent decades. They offer exceptional material for the investigation of the origins and the diffusion of the Chinese monastery.

The archaeological and art historical research on Chinese medieval monasteries has just begun. Although some records in China suggested a probable link with the monasteries in Korea and Japan, the lack of suitable comparative data hindered the possibility of pinpointing when, how, in which aspects and in what ways the Chinese monastery impacted on its neighbors.

Since the 1960s, and especially in recent years, several ancient monastic sites have been discovered and partially excavated by Chinese archaeologists. Although most of them were not completely excavated, in most cases the main buildings, such as the Pagoda, the Buddha Hall and the Compound have been unearthed; it has become possible to weigh historical sources against archaeological material. Today we are not only in a position to carry out research on the evolution of monastery layout between the fifth and seventh centuries, but also to discuss the early Buddhist

contacts between China, Korea and Japan by comparing the architectural layout of medieval monasteries.

Research Methods

A few words will adequately indicate the research method here applied to the abovementioned material. Data from different fields have been interrelated, for example through the combination of textual evidence and archaeological discoveries. It is well known that China has a long tradition of recording its history, going back several thousand years. Chinese history relies on a vast corpus of textual sources. Generally speaking, Chinese ancient literature consists of texts written on paper and epigraphic sources. Official histories were normally written by scholars of a later period, so that they may contain events and explanations from a later period, inserted for various reasons. For example, many Buddhist documents describing the exact date of the introduction of Buddhism into China are quite unlikely, but they can be used once they have been analyzed and purified of questionable elements. On the other hand, epigraphic sources and manuscripts were often material contemporaneous with the events described and therefore disclose more reliable data. However, by their nature, the information they disclose is usually disorganized or incomplete, and therefore in need of being identified and interpreted carefully as well.

Traditional historiography has been widely utilized to restore the original appearance of ancient society by Chinese scholars. Moreover, from the Song Dynasty onward, the development of epigraphy (*jinshixue* 金石學) could make up for the shortage of historical documents to a certain extent. Nevertheless, how to understand and interpret ambiguous, even contradictory records is still a vexing problem. As mentioned above, many controversies were born out of different interpretations of a single document, an issue which has led to a debate concerning the reliability of ancient Chinese documentation lasting for several decades.

The emergence and development of modern archaeology provided a new approach for historical research. In the early twentieth century, Wang Guowei 王國維, a prominent master of Chinese learning in the twentieth century, put forward his famous 'method of dual attestation' (*erchong zhengju fa* 二重證據法). In his works and lectures, Wang Guowei repeatedly emphasized that the progress of sinological research often profited from the discovery of new materials. The core of his thought was that texts and excavated material could mutually authenticate each other. The texts that can be verified by archaeological material are to be considered undoubtedly reliable and as reflecting the historical facts. At the same time, we cannot thoughtlessly deny those records that have not been verified thus far.²⁵ After nearly a hundred years, this theory has been widely accepted in academic circles, and proved to be an effective research method for Chinese history.

²⁵ Wang Guowei 1994, 2–3.

In recent decades, a lot of buried material has been discovered and unearthed. There is abundant information to supplement textual sources that can be used to reconstruct historical events. This book rests on archaeological materials, and all typical monastery layouts taken into consideration were based on excavated physical evidence. It should be mentioned that for most of them, especially the State Monasteries, there is a more or less detailed written record. Using the method of dual attestation, i.e. connecting written records with archaeological discoveries, many important issues about these monasteries, such as the date of their construction, the historical background, the religious belief system, the monastery system, the architectural scale and style, the origin and evolution of architectural layout, will be discussed in detail.

A second methodological tool used throughout the book is typological comparison. Typology is a classification method based on types or categories and is widely used in archaeology, architecture, anthropology, linguistics and other fields. Because of their different research objects and purposes, various disciplines have different ways of defining typology. In nature, they all derive from the taxonomy of biology, and the basic principle is similar. For example, archaeological typology is a method of classifying artifacts according to their characteristics.²⁶ Architectural typology is the taxonomic classification of (usually physical) characteristics commonly found in buildings and urban places. Stylistic analysis, one of the basic research methods in art history, in which artifacts need to be classified and compared prior to further analysis, should also be mentioned. Undoubtedly, typology can be applied to the classification of Buddhist monasteries in the light of their architectural forms. However, though typology enables us to determine a chronological sequence, its authority rests on the classification of materials obtained from stratigraphic sequences.

Archaeological excavation and typological research have led the famous Chinese archaeologist Su Bingqi 蘇秉琦 to bring forward a new theory called 'Regional Divisions, Cultural Series and Types in Archaeological Culture' (*kaoguxue wenhua de quxi leixing* 考古學文化的區系類型). The leitmotiv of this theory is that some typical sites are selected, through scientific excavation, to obtain representative analysis materials. On the basis of the exact division of cultural types, some cultural series are summarized in a larger area according to similarities and differences in their cultural connotations.²⁷ Although this theory was originally used for the analysis of prehistoric cultures, it can be equally applied to the study of late ruins and relics.

The Chinese, Korean and Japanese Buddhist monasteries selected in this book are representatives of the highest-ranking monasteries in early medieval East Asia. Almost all of them were built under the auspices of the royal

family or dignitaries, and pertinent records providing essential information about them have been preserved. After long-term archaeological survey and excavation, the architectural style and layout of these monasteries have gradually emerged. In accordance with the different arrangement of the main buildings in the monasteries, different types of monastery layout will be classified according to typological principles. Then the cultural series (monastery layouts) will be summed up according to their similarities and differences, thus disclosing the architectural form and distinctive features of Buddhist monasteries in different areas and periods. Finally, I will discuss the evolution of the architectural layout of Buddhist monasteries in early medieval China and contact with contemporaneous monasteries in Korea and Japan through typological comparison and stylistic analysis.

On a more theoretical level, the interaction of space and function will allow for a deeper insight into the issue under investigation. Space, understood as a limited coverage of one, two or three dimensions, in my book corresponds to Buddhist architecture. It can refer to a single building, such as a Pagoda, a Buddha Hall or a Lecture Hall, but can also refer to a building space or a group of buildings, such as a courtyard or an entire monastery. Function in my book corresponds to the purpose of a single piece of Buddhist architecture or a group of buildings.

In this book, the interaction of space and function is the most relevant method for exploring the deeper reasons that brought about the evolution of monastery layout in early medieval China. Despite the fact that a significant part of the book discusses Buddhist architecture, it should be emphasized that I am particularly interested in the evolution of religious thought, rather than the simple evolution of architectural forms. In my opinion, space and function, as defined above, are so intertwined that they cannot be divided. Function determines space, while space serves as a locale for the fulfillment of a function, and confines the performance of a function under certain conditions. Doubtless, cultural connotations cannot be conceived or detected if the interaction of space and function is neglected. In the specific case of a Buddhist monastery, the interaction of space and function is traceable in the combination of various buildings, in which every main building or building group has a distinct and specific purpose. The evolution of the monastery layout thus reflects changes in religious thought and practice.

It should also be noted that the interaction between space and function is a crucial method for researching the intrinsic reasons for and laws of the development and evolution of medieval Chinese monasteries spanning the centuries. This method must be applied with caution when analyzing the early monastery layouts in Korea and Japan. This is because the method is only effective as applied to an original culture noumenon, rather than a derivative one. As far as the architectural layout of the Buddhist monastery is concerned, Chinese monasteries appeared around the first century AD, following the introduction of Buddhism,

²⁶ Dunnell 1986, Pp.35 - 99. ppp149-51.

²⁷ Su Bingqi and Yin Weizhang 1981.

and gradually shaped their own architectural tradition and style in the centuries following. Different buildings and groups of buildings had different religious meanings, and an inherent logical relation existed between space and function. Nevertheless, early Buddhist monasteries in Korea and Japan were quite dissimilar to Chinese ones. By imitating, they could replicate the architectural forms of contemporaneous Chinese monasteries, but this does not mean that the religious connotation contained in the architectural form was understood or accepted. In other words, similarity in architectural form and spatial arrangement does not correspond to uniformity in function, especially when these elements are newly introduced into a different cultural milieu.

Monastery Layout in Early Medieval China: Textual Evidence

1.1. The Introduction of Buddhism and the Establishment of Early Monasteries in China

There are many discrepancies between historical records and Buddhist sutras regarding the exact time of the introduction of Buddhism to mainland China, though most of them are preposterous and not worth refuting. Two events mentioned in these controversial records, however, need to be given due consideration. An early chronicle of the *Brief Account of Wei* 魏略 states:

Once in the first year of the Yuanshou Era (2 BC), during the reign of Emperor Ai in the Han Dynasty, Yi Cun, an envoy sent by the king of the Yuch-chih, dictated a Buddha Sutra to Jing Lu, a court academician.¹

Tang Yongtong carefully analyzed this text and demonstrated that it should be accepted as recording a historical incident.² Under his advocacy this event has been accepted as the earliest record of the introduction of Buddhism to China by a growing number of researchers.³

Another well-known event widely cited in late Buddhist literature is that of Emperor Ming of Eastern Han (漢明帝r. 58–75 AD), who demanded the teaching of Buddhism and sent envoys to India. It was originally recorded in *Mouzi on the Settling of Doubts* at the end of Eastern Han, and in more detail in the *Book of Wei*. After having dreamed of a golden man with a shining halo circling in front of the palace, Emperor Ming sent a mission to India to inquire about Buddhist teaching. The envoys copied and brought back the *Sutra of Forty-Two Sections* (*Sishi'erzhang Jing* 四十二章經), which is often considered to be the earliest Buddhist literature in China. After that, due to the peace and prosperity of the country, the number of people who believed in Buddhism increased rapidly.⁴

Although this story was recorded in a late historical document and sounds more like a legend, another contemporaneous event provides strong evidence for its authenticity. The brother of Emperor Ming was Prince Ying of Chu 楚王英, the capital of whose kingdom was located in Pengcheng 彭城, modern Xuzhou in Jiangsu Province 江蘇徐州. The *Book of Later Han* states the fact that Prince Ying believed in Buddhism and founded Buddhist communities. In 65, Prince Ying offered 30 rolls of silks to atone for the sins he had committed before

believing in Buddhism and accorded an amnesty that empowered criminals to ransom themselves after paying a certain amount of money. Emperor Ming deemed Prince Ying innocent and sent back his ransom, meanwhile issuing an edict stating:

The Prince of Chu recites the subtle words of Huang-Lao, and esteems the virtuous deeds of the Buddha; [...] the ransom is sent back to prepare a sumptuous vegetarian feast for the pious *upāsakas* (laymen) and *śramaṇas* (monks).⁵

In view of the fact that this contemporaneous record may possibly prove the circumstantial event of Emperor Ming inquiring about Buddhist teaching, most researchers generally believe that the first century is the *terminus ante quem* for the introduction of Buddhism to mainland China.

With the introduction of Buddhism, Buddhist monasteries began to appear in Luoyang and Pengcheng, the earliest recorded places where Buddhist activities took place. In the following few centuries, Buddhist monasteries expanded slowly and smoothly throughout the country along with the spread of Buddhism. By the Western Jin (265–316 AD), the number of Buddhist monasteries already totaled a few hundred. The *Stories about Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang* vaguely mention that there were forty-two monasteries in the Yongjia Era (307–313 AD) of the Western Jin,⁶ while the *Treatise on Discussing the Right* records definitely:

In the two capitals of the Western Jin, there were a total of one hundred eighty monasteries, and seventy three sutras were translated by thirteen persons, and there were more than three thousand seven hundred monks and nuns.⁷

By analyzing the location of Buddhist monasteries recorded in literature, we find that most monasteries before the Western Jin were located in certain important religious centers and at the hubs of Sino-Western routes.⁸ Though the names of more than 20 monasteries of this period can be seen in all sorts of documents, unfortunately, only a few architectural forms are mentioned directly and concretely.

¹ *Sanguo Zhi* 三國志, 859, ‘昔漢哀帝元壽元年, 博士弟子景盧受大月氏王使伊存口授浮屠經。’; Hucker 1985, 390.

² Tang Yongtong 1997, 34–36.

³ Ren Jiyu 1981, 90–91; Zürcher 1972, 24; Ch'en 1964, 27–42.

⁴ *Mouzi Lihuo Lun* 牟子理惑論, 4–5.

⁵ *Hou Han Shu* 後漢書, 1153–54, ‘詔報曰: 楚王誦黃老之微言, 尚浮屠之仁祠。……其還贖, 以助伊蒲塞桑門之盛饌。’

⁶ *Luoyang Qielan Ji* 洛陽伽藍記, 999.

⁷ *Bian Zheng Lun* 辯正論, 502, ‘右西晉二京, 合寺一百八十所, 譯經一十三人七十三部, 僧尼三千七百餘人。’

⁸ Yan Shang-wen 1985.

The earliest Buddhist monastery was founded in the period of Emperor Ming, as recorded in the *Mouzi on the Settling of Doubts*:

[After the mission came back from Kushan], a Buddhist monastery was built outside of the Yong Gate in the west of Luoyang. Thousands of vehicles and horses were painted on the wall three deep that surrounded the pagoda.⁹

This monastery became the prototype of the so-called *Baimasi Monastery* 白馬寺 described in late Buddhist literature and legends, despite the fact that there is no information about its exact name at that time (Picture 1.1). Actually, the inception and early history of Buddhist architecture in China remains unclear, but a significant message emerging from the above text is that the pagoda was deemed particularly important as the central building of the whole monastery.

Another document written at the end of the Han Dynasty provides more detailed information about Buddhist monasteries and Buddhist activities. The *Records of Three Kingdoms* was the first to recount this event. Ze Rong (祚融?–195 AD), a local official in charge of transportation between Guangling 廣陵 and Danyang 丹陽 in the lower basin of the Yangtze River, hijacked grains and goods for his own use within the area under his control.

He erected a large Buddhist temple. He had a bronze human figure (effigy) cast, gilded and dressed in silk and brocade. (At the top of the building) nine layers of bronze scales were suspended, and below there was a building of several stories with covered passages, which could contain more than three thousand people, studying and reading Buddhist scriptures. He ordered the Buddhist devotees from the region (under his supervision) and from the adjacent prefectures to listen and to accept the doctrine. He exempted those people from statute labour duties in order to attract them. On account of this, those who came to (the monastery) from near and far numbered more than five thousand. Whenever there was (the ceremony of) 'bathing the Buddha', he always had great quantities of wine and food set out (for distribution), and mats spread along the roads for several tens of *li*. (On these occasions) tens of thousands of people came to enjoy the spectacle and the food. The expenses (of such a ceremony) amounted to millions.¹⁰

This text is confirmed by similar records in the *Book of Later Han*,¹¹ which not only provides a glimpse of the

activities of the early Buddhist community, but is also the earliest detailed description of a Buddhist monastery and Buddhist images in a historical record. It should be noted that the 'building of several stories with covered passages' (*tangge zhouhui* 堂閣周回) suggests it must be a traditional square Chinese pagoda, a structure built by combining rammed earth and timbers.

It is generally believed that the first Buddhist monastery in South China was built during the Three Kingdoms period, according to the record of Kang Senghui 康僧會 in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*. This famous monk, the descendant of a Sogdian family, came to Jianye (建業, modern Nanjing, Jiangsu Province), the capital of Wu 吳, in 247 AD. By virtue of his thaumaturgical powers, he succeeded in persuading Sun Quan 孫權, the sovereign of the Wu Kingdom, to support his missionary efforts. Sun Quan erected a *śarīra* pagoda and named the monastery *Jianchusi Monastery* 建初寺.¹² Another contemporary document increases the trustworthiness of the above-mentioned record. The *Records of Three Kingdoms* mentioned the atrocity of Sun Lin (孫綝 231–258 AD), the regent of the Wu Kingdom, who destroyed Buddhist monasteries and decapitated practitioners.¹³ Therefore, the history of *Jianchusi Monastery* cannot be easily rejected, though it was recorded in late Buddhist documents.

During the Eastern Jin and Sixteen Kingdoms period, northern ethnic minorities invaded and occupied central China. In a sense, the division of the state and the ongoing war provided an opportunity for the diffusion of all kinds of philosophies and religions. As an exotic religion, Buddhism was advocated by some northern ethnic rulers who regarded themselves as foreigners and thought that they should believe in a foreign religion.¹⁴

Because of the long-term war in the northern regions, accurate statistics on the number of Buddhist monasteries were not clear, and therefore we are not in the position of having a full overview of the spread of Buddhism; what is at our disposal are some partial facts from the disjointed biographies of monks. Fotucheng (佛圖澄 ?–348 AD), a famous monk of Central Asia, who came to China in 310 AD, was a missionary gifted with thaumaturgical powers and a warlock. The miracles he performed made a significant impact on the rulers of the time. He was treated as an oracle and an advisor by Emperors Shi Le 石勒 and Shi Hu 石虎 of Later Zhao (後趙 319–351 AD). As a result of his missionary efforts, most people of the Han nationality and ethnic minorities in the Central Plains of

⁹ *Mouzi Lihuo Lun* 牟子理惑論, 4–5, '時於洛陽城西雍門外起佛寺, 於其壁畫千乘萬騎繞塔三匝。'

¹⁰ *Sanguo Zhi* 三國志, 1185, '乃大起浮圖祠, 以銅為人, 黃金塗身, 衣以錦采, 垂銅盤九重, 下為重樓閣道, 可容三千餘人, 悉課讀佛經, 令界內及旁郡人有好佛者聽受道, 復其他役以招致之, 由此遠近前後至者五千餘人戶。每浴佛, 多設酒飯, 布席于路, 經數十里。民人來觀及就食且萬人, 費以巨億計。' For the translation, see Zürcher 1972, 28.

¹¹ *Hou Han Shu* 後漢書, 2368.

¹² *Gaoseng Zhuan* 高僧傳, 325.

¹³ *Sanguo Zhi* 三國志, 1449, '綝意彌溢, 侮慢民神。遂燒大橋頭伍子胥廟, 又壞浮圖祠斬道人。'

¹⁴ *Gaoseng Zhuan* 高僧傳, 385, 'Shi Hu issued an edict: Wang Du argued that Buddha is a foreign god, and it is not appropriate for the Emperor and the Chinese to offer him homage. I was born in a remote area, and fortunately had an opportunity to rule China. Concerning sacrifices, I should also conform to our traditional customs. Buddha is an exotic god, he ought to be worshiped' (虎下書曰: 度議云佛是外國之神, 非天子諸華所可宜奉。朕生自邊壤, 忝當期運, 君臨諸夏。至於饗祀, 應兼從本俗。佛是戎神, 正所應奉)。



Picture 1.1: *Baimasi Monastery in Luoyang, China*

China began to believe in Buddhism, and as a consequence a great many pagodas and monasteries were built:

Zhang Li and Zhang Liang, the ministers of Shi Hu, whose families were very rich and engaged in worshipping Buddha, each built their own pagoda.

[...] Hundreds of persons often followed and studied with him (Fotucheng). In total his disciples totaled nearly ten thousand. Eight hundred and ninety-three Buddhist monasteries were established in provinces and counties where he traveled. Buddhism was promoted unprecedentedly.¹⁵

Dao'an (道安 314–385 AD), the most prominent Buddhist master at the time, was once a disciple of Fotucheng. His doctrines deeply influenced Chinese Buddhism both in North and South China. Emperor Fu Jian 苻堅 of Former Qin (前秦 351–394 AD) revered him deeply and regarded him as his instructor. At the time when Dao'an and his disciples traveled and preached through North China,

many Buddhist monasteries are mentioned; a few of them might reveal the features of early Buddhist architecture in China. For example, after 365 AD, Dao'an lived in Xiangyang 襄陽. Under the patronage of local magnates and officials, he built the *Tanxisi Monastery* 檀溪寺 with a five-story pagoda and four hundred rooms. In 379 AD, Dao'an went to Chang'an and lived in the *Wuchongsi Monastery* 五重寺.¹⁶

Another example is *Kumārajīva* (鳩摩羅什 344–413 AD), the most outstanding translator of Buddhist sutras in history. Formerly a prince of Kucha 龜茲國, he arrived at Chang'an in 401 AD. Emperor Yao Xing 姚興 of Later Qin regarded him as a religious master and created a system of Buddhist clergies (*sengguan zhidu* 僧官制度).¹⁷ To help *Kumārajīva* to translate Buddhist sutras, the emperor organized hundreds of scholars and famous monks to work together with him. A large number of important Indian sutras were translated by *Kumārajīva* and his translation team.

¹⁵ *Gaoseng Zhuan* 高僧傳, 385–87, '虎尚書張離張良家富事佛, 各起大塔。……(佛圖澄)受業追游常有數百, 前後門徒幾且一萬。所曆州郡興立佛寺八百九十三所, 弘法之盛莫與先矣。'

¹⁶ *Gaoseng Zhuan* 高僧傳, 352, '安以白馬寺狹, 乃更立寺名曰檀溪, 即清河張殷宅也。大富長者並加贊助, 建塔五層起房四百。涼州刺史楊弘忠送銅萬斤, 擬為承露盤。……既至住長安五重寺, 僧眾數千大弘法化。'

¹⁷ *Gaoseng Zhuan* 高僧傳, 363.

Since Yao Xing indulged in Buddhism, high-level officials and ordinary people all admired and respected śramaṇas. More than five thousand persons came to [Chang'an] from afar. A pagoda was erected at Yonggui Li, and a *Prajñā* platform was built at the central palace. There were always thousands of meditating monks. (People of) the provinces and counties were affected; nine-tenths of the households believed in Buddhism.¹⁸

Syncretized with Wei-Jin Metaphysics 魏晉玄學, Buddhist thought was further promoted in South China, where there was a more traditional Chinese political, economic and cultural system. There are numerous records about emperors and ministers who believed in Buddhism and had contacts with famous monks of the time. Thousands of monasteries are mentioned in Buddhist documents, nearly ten monasteries under the auspices of the Eastern Jin royalty:

In year 104 of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, there were 1,768 Buddhist monasteries in total, 263 sutras translated by 27 persons, and 24,000 monks and nuns.¹⁹

Regrettably, although in addition to the *Changgansi Monastery* 長干寺, which was built as a three-story wooden pagoda sponsored by Emperor Jianwen of Eastern Jin,²⁰ Huiyong 惠永 and Huiyuan 慧遠 built Buddha Halls and Meditation Halls at the *Lingyun Monastery* 凌雲精舍²¹ and at the *Longquan Monastery* 龍泉精舍²² of Lushan 廬山, we do not have detailed information about the overall architectural layout of the Buddhist monasteries in South China during this period.

Since the introduction of Buddhism in the first century, due to the patronage of the rulers, the promotion of outstanding masters, and its combination with traditional culture, by the fifth century, Buddhism had gradually penetrated into every aspect of Chinese society, and consequently Buddhist monasteries were widely established in North and South China. Although archaeologists had not excavated any monastery remains of this period until 2019, on the basis of historical and Buddhist documents, we may reasonably assume that an early Buddhist monastery system had already begun to take shape.

1.2. Buddhist Monasteries in the Northern and Southern Dynasties

Chinese Buddhism reached its peak in fifth to sixth centuries. The central governments of both the Northern and the Southern Dynasties began to set up special organizations to manage religious affairs; one remarkable

symbol was the establishment of a mature official system of Buddhist clergies and its extension nationwide.²³ Under government management, Buddhist monasteries developed greatly both in number and in scale; at the same time, architectural forms and monastery layouts were also increasingly standardized.

As early as the end of the fourth century, the rulers of Northern Wei had already converted to Buddhism and built monasteries even before reunifying North China. In order for the believers to have a place to engage in Buddhist activities, the Emperor Daowu (道武帝 r. 386–409 AD) issued a decree ordering competent authorities to erect images and repair dwellings. In 398 AD, a great Buddhist monastery with a five-story Pagoda, a *Sumeru Hall* 須彌山殿, a Lecture Hall and Meditation Hall was established in the capital. This was the first imperial-sponsored Buddhist monastery constructed in the Northern Wei Dynasty.²⁴

In 439 AD, the Northern Wei occupied Liangzhou 涼州, an important Buddhist center since the middle of the fourth century. A great number of people and famous monks including Xuangao 玄高, Shixian 師賢 and Tanyao 曇曜 were transferred to Pingcheng, the Northern Wei capital:

In the Taiyan Era (435–440 AD), (Emperor Taiwu) conquered Liangzhou. The people of the Northern Liang were deported to the capital, and monks and Buddhist activities and rituals were all transferred to the eastern region. Buddhism was thus more prosperous (in Northern Wei).²⁵

Meanwhile, in spite of the brief suppression of Buddhism between 446 and 452, after Emperor Taiwu's death, Buddhism was quickly restored and prospered after the mid-fifth century. Upon ascending to the throne, Emperor Wencheng (文成帝 r. 452–465 AD) proclaimed that believers and ordinary people embracing Buddhism were free to leave home and join the monastic order. Besides, any densely populated areas could build Buddhist monasteries according to their own need. Shixian was appointed *dao-ren-tong* 道人統, and then Tanyao was appointed *sha-men-tong* 沙門統. In truth, both titles indicated the same highest-ranking official in charge of religious affairs during the Northern Wei. In order to obtain the support of the imperial family, many monks were bound up in preaching the idea that the emperor was a living incarnation of the Buddha. Therefore, it was very popular to erect great Buddha images in the resemblance of the emperors in the monasteries of the capital. Under the sponsorship of Tanyao, the famous Yungang Grottoes, which are now often referred to as the greatest achievement of Buddhism in the Northern Wei Dynasty, were built near the capital after 453 AD.

¹⁸ *Jin Shu* 晉書, 2985, '興既托意於佛道, 公卿已下莫不欽附沙門, 自遠而至者五千餘人。起浮圖於永貴里, 立波若台于中宮。沙門坐禪者恒有千數, 州郡化之, 事佛者十室而九矣。'

¹⁹ *Bian Zheng Lun* 辯正論, 503, '右東晉一百四載, 合寺一千七百六十八所, 譯經二十七人二百六十三部, 僧尼二萬四千人。'

²⁰ *Gaoseng Zhuan* 高僧傳, 409.

²¹ *Ming Seng Zhuan Chao* 名僧傳抄, 357.

²² *Gaoseng Zhuan* 高僧傳, 358.

²³ Xie Chongguang 2009, 18–29, 51–67.

²⁴ *Wei Shu* 魏書, 3030.

²⁵ *Wei Shu* 魏書, 3032, '太延中, 涼州平, 徙其國人於京邑, 沙門佛事皆俱東, 象教彌增矣。'

In the late fifth century, for the sake of consolidating the centralized government and effectively controlling a multi-ethnic country, under the support of Empress Dowager Feng (馮寧 442–490 AD, the consort of Emperor Wencheng) and Emperor Xiaowen (孝文帝 r. 471–499 AD) implemented a series of drastic policies to sinicize the minorities of North China. Some important compulsive reform measures were carried out without delay, including the full acceptance of traditional Chinese laws and institutions and relocating the capital to Luoyang in 494.

Since the Eastern Han, Luoyang had already been an important place for Buddhism in China. Despite the temporary decline during the long-term wars starting in the third century, under the strong imperial patronage of Northern Wei, at the end of the fifth century Luoyang was once again the political and religious center of North China. According to the *Stories about Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang*, there were more than a thousand monasteries in the area of the capital alone.²⁶ In the Northern Wei territory as a whole, the total number of Buddhist monasteries totaled tens of thousands.

A total of seventeen emperors of Northern Wei ruled for 170 years. During this period, there were 47 great state monasteries. [...] Princes, Dukes, dignitaries and all lords built 839 monasteries, and common people built more than thirty thousand monasteries. Two million monks and nuns in total were tonsured and nineteen persons translated forty-nine sutras.²⁷

This record not only provides detailed information about the development of the Buddhist monasteries during Northern Wei, but also puts forward the concept of the 'State Monastery' specifically. Compared with terms to describe official and private monasteries, we can affirm that the term 'State Monastery' is used to imply an imperial undertaking, while not necessarily referring to a monastery's size or its architectural scale.

In 534 the Northern Wei Dynasty split into the Eastern Wei (534–550 AD) and Western Wei (534–557 AD), and the capital of the Eastern Wei was moved from Luoyang to Yecheng. In addition to official bureaus and common people, a great number of monks and nuns and of the outstanding masters who originally promoted Buddhism in Luoyang, including *Bodhiruci* 菩提流支, *Ratnamati* 勒那摩提, Huiguang 慧光, also moved to Yecheng along with the court.

(Due to) frequent disasters in the Yongxi Era (532–534 AD), the royal family (of the Northern Wei) moved to

Ye, and monks and nuns of each monastery were also transferred at that time.²⁸

After the Eastern Wei was supplanted by the Northern Qi in the middle of sixth century, Yecheng displaced the status of Luoyang and became the new Buddhist center of North China.

In the heyday of the Northern Qi, there were approximately four thousand large monasteries in the capital and nearly eighty thousand resident monks and nuns. More than two hundred lecture halls were lined up one after the other, regularly visited by over ten thousand people. Therefore, all the heroes and outstanding persons of the world submitted to the state.²⁹

During the Northern Qi period, there were forty-three State Monasteries and tens of thousands of private monasteries spreading all over the whole territory.

A total of six emperors of Northern Qi ruled for twenty-eight years. During this time, the imperial family sponsored the construction of forty-three great state monasteries and six persons who translated fourteen sutras.³⁰

Although in the Western Wei's and the Northern Zhou's territory, both in the western region of North China, Buddhism was not as important in society as it was in the eastern part of North China, the construction of Buddhist monasteries and the translation of sutras were still very popular. A census carried out at the time when Emperor Wu of Northern Zhou suppressed Buddhism between 574 and 577 AD gives us a glimpse of the number and scale of Buddhist monasteries at the end of the Northern Dynasties. In 577, by conquering the Northern Qi, Emperor Wu extended the campaign to destroy Buddhism over the whole northern territory. According to the *Record of the Three Jewels through the Ages*:

(The campaign of Buddhist suppression in the Jiande Era) destroyed all previous constructions which were officially and privately built over several hundred years, (all the way) from the west of (Hangu 函谷關) Pass to the east of Mount (Xiao 嶠山). All pagodas were torn down entirely, holy icons were melted or scratched, and sutras were burned. Over forty thousand monasteries in eight provinces were all bestowed on the Princes and Dukes as their mansions. The number of monks and nuns nationwide was cut by three million,

²⁶ *Luoyang Qielan Ji* 洛陽伽藍記, 999.

²⁷ *Bian Zheng Lun* 辯正論, 507, '右元魏君臨一十七帝, 一百七十年。國家大寺四十七所。……其王公貴室五等諸侯寺八百三十九所, 百姓造寺三萬餘所。總度僧尼二百萬人, 譯經一十九人四十九部。'

²⁸ *Luoyang Qielan Ji* 洛陽伽藍記, 999, '暨永熙多難, 皇輿遷鄴, 諸寺僧尼亦與時徙。'

²⁹ *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* 續高僧傳, 501, '屬高齊之盛, 佛教中興。都下大寺, 略計四千。見住僧尼, 僅將八萬。講席相距, 二百有餘。在眾常聽, 出過一萬。故宇內英傑咸歸厥邦。'

³⁰ *Bian Zheng Lun* 辯正論, 508, '右高齊六君二十八年, 皇家立寺四十三所, 譯經六人一十四部。'

and all of them were reinstated as soldiers and civilians and returned to their households.³¹

Since it did not suffer wars or suppression in the same way as the Northern Dynasty, Buddhism in South China had always remained relatively steady and underwent a continuous development. We can observe this in Table 1.1.³²

As the capital of six different dynasties (Wu, Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties), Jiankang (建康, modern Nanjing) had always been the Buddhist center in South China. Numerous historical documents show that more than seven hundred Buddhist monasteries were distributed throughout the capital in the heyday of Buddhism,³³ and many of them were built under the auspices of the imperial family.³⁴ Unfortunately, not only was the overall layout of these monasteries seldom recorded in historical documents, but Chinese archaeologists have not found any valuable clues about Buddhist architecture during this period, either in the form of above-ground architectural structures or remains underground. Nevertheless, some sporadic records referring to specific architectural structures of some monasteries can be found, and have a unique significance in the exploration of contemporary Buddhist monasteries in North China.

1.3. The Buddhist Monastery System during the Sui and Tang Dynasties

After the unification by the Sui Dynasty, the traditional and long-term capital of ancient China, Chang'an, initially named Daxing 大興城 by the Sui, was rebuilt in accordance with a strictly symmetrical principle. Benefiting from the

recovery of its political and economic status, it became the religious center of China once again.

At the beginning of his time on the throne, Emperor Wen of Sui set about reviving Buddhism, which had suffered severe persecution between 574 and 577 AD. At first, he issued a decree to rebuild damaged monasteries throughout the country. Then, a magnificent State Monastery, the *Daxingshansi Monastery* 大興善寺, was founded in the capital. At the same time, a *Daxingguosi Monastery* 大興國寺 was built in every province he had been to. During the Renshou Era (601–604 AD), Emperor Wen ordered several times that *śāstras* be distributed nationally, and pagodas set up to make offerings. During the Sui Dynasty:

There were 3,985 Buddhist monasteries, 236,200 monks and nuns were tonsured, and twenty-six persons translated eighty-two sutras.³⁵

Although the Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty was frequently impinged upon by homegrown Taoism, it still maintained a positive and forward trend. The official system of Buddhist clergies in the Tang inherited and improved the same system left in place by the Northern Dynasties, and strict prescripts were enacted to restrict private tonsuring and monastery-building.³⁶ Nevertheless, historical records indicate that official and private Buddhist monasteries were still extremely numerous. For example, Wu Zetian 武則天 issued an edict to build a *Dayunsi Monastery* 大雲寺 in each province after her coronation as Empress; Emperor Zhongzong of Tang 唐中宗 built *Zhongxingsi Monasteries* 中興寺 all over the country after his enthronement; while in the 26th year of the Kaiyuan Era (738 AD), Emperor Xuanzong of Tang 唐玄宗 commanded the establishment of *Longxingsi Monasteries* 龍興寺 and *Kaiyuansi Monasteries* 開元寺 throughout the country.

From the statistics compiled by Tang Yongtong, we can learn much about the number of Buddhist monasteries and *śramāṇas* at different stages of the Sui and Tang period (Table 1.2).³⁷

There were more than one hundred Buddhist monasteries in Chang'an, the flourishing capital of a powerful empire. As mentioned in the *Records of Chang'an* and the *Review of the Cities and Wards in Two Capitals of the Tang* (*Tang Liangjing Chengfan Kao* 唐兩京城坊考), they were built almost throughout the city grid and in every ward, their names were known and their locations could be checked in the documents.³⁸

According to the management system of the Tang Dynasty, Buddhist monasteries across the whole country had a fixed number. The *Six Codes of Tang* states:

³¹ *Lidai Sanbao Ji* 歷代三寶記, 94, '毀破前代關山西北數百年來官私所造。一切佛塔, 掃地悉盡。融刮聖容, 焚燒經典。八州寺廟出四十千, 盡賜王公, 充為第宅。三方釋子減三百萬, 皆復軍民, 還歸編戶。'

³² *Bian Zheng Lun* 辯正論, 503.

³³ *Bian Zheng Lun* 辯正論, 503; *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* 續高僧傳, 548, 694.

³⁴ A great number of Buddhist monasteries were built by the emperors of the Southern Dynasties; the name and era of these imperial monasteries refer to the relevant records of the *Treatise on Discussing the Right* 辯正論, *Record of Monasteries in Liang Capital* 梁京寺記, *Records of Buddhist Monasteries Southern Dynasties* 南朝佛寺志, *Records of Jiankang* 建康實錄 and *History of the Southern Dynasties* 南史.

Emperor Wu of Song (r. 420–422): *Linggensi Monastery* 靈根寺, *Fawangsi Monastery* 法王寺.

Emperor Wen of Song (r. 424–453): *Tianzhusi Monastery* 天竺寺, *Bao'ensi Monastery* 報恩寺, *Chanyunsi Monastery* 禪雲寺.

Emperor Xiaowu of Song (r. 454–464): *Yaowangsi Monastery* 藥王寺, *Xin'ansi Monastery* 新安寺.

Emperor Ming of Song (r. 465–472): *Xianggongsi Monastery* 湘宮寺, *Xinghuangsi Monastery* 興皇寺, *Hongpuzhongsi Monastery* 弘普中寺.

Emperor Gao of Qi (r. 479–482): *Jianyuansi Monastery* 建元寺, *Zhiqisi Monastery* 陟岵寺, *Zhengguansi Monastery* 正觀寺.

Emperor Wu of Qi (r. 483–493): *Qi'ansi Monastery* 齊安寺, *Chanlingsi Monastery* 禪靈寺, *Jishansi Monastery* 集善寺, *Zhaoxiansi Monastery* 招賢寺, *Youxuansi Monastery* 游玄寺.

Emperor Wu of Liang (r. 502–549): *Guangzhaisi Monastery* 光宅寺, *Tongtaisi Monastery* 同泰寺, *Xingguochansi Monastery* 興國禪寺, *Da'aijingsi Monastery* 大愛敬寺, *Baolinsi Monastery* 寶林寺.

Emperor Yuan of Liang (r. 552–554): *Tianjusi Monastery* 天居寺, *Tiangongsi Monastery* 天宮寺.

Emperor Houzhu of Chen (r. 557–560): *Dahuangsi Monastery* 大皇寺.

³⁵ *Bian Zheng Lun* 辯正論, 509, '寺有三千九百八十五所, 度僧尼二十三萬六千二百人, 譯經二十六人八十二部。'

³⁶ Tang Yongtong 1982, 56–60.

³⁷ Tang Yongtong 1982, 52.

³⁸ Gong Guoqiang 2006, 48–88.

Table 1.1: Statistics of Buddhist monasteries, translators, translated sutras, monks and nuns in the Southern Dynasties

Dynasty	Number	Monasteries	Translators	Translated Sutas	Monks and nuns
Song (420–479 AD)		1,913	23	210	36,000
Qi (479–502 AD)		2,015	16	72	32,500
Liang (502–557 AD) Late Liang (555–587 AD)		2,846 108	42 ?	238 ?	82,700 3,200
Chen (557–589 AD)		1,232	3	11	32,000

Table 1.2: Statistics of Buddhist monasteries and śramaṇas in the Sui and Tang Dynasties

Dynasty and emperor	Number of śramaṇas	Number of monasteries	Source
Sui Dynasty (581–618 AD)	236,200	3,685	<i>Pearl Grove in the Garden of the Law</i> , vol. 100
Tang Taizhong (627–649 AD)	<70,000	3,716	<i>Further Biographies of Eminent Monks</i> , vol. 5
Tang Gaozhong (650–683 AD)	>60,000	4,000	<i>Pearl Grove in the Garden of the Law</i> , vol. 100
Tang Xuanzhong (712–756 AD)	Monks 75,524 Nuns 50,576	5,358	<i>New Book of Tang</i>
Tang Wuzhong (841–846 AD)	260,500	4,600	<i>Book of Tang</i>

There are 5,358 Buddhist monasteries nationwide (3,245 monks, 2,113 nuns). Each monastery has one ‘Superior Seated One’, one abbot and one Buddhist deacon, together managing all sorts of affairs.³⁹

In the fifth year of the Huichang Era (845 AD), Emperor Wuzhong of Tang launched the third large-scale campaign to suppress Buddhism recorded in Chinese history. He promulgated a series of decrees to inspect the monasteries and to eliminate the śramaṇas countrywide; only a few monasteries and monks were retained in the capital and in some larger cities. Consequently, a large number of Buddhist monasteries were destroyed and the śramaṇas were forced back to laity.

More than four thousand six hundred Buddhist monasteries were demolished throughout the country. Two hundred and sixty thousand five hundred monks and nuns were ordered to resume secular life and to pay taxes. More than forty thousand cāturdiśas and arāṇyas were demolished, several tens of thousands of hectares of fertile farmland were confiscated, and one hundred and fifty thousand slaves and maidservants were turned into taxpayers.⁴⁰

A large number of documents recounted in detail the events of Emperor Wuzhong’s destruction of Buddhism. Although there are subtle differences in the specific numbers of monasteries reported to have been demolished in this campaign,⁴¹ it goes without saying that the development of Buddhist monasteries during the Tang Dynasty was well outlined in the above records. What is particularly worth noticing is the fact that the document explicitly distinguishes the Buddhist monasteries from cāturdiśas and arāṇyas, which substantiates the limited application of the concept of the Buddhist monastery, which I have already outlined in the Introduction to this book.

³⁹ *Tang Liu Dian* 唐六典, 125, ‘凡天下寺總五千三百五十八所（三千二百四十五所僧，二千一百一十三所尼）。每寺上座一人，寺主一人，都維那一人，共綱統眾事。’

⁴⁰ *Jiu Tang Shu* 舊唐書, 604–05, ‘其天下所拆寺四千六百餘所，還俗僧尼二十六萬五千人，收充兩稅戶。拆招提、蘭若四萬餘所，收膏腴上田數千萬頃，收奴婢為兩稅戶十五萬人。’

⁴¹ Tang Yongtong 1982, 46.

Monastery Layout in Early Medieval China: Archaeological Evidence

Among the numerous Buddhist monasteries of early medieval China mentioned in textual sources, fewer than ten State Monasteries have been excavated to date, and some of them have only been partially revealed. Although their number is limited, they are what we need, as they represent the highest-ranking State Monasteries under imperial patronage, and illustrate consecutive developmental stages that formed over the course of the period from the fifth to the seventh century. In this chapter I will discuss in detail the historical context that gives a clue to the origin of these Buddhist monasteries, and I will describe the archaeological remains in order to lay a solid basis for the ensuing research.

2.1. Monastery Layout in the Mid-Fifth Century: the Yungang Monastery in Pingcheng

In 439 AD, Emperor Taiwu of Northern Wei conquered the Northern Liang (北凉 397–439 AD), an important Buddhist region since the Eastern Han and the Sixteen Kingdoms period, and reunified North China. On this occasion many Buddhist devotees and craftsmen, as well as most riches, were transferred from Liangzhou to Pingcheng, creating a large concentration of manpower and material resources, which, once added to the support of the emperor and the aristocracy, allowed Buddhism to flourish quickly in Pingcheng and in the whole of North China in the second half of the fifth century.¹

To date, the earliest Buddhist monastery ever excavated in North China is the Yungang Monastery, located about 15 km west of Pingcheng, the capital of Northern Wei at the time. In coordination with the protection project of the Yungang Grottoes 雲岡石窟, in 2010 Shanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, along with the Yungang Institute and the Datong Municipal Institute of Archaeology, carried out a joint excavation at the top of the cliff where the Yungang Grottoes were carved.²

The Yungang Monastery 雲岡佛寺 was built above Cave 37. The monastery, rectangular in plan, displayed a Pagoda (A) marking the center of the sacred area and cells (G) set side by side against the perimeter wall (Fig. 2.1). The remains of the pagoda (A), which was the most important building in the whole monastery, now consisted merely of its base. According to the archaeological report, the rammed earth base was almost a perfect square in plan: the north and south sides measured 14 m, while the east and west ones were 14.3 m long; it was accessed through

a 2.1 m wide, 5 m long inclined ramp from the south. The whole base displayed a stone masonry facing. There was no underground palace, nor were relics found at the center of the base of the pagoda.

Against the four sides of the perimeter wall, rows of small cells (G) were set next to one another. Except for two late structures rebuilt during the Liao and Jin Dynasties, most of the remains belong to the Northern Wei period. The cells were approximately of the same dimensions, 7.4–8.3 m long and 3.4–4.4 m wide on average. In some of them, a hypocaust system, stove and chimney are still extant. Aligned stone plinths in front of the chambers indicate the original presence of a portico on each side. The unearthed objects consist mostly of fragments of the building materials, including tile-heads decorated with a lotus-flower design and the Chinese characters *Chuan Zuo Wu Qiong* (傳祚無窮 ‘Transmission [of Buddhism] to later generations, infinitely’).

Contemporary literary sources indicate that around the mid-fifth century, several monasteries, such as the *Tonglesi Monastery* 通樂寺, *Lingyansi Monastery* 靈岩寺, *Huguosi Monastery* 護國寺, *Tiangongsi Monastery* 天宮寺 and *Chongfusi Monastery* 崇福寺, were successively erected under the auspices of emperors and dignitaries of the Northern Wei Dynasty.³ According to a later manuscript, the *Stele of the Restoration of the Great Cave-Temple Complex at the Wuzhou Hill near the Western Capital of the Jin Dynasty* (*Da Jin Xijing Wuzhou Shan Chongxiu Dashiku Si Bei* 大金西京武州山重修大石窟寺碑), the Wuzhou Hill Buddhist complex comprised the Yungang Grottoes as well as ten above-ground monasteries. The Yungang Monastery may have been one of the ‘Ten Monasteries of Yungang’ mentioned in the stele. Li Chongfeng carried out a comparison between the Yungang Monastery and the monastery layout of ancient Indian architecture: he suggests that the freestanding Yungang Monastery might be contemporary with the setting up of ‘the Five Caves of Tanyao’ 曇曜五窟, and was completed before the third year of the Heping Era (462 AD) of Northern Wei. As an important place for the translation of Buddhist sutras, its design followed the construction principles of ancient Indian monasteries.⁴ Specifically, the layout of this monastery, a combination of the central Pagoda and the surrounding monastic residential cells, seems to derive directly from a prototype from the Greater *Gandhāra*.⁵

¹ Su Bai 1996 a.

² State Administration of Cultural Heritage 2011; Yungang Grottoes Research Institute 2016.

³ Su Bai 1996 b, 54, 65.

⁴ Stone 1994, figs 18, 19, 21, 28, 29.

⁵ Li Chongfeng 2014.

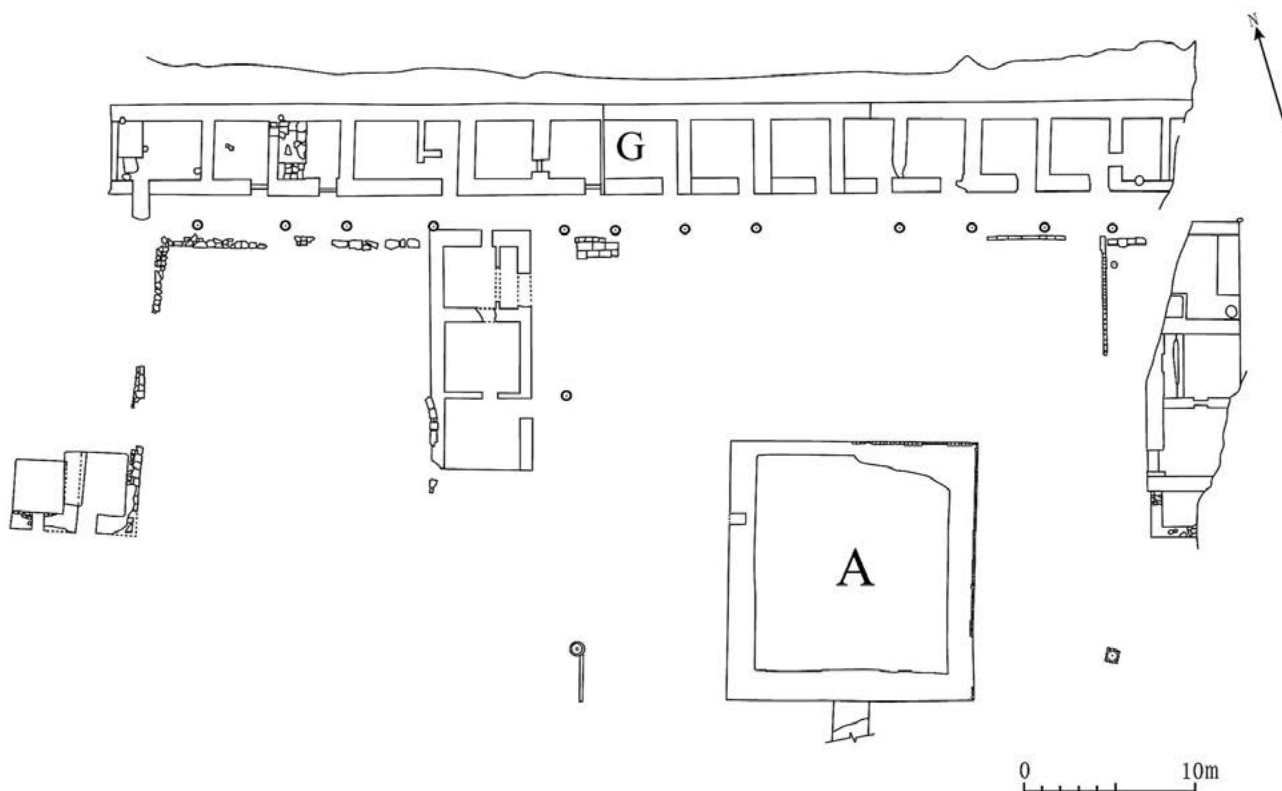


Fig. 2.1: Sketch plan of the *Yungang Monastery* (Modified from: *Yungang Grottoes Research Institute* 2016, 537, fig. 6).

2.2. Monastery Layout in the Late Fifth Century: the *Siyuan Monastery* in Pingcheng and the *Siyuan Monastery* in Longcheng

In the late fifth century, Empress Dowager Feng dominated the affairs of state for more than twenty years. As a virtual regent and a devout Buddhist, she advocated Buddhism energetically. Thus, the status of Buddhism was further promoted. During her reign, two monasteries were built on her behalf: the *Siyuan Monastery* was constructed close to her burial place in Pingcheng, while the *Siyuan Monastery* was constructed in her native country, Longcheng. These are the two earliest Buddhist monasteries clearly recorded in official Chinese history that have been excavated to date.

2.2.1. *Siyuan Monastery* 思遠佛寺

The *Siyuan Monastery* is located at Mount Xisiliang (西寺梁山, corresponding with the ancient Mount Fang 方山), Datong City, Shanxi Province (Picture 2.1). The *Book of Wei* states:

In the third year of the Taihe Era (479 AD), [...] in the eighth month, [...] (the Emperor Xiaowen) visited Mount Fang, and built the '*Siyuan Monastery*'.⁶

Li Daoyuan 酈道元, a distinguished historical geographer of the Northern Wei, also recorded this monastery in his work:

There was the mausoleum on the western Mount Fang, and the mausoleum of Gaozu was located to the northeast of it. There was the *Yonggu Hall* to the south of these two mausoleums. [...] there was the '*Siyuan Monastery*' outside the courtyard to the west.⁷

Japanese scholars Seiichi Mizuno 水野清一 and Toshio Nagahiro 長廣敏雄 were the first modern scholars to survey the area, in 1939 and 1941 respectively.⁸ In 1981, the archaeological team from Datong City Museum excavated the monastery remains and recently published a preliminary excavation report.⁹

The plan of the site of the *Siyuan Monastery* was a longitudinal rectangle oriented to the south. It consisted of two platforms, two stone ramps with steps, a middle gate (C), the foundation of a Pagoda (A), a Buddha Hall (B) and the Monks' Quarters (G). The main buildings were all distributed along the north-south axis (Fig. 2.2).

The lower platform corresponded to the external perimeter of the monastery, measuring 87.8 m by 57.4 m; it was made of rammed earth and faced with basalt and pumice stones. At the south end of the platform, there was a stone ramp with steps leading to the upper platform.

⁶ *Wei Shu* 魏書, 147, '太和三年 (479年) 八月.....乙亥, 幸方山, 起思遠佛寺。'

⁷ *Shuijingzhu Jiaozheng* 水經注校證, 312, '.....方山西嶺上有文明太皇太后陵, 陵之東北有高祖陵, 二陵之南有永固堂。.....院外西側有思遠靈圖。'

⁸ Seiichi Mizuno and Toshio Nagahiro 1952-56, 7-12.

⁹ Museum of Datong City 2007.



Picture 2.1: *Siyuan Monastery in Pingcheng, China.*

The upper platform was built on the north–south axis of the lower platform, slightly to the north. Its plan was also rectangular, with dimensions of 45.8 m by 35 m, and a height of 2.5 m. It was made of stone-faced rammed earth as well. On the short south side of the platform, there was a long stone ramp, 12 m long and 4.8 m wide, and at the end of the ramp was the middle gate (C). Two well-preserved plinths, one on each side of the gate, clearly indicated the span of the gate, 3.6 m.

A pavilion-style timber Pagoda (A) was the main building of this monastery, of which only the foundations of the Pagoda are now extant. Its location corresponds approximately to the center of the lower platform. This foundation is square in plan with sides of 12 m and a residual height of approximately 1.25 m, made of earth rammed layer by layer. The rammed earth core of the Pagoda was located at the center of the foundation, above the original ground level. The Pagoda was surrounded by a roofed corridor on four sides, each 18.2 m long. Judging from the arrangement of the remaining plinths, we may presume that the ground floor of Pagoda was a five-bay-wide and five-bay-deep structure. Apart from the 5 m wide entrance, other bays measured 3.3 m by 3 m. There was no any partition structure inside the roofed corridor, thus affording appropriate space for monks to worship and to circumambulate the Pagoda.

The Buddha Hall (B) lay in the northern section of the upper platform, behind the Pagoda. Its transverse rectangular plan measured 21 m by 6 m. Four sandstone plinths were discovered in the western section of the Buddha Hall. Judging by their location, we can reasonably assume that the Buddha Hall was a structure of seven by two bays.

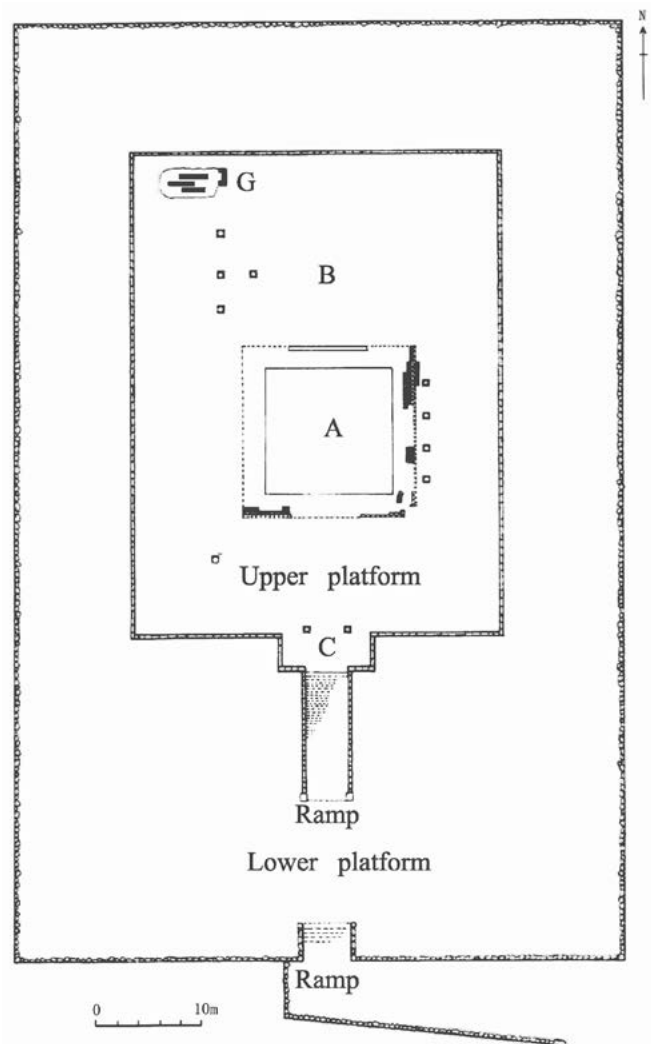


Fig. 2.2: Sketch plan of the *Siyuan Monastery* (Modified from: Museum of Datong City 2007, 7, fig. 5).

Traces of the Monks' Quarters (G) were found in the northwest corner of the upper platform; the poor condition of preservation does not allow for a reconstruction of their original structure.

The *Siyuan Monastery* presents us with very useful data: we know the precise date of the erection, and it displays a very clear layout, with the main buildings aligned along the north-south axis. The Pagoda, as the most important building, was located at the center of the whole monastery, in front of the Buddha Hall. Although its size is not as large as one would expect, the *Siyuan Monastery* was undoubtedly a full-scale monastery with all necessary architectural components for all basic functions; furthermore, it was a monastery that enjoyed imperial patronage. It goes without saying that the *Siyuan Monastery* has an invaluable importance for the study of Buddhist monastery layout in the late fifth century.

2.2.2 *Siyuan Monastery* 思燕浮圖

Shortly after the *Siyuan Monastery* was completed, Dowager Feng built another Buddhist monastery, the *Siyuan Monastery*. This time, it was in her hometown of Longcheng, the capital of the Northern Yan (北燕 409–436 AD), which was occupied by the Northern Wei several decades earlier. The *Book of Wei* records:

The Empress (Dowager Feng) built a shrine for the King of Wenxuan in Chang'an, and built 'Siyuan Monastery' in Longcheng. All with carved stones and erected steles.¹⁰

Starting in 1986, while carrying out restoration and a conservation project to preserve the North Pagoda in Chaoyang, the Liaoning Provincial Institute of Cultural and Historical Relics and Archaeology and the Chaoyang City Museum conducted a series of archaeological surveys and excavations at this site. In spite of the extremely complex stratigraphic configuration, archaeologists discovered and identified the traces of architectural remains belonging to four different periods: Three Yan 三燕 of the Sixteen Kingdoms period, Northern Wei, Sui-Tang and Liao Dynasty. what is particularly important is the fact that the *Siyuan Monastery* appears to have been built on top of the ruins of a palace of the Three Yan period.¹¹

The *Siyuan Monastery* was also centered on a wooden pagoda. The pagoda's foundation and the roofed corridor surrounding the Pagoda have been excavated. The square pagoda foundation was 90 m wide and took advantage of the large rammed palace base of Three Yan period. Owing to successive destruction and transformation, details of its structure remain unclear. The core of the pagoda above the ground consisted of rammed pure loess faced with mud

bricks. Its ground plan was a square 18.9 m long on each side, and surrounded by a 48.6 m wide roofed corridor, which was called a 'hall' by the excavators. Judging from the remaining plinths and pits, it is not difficult to assume that each side of the roofed corridor was an eleven-bay-wide and two-bay-deep structure measuring 4.0–4.8 m by 5.8 m. In the middle of each side, there was an entrance and a ramp leading to the pagoda (Fig. 2.3).

In a later excavation carried out a few years later, the remains of a wall and cultural relics contemporaneous with the construction of the pagoda were found about 50 meters away from the pagoda. Most significantly, a large patch of rammed earth was found north of the pagoda, which might be the foundation of the Buddha Hall. Although a full-scale excavation is still needed, there is increasing evidence suggesting that the plan of the *Siyuan Monastery* also consisted of a Buddha Hall set behind a pagoda along the north-south axis.¹²

2.3. Monastery Layout in the Early Sixth Century: the *Yongningsi Monastery* in Luoyang

In the first year of the Xiping Era (516 AD), Empress Dowager Hu, the mother of Emperor Xiaoming and virtual regent at the end of the Northern Wei, built a superb Buddhist monastery, the *Yongningsi Monastery* 永寧寺 in the capital, Luoyang. The architectural standard of this monastery was unprecedented. Its Buddha Hall was an imitation of the *Taiji Hall* 太極殿. The main hall of the court and the nine-story pagoda were so high and majestic that it became a landmark of the capital. Unfortunately, only eighteen years later, in the third year of the Yongxi Era (534 AD), the wooden pagoda was utterly burned out. In the same year, the Northern Wei ended and the Eastern Wei moved the capital to Yecheng. The glorious *Yongningsi Monastery* and numerous Buddhist monasteries in Luoyang were reduced to rubble and buried underground for over a thousand years (Fig. 2.4).

The *Yongningsi Monastery* was recorded in many different documents, so we can study its origins and acquire detailed information from a large variety of sources. The *Book of Wei* states:

During the Xiping Era (516–518 AD) of Emperor Shuzong, west of the Altar within the Capital, the *Yongningsi Monastery* was built. The Empress Ling (Dowager Hu), leading all the officials, personally laid the foundation and set up a mast. The nine-story pagoda was more than forty *zhang* high. The expenses could not be reckoned.¹³

More information about the *Yongningsi Monastery* can be found in the *Emending of Commentary to the River Classic*

¹⁰ *Wei Shu* 魏書, 329, ' (馮) 太后立文宣王廟于長安, 又立思燕浮圖于龍城, 皆刊石立碑。'

¹¹ Liaoning Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology and Northern Pagoda Museum of Chaoyang City 2007, 26–52.

¹² Liaoning Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology and Northern Pagoda Museum of Chaoyang City 2007, 126–33.

¹³ *Wei Shu* 魏書, 3043, '肅宗熙平中, 於城內太社西, 起永寧寺。靈太后親率百僚, 表基立剎。佛圖九層, 高四十餘丈, 其諸費用, 不可勝計。'

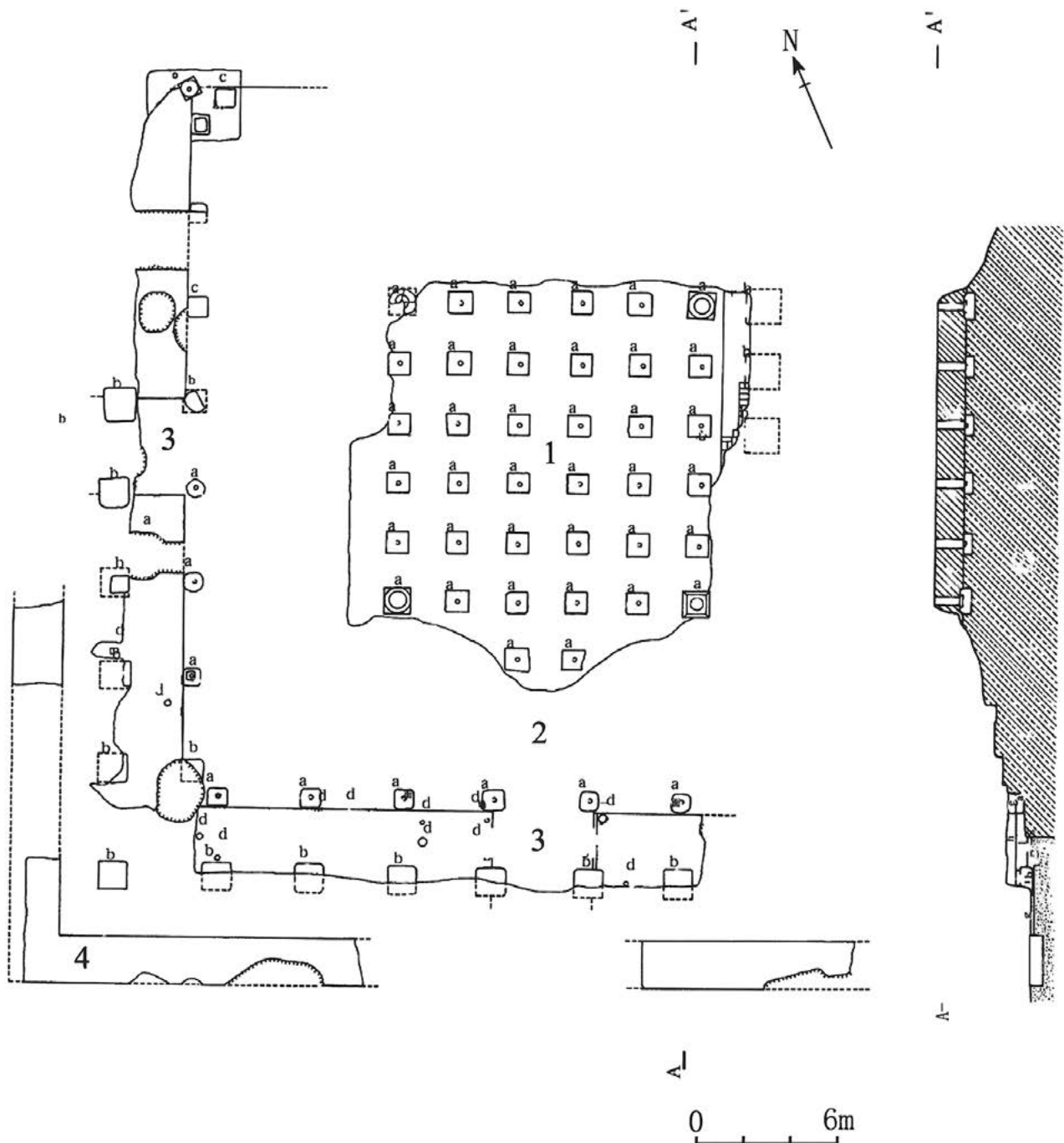


Fig. 2.3: Plan and section of the *Siyan Monastery* pagoda foundation (Modified from: Liaoning Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology and Northern Pagoda Museum of Chaoyang City 2007, 8, fig. 5).

and in the *Stories about Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang*. Half of the text in the latter is dedicated to the description of the history, the location, the architecture of the Buddhist monasteries in the capital and the art they contained. Some important details are as follows:

The *Yongningsi Monastery* was built by decree of Empress Dowager Ling, whose surname was Hu, in the first year of Xiping Era. It was located one *li* south of the Changhe Gate on the west side of the Imperial Road in front of the Palace.

[...] There was a nine-story wooden pagoda inside (the monastery), rising ninety *zhang*, and a mast that

extended for another ten *zhang*. Thus, together they soared one hundred *zhang* above the ground. It could be seen as far away from the capital as one hundred *li*.

[...] North of the pagoda was a great hall, which was shaped like the Taiji Hall. In the hall was a golden statue of the Buddha, eighteen *chi* high, along with ten medium-sized images.

[...] The monastery had over one thousand monks' quarters and pavilions, decorated with carved beams and painted walls. [...] The sutras and images offered by foreign countries were all conserved here.

[...] The walls of the monastery all made use of short rafters covered by tiles, which were the same as

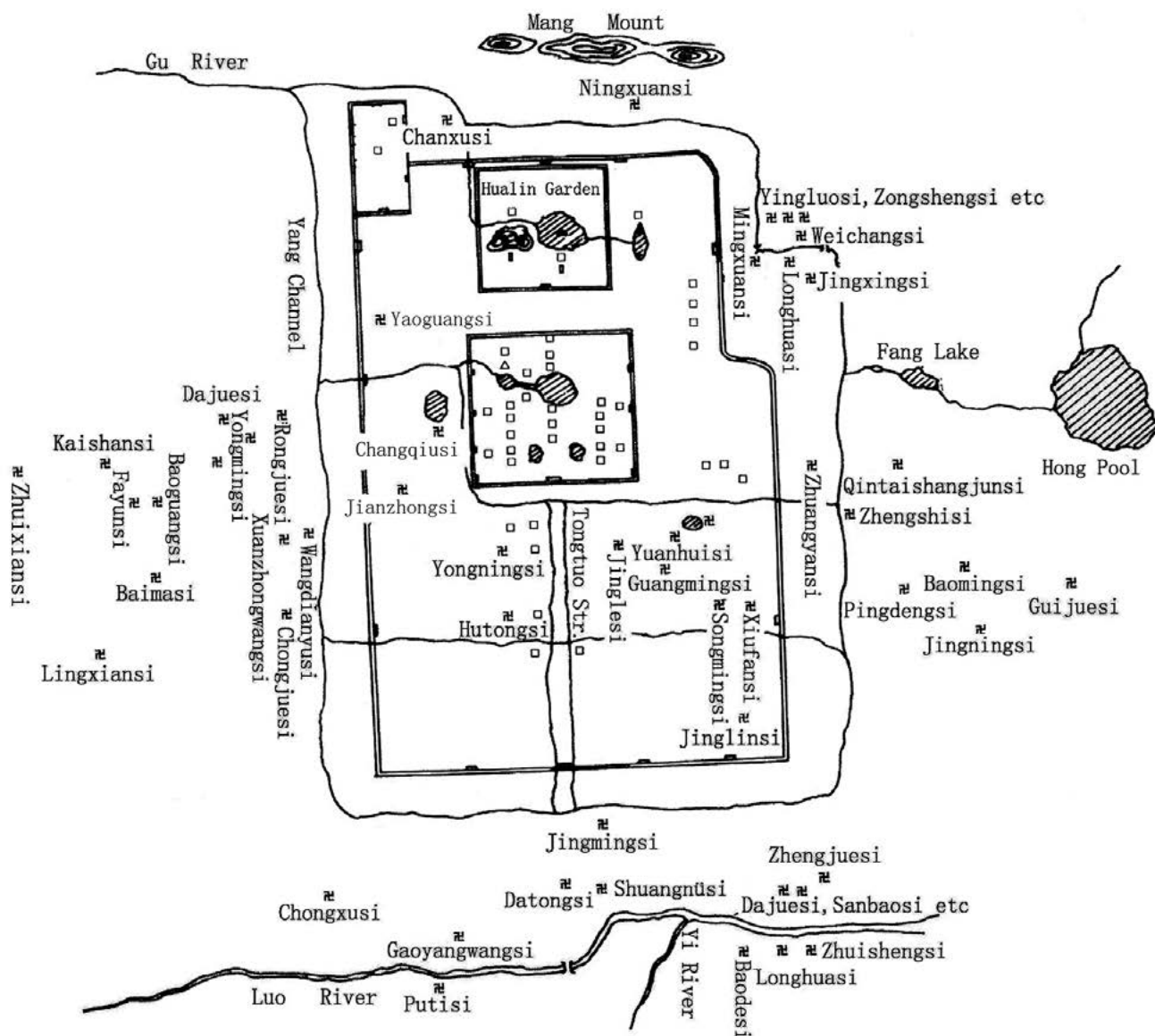


Fig. 2.4: The map showing the distribution of Buddhist monasteries in Luoyang (Modified from: Gong Guoqiang 2006, 208–09, fig. 51).

contemporary palace walls. There were gates in each of the four directions. The tower on the South Gate rose twenty *zhang* above the ground, which had three stories, each with an archway, and a shape looking like the present Duan Gate. [...] The East and West Gates resembled the South Gate, except that the towers had only two stories. The North Gate had no tower and only one archway, resembling Wutou Gate. Outside the four gates were green locust trees and an encircling green stream.

[...] In the second month of the third year of Yongxi Era (534 AD), the Pagoda was burnt out. [...] In the tenth lunar month, the capital was relocated to Yecheng.¹⁴

¹⁴ *Luoyang Qielan Ji* 洛陽伽藍記, 999–1002, '永寧寺, 熙平元年靈太后胡氏所立也。在宮前閭闔門南一里御道西。……中有九層浮圖一所, 架木為之, 舉高九十丈, 有剎復高十丈, 合去地一千尺。去京城百里, 已遙見之。……浮圖北有佛殿一所, 形如太極殿, 中有丈八金像一軀, 中長金像十軀。……僧房樓觀一千餘間, 雕

In 1963, the Luoyang Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of (Social) Sciences, investigated the remains of *Yongningsi Monastery* for the first time, basically confirming the size of the monastery and the location of the gates, the Pagoda's foundation and the Buddha Hall.¹⁵ Between 1979 and 1981, a large-scale archaeological excavation was carried out on some of the pivotal remains, such as the foundation of the Pagoda, the Buddha Hall, and the South and East Gates. Since then, along with the conservation project, a series of small-scale excavations have been continuing (Picture 2.2).¹⁶

梁粉壁青縑綺疏難得而言。……外國所獻經像, 皆在此寺。寺院牆皆施短椽, 以瓦覆之, 若今宮牆也。四面各開一門, 南門樓三重, 通三道, 去地二十丈, 形制似今端門。……東西兩門亦皆如之, 所可異者, 唯樓二重。北門一道, 不施屋, 似烏頭門。四門外樹以青槐, 互以綠水。……永熙三年二月浮圖為火所燒。……十月而京師遷鄴。'

¹⁵ Luoyang Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, Academia Sinica 1973.

¹⁶ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1996, 1–4.



Picture 2.2: *Yongningsi Monastery* in Luoyang, China.

The *Yongningsi Monastery* was located about 500 m south of the Palace City, 200 m west of Tongtuo Street 銅駝街, the main north–south avenue of Luoyang City. Despite the fact that the site has not been fully excavated and a great many remains still have not been unearthed, on the basis of literary records, archaeologists were able to determine the layout of the monastery roughly.¹⁷

The plan of the *Yongningsi Monastery* was a north–south rectangle with dimensions of 301 m by 212 m (Fig. 2.5). The main features of the layout are similar to those of the monasteries discussed above: the main buildings were arranged in a single large compound, enclosed by a rammed wall (Fig. 2.6). Traces of whitewash and wall-painting fragments were found. Furthermore, the four corners of the perimeter wall displayed a very complex stratigraphy, which has led to many hypotheses. This is true especially for the southwest corner, where a thick accumulation of scattered bricks and tiles, together with the sharp increase in the size of the foundation, suggest that originally there may have been a tower.

The South Gate (C) was the main entrance into the monastery; it was set in the middle of the southern wall and rested on a rectangular rammed earth platform. The remaining marks of the plinths indicate that the South Gate

(C) was a seven-bay-wide and two-bay-deep building measuring 45.5 m by 19.1 m. At the bottom of the rammed earth platform, the drainage was facilitated by a stratum of shards of earlier tiles (Fig. 2.7). The West Gate (C₁) was set in the middle of the longer western wall of the monastery, facing the Pagoda (A). It was also built on a rammed earth platform displaying a ‘T’-shaped plan. It was much smaller than the South Gate (C), measuring 24–30 m by 18.2 m. Since the locations of only three plinths were discovered, it remains difficult to reconstruct its dimensions and architectural forms (Fig. 2.8). The East Gate (C₂) may have been similar to the West Gate (C₁). The stratigraphy allows only the identification of the place where it was built. As for the North Gate, so far no traces have been found.

The magnificent pavilion-style wooden Pagoda (A) was the most important landmark of the *Yongningsi Monastery*, possibly even in the whole city (Fig. 2.9).

The underground foundation of the Pagoda was located slightly south of the center of the monastery, with dimensions of 101.2 m by 97.8 m, and over 2.5 m in depth. The base above the ground was a square rammed earth platform, 38.2 m wide and 2.2 m high at present. At the center of each side, there was a 4.8 m wide ramp, with an inclination of 8 degrees. From the remaining marks it is possible to see that the entire surface, including the four facades of the platform and the ramps giving access to it,

¹⁷ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1996, 5–21.

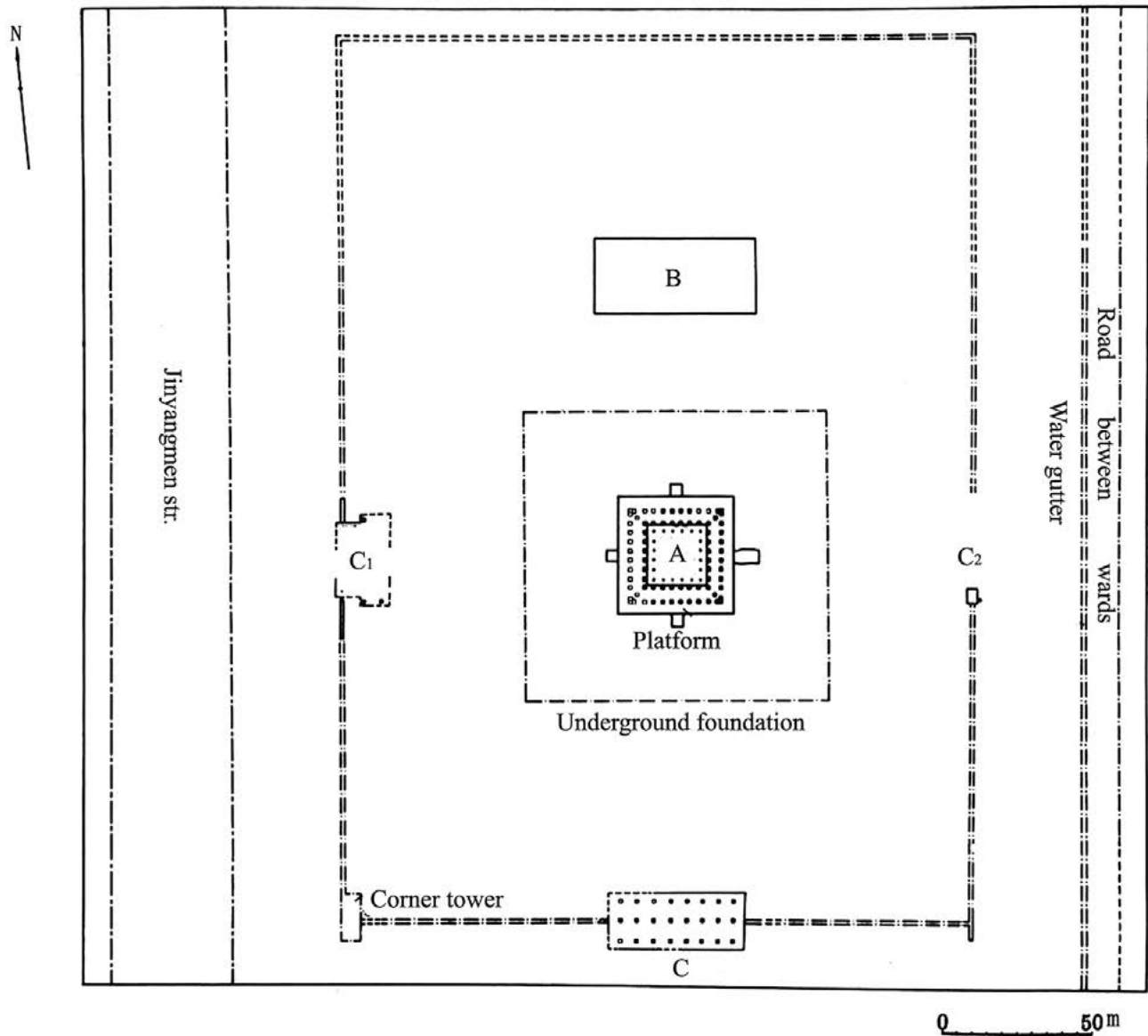


Fig. 2.5: Sketch plan of *Yongningsi Monastery* in Luoyang (Modified from: Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1996, 7, fig. 4).

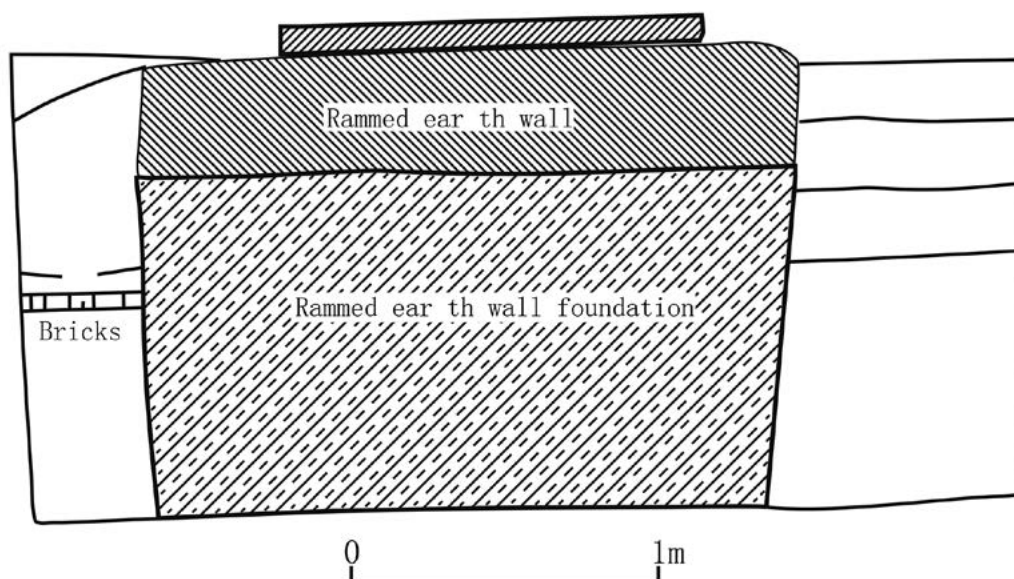


Fig. 2.6: Section of the wall in *Yongningsi Monastery* (Modified from: Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1996, 8, fig. 5).

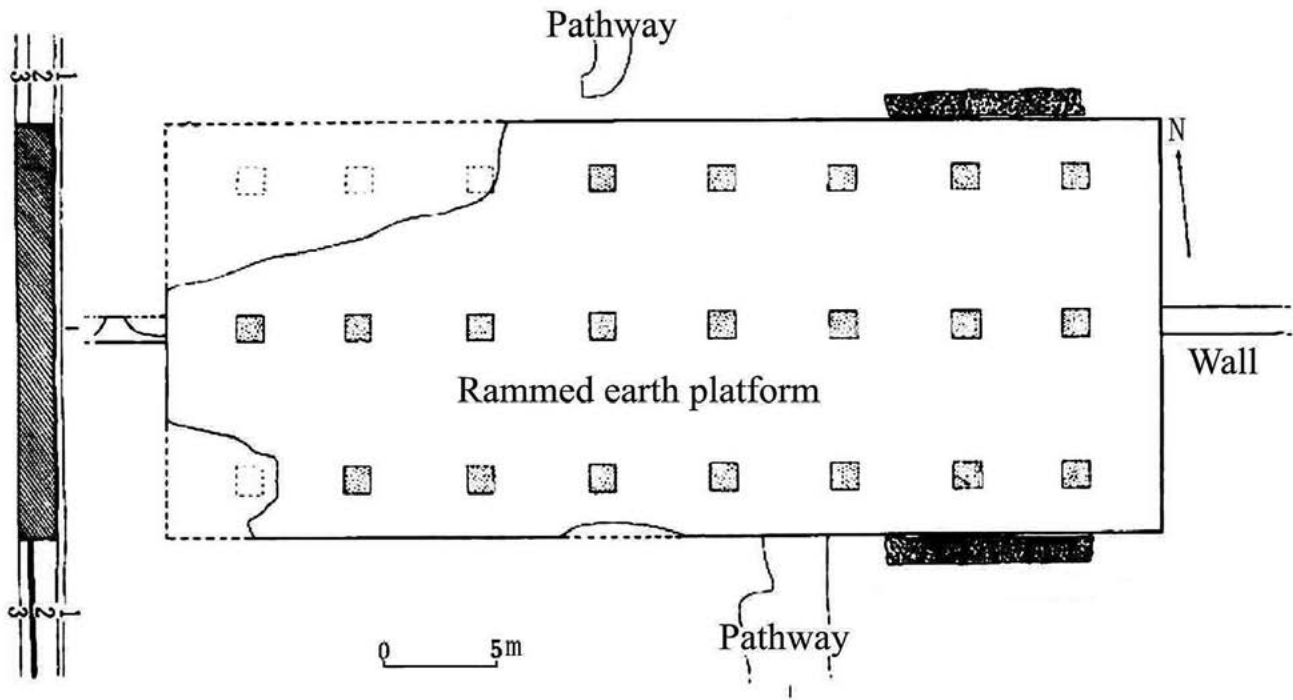


Fig. 2.7: South Gate of the *Yongningsi Monastery* (Modified from: Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1996, 9, fig. 6).

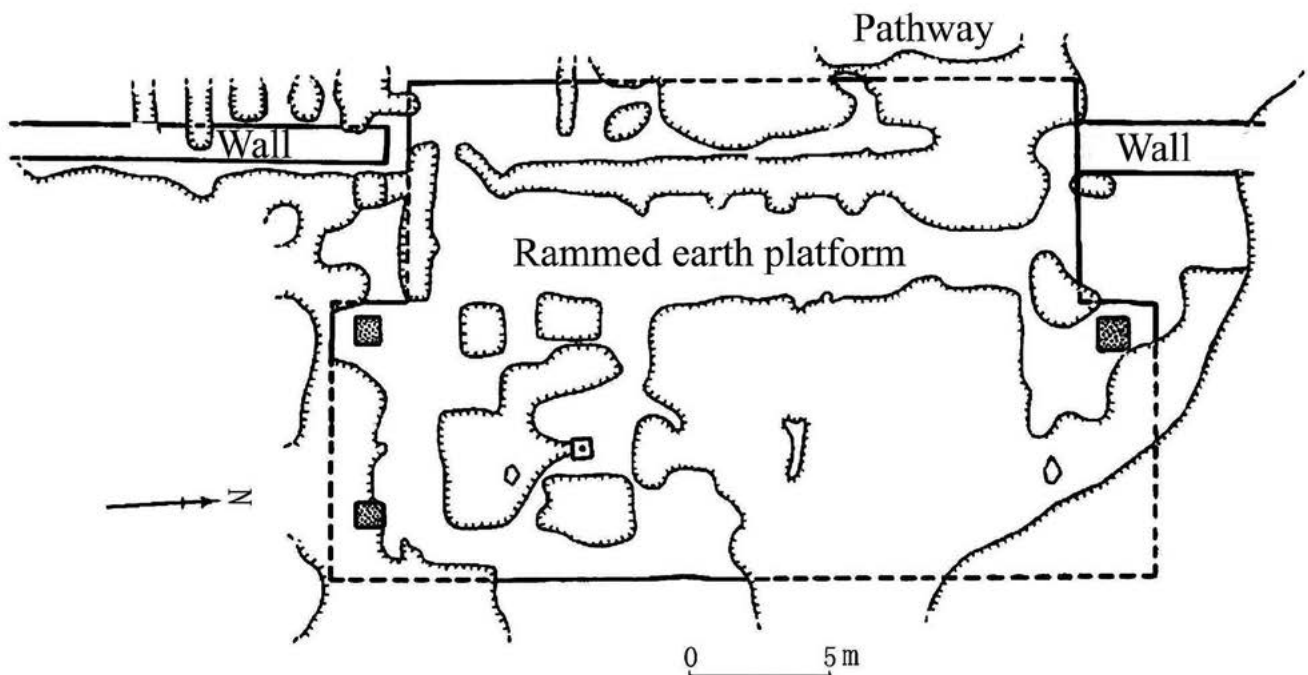


Fig. 2.8: West Gate of the *Yongningsi Monastery* (Modified from: Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1996, 10, fig. 7).

was covered with limestone slabs. The core of the Pagoda was a construction made of mud bricks and timbers, with the width progressively decreasing with the height; its sides were 19.8 m long, and the remaining height is 3.7 m. Around the periphery of the mud-brick core, there were damaged niches with painted statues, which suggest the original functions of the space – circumambulation and worshipping around the Pagoda. Although the excavated plinths were very few, archaeologists were able to identify

most plinth pits. On the basis of these evidence, it has been possible to reconstruct the timber structure of the whole Pagoda. The restored column structure, besides the central pillar, consisted of five round plinths, and the innermost round was made up of four groups of plinths, with each group made up of four smaller plinths. The outermost perimeter was composed of forty-eight plinths. The core of the Pagoda was surrounded by the two outermost rounds of plinths, which likely sustained a porch encircling it.

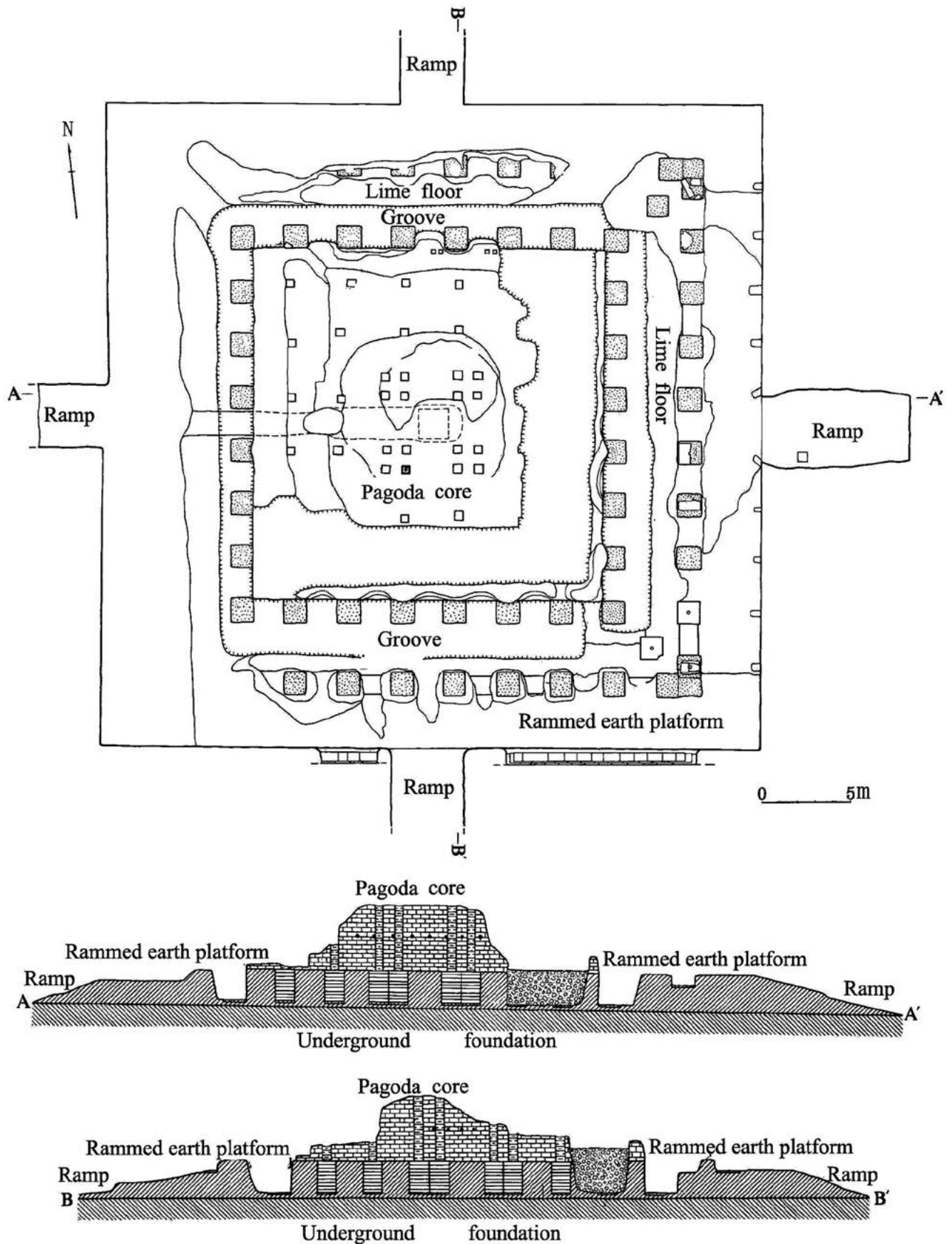


Fig. 2.9: Plan and sections of Pagoda foundation of the *Yongningsi Monastery* (Modified from: Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1996, 114, fig. 9A).

According to the distribution of the plinths, archaeologists presume that generally the roofed corridor was a nine-bay-wide and nine-bay-deep structure, with each bay measuring 3 m by 4.1 m. According to written records, each side was provided with three gates and six windows.

The Buddha Hall (B) was located approximately 60 m north of the Pagoda (A). Because of the construction of a nearby railway, all the structures above ground have been lost, together with some of the underground relics. On the basis of the remains, it appears that the Buddha Hall (B) was a transverse rectangle measuring 54 m by 25 m. The loss of plinths and plinth pits does not allow for the reconstruction of the original spectacular appearance of the Buddha Hall. According to historical records and the construction of the South Gate, excavators speculate that the Hall may have been a nine-bay-wide and three-bay-deep building.¹⁸

We are well informed about the exact time of the construction of *Yongningsi Monastery* and about the historic context in which it was created. We can affirm that this was undoubtedly a typical State Monastery built at the end of the Northern Wei Dynasty. Although we still lack material evidence about the ‘over one thousand Monks’ Quarters’, archaeological excavation carried out so far makes it possible to visualize the overall plan. Specific features will be discussed in more detail later. What is important to note for the time being is that the layout of the *Yongningsi Monastery* should be taken as the prevalent paradigm of large Buddhist monasteries of that time.

2.4. Monastery Layout in the Late Sixth Century: the Zhaopengcheng Monastery in Yecheng

In 2002, the Joint Ye City Archaeological Team, composed of archaeologists from the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics, discovered a very large Buddhist monastery south of the capital city of the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi Dynasties, South Yecheng (Fig. 2.10).

After a large-scale excavation of the pagoda’s foundation in the first season,¹⁹ by conducting exploratory boring and trial excavations, the team attempt to determine the overall layout of the monastic complex (Picture 2.3). Over the following years, a series of important remains relating to the monastery, such as ditches, entrances, roads, compounds, a portico, roofed corridors and Buddha Halls were discovered in succession.²⁰ By 2012, the preliminary report of the first phase of excavation and investigation was issued, and subsequent exploration and excavation have been continuing since then.²¹

The *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* 趙彭城佛寺 was located to the southwest of the present Zhaopengcheng Village, Linzhang County, Hebei Province. It sits outside of South Yecheng, approximately 1300 m south of *Zhumingmen Gate* 朱明門 (Fig. 2.11).

The plan of the monastery was almost square, oriented to the south, with a total area of nearly 200,000 square meters. No traces of the perimeter wall have been found; instead, traces of a ditch circling the whole monastery were discovered and excavated. The ditch, approximately 5–6 m wide and 3 m deep, measures 452–53 m south to north and 433–435 m east to west (Fig. 2.12). A gateway was set in the middle of each side, confirming that the southern entrance (C) was slightly larger than the others (C₁–C₃). According to the stratigraphy, the unearthed artifacts and the relative position of the main buildings, it has been confirmed that the ditch was indeed the boundary of the monastery.

The South Entrance (C), which separated the southern ditch in two, is located some 130 m south of the Pagoda (A). Since the soil containing traces of human activities has been damaged by later agricultural work, it is impossible to individuate any building remains. The entrance was about 7.1 m wide, and many neatly arranged large tiles were found at the bottom of the ditch, suggesting the existence of a large building near the entrance.²² The East Entrance was slightly smaller than the southern one, and at the bottom of the ditch on both sides of the entrance, accumulation deposits from a collapse were also found.

The square wooden Pagoda (A) was situated slightly south of the center of the monastery, about 113 m north of the South Entrance. The underground foundation was square, with sides measuring 45 m long and over 6 m deep. The lower layers were made of alternating layers of rammed earth and pebbles (Fig. 2.13).

On the top of the Pagoda’s foundation, just below the plinth of the central pillar, there is a small cubic brick closet (*zhuanhan* 磚函), whose sides measured 0.75 m (Fig. 2.14). Up to now, this is the earliest sample of an underground palace unearthed in China that has been discovered. It is also worth noting that at the four corners of the foundation, there were four square rammed earth pits, each about 3 m wide and 1.5 m deep. Alternating layers of earth and pebbles, or broken tiles, were rammed at the bottom, which was exactly the same construction method used for the foundation of the Pagoda. Thus, it becomes reasonable to assume that the four rammed pits were also the underground foundations of a construction. Unfortunately, no construction remains have been found on top of them.²³ The remains of the rammed platform

¹⁸ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1996, 12–13.

¹⁹ Yecheng City Archaeological Team from IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 2003.

²⁰ Zhu Yanshi and He Liqun 2005.

²¹ Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 2010.

²² Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Institute of Cultural Relics of Hebei Province 2013 a.

²³ These rammed pits were placed at the four corners of the Pagoda and had traces of identical construction techniques and methods. Given the style of *Buddagaya Stūpa* after the fourth century in India and the five-pagoda form in the wall painting of Dunhuang 428 Cave, of the Northern Zhou Dynasty (557–581 AD), it seems plausible to assume that the

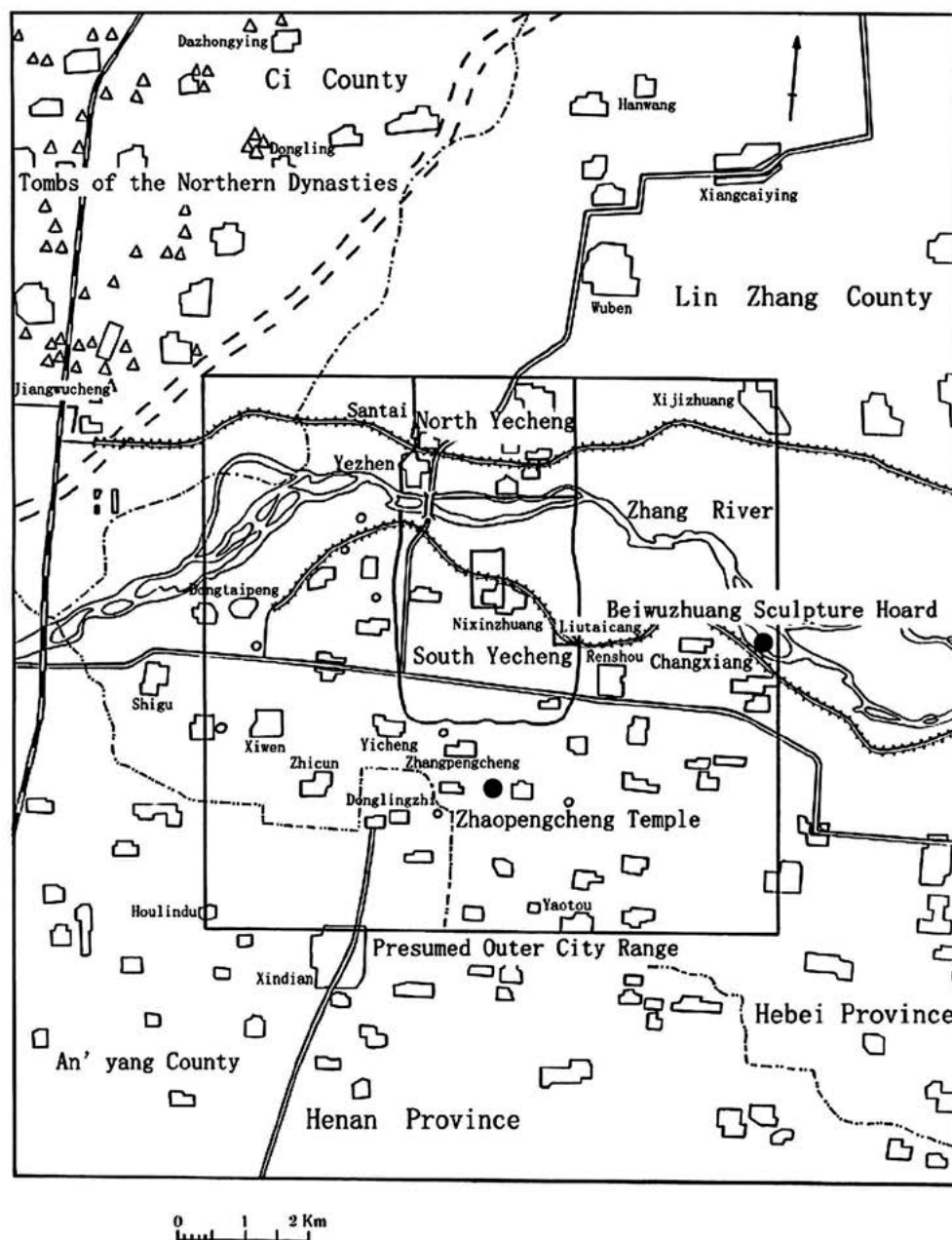


Fig. 2.10: Sketch plan of the Yecheng Site (Modified from: Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Institute of Cultural Relics of Hebei Province 2013 a, 50, fig. 1).

and core above ground were approximately 30 m wide and 4.5 m high. At the center of the rammed core, above the brick closet, the plinth of the central pillar was well preserved. This was the first time such a plinth had been unearthed in China, although we had known about it from fragmentary records in historical documents. Surrounding the central pillar were the pits of four other plinths, surely intended for the positioning of the four great columns used to buttress the central one. Residual traces of the plinth pits indicate that there were four rounds of pillars around the central one, and in the outer row on each side, the

building had six pillars, thus composing a five-by-five-bays structure. A sloping ramp, 2.3 m wide, and leading to the south of the platform, was wrapped with bricks on both sides. In front of the platform, there were large remnants of the drainage facilities, covered by broken bricks.

The surveys carried out by the Ye City Archaeological Team have failed to identify the location of the Buddha Hall behind the Pagoda (A), but two extensive Compounds were found at the southwest and southeast corners of the monastery. In 2004, a series of small-scale trial trenches in the southwest corner of the monastery was dug. It has been confirmed that the Southwestern Compound was square in plan, with sides approximately 117 m long and surrounded by a portico. The foundation of the portico revealed an

pagoda might be the earliest example of *vajrasana-stūpa* (*jīngāng bǎozuō tā* 金剛寶座塔) in China which has four small pagodas positioned at the corners of the central large pagoda.



Picture 2.3: Zhaopengcheng Monastery in Yecheng, China.

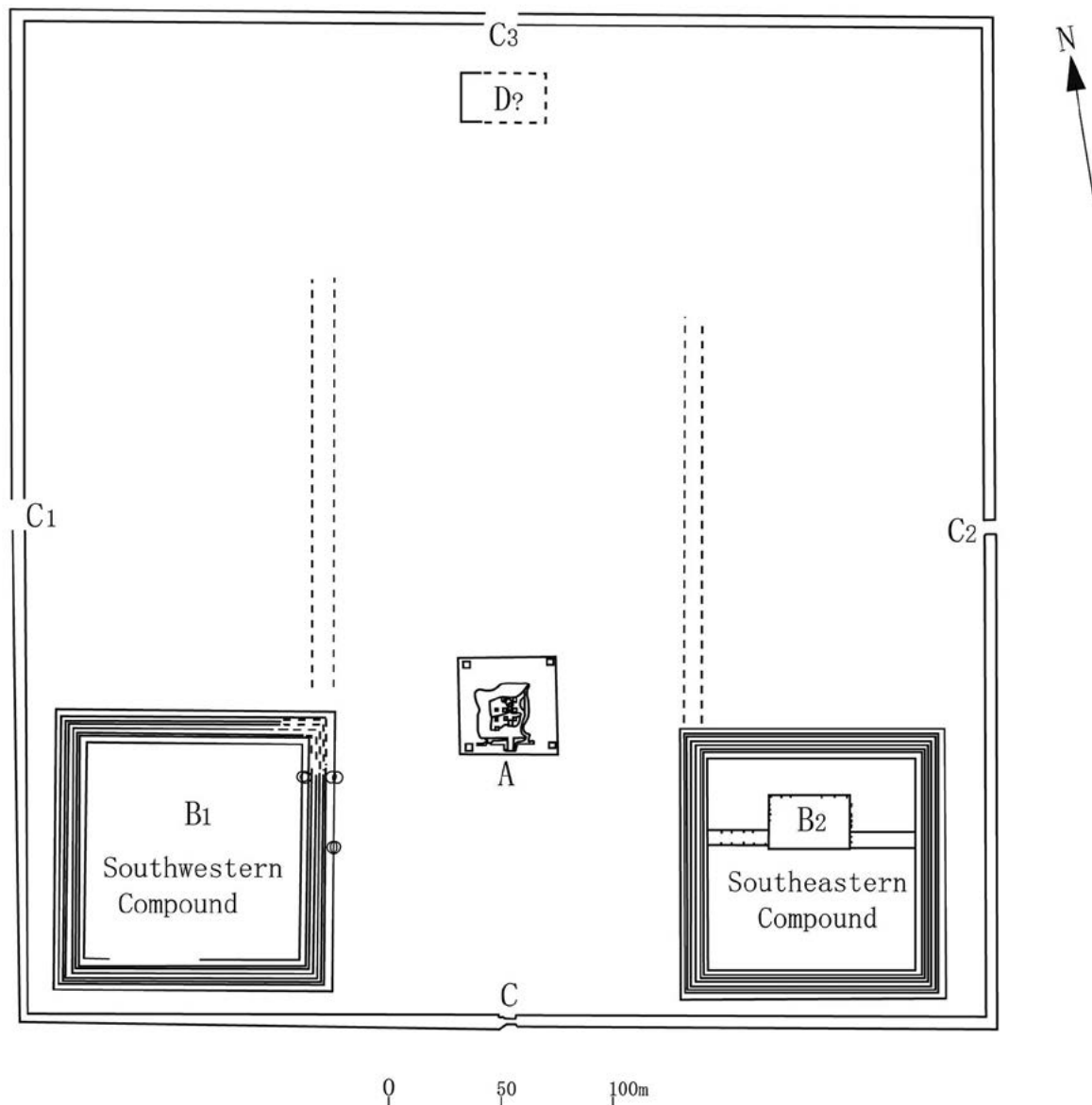


Fig. 2.11: Sketch plan of the Zhaopengcheng Monastery (Modified from: Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Institute of Cultural Relics of Hebei Province 2013 a, 50, fig. 2).

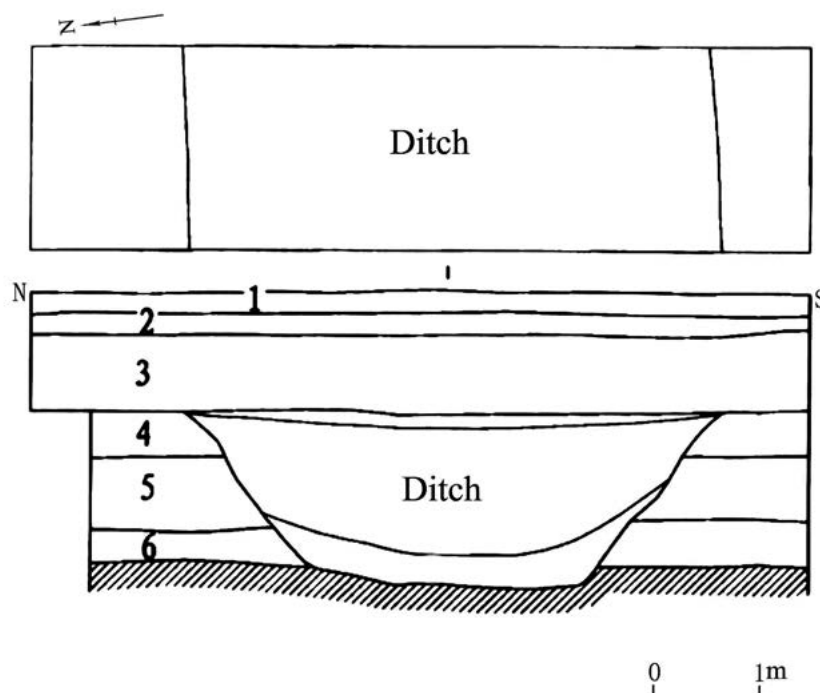


Fig. 2.12: Plan and section of the outer ditch of the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* (Modified from: Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 2010, 33, fig. 3).

interesting construction method: four parallel ditches were dug and filled with rammed earth. The archaeological exploration shows that a Buddha Hall (B_1) rested in the northern part of the Compound, approximately 40 m long and 20 m wide (Fig. 2.15).

Excavations in 2011 and 2012 were concentrated on the Southeastern Compound, besides working on the East and South Entrances. The excavation revealed that the Southeastern Compound had the same layout as the Southwestern one. The plan was a square enclosed by a portico, approximately 117 m wide (Fig. 2.16). The Buddha Hall in the north part of the Compound was completely excavated; its plan was a longitudinal rectangle 36.6 m long by 23.4 m wide. Judging from the parallel grooves and pillar holes, it can be provisionally assumed that this Buddha Hall was a five-bay-wide and five-bay-deep building (Fig. 2.17). Besides, there were two roofed corridors connecting the Buddha Hall (B_2) with the east and west porticoes of the Compound, suggesting that a complete system of portico and roofed corridors was already in use in Buddhist monasteries at least as early as the late Northern Dynasties.

It should also be noted that a freestanding hall was discovered in the rear of the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery*, of approximately 38 m by 24.2 m, which provided an important clue to explore the position and structure of the Lecture Hall (D).²⁴

At the northeast corner of the Southwestern Compound and the northwest corner of the Southeastern Compound, two rows of building foundations 8 m wide extend to the north of the monastery. Although precise information about their structure and function, which might be gained by further excavation, is still lacking, the similarity in structure with the *Mireuksa Monastery* of Korea suggests strongly that this type of building might have a close relationship with the Monks' Quarters.

The fundamental characteristic of the layout of the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* is that all its buildings were symmetrically disposed along a central axis, and the wooden Pagoda (A) still occupied the center of the monastery, while the most significant new feature is the emergence of multiple compounds and halls (B_1 , B_2).

Not only the enormous size of the monastery, but also the sophistication of the buildings and the high quality of unearthed artifacts point to the fact that the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* was likely built by the imperial family. It is quite puzzling that there is no convincing textual evidence about its name, date or reasons for its establishment. More exactly, we cannot identify the textual source that corresponds to this monastery. In fact, a close scrutiny of all textual sources has revealed that, in the proximity of the capital Yecheng, there were over twenty Buddhist monasteries. In truth, there are some clues that loosely relate the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* to the *Dazongchisi Monastery* 大總持寺 in the sources, but they are not conclusive evidence to prove the identification.²⁵

²⁴ Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Institute of Cultural Relics of Hebei Province 2013 b.

²⁵ He Liqun 2018.

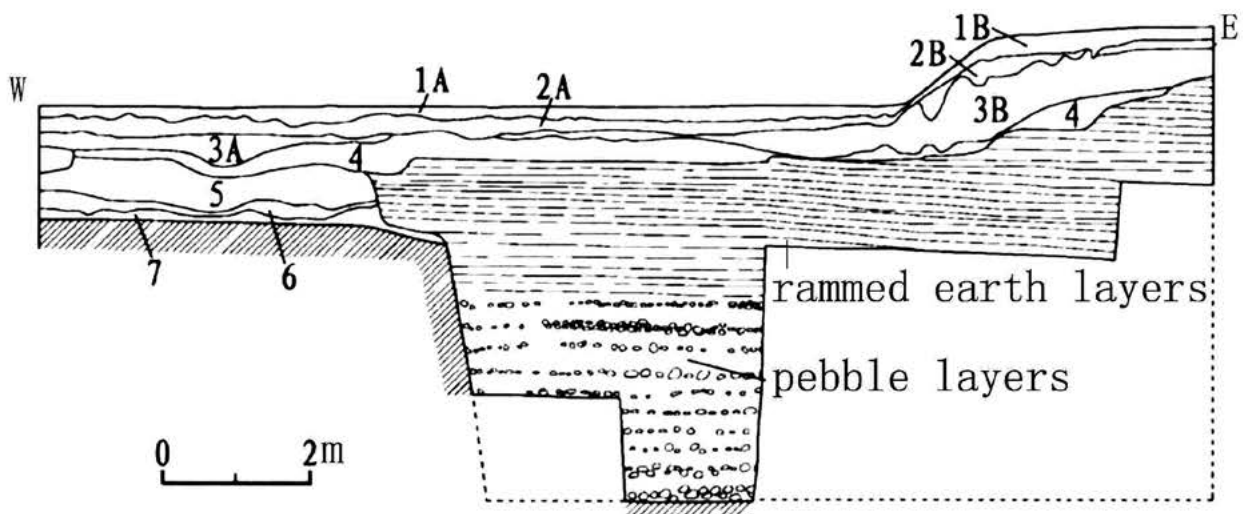
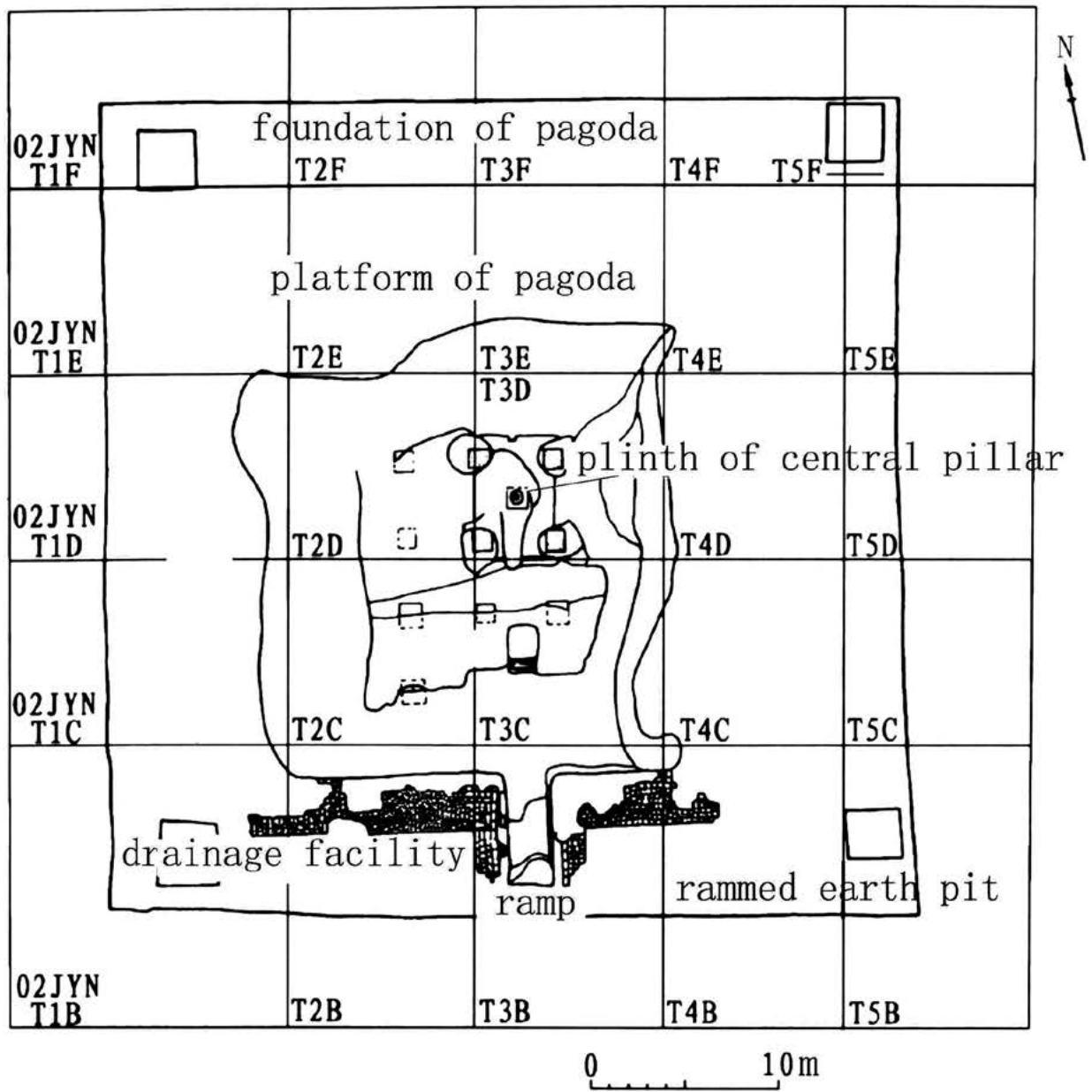


Fig. 2.13: Sketch plan of the Pagoda foundation (Modified from: Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 2010, 34, figs 4, 5).

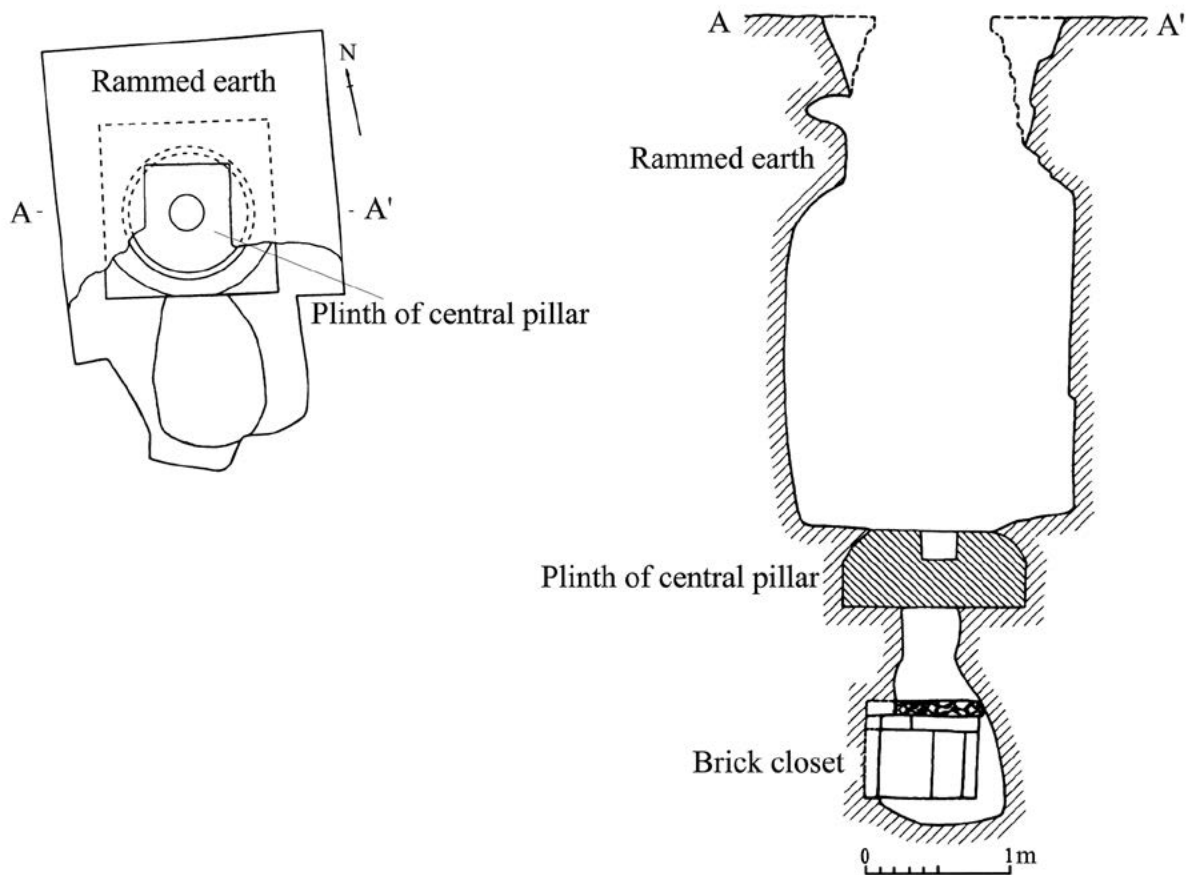


Fig. 2.14: Plan and section of the plinth of central pillar and brick closet (Modified from: Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 2010, 35, figs 6, 7).

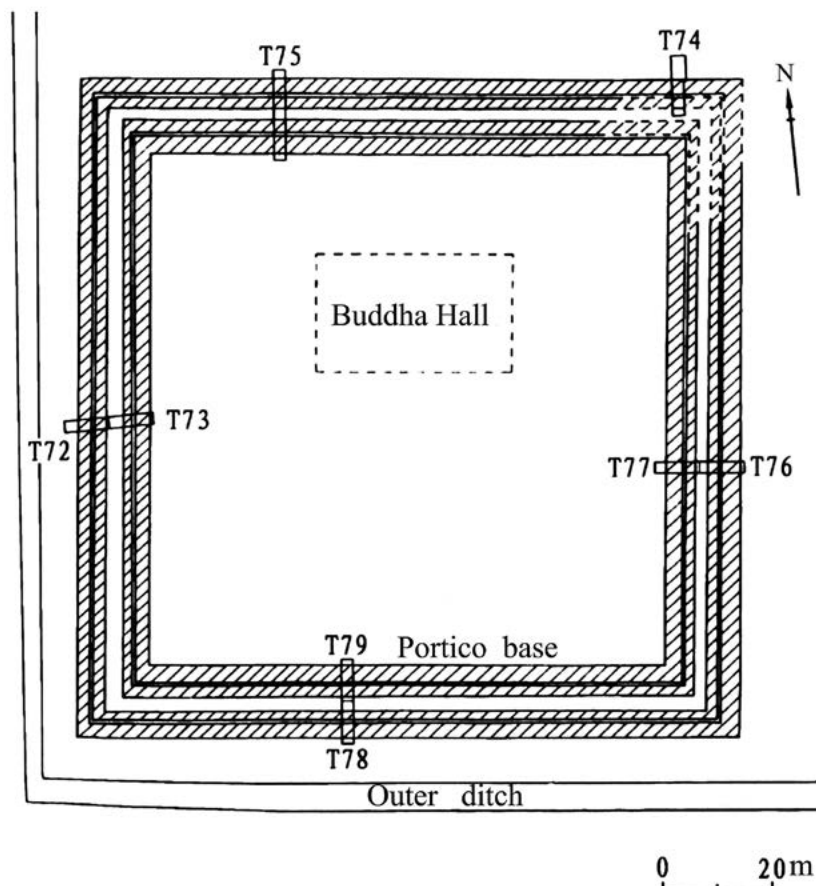


Fig. 2.15: Southwestern Compound of the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* (Modified from: Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 2010, 37, fig. 9).

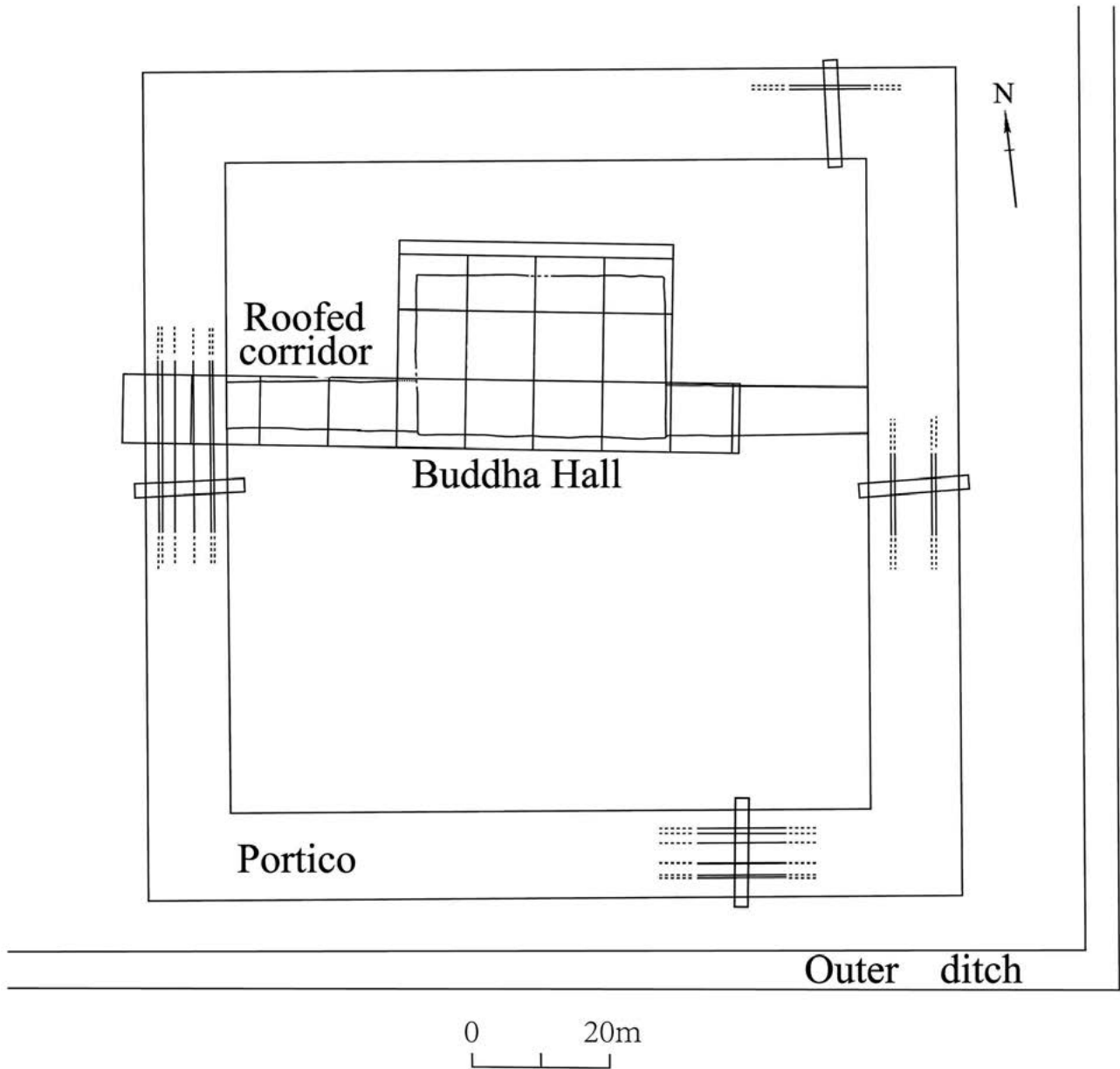


Fig. 2.16: Southeastern Compound of the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* (Modified from: Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Institute of Cultural Relics of Hebei Province 2013 b, 28, fig. 3)

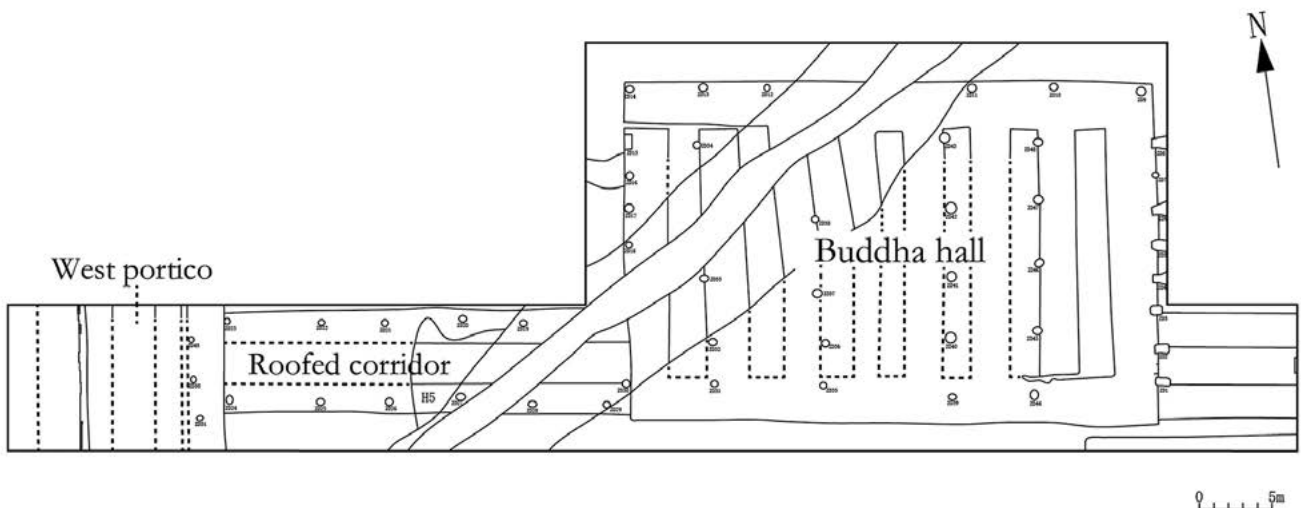


Fig. 2.17: The Buddha Hall of Southeastern Compound of the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* (Modified from: Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Institute of Cultural Relics of Hebei Province 2013 b, 29, fig. 6).

2.5. Monastery Layout in the First Half of the Seventh Century: the *Linggansi Monastery* and the *Qinglongsi Monastery* in Chang'an

The *Qinglongsi Monastery* 青龍寺 was one of the most important Buddhist monasteries in Chang'an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty. It was rebuilt on top of the *Linggansi Monastery* 靈感寺 of the Sui, established by Emperor Wen in the third year of the Kaihuang Era (583 AD). After the mid-seventh century, this monastery underwent several reconstructions.²⁶ The *Essentials of the Tang* records:

The *Qinglongsi Monastery* was located in the Xinchang Ward, and it was the previously abandoned *Linggansi Monastery* of the Sui Dynasty. In the second year of the Longshuo Era (662 AD), Princess Xincheng reported to the Emperor and rebuilt it as the *Guanyin Monastery*. Its name was changed to the present one in the second year of the Jingyun Era (711 AD).²⁷

From the 1960s onward, the Xi'an Tang City Team of the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of (Social) Sciences conducted a series of archaeological explorations and surveys of the *Qinglongsi Monastery*.²⁸ Despite the fact that the whole area is covered by modern buildings and farmland, two adjacent enclosed compounds were discovered.²⁹ In the following years, archaeologists excavated the Middle Gate, a Pagoda, a Buddha Hall, a roofed corridor and the auxiliary buildings of the Western Compound; in the same period, the Buddha Hall and North Gate of the Eastern Compound were also unearthed (Fig. 2.18).³⁰

The *Qinglongsi Monastery* was located southeast of the Xinchang Ward in the Tang Chang'an City, and covered an area of 132,500 square meters, occupying one quarter of the Ward. The plan of the monastery was a longitudinal rectangle measuring 530 m by 250 m. Available physical evidence indicates that the main characteristic of the monastery was that it was composed of several compounds and halls.

The remains of the Western Compound were relatively well preserved; the overlapped foundation and platform indicated that the buildings were restored or reconstructed in different periods.

The early buildings of the Western Compound, symmetrically aligned along the main north-south axis, were oriented to the south; they comprise the Middle Gate, a Pagoda (A) and the Buddha Hall (B₁₋₁). Moreover, outside of the Compound, there were a few small buildings, which were assumed to be auxiliary buildings, such as

the kitchen or the Monks' Quarters. No portico or walls enclosing the compound were found, probably because they were destroyed or covered by later remains.

The Middle Gate (C) was placed south of the Western Compound. Due to the superimposition of a later portico, its shape is not very clear. Nevertheless, we may gather some valuable information, such as the fact that the Middle Gate fell into disuse when the monastery was rebuilt.

The foundation of the Pagoda was centered on the north-south axis of the Western Compound, 25 m north of the Middle Gate (Fig. 2.19). Its plan was basically square, with sides of 15 m. There was a nearly square pit at the center of the foundation, 4–4.4 m wide and with a residual depth of 1.8 m. The walls and the floor were even and smooth, which implies that the interior of the pit may have been brick-faced. Though nothing valuable was found, the location suggests that the pit may have been the underground palace for the placing of relics. Since the upper part of the foundation had been sheared off by agricultural activities over the centuries, there were no indications of the position of the plinths. Thus, it remains impossible to reconstruct the original size and plan of the structure. Judging from the remains, archaeologists presumed that it might have been a pavilion-style wooden pagoda commonly seen at that time. Notice that the Pagoda was not rebuilt, a situation comparable to that of the Middle Gate of the Western Compound.

The Buddha Hall (B₁) was placed some 43 m north of the Pagoda in the Western Compound. The remains comprised two buildings of different types, belonging to two different periods. The early Buddha Hall (B₁₋₁) was a longitudinal rectangle, 57.2 m by 26.2 m in dimension. Based on the traces of well-preserved frusta,³¹ it may be restored as a thirteen-bay-wide and five-bay-deep structure, each bay being 4 m in width. There was a platform in front of the Hall, measuring 13.2 m by 5 m. There was a flight of steps in the rear of the Hall, 10 m long and 4.5 m wide. In addition, two ramps were arranged one on each side of the Hall (Fig. 2.20).

Among the younger buildings in the Western Compound, there was a later Buddha Hall (B₁₋₂), a portico and some auxiliary buildings. The later Buddha Hall (B₁₋₂) was rebuilt on the remaining foundation of an earlier one and took advantage of most of its early frusta. Its plan was also a longitudinal rectangle measuring 40.4 m by 24.9 m, with a residual height of 0.8 m, and thus slightly smaller than the earlier one. The edge of the foundation above the ground was wrapped with bricks. A total of twenty-eight well-preserved frusta were found. According to their arrangement, it was possible to determine that the later Buddha Hall was a nine-bay-wide and five-bay-deep

²⁶ Song Gaoseng Zhuan 863.

²⁷ Tang Huiyao 唐會要, 846, '青龍寺：新昌坊，本隋廢靈感寺。龍朔二年，新城公主奏立為觀音寺，景雲二年改名。'

²⁸ Tang Capital Archaeological Team at Sian, IOA, Academia Sinica 1964.

²⁹ Sian Archaeology Team of IAAS 1974.

³⁰ Xi'an Tang City Team, IA, CASS 1989.

³¹ Frustum, pl. frusta (*sangdun* 礪墩): a kind of pedestal supporting a column but differing from the general base stone. It is usually made of rammed earth mixed with rubble and broken tiles, rather than a whole stone.

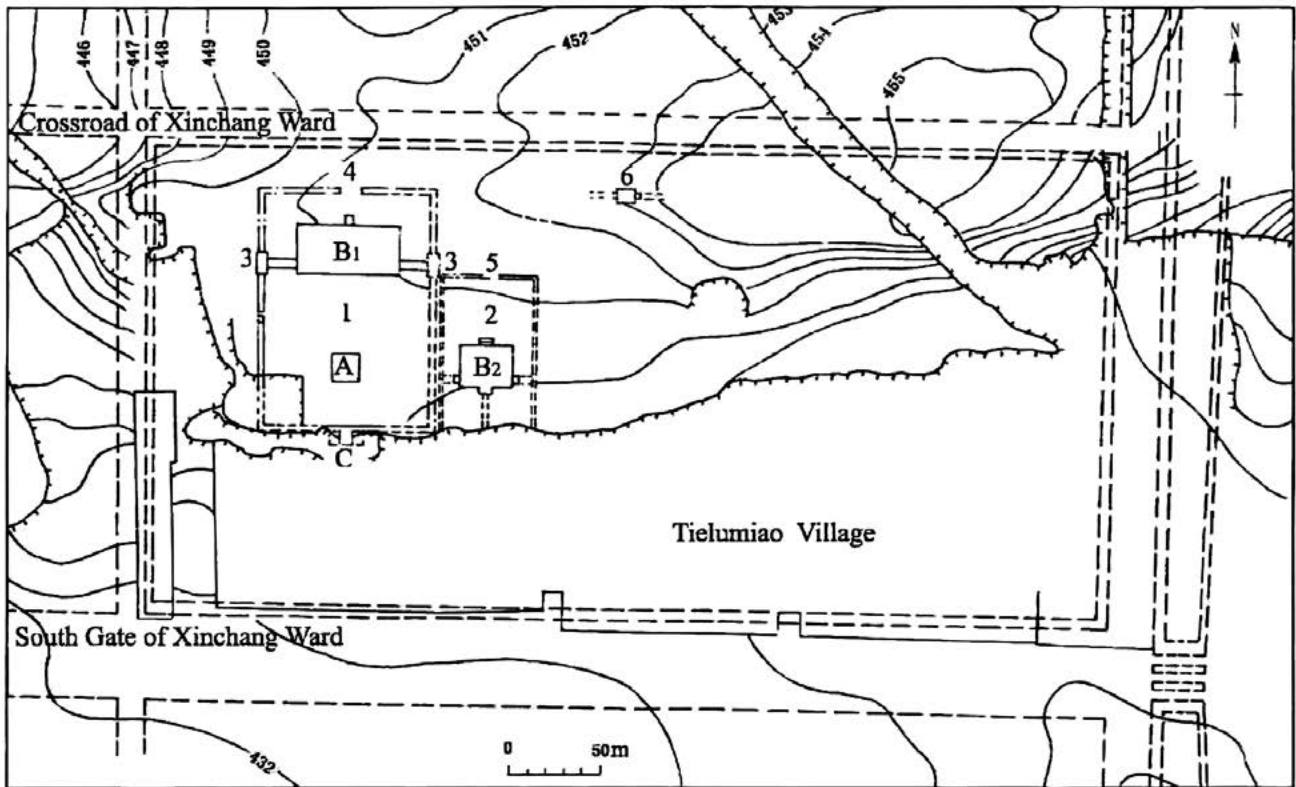


Fig. 2.18: Sketch plan of the *Qinglongsi Monastery* in Chang'an (Modified from: Xi'an Tang City Team, IA, CASS 1989, 232, fig. 1).

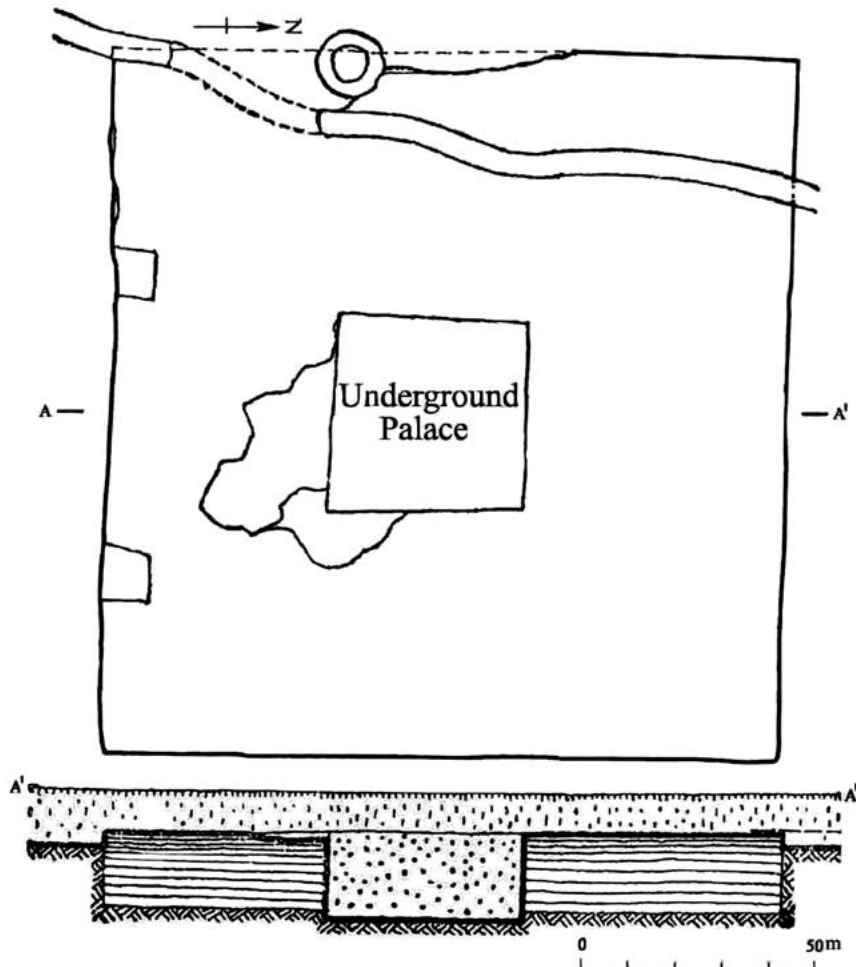


Fig. 2.19: Plan and section of the Pagoda foundation (A), Western Compound of the *Qinglongsi Monastery* (Modified from: Xi'an Tang City Team, IA, CASS 1989, 235, fig. 4).

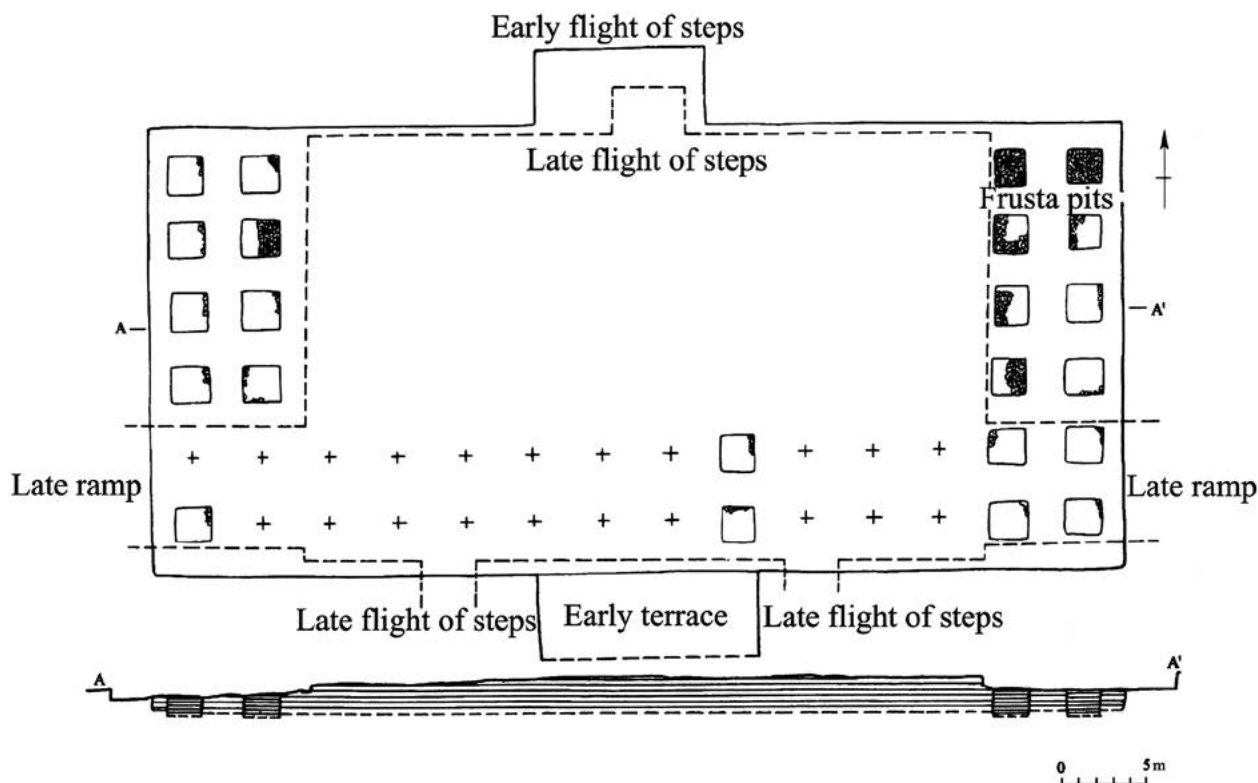


Fig. 2.20: Plan and section of the early Buddha Hall (B_{1-1}), Western Compound of the *Qinglongsi Monastery* (Modified from: Xi'an Tang City Team, IA, CASS 1989, 238, fig. 6).

structure, and that each bay was 4 m in width. There were two flights of steps (left and right) in front of the Hall, 3.8 m wide and 3.6 m long, and another flight of steps lay at the back of the Hall, 4.3 m wide. The sloping ramps at both sides of the Buddha Hall were 6.7 m wide; they overlapped with the early ones and connected the Hall with the east and west porticoes of the Compound (Fig. 2.21).

The Western Compound was surrounded by a portico, which was 5.2 m wide and extended 98 m east to west and 132 m north to south. The south portico overlapped with the early Middle Gate (C), indicating that the main entrance of the later monastery was set up elsewhere. There were two small auxiliary buildings placed in the north part of the east and west porticoes: their size was slightly larger than the portico and connected with the Buddha Hall by sloped ramps.

The Eastern Compound was a separate courtyard enclosed by a rammed earth wall, and the main building was a Buddha Hall (B_2) that also underwent reconstruction later.

The early Buddha Hall (B_{2-1}) of the Eastern Compound was placed at the center of the Compound, which has not been excavated as for the most part it is superimposed by the later Buddha Hall. In spite of this problematic situation, archaeological exploration succeeded in discovering valuable clues. The foundation of the early Buddha Hall (B_{2-1}) was square in plan, with sides 28 m long and a residual height of 0.8 m (inclusive of both the underground

foundation and the above-ground platform). According to the arrangement of the frusta, the building should have been a five-bay-wide and five-bay-deep structure. Both sides of the platform had brick-faced sloped ramps (Fig. 2.22).

The north wall of the Eastern Compound was found over 20 m north of the Buddha Hall. A remaining portion of a wall, 47 m long and 1–1.2 m wide, presented a relatively smooth and orderly facade. On the base of the wall, there were traces of the brick and tile facing, which prevented rain erosion. Along the north wall, there was a pathway leading to the Western Compound. Although most of the walls were not well preserved, the remains are sufficient to prove that the Eastern Compound was a relatively separate courtyard within the whole monastery.

The late Buddha Hall (B_{2-2}) of the Eastern Compound was built on top of the earlier one; it was rectangular in plan, measuring 28.75 m by 21.75 m, and therefore slightly smaller than the earlier Buddha Hall (B_{2-1}); its outer facades were brick-faced, 0.8 m high. Around its base, we can clearly identify traces of the drainage facilities. Due to destruction caused by later farming activities, the upper surface and the plinths of the later Buddha Hall have been lost, but the frusta still display the original position of the columns. The arrangement of the frusta was approximately square, its sides about 1.2 m by 1.8 m wide. The restored column structure, based on the network of twenty-eight frusta traces, suggests that the later Buddha Hall was a five-bay-wide and four-bay-deep structure, and that each

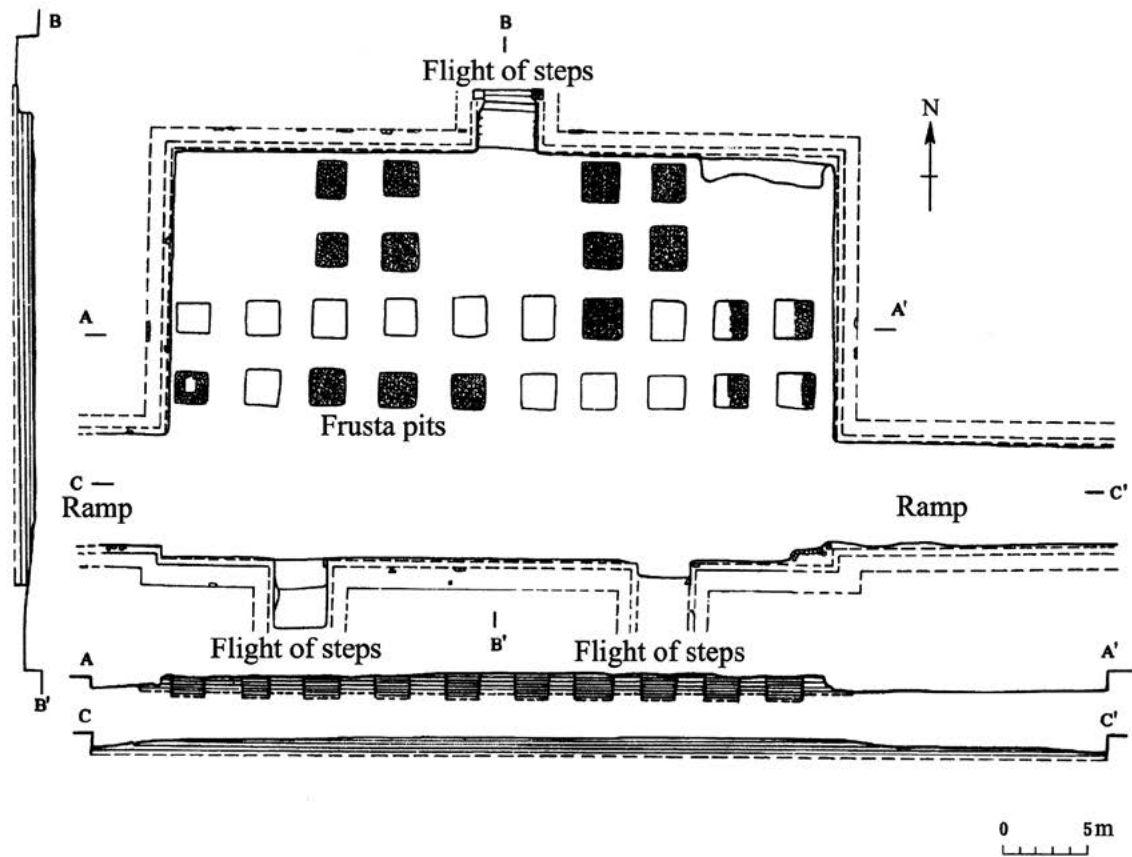


Fig. 2.21: Plan and sections of the late Buddha Hall (B_{1.2}), Western Compound of the *Qinglongsi Monastery* (Modified from: Xi'an Tang City Team, IA, CASS 1989, 237, fig. 5).

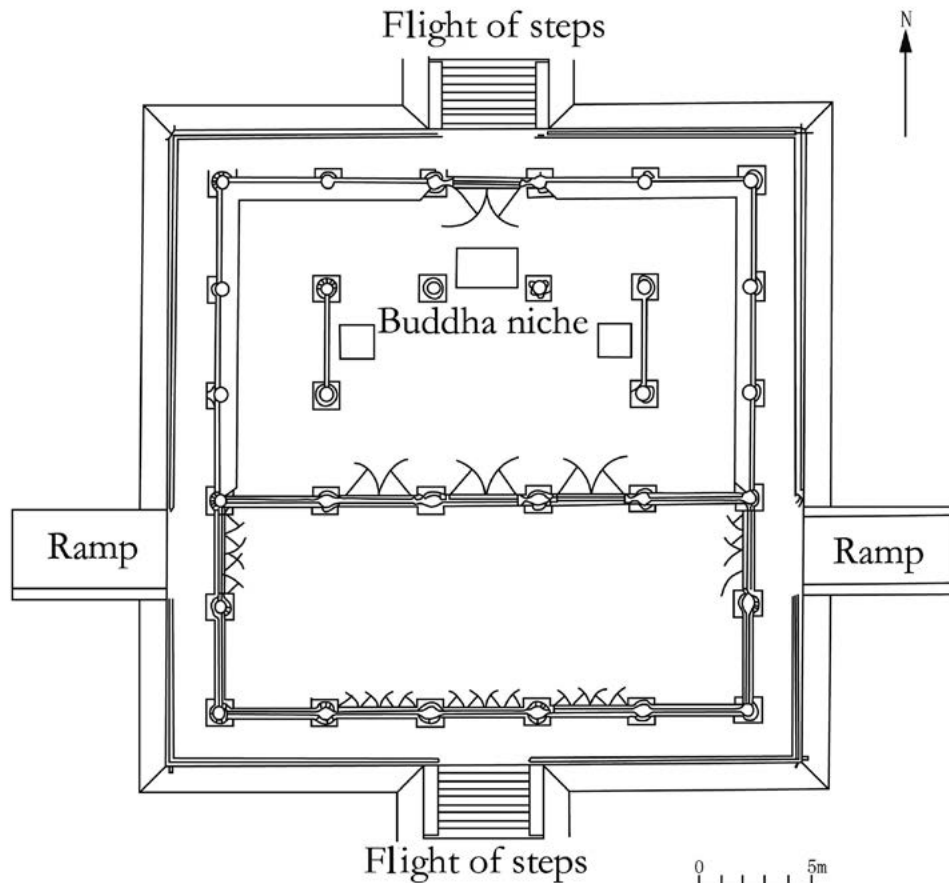


Fig. 2.22: Restored plan of the early Buddha Hall (B_{2.1}), Eastern Compound of the *Qinglongsi Monastery* (Modified from: Yang Hongxun 1984, 390, fig. 6).

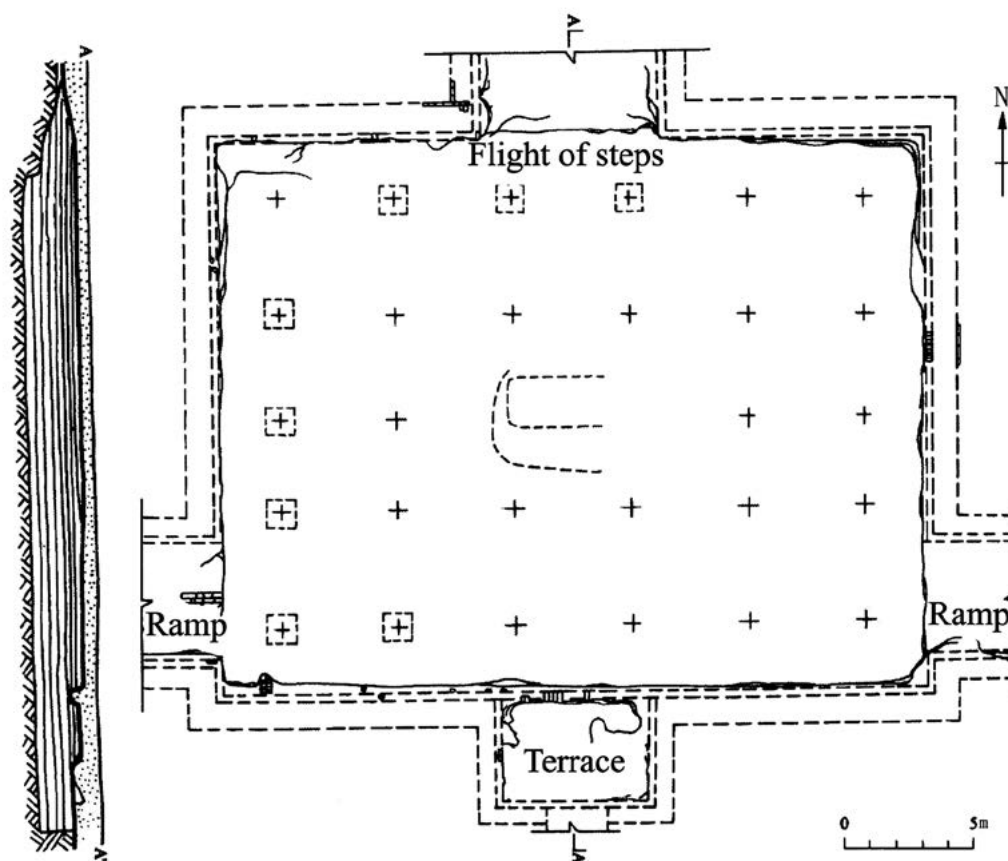


Fig. 2.23: Plan and section of the late Buddha Hall (B_{2.2}), Eastern Compound of the *Qinglongsi Monastery* (Modified from: Xi'an Tang City Team, IA, CASS 1989, 245, fig. 10).

bay measured 4.8 m by 4.15–4.6 m. Interestingly, there was no trace of columns in the central part of the Buddha Hall; instead, a small altar measuring 3 m by 5 m was found. Archaeologists presumed that it might have been an altar related with esoteric Buddhism. There was a terrace measuring 6.6 m by 4.4 m and a pathway 2.5 m wide in front of the Hall. Behind the Hall, there was a flight of steps 7.2 m wide. Each side of the Hall had a 4.8 m wide sloping ramp, which overlapped with earlier remains (Fig. 2.23).

As well as the remains of the Western and Eastern Compounds, archaeologists also excavated the North Gate of the monastery, which was located in the middle of the northern part of the monastery. Since the damage of later periods was very severe, the plan of the North Gate could not be identified. The unearthed evidence reveals that the gate may have represented early remains, damaged during Tang Wuzong Period and never reconstructed.

The written records mentioned above indicate that the Tang *Qinglongsi Monastery* was the successor of the Sui *Linggansi Monastery*. A generally accepted view in Chinese academia is that the early complex of the Western Compound in the Qinglongsi Monastery represents the remains of the *Linggansi Monastery* of the Sui Dynasty.³²

From the heyday of Tang, it became an important monastery of esoteric Buddhism. Correspondingly, its architectural form and layout underwent some fundamental changes.

2.6. Monastery Layout in the Mid-Seventh Century: the *Ximingsi Monastery* in Chang'an

The *Xiningsi Monastery* was built in the first year of the Xianqing Era (656 AD) by Emperor Gaozong of the Tang. It was well known because it hosted many Buddhist masters, such as Xuanzang 玄奘, Daoxuan 道宣, Huaisu 懷素, Daoshi 道世 and Huilin 慧琳, who lived and promoted Buddhism here in different periods. Kūkai 空海 and Enchin 圓珍, coming from Japan to seek the *Dharma*, also dwelled in this monastery. There are many helpful documentary sources depicting this monastery. The most detailed record may be found in the relevant entry of the *Biography of the Tripitaka Master of Daci'en Monastery*:

The (*Ximingsi*) *Monastery* began to be constructed in autumn on the 19th day of the eighth lunar month, in the first year (of the Xianqing Era) by Emperor Gaozong, [...] and it was completed in summer, in the sixth lunar month of that year (the third year of the Xianqing Era, 658 AD). The monastery was 350 steps wide, with a perimeter several miles long. The left and right (of the monastery) were connected with streets, and the front and rear (of the monastery) were residential areas. Its perimeter was ranged with cyan acacias, and (all this)

³² Su Bai 1997 b.

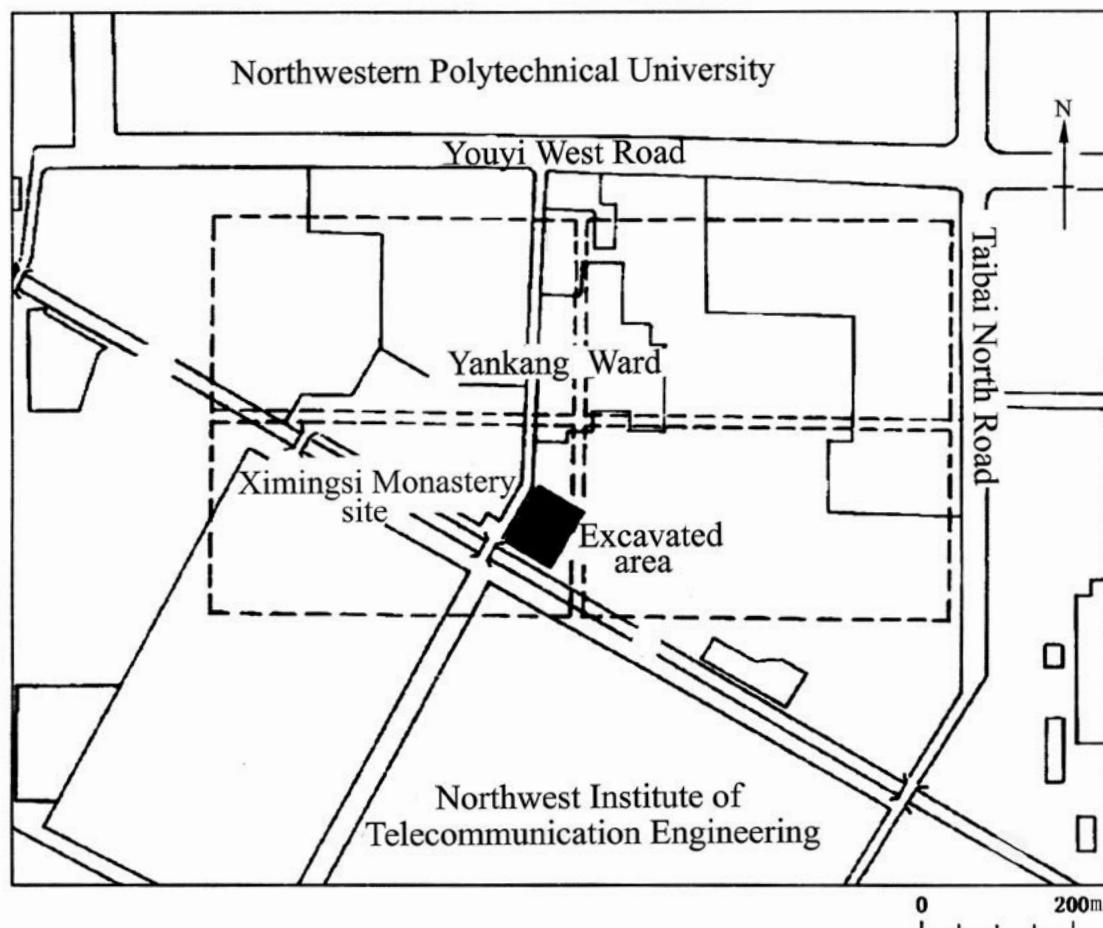


Fig. 2.24: Location of the Ximingsi Monastery (Modified from: Tang-City Team, IA, CASS 1990, 46, fig. 1).

was surrounded by clear water, flowing and deep. Among the monasteries in the capital, it ranked the first. [...] There were ten compounds in total, and over four thousand rooms. The spectacle of its buildings was unmatched, even by the *Tongtaisi Monastery* of Liang and *Yongningsi Monastery* of Wei.³³

A Chronicle of the Buddha and the Patriarchs also states:

In the second year (of the Xianqing Era), the *Ximingsi Monastery* was built obeying an imperial edict. It had thirteen great halls, four thousand pavilions and roofed corridors. The emperor appointed Master Daoxuan as 'Superior Seated One', Shentai as abbot and Huaisu as Buddhist deacon. Master Daoxuan wrote *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks* in thirty volumes when he lived in *Ximingsi Monastery*.³⁴

In 1985, in coordination with municipal construction, the Xi'an Tang City Team of the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, carried out archaeological surveys and a partial excavation at the site of the *Ximingsi Monastery*, and basically identified the location, boundaries and structure of several buildings.³⁵ A few years later, another excavation was carried out, aiming to complement and better understand the past one (Fig. 2.24).³⁶

The *Ximingsi Monastery* was located southwest of the Yankang Ward 延康坊, Chang'an City, and occupied one quarter of the ward. According to archaeological exploration, the rectangular plan of the monastery measures approximately 500 m east to west and 250 m north to south. The excavation took place in the eastern part of the monastery, and one large compound (the Main Compound) and parts of two small auxiliary ones (the Southeastern Compound and Southwestern Compound) were unearthed (Fig. 2.25).

The Main Compound consisted of three Halls (B, B₁ and B₂) surrounded by a portico. In front of the South Hall (B),

³³ *Da Tang Daci'en Si Sanzang Fashi Zhuan* 大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳, 275, '寺以(顯慶)元年秋八月戊子十九日造。……其年(顯慶三年)夏六月營造功畢。其寺面三百五十步, 周圍數里, 左右通衢, 腹背塵落。青槐列其外, 淙水互其間, 臺臺耽耽。都邑仁祠, 此為最也。……凡有十院, 屋四千餘間, 莊嚴之盛, 雖梁之同泰、魏之永寧, 所不能及也。'

³⁴ *Fozu Tongji* 佛祖統紀, 367, '(顯慶)二年, 勅建西明寺。大殿十三所, 樓臺廊廡四千區。詔道宣律師為上座, 神泰法師為寺主, 懷素為維那。宣律師居西明作續高僧傳三十卷。'

³⁵ Tang-City Team, IA, CASS 1990.

³⁶ An Jiayao 2000.

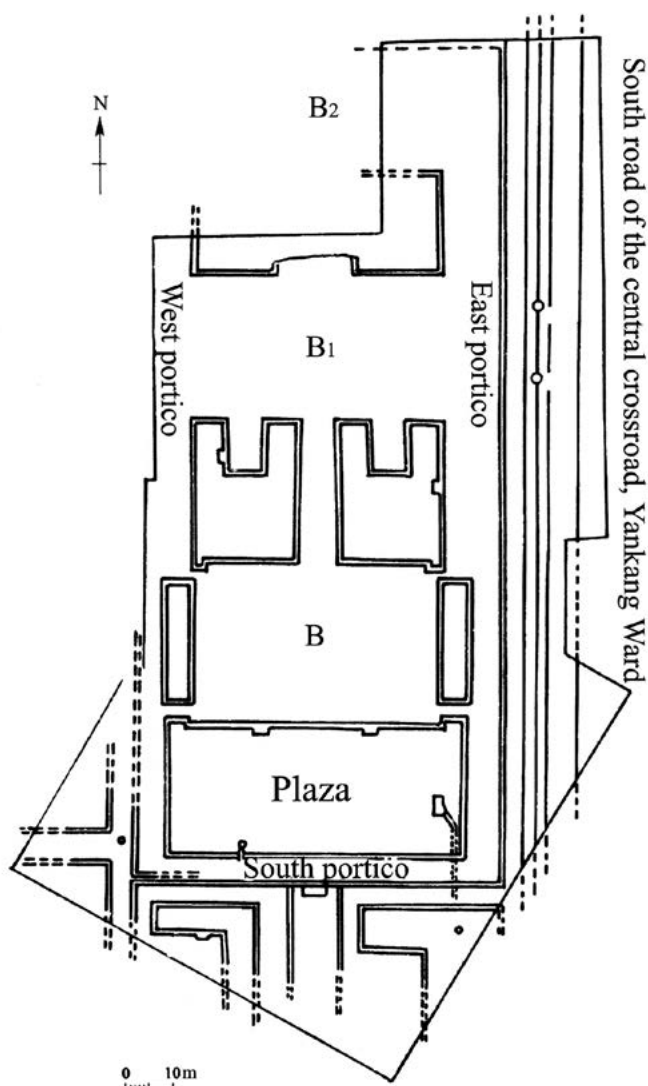


Fig. 2.25: Sketch plan of the partial *Ximingsi Monastery* (Modified from: Tang-City Team, IA, CASS 1990, 47, fig. 2).

there was a large plaza, 59.3 m east to west and 26.3 m south to north. The ground of the plaza was leveled off, and many facilities, such as a stone lamp, a water well and the drainage facilities, were found inside. The edge of the Compound, except for the northern part that has not been excavated, was enclosed by a portico. The east portico was 6 m wide, brick-faced on the inside and wrapped with draining facilities. The south portico, as the main entrance of the Compound, was also 6 m wide, brick-faced on both the inside and the outside, and provided with draining facilities. The west portico had a structure similar to the east one, but it was 9.7 m wide, and traces of a wall were found inside. Therefore, excavators presumed that might it be a dual portico (*fulang* 復廊). If this assumption is accepted, there should have been another similar architectural space on the west side of this Compound.

The South Hall (B) was the main hall of the Compound. The platform above ground was a rectangle, measuring 51.54 m by 33.06 m, and with a remaining height of 0.9–1.29 m. Since the surface of the platform was destroyed,

there was no trace of the paved wards or plinth pits; it is therefore difficult to conjecture about its bay structure. The platform was brick-faced and surrounded by draining facilities. There were two steps in the south of the Hall, and two ramps one on each side of the Hall leading to the east and west porticoes of the Compound. At the back of the Hall, there was a 6 m-wide corridor which connected it with the Middle Hall.

The Middle Hall (B₁) was about 29.5 m north of the South Hall (B), and measured 68 m by 29 m, with a remaining height of 0.4–0.5 m. The bay structure could not be reconstructed because of the damaged surface. Existing evidence shows that the two sides of the Middle Hall were directly connected with the portico encircling the Compound. The North Hall (B₂) was about 21 m north of the Middle Hall. Due to the limited excavated area, its shape is not clear yet.

Two small auxiliary compounds were placed south of the main Compound, on either side of the central pathway, which led to the middle of the south side of the portico of the main Compound. This indicates the position of the former entrance, although there is no trace of a gate. Inside the two auxiliary compounds, brick-faced bases of small buildings provided with draining facilities were found; a well was discovered in the southeastern compound. Since these auxiliary compounds were not fully excavated, the overall layout still remains unclear.

The east wall of the monastery was found about 4 m east of the east portico of the main Compound. It was a rammed earth construction 2.4 m wide, with a residual height of 0.7–0.9 m. Outside the monastery, along the east wall, there was the main street of the Yankang Ward, proving that the monastery was carefully integrated into the grid system of Chang'an City.

These archaeological achievements offer us a glimpse into the panorama of the layout of the monastery, and confirm in one aspect the records that stated that the *Ximingsi Monastery* had ten compounds and thirteen Buddha Halls. It goes without saying that it provides important material evidence for the study of Buddhist architecture in the Tang Dynasty.

Monastery Layout in Early Medieval China: Development and Evolution

3.1. The Buddhist Monastery: Main Buildings and Auxiliary Buildings

As a place devoted to religious activities and meant for daily living, a large monastery was usually composed of a variety of buildings, each performing a specific function. Despite the fact that many monasteries may have their own unique building(s), some buildings are regularly seen in large monasteries of various periods; they form the core of crucial elements which allow us to explore the evolution of the monastery layout. In this section, I will introduce the main buildings that will subsequently be used to trace the development of the monastery layout.

3.1.1. Entrance

The Middle Gate (*zhongmen* 中門) was the most important entrance of a Buddhist monastery. Because many monasteries of ancient China faced south, in most cases the Middle Gate was located on the south side of the monastic complex. Sometimes, there was a smaller South Gate in front of the Middle Gate. To date, Chinese archaeologists have excavated the Middle Gate of the *Siyuan Monastery*, the *Yongningsi Monastery*, the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* and the *Linggansi Monastery*. Of these, the most remarkable one is the Middle Gate of the *Yongningsi Monastery*, a seven-bay-wide and two-bay-deep building, apparently a conscious replica of the main gate of the Palace City. In addition, smaller entrances giving access to the monastery from other sides have also been excavated at the *Yongningsi Monastery*, *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* and *Qinglongsi Monastery*.

3.1.2. Perimeter wall, portico and roofed corridor

A continuous rammed earth wall (*hangtuqiang* 夯土牆) usually served as the outer boundary of earlier monasteries, as in the case of the *Yongningsi Monastery* of the Northern Wei. In later monasteries, this wall was gradually replaced by a portico, as in the case of the *Qinglongsi Monastery* and *Ximingsi Monastery* of the Tang Dynasty. The portico set at the edge of the monastery marked its limit, and it could also be used to separate different Compounds within a monastery. Another structure was the roofed corridor normally used to connect different structures. A special case is the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery*: no trace of the perimeter wall was found, while the limits of the monastery consisted in a ditch 5–6 m wide surrounding the monastery on the four sides.

3.1.3. Pagoda

The pagoda as an architectural structure derived from the Indian *stūpa*: it marked the place where Sakyamuni's

śarīra was conserved. In the early stage of Buddhism in China, as a symbol of the relic cult, the pagoda had a far higher status than the Buddha Hall, a building containing the main statuary. Until the seventh century, as the most important building of the monastery, the pagoda was placed at its center. Its architectural form was that of a multi-story timber-frame building. Generally speaking, Chinese-style pagodas were built with an odd number of stories, three, five, seven or nine, each implying a different political or religious rank; pagodas in State Monasteries were commonly seven or nine stories tall. Although excavations have not uncovered any above-ground timber remains, judging from the size of the foundation and bay structure, the height and number of stories of the pagodas of the *Yongningsi Monastery* and *Zhaopengcheng Monastery*, for example, have been calculated and reconstructed by architectural historians.

3.1.4. Buddha Hall

The Buddha Hall is a building in which to present offerings and carry out religious rituals in front of the Buddha, or Bodhisattva images. Before the fourth century, only in a very few cases were small rooms arranged at the back of monasteries, or caves in India and Central Asia, for the setting up of Buddha images. In spite of their secondary status, such buildings should be considered the prototype of the later Buddha Halls.¹ However, in tandem with the evolution of Buddhist thought, the Buddha Hall progressively became the most important building of a Chinese monastery, even more important than the pagoda. The architectural type of the Buddha Hall has its origin in the traditional Chinese palace, or official buildings, often built on top of a rammed earth platform with commodious space, a complex timber-frame structure and a solemn roof. The remains of several Buddha Halls from the Northern Dynasties to the Tang have been excavated, and some of them have already been restored according to the study of architectural historians.

3.1.5. Lecture Hall

The Lecture Hall (*jiangtang* 講堂) is a gathering place for studying sutras and performing daily rituals. Since its main function was to provide adequate space for monks to assemble, it is not difficult to understand that the Lecture Hall was frequently the largest building in the whole monastery. Under normal circumstances, the Lecture Hall resembles the Buddha Hall, but its status is far lower, and its position is not as prominent as that of the Pagoda or the

¹ He Liqun 2011.

Buddha Hall. The Lecture Hall is usually found in Korean and Japanese monasteries; it was widely recorded in ancient Chinese documents, but before recent findings in the rear area of the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery*, we lacked material evidence of it in China.

3.1.6. Auxiliary buildings

In addition to above-mentioned buildings, which have special religious functions and are essential for the running of a monastery, other auxiliary buildings, such as Monks' Quarters (*sengfang* 僧房), Meditation Rooms (*chanshi* 禪室), Sutra Halls (*jingtang* 經堂) and Bell Towers (*zhonglou* 鐘樓) are sometimes mentioned in textual sources. Unfortunately, very little archaeological data is available to date, so that it remains impossible to restore their specific forms and the location of such buildings in early Chinese monasteries.

3.1.7. Compound

Actually, the Compound (*yuan* 院) is a spatial concept, rather than a building. The term is used throughout this book to indicate a specific area within the monastery, usually enclosed by rammed walls or a portico to form relatively isolated sections within a monastery. In this sense, the Compound is an important concept for the study of the development of the monastery layout, since the location of the Pagoda, the Buddha Hall and Compounds, and their mutual relation, are the elements that best reflect this evolution. Some large compounds have already been found, in the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery*, the *Qinglongsi Monastery* and the *Ximingsi Monastery*, and have provided valuable clues for studying the evolution of the layout of the monastery.

3.2. Monastery Layout: Types, Periodization and Distinctive Features

A complete monastery usually consisted of a combination of the above-mentioned buildings, but in the evolution of the monastery layout, these buildings each played a different role, some more crucial than others. For example, the Lecture Hall, undoubtedly the most important building in a Buddhist monastery, was regularly located in the rear of the monastery, and therefore its significance for the study of the development of the layout is relatively less revealing than the buildings whose disposition shifted through time. Depending on the relative location of the Pagoda, Buddha Hall and Compound, the layout of the excavated State Monasteries can be divided into four major types: 'Central Pagoda' (*zhongxinta shi* 中心塔式); 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' (*qianta houdian shi* 前塔後殿式); 'Central Pagoda and Halls on Different Axes' (*tadian fenli shi* 塔殿分立式); 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' (*duoyuan duodian shi* 多院多殿式). These four types of monastery layout have distinct characteristics that represent four different developmental stages from the mid-Northern Wei to the Tang Dynasty.

3.2.1. The 'Central Pagoda' monastery (mid-fifth century)

This is the oldest Buddhist monastery layout, dating back to the days of the introduction of Buddhism into China. Up to now, the earliest excavated monastery with this layout is the *Yungang Monastery* dated to the mid-fifth century. The typical feature is a Pagoda erected at the center of the monastery, and small chambers set around the square perimeter. There is no evidence of the existence of a Buddha Hall or a Lecture Hall. It is widely assumed that this layout directly imitates the Buddhist monastery from the Indian subcontinent.

3.2.2. The 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' monastery (late fifth to early sixth century)

This monastery layout was prevalent in the late Northern Wei; the most representative example is the *Yongningsi Monastery*; other examples are the *Siyuan Monastery* and the *Siyan Monastery*. The prominent feature of this monastery layout is its longitudinal rectangular plan, with the main buildings located within a large Compound: starting from the south, the Middle Gate, the Pagoda and the Buddha Hall, aligned in sequence along the central axis. The square wooden Pagoda was placed at the absolute center of the monastery, while the Buddha Hall was built behind the Pagoda, not far from it. So far, no evidence has been found indicating that this type of monastery included a Lecture Hall in the rear area.

3.2.3. The 'Central Pagoda and Halls on Different Axes' monastery (mid to late sixth century)

The *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* of the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi periods is the only instance excavated thus far, although similar layouts are recorded in the descriptions of monasteries of the Southern Dynasties. The plan of the monastery is approximately square, with the wooden Pagoda set slightly to the south of the monastery center. Evidence of the existence of a Buddha Hall behind the Pagoda has not been found. However, two separate Compounds enclosed by porticoes occupied the southeast and southwest corners of the monastery, each including a spacious hall in the north part, approximately 35 m wide, which might be interpreted as substitutes for a central Buddha Hall. Judging from their location and plan, the remains of a hall recently unearthed in the northernmost part of the monastery were tentatively seen as a Lecture Hall. Prominent features of the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* are the Pagoda being set at the center of the monastery, and the layout still complying with the principle of north-south axial symmetry, while at the same time the characteristics of the 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' are beginning to emerge.

3.2.4. The 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' monastery (after the mid-seventh century)

Buddhist monasteries comprising several compounds and halls were very popular in the Tang Dynasty.

Archaeological excavations of the *Qinglongsi Monastery* and the *Ximingsi Monastery* indicate that such a layout was of overwhelming significance for State Monasteries of this period. These two famous monasteries could not be completely excavated, since modern buildings were constructed over their remains; in spite of this drawback, some compounds and halls were disclosed, offering a first glimpse of the layout of the whole monastery. Fortunately, some contemporary pictorial representations provide sufficient evidence for our study. Particularly important examples come from Dunhuang wall paintings, which preserve a great number of representations of Buddhist monasteries of the Tang Dynasty (Fig. 3.1). These images might make up for the lack of archaeological materials, because the archetypes for them often were the monasteries from the two capitals of Tang (Chang'an and Luoyang). Salient features of such monasteries are: the ground plan of the monastery as a whole was rectangular, inserted within the city grid plan; by this time, the monastery's basic unit was the compound, while the main building was the Buddha Hall – indeed, large monasteries consisted of many compounds separated from one another by walls or porticoes, and each major compound often had its own hall; in most cases the pagoda no longer occupied a central location in a monastery, and in some cases there was no pagoda at all.

3.3. The Evolution of Monastery Layout from the Northern Wei to the Tang Dynasty

Since the introduction of Buddhism to China, the pagoda has been the most important building in a Buddhist monastery. In certain periods, as a landmark, the word *stūpa* even became synonymous with the whole monastery; therefore, it is not difficult to understand the fact that many documents describing the Buddhist monasteries focused on the description of the pagoda. The tradition of focusing on the pagoda was inherited by the newly built State Monasteries of the Northern Dynasties, and extended to the Sui Dynasty.

In order to provide an adequate place for believers to engage in Buddhist activities, even before his conquest of all North China, Emperor Daowu of Northern Wei issued an edict asking his officials to adorn images and build monasteries in the capital. This is the earliest record of official sponsorship of a Buddhist monastery in China.²

After the brief suppression of Buddhism by Emperor Taiwu (太武帝 r. 423–452 AD), Buddhism revived rapidly after the mid-fifth century. In addition to the celebrated *Yungang Grottoes*, a great number of Buddhist monasteries were built in Pingcheng, the capital of the Northern Wei at that time. The *Book of Wei* states:

In the second year of the Tian'an Era (467 AD) the *Yongningsi Monastery* was built and a seven-story

pagoda was constructed, which reached a height of three hundred *chi*. The massive foundation and spacious framework were unparalleled in the world. Then, an icon of standing Sakyamuni was cast in *Tiangong Monastery*. It was forty-three *chi* in height and a hundred thousand *jin* of copper and three hundred *jin* of gold were used. In the Huangxin Era (467–471 AD), a three-story pagoda was built, [...] ten *zhang* in height, [...] (which became) a landmark of the capital.³

In 494, Emperor Xiaowen of Northern Wei moved the capital to Luoyang, and adopted a series of reform measures to implement systematic sinicization. Emperor Xiaowen and his successors were all devout Buddhists: much manpower and many material resources were plunged into the construction of Buddhist monasteries. Besides the *Yongningsi Monastery* built by Empress Dowager Hu, a large number of State Monasteries sponsored by the imperial family and centering on the pagoda were recorded in the *Stories about Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang*:

Yaoguangsi Monastery, built by Emperor Xuanwu, [...] has a five-story pagoda that rose fifty *zhang* from the ground [...], more than five hundred lecture halls and nuns' quarters beautifully placed next to each other, connected with doors and windows.

Qin Taishangjinsi Monastery, built by Empress Dowager Hu. [...] There was a five-story pagoda, with a tall steeple piercing the clouds and a high gate facing the street. The rituals and decorations were equal to *Yongningsi Monastery*. A chanting room and meditation halls were laid out one after another.

Datongs Monastery was located at the west of *Jingmingsi Monastery*. [...] There were two monasteries built in honor of *Qin Taishigong* to the east of *Datongs Monastery* and one *li* south of *Jingmingsi Monastery*. The western monastery was built by Empress Dowager and the eastern one was built by her sister, [...] each had a five-story pagoda that rose fifty *zhang* above the ground.⁴

Apart from the above-mentioned ones, a large number of other monasteries can be found in this document that pay much attention to the description of the pagoda.⁵ The

³ *Wei Shu* 魏書, 3037–38, '於時起永寧寺, 構七級佛圖, 高三百餘尺, 基架博敞, 為天下第一。又於天宮寺, 造釋迦立像。高四十三尺, 用赤金十萬斤, 黃金六百斤。皇興中, 又構三級石佛圖,高十丈。.....為京華壯觀。'

⁴ *Luoyang Qielan Ji* 洛陽伽藍記, 1003, '瑤光寺, 世宗宣武皇帝所立。.....有五層浮圖一所, 去地五十丈。.....講殿尼房五百餘間。綺疏連戶牖相通。' 1006, '秦太上君寺, 胡太后所立也。.....中有五層浮圖一所, 修剎入雲, 高門向街。佛事莊飾, 等於永寧。講室禪堂, 周流重迭。' 1010, '大統寺, 在景明寺西。.....東有秦太師公二寺, 在景明南一里。西寺太后所立, 東寺皇姨所建。.....各有五層浮圖一所, 高五十丈。'

⁵ *Luoyang Qielan Ji* 洛陽伽藍記, 1002, 1004, 1010, 1013–14, 1014, 1014, 1017.

'*Changqiushi Monastery* was built by Liusheng. ... There was a three-story pagoda, and the city was irradiated by its golden plate and auspicious *ksetra*' (長秋寺, 劉騰所立也。.....中有三層浮圖一所, 金盤靈剎曜諸城內)。

'*Hutongs Monastery* was built by an aunt of Empress Dowager ... it had a five-story pagoda with a lofty golden *Ksetra*' (胡統寺, 太后從姑所立也。.....寶塔五重, 金剎高聳, 洞房周匝)。

² *Wei Shu* 魏書, 3030

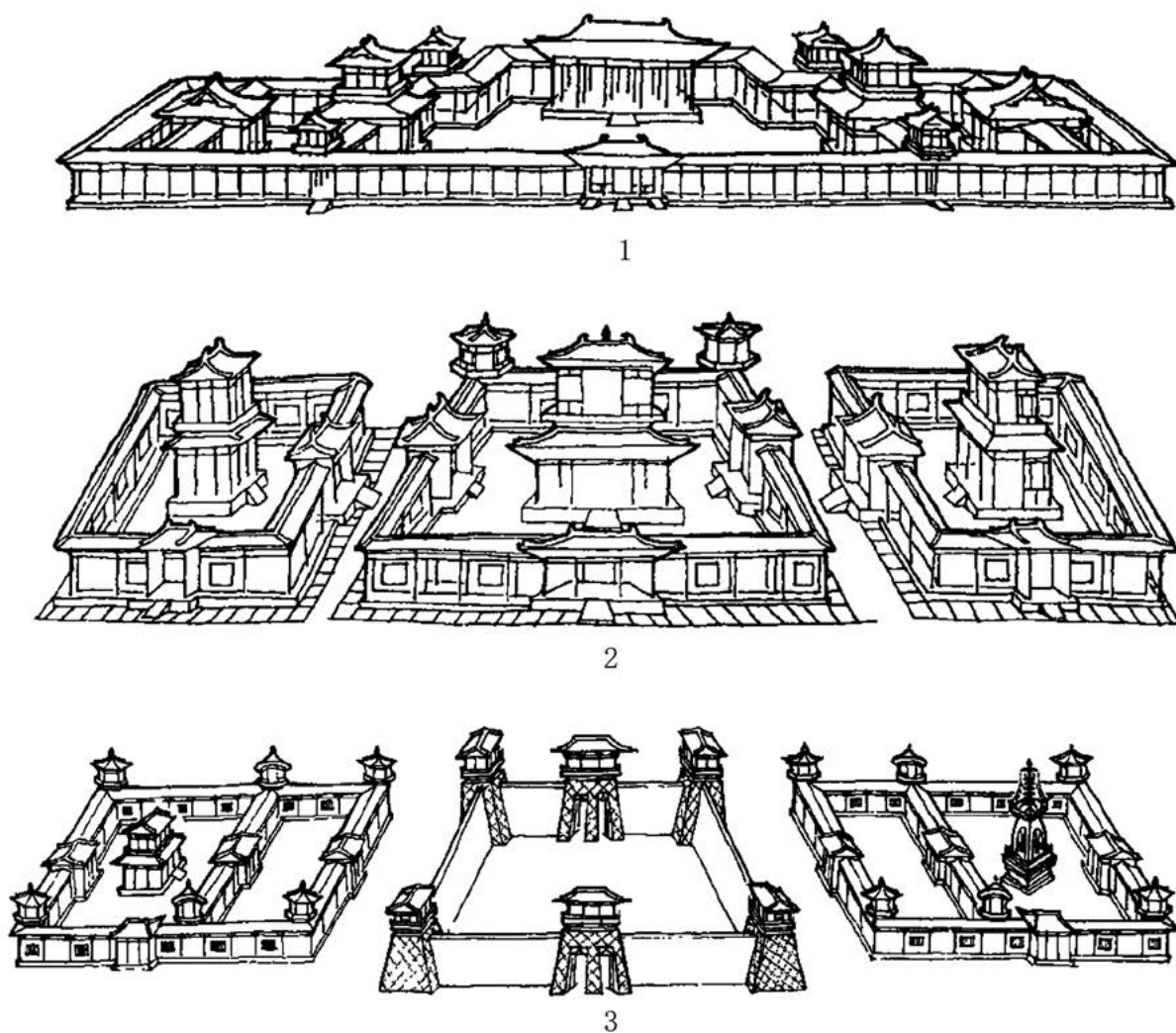


Fig. 3.1: Buddhist Monasteries in Dunhuang wall paintings (Modified from: Xiao Mo 2003, 70, figs 1-39, 1-37, 1-38).

Siyuan Monastery of Pingcheng, the *Siyan Monastery* of Longcheng and the *Yongningsi Monastery* of Luoyang are all properly unearthed instances. Therefore, archaeological evidence and written records give concurring evidence that the typical layout of the Northern Wei's monasteries was of the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' type.

'*Jingmingsi Monastery* was built by Emperor Xuanwu. ... In Zhengguan Era (520–524 AD) a seven-story pagoda was established by the Empress Dowager, a hundred *ren* high above the ground' (景明寺, 宣武皇帝所立也。……至正光年中, 太后始造七層浮圖一所, 去地百仞)。

'*Chongjuesi Monastery* was built by Yuan Yi, the Qinghe Prince and the emperor's mentor, who donated his own residence. ... There was a five-story pagoda, and the workmanship applied was similar to that of *Yaoguangsi Monastery*' (沖覺寺, 太傅清河王懌舍宅所立也。……建五層浮圖一所, 工作與瑤光寺相似也)。

'*Wangdianyu Monastery* was built by eunuch Wang Taotang. ... There was a three-story pagoda near the gate' (王典御寺, 閹官楊王桃湯所立也。……門有三層浮屠一所)。

'*Baoguangsi Monastery* was located on the north of the imperial road outside of the Xiyang Gate. There was a three-story pagoda on a stone foundation, and the shape followed the ancient style' (寶光寺, 在西陽門外御道北。有三層浮圖一所, 以石為基, 形制甚古)。

'*Rongjuesi Monastery* was built by Yuan Duo, the Wenxian Prince of Qinghe. ... There was a five-story pagoda equal to the one in *Chongjuesi Monastery*. The Buddha Halls and Monks' Quarters stretched one *li*' (融覺寺, 清河文獻王懌所立也。……有五層浮圖一所, 與沖覺寺齊等。佛殿僧房充溢一里)。

Textual evidence concerning the Buddhist architecture of the Eastern Wei period is relatively scarce, but a few historical records provide us with important clues to understand the layout of the monasteries of this period. For example, the architectural arrangement of the *Xianyisi Monastery* 顯義寺 is incidentally mentioned in an account of the eventful preaching of a sermon by master Sengfan 僧範 in the capital Yecheng. The *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks* states:

Once upon a time, Du Bi, the governor of Jiao Zhou, invited Sengfan to preach and recite the Buddhist scripture at the *Xianyisi Monastery* of Yecheng in winter. When Sengfan preached to the sixth stage of *Avatamsaka-sutra*, suddenly a wild goose flew down. It entered the hall from the east side of the pagoda, faced Sengfan's seat and lay on the ground, listening to the *Dharma*. After the sermon, the goose left slowly, along the west side of the pagoda, soared into the air and flew away.⁶

⁶ Xu Gaoseng Zhuan 續高僧傳, 483, '嘗有膠州刺史杜弼(491–559 AD), 於鄴顯義寺請範冬講。至華嚴六地, 忽有一雁飛下, 從浮圖東順行入堂, 正對高座, 伏地聽法, 講散徐出, 還順塔西爾乃翔遊。'

Judging from the flight route of the wild goose, it seems that the Pagoda was located at the center of the monastery, while the Hall was placed behind it.

The archaeological excavation of the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* is still in progress. Based on available information, despite the fact that the layout of the monastery was different from that of the Northern Wei, the Chinese pavilion-style pagoda still occupied the central position, indicating a continuity with the layout of earlier monasteries. However, the most significant change in monastery layout is that it now has two separate compounds, each with its own hall. To date, the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* is the earliest example of a multiple-compound monastery excavated in northern China. Given the inheritance in capital planning and design between South Yecheng and Chang'an City,⁷ it is not difficult to imagine the pivotal position of *Zhaopengcheng Monastery*, which represents a demarcation between the single-compound monastery layout centering on a pagoda of the Northern Wei and the 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' layout of the Tang Dynasty.

Until the Sui Dynasty (581–618 AD), the wooden pagoda still occupied a dominant position within State Monasteries. Under the advocacy and support of Emperor Wen of Sui (隋文帝 r. 581–604 AD), a large number of dilapidated monasteries were restored and new ones were built throughout the country.

At the beginning of the Kaihuang Era (581–600 AD), [...] (Tanchong) erected a pagoda (within the grounds of the monastery of the capital). [...] In the fourteenth year (594 AD), the pagoda was finished. It was eleven stories high, rising to the sky and known as the tallest building in the capital.⁸

Chandingsi Monastery 禪定寺 was also famous for its pagoda:

(During the Renshou Era, Emperor Wen) established *Chandingsi Monastery* in the southeast of the capital. A seven-story pagoda rose straight into the sky; the hall was very tall and the houses were multi-leveled. The gate equaled the palace *que*, and the garden seemed a heaven. [...] Tanqian was appointed abbot.⁹

Another major event in this period was that Emperor Wen issued a series of edicts to distribute *śarīra* to the major prefectures. Consequently, many pagodas were restored or erected to accommodate the *śarīra*.¹⁰ Archaeological excavations have demonstrated that the pagoda of the

Siyan Monastery was rebuilt in the Sui Dynasty upon having obtained a *śarīra*.¹¹ At the same time, a Multi-compound monastery was mentioned in the documents as well:

In the fifth year of the Kaihuang Era (585 AD), [...] (Emperor Wen) established *Tianjusi Monastery* in Bozhou and *Wudesi Monastery* in Binzhou. Each had twelve compounds from the front to the rear (of the monasteries), which were surrounded by more than one thousand houses accommodating around three hundred monks.¹²

Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that the multi-compound monastery was not as popular as those centered on a pagoda. As mentioned above, the *Linggansi Monastery* of the Sui, predecessor of the *Qinglongsi Monastery* of the Tang in Chang'an, consisted of a single compound lying on a north–south axis, in which the wooden pagoda was placed in front of the Buddha Hall. Su Bai has already demonstrated that such a layout focusing on a pagoda had always been the primary arrangement in Chinese ancient monasteries since the Eastern Han, and lasted until the Sui Dynasty.¹³

After the mid-seventh century, records concerning the pagoda were considerably fewer than those in previous periods; conversely, the description of halls and compounds noticeably increased. Famous Buddhist monasteries in Chang'an City were described as follows:

In (*Daci'ensi Monastery* 大慈恩寺), there were multi-story buildings, halls towering high, and densely built houses. A total of ten or more compounds had 1,897 houses altogether.¹⁴

In (*Ximingsi Monastery* 西明寺), there were ten compounds and over four thousand houses. Its decoration was so luxurious that *Tongtaisi Monastery* of the Liang and *Yongningsi Monastery* of the Wei could not be compared with it.¹⁵

In (*Zhangjingsi Monastery* 章敬寺), there were 4,130 houses, and forty-eight compounds.¹⁶

It is particularly important that many of the names of these compounds in Chang'an monasteries, such as Pure Land Compound (*Jingtu Yuan* 淨土院), *Avalokiteśvara* Compound (*Guanyin Yuan* 觀音院), *Manjusri* Compound (*Manshu Yuan* 曼殊院), Meditation Compound (*Chan Yuan* 禪院), Three Stages Compound (*Sanjie Yuan* 三階

⁷ Xu Guangji 2002.

⁸ Xu Gaoseng Zhuan 續高僧傳, 568, '開皇之初,建浮圖一區。.....十四年(594年)內方始成就。舉高一十一級, 竦耀太虛, 京邑稱最。'

⁹ Xu Gaoseng Zhuan 續高僧傳, 573, '於京邑西南置禪定寺, 架塔七層駭臨雲際, 殿堂高竦房宇重深。周圍等宮闕, 林園如天苑, 舉國崇盛莫有高者。.....即以遷為寺主。'

¹⁰ Guang Hongming Ji 廣弘明集, 213–16.

¹¹ Liaoning Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology and Northern Pagoda Museum of Chaoyang City 2007, 53–58.

¹² Bian Zheng Lun 辯正論, 509, '開皇五年,又於亳州造天居寺、并州造武德寺, 前後各一十二院, 四周閭舍一千餘間, 供養三百許僧。'

¹³ Su Bai 1997 a, b.

¹⁴ Da Tang Daci'en Si Sanzang Fashi Zhuan 大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳, 258, '重樓複殿, 雲閣洞房。凡十餘院, 總一千八百九十七間。'

¹⁵ Da Tang Daci'en Si Sanzang Fashi Zhuan 大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳, 275, '凡有十院, 屋四千餘間。莊嚴之盛, 雖梁之同泰、魏之永寧所不能及也。'

¹⁶ Chang'an Zhi 長安志, 251, '總四千一百三十餘間, 四十八院。'

院), *Prajñā* Compound (*Bore Yuan* 般若院) and Lotus Compound (*Fahua Yuan* 法華院), are mentioned in the *Records of Monasteries and Pagodas*, *Records of Famous Paintings through the Ages*, *Records of Chang'an* and *New Records of Two Capitals*,¹⁷ which indicates these compounds had a close relationship with relevant Buddhist sects. At the same time, although there were a number of monasteries that still retained a pagoda, in most cases, the Buddha Hall began to occupy the central position. Accordingly, the pagoda was normally placed in a secondary position. The *Qinglongsi* and the *Ximingsi* monasteries are the most telling example, despite the fact that they were only partially excavated; the configuration of the Eastern and Western Compounds in the *Qinglongsi Monastery* and the three halls in the *Ximingsi Monastery* indicate their 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' style, showing us a completely different layout compared with earlier monasteries centered on the pagoda. The popularity of this layout in the Tang Dynasty is also illustrated by the aforementioned contemporary Dunhuang wall paintings.

The above-mentioned data from both archaeological excavations and historical documents prove that the architectural layout of Buddhist monasteries in northern China underwent a development from the monastery with the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' style prevailing in the Northern Wei to the 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' style in the Tang Dynasty. This process not only reflects the enculturation trend (sinicization) of Buddhism in early medieval China, but also represents a change in religious thinking. Furthermore, in the development of monastery layout from the Northern Wei to the Tang Dynasty, the crucial role played by the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* in Yecheng, a capital which inherited the essence of the city layout of Luoyang and had a direct impact on the planning of the Sui and Tang Chang'an capitals, can be clearly observed.

¹⁷ Gong Guoqiang 2006, 137–38.

Monastery Layout in Early Medieval East Asia: Archaeological Evidence and Research

Having analyzed the situation of China, we will now look at the neighboring Korean Peninsula and Japanese Archipelago, where Buddhist monasteries had a close relationship with Chinese ones. In particular, many medieval monasteries in Korea and Japan are quite well preserved, and provide us valuable information to explore the evolution and exchange of Buddhist architecture in East Asia.

4.1. The Korean Peninsula: Monastery Layout during the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla Periods

The surveying of Buddhist monasteries in the Korean Peninsula by Japanese archaeologists began in the early twentieth century. After World War II, surveys and scientific excavations were carried out mainly by South Korean research institutions. Dozens of Buddhist monasteries of the Three Kingdoms period and Unified Silla period were surveyed and excavated; their layouts present distinctive features.¹ In order to analyze their relationship with contemporaneous monasteries of China and Japan, I have chosen the monasteries displaying definite epochal traits as a solid basis on which to carry out a comparative study.

According to the arrangement of the Pagoda and Buddha Hall, the monastery layout on the Korean Peninsula can be divided into four main types: 'Central Pagoda and Three Halls', 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear', 'Central Hall and Twin Pagodas' and 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall'. We will look at them one by one.

4.1.1. Goguryeo Kingdom: 'Central Pagoda and Three Halls' monastery layout

The Kingdom of Goguryeo was located in the north of the Korean Peninsula. It emerged as an independent kingdom in 37 BC, and was destroyed by allied Silla and Tang troops in 668 AD. Although Chinese and Korean historical records diverge slightly on details regarding specific people and events, most scholars agree on the fact that Buddhism was introduced into Goguryeo from North China in the fourth century AD.²

Currently, at least four Buddhist monasteries of the Goguryeo Kingdom, all dated between the fifth and sixth centuries, have been surveyed or excavated; they are the *T'osong-ri p'yesa Monastery* 土城里廢寺, the *Songwol-ri Monastery* 上五里佛寺, the *Chongrungsa Monastery* 定陵寺 and the *Ch'ongam-ri p'yesa Monastery* 清岩里廢寺.³

T'osong-ri p'yesa Monastery 土城里廢寺

Location: Pongsan-kun.

Construction date: fifth century.

Excavation: 1987 by North Korean archaeologists.⁴

At the center of the monastery was the octagonal foundation of the stone Pagoda (A). The other main buildings present a rectangular base and comprise the Hall (B) set to the North, the Hall (B₁) set to the west, and the Hall (B₂) set to the east.

The Pagoda (A) was obviously the center of the monastery. Hall (B), located behind the Pagoda, was the main hall in the whole monastery, and has been seen as the Middle Golden Hall; it was much larger than Halls (B₁) and (B₂).

Songwol-ri Monastery 上五里佛寺

Location: Songwol-ri, Sohung-gun, Pyongyang.

Construction date: fifth century.

Excavation: 1939 by Japanese scholars (Fig. 4.1).⁵

According to published data, the foundation of Pagoda (A) marked the center of the monastery; octagonal in shape, its sides were about 8 m long. The foundations of the two large Halls (B₁) and (B₂), measuring 25.8 m by 12.6 m, were located west and east of the Pagoda.

Due to a number of reasons, the partial survey of the above-ground remains could not be completed, and to date the layout of this monastery remains quite unclear. Based on the layout of contemporaneous monasteries, it is reasonable to assume a Middle Golden Hall (B) was built behind the Pagoda (A).

Chongrungsa Monastery 定陵寺

Location: Ryongsan-ri, Ryokpo-guyok, Pyongyang.

Construction date: fifth century.

Excavation: 1974–75 by the Kim Il-sung Comprehensive University.

¹ Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 1991, 246–66.

² Huang Youfu and Chen Jingfu 1993, 28–32; *Gaoseng Zhuan* 高僧傳, 348, 392; *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺事, 986.

³ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 18–27.

⁴ Sketch plan of the *T'osong-ri Monastery* see Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 19, fig. 1.

⁵ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 20–21.

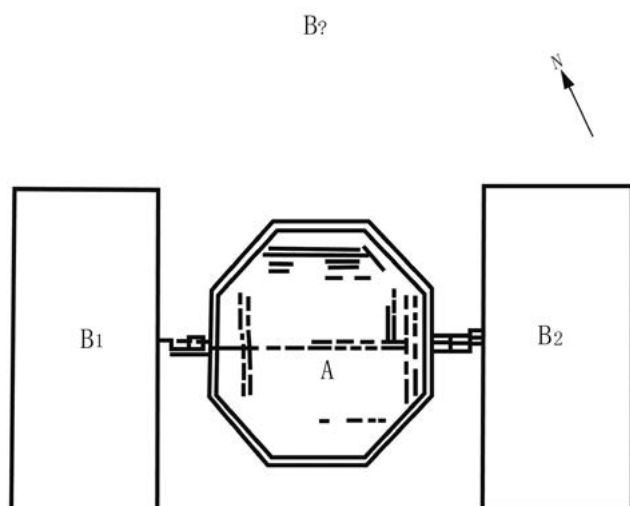


Fig. 4.1: Sketch plan of the *Songwol-ri Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 25, fig. 1).

The scale of this monastery is quite large, measuring 223 m east to west and 132.8 m north to south. According to the excavation report, the monastery consisted of several compounds separated by a portico. There were approximately twenty buildings of various types in the compounds; however, there is a general consensus that many buildings may have been built in successive periods.

The layout of the earliest compound can be clearly identified. An octagonal stone foundation (A) with sides measuring approximately 8.4 m was located at the center of the main compound: this was likely to be the foundation of the Pagoda. It was surrounded by three Halls with foundations measuring approximately 20 m by 14 m, marked respectively by B, B₁ and B₂ in the drawing. The Middle Gate (C) was a three-bay-wide and two-bay-deep structure embedded in the south portico. In the rear part of the compound, there was a large rectangular architectural feature, over 40 m in length, embedded in the north portico: this was certainly a Lecture Hall (D). On both sides of the Middle Golden Hall (B), there were two square buildings that may have been the Sutra Hall and the Bell Tower. Since analogous structures were not mentioned in documents or found in monastery ruins of the period, it is plausible to assume that the buildings were built at a later stage.⁶

Ch'ongam-ri p'yesa Monastery 清岩里廢寺

Location: Daedonggangguyeok, Pyongyang.

Construction date: end of the fifth century.

Excavation: 1938 by Japanese scholars (Fig. 4.2).⁷

⁶ Park Daenam 2005, 28–31; Sketch plan of the *Chongrungs Monastery* see Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 27, fig. 1.

⁷ Akio Koizumi 1940, 5–19.

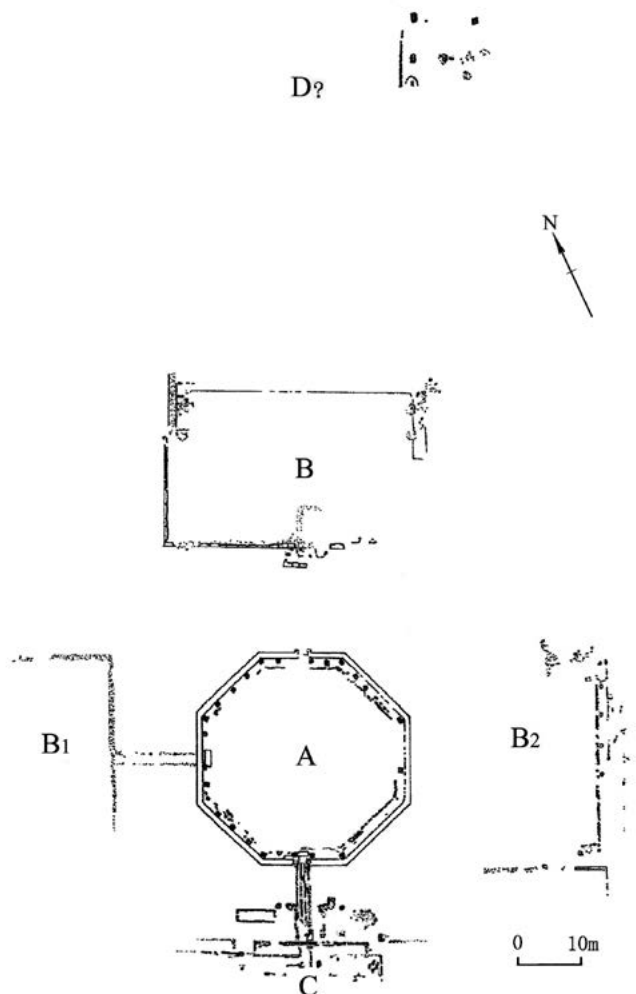


Fig. 4.2: Sketch plan of the *Ch'ongam-ri p'yesa Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 29, fig. 1).

Historical background: According to the *Samguk sagi* (*History of the Three Kingdoms*), the name of this monastery was *Vajra Monastery* 金剛寺, built by King Munja of Goguryeo (高句麗文諮明王 r. 491–519 AD).⁸

The description in the survey is limited to the central area of the monastery, and does not state whether there was a portico or a wall delimiting it; the dimensions of the monastery and the function of some buildings remain unclear.

The octagonal foundation of the Pagoda (A), with sides approximately 10 m in length, marked the center of the monastery; around it, there were the foundations of three Halls, respectively Hall B, B₁ and B₂. The Main Hall (B) measured 32 m by 19 m, obviously larger than the West Hall (B₁) and East Hall (B₂). The Middle Gate (C) was

⁸ *Samguk Sagi* 三國史記, vol. 19, 2, '[In the seventh year of King Munja], in July by the lunar calendar, the *Vajra Temple* was founded. In August by the lunar calendar, the envoy was sent to Wei to pay tribute' (秋七月, 創金剛寺。八月, 遣使入魏朝貢).

located in front of the Pagoda (A), and the ill-preserved foundation found in the rear of the monastery might be the ruins of the Lecture Hall (D). Stone-paved paths connected the Pagoda with the surrounding buildings.

The available archaeological data indicate that the main buildings in the monasteries of the Goguryeo Kingdom were the Middle Gate, a Pagoda, the Golden Hall(s) and porticoes; in addition, in some monasteries, traces of the Lecture Hall were found. The pagoda's foundation was always octagonal in plan, constructed in undressed stone. In many cases, evidence of the roofed corridors connecting different buildings is scarce. The main buildings were provided with drainage facilities, and the paths connecting these buildings were stone-paved. The monasteries of this period, therefore, had a typical 'Central Pagoda and Three Halls' layout.

4.1.2. Baekje Kingdom: 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' monastery layout

The Baekje Kingdom was located in the southeast part of the Korean Peninsula. It emerged as a kingdom in 18 BC, and was destroyed by the allied troops of Silla and Tang in 660 AD. According to the records of *Samguk Sagi*:

In the first year of Baekje King Chimnyu, [...] the Indian Buddhist monk *Marananta* came to Baekje from the Eastern Jin (317–420 AD). King Chimnyu welcomed him in the palace and received him respectfully. This is the beginning of Baekje's Buddhism. In February by the lunar calendar in the second year, a Buddhist monastery was built at Mount *Han* [of the capital].⁹

Despite the fact that the date of the introduction of Buddhism to the Baekje Kingdom was slightly later than to Goguryeo Kingdom, Baekje's Buddhism played a more crucial role in the Korean Peninsula. Not only did many monks from Baekje study Buddhism and Buddhist architectural technology in the Chinese Mainland, some of them also traveled to India to seek the *Dharma*. In the meantime, under the auspices of the royal family, Baekje's Buddhism and Buddhist monastery construction technique had a strong impact on neighboring Silla, as well as on the Japanese Archipelago. A large number of Baekje's monasteries built and utilized from the sixth to the mid-seventh century have been investigated or excavated. Among the most representative monasteries are the *Daetongsa Monastery* 大通寺, *Gunsu-ri Monastery* 軍守里寺, *Jeunglim Monastery* 定林寺, *Neungsan-ri Monastery* 陵山里寺, *Wangheungsa Monastery* 王興寺, *Vajra Monastery* 金剛寺, *Busosan Monastery* 扶蘇山廢寺, *Yongjeong-ri Monastery* 龍井里寺, *Cheonwangsa Monastery* 天王寺, *Jeseok Monastery* 帝釋寺, *Wanggung-ri Monastery* 王宮里寺, *Seongjusa Monastery* 聖住寺 and *Mireuksa Monastery* 彌勒寺.

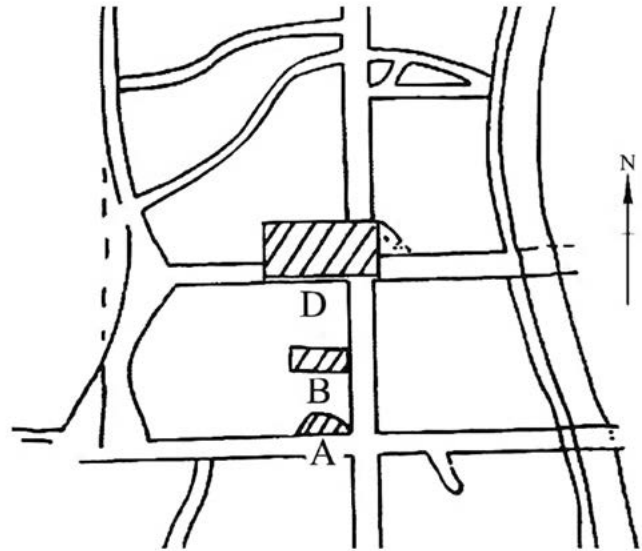


Fig. 4.3: Sketch plan of the *Daetongsa Monastery* (Modified from: Park Daenam 2005, 40, fig. 12).

Daetongsa Monastery 大通寺

Location: Banjuk-dong, Gongju-eup, Gongju-gun, Chungcheongnam-do.

Construction date: early sixth century.

Excavation: surveyed by Japanese scholars during the Japanese Occupation (Fig. 4.3).¹⁰

Historical background: The *Samguk Yusa* (*Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*) states that it was built by King Seong of Baekje 百濟聖王 for the wellbeing of Emperor Wu of the Chinese Liang Dynasty in 527.¹¹

During the survey of this monastery some tile-heads were found; the carved Chinese characters '*Datong* 大通' on them have confirmed the name of the monastery. Although the survey was limited to a small section of the monastery, the location of most important buildings, such as the remains of the Pagoda (A), the Golden Hall (B) and the Lecture Hall (D), were identified: they were found aligned along the north-south axis, with the Golden Hall behind the Pagoda.

Gunsu-ri Monastery 軍守里寺

Location: hilly area near the Baengma-gang (White-Horse River), Buyeo.

Construction date: sixth century.

Excavations: surveyed in the 1930s by Japanese scholars;¹² excavated by the Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage in 2005 and 2007 (Fig. 4.4).¹³

⁹ *Samguk Sagi* 三國史記, vol. 24, 9–10, ' (枕流王元年) ,胡僧摩羅難陀自晉至。王迎之, 致宮內, 禮敬焉。佛法始於此。二年, 春二月, 創佛寺於漢山。'

¹⁰ Karube Jion 1971, 25–33.

¹¹ *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺事, 988.

¹² Mosaku Ishida 1937, 45–55.

¹³ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 32–35.

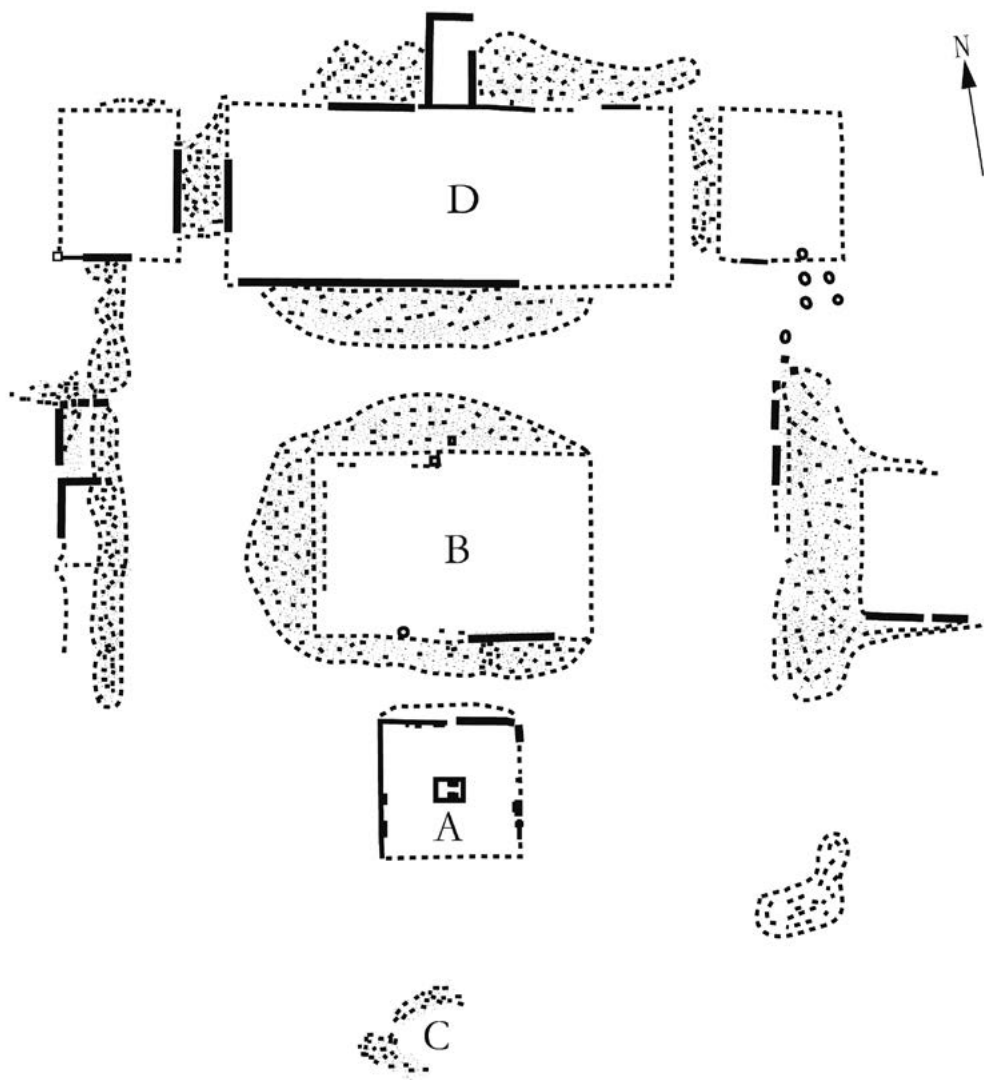


Fig. 4.4: Sketch plan of the *Gunsu-ri Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 34, fig. 1).

The most important buildings of the *Gunsu-ri Monastery* were the Middle Gate (C), the Pagoda (A), the Golden Hall (B) and the Lecture Hall (D), all aligned along the north-south axis, with the Golden Hall (B) behind the Pagoda (A). The plan of the Pagoda's foundation was a square with sides approximately 14 m long; on it, there was likely a multi-story pavilion-style building. The plan of the Golden Hall (B) was a transverse rectangular nine-bay structure with dimensions of 22.27 m by 20.2 m. The Lecture Hall (D) was placed in the rear of the monastery, and two square foundations were found one on either side of it, presumably the remains of a Sutra Hall and a Bell Tower. Moreover, the traces of a portico were also found outside the monastery.¹⁴

Jeunglim Monastery 定林寺

Location: Sabi City site 泗泚城遺址 of Buyeo, the capital of Baekje from 538 to 660 AD.

Construction date: mid-sixth century.

Excavations: by Japanese scholars from 1942–43, 1979–80 and 1984 by the Museum of Chungnam National University;¹⁵ between 2008 and 2010 by the National Institute of Cultural Heritage (Fig. 4.5).¹⁶

Through a series of archaeological excavations, all the important buildings, such as the Middle Gate (C), Pagoda (A), Golden Hall (B), Lecture Hall (D) and portico were completely unearthed, and thus the layout of the whole monastery was exposed. The plan of the *Jeunglim Monastery* was a longitudinal rectangle, which extended 120 m north to south and 62 m east to west. The main buildings of the monasteries of the Baekje Period were aligned with the north-south axis; the Middle Gate (C) and Lecture Hall (D) were embedded in the front and rear sections of the portico at either end of the axis. The Middle

¹⁴ Park Daenam 2005, 34–35.

¹⁵ Yun Moo-byung 1991, 32–55.

¹⁶ Buyeo National Institute of Cultural Heritage 2011 b, 47–60.

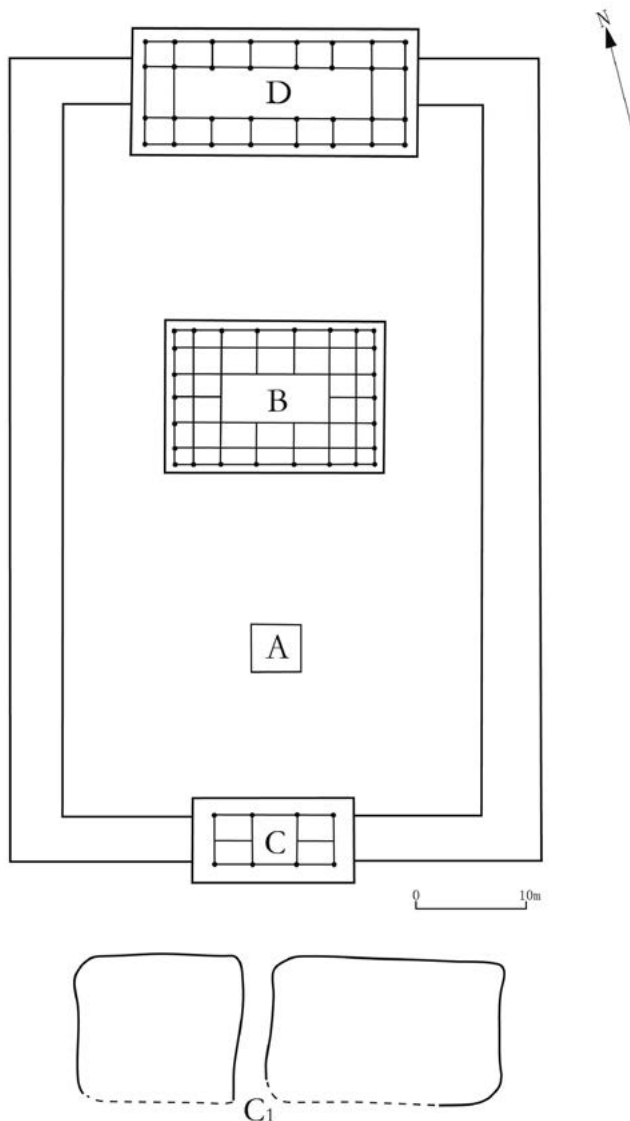


Fig. 4.5: Sketch plan of the Jeunglim Monastery (Modified from: Park Daenam 2005, 38, fig. 10).

Gate (C) was a three-bay-wide and one-bay-deep wooden structure, measuring 13.1 m by 7.1 m. In front of the Middle Gate, traces of the South Gate (C_1) were found. An unusual discovery deserves our attention: two lotus pools, one on each side of the South Gate (C_1), were identified and excavated. The pagoda (A) was a five-story stone structure 8.33 m in height, placed slightly south of the monastery center. The Golden Hall (B) was set behind the Pagoda and, judging from the traces of column foundations, it was a five-bay-wide and three-bay-deep structure, whose dimensions were 20.55 m by 15.6 m. The Lecture Hall (D) was a seven-bay-wide and three-bay-deep structure, measuring 24.64 m by 10.7 m; it was reconstructed during the Goryeo Period (高麗時期 918–1392 AD).

Neungsan-ri Monastery 陵山里寺

Location: approximately 4 kilometers southeast of Buyeo City

Construction date: mid-sixth century.

Excavation: since 1992 by the Buyeo National Museum (Fig. 4.6).¹⁷

Judging from the inscription on the unearthed *śarīra* container, the monastery was built in 567 AD. Its plan was a transverse rectangle, with all important buildings placed on the north–south axis, with the Middle Gate (C), the Pagoda (A), the Golden Hall (B) and the Lecture Hall (D) arranged in sequence. The wooden pavilion-style Pagoda was square in plan with a foundation 11.7–11.8 m long. The Golden Hall (B) was a five-bay-wide and three-bay-deep structure 21.6 m by 16.16 m at the base. The Lecture Hall (D) lay at the back of the monastery, and was embedded into the portico, which surrounded the whole monastery. In addition, there were some annexed buildings embedded in the portico, but their functions remain unclear.

Wangheungsa Monastery 王興寺

Location: about 1 kilometer west of the Sabi City.

Construction date: late sixth century.

Excavations: by the Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage in 2003 and 2007 (Fig. 4.7).¹⁸

Historical background: According to the inscription found on an unearthed bronze *śarīra* casket, the monastery was initially built by Baekje King Chang in memory of his deceased son in 577.¹⁹

The plan of the Wangheungsa Monastery was also a longitudinal rectangle with the Middle Gate (C), the Pagoda (A), the Golden Hall (B) and the Lecture Hall (D) aligned along the north–south axis. The wooden pavilion-style Pagoda was square in plan, with sides 12.2 m long. The Golden Hall (B) was a transverse rectangle in plan, 22.7 m by 16.6 m wide, located behind the Pagoda (A). The whole monastery was surrounded by a portico, and the Lecture Hall (D) was embedded in its rear section. On the lateral sides of the portico, there were some embedded annexed buildings, likely the Monks' Quarters.

Vajra Monastery 金剛寺

Location: Geumgok-ri, Eunsan-myeon, Buyeo-gun, Chungcheongnam-do, about 15 kilometers north of the capital of Baekje.

¹⁷ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 36–39.

¹⁸ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 40–43.

¹⁹ Buyeo National Museum and Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2008, 53. The inscription may be interpreted as follows: 'On the fifteenth day of the second lunar month of the Jeongyu Year [577 AD], Baekje King Chang established this monastery on behalf of his deceased son. When the two pieces of relics were buried, through a divine [miracle] they transformed into three' (丁酉年二月十五日, 百濟王昌爲亡王子立刹。本舍利二枚葬時, 神化爲三。). This discovery corrects the records in *Samguk Sagi* and *Samguk Yusa* stating that the monastery was initially built in 600.

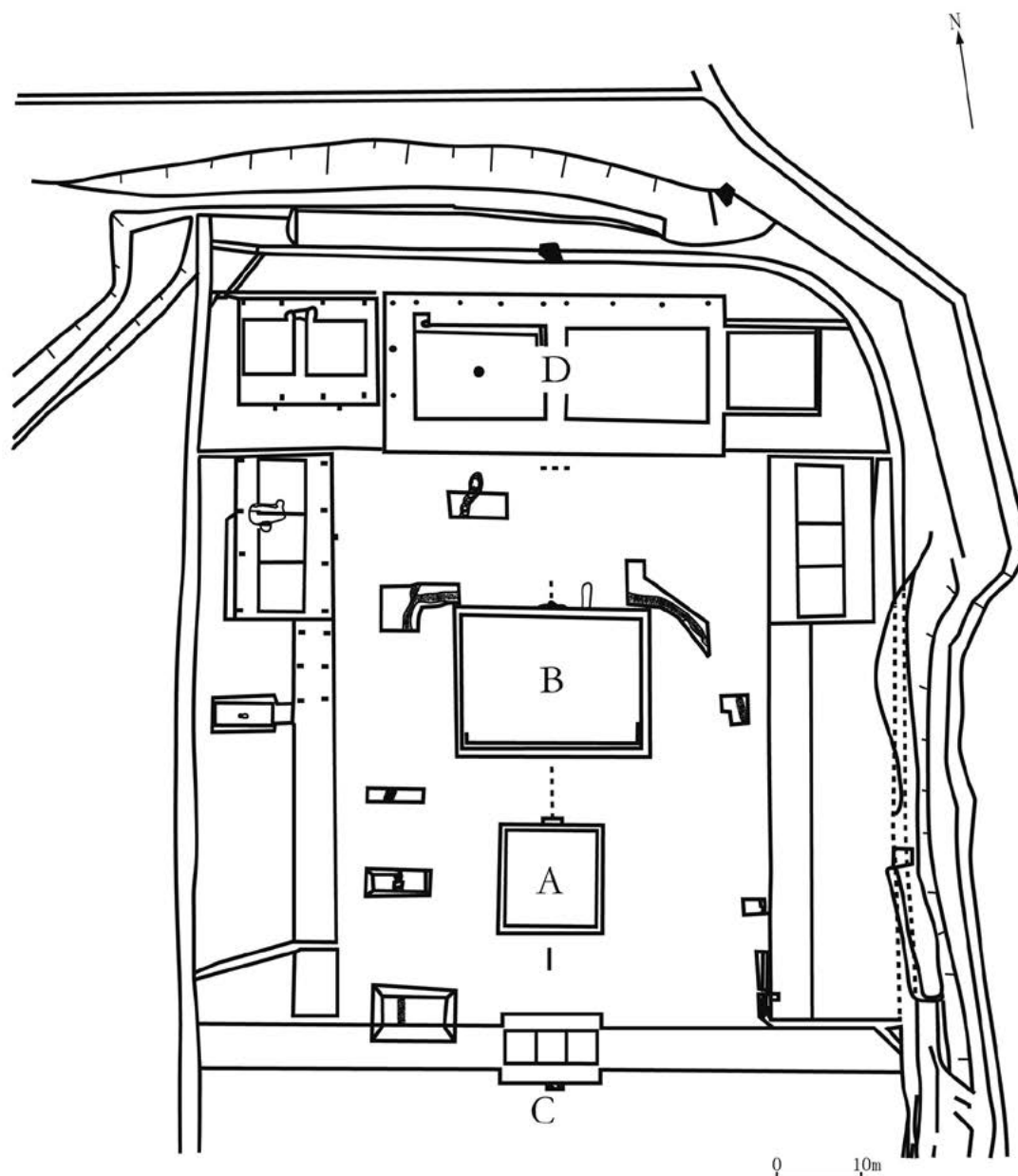


Fig. 4.6: Sketch plan of the *Neungsan-ri Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 37, fig. 1).

Construction date: presumably seventh century.

Excavation: 1964 by the Korean National Museum (Fig. 4.8).²⁰

The monastery faced west, approximately 170 m long east to west and 150 m wide north to south, with the Middle Gate (C), the Pagoda (A), the Golden Hall (B), the Lecture Hall (D) and the Monks' Quarters (G) aligned along the east–west axis. The Golden Hall (B) was arranged behind the Pagoda (A), while the Middle Gate (C) and Lecture Hall (D) were embedded into the portico. The Monks' Quarters (G) were placed behind the Lecture Hall (D). Outside the portico surrounding the monastery, the outer wall of the building formed the western perimeter wall.

Busosan Monastery 扶蘇山廢寺

Location: on top of a small hill near the Baekje Capital.

Construction date: seventh century.

Excavations: by Japanese scholars in 1942; in the 1980s, by the Korean National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (Fig. 4.9).²¹

The monastery had a longitudinal rectangular layout and faced south, with the Middle Gate (C), the Pagoda (A) and the Golden Hall (B) aligned on the north–south axis. Since the excavation was confined to the south part of the monastery, the exact location of the Lecture Hall could not be identified.

²⁰ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 46–49.

²¹ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 48–49.

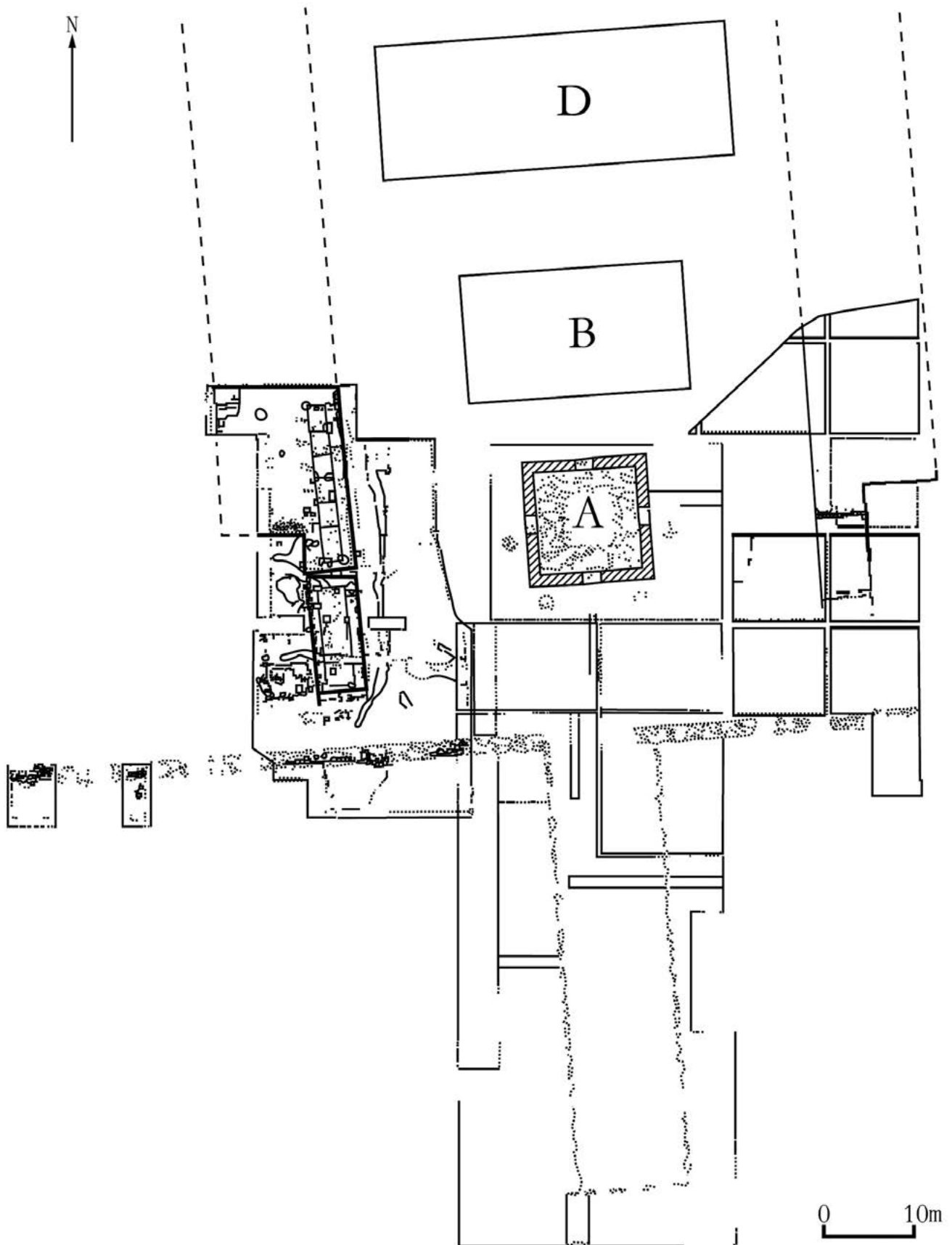


Fig. 4.7: Sketch plan of the *Wangheungsa Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 42, fig. 1).

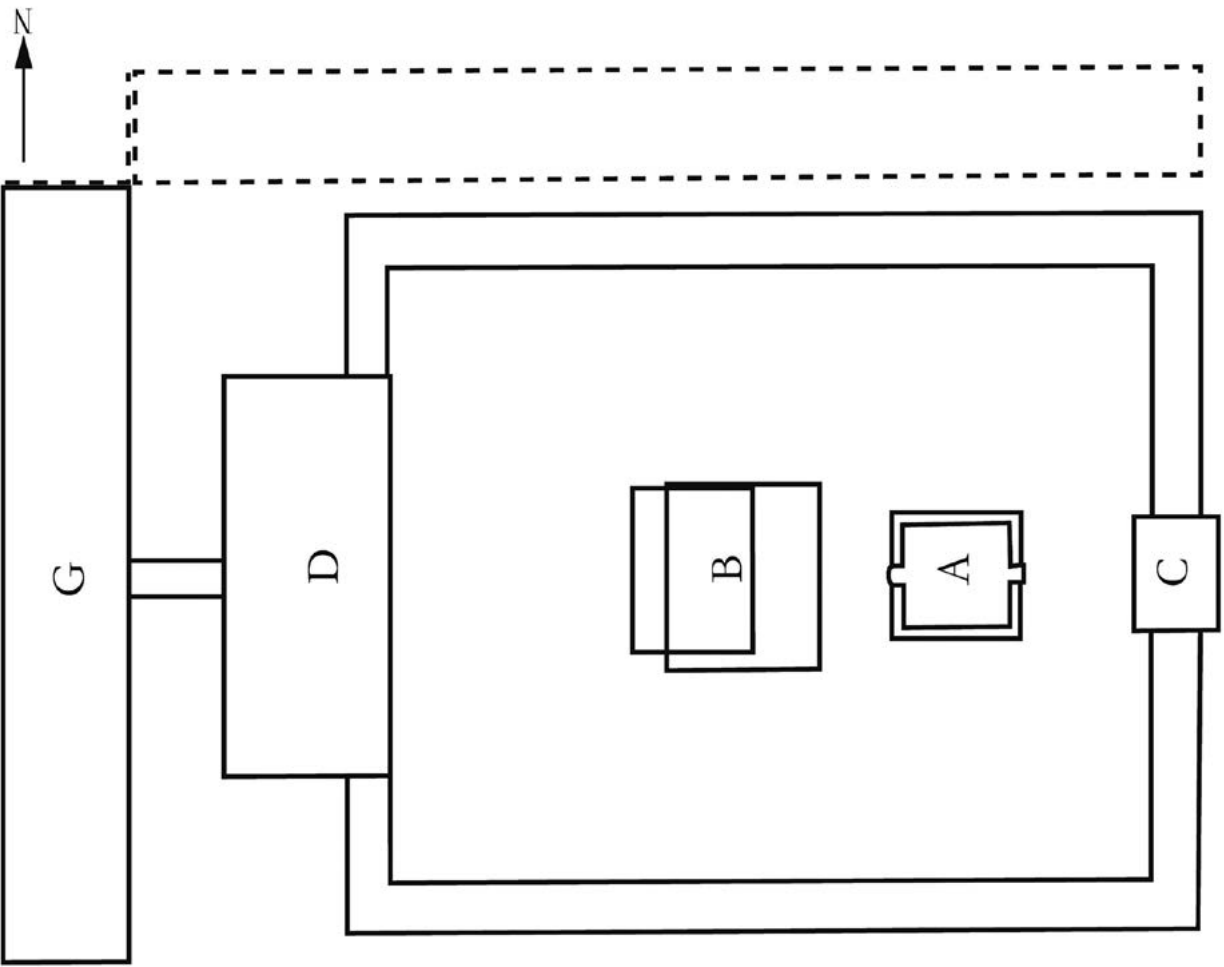


Fig. 4.8: Sketch plan of the *Vajra Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 48, fig. 1).

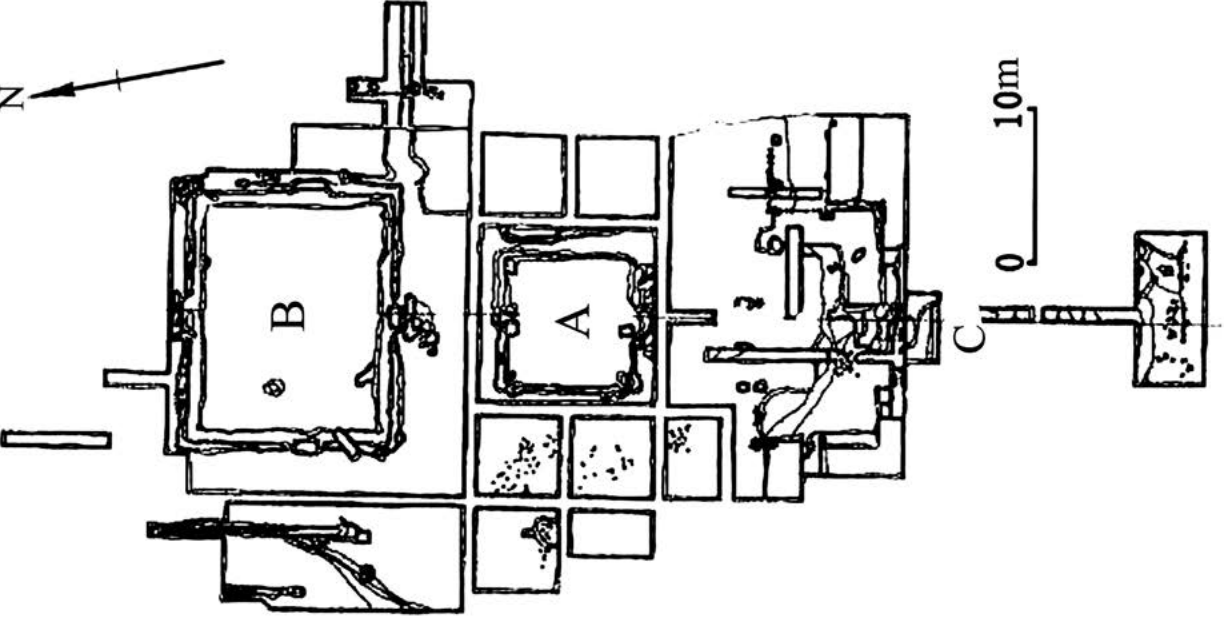


Fig. 4.9: Sketch plan of the *Busosan Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 49, fig. 1).

Yongjeong-ri Monastery 龍井里寺

Location: Yongjeong-ri, Buyeo

Construction date: approximately seventh century.

Excavation: 1991–92 by the Buyeo National Institute of Cultural Heritage (Fig. 4.10).²²

Due to the poor condition of preservation of the site, only incomplete traces of the wooden Pagoda (A) and of the Golden Hall (B) were found. Judging from the unearthed tiles and lotus tile-heads, it is plausible to assume that it was built even before the seventh century and had a monastery plan of Baekje style.

Jeseok Monastery 帝釋寺

Location: Iksan near Sabi.

Construction date: early seventh century.

Excavation: between 2007 and 2009 by the Buyeo National Institute of Cultural Heritage (Fig. 4.11).²³

Historical background: According to relevant remains, it was built during the reign of King Mu (百濟武王 r. 600–641 AD).

The monastery faced south and had a longitudinal rectangular plan. The Middle Gate (C), Pagoda (A), Golden Hall (B) and Lecture Hall (D) were arranged along the north–south axis. Stone-paved paths connected the main buildings, which were surrounded by the portico. The Pagoda (A) was a seven-story pavilion, five or seven bays wide. The Golden Hall (B) was placed behind the Pagoda (A): its 31.8 m by 23.6 m dimensions made it one the largest Golden Halls of the period.²⁴

Mireuksa Monastery 彌勒寺

Location: west of Mireuk Mountain, Iksan-si, Chollabuk-do.

Construction date: early seventh century.

Excavation: from 1981–85 by the Korean National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (Fig. 4.12).²⁵

Historical background: According to the records of *Samguk Yusa*, King Mu of Baekje (600–641 AD) and his wife saw a vision of the Buddha Maitreya at a pond on the Yonghwasan Mountain. He issued an edict to fill in the pond and established the *Mireuksa Monastery*. A monastery with three sets of pagodas and halls were set

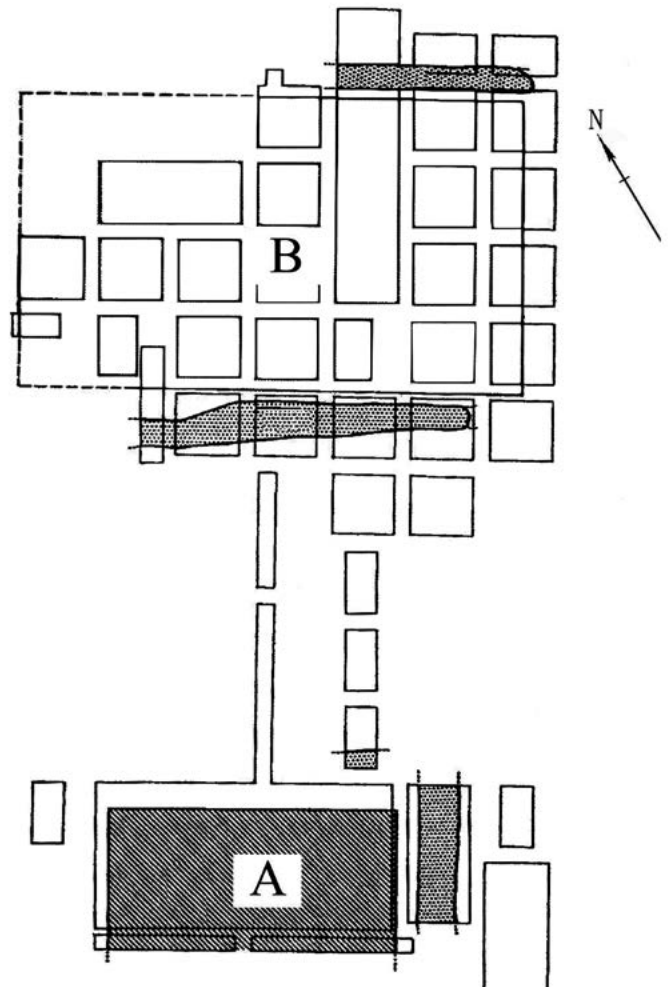


Fig. 4.10: Sketch plan of the *Yongjeong-ri Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 56, fig. 1).

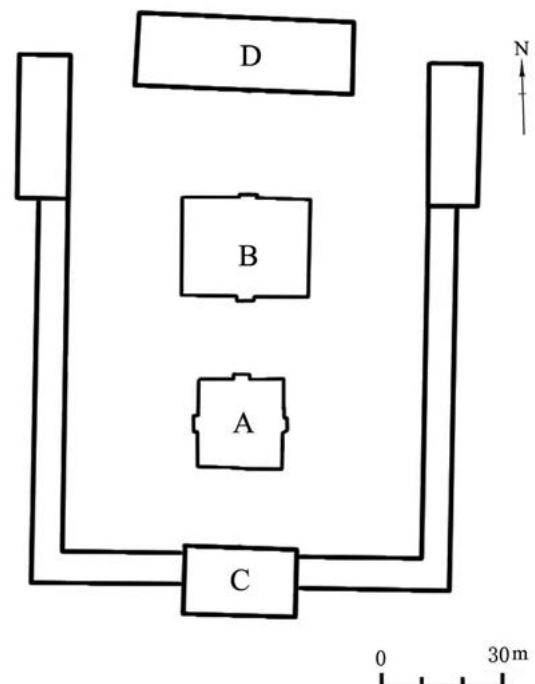


Fig. 4.11: Sketch plan of the *Jeseok Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Institute of Cultural Heritage 2011 a, 36, fig. 3).

²² Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 54–57.

²³ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2011 a, 22–37.

²⁴ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 50–51.

²⁵ Chang Kyung-ho 1991, 56–93.

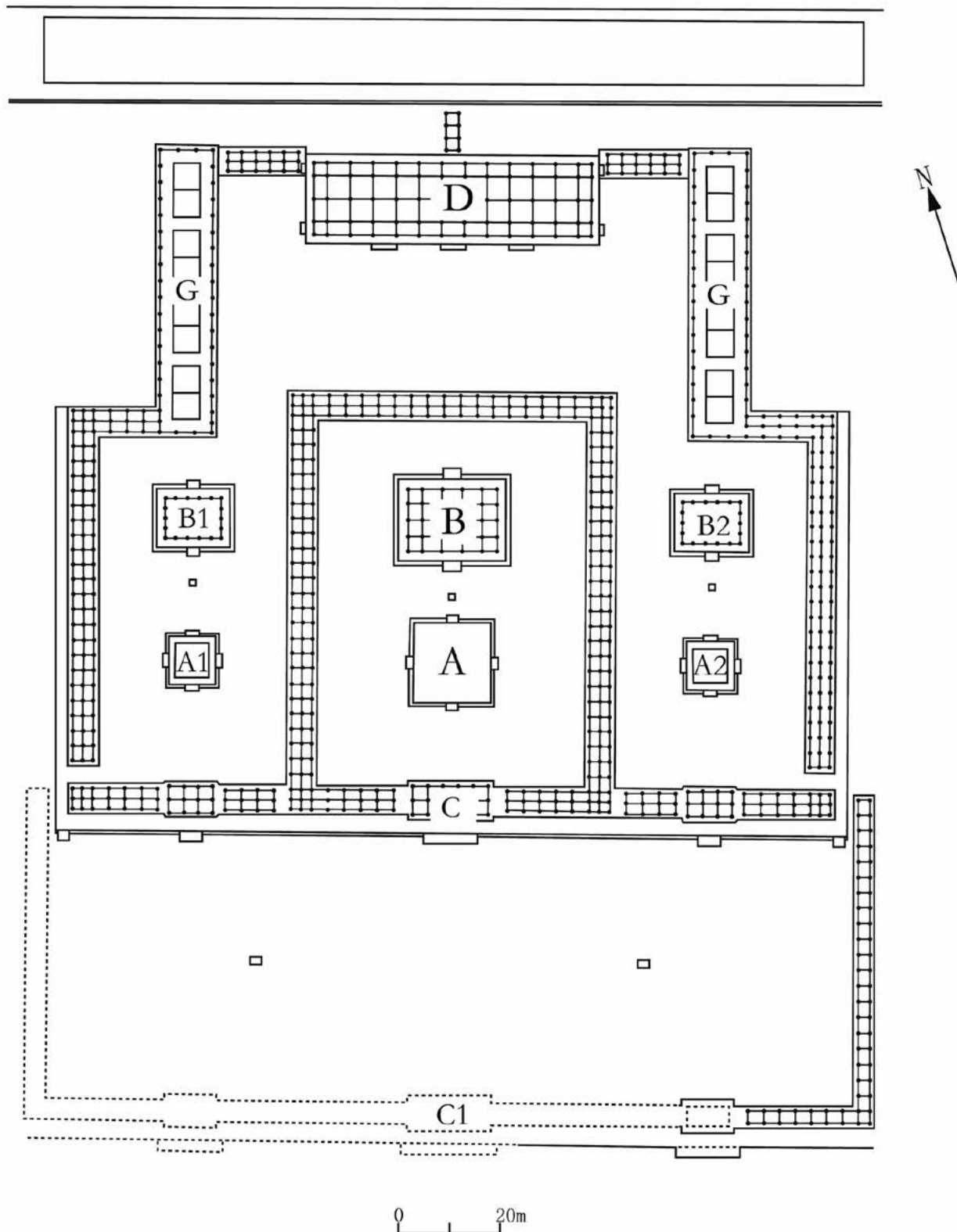


Fig. 4.12: Sketch plan of the *Mireuksa Monastery* (Modified from: Chang Kyung-ho 1991, 68, fig. 2).

up, symbolizing the Three Dragon Flower Assemblies of Maitreya 彌勒三會.²⁶ The nine-story wooden pagoda erected at the center of the Middle Compound was said to be the work of the famous Baekje craftsman Abiji.

²⁶ *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺事, 979.

As the largest Buddhist monastery of Baekje, the *Mireuksa Monastery* displayed many hitherto unknown data about Baekje architecture and monastery layout. The reverse 'T'-shaped plan of the monastery, measuring 171.4 m north to south and 146.1 m east to west, consisted of three adjacent compounds, each with its own Middle Gate, Pagoda and Golden Hall. Thus, the *Mireuksa Monastery* had three

self-contained monasteries in a 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' layout. The Pagoda (A) in the middle compound was a timber construction set on a square foundation with sides 17.6 m long. The Golden Hall (B) of the Middle Compound located behind the Pagoda was a five-bay-wide and four-bay-deep structure measuring 25.9 m by 20.2 m. The Pagodas (A₁, A₂) in the Western and Eastern Compounds were made of stone, while the Golden Halls (B₁, B₂) were similar in structure to the one in the Middle Compound, but slightly smaller in size.

Between the Middle Gate (C) and South Gate (C₁), there was a large forecourt. The whole monastery and each compound were surrounded and separated by porticoes. The sole Lecture Hall (D) was still placed in the rear of the monastery, and many Korean researchers have assumed that the buildings in the vicinity of the Lecture Hall (D) may have been the remains of the Monks' Quarters (G). In addition, draining facilities and pathways were found in large numbers close to the main buildings.

In brief, the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' style was the typical layout of monasteries in the Baekje Kingdom. Their plan was always a longitudinal rectangle, and the main buildings were aligned on the north-south axis. A timber, or stonework, pavilion-style pagoda marked the core of the monastery, while the Golden Hall stood behind it. The whole monastery was surrounded by a portico, with the Lecture Hall embedded in the rear. Usually, there was a small South Gate in front of the Middle Gate, and the Monks' Quarters were arranged at the back of the monastery, in proximity to the Lecture Hall. Some special cases, such as the form with three pagodas and three halls in the *Mireuksa Monastery*, could be seen as variants of the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' layout.

4.1.3. Silla Kingdom: 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' and 'Central Pagoda and Three Halls' monastery layouts

Though known through the envoys of the Goguryeo and Baekje Kingdoms at an early period, Buddhism did not have a lasting influence on Silla's royal family and common people. Actually, Buddhism was not introduced into Silla through official channels until the sixth century. In 527, however, Silla established formal diplomatic relations with South China. Emperor Wu of Liang sent the monk Yuanbiao 元表 to Silla with Buddhist scriptures, a Buddha image as a gift and to preach the *Dharma*.²⁷ Despite the resistance of many aristocrats, King Beopheung (法興王 r. 514–540 AD) accepted Buddhism, and during his reign Buddhism became fairly popular throughout Silla.²⁸ Through the efforts of his successor, King Jinheung (眞興王 r. 540–576 AD), Buddhism was endowed with the special function of protecting the country and making it prosper. Consequently, it almost became the state religion

of Silla. Not too many Silla monasteries are extant; only the *Hwangnyongsa Monastery* 皇龍寺 and *Bunhwangsa Monastery* 芬皇寺 have been surveyed and excavated in detail by Korean archaeologists.

Hwangnyongsa Monastery 皇龍寺

Location: in a valley near Toham Mountain, Gyeongju.

Construction date: mid-sixth century.

Excavation: 1976 by the Korean National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (Picture 4.1).²⁹

Historical background: According to the records of *Samguk Sagi*, the construction of the *Hwangnyongsa Monastery* begun in 553.³⁰ Under the patronage of King Jinheung of Silla, it was designed as a place where monks might pray for the welfare of the nation.³¹ As one of the most important State Monasteries in the Korean Peninsula, the *Hwangnyongsa Monastery* underwent three large-scale reconstructions in 574, 754 and 1095; as a result, its layout underwent some major changes. The monastery was burned down and definitely abandoned in 1238, due to the war between Mongolia and Goryeo.

By virtue of the stratigraphic sequence and the structural intrusions of different buildings, the monastery layout in each period could be identified and restored.³² The *Original Hwangnyongsa Monastery* was nearly square in plan, 288 m in length, and consisted of three adjacent compounds surrounded by a portico. The Central Compound was the main one, while the Eastern and Western Compounds were separated by two narrow roofed corridors. In the Central Compound, the Middle Gate (C), the Pagoda (A), the Golden Hall (B) and the Lecture Hall (D) were aligned along the north-south axis; however, there was nothing to be found in the Eastern and Western Compounds, suggesting that the monastery in its initial phases might display a 'Pagoda in Front and One Hall in the Rear' layout, probably based on the prototype of Baekje (Fig. 4.13).

During the first reconstruction of the *Hwangnyongsa Monastery*, the portico between the Central Compound and the side compounds was dismantled; thus the original three compounds were merged into a larger one in the second phase. The extant foundation of the Pagoda (A) was a seven-bay-wide and seven-bay-deep structure, 32 m in length. This was the largest and tallest nine-story wooden pagoda in the Korea Peninsula, built under the auspices of Queen Seondeok (善德女王 r. 632–647 AD) and erected by Baekje's craftsmen in 645.³³ On either side of the Middle Golden Hall (B), two slightly smaller Halls (B₁,

²⁷ *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺事, 1018.

²⁸ *Samguk Sagi* 三國史記, vol. 4, 3–5.

²⁹ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 86–97.

³⁰ *Samguk Sagi* 三國史記, vol. 4, 7.

³¹ *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺事, 990.

³² Kim Dong-hyun 1991, 94–135.

³³ *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺事, 991.



Picture 4.1: *Reconstructed Hwangnyongsa Monastery in Gyeongju, Korea.*

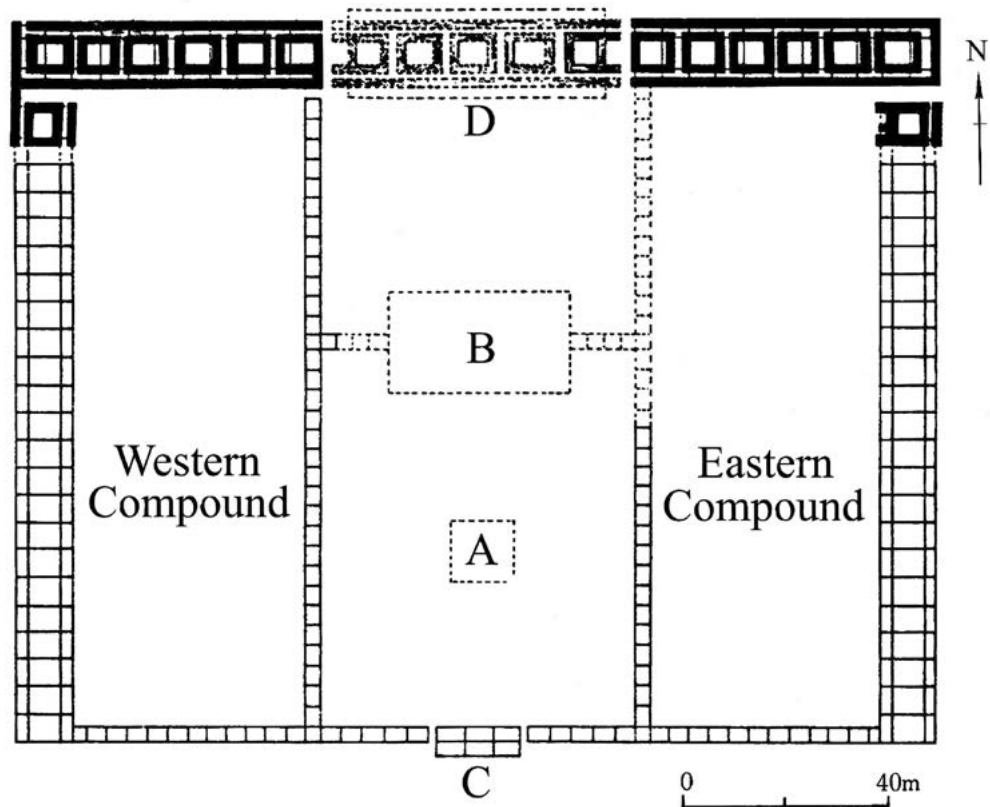


Fig. 4.13: Sketch plan of the *Original Hwangnyongsa Monastery* (Modified from: Kim Dong-hyun 1991, 134, fig. 1)

B₂) were built, and therefore the layout consisted of one Pagoda and three Golden Halls, indicating the impact of Goguryeo's monastery layout on Silla's architecture (Fig. 4.14).

Basically, the second and third reconstructions of the *Hwangnyongsa Monastery* were on the basis of the first one; a square Sutra Hall and a Bell Tower were erected in front of the Pagoda: these were quite common buildings in late Buddhist monasteries (Figs 4.15, 4.16).

Bunhwangsa Monastery 芬皇寺

Location: about 140 m north of *Hwangnyoungsa*, near Toham Mountain, Gyeongju, Korea.

Construction date: mid-seventh century.

Excavations: by Japanese scholars in 1915; from 1990–92, by the Gyeongju National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (Picture 4.2).³⁴

Historical background: According to the records of *Samguk Sagi* and *Samguk Yusa*, this monastery was built in the first year of the Renping Era (634 AD), after Queen Seondeok ascended the throne.³⁵

The monastery was rebuilt several times through history, and its layout underwent significant changes. Evidence emerging from archaeological excavation indicated that the original *Bunhwangsa Monastery* faced south. The Pagoda (A) was a stonework multi-story structure, supposedly seven or nine stories high. The Middle Golden Hall (B) was placed about 36 m north of the Pagoda, which was a three-bay-wide and three-bay-deep structure, measuring 26.6 m by 15.4 m. The earliest Middle Golden Hall was rebuilt several times, and the extant one, facing west, was completed in the third reconstruction. It is worth noting that traces of the initial West and East Golden Halls (B₁, B₂) were discovered, illustrating a layout with one Pagoda and Three Golden Halls.³⁶ Just like the first reconstruction of the *Hwangnyongsa Monastery*, this discovery suggests that the original layout of the *Bunhwangsa Monastery* might also have been based on a Goguryeo prototype (Fig. 4.17).

There are not many extant or unearthed Silla monasteries. Judging from available materials, their layouts do not display any new features. It seems that the earliest Silla monasteries evolved from contemporary Baekje ones, i.e. from the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' layout, while the later ones were obviously influenced by the layout of the Goguryeo monasteries, i.e. the 'Central Pagoda and Three Halls' layout.

4.1.4. Unified Silla: 'Central Hall and Twin Pagodas' and 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' monastery layouts

In the mid-seventh century, through an alliance with the Chinese Tang Dynasty, Silla began the war to unify the Korean Peninsula. In 660, King Taejong Muyeol (太宗武烈王 r. 654–661 AD) conquered the Baekje Kingdom, while his successor, King Munmu (文武王 r. 661–681 AD), subjugated the Goguryeo Kingdom in 668. The history of the Korean Peninsula entered the Unified Silla Period (668–935 AD). After a series of military and diplomatic struggles, Unified Silla acquired the territory south of the Taedong River 大同江. Due to the long-term war and unstable social conditions, Buddhism, as an important tool to protect the state and to solidify the nation, had been further strengthened.³⁷ Surveyed and excavated monasteries of this period include the *Sacheonwangsa Monastery* 四天王寺, the *Kamunsa Monastery* 感恩寺, the *Mangdeoksa Monastery* 望德寺, the *Cheongundong Monastery* 千軍洞寺, the *Bulguksa Monastery* 佛國寺, the *Cheonweonsa Monastery* 天官寺, the *Ganweolsa Monastery* 潤月寺, the *Goseonsa Monastery* 高仙寺 and the *Jigoksa Monastery* 智谷寺. Despite the fact that not all of these monasteries were fully excavated, features of their layouts are sufficiently clear.³⁸

Sacheonwangsa Monastery 四天王寺

Location: southern slopes of Mount Nangsan, Gyeongju, near the Mausoleum of Queen Seondeok.

Construction date: late seventh century.

Excavation: since 2007 by the Gyeongju National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (Picture 4.3).³⁹

Historical background: According to the records of *Samguk Sagi*, the monastery was built by King Munmu in 679.⁴⁰ During the war between Silla and Tang China, mysterious religious rituals were held in this monastery to help the Silla army win the final victory.⁴¹

The ongoing archaeological excavation is aimed at unearthing the entire monastery. The monastery is well preserved, and almost all the bases of the columns were found in their original positions. The ground plan, delimited by the portico, was nearly a square. The Middle Gate (C), the Golden Hall (B) and the Lecture Hall (D) were aligned along the north–south axis, with the Golden Hall (B) occupying the center of the monastery. Judging from the location of the bases of the columns, the Golden Hall (B) was a 21.2 m by 14.9 m five-bay-wide and three-

³⁴ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 98–100.

³⁵ *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺事, 986; *Samguk Sagi* 三國史記, vol. 5, 1.

³⁶ Park Daenam 2005, 58–61.

³⁷ He Jingsong 2008, 79–82.

³⁸ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 108–35.

³⁹ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 108–11.

⁴⁰ *Samguk Sagi* 三國史記, vol. 7, 16.

⁴¹ *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺事, 972.

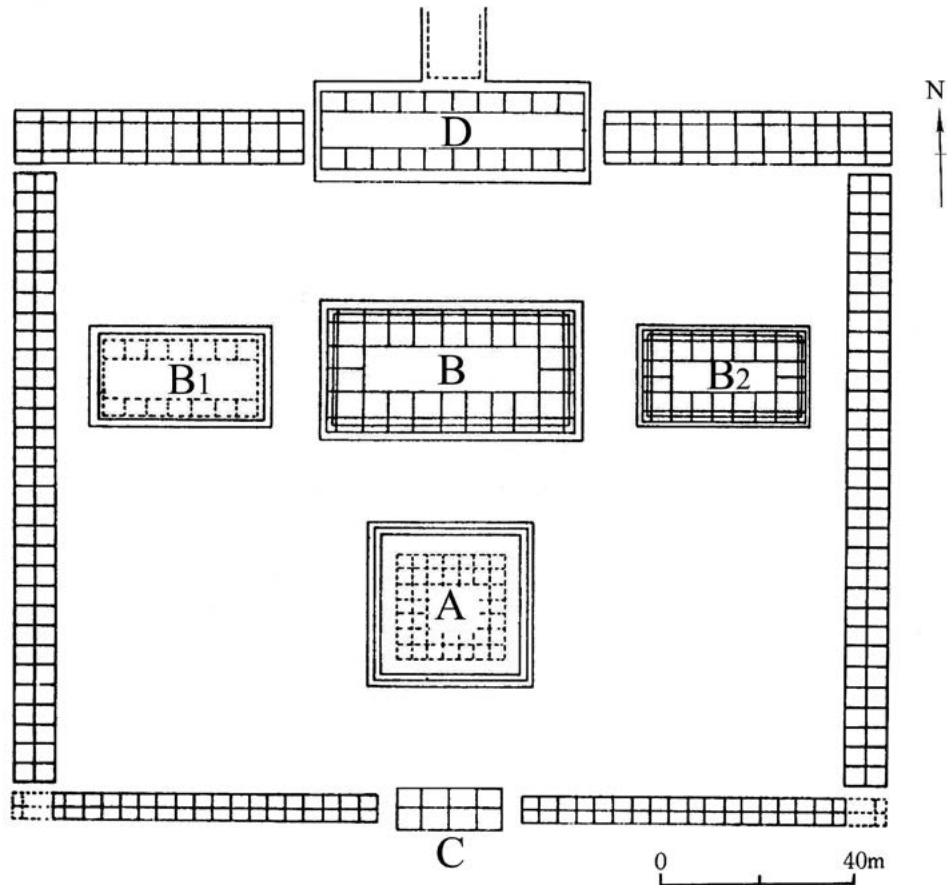


Fig. 4.14: Sketch plan of the *First Reconstructed Hwangnyongsa Monastery* (Modified from: Kim Dong-hyun 1991, 134, fig. 2).

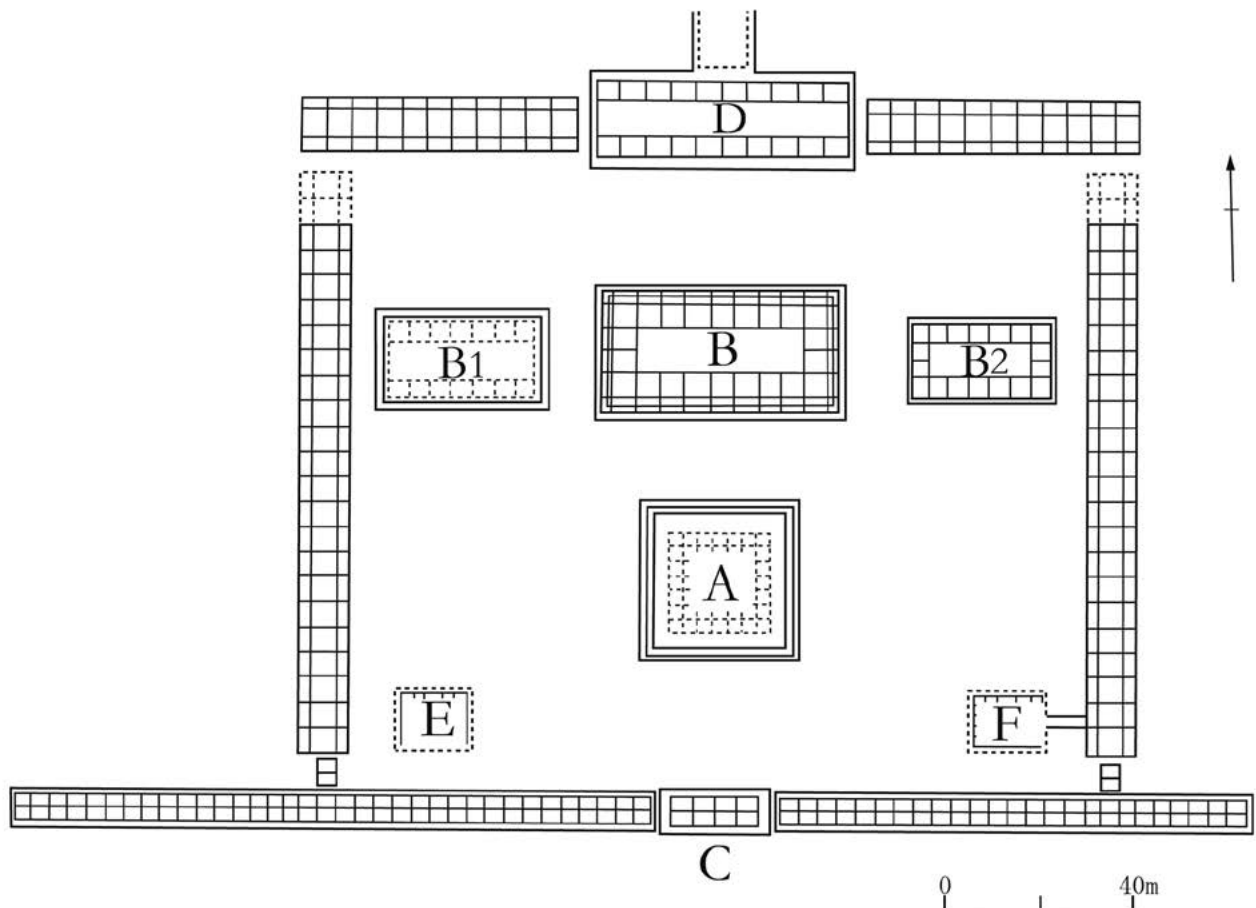


Fig. 4.15: Sketch plan of the *Second Reconstructed Hwangnyongsa Monastery* (Modified from: Kim Dong-hyun 1991, 135, fig. 3).

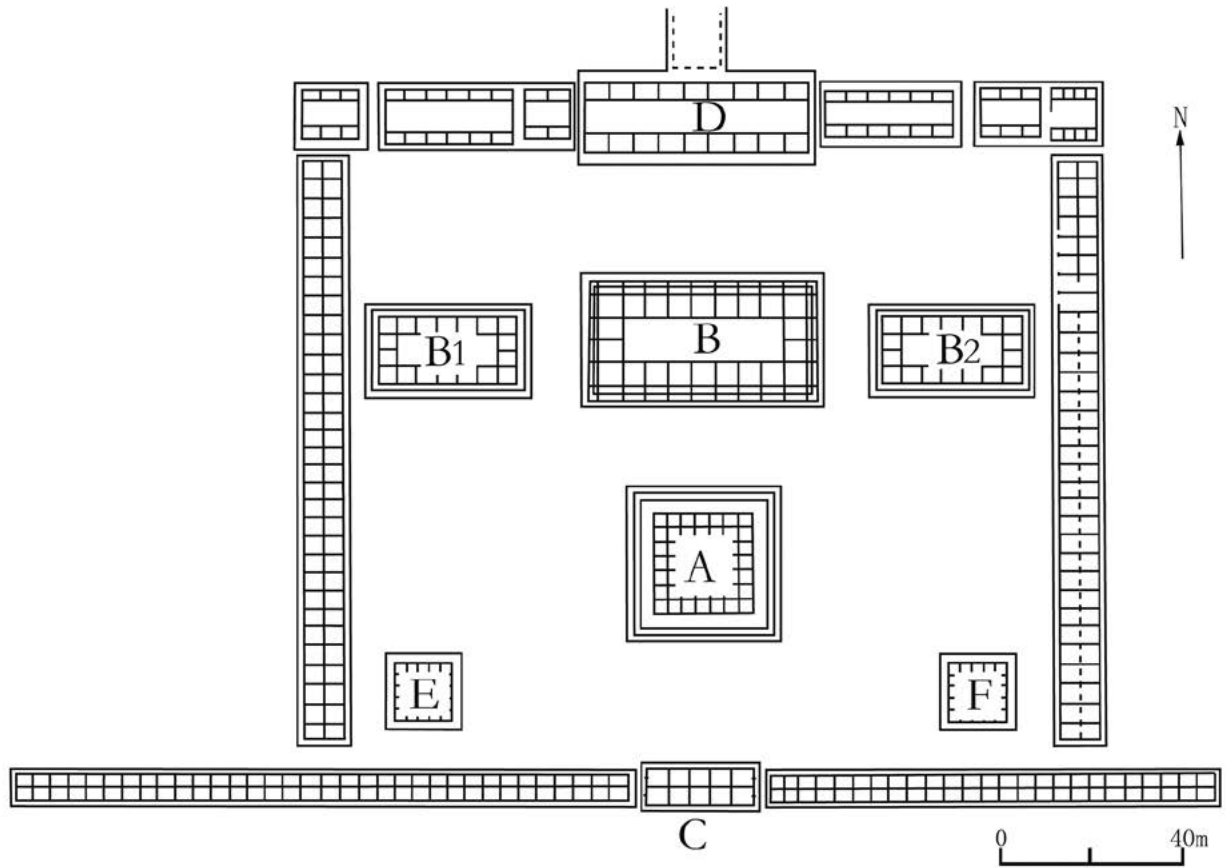


Fig. 4.16: Sketch plan of the *Third Reconstructed Hwangnyongsa Monastery* (Modified from: Kim Dong-hyun 1991, 135, fig. 4).



Picture 4.2: *Bunhwangsa Monastery* in Gyeongju, Korea.

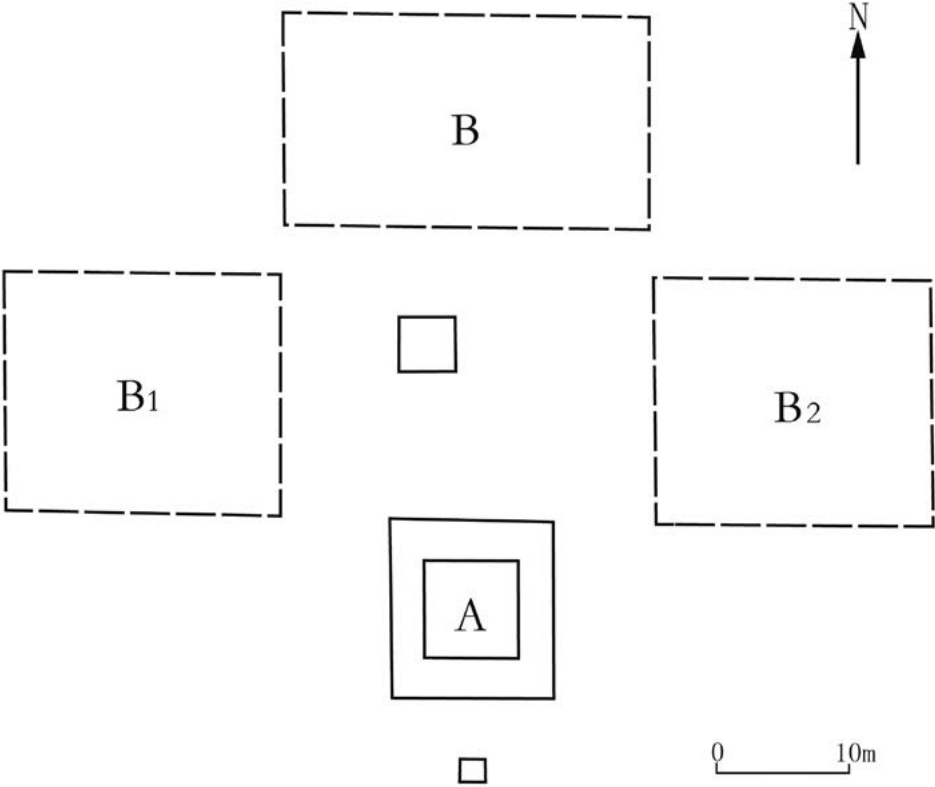


Fig. 4.17: Sketch plan of the *Bunhwangsa Monastery* (Modified from: Park Daenam 2005, 59, fig. 24).



Picture 4.3: *Sacheonwangsa Monastery* in Gyeongju, Korea

bay-deep wooden structure. On either side of the Golden Hall (B), there were two roofed corridors connecting it with the east and west portico. In front of the Golden Hall (B), there are the foundations of two square three-bay wooden Pagodas (A_1 , A_2), measuring 10.75–12.9 m. In addition, two small square buildings were found behind the Golden Hall (B); judging from their size and structure, it is assumed that they were the Sutra Hall and the Bell Tower. The Lecture Hall (D) was placed in the rear of the monastery, embedded into the northern portico. Furthermore, some remains recently excavated slightly south of the Middle Gate (C) indicate the locations of the South Gate and of a forecourt (Fig. 4.18).

Kamunsa Monastery 感恩寺

Location: Yongdang-ri, Yangbuk-myeon, Gyeongju, near the shore of the East Sea.

Construction date: late seventh century.

Excavation: from 1979 by the Gyeongju National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (Fig. 4.19).⁴²

Historical background: This monastery was built by King Munmu during the Japanese aggression in 682, and the monastery was still unfinished when he passed away; his tomb was placed beside it.⁴³

The *Kamunsa Monastery* was a transverse rectangle in plan, surrounded by a portico. The monastery layout was similar to that of the *Sacheonwangsa Monastery*. The Golden Hall (B) was arranged at the center of the monastery, a five-bay-wide by three-bay-deep structure, measuring 23.8 m by 17.6 m. On either side of the Hall (B), there were two segments of a roofed corridor connecting it with the east and west portico. There were two stone Pagodas (A_1 , A_2) erected side by side in front of the Golden Hall (B). The Middle Gate (C) and Lecture Hall (D) were embedded into the south and north porticoes respectively.

Mangdeoksa Monastery 望德寺

Location: Baeban-dong, Gyeongju.

Construction date: late seventh century.

Excavations: by Japanese scholars in 1930; in 1969, by the Korean Art History Academy (Fig. 4.20).⁴⁴

Historical background: According to the records of the *Samguk Sagi*, the monastery was completed in the fifth year of King Sinmun (神文王 r. 681–692 AD),⁴⁵ while according to the *Samguk Yusa* it was built during the period of King Hyoso (孝昭王 r. 692–702 AD) to bless

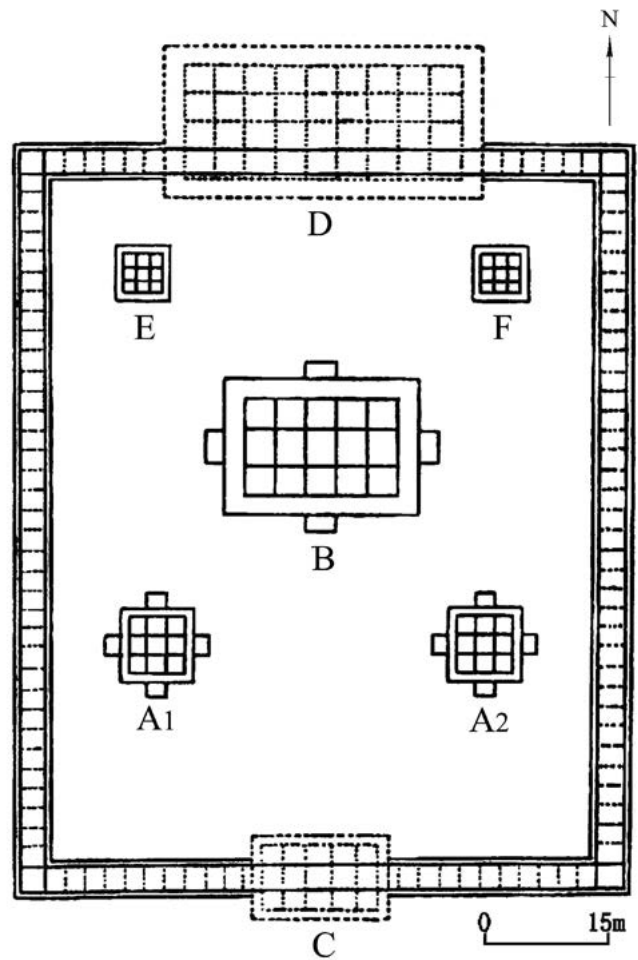


Fig. 4.18: Sketch plan of the *Sacheonwangsa Monastery* (Modified from: Gong Guoqiang 2006, 240, fig. 64).

the imperial family of the Tang. Many miraculous stories are mentioned about the Twin Pagodas of this monastery.⁴⁶

Based on the location of the plinths of the columns, the original location and the basic structure of the main buildings could be reconstructed. The large rectangular foundation at the center of the monastery was definitely identified as the remains of the Golden Hall (B). In front of the Hall, the ruins of the Twin Pagodas (A_1 , A_2) were excavated, each three bays wide and three bays deep. Meanwhile, a few of the plinths of the west portico were found, from which the approximate range of the monastery was inferred. Although the excavation was limited to a small area, the layout of this monastery is relatively clear: the Golden Hall (B) was set at the center, with two Pagodas (A_1 , A_2) in front of it.

Cheongundong Monastery 千軍洞寺

Location: Cheongundong 548-1, Gyeongju.

Construction date: approximately eighth century.

⁴² Cho You-chon 1991, 94–135.

⁴³ *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺事, 973.

⁴⁴ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 80–83.

⁴⁵ *Samguk Sagi* 三國史記, vol. 8, 3.

⁴⁶ *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺事, 1013; *Samguk Sagi* 三國史記, vol. 9, 5.

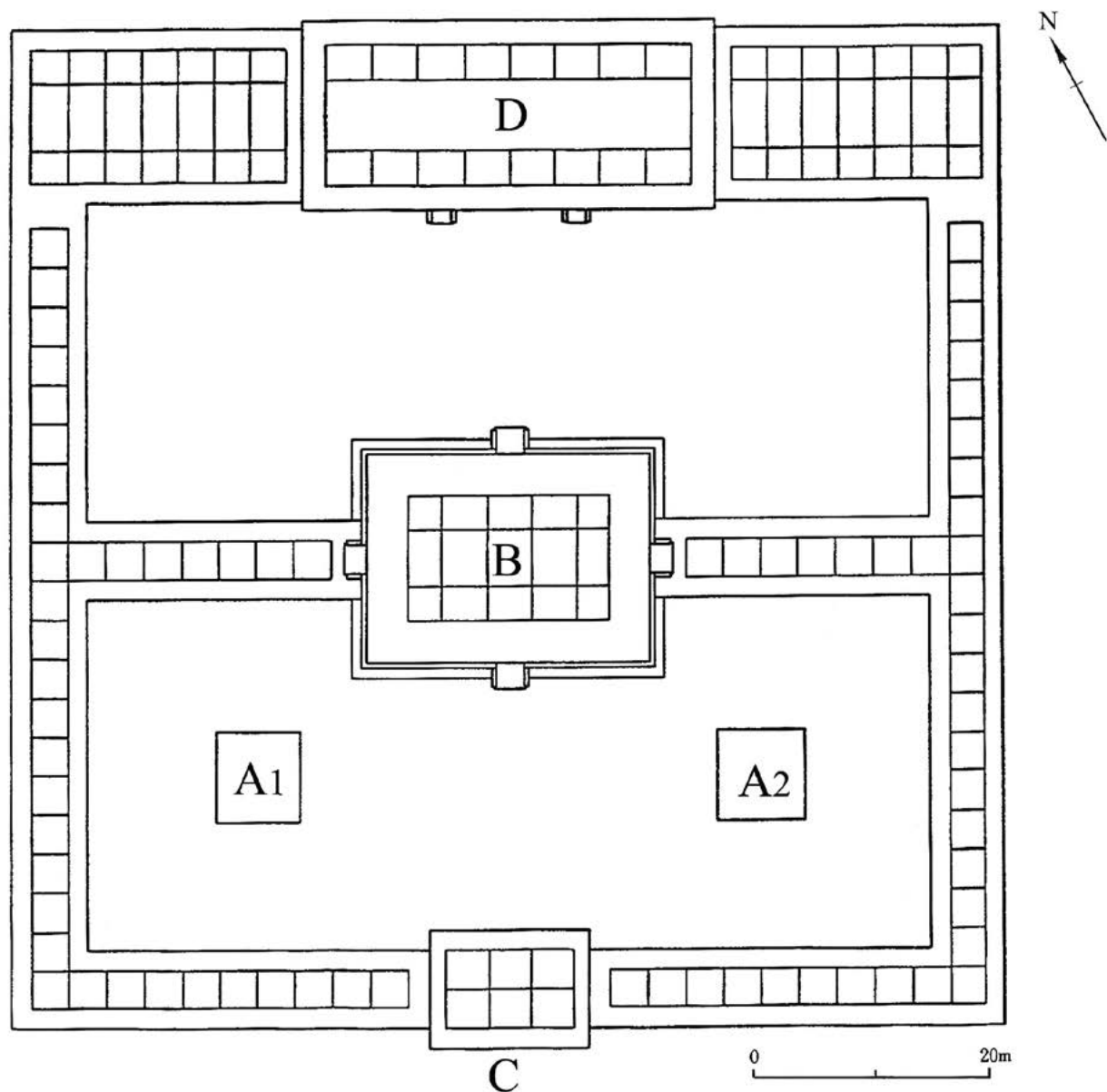


Fig. 4.19: Sketch plan of the *Kamunsa Monastery* (Modified from: Cho You-chon 1991, 138, fig. 1).

Excavation: 1938 by Japanese scholars (Fig. 4.21).⁴⁷

The monastery was attributed to the Unified Silla Period on the basis of the architectural components and the style of the pagodas. The plan of the monastery was a longitudinal rectangle enclosed by a portico. The Middle Gate (C), the Golden Hall (B) and the Lecture Hall (D) were aligned along the north-south axis, with the Golden Hall (B) occupying the center of the monastery. Between the Middle Gate (C) and the Golden Hall (B), there were two three-story stone Pagodas (A₁, A₂) side by side. The pagodas remain in their original position and are relatively well preserved. Once more, the Lecture Hall (D) was in the rear of the monastery, and some buildings found beside it may have been the Monks' Quarters (G).

Bulguksa Monastery 佛國寺

Location: near the *Seokguram Grotto* 石窟庵, Jinhyeon-dong, Gyeongju.

Construction date: mid-eighth century.

Excavation: from 1969–70, the Administration of Cultural Heritage conducted a survey and a renovation (Picture 4.4).⁴⁸

Historical background: The monastery's records state that a small monastery was built in this very place under the auspices of King Beopheung in the early seventh century. According to the records of *Samguk Yusa*, the current monastery was founded by Prime Minister Kim Daeseong (金大城 700–774 AD) in order to pacify the spirits of his

⁴⁷ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 126–29.

⁴⁸ Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 1991, 247–48.

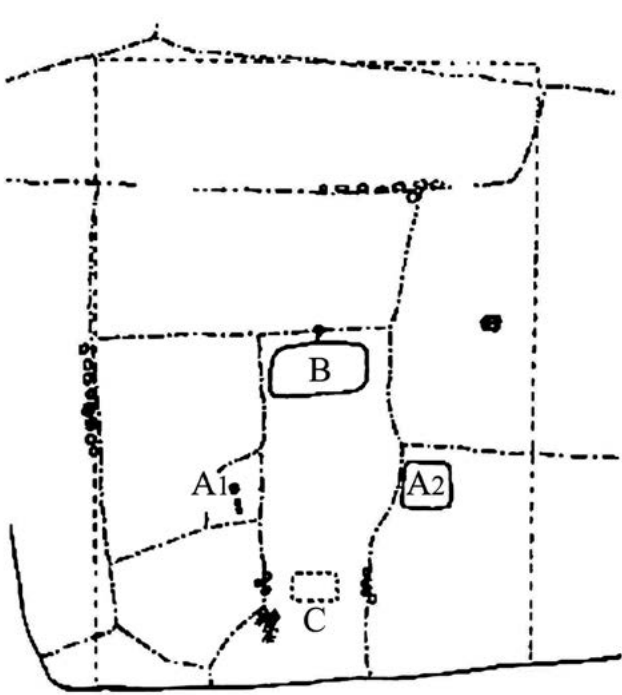


Fig. 4.20: Sketch plan of the *Mangdeoksa Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 82, fig. 1).

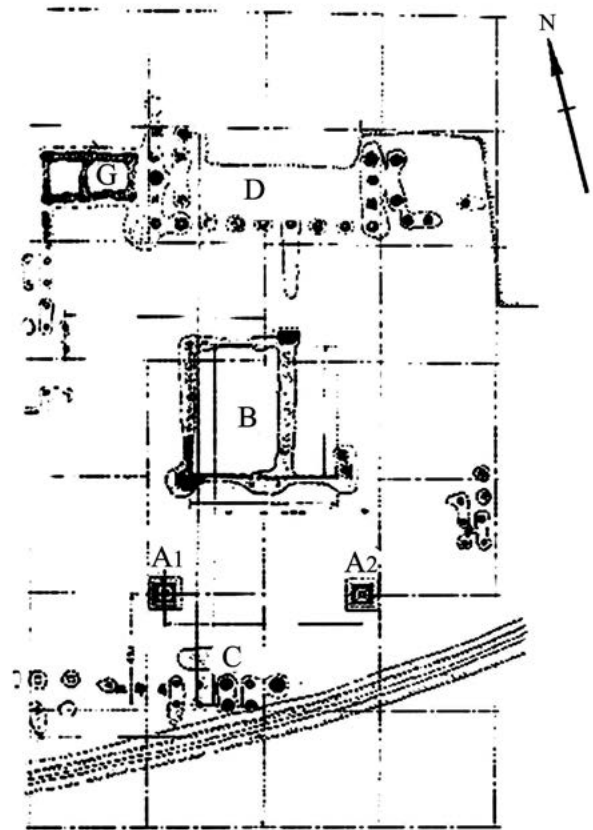


Fig. 4.21: Sketch plan of the *Cheonggundong Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 127, fig. 1).



Picture 4.4: *Bulguksa Monastery* in Gyeongju, Korea.

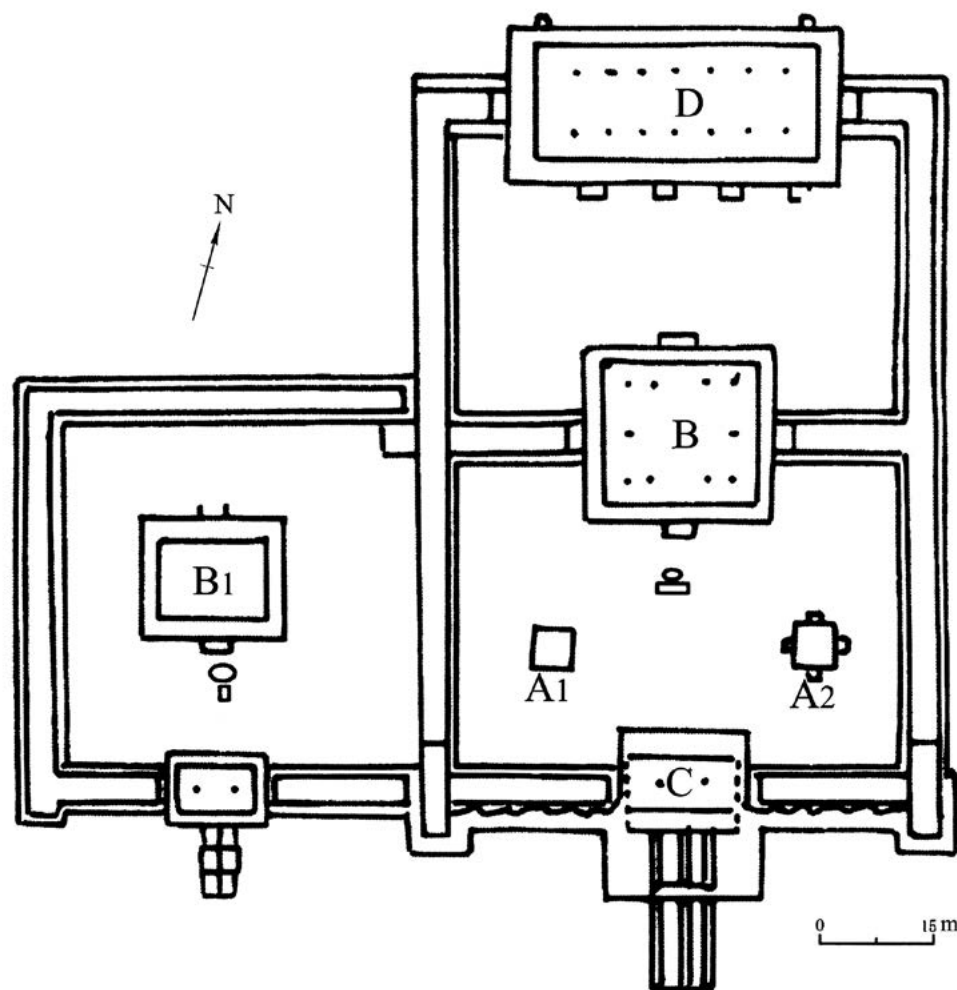


Fig. 4.22: Sketch plan of the *Bulguksa Monastery* (Modified from: Gong Guoqiang 2006, 238, fig. 62).

parents in 751. Kim Daeseong passed away before the monastery was completed, so the royal court took over the construction.⁴⁹

The *Bulguksa Monastery* consisted of two compounds enclosed by porticoes and roofed corridors; each compound had its own gate leading out of the monastery. The Eastern Compound was the main compound, with a large Golden Hall (B) occupying the center of the complex, and was restored several times in the periods following. On either side of Hall (B), there were two roofed corridors connecting it with the east and west portico. In front of the Hall (B), two three-story stone Pagodas (A₁, A₂), known as the Seokgatap 釋迦塔 and Dabotap 多寶塔 Pagodas, were erected side by side, now still in their original position. The Lecture Hall (D) was embedded into the north portico of the Eastern Compound. The Western Compound, nearly square in plan, was somewhat smaller than the East one, with the *Avalokiteśvara's Hall* (B₁) (Gwaneumjeon) slightly north of the compound's center (Fig. 4.22).

Unlike those of Silla, the Buddhist monasteries of Unified Silla had their own characteristics. The most remarkable

feature of the layout was the prominence of the Golden Hall, as it was the most important building occupying the center of a monastery; a second feature was the presence of the Twin Pagodas between the Middle Gate and Golden Hall. Meanwhile, the overall plan of the monastery evolved gradually from a longitudinal to a transverse rectangle, and some monasteries displayed a 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' layout.

4.2. The Japanese Archipelago: Monastery Layout during the Asuka and Nara Periods

There are many inconsistencies in textual sources concerning the introduction of Buddhism to Japan. Currently, the most widely accepted view is that Japan came in contact with Buddhism through Chinese emigrants from Liang, one of the Southern Dynasties; however, the precise time of the introduction of Buddhism to Japan through official channels is dated approximately to the mid-sixth century.⁵⁰ In this process, the Kingdom of Baekje played an important role. Two documents are often quoted to demonstrate the formal introduction of Buddhism to Japan. The first one comes from the *Gangōji*

⁴⁹ *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺事, 1018.

⁵⁰ Yang Zengwen 2008, 17–22.

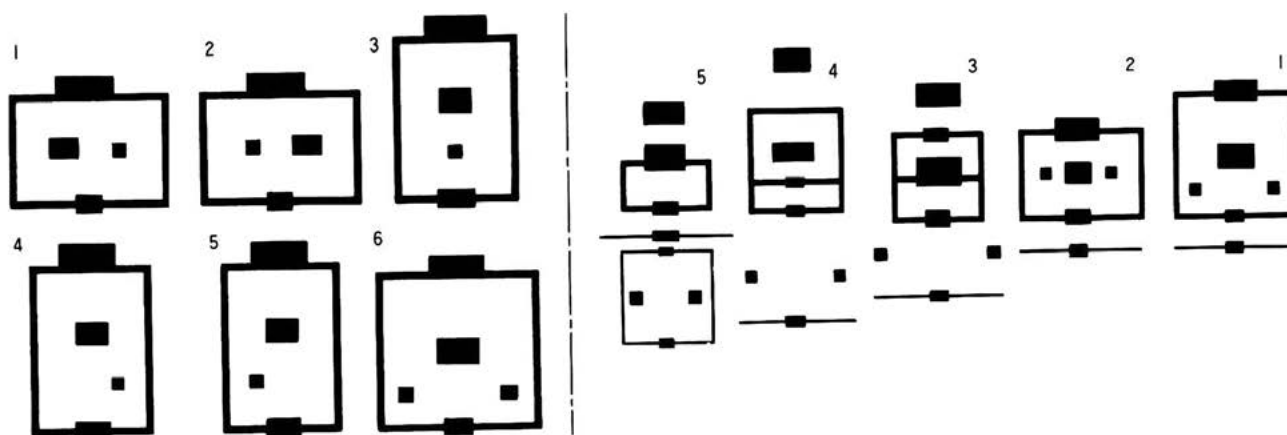


Fig. 4.23: Classification of Japanese monasteries 1 (Tanaka Shigehisa) (Modified from: Saito Tadashi 1987, 219, fig. 6).

Engi (*The Origin of the Gangōji Monastery*), edited in the Nara Period. It states that King Seong of Baekje (百濟聖明王 r. 523–554 AD) presented images and sutras to Emperor Kimmei (欽明天皇 r. 539–571 AD) in 538.⁵¹ The second document is a passage from the *Nihon Shoki* (*The Chronicles of Japan*), which records in detail the episode of King Seong of Baekje sending a mission to Japan in the 13th year of Kimmei's Reign (552 AD): among the gifts brought were a gilt-bronze image of Sakyamuni, some *patakas* 幡蓋 and sutras. Meanwhile, a letter was presented to Emperor Kimmei praising the merits of Buddhism.⁵² Despite the fact that there are still different interpretations of the above records, most scholars have agreed on the fact that Buddhism was officially introduced to Japan by King Seong of Baekje during Kimmei's reign. By the end of the sixth century, thanks to the advocacy and support of the imperial family, the Buddhist faith had penetrated deep into Japanese society. A passage of the *Nihon Shoki* for 593 states:

At the beginning of February by the lunar calendar in the second year of Empress Suiko, (Suiko Tennō) instructed the Imperial Prince and the great ministers to promote *Tri-ratna*. At this time, all the ministers and administrative officers vied with each other in erecting Buddha shrines in honor of the emperor; those were called *Si* (Buddhist monasteries).⁵³

Along with the spread of Buddhism, Buddhist monasteries, a new architectural form which was entirely different from earlier architecture of Japan as well as from later secular buildings, were established throughout the Asuka and Nara regions. According to the records of *Nihon Shoki* and *Fuso-ryakki* (*An Abbreviated Account of Japan*), there were 46 monasteries, housing 816 monks and 569 nuns in the year 623, and the number of monasteries rose to 545 by the end of the seventh century. The spread of the faith

was so quick that it was deemed necessary to undertake official supervision of the Buddhist establishments all over the country.⁵⁴

In Japan, a large number of Buddhist monasteries built between the sixth and eighth centuries have come down to us well preserved. Although the buildings have been reconstructed many times, or were buried underground, the foundations of the main buildings and the plinths of the columns are still located in their original places and provide definite evidence for the exploration of the original layout of these monasteries. A large number of Buddhist monasteries of the Asuka and Nara periods have been surveyed and excavated.⁵⁵ Based on their different disciplines and methods, Japanese scholars have classified the monasteries of this period into a variety of types. As early as the 1940s, Tanaka Shigehisa 田中重久 classified the Buddhist monasteries of the Asuka Period into six types, besides analyzing the development of the twin-pagoda layout (Fig. 4.23).⁵⁶ According to the positioning of the pagoda, Mosaku Ishida 石田茂作 at first proposed a classification into five main types of monastery layouts: the *Shitennōji Monastery* type, the *Hōryūji Monastery* type, the *Hōkiji Monastery* type, the *Yakushiji Monastery* type and the *Tōdaiji Monastery* type.⁵⁷ Later he proposed a classification into three main types and thirteen subtypes (Fig. 4.24).⁵⁸ Considering the arrangement of the main buildings, scholars from the field of architecture have classified the monasteries of the Asuka-Nara periods into six types: the *Asukadera Monastery* type, the *Shitennōji Monastery* type, the *Kawaradera Monastery* type, the *Hōryūji Monastery* type, the *Yakushiji Monastery* type and the *Kōfukuji Monastery* type.⁵⁹ In some writings, the *Tōdaiji Monastery* type has been added as a new type.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Soper 1978, 4.

⁵⁵ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 148–251.

⁵⁶ Saito Tadashi 1987, 219.

⁵⁷ Mosaku Ishida 1978, 5–15.

⁵⁸ Mosaku Ishida 1975–77, 17.

⁵⁹ Classification of Japanese monasteries see also Architectural Institute of Japan 1975, 17, fig. 13.

⁶⁰ Kazuo Nishi and Kazuo Hozumi 1985, 17.

⁵¹ Yang Zengwen 2008, 18.

⁵² *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 19, 12.

⁵³ *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 22, 1, ‘(推古天皇)二年春二月丙寅朔。詔皇太子及大臣，令興隆三宝。是時，諸臣連等各為君親之恩，競造仏舎，即是謂寺焉。’

Since this book proposes a comparison and suggests a development from Chinese and Korean monasteries to Japanese monasteries, I will classify Japanese monasteries on the basis of their layouts, that is, by taking into consideration the relative position of the Pagoda and the Golden Hall and the configuration of the Compound. Although familiar with the classification and the naming of the types put forward by Japanese scholars, in the case where the monastery layouts correspond to types known in China and Korea, I will use a consistent terminology, since it allows a direct geographical and cultural comparison between monasteries in the three regions.

4.2.1. Late sixth to first half of the seventh century: 'Central Pagoda and Three Halls' and 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' monastery layouts

The 'Central Pagoda and Three Halls' layout

The 'Central Pagoda and Three Halls' layout is believed to be one of the earliest monastery layouts in Japan. Currently, only one monastery with this type of layout is known, the *Asukadera Monastery*. The 'Central Pagoda and Three Halls' layout of this monastery definitely brings to mind the layout of the monasteries of the Goguryeo Kingdom. Due to some confusion in the textual records and unearthed material evidence, there are different opinions about the origin of this monastery layout; I will study the issue in the following chapter.

Asukadera Monastery 飛鳥寺

Location: Asuka-mura, Takaichi-gun, Nara Prefecture.

Construction date: end of the sixth century.

Excavation: Between 1956 and 1957, the Nara National Institute of Cultural Properties carried out a series of large-scale excavations at the site, revealing all its main buildings, including a Pagoda, three Golden Halls, the Lecture Hall, the portico and the Gate; the layout of the whole monastery was clearly exposed (Fig. 4.25).⁶¹

Historical background: The *Asukadera Monastery* was also known as the *Hōkōji Monastery* 法興寺. Historical records set the date of the beginning of its construction toward the end of the sixth century, under the guidance of craftsmen from the Baekje Kingdom. The Great Hall and porticoes were built in 592; in the following year, a reliquary was interred at the central plinth and the central pillar of the pagoda was erected. In the 4th year of Empress Suiko (推古天皇 r. 593–628 AD), all the main buildings of the *Asukadera Monastery* were completed.⁶² However, the main object of worship, a large bronze Buddha statue, was likely cast in the early seventh century.⁶³

⁶¹ Nara National Institute of Cultural Properties 1958, 15–24.

⁶² *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 21, 5–6; vol. 22, 1.

⁶³ Nishikawa Kyōtarō 1982, 15–17.

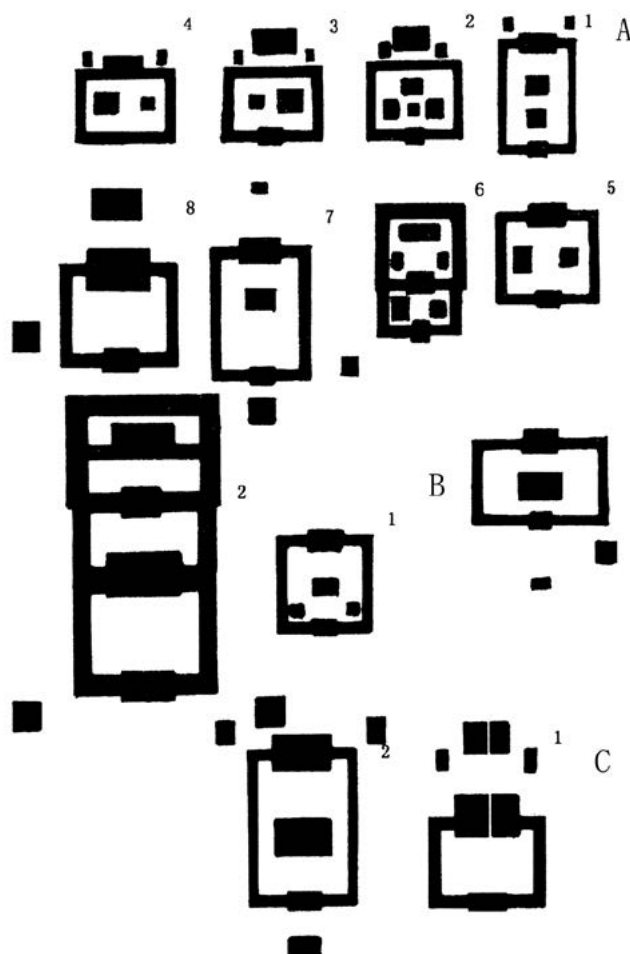


Fig. 4.24: Classification of Japanese monasteries 2 (Mosaku Ishida) (Modified from: Gong Guoqiang, 244, fig. 66).

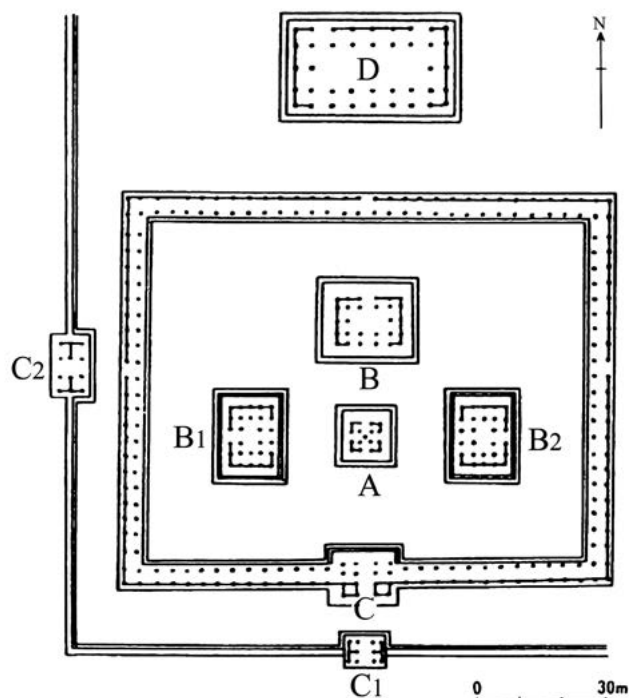


Fig. 4.25: Sketch plan of the *Asukadera Monastery* (Modified from: McCallum 2009, 39, fig. 1).

According to the excavation report, the central axis of the *Asukadera Monastery* was orientated to true north, rather than to magnetic north. The South Gate (C₁), the Middle Gate (C), the Pagoda (A), the middle Golden Hall (B) and the Lecture Hall (D) were aligned in sequence along the north–south axis. Except for the South Gate (C₁), the West Gate (C₂) and the Lecture Hall (D), all the remaining buildings were surrounded by a 6 m wide portico. The Middle Gate (C), measuring 16.4 m by 14 m, was embedded in the middle of the south portico, while the South Gate (C₁) was located about 18 m to its south. In addition, the West Gate (C₂) was found about 91 m west of the central axis. The wooden Pagoda (A) was erected on top of a 12 m wide platform, which occupied the most important position in the monastery. A stone urn was discovered under the central foundation base: it contained a small gilt bronze reliquary and about 2,500 beads of glass and other precious materials. The Middle Golden Hall (B) was situated 26.6 m north of the Pagoda (A), measuring 21.2 m by 17.6 m. On either side of the Pagoda (A), there were the other two Golden Halls, the West Hall (B₁) and East Hall (B₂), apparently similar in size and structure, standing on platforms of 20 m by 15.6 m, forming the ‘Central Pagoda and Three Halls’ layout. The Lecture Hall (D) was located in the rear of the monastery, behind the north portico, measuring 39.4 m by 22.6 m. The Middle Golden Hall (B) and the Pagoda (A) were destroyed by a fire in 1196, and the ruined buildings have not been reconstructed until recently.⁶⁴

The ‘Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear’ layout

This type of Buddhist monastery was extremely popular in the late sixth and early seventh centuries. The remarkable feature of this layout is that all the main buildings were arranged along the north–south axis. The Pagoda occupied the most significant position in the monastery, with one Golden Hall behind it. Besides the *Shitennōji Monastery* 四天王寺, typical monasteries of this type also include the *Original Hōryūji Monastery* 初建法隆寺, the *Tachibanadera Monastery* 橘寺 and the *Yamadadera Monastery* 山田寺.

Shitennōji Monastery 四天王寺

Location: Tennōji-ku, Osaka.

Construction date: end of the sixth century.

Excavation: Between 1955 and 1957, the Japanese Protection Commission of Cultural Properties conducted a survey and an excavation (Fig. 4.26).⁶⁵

Historical background: According to the *Nihon Shoki*, its construction began in 593 AD. As the oldest officially administrated monastery in Japan, its establishment is believed to have a close relationship with Prince Shōtoku

(聖德太子 574–622 AD). Various important religious activities were held in this monastery in the ensuing decades.⁶⁶

The plan of the monastery was a longitudinal rectangle with the main buildings aligned along the north–south axis. The five-story wooden Pagoda (A) was placed slightly south of the monastery center, and the Golden Hall (B) was set behind it. The monastery was surrounded by a portico, and the Lecture Hall (D) was embedded in the north portico. There were three gates; the Middle Gate (C) in the south was far larger than West Gate (C₁) and East Gate (C₂).

Original Hōryūji Monastery 初建法隆寺

Location: Ikaruga, Nara Prefecture.

Construction date: the beginning of the seventh century.

Excavation: first surveyed by Mosaku Ishida in 1939; partial excavation in the 1960s by the Nara National Institute of Cultural Properties (Picture 4.5).⁶⁷

Historical background: It is believed that the monastery was initially built under the auspices of Prince Shōtoku, and originally called *Ikaruga-dera* 斑鳩寺.⁶⁸

The Hōryūji Monastery consisted of two compounds of different historical periods; the Eastern Compound is also known as the *Original Hōryūji Monastery*, or *Wakakusa-dera* 若草伽藍. Given the results of the above investigations, it can be affirmed that the layout of the *Original Hōryūji Monastery* was similar in plan to that of the *Shitennōji Monastery*, i.e. a ‘Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear’ layout, with the Pagoda (A), the Golden Hall (B) and the Lecture Hall (D) aligned along the north–south axis (Fig. 4.27).

Tachibanadera Monastery 橘寺

Location: Asuka-mura, Takaichi-gun, Nara Prefecture, in the vicinity of the birthplace of Prince Shōtoku.

Construction date: ample evidence indicates that the monastery was built in the first half of the seventh century.⁶⁹

Excavations: in 1950, surveyed by Mosaku Ishida; in 1997, excavated by the Archaeological Institute of Kashihara, Nara Prefecture (Fig. 4.28).⁷⁰

Historical background: It suffered a conflagration in 680; it was rebuilt and restored many times throughout history.

⁶⁶ *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 22, 1; vol. 25, 12.

⁶⁷ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 118–19.

⁶⁸ *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 22, 5.

⁶⁹ *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 29, 9, ‘In the fourth month in the ninth year of Emperor Temmu’s reign, *Tachibanadera Monastery* was on fire and ten houses were burnt down’ (天武天皇九年四月乙卯, 橘寺尼房失火, 以焚十房。)

⁷⁰ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 116–17.

⁶⁴ Nara National Institute of Cultural Properties 1958, ix–xi.

⁶⁵ Mosaku Ishida 1968, 25.

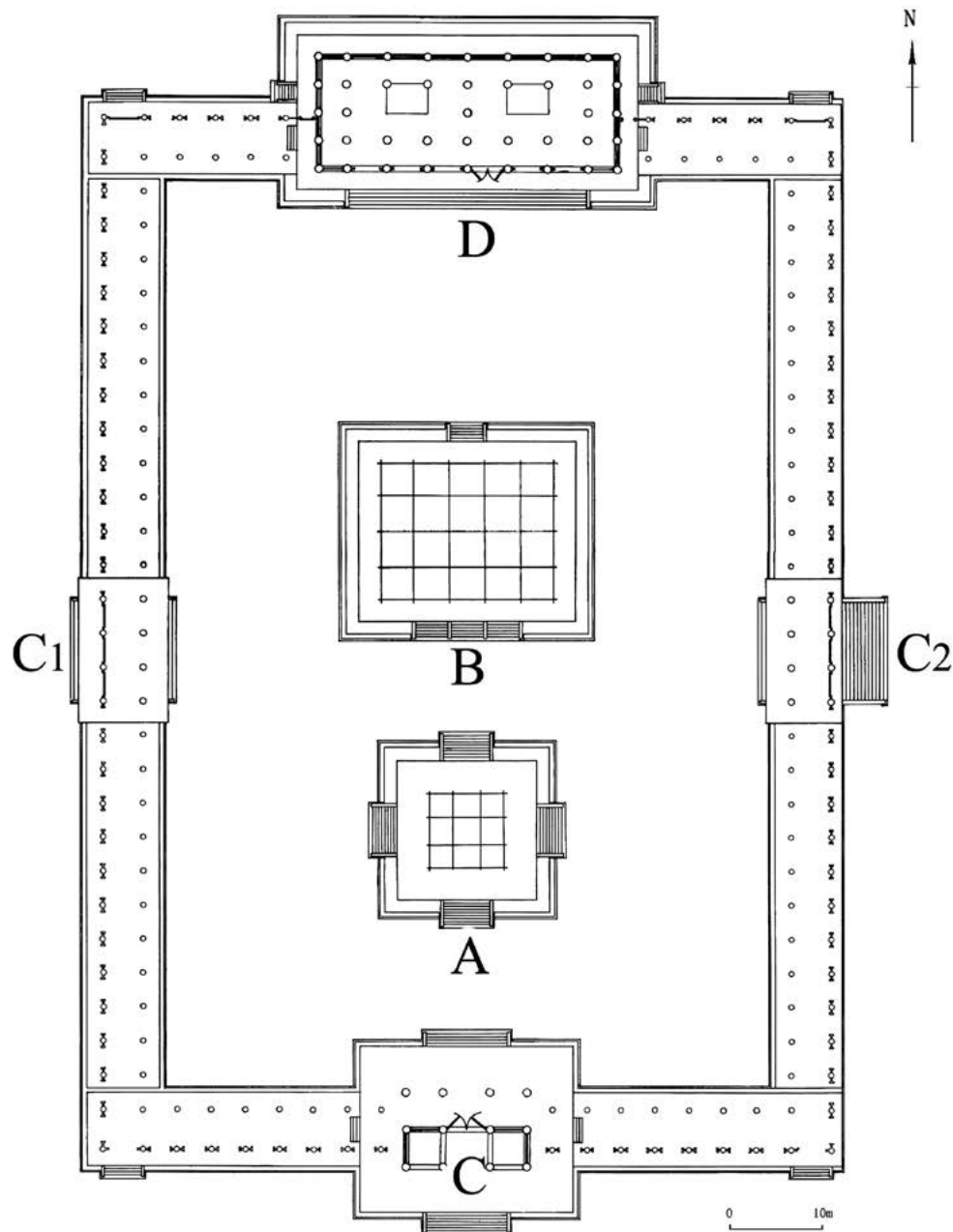


Fig. 4.26: Sketch plan of the *Shitennoji Monastery* (Modified from: Mosaku Ishida 1968, 25, figure of *Shitennoji Monastery*).

The plan of the monastery was a longitudinal rectangle, surrounded by a portico. The five-story, two-bay-wide and three-bay-deep wooden Pagoda (A) was placed along the north-south axis, slightly south of the center, and the Golden Hall (B) was placed behind it. The large Lecture Hall (D) was situated in the rear of the monastery as usual.⁷¹ The layout was thus of the ‘Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear’ type.

Yamadadera Monastery 山田寺

Location: Sakurai, Nara Prefecture.

Construction date: mid-seventh century.

Excavation: complete survey and excavation by the Nara National Institute of Cultural Properties in 1976, which disclosed most of the main buildings and the layout of the monastery (Fig. 4.29).⁷²

Historical background: According to the records of *Jōgū Shōtoku Hōō Teisetsu* (上宮聖徳法王帝説 *Biography of Shōtoku Taishi*), the monastery was initially established by Soga no Kurayamada no Ishikawa no Maro 蘇我倉山田石川麻呂 in 641 AD, and all the works were finally completed after a few decades.

The plan of the *Yamadadera Monastery* was a longitudinal rectangle. The sequence of buildings aligned along the

⁷¹ Ohwaki Kiyoshi 1989, 138–54.

⁷² Ohwaki Kiyoshi 1989, 57–87.



Picture 4.5: *Original Hōryūji Monastery* in Nara, Japan.

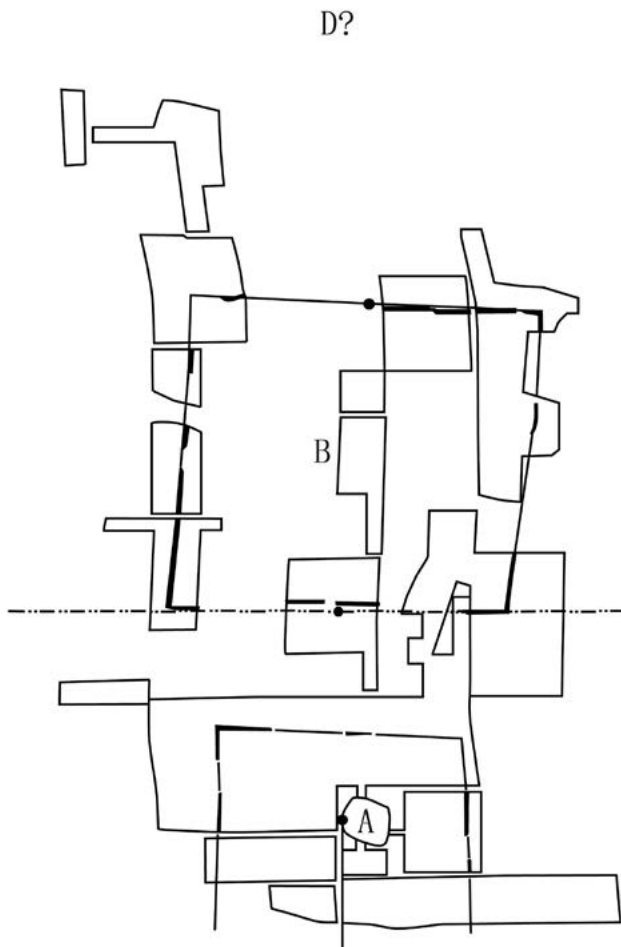


Fig. 4.27: Sketch plan of the *Original Hōryūji Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 166, fig. 1).

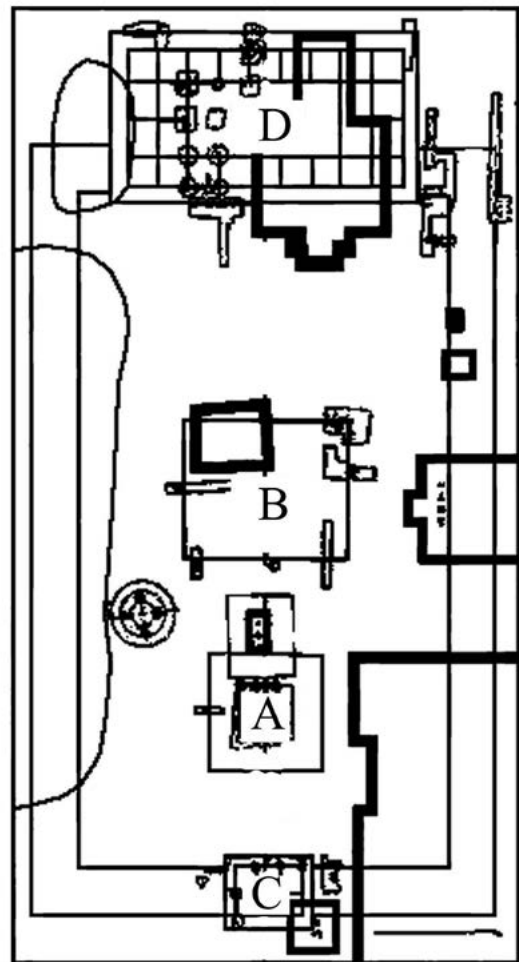


Fig. 4.28: Sketch plan of the *Tachibanadera Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 117, fig. 1).

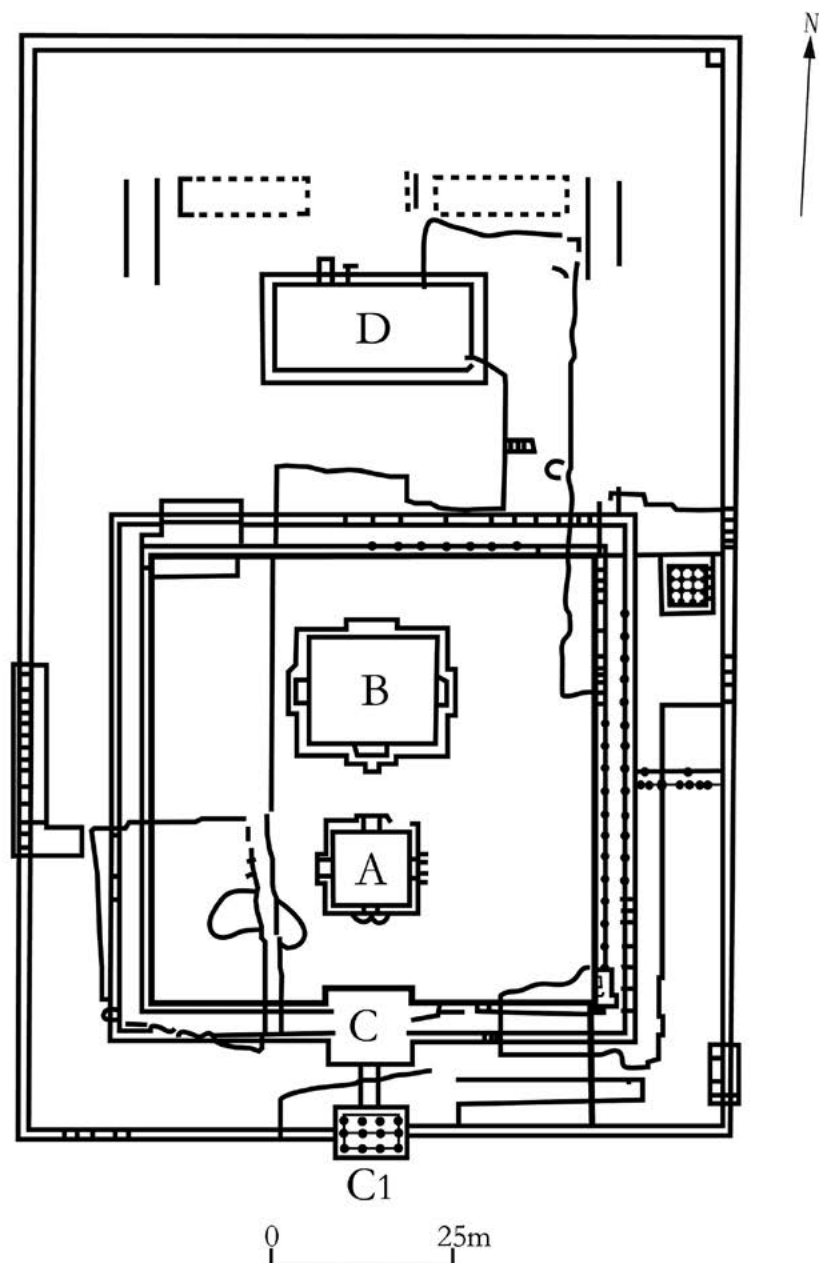


Fig. 4.29: Sketch plan of the Yamadadera Monastery (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 173, fig. 1).

north–south axis consists of the South Gate (C_1), the Middle Gate (C), the Pagoda (A), the Golden Hall (B) and the Lecture Hall (D). The Pagoda (A) was square in plan, a three-bay wooden structure; traces of a buried śarīra casket were found below the base of the central pillar. The Golden Hall (B) was built behind the Pagoda (A), a three-bay-wide and two-bay-deep structure. The Pagoda (A) and Golden Hall (B) were surrounded by a portico 85 m wide east to west and 89 m long north to south. The Lecture Hall (D) was placed in the rear of the monastery, outside the northern portico; judging from the remaining bases of columns, it appears to have been a five-bay-deep and four-bay-wide structure.

In addition to the above-mentioned cases, there were a large number of monasteries built during this period, such

as the *Heiryuji Monastery* 平隆寺, the *Chūgūji Monastery* 中宮寺, the *Shindo-haiji Monastery* 新堂廢寺, the *Katagihara-haiji Monastery* 檜原廢寺, the *Kitano-haiji Monastery* 北野廢寺, the *Okuyamakumadera Monastery* 奥山久米寺,⁷³ the *Yamatohashidera Monastery* 大和橋寺, the *Kataokaoji Monastery* 片岡王寺, the *Yokoi-haiji Monastery* 横井廢寺, the *Kawachihajidera Monastery* 河内土師寺, the *Iyo Hoanji Monastery* 伊予法安寺⁷⁴ and the *Original Anō-haiji Monastery* 穴太廢寺,⁷⁵ all having the ‘Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear’ layout.

⁷³ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 110–13, 120–21, 126–29, 170–71, 172–73, 194–95.

⁷⁴ Mosaku Ishida 1978, 6.

⁷⁵ McCallum 2009, 193.

4.2.2. Mid-seventh century: ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side’ and ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side with a Central Hall Behind’ monastery layouts

The ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side’ layout

The earliest example of the ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side’ layout in Japan, a monastery layout prevailing in the mid-seventh century, was believed to be the Western Compound of the *Hōryūji Monastery*. However, recent archaeological discoveries indicate that the site of the *Kibi Pond* might be an earlier instance. Typical monasteries with this layout include the *Kudara Ōdera Monastery* 百濟大寺, the *Hōryūji Monastery* 法隆寺, the *Ākāśagarbha Monastery* 虚空藏寺, the *Kose Monastery* 巨勢寺, the *Hōkiji Monastery* 法起寺, the *Kanzeonji Monastery* 觀世音寺 and the *Komadera Monastery* 高麗寺.

Kudara Ōdera Monastery 百濟大寺

Location: present Sakurai, northeast of the central Asuka area.

Construction date: mid-seventh century.

Excavation: since the 1990s, by the Nara National Institute of Cultural Properties (Fig. 4.30).⁷⁶

Historical background: The *Kudara Ōdera Monastery* is believed to be the predecessor of the *Daianji Monastery*. For a long time, due to the ambiguity of the documents, the exact construction date and the precise location of this monastery were unclear. Some entries in *Nihon Shoki* are believed to refer to the establishment of the *Kudara Ōdera Monastery*. A passage of 639 AD mentions that Emperor Jomei (舒明天皇 r. 629–641 AD) issued a decree to build a great palace and a great monastery near the Kudara River. A few months later, a nine-story pagoda was erected on the bank of the Kudara River.⁷⁷ Another entry, of 641, states that Empress Kogyoku (皇極天皇 r. 642–645, 655–661 AD) wished to build a great monastery, and so mobilized labor and levied taxes from the surrounding area. A note on this entry, in smaller typeface, marks that this monastery was the *Kudara Ōdera Monastery*.⁷⁸

The excavation took place in the Kudara area, east of Fujiwarakyō 藤原京. A series of archaeological discoveries ultimately proved that the site of *Kibi Pond* corresponded to the *Kudara Ōdera Monastery* in the documents. *Kudara Ōdera Monastery* was such a significant imperial Buddhist monastery in the middle of the seventh century that many scholars, including archaeologists, architectural historians and art historians, have been seeking its location for several decades.

Archaeological data indicate clearly that the *Kudara Ōdera Monastery* had a completely different layout from

that of earlier Buddhist monasteries of East Asia. Several excavations disclosed the first half of the monastery, which was surrounded by a portico. It is worth noting that the Pagoda (A) and the Golden Hall (B) were erected side by side in the forepart of the monastery. The Pagoda (A) was placed to the west and had a square foundation with sides measuring 32 m, while the residual height was 2.3 m. The pit of the plinth for the central pillar, found at the center of the Pagoda’s foundation, was 6.7 m by 5.4 m. Both the foundation and the plinth pit were far larger than those in any contemporaneous monasteries, such as those in the *Asukadera Monastery*, the *Shitennōji Monastery*, the *Kawaradera Monastery* or the *Yakushiji Monastery*, where there were three- and five-story pagodas. The pagoda of *Kudara Ōdera Monastery* may have been a nine-story pavilion structure, as the accounts of *Nihon Shoki* and *Daianjiengi* (*The Origin of the Daianji Monastery*) depict. The Golden Hall (B) was placed to the east, its base measuring 37 m by 25 m. The Middle Gate (C) was embedded into the south portico, and faced the Golden Hall (B).⁷⁹ Although there is no exact archaeological evidence, a reasonable hypothesis is that a Lecture Hall may have been situated in the rear of the monastery. The discovery and excavation of *Kudara Ōdera Monastery* provide important clues to the origin of the ‘Pagoda and Hall Side by Side’ layout.

Hōryūji Monastery 法隆寺

Location: Ikaruga, Nara Prefecture.

Construction date: late seventh century.

Excavation: 1926 survey by the National Treasure Preservation Committee of Hōryūji (Picture 4.6).⁸⁰

Historical background: Usually, the term *Hōryūji Monastery* refers to the Western Compound of the monastery rebuilt in 680, after the *Original Hōryūji Monastery* was burned to the ground in a conflagration. The *Hōryūji Monastery* preserves the earliest timber-framed complex in the world, and a large number of sculptures and artifacts.

At the moment, the *Hōryūji Monastery* is a mixture of buildings constructed in different periods; however, the Middle Gate (C), the Pagoda (A), the Golden Hall (B) and part of the portico, which form the main body of the monastery, still maintain their original positions from the late seventh century. Many of the annexed buildings, including the Sutra Hall, the Bell Tower and Lecture Hall (D), were established or rebuilt after the ninth century.⁸¹ The Middle Gate (C) was embedded into the center of the south portico, with the south gate in front of it. The Pagoda (A) and the Golden Hall (B) were laid out opposite each other. The former was a five-story wooden structure situated to the west, and the latter was a two-story pavilion

⁷⁶ McCallum 2009, 137–38.

⁷⁷ *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 23, 6.

⁷⁸ *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 24, 2.

⁷⁹ McCallum 2009, 119–34.

⁸⁰ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 174–75.

⁸¹ Kidder 1964, 55–62.

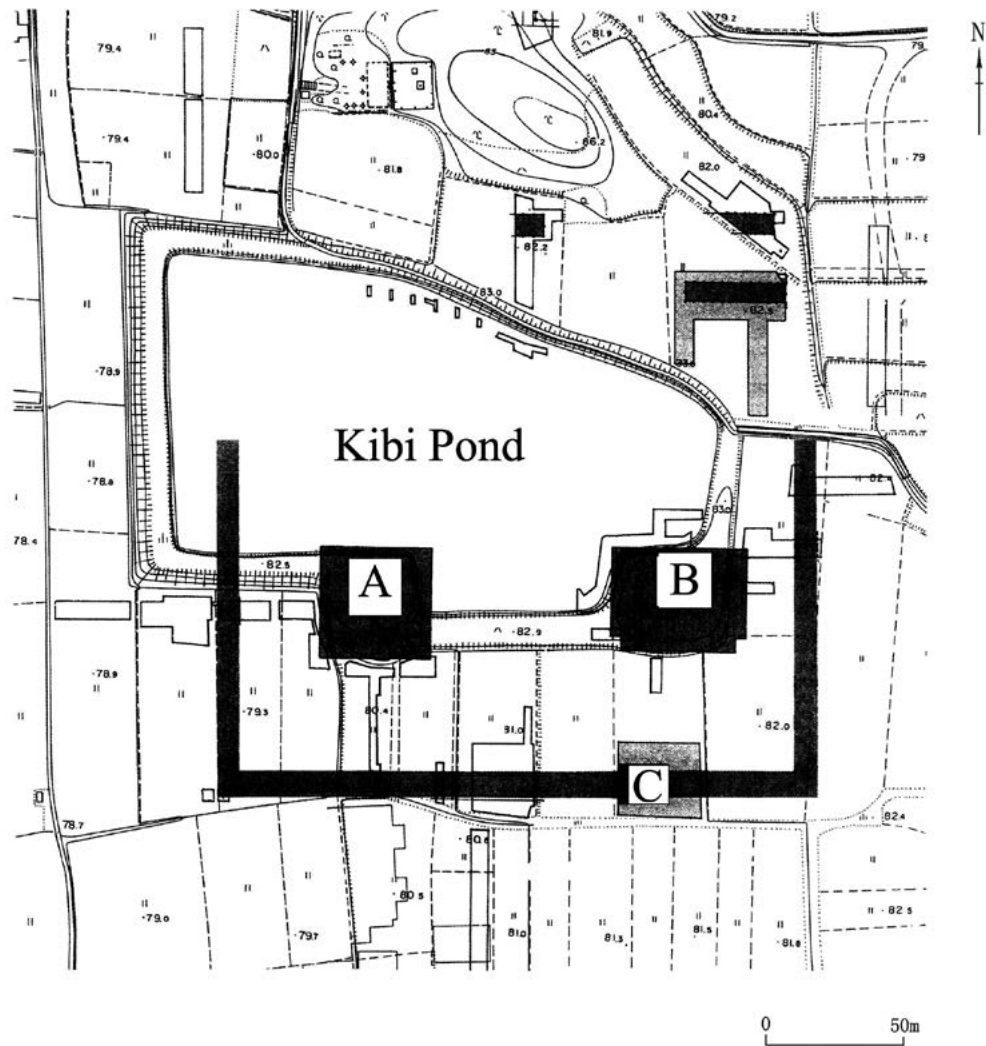


Fig. 4.30: Sketch plan of the *Kudara Ōdera Monastery* (Modified from: Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 27, fig. 3).



Picture 4.6: *Hōryūji Monastery* in Nara, Japan.

placed to the east, with a five-bay-wide by four-bay-deep structure. The original Lecture Hall (D) is believed to have been located outside of the north portico, and it was reconstructed in the Heian Period (Fig. 4.31).⁸²

Ākāśagarbha Monastery 虚空藏寺

Location: Usa, Oita Prefecture.

Construction date: seventh century.

Excavation: 1971 survey by the Education Committee of Oita Prefecture; 1988 survey by the Education Committee of Usa City (Fig. 4.32).⁸³

According to published information, the layout of the Ākāśagarbha Monastery was similar to that of the *Hōryūji Monastery* in style. The South Gate (C₁), the Middle Gate (C) and the Lecture Hall (D) were aligned along the north–south axis, while the Pagoda (A) and the Golden Hall (B) were aligned along the east–west axis. The Pagoda (A) and the Golden Hall (B) were surrounded by a portico, with the Pagoda (A) to the west and the Golden Hall (B) to the east.

Kose Monastery 巨勢寺

Location: Gose, Nara Prefecture.

Construction date: late seventh century.

Excavations: in 1987, partial excavation by the Archaeological Institute of Kashihara, Nara Prefecture (Fig. 4.33).⁸⁴

Historical background: It is believed that the *Kose Monastery* was related to the powerful clan of Kose. An entry in *Nihon Shoki* for 686 AD states that *Kose Monastery* was granted two hundred households as a fief, which indicates that the construction of the monastery must have been earlier than this date.⁸⁵

The archaeological excavation disclosed the foundation of the Pagoda (A) and the remains of the Golden Hall (B), the Lecture Hall (D) and the portico. The layout resembled that of the *Hōryūji Monastery*. The Pagoda (A) and the Golden Hall (B) were erected side by side, with the Pagoda on the west and the Golden Hall to the east. Both were surrounded by a portico; the Lecture Hall (D) was embedded into the north portico.

Hōkiji Monastery 法起寺

Location: Okamoto, Ikaruga-cho Ikoma-gun, Nara Prefecture.

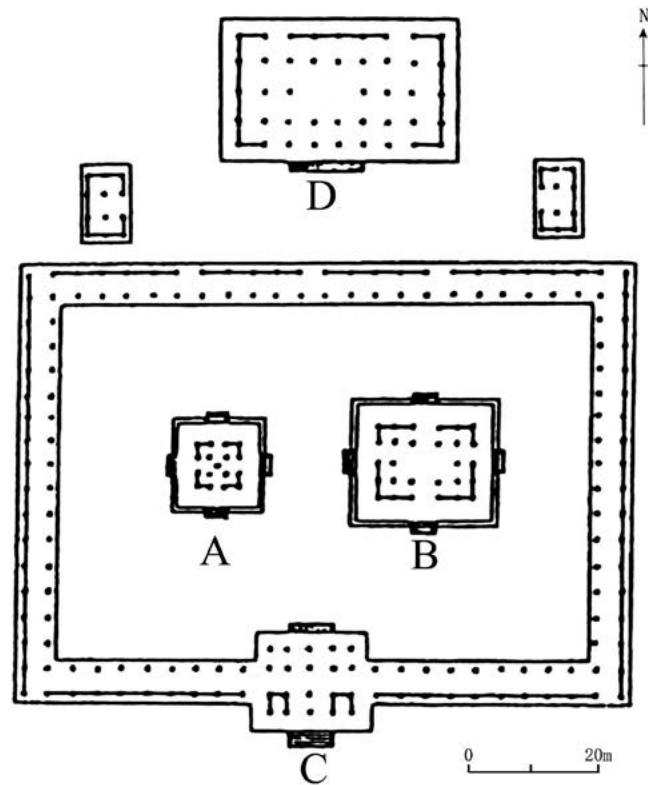


Fig. 4.31: Sketch plan of the *Hōryūji Monastery* (Modified from: McCallum 2009, 124, fig. 2.20).

Construction date: mid-seventh century.⁸⁶

Excavation: surveyed by the Education Committee of Nara Prefecture in 1969; the location of the main buildings and their structural superimposition over an early palace were confirmed (Fig. 4.34).⁸⁷

Historical background: It is believed that this monastery was erected on the ruins of the Okamoto Palace 岡本宮, the palace where Prince Shōtoku had lectured on the *Lotus Sutra*. Prince Yamashiro, son of Prince Shōtoku rebuilt the former palace as a monastery in memory of his father.

The Pagoda (A) was a three-story wooden pavilion square in plan, a three-bay-wide and three-bay-deep structure. The Golden Hall (B) was on the same east–west axis. The Middle Gate (C) and the Lecture Hall (D) were instead aligned along the north–south axis. The difference in monastery layout between the *Hōkiji Monastery* and the *Hōryūji Monastery* consists in the opposite locations of the Pagoda and the Golden Hall. Therefore, some Japanese researchers consider it a new type – the *Hōkiji Monastery* style. On the basis of historical records, except the Pagoda (A), the main buildings, including the Golden Hall (B), the Lecture Hall (D) and the Middle Gate (C), were all rebuilt at later periods in their original position.

⁸² Kakichi Suzuki 1980, 54–57.

⁸³ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 228–29.

⁸⁴ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 164–65.

⁸⁵ *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 29, 22.

⁸⁶ Mosaku Ishida 1978, 10–11.

⁸⁷ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 184–85.

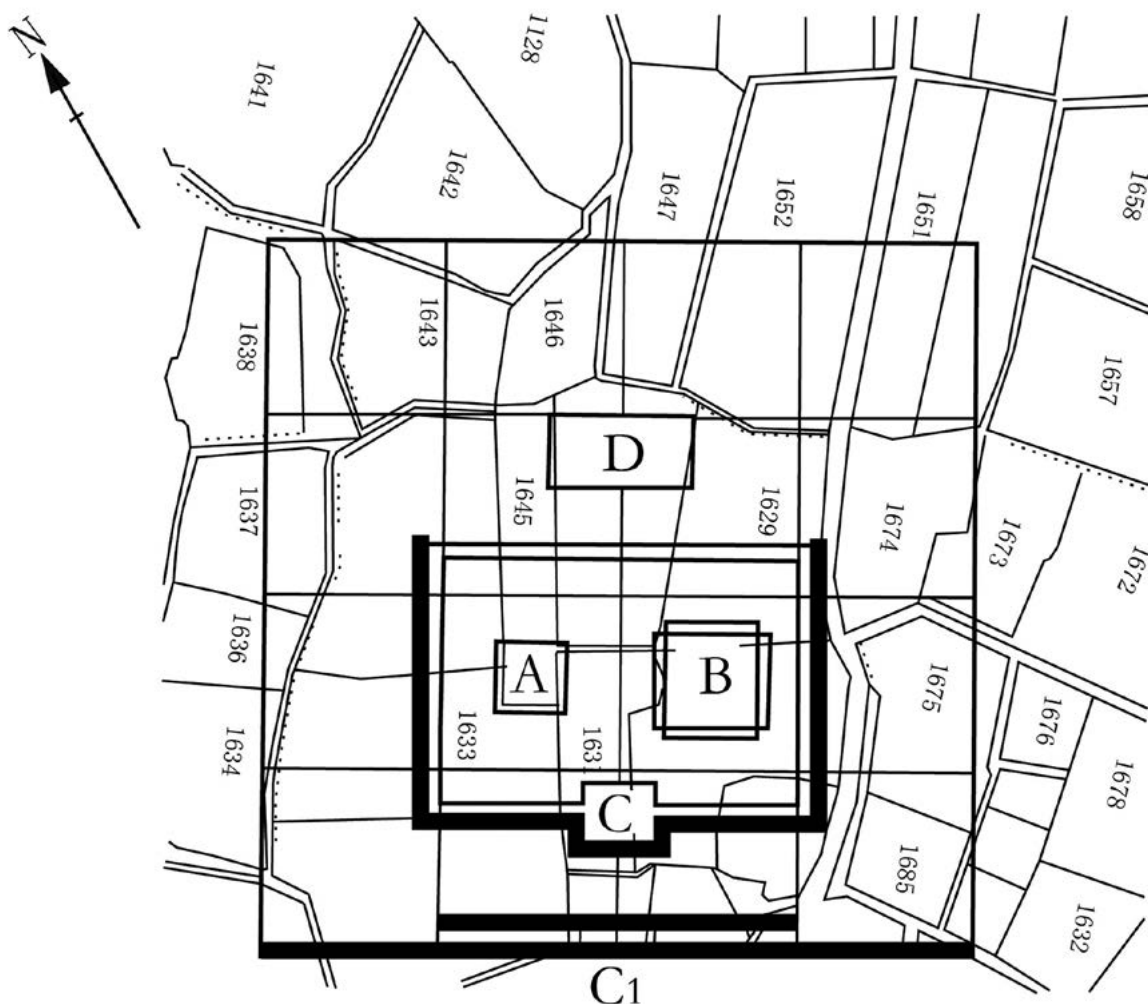


Fig. 4.32: Sketch plan of the Ākāśagarbha Monastery (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 229, fig. 1).

Kanzeonji Monastery 觀世音寺

Location: Dazaifu, northern Kyushu.

Construction date: mid-seventh century.

Excavation: surveyed by the *Kanzeonji* Preservation Commission in 1960.⁸⁸

Historical background: According to an entry in the *Shoku Nihongi*, this monastery was erected by Emperor Tengi to pray for Empress Saimei; however, it was not yet completed, even though many years had passed.⁸⁹

The *Kanzeonji Monastery* had the same plan as *Hōkiji Monastery* did. The South Gate (C₁), the Middle Gate (C) and the Lecture Hall (D) were arranged along the north-south axis, while the Pagoda (A) and the Golden Hall (B) were aligned along the east-west axis, with the Pagoda

(A) to the east and Golden Hall (B) to the west, both surrounded by a portico.⁹⁰

Komadera Monastery 高麗寺

Location: Yamashiro, Sōraku, Kyōto Prefecture.

Construction date: mid-seventh century.

Excavations: by the Education Committee of Yamshiro in 1960 and 1987 (Fig. 4.35).⁹¹

The foundation of the Pagoda (A) is square in plan, 16.1 m wide and with a residual height of 1.5 m. The Golden Hall (B) was a five-by-four-bay structure, and the Lecture Hall (D) had a similar structure, but was larger than the Golden Hall (B). This monastery had the same plan as *Hōkiji Monastery* did: the Pagoda (A) and Golden Hall (B) were

⁸⁸ Taniguchi Tetsuo 1978, 14–16, 39.

⁸⁹ McCallum 2009, 192–99.

⁹⁰ Sketch plan of the *Kanzeonji Monastery* see McCallum 2009, 193, fig. 3.22c

⁹¹ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 134–37; Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 176–79.

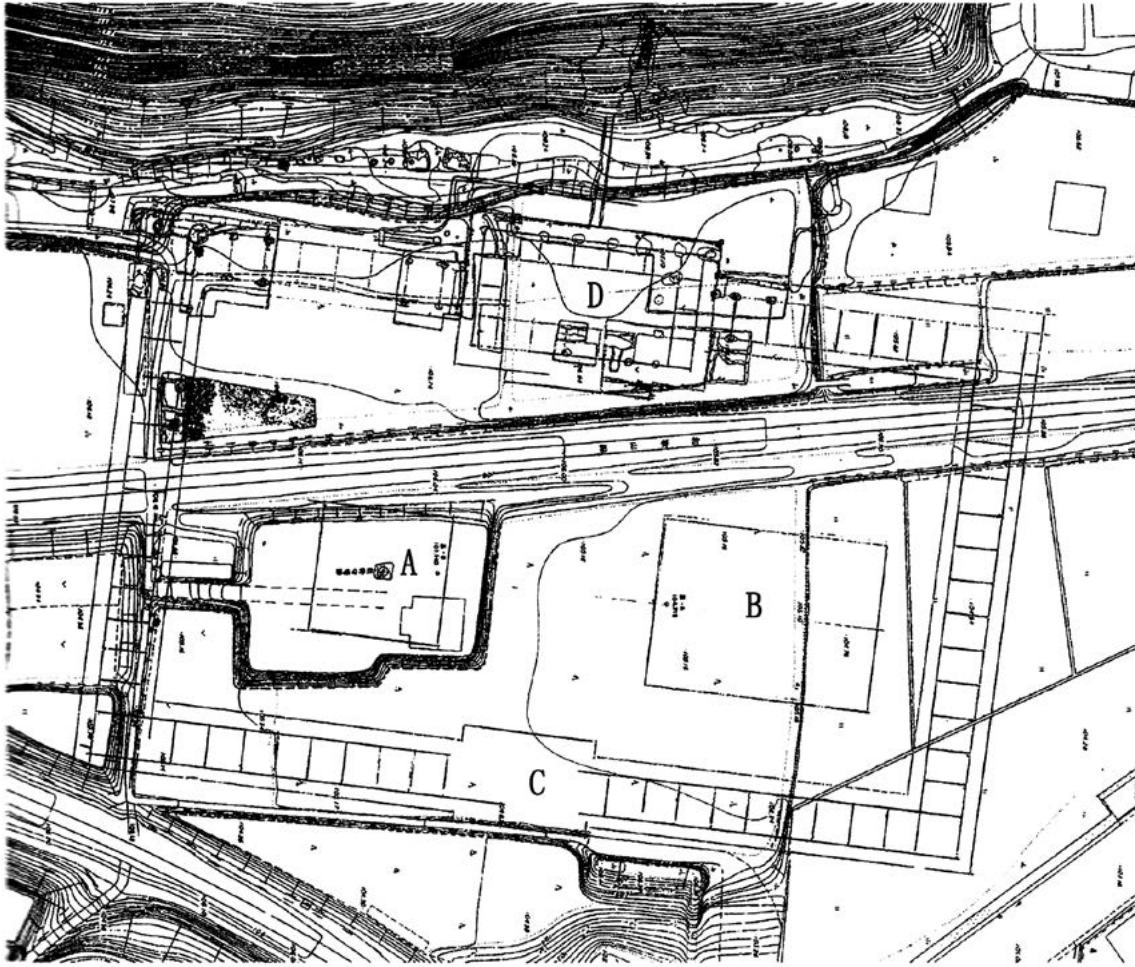


Fig. 4.33: Sketch plan of the *Kose Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 165, fig. 1).

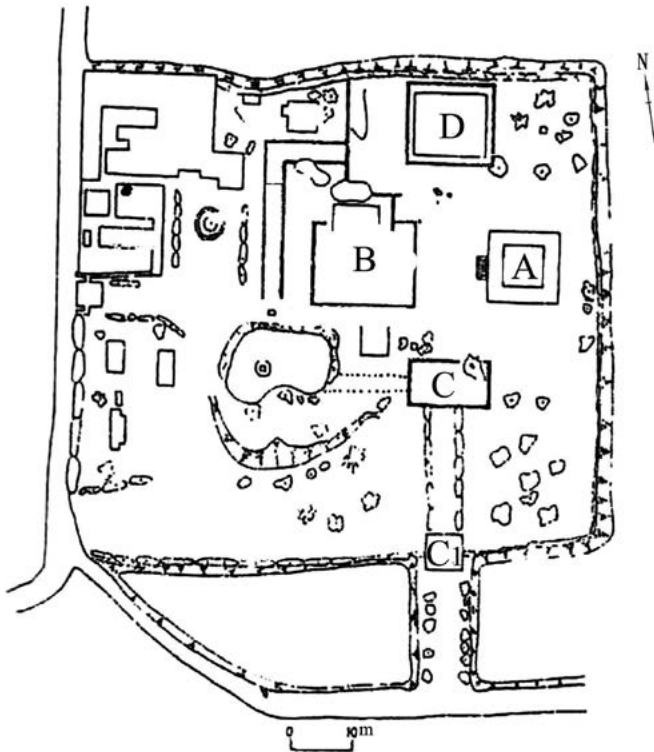


Fig. 4.34: Sketch plan of the *Hōkiji Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 185, fig. 1).

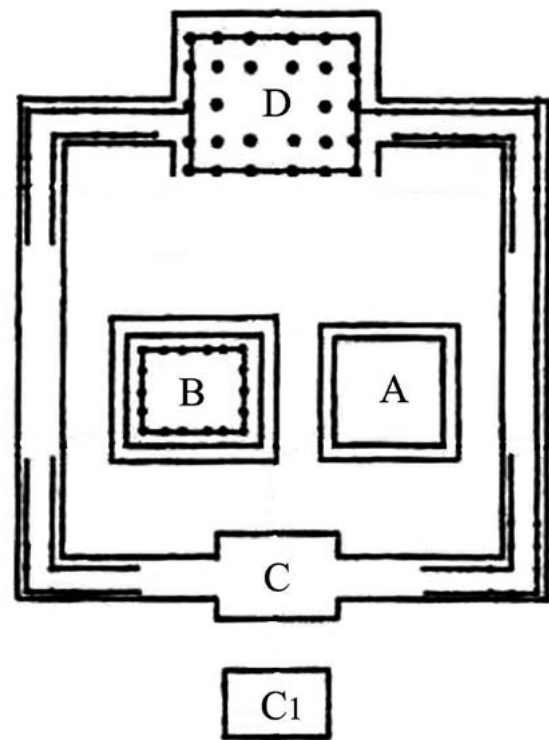


Fig. 4.35: Sketch plan of the *Komadera Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 135, fig. 1).

erected separately to the east and west of the monastery, while the Middle Gate (C) and the Lecture Hall (D), aligned along the north–south axis, were embedded into the portico surrounding the monastery.

As mentioned above, the ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side’ layout was the most popular monastery layout around the mid-seventh century. Its most notable feature was that the Golden Hall was opposite the Pagoda. A large number of Buddhist monasteries built in this period are known, including the *Hōrinji Monastery* (法輪寺), the *Kaieji Monastery* 海會寺, the *Yachuji Monastery* 野中寺, the *Teramachi-haiji Monastery* 寺町廢寺, the *Daiji-haiji Monastery* 大寺廢寺, the *Nishiyama-haiji Monastery* 西山廢寺, the *Reconstructed Anō-haiji Monastery* 穴太廢寺, the *Niji haiji Monastery* 尼寺廢寺, the *Abedera Monastery* 阿部寺, the *Zenjakuji Monastery* 禪寂寺, the *Sanno-haiji Monastery* 山王廢寺, the *Sano-haiji Monastery* 佐野廢寺, the *Saijo-haiji Monastery* 西條廢寺,⁹² the *Jorinji Monastery* 定林寺, the *Karudera Monastery* 輕寺 and the *Kokubunji Monastery* 相模國分寺,⁹³ and they have all been fully or partially excavated by archaeologists in the past few decades. All of them have been found to have the same type of layout, that is the ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side’ layout.

The ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side with a Central Hall Behind’ layout

This type of Buddhist monastery layout was popular in the second half of the seventh century. The analysis of currently available archaeological material suggests that this type appeared slightly later than the ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side’ style. In some sense, it can be regarded as an inheritor of the ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side’ layout. The main characteristic of such a layout is that the Middle Golden Hall was located at the center of the monastery, while the Pagoda and a Small Hall were erected side by side in front of it. At times, there was no small hall opposite the pagoda. Typical monasteries of this type include the *Kawaradera Monastery* 川原寺, the *Minami Shiga-haiji Monastery* 南滋賀廢寺, the *Sūfukuji Monastery* 崇福寺 and the *Daikandaiji Monastery* 大官大寺.

Kawaradera Monastery 川原寺

Location: Asuka-mura, Takaichi-gun, Nara Prefecture.

Construction date: second half of the seventh century.

Excavation: in the 1950s, by the Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties, who carried out a series of large-scale excavations disclosing all the main buildings and unearthing a large quantity of building materials, which were abundant evidence for the analysis of the

building structure and layout of this monastery (Fig. 4.36).⁹⁴

Historical background: As one of the four great monasteries of the Asuka Period, the *Kawaradera Monastery* was one of the most prominent Buddhist monasteries and had a profound impact on contemporary monastery architecture. Surprisingly, its foundation date and the reasons for the establishment of such an important monastery are not found in textual sources. Judging from the architectural style, the sculptural remains and the construction materials, it may be inferred that its construction was initiated in the second half of the seventh century; in fact, most scholars believe that the monastery was founded earlier than 673 AD. It may have been dedicated to the memory of Empress Saimei (齊明天皇 r. 654–661 AD); consequently, its construction work may have been begun by Emperor Tengi (天智天皇 r. 661–672 AD) and completed by Emperor Tenmu (天武天皇 r. 672–686 AD).⁹⁵ After this, the *Kawaradera Monastery* was involved in many significant rituals associated with the Japanese court, such as the transcription of all Buddhist sutras, prayers for sick emperors, accommodation for foreign monks, and confession and repentance.⁹⁶ After the capital was moved to Nara, and after having suffered several conflagrations, it gradually lost its glory with the demise of the Heian Period.⁹⁷

The plan of *Kawaradera Monastery* was a longitudinal rectangle oriented to the south. The most important building was the large middle Golden Hall (B) that occupied the core position of the whole monastery. It was a five-bay-wide and four-bay-deep wooden structure at the outer wall and three bays wide and two bays deep in the inner sanctum, with overall dimensions of 23.8 m by 19.2 m. The platform of the Hall was 1.5 m high; roofed corridors connected the Hall with the outer portico surrounding the monastery. In front of the middle Golden Hall (B), a Pagoda (A) and a West Hall (B₁) were erected side by side, the Pagoda (A) to the east and the Hall (B₁) to the west. The platform of the Pagoda was 11.7 m wide, with a residual height of 1.5 m. Judging from the span of the platform and the distribution of the pillar’s base stones, it is reasonable to presume the three-bay square Pagoda (A) may have been a five-story one. The West Hall (B₁), slightly smaller than the middle Golden Hall (B), faced the Pagoda rather than being oriented to the south. Although the platform of the West Hall has been shaved off by agricultural activity, its size could be inferred by the surrounding rainwater gutter and apron (*inubashiri* 散水): it was a five-bay-wide and four-bay-deep structure measuring 21.8 m by 13.6 m. The Middle Gate (C) was enclosed by the south portico, while the South Gate (C₁) was found about 30 m south of it. The Lecture Hall (D), a nine-bay-wide and four-bay-deep structure measuring

⁹² Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009, 166–215.

⁹³ Mosaku Ishida 1978, 7.

⁹⁴ Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 1960, 1–6.

⁹⁵ McCallum 2009, 163–66.

⁹⁶ *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 29, 1, 19, 20–23.

⁹⁷ Ohwaki Kiyoshi 1989, 108–15.

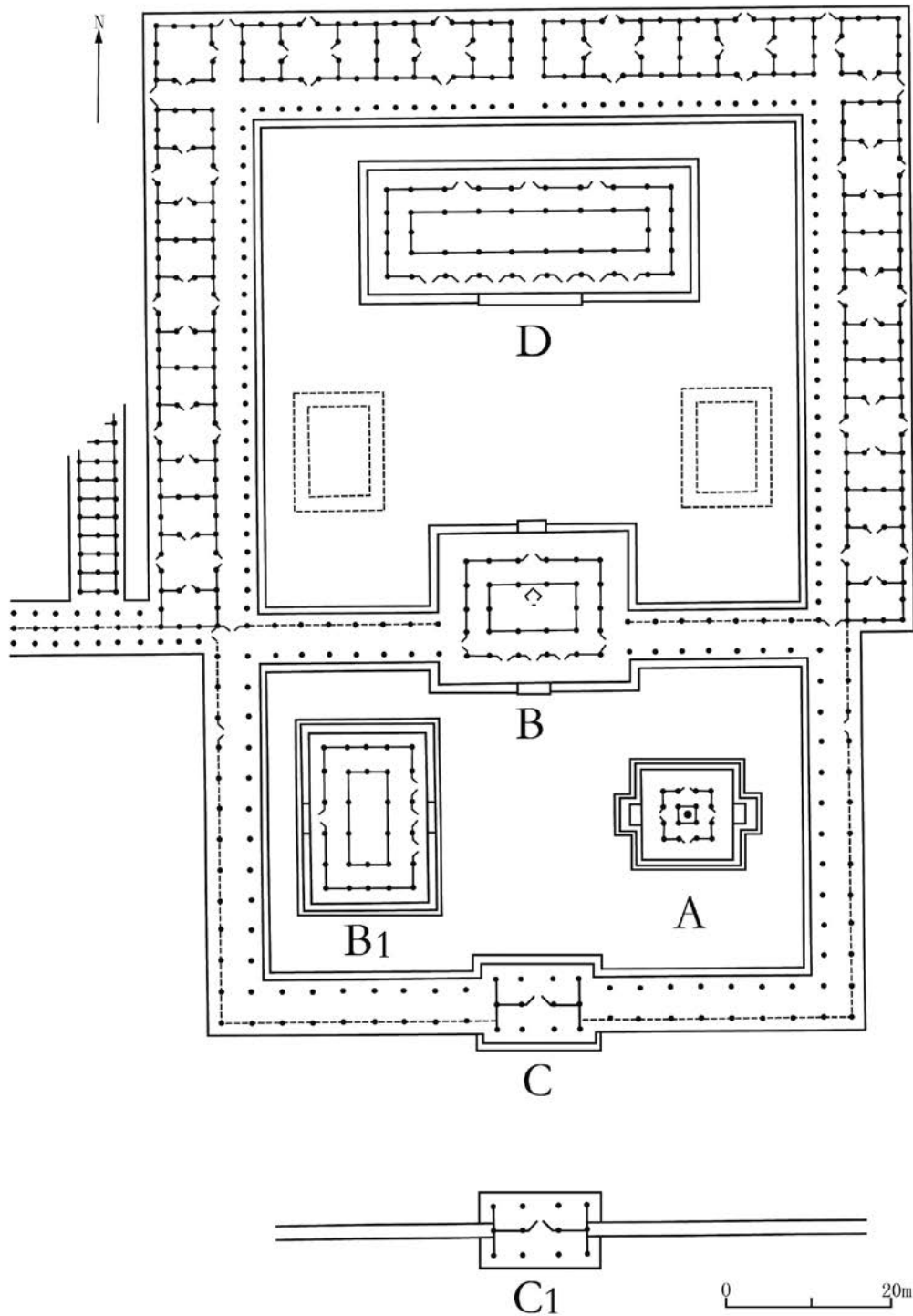


Fig. 4.36: Sketch plan of the *Kawaradera Monastery* (Modified from: Ohoka Minoru 1965, 157, figure of *Kawaradera*).

40.5 m by 16 m, was located in the northern part of the monastery, inside the north portico.⁹⁸

Minami Shiga-haiji Monastery 南滋賀廢寺

Location: Otsu, Shiga Prefecture, about 500 m north of the Otsu capital, where Emperor Tengi moved his court in 667.⁹⁹

Construction date: second half of the seventh century.

Excavations: surveyed by the Education Committee of Minami Shiga between 1938 and 1940 (Fig. 4.37).¹⁰⁰

Historical background: The location of the *Minami Shiga-haiji Monastery* indicates clearly this was a monastery closely related to the imperial family, though no one knows its original name.

⁹⁸ McCallum 2009, 166–77.

⁹⁹ *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 27, 4–5.

¹⁰⁰ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 180–83.

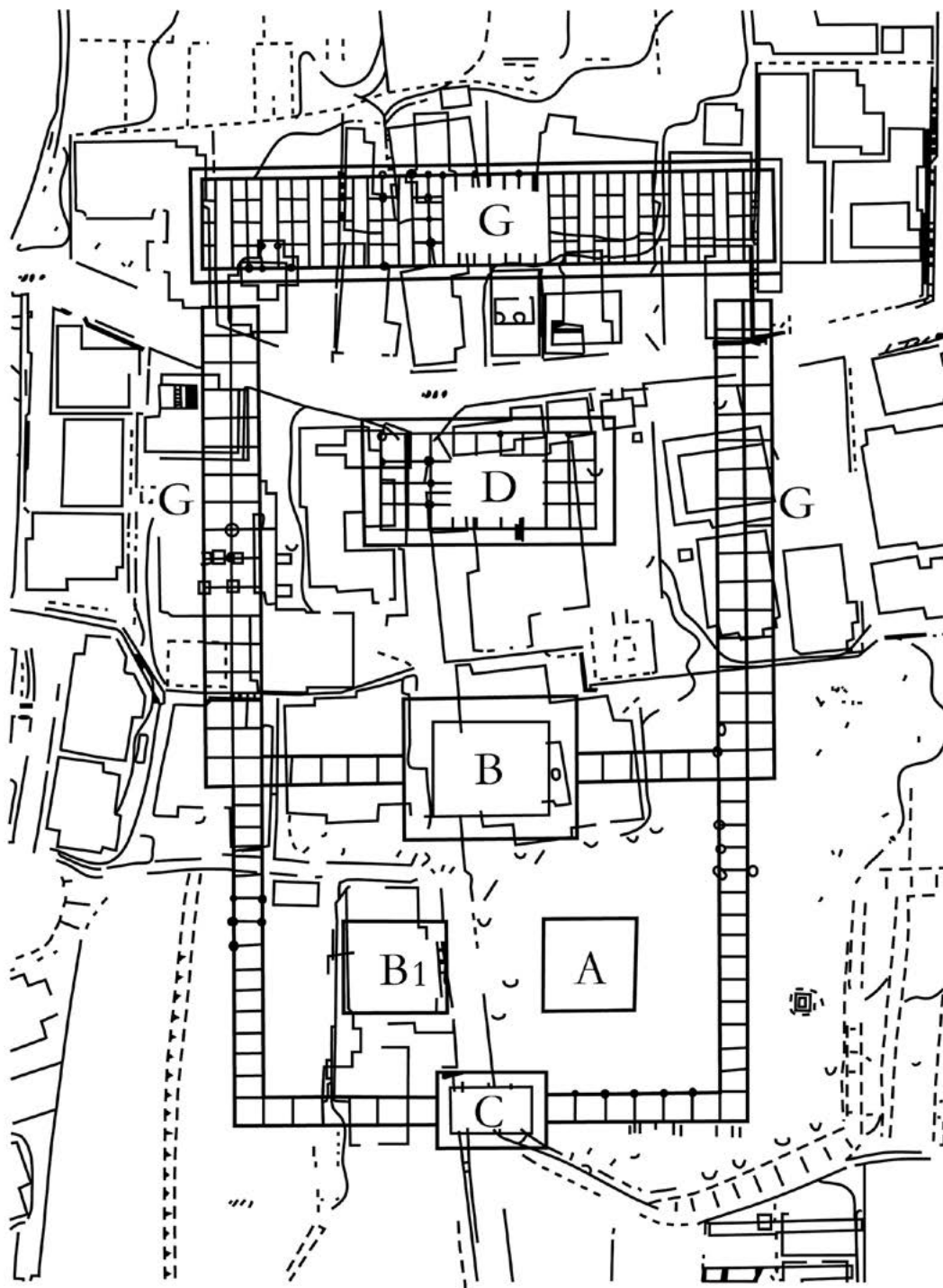


Fig. 4.37: Sketch plan of the *Minami Shiga-haiji Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 182, fig. 1).

A striking result of the excavation was the discovery that both the layout and the building material of this monastery were almost identical to those of the *Kawaradera Monastery*. The plan of whole monastery was a longitudinal rectangle surrounded by a portico. The Middle Golden Hall (B), measuring 22.72 m by 18.18 m, occupied the center of the monastery, and was connected by two roofed corridors, on its east and west sides, to the portico surrounding the monastery. The Pagoda (A) and West Golden Hall (B₁) were erected side by side in front of the middle Golden Hall (B). The Middle

Gate (C) was embedded into the south portico, and the Lecture Hall (D) was placed in the northern part of the monastery, inside the north portico. Moreover, the Monks' Quarters (G) were found in the rear of the monastery, close to the portico.

Sūfukuji Monastery 崇福寺

Location: Otsu, Shiga Prefecture, at the foothills of Mount Hiei, about one kilometer northwest of the *Minami Shiga-haiji Monastery*.

Construction date: second half of the seventh century.

Excavations: surveyed by Japanese scholars in 1928 and 1938 (Fig. 4.38).¹⁰¹

Historical background: According to the record of *Fusō Ryakki* (*An Abbreviated Account of Japan*), the monastery's construction was ordered by Emperor Tengi in 668, a year after he moved the capital to Otsu.¹⁰²

This was one of the most important Buddhist monasteries built in the second half of the seventh century. The excavation of the ruins disclosed the Middle Golden Hall (B), with a Pagoda (A) opposite a Small Hall (B₁). Judging from the relative position of these buildings, it is presumed that the layout of *Sūfukuji Monastery* may have the similar plan to that of *Kawaradera Monastery*. In addition, the unearthed building material and sculptural remains were found to be in the same style as those discovered at the *Kawaradera* and *Minami Shiga-haiji Monasteries*, indicating close contact between these monasteries.

Daikandaiji Monastery 大官大寺

Location: Asuka-mura, Takaichi, Nara Prefecture.

Construction date: second half of the seventh century.

Excavations: surveyed in mid-nineteenth century; several large-scale archaeological excavations by National Research Institute of Cultural Properties in the 1970s (Fig. 4.39).¹⁰³

Historical background: As an important Buddhist monastery of Fujiwarakyō 藤原京, it played a key role in the development of ancient Japanese monasteries. According to the records of *Nihon Shoki* and *Daianji Engi*, the predecessor of *Daikandaiji Monastery* could be traced back to *Kudara Ōdera Monastery*, founded by Emperor Jomei. In 673 AD, when the *Kudara Ōdera Monastery* was transferred to Takechi, its name was changed to *Takechi Ōdera Monastery* 高市大寺. *Daianji Engi* further states that the monastery was renamed *Daikandaiji Monastery* in 677.¹⁰⁴ At the same time, historical records and archaeological excavation demonstrated that there was another *Daikandaiji Monastery*, which may have been built during the period of Emperor Manmu (文武天皇 r. 697–707 AD). Just like the *Yakushiji* and *Gangōji Monasteries*, the *Daikandaiji Monastery*, along with the capital, was transferred again to Heijōkyō, and became the *Daianji Monastery* of Nara.

Some of the main buildings were disclosed during early excavations, such as the Pagoda (A), the Golden Hall

(B), the Lecture Hall (D) and the portico. Thus, the layout of the monastery was relatively clear.¹⁰⁵ The plan of the *Daikandaiji Monastery* was similar to that of the *Kawaradera Monastery*. The whole plan of the monastery was a longitudinal rectangle, 144 m east–west and 197 m north–south. There was a large Middle Golden Hall (B) at the center of the monastery measuring 54.6 m by 30.1 m; the residual height of the platform is about 1.7 m. Two roofed corridor segments connected the Golden Hall (B) with the east and west porticoes. The Pagoda (A) was located to the east, in front of the Golden Hall; it was a five-bay-wide and five-bay-deep square structure, with a platform 24 m wide and 2 m high. The Middle Gate (C) was a five-bay-wide and three-bay-deep structure, measuring 31.6 m by 20.7 m. It may have been a two-story building embedded into the south portico. The Lecture Hall (D) was placed at the northern part the monastery, inside the north portico, with the same dimensions as those of the Middle Golden Hall.¹⁰⁶ The only difference between the *Daikandaiji Monastery* and the *Kawaradera Monastery* was that the former did not have a small hall opposite the pagoda. Nevertheless, the *Daikandaiji Monastery* could be classified as a simplification of the same monastery layout.

4.2.3. Late seventh to mid-eighth century: 'Central Hall and Twin Pagodas', 'Central Hall and One Pagoda on Different Axes' and 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' monastery layouts

The 'Central Hall and Twin Pagodas' layout

The 'Central Hall and Twin Pagodas' layout is known in Japan as the *Heijōkyō Yakushiji Monastery* 平城京薬師寺 layout, a term derived from the homonymous monastery of the early eighth century. In truth, the earliest monasteries of this type would be the *Fujiwarakyō Yakushiji Monastery* 藤原京薬師寺, which was the predecessor of the *Heijōkyō Yakushiji Monastery* and was founded in 580 AD. However, such monasteries were mainly popular in the eighth century, after the capital was transferred to Heijōkyō. All the main buildings were aligned along the north–south axis and the Golden Hall occupied the center of the monastery; the 'Twin Pagodas' were erected in front of the Golden Hall. Besides the *Fujiwarakyō Yakushiji Monastery*, many monasteries built in the eighth century, such as the *Heijōkyō Yakushiji Monastery* and the *Tōdaiji Monastery* 東大寺, had a similar symmetrical arrangement, i.e. with 'Twin Pagodas' standing in front of the Golden Hall.

Fujiwarakyō Yakushiji Monastery 藤原京薬師寺

Location: Kashihara, Nara Prefecture, southwest of Fujiwara Palace sites.

Construction date: late seventh century.

¹⁰¹ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 224–27.

¹⁰² *Fusō Ryakki* 扶桑略記, 520.

¹⁰³ Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 50–52.

¹⁰⁴ McCallum 2009, 137–38.

¹⁰⁵ Ohwaki Kiyoshi 2009, 172–82.

¹⁰⁶ McCallum 2009, 144–46.

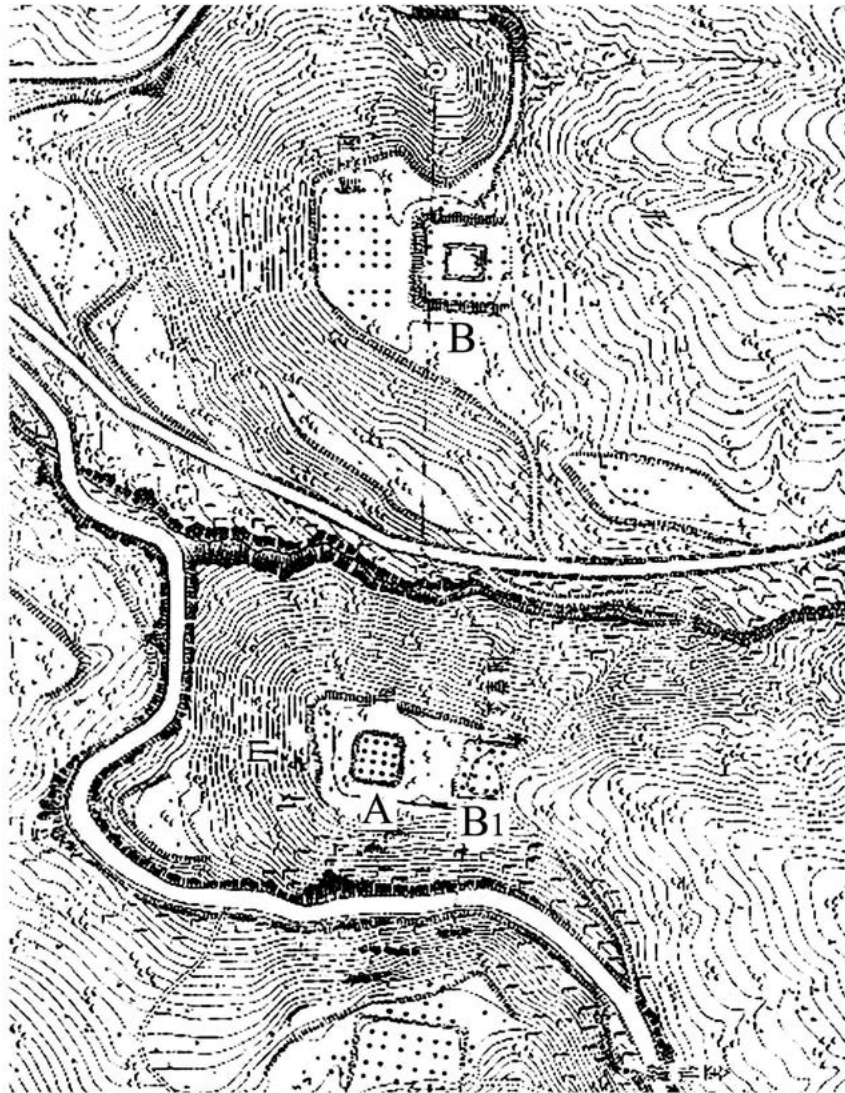


Fig. 4.38: Sketch plan of the *Sūfukuji Monastery* (Modified from: Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 226, fig. 2).

Excavation: in the 1990s, a large-scale excavation by the Nara National Research Institute (Picture 4.7).¹⁰⁷

Historical background: The *Fujiwarakyō Yakushiji Monastery* is also known as *Moto Monastery* or the *Original Yakushiji Monastery*. According to *Nihon Shoki* and the *Satsu* inscription 櫟銘 of *Heijōkyō Yakushiji*, the *Fujiwarakyō Yakushiji Monastery* was founded by Emperor Tenmu in the eighth year of his accession, who wished for the recovery of his sick consort; unfortunately, Emperor Tenmu passed away at the beginning of the construction, while his consort recovered and succeeded him as Empress Jito (持統天皇 r. 686–697 AD). During her reign, most of the main buildings of *Fujiwarakyō Yakushiji Monastery* were completed and became an important venue for religious ceremonies.¹⁰⁸

Except for the Lecture Hall and the Monks' Quarters,

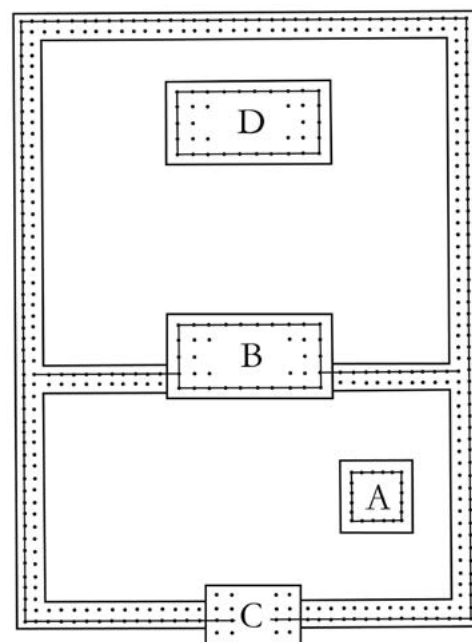


Fig. 4.39: Sketch plan of the *Daikandaiji Monastery* (Modified from: Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 50, figure of *Manmu Daikandaiji*).

¹⁰⁷ Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2010 b, 236–39.

¹⁰⁸ *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 29, 10; Ōhashi Kazuaki 1986, 112, 114.



Picture 4.7: *Fujiwarakyo Yakushiji Monastery* in Nara, Japan.

covered by modern buildings, the other main buildings, such as the Golden Hall (B), the Pagodas (A_1 , A_2), the Middle Gate and the portico, were all unearthed. The Golden Hall (B) occupied the center of the monastery; based on the integral foundation in stone masonry, it is assumed that it was a seven-bay-wide and four-bay-deep structure measuring 29.5 m by 18.2 m. The foundations of the two Pagodas (A_1 , A_2) were located in front of the Golden Hall (B). The platform of the East Pagoda (A_2) was a three-bay-wide and three-bay-deep structure measuring 16 m by 13 m, and originally approximately 1 m high. A large plinth of the central pillar, with a receptacle for śārīra, was placed on the top of the platform. The West Pagoda (A_1) had a similar structure but was a little smaller than the East Pagoda, and is believed to have been built in the early Nara Period. The Middle Gate was a three-bay-wide and two-bay-deep structure; the platform measured 16.3 m by 8.9 m and was embedded into a 7.1 m wide portico. It can be assumed that the Lecture Hall was arranged at the rear of the monastery, though it could not be excavated because modern buildings have been constructed above it (Fig. 4.40).

From the perspective of the city's overall grid plan, the *Fujiwarakyo Yakushiji Monastery* was placed at the center of a ward between the West Second Avenue and the West Third Avenue of Fujiwarakyo. The central north-south axis of the monastery faced directly toward the West Third Intermediate Avenue of the capital, suggesting that the

planning and design of the monastery was coordinated with the overall plan of the city of Fujiwarakyo.¹⁰⁹

Heijokyo Yakushiji Monastery 平城京薬師寺

Location: Nishinokyo-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture.

Construction date: early eighth century.

Excavation: in the 1980s, by the Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties. The excavated area was the core of the monastery. Based on the archaeological data and the extant buildings, Japanese architectural historians reconstructed the main buildings of the monastery (Picture 4.8).¹¹⁰

Historical background: As the successor of the *Fujiwarakyo Yakushiji Monastery*, the *Heijokyo Yakushiji Monastery* is believed to have been transferred completely to Nara in 718, when the capital moved from Fujiwarakyo to Heijokyo. However, recent archaeological excavation provides increasing evidence indicating that there might be two *Yakushiji* monasteries, existing at the same time but playing different roles.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ McCallum 2009, 215–25.

¹¹⁰ Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 84–85.

¹¹¹ Ohashi Kazuaki 1986, 42–45; McCallum 2009, 255–56.

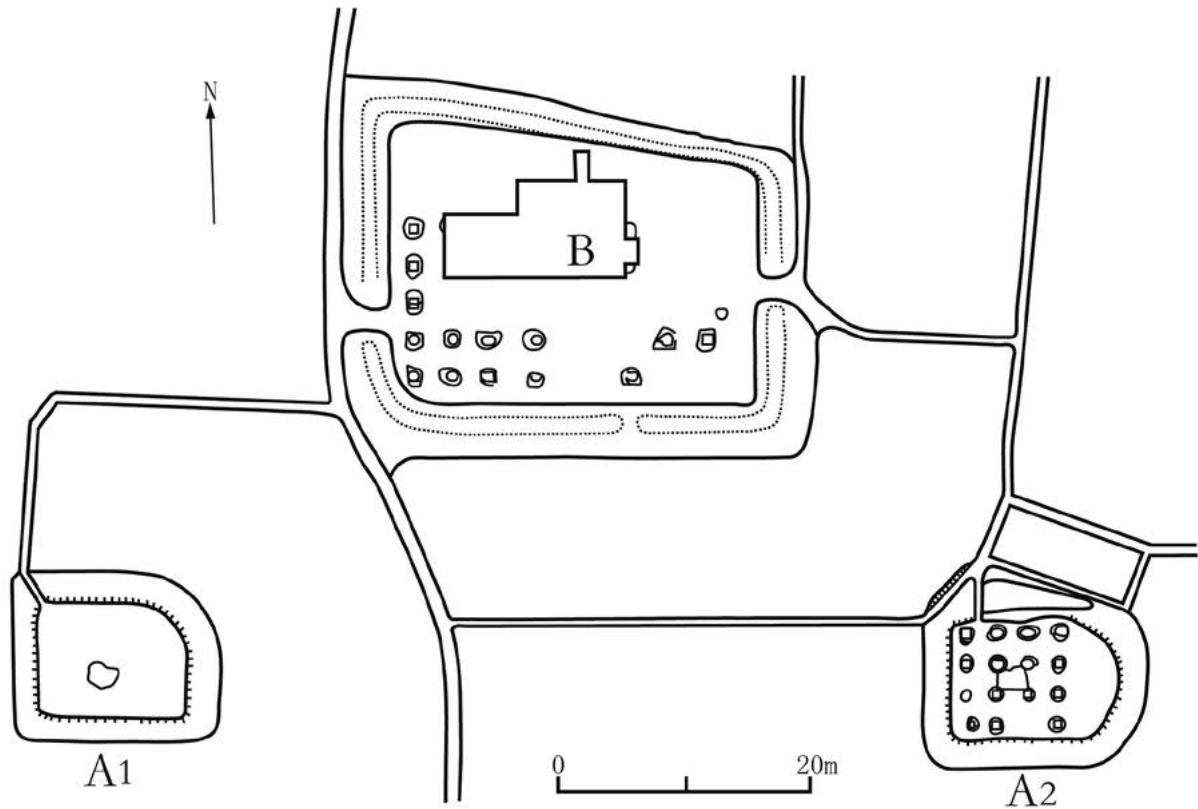


Fig. 4.40: Sketch plan of the *Fujiwarakyō Yakushiji Monastery* (Modified from: Ōhashi Kazuaki 1986, 71, figure of *Yakushiji*).



Picture 4.8: *Heijōkyō Yakushiji Monastery* in Nara, Japan.

The layout of the *Heijōkyō Yakushiji Monastery* is identical to that of the *Fujiwarakyō Yakushiji Monastery*, which strictly followed the principle of axial symmetry. All the main buildings were surrounded by a 7 m wide portico. The large Golden Hall (B) was arranged at the center of the monastery. Unearthed stone bases show us that the Hall was a seven-bay-wide and four-bay-deep structure, with dimensions of 29.4 m by 18.3 m. Two three-story pagodas (A₁, A₂), square in plan, were erected side by side in front of the Golden Hall (B); they were three-bay structures approximately 15 m wide. The East Pagoda (A₂) is the only original building of the eighth century at the *Yakushiji Monastery*, and is considered one of the finest pagodas in Japan. The Middle Gate (C) was a five-bay-wide and two-bay-deep structure, directly facing the Golden Hall (B). The Lecture Hall (D) was located behind the Golden Hall (B), embedded into the north portico. The Monks' Quarters were arranged in the rear of the monastery, outside the portico, and the Sutra Hall and Bell Tower were built between the Monks' Quarters and the north portico. A little south of the Middle Gate (C), there was the South Gate (C₁) embedded into the mud wall that enclosed the whole monastery (Fig. 4.41).

Tōdaiji Monastery 東大寺

Location: east suburb of Heijōkyō, present Zoshicho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture.

Construction date: mid-eighth century.

Excavation: surveyed by the Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties (Picture 4.9).

Historical background: Though the predecessor of *Tōdaiji Monastery* might be traced back to *Kinshōsen-ji Monastery* 金鐘山寺, built by Emperor Shūmu (聖武天皇 r. 724–749 AD) for his son in 728, most researchers prefer to believe that the *Tōdaiji Monastery* was founded in 741, after Emperor Shūmu issued an edict to promote the construction of Provincial Monasteries 國分寺 throughout the country. The *Tōdaiji Monastery* was designated as the headquarters of all the provincial monasteries, and was finally completed in 752. Thereafter, the *Tōdaiji Monastery* became an important venue for religious rituals for six Buddhist schools during the Nara period, including the Kegon-shū 華嚴宗, Hossō-shū 法相宗, Risshū 律宗, Sanron-shū 三論宗, Jōjitsu-shū 成實宗 and Gusha-shū 俱舍宗.¹¹²

The main buildings of the *Tōdaiji Monastery* were arranged symmetrically along the north–south axis, with 'Twin Pagodas' (A₁, A₂) side by side in the front. The large Golden Hall (B) occupied the center of the monastery, connected by two lateral roofed corridors to the portico surrounding the central compound. As one of the largest wooden buildings in Japan, the Golden Hall (B) was

initially a nine-bay-wide and five-bay-deep structure, measuring 88 m by 51.5 m at the base and 48.5 m in height. It contained the main icon, a 15 m high bronze image of Buddha *Vairocana* 毗盧遮那, who is the main deity of the *Avatamsaka School* 華嚴學派. The Middle Gate (C) was embedded into the south portico, directly facing the Golden Hall (B). The Lecture Hall (D) was placed outside of the north portico, surrounded by Monks' Quarters (G) and other annexes. The Sutra Hall (E) and the Bell Tower (F) were placed between the north portico and the Lecture Hall (D). In front of the Middle Gate (C), two Pagodas (A₁, A₂) enclosed by their own porticoes were erected symmetrically, which are presumed to have been over 100 m high (Fig. 4.42).

The 'Central Hall and One Pagoda on Different Axes' layout

The 'Central Hall and One Pagoda on Different Axes' layout, referred to as the *Tōshōdaiji Monastery* layout by Japanese scholars, was also a common monastery layout after the capital was moved to Heijōkyō. Such monasteries consisted of a main compound and several auxiliary compounds, and the Middle Golden Hall was arranged at the center of the Main Compound. Another distinctive feature was that a sole pagoda was not set on the main axis, but enclosed in a separate compound outside the Main Compound.

Kōfukuji Monastery 興福寺

Location: Noborioji-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture, southwest of *Tōdaiji Monastery*.

Construction date: early eighth century.

Excavation: by the Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties (Fig. 4.43).¹¹³

Historical background: Just like many monasteries of this period, the *Kōfukuji Monastery* had its predecessor and original site in Yamshina. In 672, it was transferred to Fujiwarakyō. Several decades later, when the capital moved to Heijōkyō, the monastery was dismantled and transferred to its present location. Since the *Kōfukuji Monastery* had a close relation with the Fujiwara, a powerful clan, it enjoyed prosperity and an important status for a long time, even after the capital was removed to Kyōto.¹¹⁴

The *Kōfukuji Monastery* consisted of many separate compounds, with the main one, enclosed by a portico, located slightly toward the south end of the monastery. The South Gate (C₁), the Middle Gate (C), the Golden Hall (B), and the Lecture Hall (D) were all arranged along the north–south axis. The Golden Hall (B), embedded into the north portico, was a seven-bay-wide and four-bay-deep

¹¹² Ohoka Minoru 1965, 27–28.

¹¹³ Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 83–84.

¹¹⁴ Ohoka Minoru 1965, 19–22.

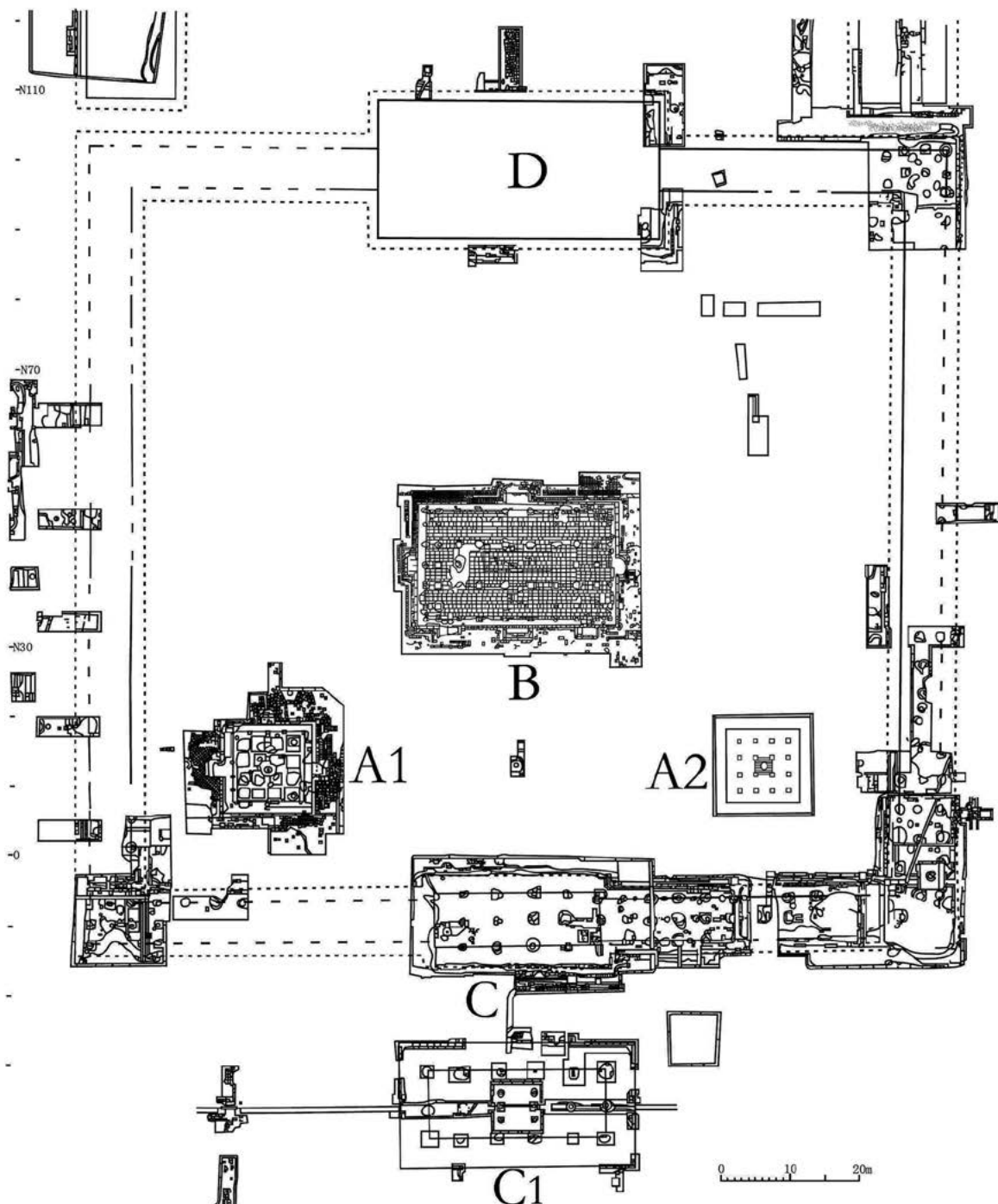


Fig. 4.41: Sketch plan of the Heijōkyō Yakushiji Monastery (Modified from: Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 85, fig. 4).

structure, with the Lecture Hall (D) behind it. Two other, smaller halls, the West Hall (B₁) and the East Hall (B₂), were placed one on each side of the Main Compound. It is worth noting that a five-story wooden Pagoda (A) and the East Golden Hall (B₂) were placed within a separate compound in the southeast corner of the monastery, enclosed by a portico and a mud wall. Other compounds and annexed buildings, such as the Storage Compound and Refectory Compound (H), were arranged at the north and northeast of the monastery.¹¹⁵

Gangōji Monastery 元興寺

Location: east of Heijōkyō, Nara City, Nara Prefecture, close to the Kōfukuji Monastery.

Construction date: early eighth century.

Excavation: surveyed by the Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties (Fig. 4.44).¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Kidder 1972, 116–18.

¹¹⁶ Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 82–83.



Picture 4.9: *Tōdaiji Monastery* in Nara, Japan.

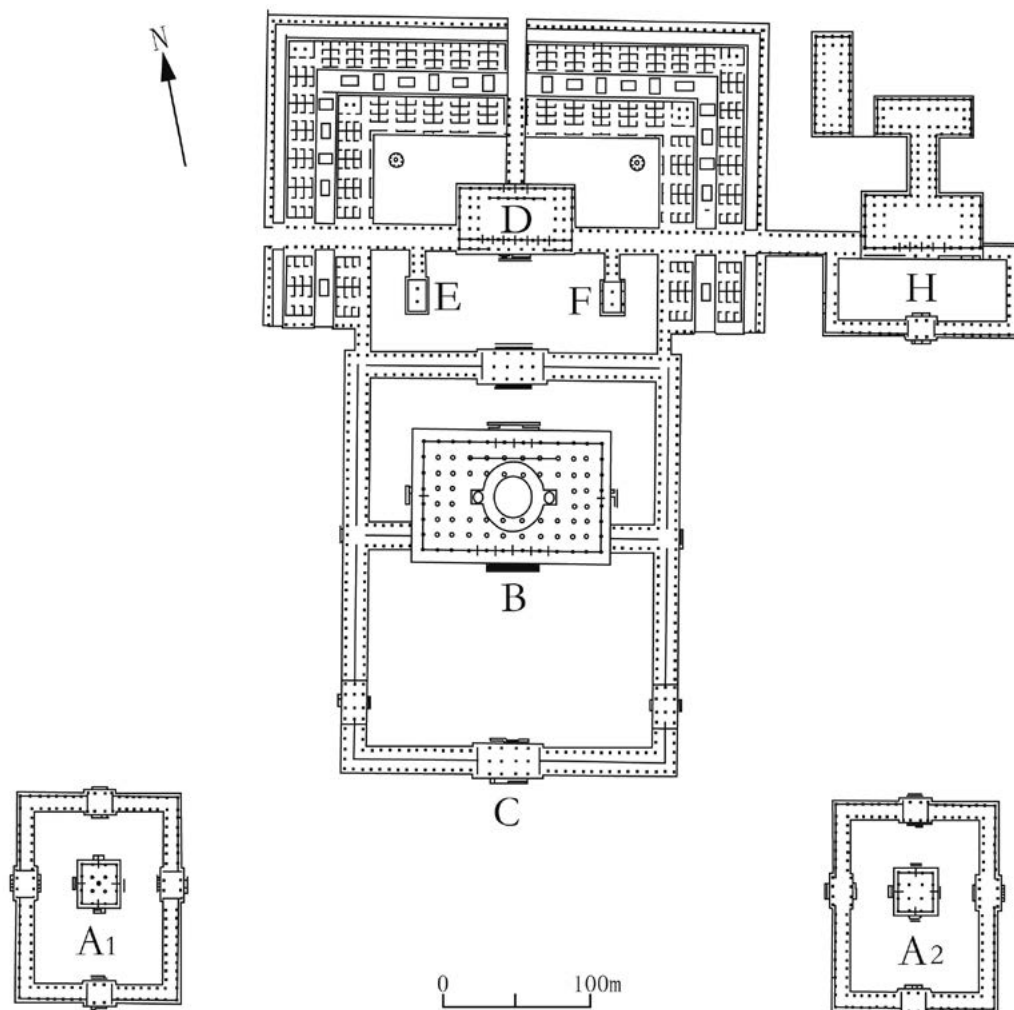


Fig. 4.42: Sketch plan of the *Tōdaiji Monastery* (Modified from: Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 82, fig. 3).

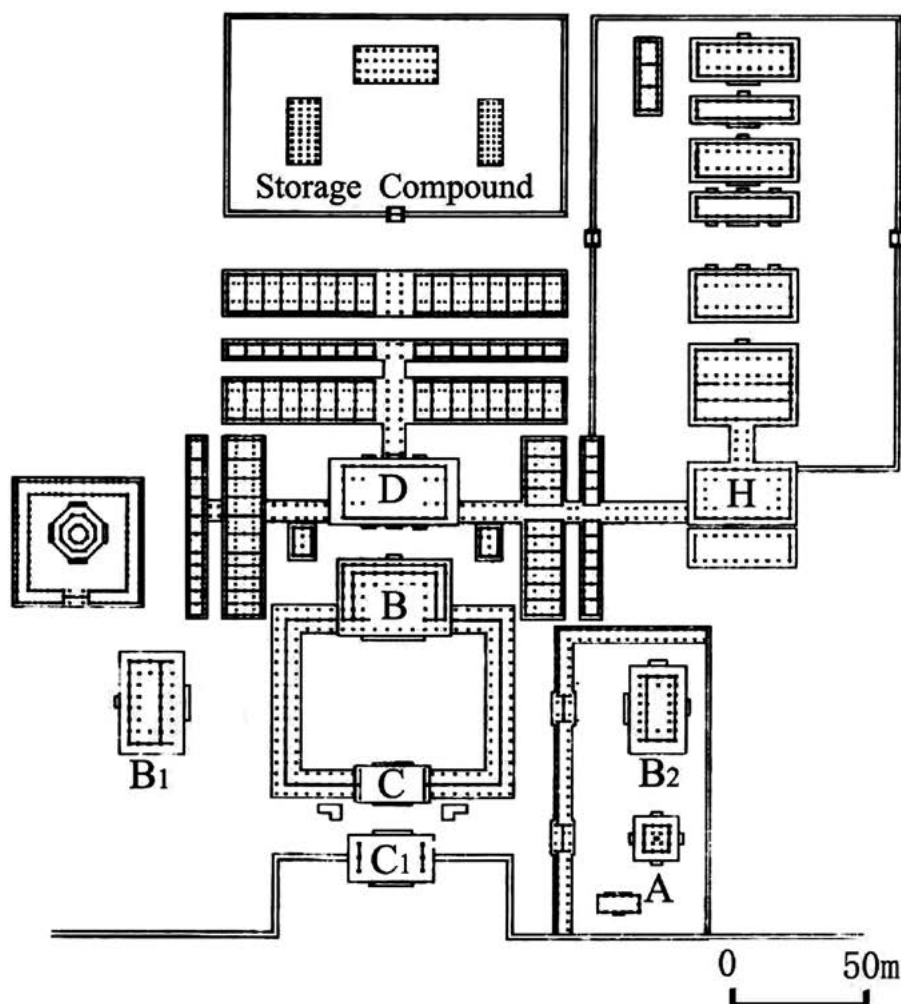


Fig. 4.43: Sketch plan of the *Kōfukuji Monastery* (Modified from: Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 82, fig. 1).

Historical background: It is assumed that this monastery was initially built by Soga no Umako, and had a close relation with the *Asukadera Monastery*. Following the relocation of the capital to Heijōkyō, it was transferred to its present position in the early days of the Nara period.¹¹⁷

The plan of the *Gangōji Monastery* was a longitudinal rectangle, enclosed by a mud wall. The South Gate (C₁), the Middle Gate (C), the Golden Hall (B), the Lecture Hall (D), the Bell Tower (F) and the Refectory (H) were arranged along the north–south axis. The Main Compound rested at the south end of the monastery, and was surrounded by a portico. The Golden Hall (B) was a seven-bay-wide and four-bay-deep structure that occupied the center of the Compound, and is one of the few well-preserved original structures. The Lecture Hall (D) was behind the Golden Hall (B). It was a nine-bay-wide structure, embedded into the north portico. A separate compound in the southeast corner of the monastery, enclosed by a portico in front and a mud wall on the sides, hosted the Pagoda (A) and a row of Monks' Quarters (G). Another very small Pagoda (A₁) was placed southwest of the monastery. Other annexed

buildings, such as the Refectory (H) and the Bell Tower (F), were all arranged symmetrically in the north part of the monastery.¹¹⁸

Tōshōdaiji Monastery 唐招提寺

Location: west of Heijōkyō, West First Avenue and West Second Avenue, north of Yakushiji, the present 13-46 Gojō-chō, Nara City, Nara Prefecture.

Construction date: mid-eighth century.

Excavation: surveyed by the Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties in 1978 (Picture 4.10).¹¹⁹

Historical background: This monastery was established by the famous Chinese *Vinaya* master Jianzhen 鑑真, who arrived in Japan after experiencing all kinds of hardship, and founded the Ritsu School.¹²⁰ Jianzhen and his disciples participated in the design and construction

¹¹⁸ Iwaki Takatoshi 1982, 9–13.

¹¹⁹ Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 82.

¹²⁰ Yang Zengwen 2008, 73–81.

¹¹⁷ Ohoka Minoru 1965, 22.

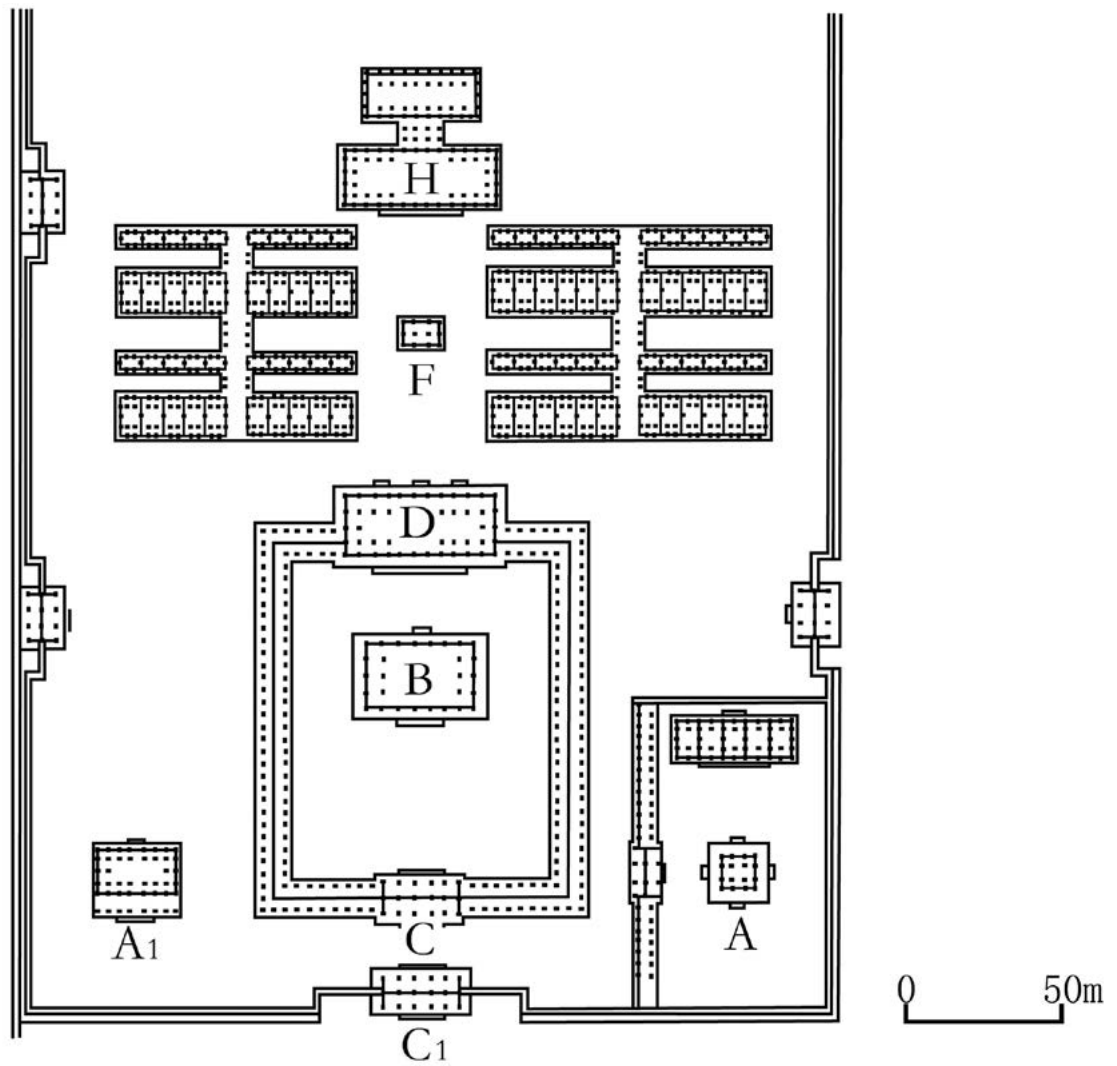


Fig. 4.44: Sketch plan of the *Gangōji Monastery* (Modified from: Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 77, fig. 2).



Picture 4.10: *Tōshōdaiji Monastery* in Nara, Japan.

of the Tōshōdaiji Monastery, which can be regarded as a monastery directly influenced by Chinese Tang models.

As in many surviving monasteries of this period, the *Tōshōdaiji Monastery* presents buildings constructed in different periods. However, it is not very difficult to recognize its initial layout, since reconstructions or restorations were normally carried out on the original base. The monastery layout was identical to that of the *Kōfukuji Monastery*, with the Middle Gate (C) and Golden Hall (B) embedded into the portico. The South Gate (C₁) was placed slightly to the south of the Middle Gate. The Golden Hall (B) was a seven-bay-wide and four-bay-deep single-story structure; behind it, there was the nine-bay-wide Lecture Hall (D). Both buildings are well preserved in their original appearance.¹²¹ The Refectory (H) and the Monks' Quarters (G) were arranged around the Lecture Hall (D). A small Sutra Hall (E) and a Bell Tower (F) were placed between the Golden Hall (B) and the Lecture Hall (D). In addition, there was a separate Pagoda Compound in the southeast of the monastery, and the five-story wooden Pagoda (A) is believed to have been built at the beginning of the ninth century. The extant site of the Ordination Platform (Jap. kaidan戒壇, Skt. *nānāvāsa*) was built in the Kamakura period (1185–1333 AD), and many researchers believe that the original *Vinaya Mandala* built by Jianzhen might have been located in the same place (Fig. 4.45).¹²²

Sairyuji Monastery 西隆寺

Location: north of Heijōkyō, between *Heijō Palace* and *Saidaiji Monastery*.

Construction date: mid-eighth century.

Excavation: by the Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties in 1971 (Fig. 4.46).¹²³

Historical background: As an important nunnery, it was founded under the auspices of Empress Shōtoku in 766 AD.

This monastery was almost square in plan, with sides about 250 m long. Along the north–south axis, the South Gate (C₁), Middle Gate (C), Golden Hall (B) and Lecture Hall (D) were arranged in sequence. The Main Compound, enclosed by a portico, was located slightly toward the south of the monastery, with the Golden Hall (B) inside. The Lecture Hall (D) surrounded with Nun's Quarters (G) was placed behind the Main Compound, outside the north portico. Two separate compounds enclosed by walls were built in the east part of the monastery. A Pagoda (A) was erected in the Southeastern Compound, while the northeast one was the Refectory Compound. The single pagoda and multiple compounds are features commonly seen in this period.

The 'Multi-Compound and Multi-Hall' layout

The 'Multi-Compound and Multi-Hall' layout was the standard monastery layout after the capital was moved to Heijōkyō in the early eighth century. The significant feature of this monastery layout was that many extremely symmetrically organized compounds were contained within the monastery boundaries, while the outer boundaries of the monastery were perfectly integrated into the grid plan of the capital. Some important compounds had their own Halls; the main buildings of the monastery, the South Gate, the Middle Gate, the Golden Hall and the Lecture Hall, were aligned along the north–south axis. As the most important building, the Golden Hall was placed at the center of the Main Compound. Typical monasteries of this type included the *Daianji Monastery* 大安寺, the *Saidaiji Monastery* 西大寺 and the *Hokkeji Monastery* 法華寺. Although Twin Pagodas still remained in many monasteries, the most striking feature of this layout was the arrangement of the multiple compounds.

Daianji Monastery 大安寺

Location: Nishinokyo-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture.

Construction date: early eighth century.

Excavation: by the Nara Municipal Education Commission, in a series of surveys and excavations in the 1990s (Fig. 4.47).¹²⁴

Historical background: As the successor of *Kudara Ōdera Monastery* and *Daikandaiji Monastery*, this monastery is believed to have been transferred to Heijōkyō in the early Nara Period, and rebuilt with the name *Daianji Monastery* in 729.¹²⁵ It was placed between the East Third Avenue and East Fourth Avenue, on the opposite side of Heijōkyō from the *Yakushiji Monastery*. The importance of the monastery declined after the capital was moved to Kyōto at the end of the Nara period.

One distinctive feature of the layout of this monastery is that it consisted of many compounds for different functions. The plan of the main compound is a longitudinal rectangle, with the South Gate (C₁), the Middle Gate (C), the Golden Hall (B), the Lecture Hall (D) and the Refectory (H) aligned along the north–south axis. All the main buildings were connected by roofed corridors. There was a small Sutra Hall (E) and a Bell Tower (F) between the Golden Hall (B) and the Lecture Hall (D). Auxiliary buildings were encircled by the portico from the outside. It should be noted that Twin Pagodas (A₁, A₂) were arranged outside the Main Compound, each enclosed within its own portico.

Hokkeji Monastery 法華寺

Location: Hokkeji-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture, in the vicinity of Heijōkyō Palace.

¹²¹ Andō Kōsei 1985, 12–14.

¹²² Andō Kōsei 1985, 39–41.

¹²³ Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 1993, 1–10.

¹²⁴ Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 88–89.

¹²⁵ Ooka Minoru 1973, 33.

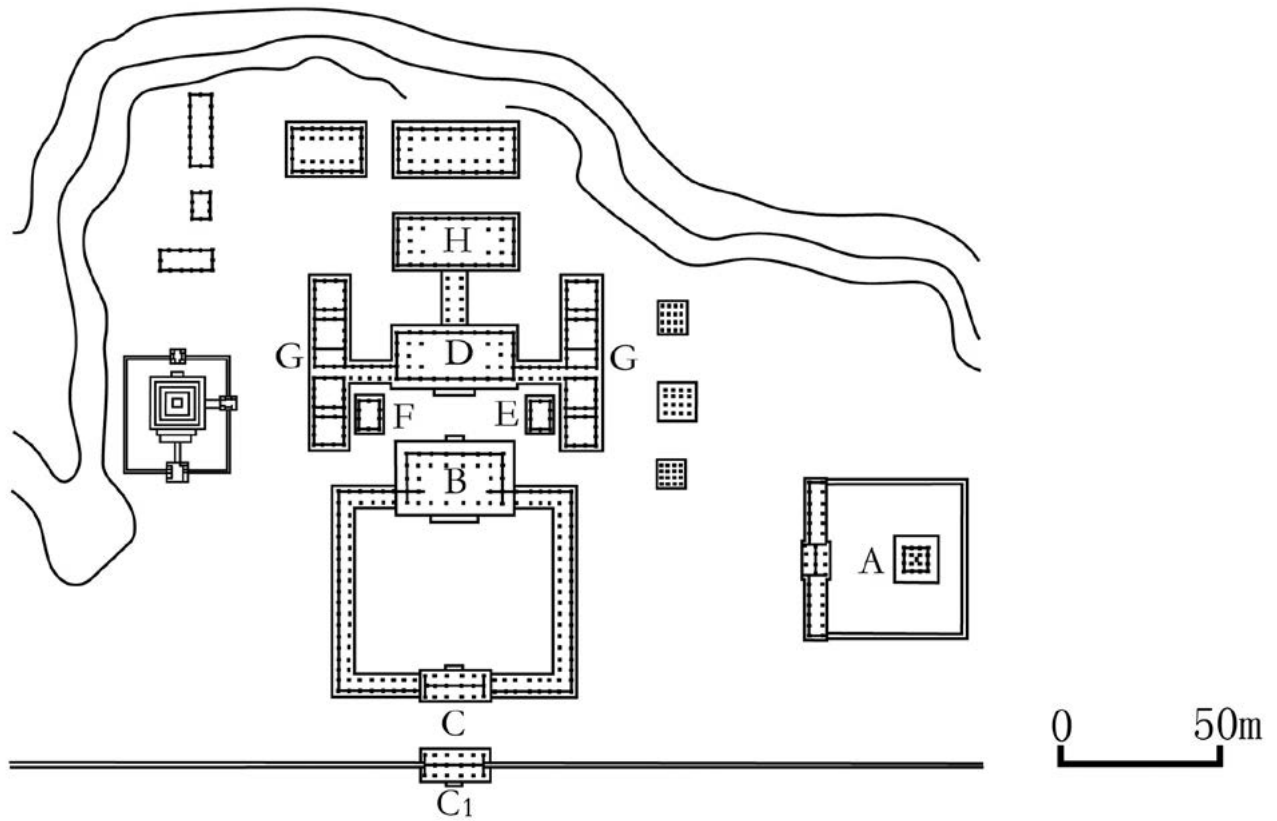


Fig. 4.45: Sketch plan of the *Tōshōdaiji Monastery* (Modified from: Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 78, fig. 5).

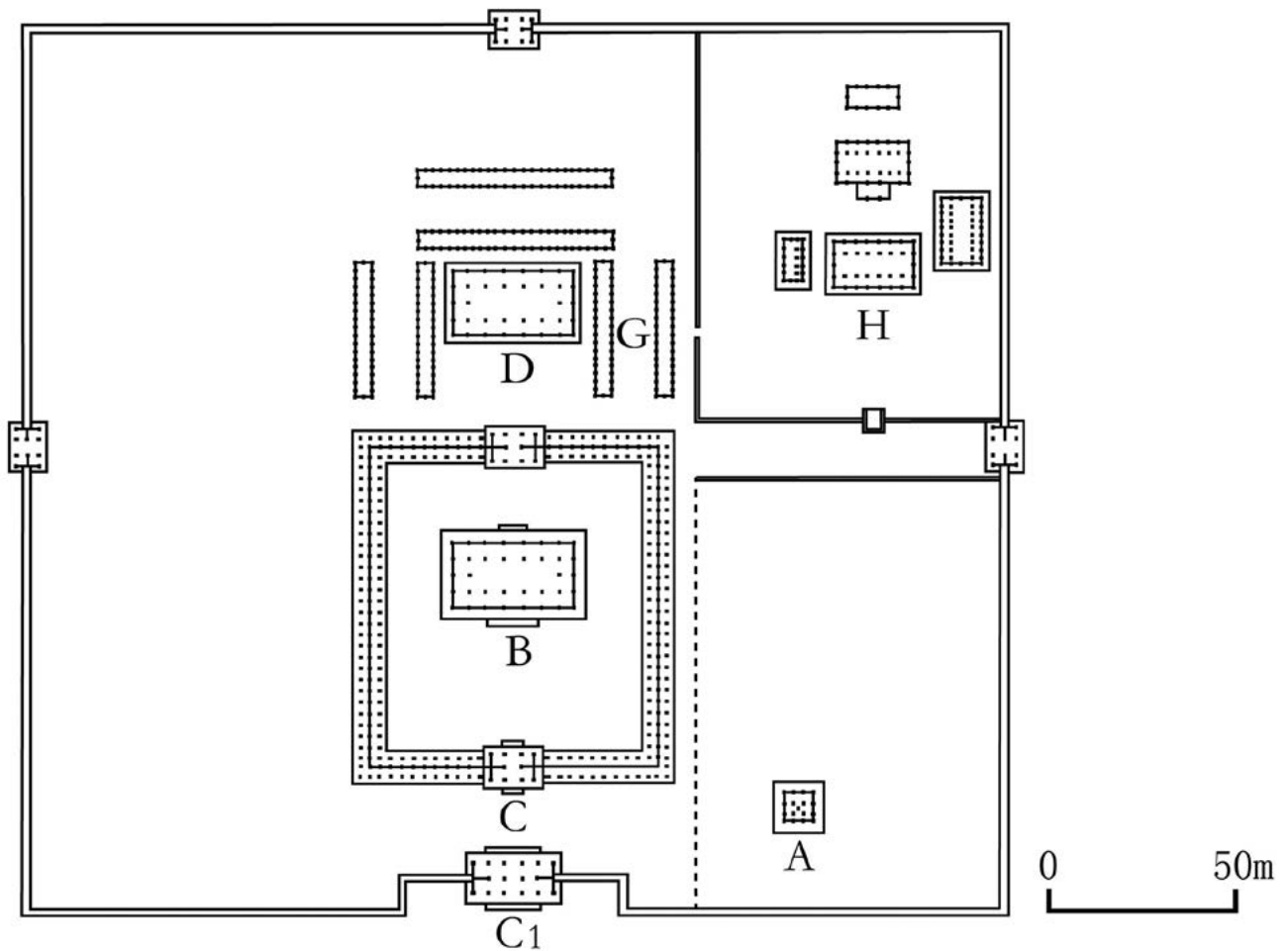


Fig. 4.46: Sketch plan of the *Sairyūji Monastery* (Modified from: Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 84, fig. 3).

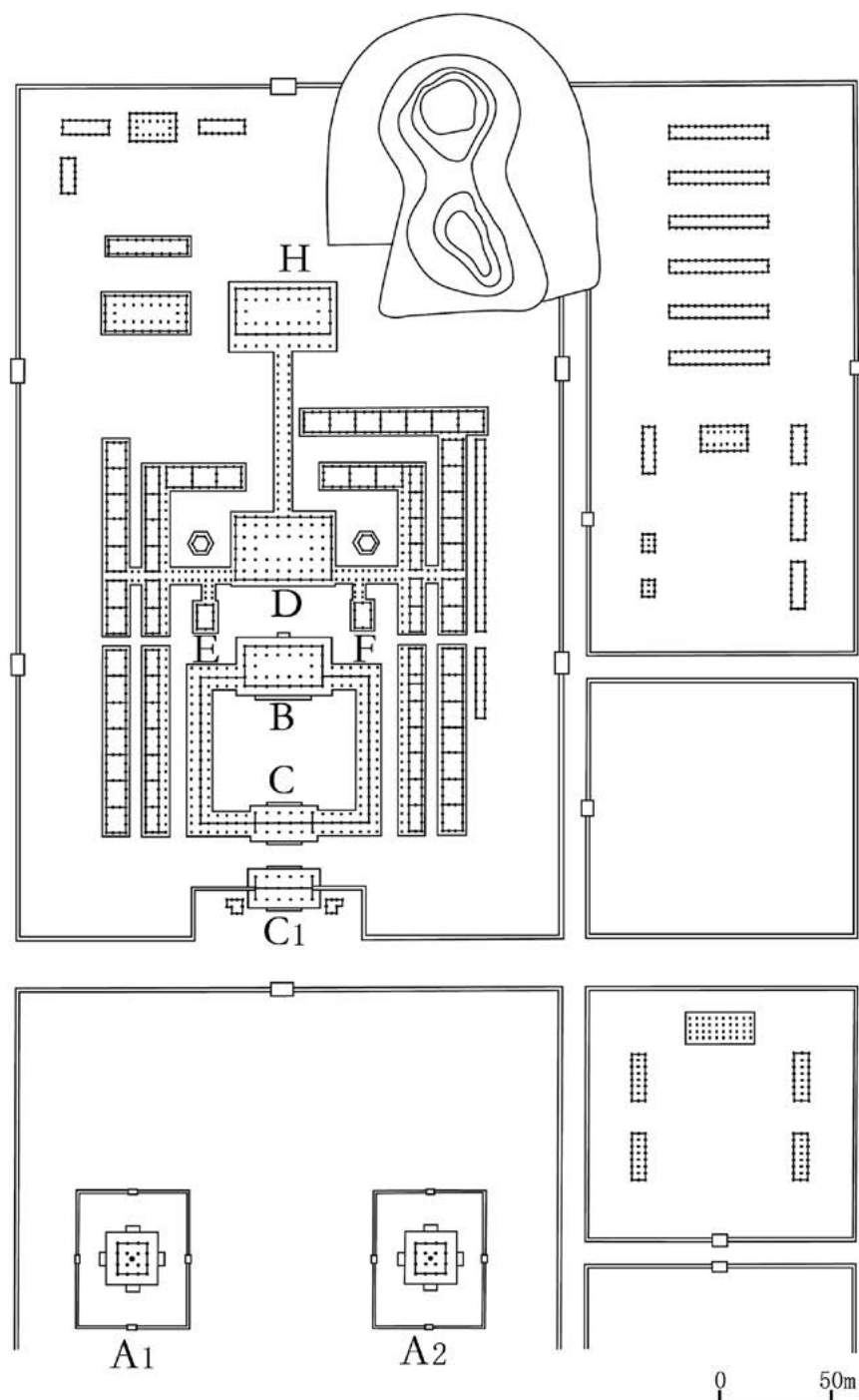


Fig. 4.47: Sketch plan of the *Daienji Monastery* (Modified from: Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 88, fig. 1).

Construction date: mid-eighth century.

Excavation: surveyed by the Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties (Fig. 4.48).

Historical background: Based on the records of *Hokkeji Engi* (*The Origin of the Hokkeji Monastery*) and *Shoku Nihongi* (*The Further Chronicle of Japan*), this monastery was built by Empress Kōmyō Kōgō 光明皇后. As the headquarters of provincial nunneries 國分尼寺, this monastery was an important venue for confession and repentance rites. The statue worshiped in *Hokkeji*

Monastery was a wooden Jūichi men kannon (十一面觀音, Skt. *ekādaśa-mukha*, eleven-faced *Avalokiteśvara*).¹²⁶

The *Hokkeji Monastery* had a symmetrical plan, with its north-south axis running through the South Gate (C₁), Middle Gate (C), Golden Hall (B), Lecture Hall (D) and Refectory (H). The whole monastery was enclosed by a mud wall. The Middle Gate (C) and the Golden Hall (B) were connected by a portico, and the Lecture Hall (D) was

¹²⁶ Machida Kōichi 1974, 8–18.

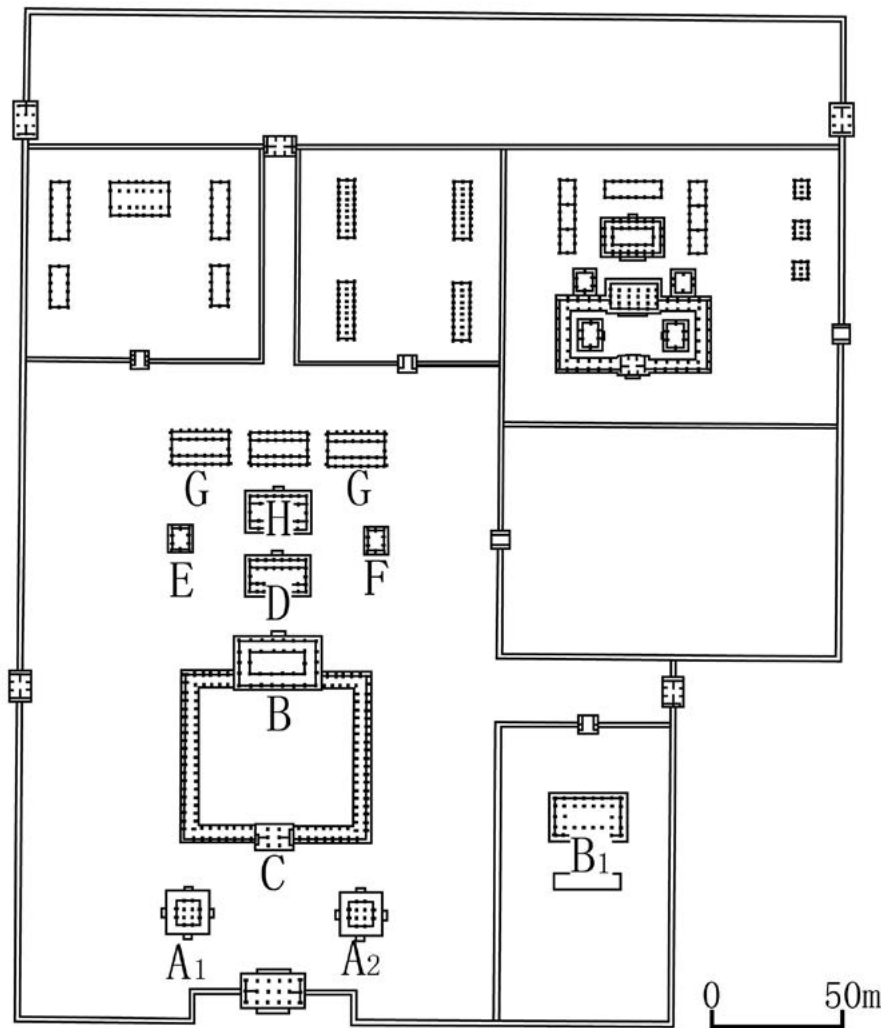


Fig. 4.48: Sketch plan of the *Hokkeji Monastery* (Modified from: Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 84, fig. 2).

placed behind the Golden Hall (B). The Monks' Quarters (G), the Sutra Hall (E) and the Bell Tower (F) were arranged at the rear of the monastery. Two pagodas (A_1 , A_2) set side by side were erected between the South Gate (C_1) and the Middle Gate (C). In addition, some separated compounds and halls (B_1) were built next to the west and north walls of the monastery.¹²⁷

Saidaiji Monastery 西大寺

Location: West of Heijōkyō, the present Saidaijishibamachi, Nara City, Nara Prefecture.

Construction date: mid-eighth century.

Excavation: surveyed by the Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties (Fig. 4.49).¹²⁸

Historical background: According to a surviving manuscript in the *Saidaiji Monastery*, the monastery was

founded by Emperor Shōtoku (稱徳天皇 r. 764–770 AD). As an important State Monastery, *Saidaiji Monastery* housed the following figures: Yakushi butsu (藥師佛 *Bhaiṣajyaguru*), Miroku (彌勒 *Maitreya*), Jūichi men Kannon (十一面觀音 *ekādaśa-mukha*) and Shitennō (四天王 *catur-mahā-rājakāyikāḥ*). In later periods, it was turned into the headquarters of Shingon Risshū 真言律宗.¹²⁹

The *Saidaiji Monastery* was perfectly integrated within the grid plan of Heijōkyō City. The monastery comprised a number of regular compounds and was enclosed by a mud wall. The whole monastery may be divided into the north and south parts. The Main Compound was located in the north part, with the Golden Hall (B) in the center. The Middle Gate (C) and the Maitreya Hall (D), which was placed in the spot usually reserved for the Lecture Hall, were embedded into the surrounding portico. Four separate square compounds, the Pagoda Compound, the Refectory Compound, the Treasure House Compound and the Administration Compound, were set on the two

¹²⁷ Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 84.

¹²⁸ Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 84.

¹²⁹ Makoto Hasegawa 1985, 6–24.

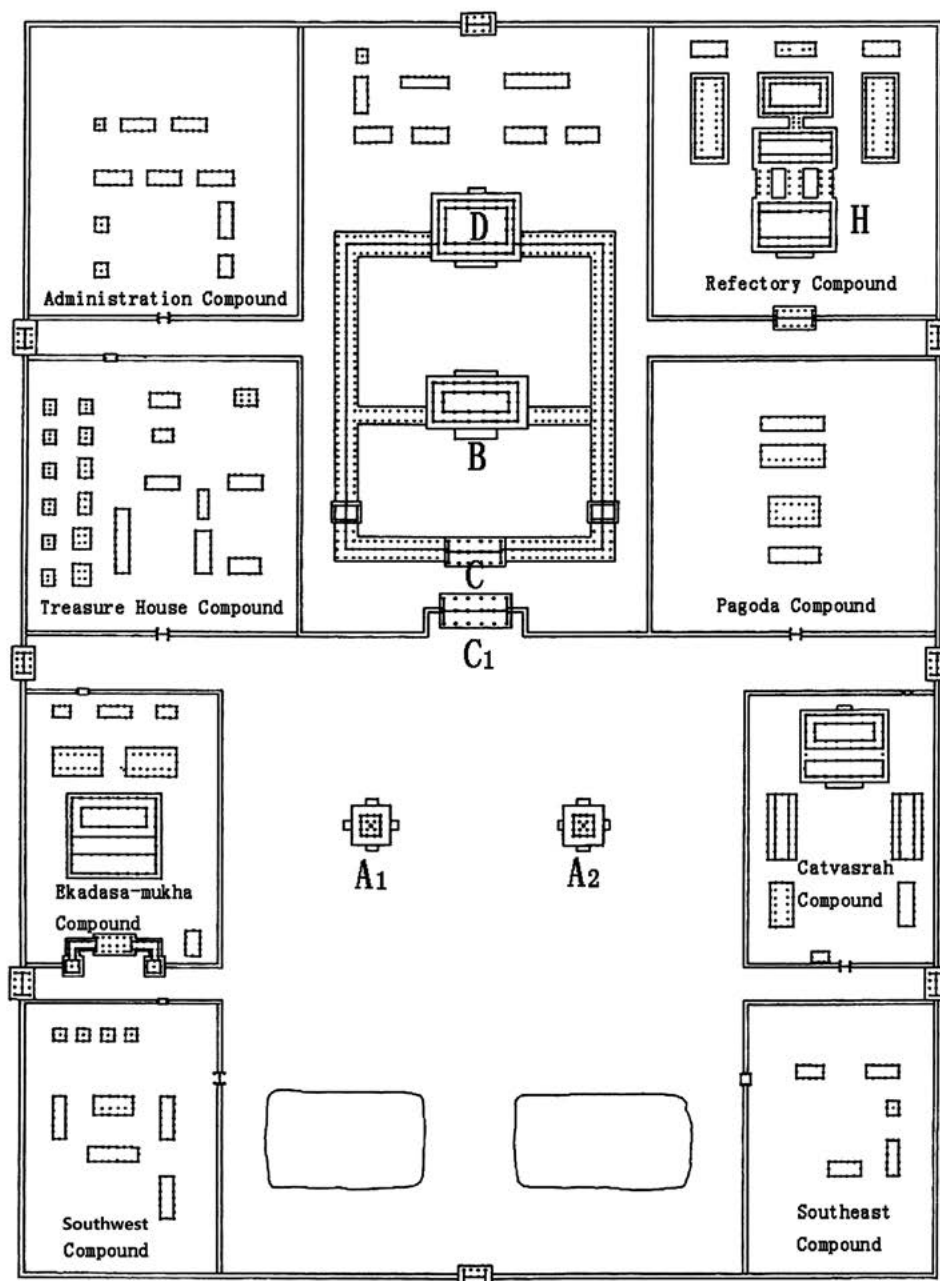


Fig. 4.49: Sketch plan of the *Saidaiji Monastery* (Modified from: Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 84, fig. 1).

flanks of the main one. Meanwhile, two pagodas (A₁, A₂) were erected side by side in the south part, and two ponds were dug in front of them. The south part comprised four compounds, the Southeastern Compound, the Southwestern Compound, the Ekadasa-mukha Compound (*Jūichimenkannon-in* 十一面観音院) and the Catvrasah Compound (*Shitennō-in* 四天王院), all placed along the east and west flanks, and each with its own Hall inside. The *Saidaiji Monastery* is the classic representative of Nara's monasteries in the middle of the eighth century. Not only did it have an axial symmetrical layout with double pagodas, but it also had the significant features of the 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' layout.

More than fifty Japanese monasteries from before the mid-eighth century have been surveyed or excavated since the

beginning of the twentieth century. Many of them are well preserved, and their original layouts are relatively clear. Classified according to the same standard used in China and the Korean Peninsula, the monastery layout of Japan can be divided into seven types. Five types, i.e. the 'Central Pagoda and Three Halls', 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear', 'Central Hall and Twin Pagodas', 'Central Hall and One Pagoda on Different Axes' and 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' layouts, can find corresponding prototypes in China, or in the Korean Peninsula; the remaining two layouts, 'One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side' and 'One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side with a Central Hall Behind', may have been local. As to the origin and the implied meaning of the Japanese monastery layouts, they will be discussed in the next chapter.

Monastery Layout in East Asia between the Fifth and Eighth Centuries: a Comparative Analysis of Monastery Layouts

5.1. The ‘Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear’ Monastery Layout: Its Diffusion

Since Buddhism was introduced into mainland China at the beginning of Eastern Han, the pagoda has always occupied a significant position and played a crucial role in Buddhist monasteries. In the 1990s, Su Bai already demonstrated that the monastery layout centered on the Pagoda with a Buddha Hall behind it was the prevailing layout of early Chinese monasteries. It was the most popular layout in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, and continued until the Sui Dynasty, around the beginning of the seventh century.¹ His conjecture was confirmed by the archaeological excavation of the *Siyuan Monastery*, the *Siyuan Monastery*, the *Yongningsi Monastery* of Northern Wei and the *Linggansi Monastery* of the Sui Dynasty. As the most popular monastery layout in early medieval China, the ‘Pagoda in Front and One Hall in the Rear’ layout had a strong impact on the Buddhist architecture of the neighboring Korean Peninsula, from there indirectly influencing Japan. The common monastery layout is evidence of early Buddhist transculturality, visible through architectural exchanges between these three countries of Eastern Asia.

Almost all the monasteries of the Baekje Kingdom presented a ‘Pagoda in Front and One Hall in the Rear’ layout, which was prevalent from the early sixth to the mid-seventh century. The main characteristic of this type of layout is that the main buildings were aligned along the north–south axis, and all enclosed within a single courtyard. The pagoda occupied the central position in the monastery, while the Golden Hall was behind it. Undoubtedly, this layout corresponded to the contemporaneous Chinese monastery layout. An important feature distinguishing the monastery layout of the Baekje Kingdom from the early Chinese ones is that in Baekje the large Lecture Hall is usually arranged at the rear of the monastery, while no trace of the Lecture Hall has been found in monasteries of the Northern Wei Dynasty.

The Kingdom of Baekje had established a close relationship with South China in the fourth century; Buddhism was introduced to Baekje from the Eastern Jin at the end of the fourth century. Since then, the two countries maintained maritime exchanges politically and culturally.

In the twelfth year of the Yixi Era (416 AD), (the Emperor An of Eastern Jin) granted Yeong Yeong the titles ‘Commissioned with Extraordinary Powers’,

‘Commander in Chief of Baekje Military Affairs’, ‘Chief General Guardian of the East’ and ‘King of Baekje’.²

Successive emperors of the Chinese Southern Dynasties inherited this tradition and maintained close ties with the Kingdom of Baekje by granting all sorts of titles to the Baekje kings.³ The political and cultural communion between Baekje and South China reached its peak during the reign of Emperor Wu of Liang (梁武帝 r. 502–549 AD). Baekje kings Dongseong (牟太 r. 479–501 AD), Muryeong (武寧王餘隆 r. 501–523 AD) and Seong (聖王餘明 r. 523–554 AD) successively accepted the titles granted by the Southern Dynasties. During this period, one of the most significant records in the *Book of Liang* states:

In the sixth year of the Zhongdatong Era (534 AD) and the seventh year of the Datong Era (541 AD), (Baekje) repeatedly sent envoys to pay tribute with domestic goods and specialties. And further, (Baekje) asked for the *Nirvāṇa Sutra* and other scriptures, scholars of the *Book of Songs*, craftsmen and painters. (The Emperor Wu) issued an edict to grant them [their request].⁴

Due to frequent cultural exchanges, the laws, institutions and also burial practices of Baekje were heavily influenced by South China. In addition to written documents, a large number of archaeological findings, such as the relics unearthed from the King Muryeong Mausoleum, confirm these close cultural exchanges. The tombstone and the burial-plot purchase contract (*maidiquan* 買地券) followed the custom of the Southern Dynasties and were written in Chinese characters. The title of ‘Chief General Guardian of the East’ in the epitaph was the official title granted by Emperor Wu of Liang. Many unearthed relics, such as five-zhu coins, blue porcelains and bronze mirrors, were undoubtedly South China exports.⁵ What is more, a tomb brick with a short inscription was found at the Gongju Songsan-ri Tomb No. 6, close to the Muryeong Mausoleum. Although there are different interpretations of the individual blurry character, most researchers accept the general meaning of the inscription as expressing the fact that Baekje regarded the craftsmanship or tile style of Liang Dynasty as a role model.⁶

² *Song Shu* 宋書, 2393, ‘義熙十二年, 以百濟王餘映 (r. 405–420 AD) 為使持節、都督百濟諸軍事、鎮東將軍、百濟王。’; Hucker 1985, 422–23.

³ *Song Shu* 宋書, 2393–94; *Nan Qi Shu* 南齊書, 1020.

⁴ *Liang Shu* 梁書, 805, ‘中大通六年, 大同七年, 累遣使獻方物; 並請涅槃等經義、毛詩博士, 並工匠、畫師等, 敕並給之。’

⁵ Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Korea 1974; Jia Meixian 1983, 66–80.

⁶ Zhao Yinzai 2011.

¹ Su Bai 1997 a; Su Bai 1997 b.

By comparing Buddhist archaeological sites and relics of the Baekje Kingdom and South China, we have found great similarities in monastery layouts, the style of the statuary and construction materials. Although evidence in the form of excavated materials is still lacking, the fact that the typical Buddhist monastery layout of the Southern Dynasties was the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' style, with a Lecture Hall in the rearmost part, has been widely accepted on the basis of historical documentation.⁷ Buddhist sculptures unearthed from monasteries of the Baekje Kingdom present exceptionally similar features, as their dresses and ornaments are found to be similar to those of sculptures unearthed over the past few decades in Chengdu, which are regarded as the typical Buddhist sculpture of the Southern Dynasties.⁸ The tile-heads of the Baekje monasteries are normally found displaying a lotus flower of eight flat wide petals, completely different from the lotus design commonly seen in North China, but very similar to that excavated from architectural ruins and tombs of the Southern Dynasties in Nanjing.⁹ An interesting issue is that the sculptures (including both Buddhist and secular images) unearthed from the *Jeunglim Monastery* of the Baekje Kingdom and the *Yongningsi Monastery* of the Northern Wei are extraordinarily similar in many respects. Most scholars believe that this similarity derives from the fact that the statues of both places were imitating the statuary of Jiankang, the capital of the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties.¹⁰ Taking the above factors into account, the fact that the layout of Buddhist monasteries of the Baekje Kingdom derived from Southern China is widely recognized in academic circles in both China and Korea.

As a traditional ally of the Yamato Kingdom on the Korean Peninsula, since the late fourth century, the Baekje Kingdom had established political ties and diplomatic marriages with Japanese royalty. There are a large number of historical records about the contacts between Baekje and Yamato in *Nihon Shoki* and *Samguk Sagi*. From that time on, the culture and technology of mainland China spread constantly to Japan via Baekje. In exchange, Japan provided military support for the Baekje Kingdom in its confrontation with Silla and Goguryeo.¹¹ Because of these frequent contacts, Buddhism was introduced to Japanese royalty from the Baekje Kingdom in the mid-fifth century. In the meantime, many entries in *Nihon Shoki* recorded that the kings of Baekje sent monks and craftsmen to Japan, not only to disseminate Buddhism, but also to teach the techniques for casting bronze figures and constructing Buddhist monasteries.¹² One of the most important records was an entry of 577 AD, stating that, in the 6th year of Emperor Bidatus:

The King of Baekje presented to (Bidatsu Tennō) a number of scrolls of canonical books via the returning envoy Prince Owake and his companions, together with six persons: an ascetic, a practiser of meditation, a nun, a reciter of Dharani spells, a maker of Buddhist images, and a temple architect. Subsequently, (they) were accommodated at Prince Owake's temple in Naniwa.¹³

The *Shitenōji Monastery* was established soon after Korean craftsmen came to Japan. The Middle Gate, the Pagoda, the Golden Hall and the Lecture Hall were aligned along the north-south axis, with the Golden Hall placed behind the Pagoda. The main buildings were all placed within a single compound, while the large Lecture Hall was placed at the back of the monastery. In view of the fact that Japan did not have any substantial direct contact with China, it is reasonable to suppose that the monastery layout of the *Shitenōji Monastery* derived from Baekje. The layout of the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' was the most prevalent monastery layout in the late sixth to early seventh century, until it was replaced by the 'One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side' layout after the Taika Reform.

In addition, the Buddhist monastery layout of the Baekje Kingdom influenced the nearby Silla Kingdom as well. The *Original Hwangnyongsa Monastery*, the largest monastery built by Silla royalty in the mid-sixth century, also had a layout in the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' style, with the Lecture Hall in the rear of the monastery. The Eastern and Western Compounds set side by side offer evidence for the fact that the feature of multiple compounds and halls began to emerge in this period.

5.2. The 'Central Pagoda and Three Halls' Monastery Layout: Its Origin and the Contacts between North China and the Korean Peninsula

The typical monastery layout of the Goguryeo Kingdom consisted of an octagonal Pagoda encircled by three Golden Halls. Almost all the Goguryeo monasteries from the fifth to the mid-seventh century were in such an arrangement, which influenced monasteries in the neighboring region, such as the *Reconstructed Hwangnyongsa Monastery* and the *Original Bunhwangsa Monastery* of the Silla Kingdom, and even the *Asukadera Monastery* of Japan to a certain extent.

For quite a long time, due to the lack of information about early Chinese monasteries, the 'Central Pagoda and Three Halls' layout with an octagonal pagoda was regarded as a native creation of the Goguryeo Kingdom. However, with the increase in archaeological material and painstaking research, more and more scholars accept the fact that the layouts of monasteries of the Goguryeo Kingdom might have originated in the Chinese Mainland

⁷ Su Bai 1997 a.

⁸ Liu Zhiyuan and Liu Tingbi 1958, fig. 1-12.

⁹ Yang Hong 2008.

¹⁰ Yang Hong 2002, 661-80.

¹¹ Wu Tingqiu 1994, 38-41.

¹² *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 19-vol. 22, entries for 538, 552, 570, 577, 584, 587, 588, 593, 594, 602.

¹³ *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 20, 3.

as well.¹⁴ As to the octagonal pagoda, it had already appeared in the *Gandhāra* region as early as the first century AD. Thereafter, similar *stūpas* were found on the site of the monastery of Loulan City (樓蘭故城), dating approximately to the fourth century.¹⁵ The earliest instances of octagonal pagodas in Central and North China were likely the stone pagodas of Northern Liang: fourteen small pagodas were found in the Gansu Corridor and Turfan region. Most of these *stūpas*, or pagodas, had an octagonal base and were embellished with carvings of diverse deities, displaying both Indian and Chinese traits.¹⁶ Quite recently, a few pentagonal and trapezoidal dressed stones were unearthed at the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* in the capital Yecheng. It is worth noting that the outer edge of each piece presents a 135-degree angle. Judging from the size, angle and connecting traces, this construction material can be merged into a large octagonal base.¹⁷ Consequently, the octagonal pagoda was not the creation of the monasteries of the Goguryeo Kingdom, but originated in *Gandhāra* and spread to north China in the fourth century at the latest. After the fifth century, this type of pagoda was introduced into Goguryeo and became one of the most notable features in its monasteries.

In regard to the appearance of the three Golden Halls, some clues can be found in Chinese Buddhist documents. When describing the history of the *Hedongsi Monastery* in Jingzhou 荊州河東寺, the *Records of the Miraculous Responses to the Manifestations of the Vinyana* mentioned the arrangement of the Pagoda, the East Hall and the West Hall.¹⁸ Another document referred several times to the image halls of *Tongtaisi Monastery* 同泰寺, initially built in Jiankang by Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty. It states:

(Emperor Wu) issued an edict that a hall, which was a three-bay structure with two wing-rooms, should be established at the northeast of the Buddha Hall of the *Tongtaisi Monastery* and the Buddha's figure should be placed on a canopied seat decorated with seven treasures. [...] In the third month by the lunar calendar in the second year of the Zhongdatong Era (547 AD), the Emperor personally visited *Tongtaisi* to attend an assembly and listened to preaching. Going through every hall praying, he came to the Hall of Buddha at sunset. [...] In the fifteenth year of the Kaihuang Era (595 AD), when Tian Zongxian, the governor of Qianzhou, came to the monastery to worship, the Buddha's figure emitted shining light instantly. So he decided to build a Main Hall north (of the monastery), a thirteen-bay structure, with nine attached halls in the east and west. [...] The Main Hall was encased by eaglewood, and thirteen canopies were arranged inside, decorated with gold and jewels. [...] The Buddha's figure was placed in the east and west halls encased

with sandalwood. The canopies and floral lamps were all made of gold. The complex was so magnificent that they were regarded as the best in the world.¹⁹

Judging from the structure of the halls mentioned in the documents above, Li Yuqun confirmed that the three-hall arrangement had already become one of the Chinese monastery layouts in the Eastern Jin.²⁰

Because of the lack of unearthed material evidence, the copious material offered by the Buddhist cave-temple can be regarded as a reliable basis to explore the structure and function of above-ground monasteries. As in the case of an above-ground monastery, different types of caves are normally clustered so as to form a monastery. Usually, a number of buildings of different types and functions are condensed into a single large cave, or a group of caves. Some scholars have noticed that niches or altars in Buddhist caves sometimes display the same themes found in the halls of above-ground monasteries. Correspondingly, the cave of the 'Three Walls and Three Niches' (*sanbi sankan shi shiku* 三壁三龕式石窟) type and of the 'Three Walls and Three Altars' (*sanbi santan shi shiku* 三壁三壇式石窟) type, popular after the sixth century in North China,²¹ should correspond to the three-hall layout in an above-ground monastery (Figs 5.1, 5.2).²² A very representative instance is the group of Caves 306–08 in Dunhuang, in which it can be clearly seen that Caves 306 and 308 of the Sui Dynasty were intended as complementary to Cave 307. Actually, this group should be regarded as an embodiment of the three-hall monastery layout (Fig. 5.3).²³ The paintings in the Dunhuang Grottoes provide us with additional evidence to further explore the origin of the three-hall monastery layout. As mentioned above, a large number of depictions of Buddhist monasteries are preserved in the Dunhuang paintings of the Sui and Tang Dynasties: many monasteries are presented in a three-hall layout. One earlier instance shows a main hall with two separate small halls (Fig. 5.4), whereas the main hall of a monastery of the Tang Dynasty is normally connected with the halls on its sides by a roofed corridor (Fig. 5.5). Given the prototype of these monastery types coming from the two capitals, Chang'an and Luoyang, rather than from Dunhuang's local monasteries,²⁴ it is not difficult to speculate about the popularity of the three-hall monastery layout in North China in that period.

If we consider it from a broader perspective, the architectural layout focusing on the main hall with two

¹⁴ Park Daenam 2005, 76–78.

¹⁵ Chen Xiaolu 2006.

¹⁶ Yin Guangming 1997.

¹⁷ Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 2010.

¹⁸ Lüxiang *Gantong Zhuan* 律相感通傳, 877–78.

¹⁹ *Fayuan Zhulin* 法苑珠林, 385–86, '勅於同泰寺大殿東北起殿三間兩廡，施七寶帳坐，以安瑞像。……中大同二年三月，帝幸同泰，設會開講。歷諸殿禮，黃昏始到瑞像殿。……開皇十五年，黔州刺史田宗顯至寺禮拜，像即放光。公發心造正北大殿一十三間，東西夾殿九間。……大殿以沉香帖遍，中安十三寶帳，並以金寶莊嚴。……其東西二殿，瑞像所居。並用檀帖，中有寶帳華炬，並用真金所成。窮極宏麗，天下第一。'

²⁰ Li Yuqun 2009.

²¹ Institute for Cultural Relics Management in Longmen and Department of Archaeology, Peking University 1991, 286–87.

²² Park Daenam 2005, 76–78.

²³ Su Bai 1997 a.

²⁴ Xiao Mo 2003, 74–75.

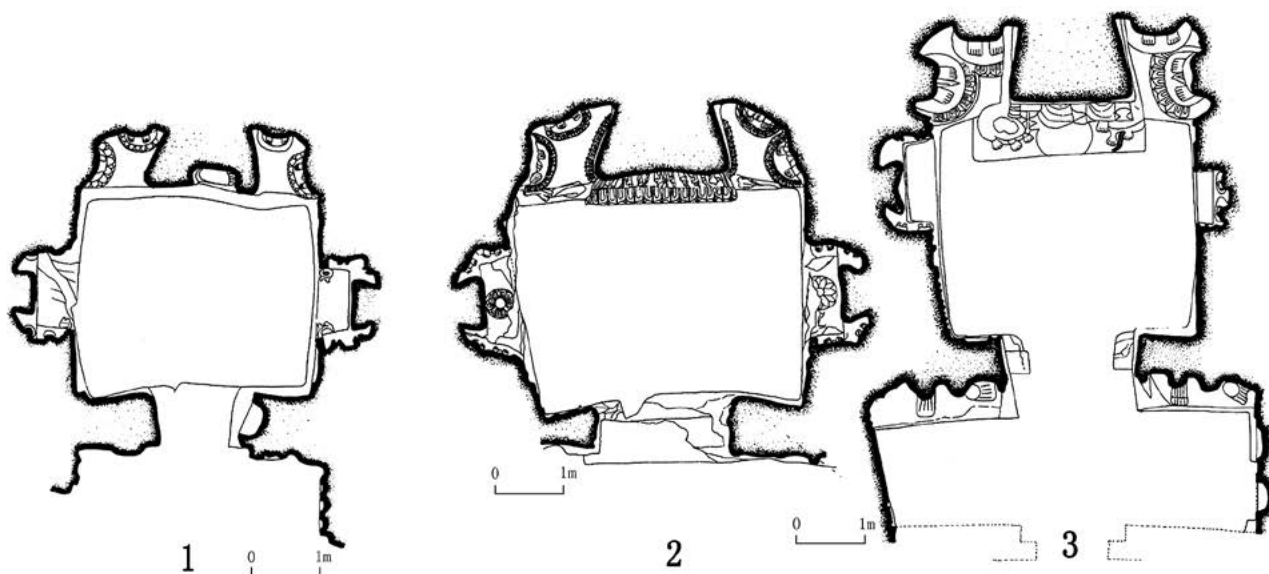


Fig. 5.1: 'Three Walls and Three Niches' caves in the Northern Wei, Longmen Grottoes (Modified from: Institute for Cultural Relics Management in Longmen and Department of Archaeology, Peking University 1991, 286, figure of Putai Cave, 287; figures of Weizi and Yaofang Caves).

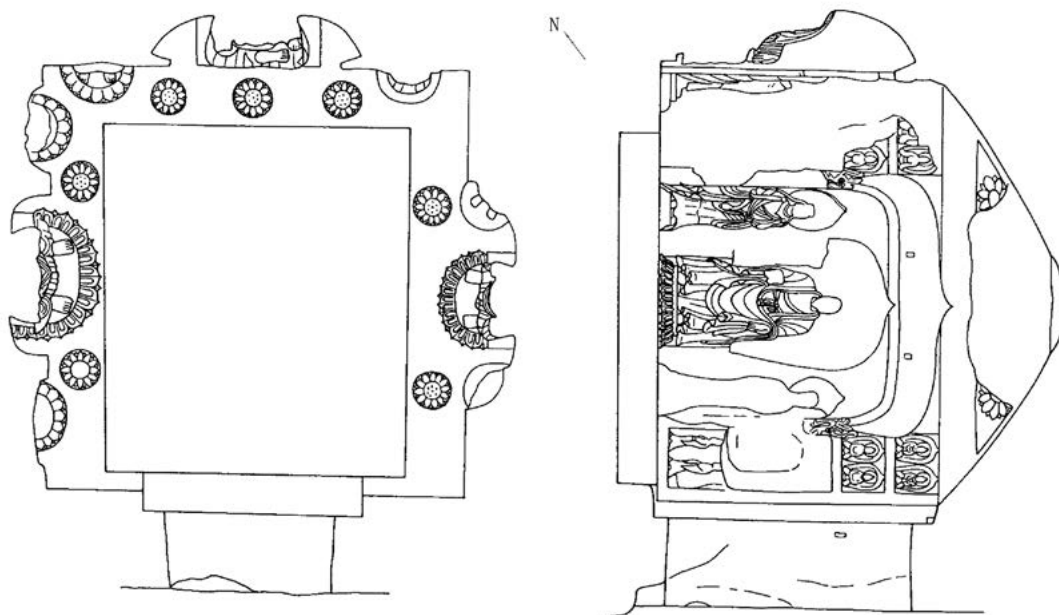


Fig. 5.2: 'Three Walls and Three Altars' cave in the Eastern Wei, Cave 2 of the Tianlongshan Grottoes (Modified from: Li Yuqun 2003, 196, fig. 47).

subordinate auxiliary halls, or wing-rooms, had been a traditional architectural type in North China since the Three Kingdoms Period. The Taiji Hall of the Luoyang Palace 洛陽宮太極殿, the most important hall of the Cao Wei Kingdom (220–265 AD), is one of the earliest archaeological examples of a three-hall layout. As far as we know, it exerted an important impact on other East Asian countries.²⁵ On both sides of the Taiji Hall, there were two auxiliary buildings, the East Hall and the West Hall.²⁶ This configuration of the three-hall layout was inherited by later palaces and became a set pattern during

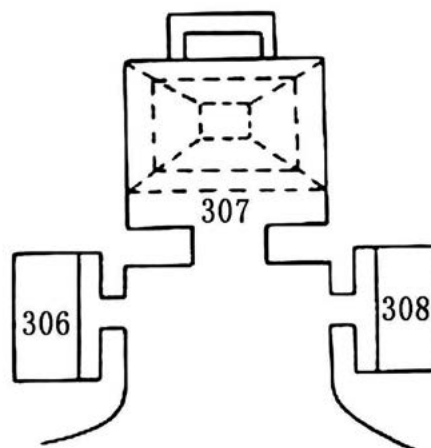


Fig. 5.3: Sketch plan of caves 306–08 in the Dunhuang Grottoes (Modified from: Su Bai 1997 b, 32, fig. 4).

²⁵ Wang Zhongshu 2003.

²⁶ Fu Xinian 2001, 22–26, fig. 1-2-1.

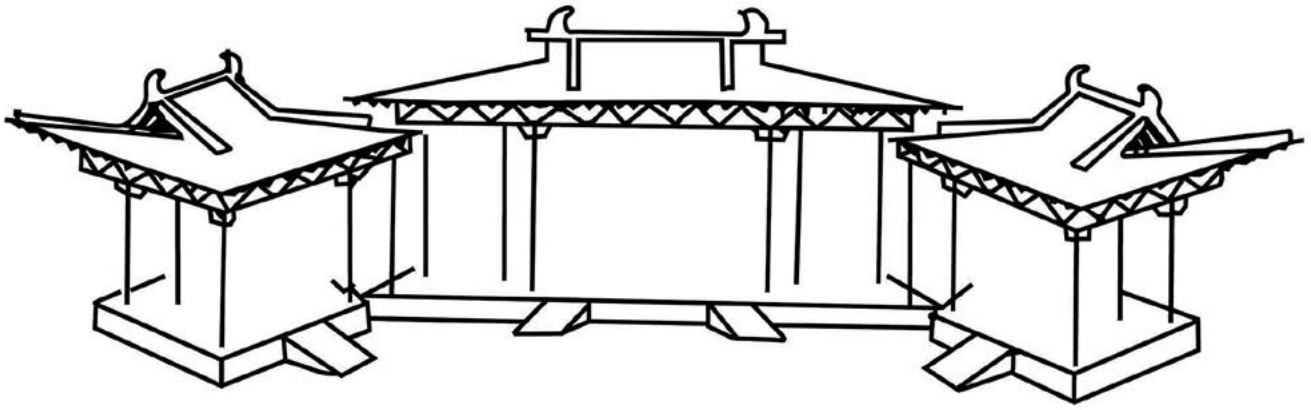


Fig. 5.4: Three halls arrangement on the wall painting of the Sui, ceiling of Cave 433 in Dunhuang (Modified from: Xiao Mo 2003, 39, fig. 1-4).

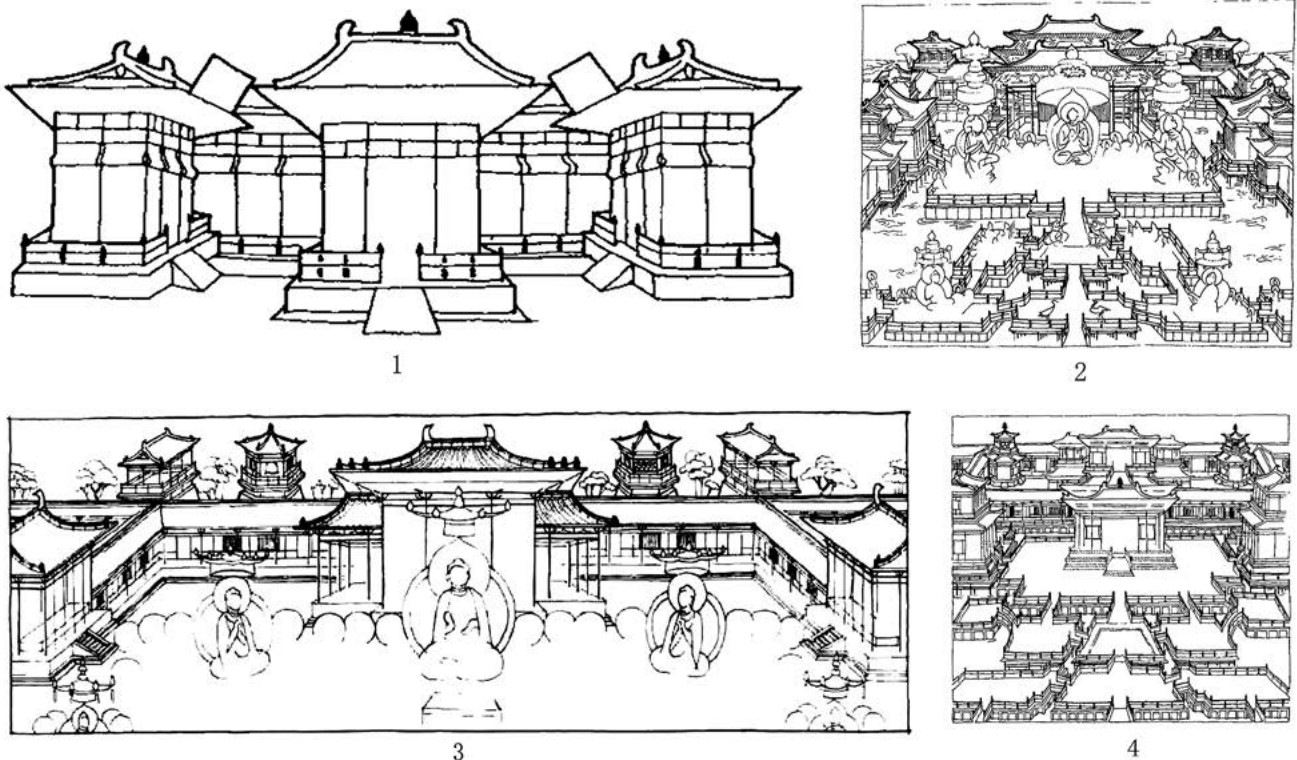


Fig. 5.5: Three halls arrangement on the wall paintings of the Tang in Dunhuang (Modified from: Xiao Mo 2003, 39, fig. 1-5; 56, fig. 1-21; 69, fig. 1-36; 63, fig. 1-30).

the Northern and Southern Dynasties. In the Palatial Cities in Luoyang, Yecheng of North China and Jiankang of South China, the Great Hall was normally arranged with east and west annexed halls.²⁷ Changhemmen 闕闕門, the palace gate of Luoyang, and Zhumingmen 朱明門, the south gate of Yecheng, consisted of one main hall and two freestanding gate towers; the configuration was similar to that of the Taiji Hall (Fig. 5.6).²⁸

The famous Hanyuan Hall within the Daming Palace of Tang Chang'an City 唐長安城大明宮含元殿, excavated

in the 1950s, may be regarded as a masterpiece of such architecture. As the most important hall of Daming Palace, the Hanyuan Hall was initially built on the top of the Longshou Hill 龍首原 in 662 AD. Among the main buildings there were the Great Hall, two pavilions, roofed corridors, a plaza and the pathway.²⁹ The Great Hall was a 75.9 m by 42.3 m eleven-bay-long and four-bay-wide structure; the nine bays at the center were 5.35 m wide, while the two at the sides were slightly smaller, about 5 m in width. The two pavilions, the Xiangluan Pavilion 翔鸞閣 and the Qifeng Pavilion 棲鳳閣, arranged at the southeast and southwest of the Great Hall, were connected with it by

²⁷ Liu Dunzhen 1984, 84–86.

²⁸ Archaeological Team at Yecheng, IA, CASS and Inst. of Archaeology of Hebei Province 1996; Guo Yifu 1996.

²⁹ Ma Te-chih 1961.

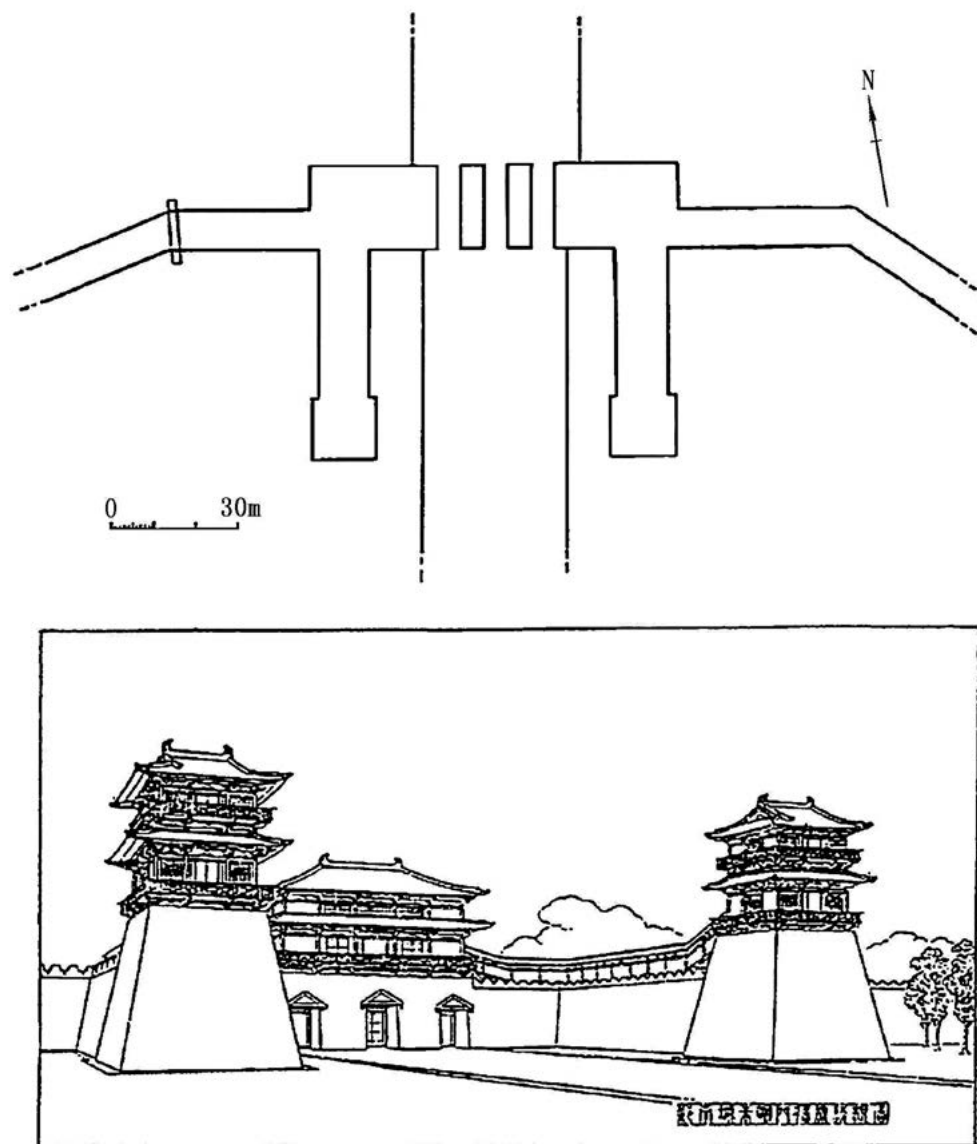


Fig. 5.6: Sketch plan and reconstruction of Zhumingmen, the South Gate of South Yecheng (Modified from: Archaeological Team at Yecheng 1996, 1, fig. 1; Guo Yifu 1996, 20, fig. 18).

roofed corridors.³⁰ On the basis of both the archaeological excavation and the historical documents, architectural historians have restored the complex of Hanyuan Hall, which used to include the Great Hall, the Tongqian Gate, the Guanxiang Gate, the Bell Tower, the Drum Tower, the roofed corridors, the Xiangluan Pavilion, the Qifeng Pavilion and the Dragon Tail steps 龍尾道 (Fig. 5.7).³¹ In addition to the arrangement of the three halls, it should be noted that even the architectural types of the Bell and Drum Towers in the Palace might be the prototype of the Sutra Hall and Bell Tower in late Buddhist monasteries.

Since Buddhism was introduced into China, it had been supported by the upper class of society; Buddhist monasteries enjoyed an increasingly higher status, and their construction standards were better than those of

average buildings. Buddhist architecture, especially the State Monasteries, increasingly imitated the Imperial Palace and other ritual buildings. Relevant instances can be found in historical documents and confirmed in archaeological excavations of the *Yongningsi Monastery* and the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery*. For example, the *Da'aijingsi Monastery* 大愛敬寺, built by Emperor Wu of Liang for his father in the first year of the Putong Era (520 AD), is described as follows:

[(Emperor Wu of Liang) set up *Da'aijing Monastery* for Emperor Wen of Taizu along the north stream in Mount Zhong.] The structure of the Buddhist monastery was as exalted as the imperial ancestor temple, and with the magnificent construction and decoration, the monastery was just like the heavenly palace.³²

³⁰ Xi'an Tang City Archaeological Team, IA, CASS 1997.

³¹ Yang Hongxun 2001, 419–40.

³² *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* 續高僧傳, 427, '為太祖文皇於鍾山北澗建大愛敬寺]……結構伽藍，同尊園寢。經營彫麗，奄若天宮。'

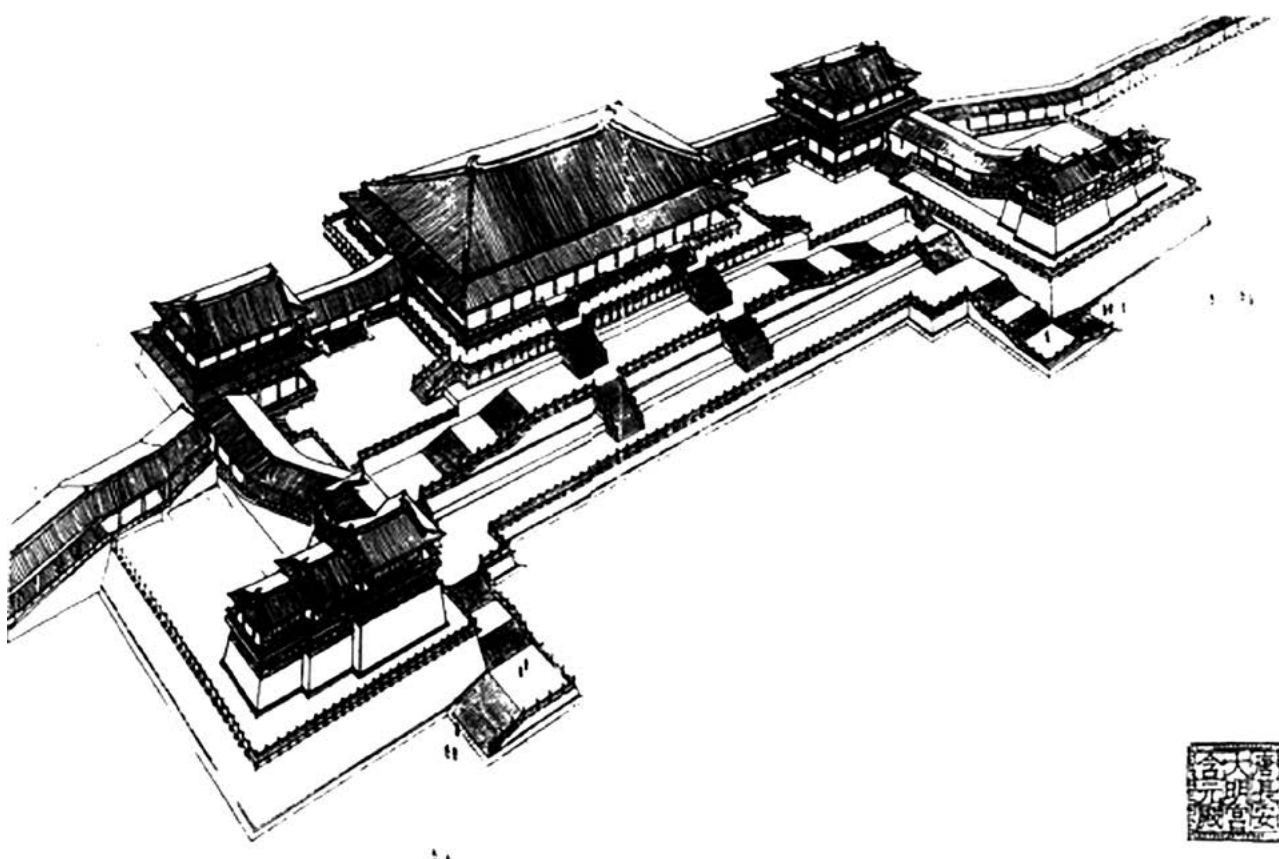


Fig. 5.7: Reconstruction of the Hanyuan Hall, Daming Palace of Chang'an (Modified from: Yang Hongxun 2001, 437, fig. 388).

The *Tongtaisi Monastery* was also established by Emperor Wu in the first year of the Datong Era (527 AD):

Pavilions and halls were built in accordance with the standard of the Imperial Palace.³³

In regard to the *Yongningsi Monastery*, famous State Monastery of Northern Wei in the first half of the sixth century, emulation of the contemporary Imperial Palace was even more evident. The *Stories about Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang* states:

The *Yongningsi Monastery* was built by decree of Empress Dowager Ling, whose surname was Hu, in the first year of the Xiping Era. [...] North of the Pagoda is a Buddha Hall, which is shaped like the Taiji Hall. [...] For all the walls of the monastery, short rafters are used and are covered with tiles, like the contemporary palace walls. The South Gate, whose structure resembles that of the Duan Gate, has a three-story tower and three gateways, and rises twenty *zhang* above the ground. [...] The east and west gates are all like this, except that the towers are only two stories. The North Gate had no tower and only one archway, resembling the Wutou Gate (of the imperial palace).³⁴

The sheer size and scale of the unearthed foundations in the *Yongningsi Monastery* and the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* indicate clearly that these vanished buildings were among the most magnificent architecture of the period. Some small tile-heads with a lotus-flower decoration excavated in the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* have been found ca. 7–8 cm in diameter, much smaller than the ordinary 15 cm; small tiles that matched them were found as well.³⁵ It is commonly understood that small tiles and small tile-heads of this kind were set at the top of perimeter walls but not used for the roofing of buildings. Utilizing walls covered with tiles and tile-heads was one of the privileges of the Imperial Palace; only a few other official organizations and folk institutions were granted such a privilege. This detail substantiates the fact that the Buddhist monastery faithfully imitated the architectural form and standard of the Imperial Palace during the Northern and Southern Dynasties.

Goguryeo founded an independent state in an area corresponding to the present Northeast China and the north part of the Korean Peninsula before the Common Era. In the following few centuries, it maintained close political, economic and cultural contacts with mainland China. Though wars took place every now and then,

³³ *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* 續高僧傳, 427, '[又]以大通元年, 於臺城北開大通門, 立同泰寺]。樓閣臺殿, 擬則宸宮。'

³⁴ *Luoyang Qielan Ji* 洛陽伽藍記, 999–1002, '永寧寺, 熙平元年靈太后胡氏所立也。……浮圖北有佛殿一所, 形如太極殿。……寺

院牆皆施短椽, 以瓦覆之, 若今宮牆也。四面各開一門, 南門樓三重, 通三道, 去地二十丈, 形制似今端門。……東西兩門亦皆如之, 所可異者, 唯樓二重。北門一道, 不施屋, 似烏頭門。'

³⁵ Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 2010.

bilateral personnel exchanges continued uninterrupted. In the second half of the fourth century, Buddhism was initially introduced into Goguryeo from the Former Qin of the Sixteen Kingdoms period. During the reign of King Sosurim (小獸林王 r. 371–384 AD), Buddhist monasteries began to be established to accommodate monks. After ascending the throne, King Gwanggaeto (廣開土王 r. 391–413 AD) built nine monasteries for the purpose of promoting Buddhism in Pyongyang. Afterward, many monks of Goguryeo came to China to study Buddhism, while in the meantime Chinese religious ideas and architectural technology spread to Goguryeo through official and private channels.³⁶ A well-known event recorded by Juexun in the *Haidong Biographies of Eminent Monks* and *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks* might vividly reflect the religious ties between North China and Goguryeo during the Northern Dynasties.

The noble character of (Master Fashang) was well known, and his reputation had spread all over the world. So much so that the prime minister Gao De of Goguryeo, who was a pious devotee of Buddhism and esteemed the Mahāyāna, wanted to promote Buddhism in Goguryeo. Because he did not know the whole story of Buddhism and its teachings, or the process of Buddhism spreading from the west to the east, he listed specific questions and sent monks to Yecheng to ask what he had not heard of. [...] Fashang replied to him comprehensively, in detailed and rigorous words.³⁷

Considering all the above factors, we can conclude that basically Goguryeo's monastery layout with a 'Central Pagoda and Three Golden Halls' might derive from the layout of traditional palaces of North China after the fourth century.

Another issue worth further consideration is the relationship between the Baekje Kingdom and North China. A commonly held position is that Baekje did not have many relations with North China owing to the barrier of Goguryeo. As a result, the Kingdom of Baekje established frequent maritime exchanges with the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties, confirmed both by historical documents and archaeological evidence.³⁸ Nevertheless, it is too simplistic to deny any connection between the Baekje Kingdom and the Northern Dynasties. As early as the late third century, Baekje had established official contacts with the Western Jin. From 280 to 290 AD, in a time span of only ten years, the Baekje Kingdom had sent eight missions to pay tribute to the Western Jin.³⁹ During the Sixteen Kingdoms period, North China was in a state of warfare for long periods. Hence, the Kingdom of Baekje maintained friendship with the Eastern Jin, which had

moved south and retained the Chinese traditional culture. After the unification of North China by the Northern Wei in 439 AD, the Northern Dynasties re-established exchanges with the Kingdom of Baekje. Although the contact was not as frequent as that in the Southern Dynasties, it is unquestionable that cultural exchanges and direct maritime exchanges existed between them. According to a preliminary statistic, there were a total of five missions traveling back and forth between Baekje and North China during the Northern Dynasties.⁴⁰ The *Book of Wei* states:

In the second year of the Yanxing Era (472 AD), the King Ye Gyeong (of Baekje) first sent a mission to deliver a letter [that requested the Northern Wei to dispatch troops to crusade against Goguryeo]. [...] Taking into account that the mission came from a remote land and risked their lives to pay tribute, Emperor Xiaowen thereupon gave a high-level reception, and sent his envoy Shao An to Baekje together with the mission. [...] Shao An and the mission drifted around at sea in the storm; eventually they did not reach [Baekje] and had to return.⁴¹

The *History of Northern Dynasties* states:

Since the Jin, Song, Qi and Liang occupied the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, (Baekje) sent emissaries to pledge allegiance, and accepted the granted titles. In the meantime, it did not break off contact with the Wei.

After the Eastern Wei was replaced by Qi, the King Muryeong of Baekje also sent emissaries. After Yan died, his son Wideok also sent emissaries to Qi. In the first year of the Wuping Era (570 AD), Houzhu of the Northern Qi granted Wideok the titles 'Commissioned Envoy with Extraordinary Powers', 'Palace Attendant', 'Great Chariot and Horse General', 'Duke of Daifang Prefecture' and 'King of Baekje' as before. In the second year, (Houzhu) appointed Wideok 'Commissioned Envoy with Extraordinary Powers', 'Official of East Qingzhou Military Affairs' and 'Regional Inspector of East Qingzhou.'

In the sixth year of the Jiande Era (577 AD) of (Northern) Zhou, Wideok began to send emissaries to the Zhou after Qi perished. In the first year of the Xuanzheng Era (578 AD), (Baekje) sent emissaries to pay tribute again.

At the beginning of the Kaihuang Era (581–600 AD) of Sui, Wideok sent a mission to dedicate local products once again, (and he) was granted the titles 'Supreme Executive', 'Duke of Daifang Prefecture' and 'King of Baekje'. In the year when Chen was defeated, one of the warships drifted to Danmongluo state in the East Sea. The warship passed Baekje when it returned. Wideok

³⁶ Huang Youfu and Chen Jingfu 1993, 28–32, 39–43.

³⁷ Xu Gaoseng Zhuan 續高僧傳, 485, ' (法上) 景行既宣, 逸向遐被。致有高句麗國大丞相王高德, 乃深懷正法崇重大乘, 欲播此釋風被于海曲。然莫測法教始末緣由, 西徂東壤年世帝代。故具錄事條, 遣僧向鄴, 啟所未聞事。……上廣答緣緒, 文極指訂。'

³⁸ Yang Hong 2008.

³⁹ Zhou Yuxing 2010.

⁴⁰ Zhou Yuxing 2010.

⁴¹ Wei Shu 魏書, 2217–19, '延興二年, 其王餘慶始遣使上表曰: ……顯祖以其僻遠, 冒險朝獻, 禮遇優厚, 遣使者邵安與其使俱還。……安等至海濱, 遇風飄蕩, 竟不達而還。'

presented them with generous gifts, and sent envoys to deliver a congratulation letter for defeating Chen.⁴²

It is not surprising that Chinese historical documents normally focused on political contact with neighboring states. Consequently, records about economic and cultural exchanges are relatively scarce. However, this does not mean that North China did not have any direct contact with the Baekje Kingdom. To a certain extent, archaeological findings can make up for the inadequacy of written documentation. Quite recently, a bronze coin, *Changping Wuzhu* 常平五銖, was discovered in an excavation at Baekje's *Wangheungsa Monastery*. This coin belonged to the official currency of Northern Qi and was minted in the 4th year of the Tianbao Era (553 AD). The coin was stored in the *śarīra* casket under the pagoda. The inscription on the casket indicates that all the treasures within were deposited in 577 AD.⁴³ It cannot be a coincidence that a similar coin had been found in the pagoda of Silla's *Bunhwangsa Monastery* in an earlier excavation. These pieces of physical evidence offer us a glimpse of the interaction between North China and nations in the south of the Korean Peninsula.

A puzzling issue is the relationship between the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* and the *Mireuksa Monastery*. Before discussing this issue, some additional explanations about the historical background of Yecheng and the name and the date of the construction of the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* are needed.

In the capital of a divided dynasty and a war-torn period, the buildings of the capital Yecheng, especially the Buddhist ones, suffered unprecedented destruction in the late sixth century. Since 574 AD, Emperor Wu of Northern Zhou had implemented a policy of recruiting soldiers from amongst the Buddhist monks, and requisitioned land from Buddhist monasteries. After the Northern Qi was defeated in 577 AD, this policy was extended to the whole of North China. Buddhist statues and architecture were deliberately destroyed, and all monks and nuns were forced to return to the laity.⁴⁴ At the same time, Emperor Wu issued several edicts to demolish the imperial palaces and gardens of Yecheng, and donated both land and building materials to the civilians.⁴⁵ Just three years later, the governor of Xiang Province, Yuchi Jiong 尉遲迥, rebelled in Yecheng, opposing the autocracy of Yang Jian (楊堅 later Emperor Wen of Sui). The rebellion was soon put down. To prevent

similar incidents, Yang Jian issued a decree to burn down Yecheng and deported all its residents to Xiangzhou (present An'yang).⁴⁶ Thereafter, Yecheng became a desolate land for a long time. Taking into account these events, it is understandable that the original names and the orientations of many buildings are difficult to identify.

In 1998, the Ye City Archaeological Team excavated a tomb in the south suburb of the site of Yecheng. Zhao Ji 趙覲, the occupant of the tomb, held a middle-rank office at the end of Northern Wei, and was buried together with his wife in the ninth year of the Daye Era (613 AD). The unearthed epitaph recorded that the tomb was located at the site of the *Dazhuangyansi Monastery* 大莊嚴寺, east of the *Mingtang Garden* 明堂園.⁴⁷ To explore the ritual construction in the late Northern Dynasties, the Ye City Archaeological Team began to excavate in the area in Zhaopengcheng Village, located about 300 m east of Zhao Ji's tomb. Unexpectedly, the so-called '*Mingtang*' was actually the foundation of the large pagoda of a monastery.⁴⁸ In the excavations conducted in the successive years, besides the foundation of the pagoda, many other important remains of the monastery, such as the exterior ditch, the entrances, the pathways, a small pool, the southwest and southeast compounds, the porticoes and the Buddha Halls were disclosed in succession.⁴⁹ It is worth noting that the unearthed statues display new features, which have been defined as the 'Yecheng Statue Style of the Northern Qi', and this style was very popular in the second half of the sixth century.⁵⁰ During the last excavation at this site, in 2012, part of a large hall was excavated in the rear of the monastery, and the position, size and scale of this building suggest that it might be a Lecture Hall.⁵¹

Since 2012, a series of large-scale excavations have been carried out at the Hetaoyuan Village 核桃園村, in the vicinity of Zhao Ji's tomb, and east of the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery*. The archaeological work, which has continued to the present, has excavated the remains of a pagoda foundation, gate site, Buddha Hall, Monks' Quarters, corridors and a large number of auxiliary buildings, which were confirmed as the royal *Dazhuangyansi Monastery* of the Northern Qi Dynasty. This monastery also shows pagoda-centered, multi-compound layout characteristics, which enriches our understanding of the layout of the monastery in the late Northern Dynasty.⁵² In addition, we finally found traces of the *Mingtang Garden* between these two monasteries.

⁴² *Bei Shi* 北史, 3121, '自晉、宋、齊、梁據江左, 亦遣使稱藩, 兼受拜封。亦與魏不絕。及齊受東魏禪, 其王隆亦通使焉。淹死, 子餘昌 (r. 554-598 AD) 亦通使命于齊。武平元年, 齊後主以餘昌為使持節、侍中、車騎大將軍, 帶方郡公、百濟王如故。二年, 又以餘昌為持節、都督東青州諸軍事、東青州刺史。周建德六年, 齊滅, 餘昌始遣使通周。宣政元年, 又遣使為獻。隋開皇初, 餘昌又遣使貢方物, 拜上開府、帶方郡公、百濟王。平陳之歲, 戰船漂至海東耽牟羅國。其船得還, 經於百濟, 昌資送之甚厚, 並遣使奉表賀平陳。'; Hucker 1985, 423, 120, 165, 558, 274-75.

⁴³ Buyeo National Museum and Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2008, 32.

⁴⁴ *Lidai Sanbao Ji* 歷代三寶紀, 94.

⁴⁵ *Zhou Shu* 周書, 101.

⁴⁶ *Jiu Tang Shu* 舊唐書, 1492.

⁴⁷ The archaeological report of Zhao Ji's tomb has not been published. Unearthed materials were conserved in the storeroom of the Ye City Archaeological Team, and the epitaph is exhibited at the Museum of Yecheng.

⁴⁸ Yecheng City Archaeological Team from IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 2003.

⁴⁹ Zhu Yanshi and He Liqun 2005; Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 2010.

⁵⁰ He Liqun 2014.

⁵¹ Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Institute of Cultural Relics of Hebei Province 2013 a.

⁵² Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Institute of Cultural Relics of Hebei Province 2016; 2018.

Although the original name of the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* is still uncertain, after nearly twenty years of excavation, it has become increasingly probable that the monastery might be the *Dazongchisi Monastery* 大總持寺, which was built in the second year of the Heqing Era (563 AD), recorded in the *Book of Northern Qi* and *History of Northern Dynasties*.⁵³

We can now return to discussing the relationship between the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* and the *Mireuksa Monastery*. Comparison between the architectural layouts of contemporaneous monasteries in China, Korea and Japan shows that there are no other monasteries similar in layout to these two. The commonalities in layout can be seen in the following features: the Pagoda still occupied the center of the monastery; two separate compounds were placed in the southeast and southwest corners of the monastery; each compound had its own Main Hall; a large Lecture Hall was located in the rear of the monastery; two rows of buildings that might be Monks' Quarters extended from the back of the compounds to the Lecture Hall (see Figs 2.11 and 4.12).

Despite the fact that so many common elements exist between the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* and the *Mireuksa Monastery*, there is no evidence indicating direct contact between them. Actually, by the time the *Mireuksa Monastery* of the Baekje Kingdom was established in the early seventh century, the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* had long since suffered demolition. However, representing a transitional stage of Buddhist monastery layout, these two monasteries reflect a common trend in the evolution of monastery layout, i.e. the transformation from a single compound centering on the pagoda to multiple compounds and halls. Unquestionably, there are many reasons for this transformation, encompassing the development of religious ideas, novelties in urban planning and construction technology: elements which I will discuss in the final chapter. It is hard to imagine that such a trend would have appeared in two different places so far away from one another if they had not been in any kind of direct or indirect contact. In my opinion, the monasteries of the Sui were an important intermediary between them.

After the establishment of the Sui Dynasty in 581 AD, a grand new capital was built, Daxing City (later called Chang'an, the present Xi'an). As a monumental capital of medieval China, its urban planning derived directly from South Yecheng, the capital of the Northern Qi, which by that time had already been destroyed and abandoned.⁵⁴ In the meantime, under the advocacy of Emperor Wen of Sui, Buddhism, which had suffered a heavy blow at the end of the Northern Dynasties, flourished rapidly. In response to the edicts of Emperor Wen, a large number of famous monks exiled from Yecheng, such as Lingyu 靈裕, Huiyuan 慧遠, Tanqian 曇遷, Linggan 靈幹, Xinxing 信行 and Sengyong 僧邕, came to the major monasteries of

Chang'an to promote Buddhism; they played an essential role in the formation and development of Buddhist sects during the Sui and Tang Dynasties.⁵⁵ As the eminent masters of the time, Lingyu and Huiyuan were highly respected by Emperor Wen and were regarded as religious leaders. Xingxin and Sengyong founded the well-known 'Teaching of the Three Stages' (*sanjiejiao* 三階教), which had a strong influence on contemporaneous Buddhist faith and social life. Their achievements were recorded in detail in the *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks*. I prefer to discuss the role of two other less well-known monks of Yecheng. The first is Tanqian 曇遷, who played a crucial role in an event recorded in Buddhist history, the distribution of *śāstras* by Emperor Wen of Sui and the ensuing construction of pagodas throughout the country. In the third year of the Renshou Era (603 AD), Emperor Wen established the *Chandingsi Monastery* 大禪定寺 for his consort southeast of the capital. It had a seven-story pagoda, while the other buildings were similar to those of the Imperial Palace. Tanqian was the first appointed abbot of this monastery.⁵⁶ The other monk is Linggan 靈幹, who was once a monk of the *Dazhuangyansi Monastery* in Yecheng. He went to Chang'an and acted as the abbot of the *Daxinshansi Monastery*. In the third year of the Daye Era (605 AD), a second *Chandingsi Monastery* was built by Emperor Yang 隋煬帝 for his deceased father, Emperor Wen. As a senior monk, Linggan was promoted to 'Superior Seated One' (*shangzuo* 上座).⁵⁷ These two monasteries were adjacent to each other, and were renamed the *Dazhuangyansi Monastery* and the *Dazongchi Monastery*, respectively, in the early Tang Dynasty,⁵⁸ which echoed the names of the monasteries in Yecheng. In 2004, the Xi'an Tang City Team of the Institute of Archaeology detected six large building foundations in the range of the Yongyang Ward 永陽坊 and the Heping Ward 和平坊 of Tang Chang'an City. It was provisionally assumed that they used to be the two pagodas and several halls of the *Dazhuangyansi* and the *Dazongchisi Monasteries*.⁵⁹

Having unified South China, the Sui Dynasty moved its military objective to the Northeast, an area occupied at that time by the Goguryeo Kingdom. Confronted with the same military opponent, the Sui and the Baekje Kingdom soon established a close political relationship. In just a few decades, more than ten official missions were exchanged between the two countries.⁶⁰ Although there is little evidence to confirm the content of the cultural and religious exchanges between the two countries, the similarities in contemporaneous Buddhist faith and architectural layouts indicate the possibility that the development of Buddhist doctrine and architectural technology of the Northern Dynasties spread to the south of the Korean Peninsula via the Sui Dynasty.

⁵⁵ He Liqun 2007.

⁵⁶ *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* 續高僧傳, 573.

⁵⁷ *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* 續高僧傳, 518.

⁵⁸ *Chang'an Zhi* 長安志, 248–49.

⁵⁹ Gong Guoqiang 2005, 90–118.

⁶⁰ Zhou Yuxing 2010.

⁵³ *Bei Qi Shu* 北齊書, 91; *Bei Shi* 北史, 23.

⁵⁴ Xu Guangji 2002.

5.3. 'One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side' and Several Other Monastery Layouts in Japan: Their Origin and Meaning

Though many early Buddhist monasteries are well preserved in Japan, it cannot be denied that some simple issues remain unresolved. Except for the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear', 'Central Hall and Twin Pagodas' and 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' layouts, there are several controversies about the origin and significance of the early Japanese monasteries that need to be further explored.

The *Asukadera Monastery*, the earliest Buddhist monastery in Japan, presents a 'Central Pagoda and Three Golden Halls' layout, a typical monastery layout of the Goguryeo Kingdom. Let us look at the following historical factors: Yamato and the Baekje Kingdom were neighbors and allies; Buddhism was introduced to Japan from the Baekje Kingdom, and frequent exchanges were maintained afterward; the King of Baekje sent a Buddhist mission that included an artist capable of making Buddhist images and an architect to Japan not long ago before the *Asukadera Monastery* was established. It is therefore surprising that the monastery layout adopted for the *Asukadera Monastery* was one typical of the Goguryeo Kingdom, rather than the Baekje Kingdom's 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' arrangement. The Japanese scholar Senda Takemichi believed that since the builders came from the Baekje Kingdom, it was unlikely that they would have adopted a Goguryeo Kingdom ground plan. Naturally, they could have heard of the 'Central Pagoda and Three Halls' layout, but none of the Goguryeo Kingdom examples looked much like the *Asukadera Monastery*, especially as they all contained an octagonal pagoda.⁶¹ The excavation of the *Asukadera Monastery* provided helpful evidence to explore the origin of this monastery. The foundation and upper structure of the buildings were unseen in traditional Japanese architecture. Almost all the tile-heads unearthed at the site had a flat ten-petaled lotus design, which was the standard pattern of tile-head in the Baekje Kingdom. Even the kiln where the tiles were fired has a similar structure to contemporaneous kilns in the Baekje Kingdom.⁶² This sort of material evidence confirms beyond any doubt that the *Asukadera Monastery* was built under the guidance of the craftsmen who came from the Baekje Kingdom a short time before its construction. However, a fact that needs to be given due consideration is that the foundations of the Eastern and Western Golden Halls of the *Asukadera Monastery* were identical. They consisted of a two-level platform; the lower one was made up of horizontally placed slabs, on top of which there were piled stones making up the upper level, which differed from those of the Middle Golden Hall and the Pagoda.⁶³ Compared with the construction of other buildings, a different technique was applied, suggesting the possibility that these two buildings

might not have been contemporaneous with the other buildings in the monastery. An architectural technique similar to that employed in the foundation construction of the *Asukadera Monastery*'s Eastern and Western Golden Halls can be found in both the Baekje and Goguryeo kingdoms,⁶⁴ while the archaeological discoveries in recent decades indicate that such a construction method seems to have been more commonly used in the Goguryeo Kingdom. At the end of the sixth century, the monks of the Goguryeo Kingdom began to propagate Buddhism in Japan. The famous master Hyeja 惠慈 came across the sea from the Goguryeo Kingdom to Japan in 595. He was appointed tutor of Prince Shōtoku, and lived in Asukadera with Master Esō 惠聰, who came from the Baekje Kingdom. The two of them were regarded as 'The Ridgepole of Three Treasures' 三寶棟梁.⁶⁵

Taking these factors into account, it seems plausible that initially the *Asukadera Monastery* may have had only the Pagoda, the Golden Hall and the Lecture Hall, all aligned along the north-south axis, in a plan typical for the Baekje Kingdom, while the Eastern and Western Golden Halls were probably added when Hyeja 惠慈 lived there.

The prevalence of the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' layout of the previous period began to decline, and by the mid-seventh century, a new type of monastery layout, the 'One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side' layout, appeared and became the mainstream layout for Japanese monasteries. Typical monasteries, such as *Kudara Ōdera Monastery* and *Hōryūji Monastery*, had a Pagoda and a Golden Hall erected side by side in the front part of the monastery. The layout of the 'One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side with a Central Hall Behind', for example the *Kawaradera Monastery*'s layout, could be regarded as the direct evolution of the 'One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side' layout. In addition to the Pagoda and Hall opposite one another in the front area, a large Middle Golden Hall was arranged in the center of the monastery. Considered from the perspective of a building's function, if the 'One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side' layout reflected the equal status of the Pagoda and the Hall, then the 'One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side with a Central Hall Behind' further emphasized the significant role of the Hall in the Buddhist monastery. Compared with the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' layout, the above two types of monastery layout represented a transitional stage of monastery layout from one focusing on the Pagoda to one focusing on the Buddha Hall.

Generally speaking, the 'One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side' and 'One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side with a Central Hall Behind' layouts were very popular in the mid-seventh century in Japan, while similar monastery layout have not been discovered in China and in Korea. Furthermore, the arrangement of the Pagoda and the Hall side by side does not correspond to the Chinese

⁶¹ McCallum 2009, 58.

⁶² Nara National Institute of Cultural Properties 1958, 15–24, 32–36.

⁶³ McCallum 2009, 45, 49.

⁶⁴ Nara National Institute of Cultural Properties 1958, 43.

⁶⁵ *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, vol. 22, 1.

architectural tradition of axial symmetry. Hence, the majority of Japanese and Western scholars are presently inclined to regard them as a localized Japanese style.⁶⁶ However, there are still some controversies about their origin. As mentioned above, the earliest instance of building the Pagoda and the Hall side by side was not in the famous *Hōryūji Monastery*, but in the *Kudara Ōdera Monastery*, which was built in approximately 640 AD and excavated in the 1990s. The name of the monastery means the ‘Great Monastery of Baekje’, which seems to imply that the monastery should have a close relationship with the Baekje Kingdom. The origins of the *Kawaradera Monastery* are enveloped in similar doubts. After the Taika Reform 大化革新 in 645, in order to strengthen the centralization and to enhance the power of the imperial court, Japan began to adopt the rules and regulations of Tang China. Many missions, comprising envoys, scholars and young students, were dispatched to China to learn about the political system, the economic model, literature, religion and architecture. According to incomplete statistics, before 670 AD, there had been seven Japanese missions to imperial Tang 遣唐使, and the total number of people reaching China was in the range of several hundred. Among these visitors, the percentage of monks was quite high.⁶⁷ Under these circumstances, Chinese cultural influence began to penetrate into various segments of Japanese society. A remarkable feature of the *Kawaradera Monastery*, a typical monastery of the late seventh century, is that the basic unit of measure used for the construction of the monastery was the *Tang foot* 唐尺, replacing the conventional *Koma foot* 高麗尺.⁶⁸ This shift could be taken as a sign indicating that Japanese Buddhist architecture began to imitate Chinese building styles directly, rather than through the mediation of the Baekje Kingdom. Moreover, the ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side’ and ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side with a Central Hall Behind’ monastery layouts were in line with the general trend of Chinese monasteries, with the focus being shifted from the Pagoda to the Buddha Hall. Although there is no evidence of a layout similar to that of the *Hōryūji* and *Kawaradera* monasteries beyond Japan, it would be simplistic to exclude the influence of China and the Korean Peninsula. Although there are many questions still waiting for a reasonable explanation, more archaeological evidence, especially in China, can be expected to be found for exploring the origin of the *Hōryūji* and *Kawaradera* monasteries.⁶⁹

5.4. The ‘Central Hall and Twin Pagodas’ Monastery Layout: Its Origin and Significance in Unified Silla and Japan

Between the late seventh century and the mid-eighth century, a new monastery layout emerged and rapidly prevailed in the Korean Peninsula and Japan. This monastery type focused on a large Golden Hall, with two Pagodas set side by side in front of it. Typical monasteries in this layout include the *Sacheonwangsa* and *Kamunsa* monasteries in Unified Silla, and the *Yakushiji Monastery* in Japan. Although no Buddhist monastery with ‘Twin Pagodas’ before the tenth century has been excavated in China, according to abundant document records, we have reason to believe that such a monastery layout also originated in mainland China and became one of the most common monastery types after the mid-seventh century.⁷⁰ The lack of pertinent doctrinal evidence to interpret the Twin Pagodas layout has given rise to a variety of hypotheses trying to shed light on its origins and meaning. Many scholars believe that the arrangement of the two pagodas may have inherited the tradition of the double *que* 雙闕 erected in front of important buildings from the Han Dynasty.⁷¹ Other scholars deem that the two pagodas stand for the Buddhist theory of cause and effect.⁷² The Korean scholar Lee Heungbeom 李興范 argues that the two pagodas in Unified Silla and Japan were intended to protect the state, and might have their origins in the *Lotus Sutra*.⁷³ Despite the fact that no specific early instance has been unearthed, all scholars admit that this monastery layout derived from mainland China.

Buddhist monasteries with two pagodas can be traced back to the Eastern Jin period in China; the *Changleshi Monastery* 昌樂寺 and *Changgansi Monastery* 長干寺 are the earliest instances. According to the record of *Famous Painting through History*:

Wang Yi, courtesy name Shijiang, was born in Linyi, Langya. He was adept at verse, and was good at calligraphy and painting. After he moved to the south of Yangtze, his calligraphy and painting were considered the best in the Jin Dynasty, and his music, rhythm and all sorts of techniques were all thought mastery. He was appointed General of Left Protect, Marquis of Wukang during the period of Emperor Yuan. At that time, the Command General Xie Shang built the East Pagoda at the *Changleshi Monastery* in Wuchang, and Dai Ruosi built the West Pagoda. They all invited Wang Yi to draw inside.⁷⁴

The *Changleshi Monastery* was initially founded by Sun Quan in the Three Kingdoms period.⁷⁵ Though the general

⁶⁶ Soper 1978, 34–35; McCallum 2009, 245.

⁶⁷ Chi Buzhou 1983, 14–19.

⁶⁸ The earliest Japanese monastery that began to use Tang feet was Yamadadera (山田寺), which was built in ca. 641. See Soper 1978, 49; Miyamoto Nagajiro 1990, 155–63.

⁶⁹ According to the survey of extant above-ground monastery remains after the Tang Dynasty, some scholars confirmed that the ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side’ monastery layout should derive from China. See Zhang Yuhuan 2007, 56–57. Considering the fact that most monasteries cited in his book were reconstructed or altered, and have not been excavated, their time of construction and original layout need to be further confirmed.

⁷⁰ Gong Guoqiang 2006, 119–21.

⁷¹ Murata Jiro 1988, 33–34.

⁷² Soper 1978, 48.

⁷³ Lee Heungbeom (Li Xingfan) 1999, 703–29.

⁷⁴ *Lidai Minghua Ji* 歷代名畫記, 95–96, ‘王廙, 字世將, 琅琊臨沂人。善屬詞, 工書畫。過江後, 為晉代書畫第一, 音律眾妙畢綜。元帝時為左衛將軍, 封武康侯。時鎮軍謝尚于武昌昌樂寺造東塔, 戴若思造西塔, 並請廙畫。’

⁷⁵ *Fozu Tongji* 佛祖統紀, 331.

layout of the monastery remains unclear, on the basis of the above record we can be sure that two pagodas were erected side by side in the monastery. The *Changgangsī Monastery* of Jiankan, in which the two pagodas were built in two different periods, presented a different picture compared to *Changlesī Monastery*. According to a historical record, in the second year of the Xian'an Era (372 AD), the Emperor Jianwen of Eastern Jin first built a three-story pagoda in the *Changgangsī Monastery*. A few decades later, valuable *śārīras* were discovered in the monastery. Therefore, another three-story pagoda was erected to store the relics.⁷⁶ Strictly speaking, the *Changgangsī Monastery* was not an appropriate instance of this kind of monastery, because the second pagoda was not a part of the original design of the monastery layout. However, it provides us with clear evidence that at that stage the two pagodas were used to store the *śārīra*.

The 'Twin Pagodas' arrangement could also be seen in the monasteries of the Southern Dynasties. The *Xianggongsī Monastery* 湘宮寺 of the Song and the *Āśoka Monastery* 阿育王寺 of the Liang Dynasty were representatives. The *History of Southern Dynasties* states:

Emperor (Ming of Song r. 466–472 AD) rebuilt *Xianggongsī Monastery* on the basis of his own former residence, in an extremely extravagant style. The Pagoda of *Zhuangyansī Monastery* built by Emperor Xiaowu being seven stories high, Emperor Ming wanted to erect a ten-story pagoda (in *Xianggongsī Monastery*). It could not be built (perhaps due to technical reasons); eventually two five-story pagodas were erected separately.⁷⁷

The *Āśoka Monastery* was built by Emperor Wu of Liang. The *Book of Liang* states:

In the fourth year (of the Putong Era, 523 AD), on the 15th day of the ninth month of the lunar year, Emperor (Wu) came to the (*Āśoka*) Monastery to hold a large assembly without entry restrictions. Two pagodas were erected, and in both, gold and jade bottles, filled with *śārīra*, nails and hair, were stored within the seven-treasure *stūpas*. The *stūpas* were put into a stone case and buried beneath the two pagodas. They were filled with gold, silver, bracelets and all sorts of treasures donated by princes, marquises, imperial concubines and wealthy people. [...] In the eleventh year, on the 2nd day of the eleventh month by the lunar calendar, the monks invited Emperor Wu again, to inscribe the title of *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, and on that evening the two pagodas emitted bright light.⁷⁸

Analysis of the above documents indicates that the *Xianggongsī Monastery* and the *Āśoka Monastery* displayed

a typical monastery layout with two pagodas, and that the pagodas had a definite function, to preserve *śārīra*.

At the same time, the layout of the monastery with two pagodas emerged in the north of China. The *Huifusi Monastery* 暉福寺 of the Northern Wei was the earliest instance. According to the extant rubbing of the Stele of *Huifusi Monastery*, it was initially built in 488 AD (Fig. 5.8).

[In the twelfth year of the Taihe Era (488 AD)], Emperor's attendant, General of Stabilizing the West, Imperial Secretariat of Official Department and Duke of Dangchang, Wang Qingshi, [...] established two three-story pagodas for the Two Saints (Emperor Xiaowen and Empress Dowager Feng) in the south and north of his former residence in his hometown.⁷⁹

One important piece of information revealed by the inscription was that the 'Twin Pagodas' were built for the 'Two Saints', which added new signification for the pagodas. For the sake of understanding the meaning of 'Two Saints', relevant historical context needs to be explained here. Dowager Feng was the wife of Emperor Wencheng, who restored Buddhism in the mid-sixth century. After Emperor Wencheng passed away, Dowager Feng controlled the empire and became de facto regent of the Northern Wei. She assisted her grandson, Emperor Xiaowen, in carrying out a series of reforms, and was highly influential until she died in 490. Because of their lofty status, Dowager Feng and Emperor Xiaowen were respectfully regarded as Two Saints, and the title was repeatedly recorded in the *Book of Wei*.⁸⁰ After the mid-fifth century, many groups of twin caves were carved in the Yungang Grottoes for Dowager Feng and Emperor Xiaowen. According to the study of Su Bai, the prevalence of twin caves was the product of the political situation of that specific period.⁸¹ Coincidentally, a new style of stone statues, with double images, began to prevail in north China from the sixth century.⁸² The themes of these double images include two Buddhas, two *Avalokiteśvara*, two Bodhisattvas and two meditative princes. Apart from the double Buddhas, which may have come from *Lotus Sutra* and represent Sakyamuni and *Prabhūtaratna* 多寶佛, the other themes represented do not have an appropriate explanation in the doctrine. Given the meaning of twin caves and twin pagodas, it is reasonable to assume that the twin images might also have derived from the concept of Two Saints.

Another document of the Sui Dynasty corroborates the point above. It records the event of the construction of two pagodas by Emperor Yang for his deceased parents, Emperor Wen and Empress Dugu. It states:

In the eighth year (of Daye Era, 612 AD), the Emperor stayed in the Eastern Capital. He issued an edict that two

⁷⁶ *Ji Shenzhou Sanbao Gantonglu* 集神州三寶感通錄, 405.

⁷⁷ *Nan Shi* 南史, 1710, '帝以故宅起湘宮寺, 費極奢侈。以孝武莊嚴剎七層, 帝欲起十層, 不可立, 分為兩剎, 各五層。'

⁷⁸ *Liang Shu* 梁書, 792, '至四年九月十五日, 高祖又至寺設無礙大會, 暨二剎, 各以金罍, 次玉罍, 重盛舍利及爪髮, 內七寶塔中。又以石函盛寶塔, 分入兩剎下, 及王侯妃主百姓富室所捨金、銀、鑲、釧等珍寶充積。……十一年十一月二日, 寺僧又請高祖于寺發般若經題, 爾夕二塔俱放光明。'

⁷⁹ Tokiwa Daijo and Sekino Tadashi 1926, vol. 1, plate 68.

⁸⁰ *Wei Shu* 魏書, 1199, 1288, 1348, 1383.

⁸¹ Su Bai 1996 a, 114–44.

⁸² Yang Boda 1960; Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Research Institute of Cultural Relics of Hebei Province 2012.

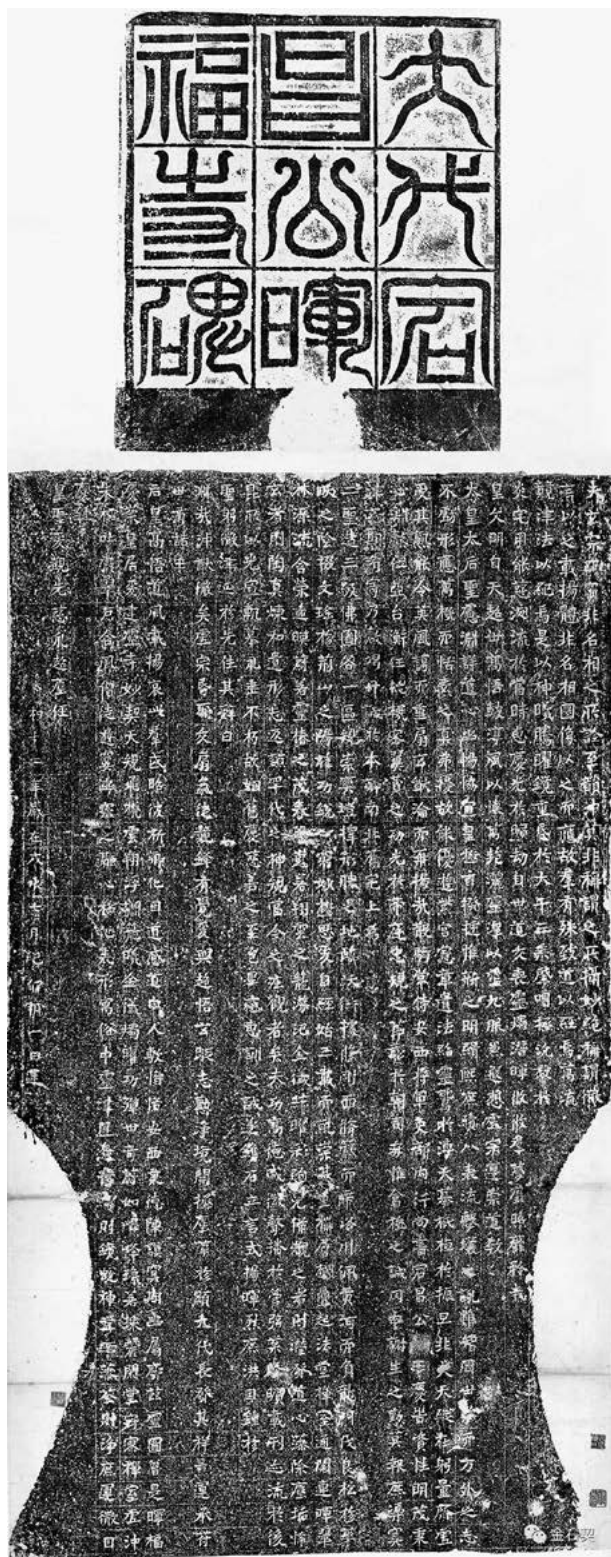


Fig. 5.8: Rubbing of the stele in Huifu Monastery (Modified from: Li Yuqun 2009, 306, fig. 10).

seven-story pagodas should be built for two Emperors [the Emperor and Empress] in the Western Capital. He also ordered that Huicheng should send *śarīra* and bury it under the pagodas.⁸³

⁸³ Xu Gaoseng Zhuan 續高僧傳, 633, ‘至八年, 帝在東都。於西京奉為二皇雙建兩塔七層木浮圖, 又勅乘送舍利瘞于塔所。’

This document assures us that the idea behind the twin pagodas referred not only to the concept of Two Saints, but also retained the pagoda’s original function of preserving relics.

The monastery with twin pagodas was one of the ordinary layouts in the Sui and Tang Dynasties. In the Chang’an area alone, documented instances included the *Fajienisi Monastery* 法界尼寺, the *Daxingshansi Monastery* 大興善寺, the *Qiangfusi Monastery* 千福寺, the *Chongfusi Monastery* 崇福寺 and the *Dayunsi Monastery* 大雲寺.⁸⁴ In particular, the *Dayunsi Monastery* deserves much attention, as its name corresponds to a monastery built in the Eastern Capital, Luoyang, and in other Prefectures throughout the country under the advocacy of Wu Zetian. During the late seventh century, Wu Zetian became the regent of the Tang Empire. She and Emperor Gaozong were known as the ‘Two Saints’ for quite a long period of time.⁸⁵ In order to gain support from the masses for her accession to the throne, she issued a series of edicts to promulgate the *Dayun Sutra*, and to establish *Dayunsi* monasteries in the two capitals and in all prefectures.⁸⁶

Around the mid-seventh century, the political situation in East Asia underwent earthshaking changes. In China, Emperor Taizong of Tang (r. 626–649 AD) defeated the East Turkic Empire, installed the Four Garrisons of Anxi 安西四鎮 in the Western Regions and established friendly relations with Tibet. After the ‘Reign of Zhenguan’ 貞觀之治, the Tang Empire became the largest and strongest nation in the world, and enjoyed high levels of civilization and prosperity. In 645 AD, Emperor Kōtoku 孝德天皇 (r. 645–654 AD) of Japan began a reform based on the rules and regulations of the Tang, known as the ‘Taika Reform’. One of the most important policies was to send a large number of missions and students to China to learn the cultural achievements of the Tang Empire. On the Korean Peninsula, the situation of long-term national disruption was ended with the assistance of Tang troops. Silla conquered the Baekje Kingdom in 660 and the Goguryeo Kingdom in 668, and established the Unified Silla Kingdom in the south of the Korean Peninsula.

After the mid-seventh century, owing to frequent political and cultural exchanges with the Tang, Japan and Unified Silla began to imitate Chinese architectural style and technology directly, rather than depending on the mediation of the Baekje or the Goguryeo Kingdom as in earlier times. More and more Chinese cultural elements appeared in Japanese architecture.⁸⁷ Extensive use of the ‘Tang foot’ from the mid-seventh century can be regarded as convincing evidence of this trend.⁸⁸ Undoubtedly, the monasteries with twin pagodas prevailing in Unified Silla and Japan had their prototype in China. Judging from

⁸⁴ Gong Guoqiang 2006, 119–21.

⁸⁵ *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐書, 81–82, ‘上元元年 (674 AD), 高宗號天皇, 皇后亦號天后, 天下之人謂之二聖。’

⁸⁶ *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐書, 90–91.

⁸⁷ Fu Xinian 1992.

⁸⁸ Soper 1978, 49.

the fact that *śarīras* were buried under many pagodas in Unified Silla and Japan, we can be sure that the original function of the pagoda as a relic repository was still retained. However, it is difficult to confirm whether the twin pagodas in Unified Silla and Japan, as a late imitation of Chinese Buddhist architecture, maintained the political meaning of the Two Saints as it had in China. On the other hand, considering the purpose of the construction of some monasteries and the narratives around the double pagodas, such as the *Sacheonwangsa* and *Kamunsa* monasteries in Unified Silla, and the *Daianji Monastery* in Japan, it seems that the twin pagodas in Unified Silla and Japan may have been built to protect the state.

5.5. The Main Monastery Layout Types and their Evolution

On the basis of current available archaeological materials, in the above chapters I have analyzed the situation of different regions in East Asia between the fifth and eighth centuries. There were a variety of monastery layouts; their distribution in different regions is as follows:

China:	‘Central Pagoda’ ‘Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear’ ‘Central Pagoda and Halls on Different Axes’ ‘Multi-compound and Multi-hall’
Korea:	‘Central Pagoda and Three Halls’ ‘Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear’ ‘Central Hall and Twin Pagodas’ ‘Multi-compound and Multi-hall’
Japan:	‘Central Pagoda and Three Halls’ ‘Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear’ ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side’ ‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side with a Central Hall Behind’

‘Central Hall and Twin Pagodas’
‘Central Hall and One Pagoda on Different Axes’
‘Multi-compound and Multi-hall’

In China, it is only in the last few decades that excavation of Buddhist monasteries has begun: a very different state of affairs compared with Korea and Japan, where, in some cases, monasteries have been unearthed and their remains have been studied over the course of a century, and where the number of excavated monasteries greatly exceeds that in China. Due to this shortage of excavated material evidence in China, not all of the monastery layouts in Korea and Japan have found a corresponding prototype in China. However, some relevant evidence, including records from historical documents, the wall paintings of the Dunhuang Grottoes and Chinese secular building architecture, indicates that most of the monastery layouts in Korea and Japan might derive from China (Table 5.1).

Table 5.2 includes the entire list of typical monastery layouts. The horizontal rows list the monastery layouts according to their different regions, while the columns represent the chronology. It clearly lists the similarities and differences in layout between the monasteries in the Chinese Mainland, the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Archipelago.


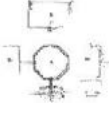

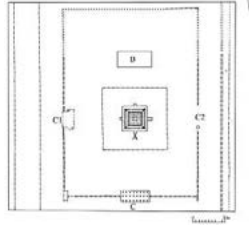
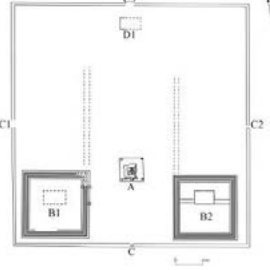
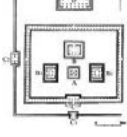
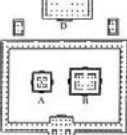
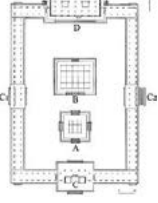
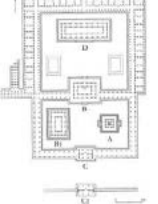
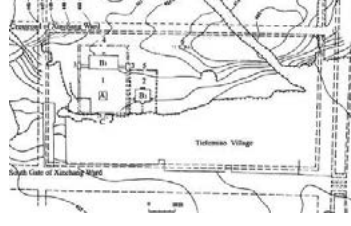
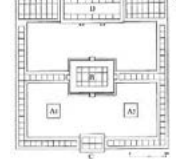

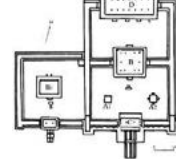
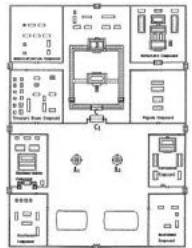

Some regular features concerning the evolution of the monastery layout displayed in chapters three and four will be summed up. Given the periods in which Buddhism was introduced in these three different regions, it can be understood that the same type of monastery might appear in different periods.

As the source of Buddhist architecture in East Asia, it is clear that the Chinese monastery layout spread eastward to the Korean Peninsula and Japan. In summary, the monastery layout of the Goguryeo Kingdom (‘Central Pagoda and

Table 5.1: The types of monastery layout in East Asia and relevant evidence in China; C: Chinese Mainland; K: Korean Peninsula; J: Japanese Archipelago; H: Historical documents; W: Wall paintings in the Dunhuang Grottoes; S: Secular buildings.

Archaeological Material	C	K	J	Chinese Records		
				H	W	S
‘Central Pagoda’	✓			✓		
‘Central Pagoda and Three Halls’		✓	✓		✓	✓
‘Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear’	✓	✓	✓	✓		
‘Central Pagoda and Halls on Different Axes’	✓			✓		
‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side’			✓			
‘One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side with a Central Hall Behind’			✓			
‘Central Hall and Twin Pagodas’		✓	✓	✓		
‘Central Hall and One Pagoda on Different Axes’			✓	✓	✓	
‘Multi-compound and Multi-hall’	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 5.2: Typical monastery layouts of East Asia during the fifth to eighth centuries

	Chinese Mainland	Korean Peninsula		Japan	
450	Central Pagoda 	Goguryeo Central Pagoda and Three Halls 	Baekje Central Pagoda and One Hall in the rear 		
500	Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear 				
550	Central Pagoda and Halls on Different Axes 				
600				Central Pagoda and Three Halls  One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side 	Central Pagoda and One Hall in the rear  One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side with a Central Hall Behind 
650	Multi-compound and Multi-hall 	Unified Silla Central Hall and Twin Pagodas 		Central Hall and Twin Pagodas 	
700					
750		Multi-compound and Multi-hall 		Multi-compound and Multi-hall  Central Hall and One Pagoda on Different Axes 	

Three Halls’) derived from traditional architectural forms of North China, while the monastery layout of the Baekje Kingdom (‘Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear’) was more influenced by South China. Before the mid-seventh century, as a result of fewer exchanges with the Chinese continent, the Buddhist architecture of Silla and Japan was strongly influenced by the Goguryeo and Baekje Kingdoms; this is particularly seen in the case of early Japanese monastery layouts (‘Central Pagoda and Three Halls’ and ‘Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear’ layouts). After the mid-seventh century, Silla unified the south of the Korean Peninsula, and Japan established direct contacts with China. Buddhist monasteries of the Tang (‘Multi-compound and Multi-hall’ layout), represented by the *Qinglongsi* and the *Ximingsi Monastery* in Chang’an, had a direct and far-reaching impact on the architectural layout of Korean and Japanese monasteries.

Judging from the above overview of Buddhist monasteries in East Asia between the fifth and eighth centuries, excepting some local characteristics, it is possible to point out a general consistent trend: the monastery layout evolved from centering on the Pagoda to the Buddha Hall and from single-compound to multi-compound and multi-hall. The interaction between architectural space and religious function will be discussed in detail in the final chapter.

Monastery Layout in Early Medieval China and East Asia: Form and Function

6.1. The Chinese Pavilion-Style Pagoda: Origin and Meaning

The Chinese pavilion-style pagoda derived from the Indian *stūpa*, which was introduced to China around the first century together with Buddhism. The original meaning of the Sanskrit *stūpa* is ‘mound’ or ‘grave’, the place in which to bury the relics of the Buddha. Later, the concept of *stūpa* was expanded to indicate a place where famous Buddhist monks and nuns were buried, a departure from the original meaning, which will not be discussed here. A similar building was the *caitya* (*zhiti* 支提), which had the same architectural form as the *stūpa*. Although the two terms *stūpa* and *caitya* were often confused in successive periods, actually, their original meaning was clearly written in early Buddhist documents: the *stūpa* was the tomb of the Buddha, while the *caitya* was a building erected to commemorate important events of his life. The *Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya* (*Mohe Sengqi Lü* 摩訶僧祇律), translated by Faxian (法顯?–ca. 422 AD) during the Eastern Jin period, states:

The place holding *śarīra* was known as *stūpa*, while the place without *śarīra* was known as *caitya*, such as the place of the birth of the Buddha, the place of his enlightenment, the place where he turned the wheel of the *Dharma*, the place where he entered *Nirvāṇa*, where the figures of *Bodhisattvas* were shrined, the grotto of the *Pratyeka-Buddha* and the traces of Buddha’s feet.¹

The *Compilation of Translated Names and Explanations of Their Meanings* explains the meaning of *caitya* in detail, quoting many early texts lost in later times, such as the *Samyuktābhi-dharmahrdayaśāstra*. It states:

Caitya, [...] here refers to a place to make offerings, or a place to extinguish evil and to produce goodness. *Samyuktābhi-dharmahrdayaśāstra* said, a place offering *śarīra* was known as *stūpa*, while the place without *śarīra* was known as *caitya*. The *Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra* said, *caitya* did not contain the bones or the body. The *Āgama* clarified the four symbolic meanings of *caitya*, i.e. the place of Buddha’s birth, the place where he reached enlightenment, the place of his turning of the wheel of the *Dharma*, and the place of his *Nirvāṇa*.²

However, it is difficult to distinguish *stūpa* and *caitya* in their architectural forms. Furthermore, the interpretations of their definitions in variety sutras have evolved over time. The concept of *caitya* progressively increased to become a comprehensive term indicating a Buddhist memorial. Besides commemorating Buddha’s meritorious deeds, it also had the added functions of preserving the relics and storing sutras and statues. At least in the early Tang, Chinese Buddhist masters and translators had already regarded the *stūpa* and *caitya* as the same structure, a square tomb or shrine.³ Thereafter, the terms *stūpa* and *caitya* were used as synonyms in many sutras. Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that the meanings of *stūpa* and *caitya* were quite different in the earlier centuries, when Buddhism was newly introduced to China. The former focused on the function of preserving Sakyamuni’s relics, while the latter laid more emphasis on the function of monumentalizing his meritorious deeds. In this sense, the famous *stūpa* of *Sanchi* and the *stūpa* of *Bharhut* are *stūpas* in the true sense, while *Amarawati* of South India should be called a *caitya*.⁴

With regards to the origin of the Chinese pavilion-style pagoda, much research has been carried out.⁵ The generally accepted view is that it derived from both the Indian *stūpa* and the traditional Chinese tower type.⁶ In ancient Chinese myths and legends, immortals preferred to live in the lofty heights. Hence many high-story buildings were established by emperors and magicians to come close to the gods or to pray for immortality. A well-known event took place in the middle of the Western Han Dynasty. Gongsun Qing 公孫卿, a notable alchemist deeply trusted by Emperor Wu (漢武帝 r. 141–87 BC), explicitly mentioned that the immortals loved living in high buildings. Thereupon, Emperor Wu erected many high-story buildings in Chang’an to attract all sorts of immortals.⁷ These buildings were normally square in plan and up to tens of meters high, such as the famous Boliangtai 柏梁台, Tongtiantai 通天台 and Shenmingtai 神明台. In ancient times, tall buildings were built on platforms, where a large number of alchemists fulfilled their responsibility of communicating with gods and immortals. As early as the 1940s, Liang Sicheng in *Chinese Architectural History* proposed that the Chinese traditional tower might be the high-story platform intended to attract and wait for the immortals. He further deduced that the pavilion-style pagoda after the Wei and Jin periods must

¹ *Mohe Sengqi Lü* 摩訶僧祇律, 498, ‘今王亦得作枝提。有舍利者名塔，無舍利者名枝提。如佛生處、得道處、轉法輪處、般泥洹處、菩薩像、辟支佛窟、佛腳跡。’

² *Fanyì Míngyì Jì* 翻譯名義集, 1168, ‘支提：或名難提、脂帝、制底、制多。此翻可供養處，或翻滅惡生善處。《雜心論》云：有舍利名塔，無舍利名支提。《文句》云：支提無骨身者也。《阿含》明四支微：謂佛生處、得道處、轉法輪處、入滅處也。’

³ Li Chongfeng 2003, 26–29.

⁴ Akira Miyaji 2009, 16–21.

⁵ Soper 1978, 89–93.

⁶ Seckel 1980, 249–56.

⁷ *Shi Ji* 史記, 1400.

have evolved from these towers.⁸ Later archaeological discoveries offered sufficient evidence to support his intuition. Since the 1950s, many pottery tower models have been excavated in Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Shannxi and Gansu provinces, most of them dated to the Eastern Han and Wei-Jin periods. These models, imitations of real wooden towers, were square in plan, and at least some were placed at the center of a small courtyard surrounded by walls. In most cases, they were three or four stories high, and each story had its own railings, eaves, bracket sets, beams and pillars (Fig. 6.1).⁹

There is no conclusive evidence to demonstrate how the earliest Chinese pagodas may have looked. It is reasonable to assume that, when Buddhism was first introduced into China, the pagoda was built according to Indian models, as recorded in the *Book of Wei*:

All the palaces and pagodas were made just like their counterparts in India.¹⁰

Obviously, it was quite easy to duplicate paintings and small carvings in an exotic form, as can be seen, for example, in the case of the stone pagodas of Northern Liang (*Beiliang Shita* 北涼石塔). Conversely, it is difficult to imagine that an Indian-style *stūpa*, such as the *Sanchi Stūpa*, could be exactly reproduced in another country, since such an enterprise not only involved manpower and money, but also an entire production system, encompassing techniques, tools, supporting facilities, raw material, and even craftsmen's habits and ways of thinking. Taking these into account, it becomes easier to understand the reason why the early pagoda in China had a main timber framework, as most Chinese traditional buildings did.

The pagoda of *Baimasi Monastery*, built in Luoyang by Emperor Ming of Eastern Han, is the first Buddhist pagoda mentioned in historical records. *Mouzi on the Settling of Doubts* mentioned that the pagoda was surrounded by wall paintings in three circles.¹¹ Though the description of the architectural form of the pagoda is ambiguous, some architectural historians have presumed that the pagoda may have had a three-level platform, different from the Indian *stūpa*.¹²

Another document provides more detailed information about early pagodas in Chinese style. According to the *Records of Three Kingdoms*, a Buddhist monastery was built between the years 188 and 193 AD by Ze Rong. The pagoda was a multi-story pavilion with a top of nine-tiered bronze plates.¹³ Obviously, the multi-story wooden structure was a well-known type of traditional Chinese architecture, while the nine-tiered bronze plates may have derived from the *stūpa* in Indian style. Pagodas displaying

mixed Chinese and Indian features may have been quite common at the time.

To date, we have not discovered any remains of wooden pagodas before the mid-fifth century. Conversely, extant Buddhist grottoes provide us with an abundance of visual material. For example, in the Yungang Grottoes Caves 1, 2 and 39, the central pillar was carved into the shape of a pavilion-style pagoda (Fig. 6.2), while similar pagodas were also depicted in a simplified manner among the scenes carved along the lateral walls or the central pillar (Fig. 6.3). These occurrences provide material evidence to understand the architectural form of early wooden pagodas.

In recent decades, Chinese archaeologists have excavated the remains of several pavilion-style wooden pagodas of the late fifth and sixth centuries. The most striking examples are the large pagoda of the *Yongningsi Monastery* of Northern Wei and the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* of Eastern Wei and Northern Qi. They provide new evidence for the exploration of the origin of Chinese pavilion pagodas. Since the wooden structures above ground were destroyed over a thousand years ago, we have just the extant base, which usually includes two parts, the underground foundation and the above-ground platform. Based on the residual traces, such as the size of the base, the arrangement of the plinths, the stepped ramp and the drainage facilities, the internal structure, construction methods and techniques have been determined with a certain degree of reliability.

As mentioned above, the pagoda of the *Yongningsi Monastery* was the landmark of Luoyang City. The base was nearly square in plan, and its underground foundation was 101.2 m long by 97.8 m wide, and over 2.5 m deep. We do not know the underground foundation in detail, because it has not been sectioned. The above-ground square platform, 38.2 m wide and 2.2 m high, was placed at the center of the underground foundation. It was faced with limestone slabs, with flights of steps on each side. The core of the pagoda was a composite of mud brick and timber, whose remaining part is about 19.8 m wide and 3.7 m high. Around the core of the pagoda, there were four sets of plinths, the basis of pillars supporting the ground floor of the pagoda. Judging from the arrangement of the plinths, the square pagoda was a seven-bay structure. The ground floor was surrounded by a nine-bay porch (Fig. 6.4).¹⁴ As to the height of the pagoda, scholars specializing in architecture have different views. Chen Mingda 陳明達 was inclined to think that the pagoda could not be more than 81.66 m high,¹⁵ while Yang Hongxun 楊鴻勳 thought it might have reached a height of 147 m (Fig. 6.5).¹⁶ In any case, the common view is that the documents exaggerated the actual height of the pagoda.

⁸ Liang Sicheng 1985, vol. 3, 36.

⁹ Li Chongfeng 2003, 39–40.

¹⁰ *Wei Shu* 魏書, 3029, ‘凡宮塔制度，猶依天竺旧狀而重構之。’

¹¹ *Mouzi Lihuo Lun* 牟子理惑論, 5.

¹² Fu Xinian 2001, vol. 2, 176–77.

¹³ *Sanguo Zhi* 三國志, 1185; *Hou Han Shu* 後漢書, 2368.

¹⁴ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1996, 13–19.

¹⁵ Chen Mingda 1990, 32–35.

¹⁶ Yang Hongxun 1992.

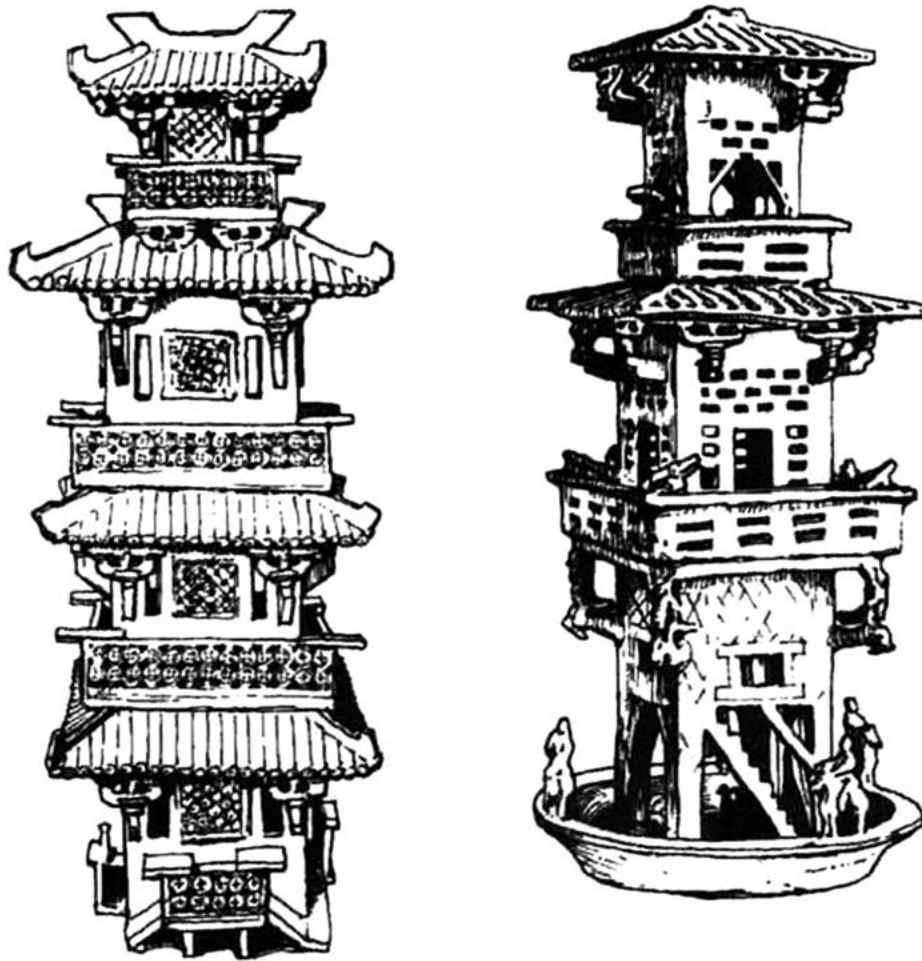


Fig. 6.1: Eastern Han Dynasty Pottery tower models, unearthed in Shandong and Henan provinces (Modified from: Yang Hongxun 2001, 345, figs 298 and 299).

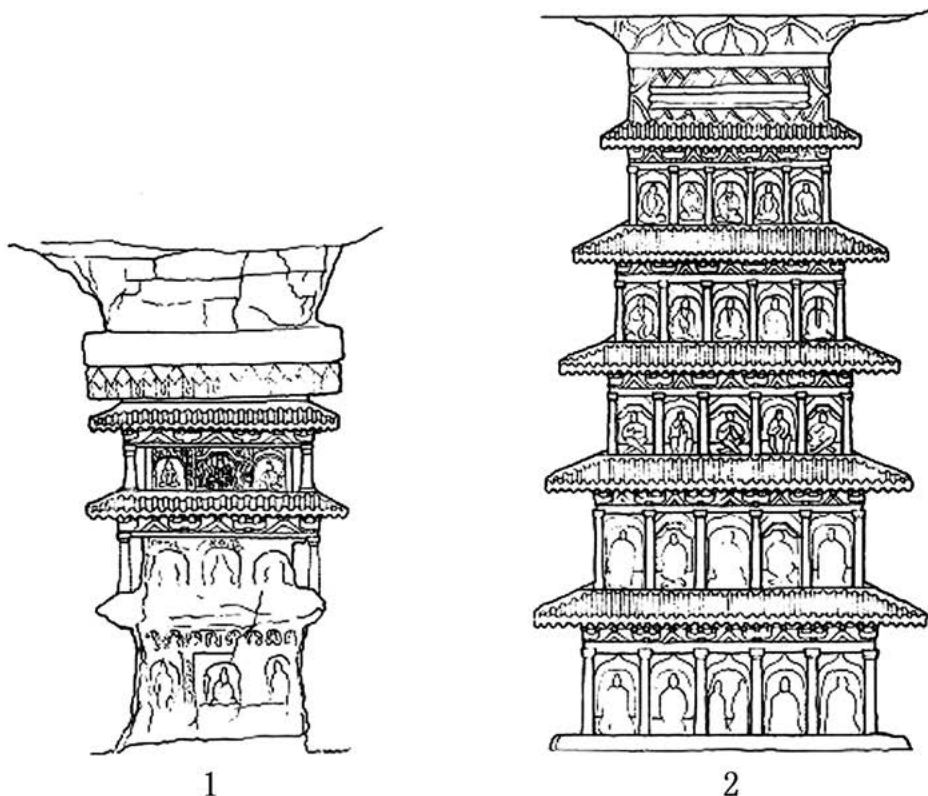


Fig. 6.2: Central pagodas of Yungang Grottoes in the Northern Wei (Modified from: Liu Dunzhen 1984, 91, fig. 59).

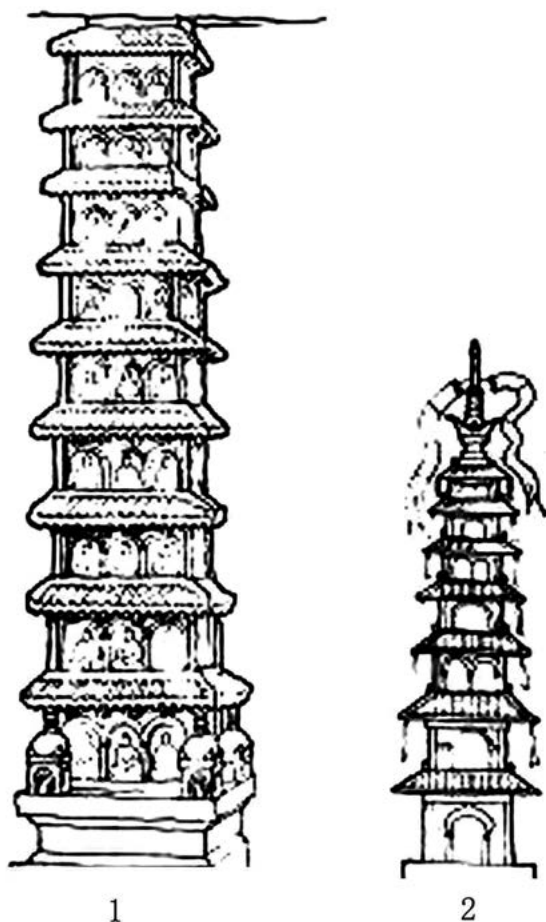


Fig. 6.3: Pagodas in relief on the wall and central pillar in Yungang Grottoes of the Northern Wei (Modified from: Liu Dunzhen 1984, 91, fig. 59).

The form and construction methods of the pagoda in the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* are similar to those of *Yongningsi's* pagoda. Although the underground foundation was only 42 m wide, the above-ground platform was over 30 m wide and had the same status as the pagoda in the *Yongningsi Monastery*. The trench cut into the underground foundation revealed that it was almost 5 m deep, and the residual above-ground platform was about 4.5 m high, with traces of brick faced on it. Because of the poor state of preservation, only three sets of plinths could be positively identified, while a fourth set of plinths may have been set upon the above-ground platform. Thus, the ground floor of the pagoda was no smaller than a five-bay structure (see Fig. 2.13).¹⁷ As for the height of the pagoda, the archaeologists' and architectural historians' preliminary assumption was that the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery's* pagoda might have been a nine-story structure towering more than 100 m high.

The excavations of the *Yongningsi* and *Zhaopengcheng* monasteries provide us with evidence to explore the forms and construction methods of the pavilion-style pagoda in the

sixth century. As far as the pagoda in the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* is concerned, at first, a large square pit, 5 m deep and with sides 42 m long, was dug into the ground. More than ten layers of cobblestones alternating with strata of rammed earth were laid at the bottom of the pit; on top of it, ten more strata of rammed earth filled the pit to the contemporary ground level (Fig. 6.6). When the compacted earth was rammed to a level slightly higher than the ground, the foundation stone of the central pillar, with sides of 1.2 m, was placed at the center of the above-ground platform. Under this foundation stone, there was a small brick cell, measuring 0.7 m by 0.7 m; it was the underground palace for the relics. The square above-ground platform, 30 m wide, presently having a residual height of 4.5 m, was built in the middle of the underground foundation. It was made of well-compacted rammed earth. The remaining part of the above-ground platform indicates that all its sides were faced with bricks or stone slabs. In front of the above-ground platform, there were drainage facilities paved by bricks on both sides of the stepped ramp. On the above-ground platform, the multi-story pagoda was built, diminishing in width from bottom to top. As in any other traditional Chinese pavilion, each story had its own rooms, stairs, roof, railings and decorations. According to the documents, the top of the pagoda still had basic elements of the Indian *stūpa*. A particularly striking feature was the multiple bronze plates, i.e. the so-called 'dew receivers' (*chenglupan* 承露盤), inserted at the top.

Presently, most scholars agree on the fact that the pattern of the top of the pagoda derived from India models, while the pagoda's body section was an imitation of a Chinese tower. However, where did the massive square underground foundation and the above-ground platform derive from? In 1980, by comparison with traditional Chinese architecture, Ledderose pointed out that the prototype of the Chinese pagoda derived not only from the architectural form of the multi-story tower, but also from the *Mingtang*, in the sense of its religious function and symbolism.¹⁸ This prophetic view has been corroborated by recent excavations. On the basis of archaeological evidence, I prefer to assume that traditional Chinese ritual buildings (*lizhixing jianzhu* 禮制性建築), including the Imperial Mausoleum (*wangling* 王陵), the Imperial Ancestor Shrine (*taiiao* 太廟), the Imperial Academy (*taixue* 太學), the *Mingtang* 明堂, the *Biyong* 辟雍, the *Lingtai* 靈臺 etc., are among the most important origins of the pavilion-style pagoda. The common feature of these buildings is that they all belong to the high-story category, and most of them have an underground foundation and an above-ground platform. Since the 1950s, some ritual buildings from the Warring States period to the Tang Dynasty have been excavated; they provide appropriate materials for the comparative study of the structure of the pagoda.

From the Warring States period (475–221 BC) onward, kings of vassal states and later the emperors used to

¹⁷ Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 2010.

¹⁸ Ledderose 1980, 238–48.

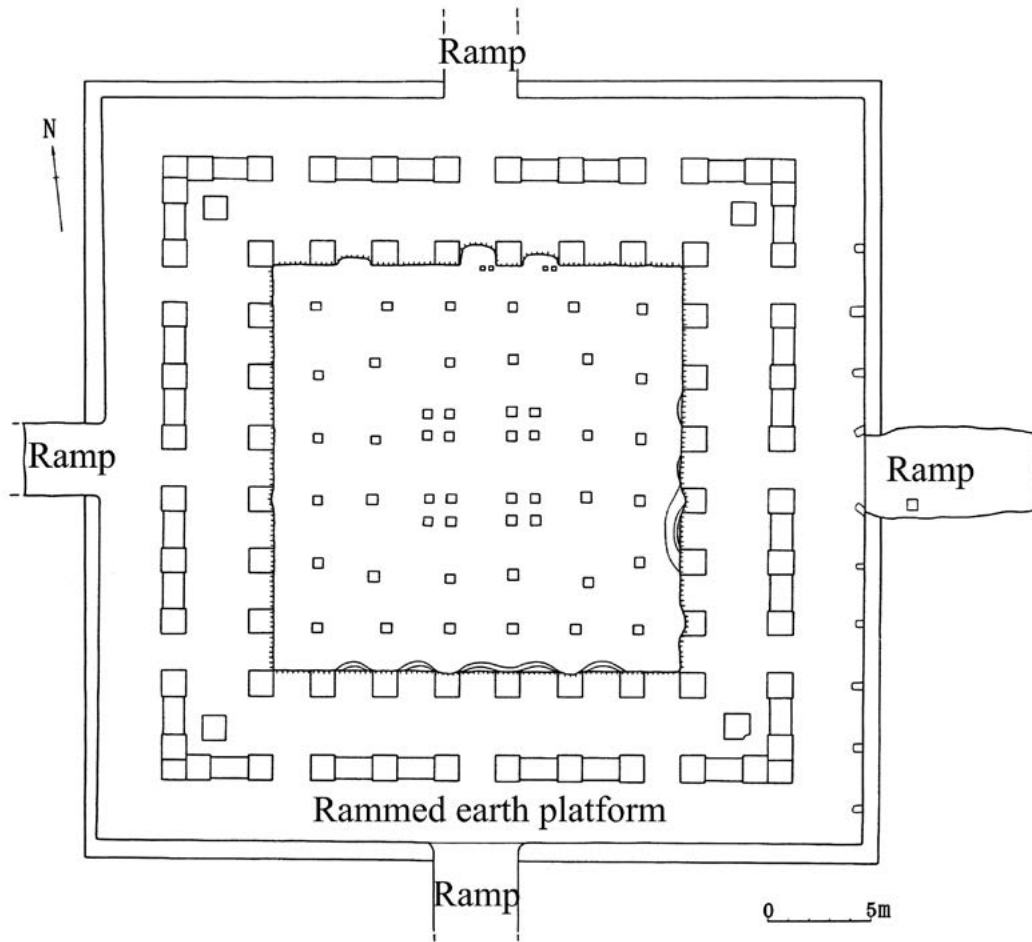


Fig. 6.4: Reconstructed plinth network of the pagoda, in *Yongningsi Monastery*, Luoyang (Modified from: Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1996, 15, fig. 9B).

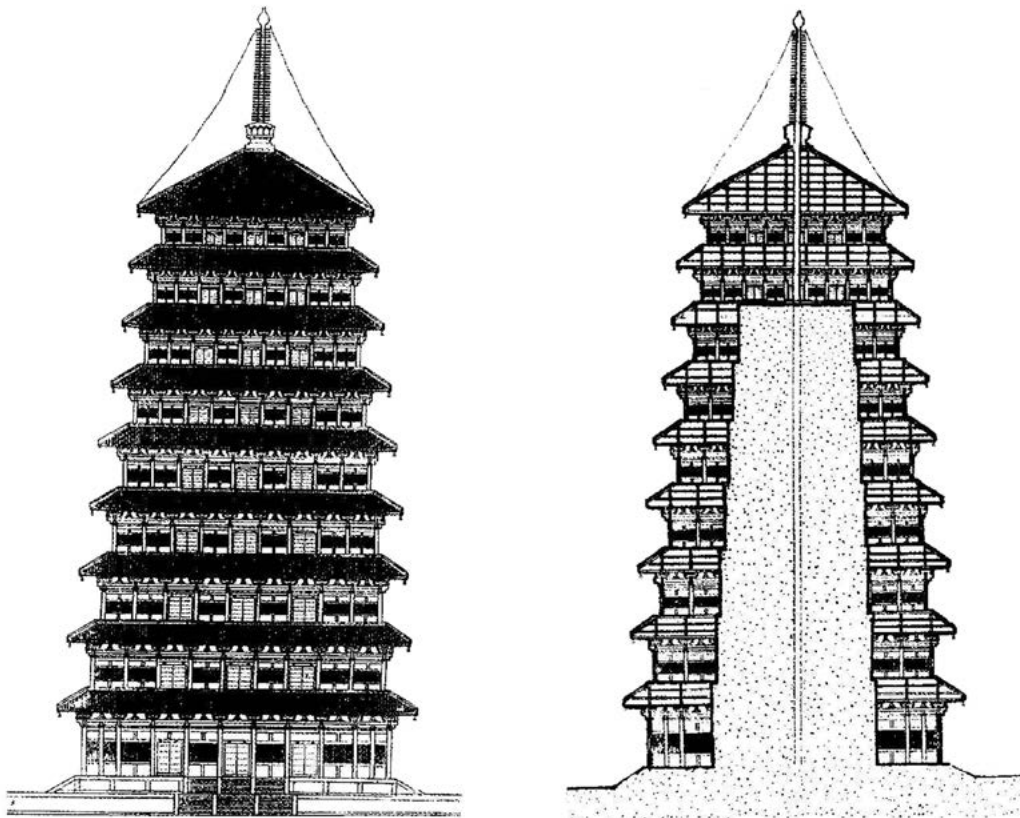


Fig. 6.5: Reconstruction of the pagoda, in *Yongningsi Monastery*, Luoyang (Modified from: Zhang Yuhuan 2008, 15, illustration).

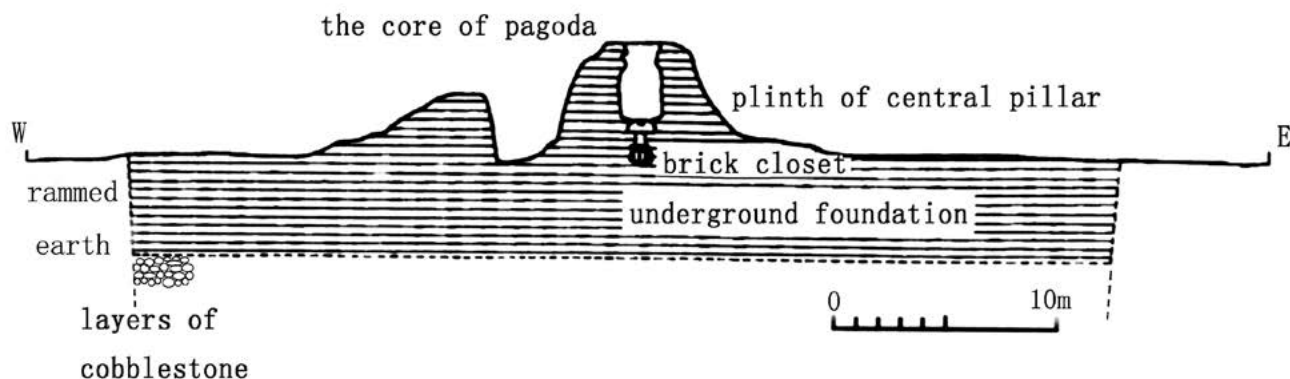


Fig. 6.6: Section of the pagoda foundation, Zhaopengcheng Monastery, South Yecheng (Modified from: Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 2010, 36, fig. 8).

build large mausoleums for their afterlife; on top of the underground grave, there was a large trapezoidal mound, on which there was a pavilion-style hall surrounded by roofed corridors to commemorate or offer sacrifice to the dead monarch. A case in point was the Mausoleum of the Zhongshan King 戰國中山王陵 of the Warring States period, excavated in the 1970s.¹⁹ In it, there was the famous bronze plan of the Zhongshan King's Mausoleum (*Zhongshanwang ling zhaoyu tu* 中山王陵兆域圖). The superstructure of mausoleum No. 1 was reconstructed by architectural historians on the basis of the archaeological report.²⁰ The superstructure stood on a three-story rammed earth platform, its remains being 15 m high. The lowermost platform was square in plan, with sides 52 m long, and drainage facilities around it. On the outside, each platform was surrounded by a roofed corridor. The uppermost platform was approximately 32 m wide, on top of which a square hall was built. The hall was presumably a five-bay square structure, with its perimeter surrounded by a roofed corridor and handrails (Fig. 6.7). Similar remains have also been found in the mausoleums of the Wei State (present Hui County, Henan Province),²¹ the mausoleums of the Yan State (present Yi County, Hebei Province)²² and the mausoleums of the Zhao State (present Handan City, Hebei Province).²³ Actually, many imperial mausoleums of the Qin and Han Dynasties, including the well-known Mausoleum of Emperor Qin Shi Huang (*Qin shi Huangdi ling* 秦始皇帝陵), adopted a similar architectural form for the hall above their graves.

In the 1950s, Chinese archaeologists excavated a group of architectural ruins near Xi'an, which were confirmed to be ceremonial buildings of the Han Dynasty in the southern suburb of Han Dynasty Chang'an City.²⁴ One group of these buildings was the Nine Shrines of Wang Mang (*Wang Mang jiumiao* 王莽九廟), namely nine shrines established

by Wang Mang for his ancestors and himself.²⁵ According to Yang Hongxun's research, among the Nine Shrines of Wang Mang there were twelve high-story buildings that had a similar configuration and structure. All the buildings were pavilion-style halls, square in plan. With the exception of the largest hall, with sides over 100 m long, the other eleven halls were built on rammed foundation 52 m wide, each surrounded by drainage facilities (Fig. 6.8).²⁶

In ancient China the term *Lingtai* 靈臺 referred to an observatory. In the years 1974 and 1975, Chinese archaeologists excavated the site of a *Lingtai* of the Han and Jin Dynasties in Luoyang. The remains were found in the shape of a high square platform, initially built in the Eastern Han and in use until the Western Jin. Zhang Heng (張衡 78–139 AD), the most famous astronomer of ancient China, was in charge of this *Lingtai* for a long time. The underground foundation of the *Lingtai* was about 50 m wide, and the above-ground platform consisted of two layers. Because of the poor state of preservation, the platform was 41 m wide north to south, and its residual height was approximately 8 m. At the margin of each layer of the platform, there were the traces of buildings, which have been confirmed to be the remains of a roofed corridor (Fig. 6.9).²⁷ Relying on the archaeological evidence, Yang Hongxun was able to reconstruct its architecture (Fig. 6.10).²⁸

The *Mingtang* 明堂 and the *Biyong* 辟雍 were commonly seen ritual buildings. Generally speaking, the *Mingtang* was a great hall where the emperor gave publicity to important policies of politics, religion and education, holding the ceremonies for assemblies, alliances, sacrifices and celebrations. The *Biyong* was originally a college established by the King of Western Zhou. Unfortunately, the configurations of the *Mingtang* and *Biyong* were already

¹⁹ CPAM, Hopeh Province 1979.

²⁰ Yang Hongxun 2001, 174–85.

²¹ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Sciences 1956, 144–45.

²² CPAM of Hopeh Province and CPAM of Handan Prefecture 1982.

²³ Hopei Bureau of Culture Archaeological Team 1965.

²⁴ Tang Jinyu 1959.

²⁵ Han Ch'eng Archaeological Team, IOA 1960; Editorial board of Chinese Encyclopedia 1986, 162.

²⁶ Yang Hongxun 2001, 282–85.

²⁷ Luoyang Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, the Chinese Academy of Social Science 1978.

²⁸ Yang Hongxun 2001, 332–38.

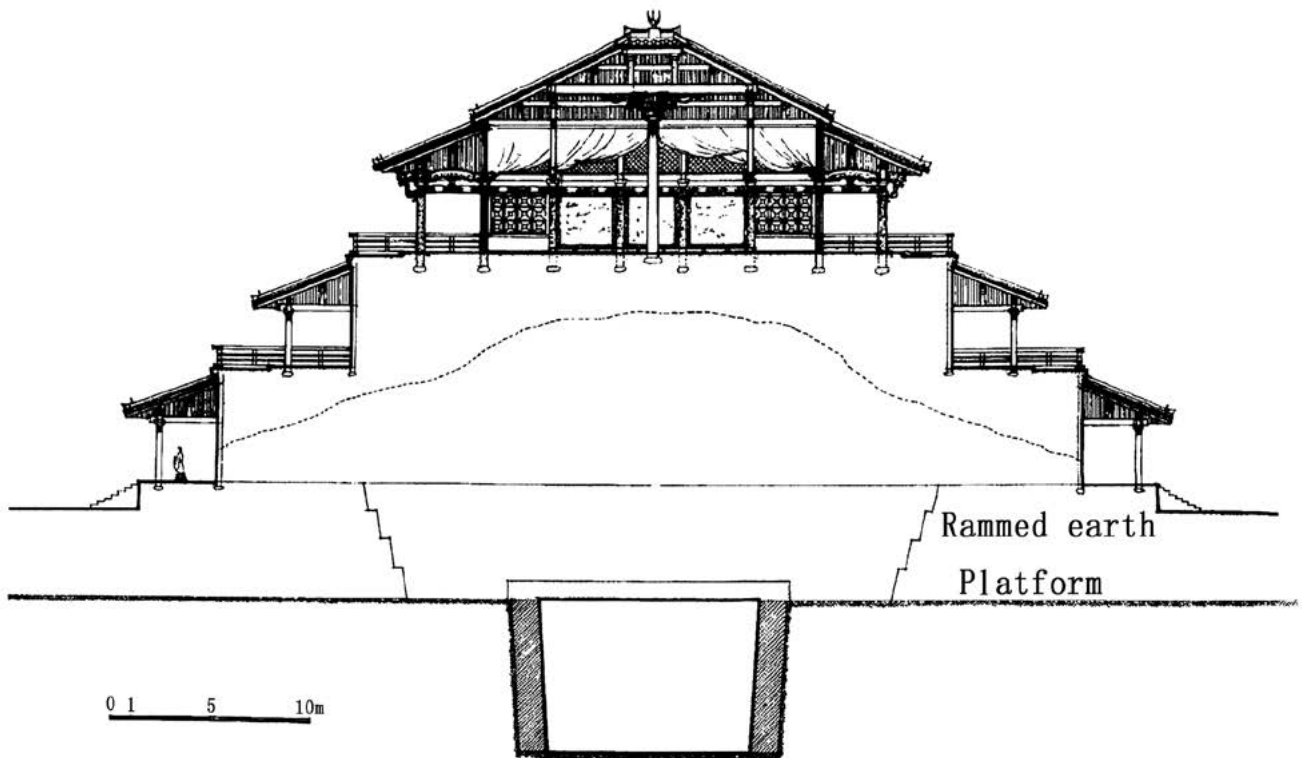


Fig. 6.7: Reconstruction of the Zhongshan King's Mausoleum, Warring States period (Modified from: Yang Hongxun 2001, 180, fig. 162).

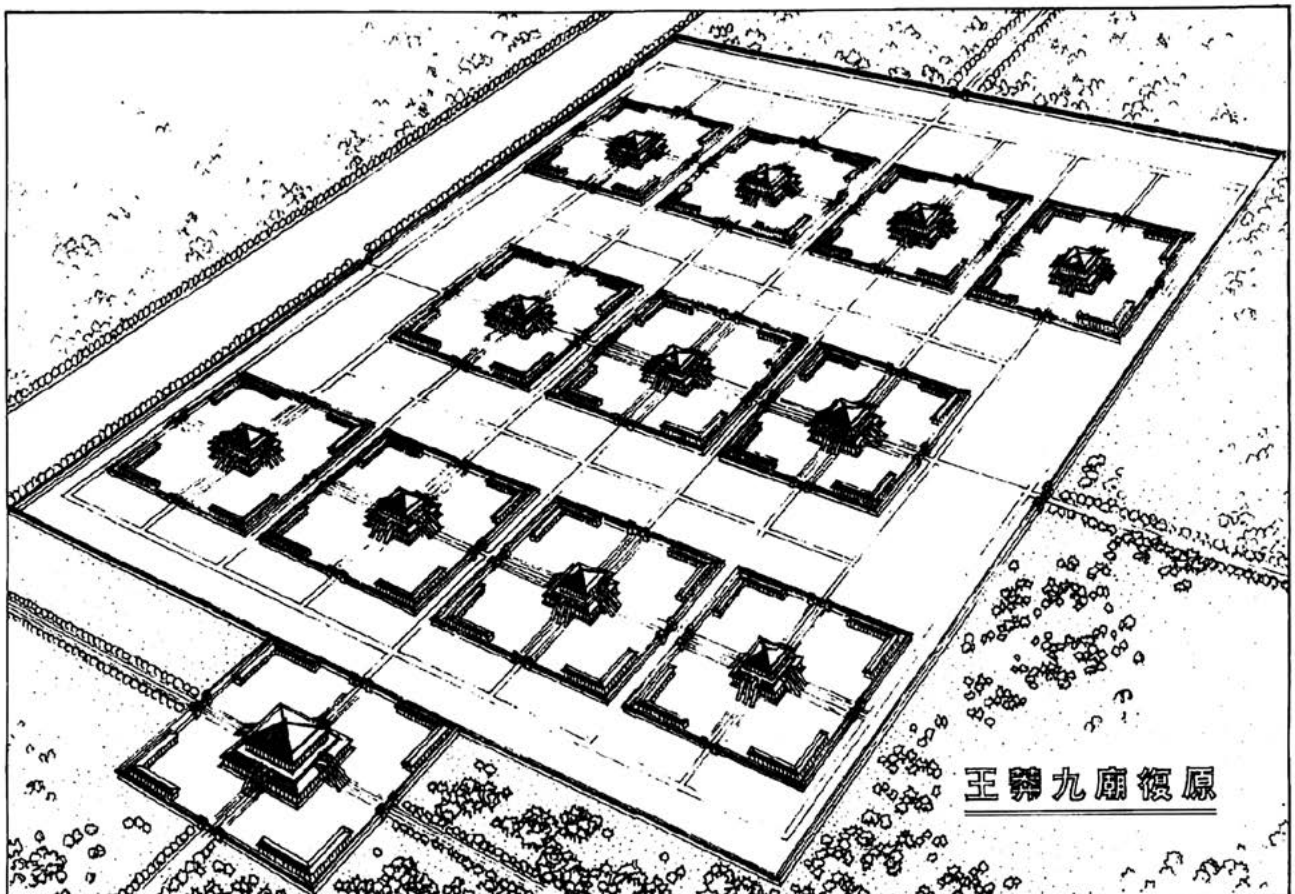


Fig. 6.8: Reconstruction of the Nine Shrines of Wang Mang, Han Dynasty (Modified from: Yang Hongxun 2001, 285, fig. 257).

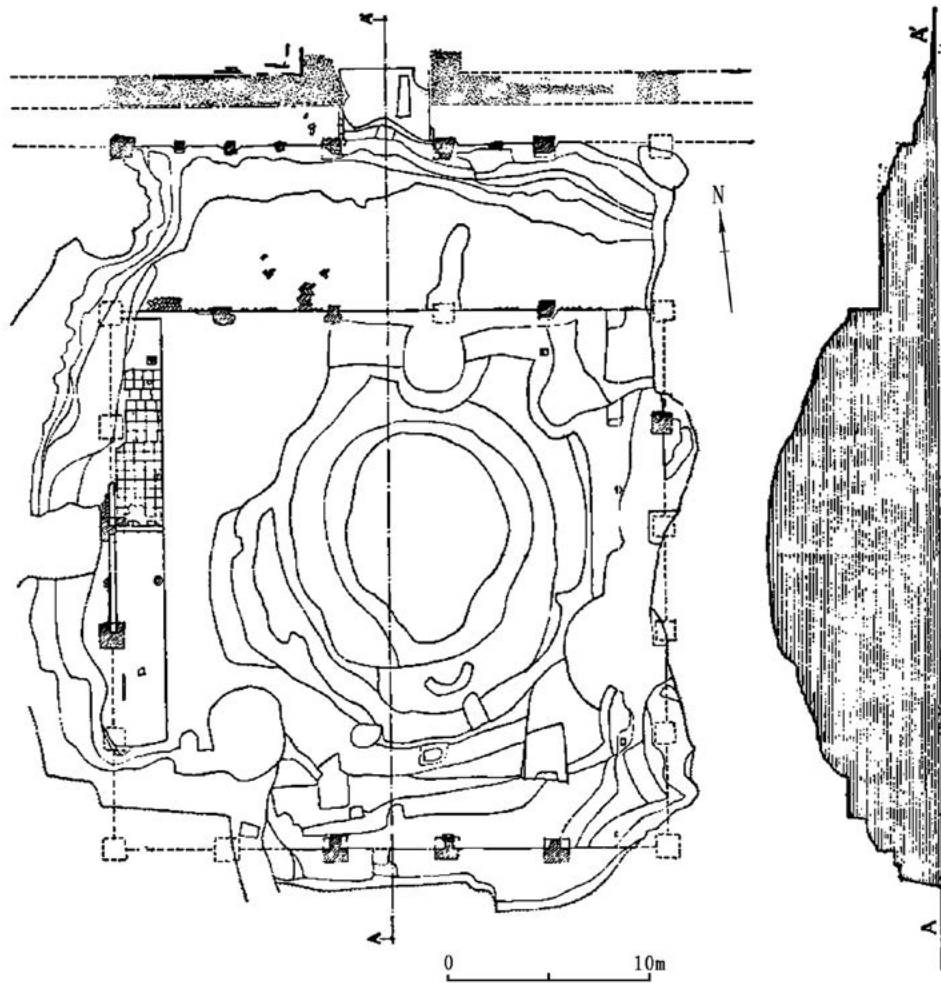


Fig. 6.9: Plan and section of a *Lingtai* site of the Han Dynasty (Modified from: Luoyang Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, the Chinese Academy of Social Science 1978, 55, fig. 1).

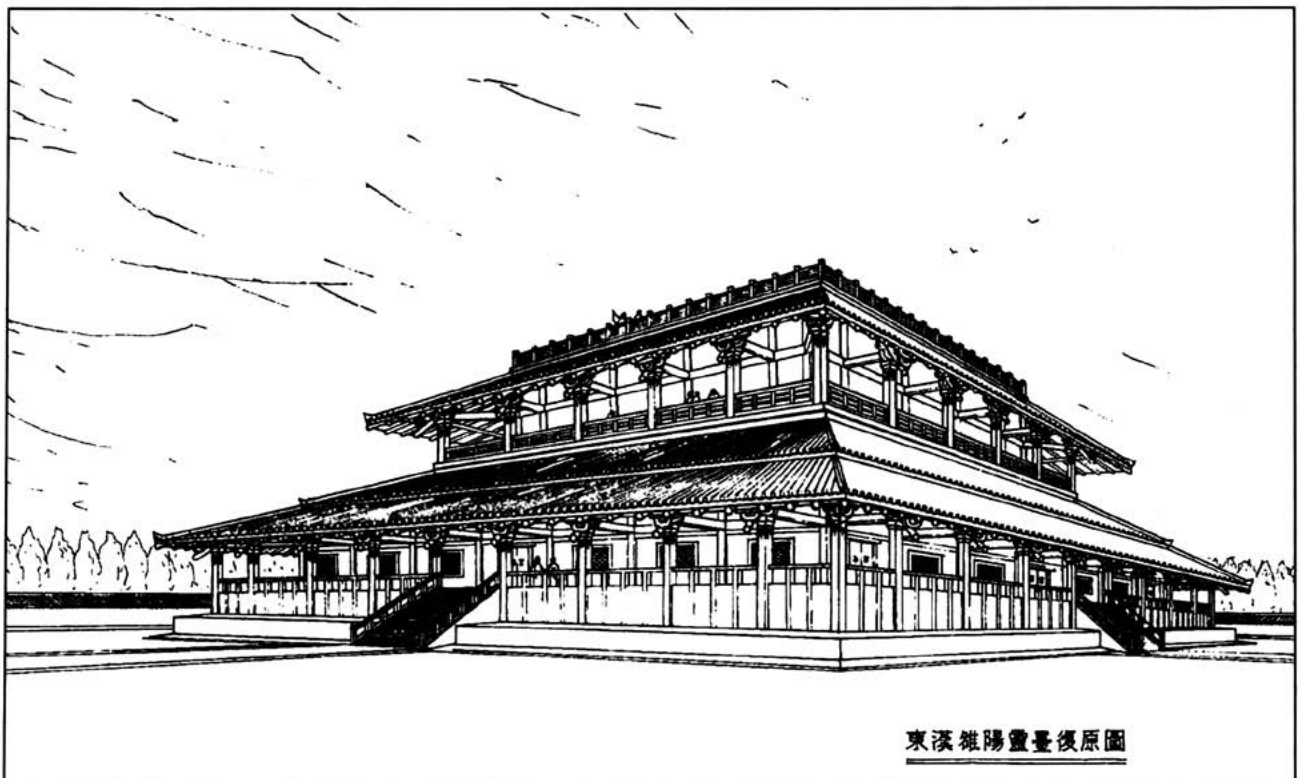


Fig. 6.10: Reconstruction of the *Lingtai*, Han and Jin periods (Modified from: Yang Hongxun 2001, 338, fig. 292).

unclear by the mid-Western Han Dynasty. The *Book of Han* states that Emperor Wu wanted to build a *Mingtang*, but no one knew the configuration and the construction method.²⁹ After the Western Han Dynasty, the meanings of *Mingtang* and *Biyong* were explained contradictorily in various documents. Some scholars thought they were the same ritual buildings with different names, while others considered the *Biyong* to be the circular ditch outside the *Mingtang*.³⁰

So far, at least six *Mingtang* and *Biyong* sites of different periods have been excavated. The earliest instance is the Han Dynasty *Mingtang* in Chang'an, which was built in the Xinmang Era (9–23 AD); it was excavated in the 1950s.³¹ According to the archaeological report, this site was surrounded by a circular ditch, with an underground foundation round in shape and with a diameter of 62 m. At the center of the foundation, a high square platform of rammed earth was built, with many buildings arranged symmetrically at the margins of it. Correspondingly, there was a great hall on the platform (Fig. 6.11).³²

A large number of ritual buildings of various dynasties have been discovered in Luoyang. The *Mingtang* and *Biyong* of the Eastern Han were excavated in the 1970s;³³ they were similar in configuration and structure to those of Chang'an (Fig. 6.12).³⁴ The Northern Wei originally established its *Mingtang* in Pingcheng, also with a similar configuration to the one in Chang'an; it was excavated in the 1990s.³⁵ After moving the capital to Luoyang, the Northern Wei built another *Mingtang* above the remains left by the Eastern Han. The latter's configuration and structure were not significantly different from those of the former.³⁶

In the late seventh century, preparing for her ascent the throne, Wu Zetian issued an edict to establish a *Mingtang* in the east capital Luoyang; the remains of this building were discovered and excavated in 1996.³⁷ According to the reconstruction plan put forward by Yang Hongxun (Fig. 6.13), the *Mingtang* was built on a rammed earth underground foundation and an above-ground platform. A great round hall was built at the center of the platform, and a central pillar ran through the whole building from the base to the top.³⁸ Since 2001, the Ye City Archaeological Team has excavated a series of large-scale buildings in the south of Yecheng, including the foundations of pagodas in the *Zhaopengcheng* and *Hetaoyuan* monasteries, and

a building site in *Mingtang* Garden.³⁹ The base of these buildings, including the underground foundation and the above-ground platform, had such similar configurations that when excavations began twenty years ago, the Ye City Archaeological Team wrongly assumed that the base of the pagoda in the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* was the remains of a *Mingtang*.

The similarity between the Chinese Buddhist pagoda and traditional Chinese ritual buildings is not confined to the configuration and construction methods. Historical documents also provide clues to the intrinsic correlation between them. As a shrine holding the relics of Sakyamuni, the pagoda had a definite relationship with the mausoleum; moreover, Buddhist monasteries were also known as *Qutan Shrines* (瞿曇廟 *Qutan* is one of the ten titles of Sakyamuni),⁴⁰ a term which implies that the meaning of the pagoda was correlated with that of the imperial ancestor shrine. The most important document in this regard is recorded in the *Stories about Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang*; it states:

The golden pagoda was as tall as the Lingtai, and the spacious Buddha Hall was as magnificent as the A'pang Palace.⁴¹

The intrinsic correlation between the pagoda and ritual buildings, Buddha Hall and palace, is well illustrated by the analogy in this document. Judging from the above evidence, we can draw the conclusion that the Chinese pavilion-style pagoda was an eclectic combination of the Indian *stūpa*, the traditional Chinese tower and also traditional Chinese ritual buildings.

6.2. The Development of Buddha Hall: from India to Japan

The Buddha Hall is one of the most important ritual buildings in Buddhist monasteries, the place where the figures of Buddha or Bodhisattva were placed. In China, it was also known as the Great Hall (*dadian* 大殿), the Main Hall (*zhudian* 主殿), the Image Hall or the Icon Hall (*xiangdian* 像殿) in the early period, and as the *Mahavira* Treasure Hall (*Daxiong baodian* 大雄寶殿) later. In the Korean Peninsula and Japan, the Buddha Hall is usually called the Golden Hall (Ch. *jintang*, Kor. *kūmdang*, Jap. *kondō* 金堂).

Although the Buddha Hall discussed in this book is a traditional Chinese architectural form, its prototype and religious meaning also derived from India. In Buddhist documents, the Sanskrit term *Gandhakutī* was translated as Aromatic Chamber (*xiangshi* 香室), Aromatic Platform (*xiangtai* 香臺) or Aromatic Hall (*xiangdian* 香殿), in

²⁹ *Shi Ji* 史記, 480.

³⁰ Wang Shi-jen 1963.

³¹ Tang Jinyu 1959.

³² Yang Hongxun 2001, 267–74.

³³ Duan Pengqi 1984, 516–21.

³⁴ Yang Hongxun 2001, 322–32.

³⁵ Wang Yintian 2000; Wang Yintian, Cao Chenming and Han Shengcun 2001.

³⁶ Yang Hongxun 2001, 348–49.

³⁷ Archaeological Team at the Tang Dynasty City of Luoyang, IA, CASS 1988.

³⁸ Yang Hongxun 2001, 505–10.

³⁹ Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of IA, CASS and Institute of Cultural Relics of Hebei Province 2010; 2016.

⁴⁰ *Da Song Sengshi Lue* 大宋僧史略, 237.

⁴¹ *Luoyang Qielan Ji* 洛陽伽藍記, 999, '金刹與靈臺比高, 廣殿共阿房等壯。'

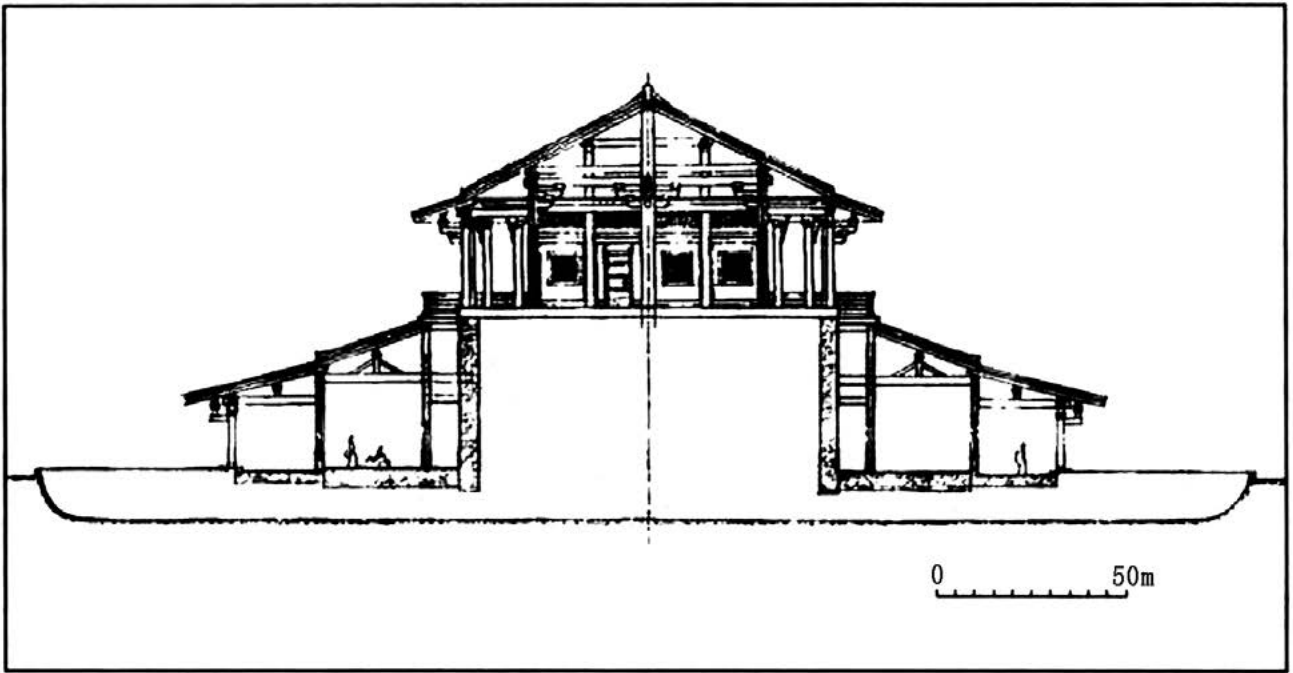


Fig. 6.11: Reconstruction of the *Mingtang* in Chang'an, Han Dynasty (Modified from: Yang Hongxun 2001, 270, fig. 252).

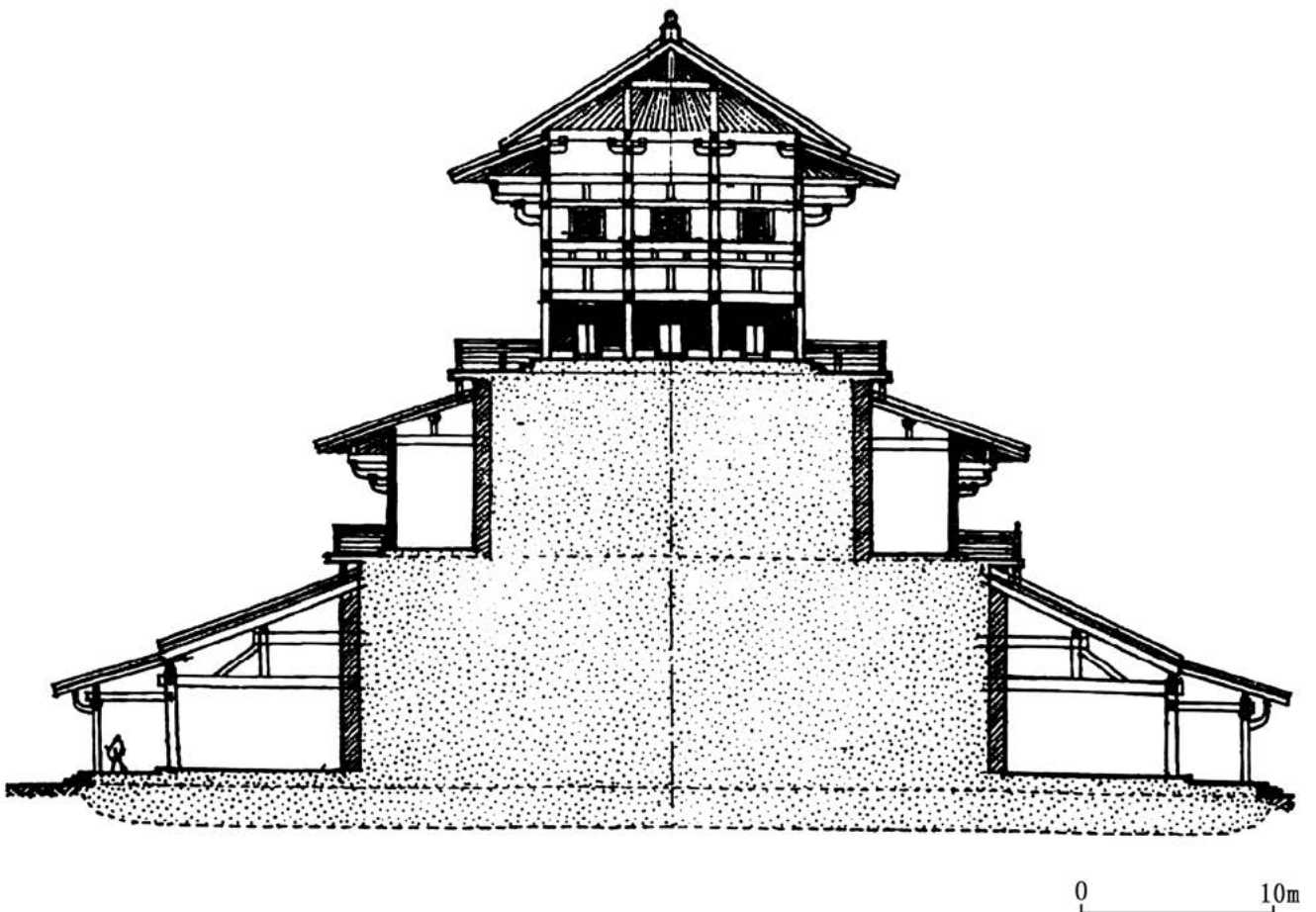


Fig. 6.12: Reconstruction of the *Mingtang* in Luoyang, Eastern Han Dynasty (Modified from: Yang Hongxun 2001, 326, fig. 279).

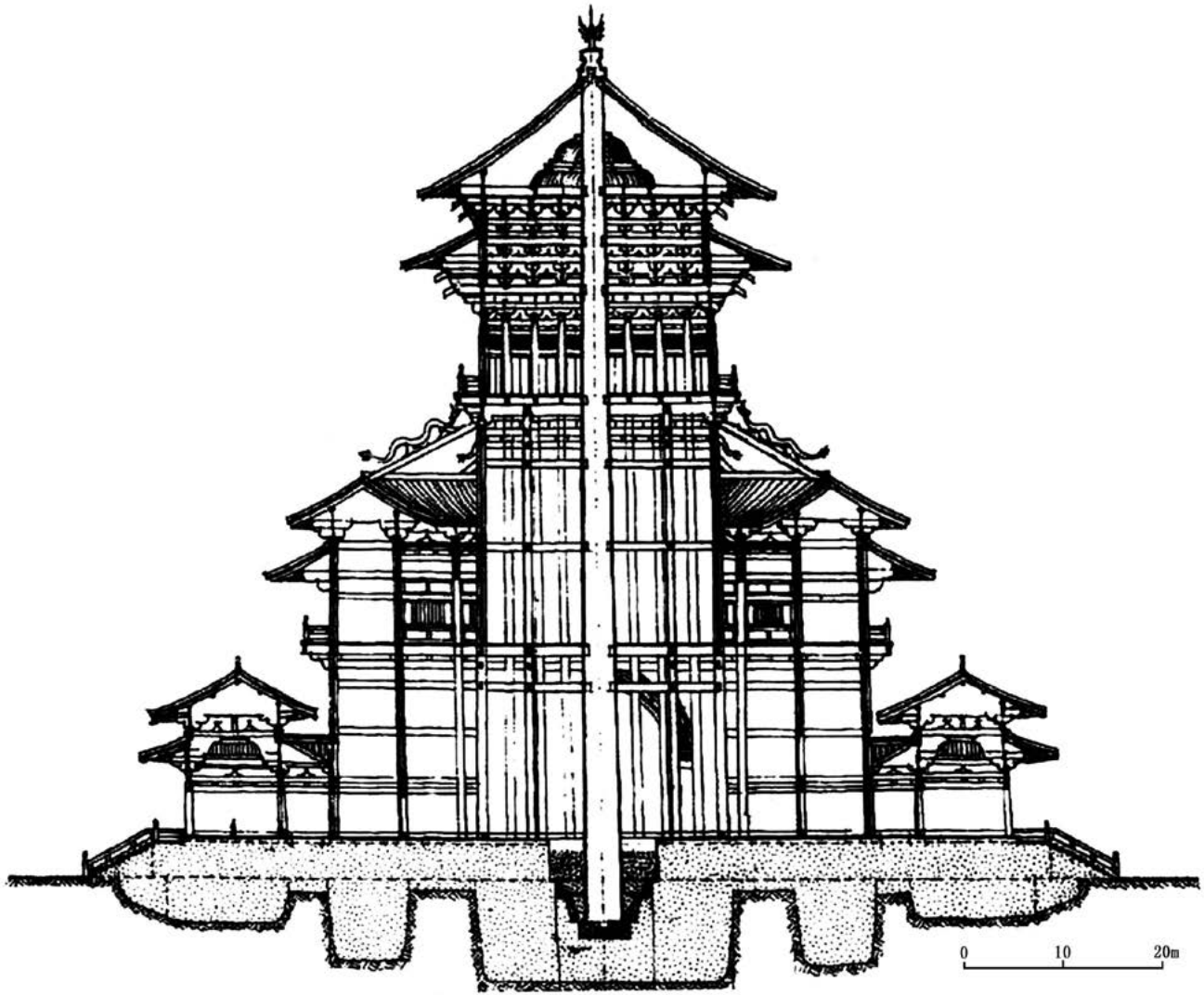


Fig. 6.13: Reconstruction of the *Mingtang* in Luoyang, Tang Dynasty (Modified from: Yang Hongxun 2001, 509, fig. 442).

which the Buddha's image was placed.⁴² However, under the restriction of the Buddhist doctrine of the time, the *stūpa* was always the central building of a Buddhist monastery, while the status of buildings similar to the Buddha Hall was subordinate or even inessential. Actually, we cannot find any instance of large Buddha Halls like those in East Asia in India. Nevertheless, some small chambers were built in the rear of Indian grottoes and Buddhist monasteries, in which offerings were presented to the image of Buddha.⁴³ Such buildings were called *Gandhakutī* in Sanskrit and were the origin of the Chinese Buddha Hall.

Accompanying the development of the Buddhist doctrine and its spread from India and *Gandhāra* eastward, the Buddha Hall gradually became one of the main buildings in the monasteries of Central Asia and the Xinjiang region. At the end of the fourth century, Faxian, the famous monk of the Eastern Jin, went to India, seeking Buddhist sutras.

In his travelogue, he mentioned the building arrangement of the *Wangxinsi Monastery* of Khotan 和闐王新寺:

[...] A Buddha Hall was built behind the *stūpa*, and it was sacred and solemn.⁴⁴

In the early twentieth century, Stein made four major expeditions to Central Asia and Eastern Turkistan, and discovered a large number of ancient sites. In his works, he recorded many remains of Buddhist monasteries and Buddha Halls built before the fourth century.⁴⁵ In the late 1980s to 1990s, the Institute of Cultural and Historical Relics and Archaeology of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region surveyed a series of Buddhist monastery sites around the Tarim basin, and excavated several remains of Buddha Halls from the Wei and Jin periods to the Northern and Southern Dynasties.⁴⁶ The

⁴² *Genben Shuo Yiqieyoubu Pinaiye Zashi* 根本說一切有部毗奈耶雜事, 331.

⁴³ Sarkar 1993, 59–62.

⁴⁴ *Gaoseng Faxian Zhuan* 高僧法顯傳, 857, '有僧伽藍, 名王新寺。……塔後作佛堂, 莊嚴妙好。'

⁴⁵ Stein 1921, 485–547; Stein 1928, 169–79.

⁴⁶ Jia Yingyi 2002, 141–53.

archaeological evidence shows that the Buddha Hall existed in the Buddhist monasteries of Central Asia before the fifth century.

As mentioned in chapter one, early Chinese documents normally paid considerable attention to the description of the pagoda, a fact reflecting the high status of the pagoda in the Buddhist monasteries at that time. However, no later than the end of the fourth century, the Buddha Hall appeared and played a more and more important role in the monastery. The *Book of Wei* states:

In the first year of the Tianxing Era (398 AD), [...] a five-story pagoda and the Mount *Gr̥dhrakūṭa* Hall and Mount *Sumeru* Hall were built. To these, paintings and decorations were added. In addition, a Lecture Hall, a Meditation Hall and cells for śramaṇas were built, all perfectly furnished and equipped.⁴⁷

This is one of the earliest records about the Buddha Hall in North China. The emergence of the Buddha Hall was so significant that Su Bai regarded it as an important turning point in the course of the evolution of monastery layout.⁴⁸ Since then, all kinds of Buddha Halls gradually appeared in descriptions of Buddhist architecture. For example, the *Biographies of Bhikṣuṇī* states that in the 5th year of the Yuanjia Era (438 AD), the *Qingyuansi Monastery* 青園寺 was enlarged by the imperial consort Pan 潘貴妃 for Ye Shou 業首, and a Buddha Hall was established in the west of the monastery.⁴⁹ The *Biographies of Eminent Monks* also records the name of the Qingyuan Buddha Hall 青園佛殿 and the Hualin Buddha Hall 華林佛殿.⁵⁰ *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks* records that there was a Buddha Hall in the middle compound of *Da'aijingsi Monastery* 大愛敬寺, which was built by the Emperor Wu of Liang.⁵¹ It is worth noting that, in the relevant documents before the fifth century, the records about the Buddha Hall in the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties are far more than those in North China. The reason should be related to the different Buddhist theories prevailing in Southern and Northern China.

Around 494 AD, Emperor Xiaowen of Northern Wei moved the capital to Luoyang, and implemented a sinicization policy. Northern Buddhism abandoned its traditional emphasis on individual practice and ascetic life, and began to explore and promote Buddhist doctrines and theories. Thereafter, the Buddhism of the Northern Dynasties increasingly thrived and different Buddhist schools first appeared. The Buddha Hall became one of the most familiar buildings in Buddhist monasteries of that time. In the record of the *Stories about Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang*, Buddha Halls were mentioned in most of the fifty monasteries. For example, the *Jianzhongsi*

Monastery 建中寺 was built on the residence of eunuch Liu Teng 劉騰. The entrance hall served as the Buddha Hall, while the room in the rear served as the Lecture Hall.⁵² The *Jinglesi Monastery* 景樂寺, built by Prince Yuan Yi 元懌, had a Buddha Hall surrounded by a portico and connected to auxiliary buildings by roofed corridors.⁵³ Another example was the *Yongningsi Monastery*. A great hall was built behind the pagoda, which was a replica of the imperial Taiji Hall in architectural form and standard.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, due to poor preservation, archaeological excavations could not provide enough clues to recover the hall's original structure. The Buddha Hall of the *Siyuan Monastery* and the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* are two more unearthed examples of this type of building in the Northern Dynasties. The former was slightly smaller in size, and had a rectangular plan with dimensions of 21 m by 6 m. Given the distribution of the extant plinths, it might be a seven-bay-wide and two-bay-deep structure.⁵⁵ The excavation of the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* is the latest achievement in Chinese Buddhist archaeology. No trace indicating that a Buddha Hall was placed behind the Pagoda has been found thus far; however, a large hall was discovered and excavated at the north part of the Southeastern Compound during 2011–12.⁵⁶ Remains of another hall have also been identified at a corresponding location in the Southwestern Compound. The hall in the Southeastern Compound had a rectangular ground plan with dimensions of 36.6 m by 23.4 m. Its underground foundation was made of parallel strips of rammed earth (*tiaoxinghang* 條形夯), the same configuration as the foundation of a portico excavated earlier, while the above-ground platform was made out of a uniform stratum of rammed earth. Judging from the dimensions of the area with parallel grooves, we can provisionally presume that this hall was a seven-bay-wide and three-bay-deep structure. It should also be noted that there were two roofed corridors which connected the hall with the east and west porticoes of the compound. The architectural techniques applied and the layout features have not been found in the earlier unearthed monasteries, but identical techniques and layout can be seen in the Buddhist architecture of the Tang Dynasty and Japanese Nara Period (see Figs 2.15 and 2.17).⁵⁷

Historical documents and pieces of archaeological evidence show that the Buddha Hall occupied an absolutely central position in Buddhist monasteries and played a crucial role in religious practice in the Tang Dynasty. Obviously, by the time Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 described the monastery paintings of the two capitals and other prefectures in the *Record of Famous Paintings of All Dynasties*, the Buddha Hall had already become the main building of a monastery,

⁴⁷ *Wei Shu* 魏書, 3030, '天興元年, ……始作五級佛圖、耆闍崛山及須彌山殿, 加以續飾。別構講堂、禪堂及沙門座, 莫不嚴具焉。'

⁴⁸ Su Bai 1997 a.

⁴⁹ *Biqiuni Zhuan* 比丘尼傳, 940.

⁵⁰ *Gaoseng Zhuan* 高僧傳, 366, 417.

⁵¹ *Gaoseng Zhuan* 高僧傳, 427.

⁵² *Luoyang Qielan Ji* 洛陽伽藍記, 1002.

⁵³ *Luoyang Qielan Ji* 洛陽伽藍記, 1003.

⁵⁴ *Luoyang Qielan Ji* 洛陽伽藍記, 1000.

⁵⁵ Museum of Datong City 2007.

⁵⁶ Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Institute of Cultural Relics of Hebei Province 2013 b.

⁵⁷ Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Institute of Cultural Relics of Hebei Province 2013 a.

in sharp contrast with previous records that normally focused on the pagoda.⁵⁸ With the passage of time, the scale and size of the Buddha Hall expanded constantly. The *Essential Documents and Regulations of the Tang* states:

There are innumerable Buddhist monasteries in the world. Any hall of a monastery is twice as large as a palace of your Majesty. It is excessively splendid and extravagant!⁵⁹

Despite probable exaggerations, this record also gives us a glimpse of the constantly enhanced status of the Buddha Hall.

Alongside the numerous visual images existing in the wall paintings found in Dunhuang (see Figs 5.4 and 5.5), the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences excavated several halls in the *Ximingsi* and *Qinglongsi* monasteries. The excavation of the *Ximingsi Monastery* was limited to one compound in the east part of the monastery, where three halls were unearthed. Due to poor preservation, specific architectural forms and bay structures could not be reconstructed. Nevertheless, conclusive evidence shows that the compound was surrounded by a portico, and the halls were connected with it by ramps set on both sides of the halls.⁶⁰ *Qinglongsi Monastery* was the successor of the *Linggansi Monastery* of the Sui. Only two adjacent compounds were disclosed. Unearthed remains were classified into two stages, and the pagoda and the early hall in the Western Compound were regarded as the ruins of *Linggansi Monastery*.⁶¹ Except for the early Pagoda, the main buildings of the monastery, including the Buddha Halls in the Western and Eastern Compounds, were rebuilt several times during the Tang Dynasty, while the Pagoda and the corresponding Middle Gate of *Qinglongsi Monastery* were abandoned completely. This is also circumstantial evidence to indicate the decline of the pagoda's status. In contrast, the Buddha Hall had become an essential building within a Buddhist monastery.

The foundation of the Hall in the Eastern Compound is well preserved. It had an almost square ground plan 28 m long. Judging from the distribution of plinths, it was a five-bay-wide and five-bay-deep structure. Despite the fact that the early Hall was initially built during the Sui Dynasty, the arrangement inside might be dated after the middle of the eighth century, since it had a close relationship with Tantric Buddhism. Examining the Tantric Hall in Japan, contemporary architecture and paintings of China, Yang Hongxun restored the early Hall in the Eastern Compound in the *Qinglongsi Monastery* (Fig. 6.14).⁶² The late Hall in the Eastern Compound was rebuilt after Emperor Wu

of Tang destroyed Buddhism throughout the country in 845 AD. Compared with the early Hall, the late one was slightly smaller in scale and size. The rectangular ground plan measured 28.75 m by 21.75 m, and the traces of plinths showed that the structure was five bays wide and four bays deep. There was a platform in front of the Hall, and two ramps connected it with the surrounding portico. A square altar was built at the center of the Hall. Modeled on the contemporary Buddha Hall of the *Foguangsi Monastery* in Mount Wutai 五臺山佛光寺, the late Hall of the *Qinglongsi Monastery* was also restored (Fig. 6.15).⁶³

Following the eastward spread of Buddhism, Buddhist architecture was introduced first to the Korean Peninsula, and then to Japan. As mentioned in the above two chapters, it appears that all the early monasteries, those of the Goguryeo and the Baekje Kingdoms on the Korean Peninsula, or those of the Japanese Archipelago in the same period, had a Buddha Hall, although the focus of the whole monastery was still the Pagoda. However, from the mid-seventh century, almost all the monasteries shifted their focus to the Buddha Hall: the central status of the Pagoda, which was formerly the most important building in the monastery, was replaced by that of the Buddha Hall. McCallum, commenting on the structures and significance of Buddhist monasteries in this period, remarked that a monastery could exist without a pagoda, but not without a Buddha Hall. It is in this sense that the Buddha Hall might be said to have become the most important building.⁶⁴

Several Japanese monasteries vividly re-enact the process in which the crucial role of the pagoda was taken over by that of the Golden Hall. For example, the *Original Anō-haiji Monastery* 初建穴太寺 and the *Original Hōryūji Monastery* 初建法隆寺 had the same layout as the *Shitennōji Monastery* (see Figures. 4.26, 4.27), i.e. the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' layout. However, the reconstructed *Anōji* and *Hōryūji* monasteries arranged the Pagoda and the Golden Hall side by side, which reflected the equal status of the two structures (see Fig. 4.31).⁶⁵ The *Kawaradera Monastery*, meanwhile, established a central Golden Hall behind the side-by-side Pagoda and Hall (see Fig. 4.36), suggesting that the status of the Golden Hall had outshined that of the Pagoda after the mid-seventh century. Another case in point was the evolution of the *Kudara Ōdera Monastery*, the *Monmu Daikandaiji Monastery* and the *Daianji Monastery*. On the basis of recent excavations and related documents in *Nihon Shoki* and *Daianji Engi*, it is believed that these three monasteries had an explicit consecutive relationship.⁶⁶ Properly speaking, the *Kudara Ōdera Monastery* was the predecessor of *Daikandaiji Monastery* before the capital was moved to Fujiwarakyō in the late seventh century, while the *Daianji Monastery* was the successor of the

⁵⁸ *Lidai Minghua Ji* 歷代名畫記, 60–75.

⁵⁹ *Tang Huiyao* 唐會要, 851, '今天下佛寺, 蓋無其數。一寺堂殿, 倍陛下一宮。壯麗甚矣, 用度過矣。'

⁶⁰ An Jiayao 2000.

⁶¹ Xi'an Tang City Team, IA, CASS 1989.

⁶² Yang Hongxun 1984.

⁶³ Yang Hongxun 1984.

⁶⁴ McCallum 2009, 62.

⁶⁵ The layout of the Original and the Reconstructed Anō-haiji Monastery see also McCallum 2009, 193, fig. 3.22b.

⁶⁶ Ozawa Tsuyoshi 2005, 166–73.

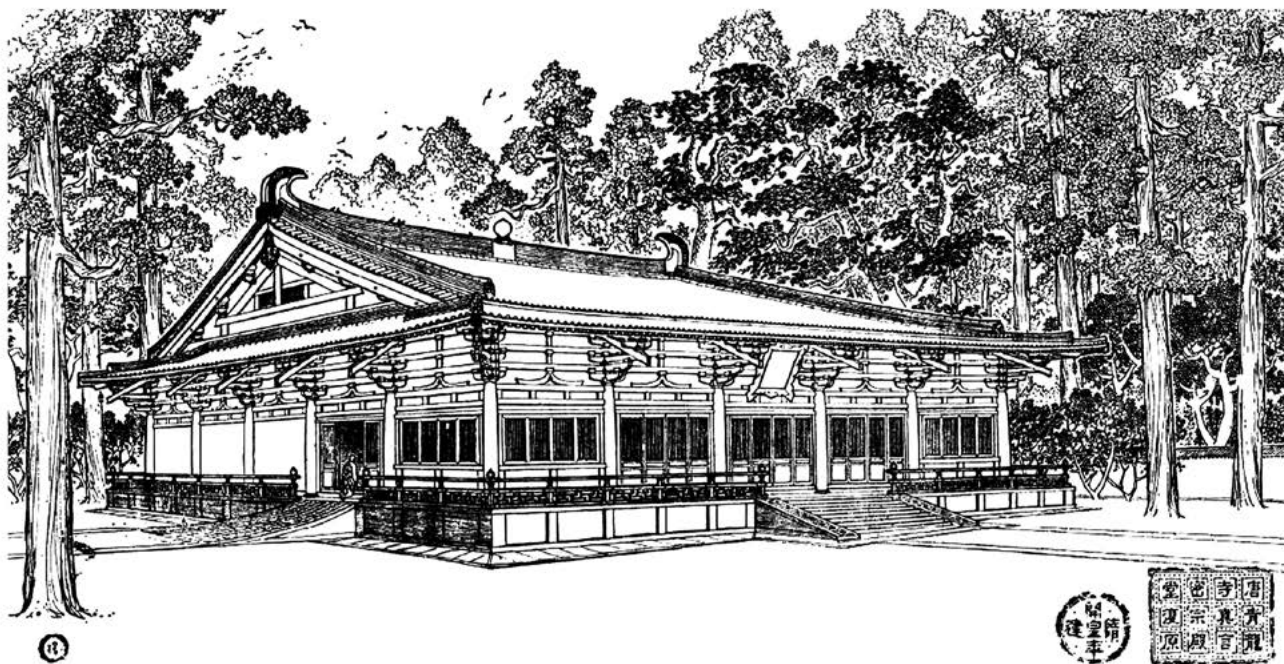


Fig. 6.14: Reconstructed early Hall of the Eastern Compound, *Qinglongsi Monastery* in Chang'an (Modified from: Yang Hongxun 1984, 388, fig. 2-3).

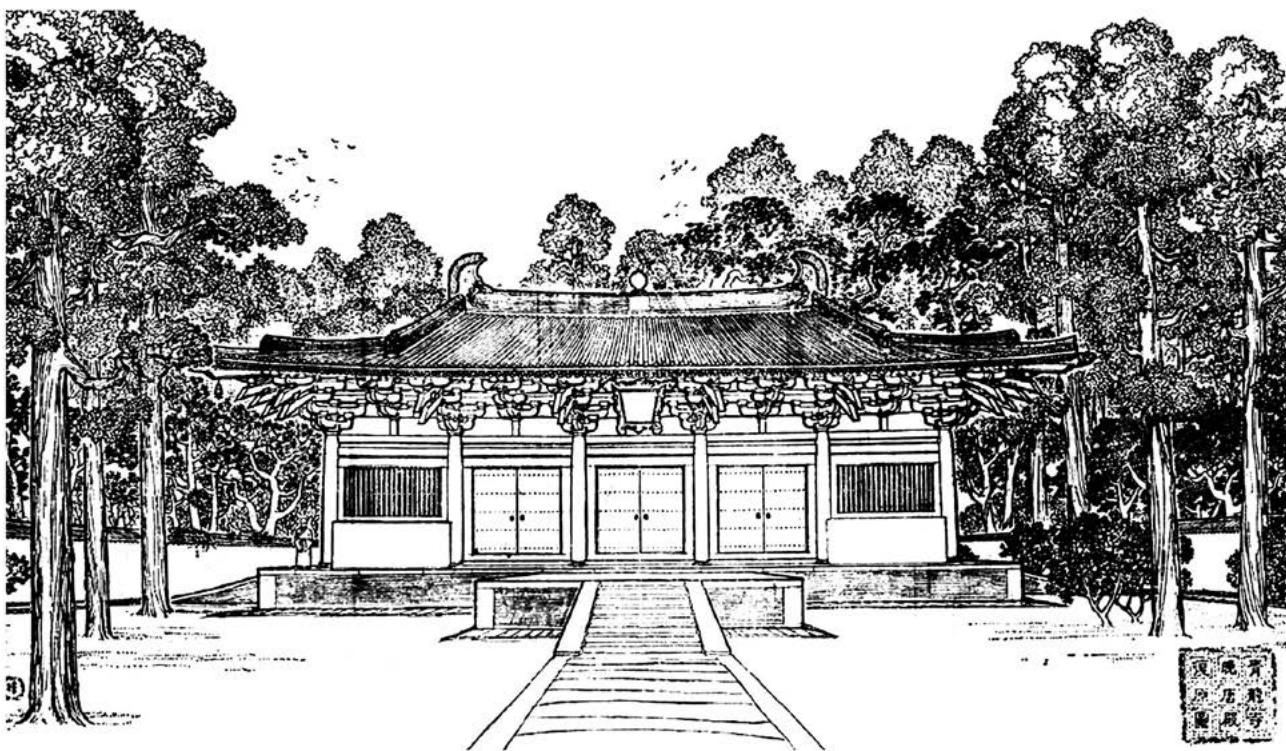


Fig. 6.15: Reconstructed late Hall of the Eastern Compound, *Qinglongsi Monastery* in Chang'an (Modified from: Yang Hongxun 1984, 394, fig. 7-6).

Daikandaiji Monastery after the capital was moved to Nara at the very end of the seventh century. As for their monastery layouts, the *Kudara Ōdera Monastery* presented a 'One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side' layout, while the *Daikandaiji Monastery* had another Hall at the center of the monastery, instead of the Hall opposite the Pagoda, thus forming a plan similar to the 'One Pagoda and One Hall Side by Side with a Central Hall Behind' layout. As

for the *Daijōji Monastery*, the Golden Hall occupied the absolute center of the monastery, and twin smaller pagodas were erected symmetrically outside the main compound, which played a symbolic role but did not have any actual function in ceremonial practices (Fig. 6.16). The two cases mentioned above could also be regarded as an epitome of the evolution of monastery layouts in Japan from the end of the sixth to the early eighth century.

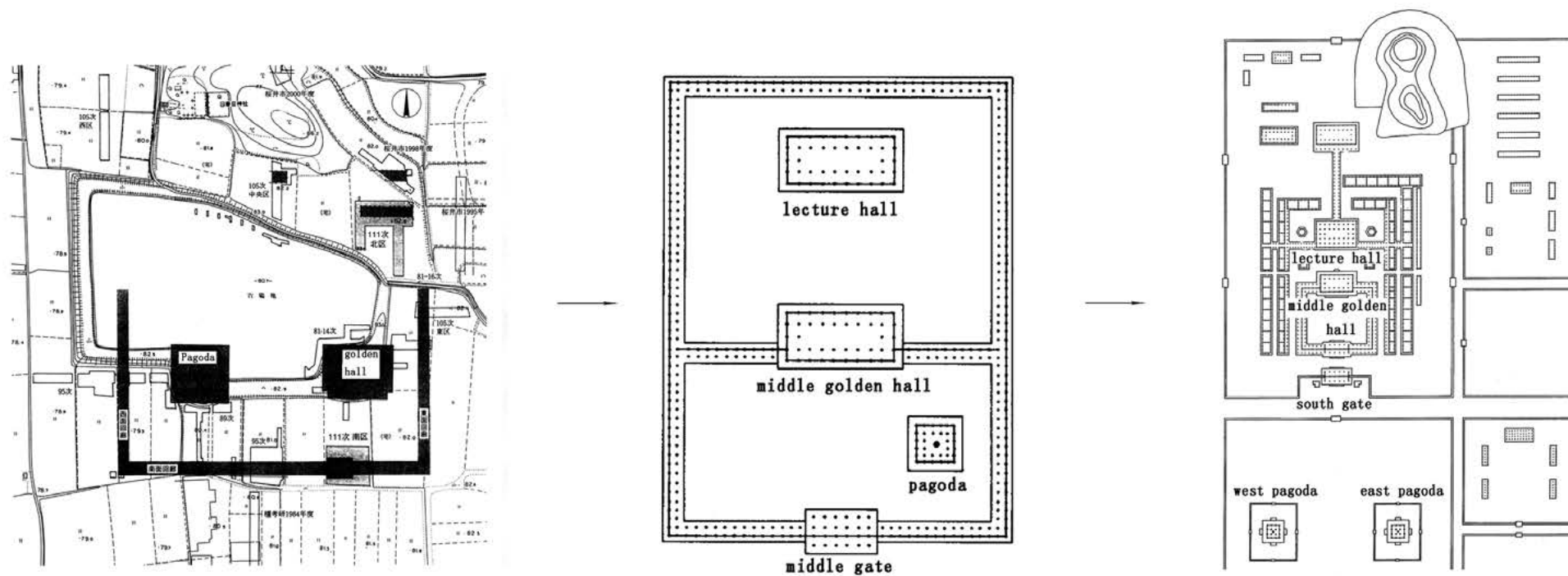


Fig. 6.16: The evolution of monastery layout from the *Kudara Ōdera*, through the *Daikandaiji* to the *Daianji* (Modified from: Figs 4.30, 4.39 and 4.47).

6.3. The Relationship between Multi-compound Monastery Layout and Urban Layout in East Asia

Apart from the pagoda and the Buddha Hall, another crucial element that can be examined to trace the development of the Buddhist monastery layout is the Compound. Strictly speaking, 'compound' should be classified as a term to describe space, since it does not refer to any specific building. As a space accommodating a variety of buildings or groups of buildings, the Compound played an important role in the development of the Buddhist monastery. In order to explore why and how the multi-compound monastery layout became prevalent after the seventh century, it is of crucial importance to consider this problem in the larger context of urban planning.

To understand the development of urban planning in the capital city in medieval China, North Yecheng 鄴北城, the capital of the Cao Wei Kingdom (曹魏 220–265 AD), is the key case. The site of Yecheng is located approximately 20 km southwest of Linzhang County, Hebei Province. It was founded during the Spring and Autumn period (770–221 BC), and became the seat of the local government of Ye County and Wei Prefecture during the Qin and Han Dynasties. In the late Eastern Han, Yecheng was occupied by Cao Cao (曹操 155–220 AD) and served as the capital of the Wei Kingdom. Novel and massive construction projects were carried out under the instruction of Cao Cao. Subsequently, Yecheng was established as one of the five capitals of the Cao Wei Empire during the Three Kingdoms period (220–265 AD). After that it was in turn the capital of the Later Zhao (335–350 AD), the Ran Wei (350–352 AD), the Former Yan (357–370 AD) during the Sixteen Kingdoms period, and of the Eastern Wei (534–550 AD) and Northern Qi (550–557 AD) during the Northern Dynasties. In China, Yecheng was known as an 'ancient capital of six dynasties'.

Since 1983, the Ye City Archaeological Team, in collaboration with the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics, has uninterruptedly surveyed and excavated the site of Yecheng. Several decades of archaeological excavation revealed that North Yecheng had quite a different urban layout compared with other ancient Chinese capitals, such as Chang'an of the Western Han and Luoyang of the Eastern Han. The most remarkable features of North Yecheng were the creation of the single-court system, the symmetrical disposition of the whole city around the central axis, and the orderly division of sub-areas according to their respective functions (Fig. 6.17).⁶⁷ The latter might be regarded as the origin of the grid pattern in urban layout. As a milestone in the historical development of China's ancient capitals, the design of North Yecheng was also adopted in the planning of capitals after the third century, and heavily influenced the planning and construction of cities in ancient China, and the rest of East Asia.⁶⁸

During the Cao Wei and West Jin periods (220–316 AD), Luoyang was located on the same area as it was during the Eastern Han. Learning from the experience of North Yecheng, Luoyang had an urban layout, partially altered. After the Northern Wei moved its capital to Luoyang at the end of the fifth century, the city experienced a full-scale reconstruction. Except for the adoption of the single-court system, the most significant event in the development of ancient capitals was the establishment of a perfect grid plan throughout the whole city. According to historical documents, an outer wall was built around the inner city of Luoyang in the second year of the Jingming Era (501 AD). Between the inner and outer walls, 320 square wards were placed in an orderly arrangement.⁶⁹ Since the 1950s, the Archaeological Team of Han-Wei Luoyang City, the Institute of Archaeology, has been working there uninterruptedly. The range of the outer city and the distribution of the wards have almost been identified (Fig. 6.18).⁷⁰ What is noteworthy is the fact that the *Stories about Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang* not only recorded the range and number of wards, but also the names and locations of many wards. What is also important is the fact that the description of the Buddhist monasteries in this book was in accordance with the sequence of wards, which implies that the construction of a Buddhist monastery and the choice of its position strictly complied with the general layout of the city.⁷¹

The Northern Wei, which unified north China for nearly 140 years, split into Eastern and Western Wei in 534. The Eastern Wei moved its capital from Luoyang to Yecheng, followed by the majority of the population. Since the dilapidated North Yecheng was overcrowded, a new city, south of the former one, was built and called South Yecheng. In 550, after Emperor Xiaojing of the Eastern Wei was ousted by Gao Yang, who established the Northern Qi Dynasty (550–577 AD), Yecheng still served as the capital. According to historical documents, the construction of South Yecheng was completed in the first year of the Xinghe Era (537 AD).⁷² Besides inheriting the traditional layout of North Yecheng, the city plan of South Yecheng also imitated that of the contemporary Luoyang.⁷³ Archaeological surveys and excavations demonstrate that South Yecheng used to have a clear north-south axis, and the intersecting streets were divided into a grid plan.⁷⁴ At the same time, recent excavations have provided more and more clues to the distribution of the wards in the outer city of South Yecheng. It is believed that the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* was located next to the

⁶⁷ Yecheng Archaeological Team of IA, CASS and Provincial Institute of Archaeology of Hebei 1990; Xu Guangji 1993.

⁶⁸ Editorial board of Chinese Encyclopedia 1986, 605.

⁶⁹ *Wei Shu* 魏書, 194, '(景明)二年……九月辛酉，發畿內夫五萬人築京師三百二十三坊，四旬而罷。' Comparing this with related records of the same event in different documents, it seems that the total of 323 wards might be an erroneous transcription of 320 wards; see note 4 of the same volume, p. 216.

⁷⁰ Luoyang Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, Academia Sinica 1973; Wang Zhongshu 1982.

⁷¹ Su Bai (Shu Peh) 1978 a.

⁷² *Wei Shu* 魏書, 303.

⁷³ *Wei Shu* 魏書, 1862.

⁷⁴ Yecheng City Archaeological Team, IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 1997.

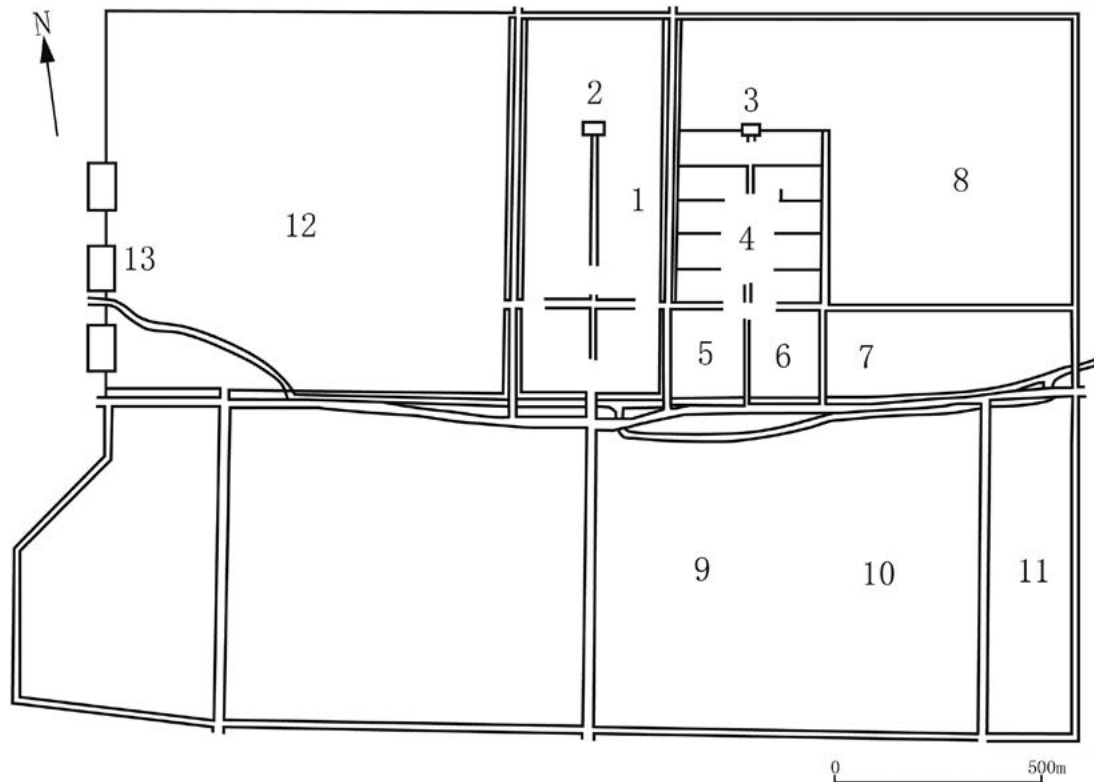


Fig. 6.17: Sketch plan of North Yecheng, from the Cao Wei to the Sixteen Kingdoms period (Modified from: Xu Guangji 1993, 424, fig. 2).



Fig. 6.18: Sketch plan of Luoyang City, Northern Wei (Modified from: Wang Zhongshu 1982, 511, fig. 5).

north–south axis of the whole city, in the third column of wards south of *Zhumingmen Gate*, which was the south gate of South Yecheng.⁷⁵

Several decades ago, Chen Yinqe 陳寅恪 pointed out that the planning of Chang'an inherited the tradition of Luoyang and South Yecheng. One of the most important pieces of evidence was that many administrators and members in charge of planning and constructing the Sui Daxing City and the Tang Chang'an City, like Gao Jiong 高顗, Liu Long 劉龍 and Gao Yi 高彖, were all members of the royal family or former officials of Northern Qi, who had lived in Yecheng for a long time.⁷⁶ Thus, the most popular explanation remains that South Yecheng inherited the essence of the layout of North Yecheng and Luoyang, while at the same time it was the direct prototype of capital planning during the Sui and Tang Dynasties.⁷⁷

Daxing City, the most representative ancient Chinese capital, was built by Emperor Wen of Sui in 582 AD; it was renamed Chang'an during the Tang Dynasty. The urban planning of Tang Chang'an was in a strict grid pattern along the north–south axis, consisting of the Palace City, the Imperial City and the Outer City; it covered an area of 83.12 km², measuring 9,727 m from east to west and 8,651.7 m from north to south, and was divided into 108 rectangular wards and two marketplaces.⁷⁸ All the wards were transverse rectangles in a plan of three sizes, but all surrounded by a rammed earth wall. The smallest wards, measuring 500–590 m by 558–700 m, were located south of the Imperial City, on both sides of the Central Avenue. The largest wards, 838 m by 1,115 m, were placed east and west of the Palace City and the Imperial City. A standard ward used to be divided into four quadrants by crossing streets, and small crossing alleys subdivided the four quadrants into sixteen blocks. Thus, there was a large number of enclosed courtyards (Fig. 6.19).

In his masterpiece *Ten Thousand Things*, Ledderose proposed a new theory about the module and mass production in Chinese art. The gist of this theory is that 'the Chinese devised production systems to assemble objects from standardized parts. These parts were prefabricated in great quantity and could be put together quickly in different combinations, creating an extensive variety of units from a limited repertoire of components.'⁷⁹ The system of module and mass production has been used in analyses in various fields of Chinese ancient art, such as the writing system, the production of bronzes, the terra-cotta figures, lacquer, porcelain, architecture, printing and painting. It proved to be effective in exploring the technical and historical evolution in all these fields as well as in identifying the implications of particular makers and of the society at

large. A case in point is the writing system. Ledderose divided the Chinese system of script, which might be the most complex writing system in the world, into five levels according to increasing complexity:

Element	a single brushstroke
Module	a building block or component
Unit	a single character
Series	a coherent text
Mass	all existing characters

By analyzing the evolution of separate levels in the five-tier system, the author illuminated the question of why the Chinese developed a module system at all for their script, and drew the conclusion that 'only with a module system could the Chinese script fulfill its true function: to guarantee the coherence of China's cultural and political traditions. This awesome unity is unsurpassed in world history.'⁸⁰

This theory can also be applied to ancient Chinese cities, especially the capitals of the medieval period. Ledderose has explained the relationship between bracketing, bays, buildings, courtyards, and cities through the module system. Chinese buildings did not stand alone, but were assembled in courtyards enclosed by a wall, within which they were disposed symmetrically according to certain principles. The relation between a single building and a courtyard might be regarded as that of module to unit.⁸¹ Actually, there is another level between the courtyard and the city; in fact, courtyards were assembled into wards, each of which formed one block in the city grid.

The most conspicuous feature of city planning in medieval China is the establishment and continual improvement of the grid pattern. Except for the Palace City and the most important government offices, other buildings and building groups, including official residences, ritual buildings, Buddhist monasteries, marketplaces and average residences were strictly in compliance with the grid pattern. As for a Buddhist monastery, Buddhist architecture and its enclosed compound could also be regarded as module and unit. Regardless of the scope of a monastery, which could be larger or smaller than a ward, the external wall of the ward could not be changed randomly. Archaeological excavations and historical documents show clearly that the Buddhist monastery had already been embedded into the grid pattern since the early sixth century in Luoyang of the Northern Wei. In the Tang Dynasty, the Buddhist monastery in a multi-compound layout was combined perfectly with the frame of regular wards, and became the most popular monastery layout. The convenience and significance of this construction principle is, as Ledderose

⁷⁵ Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of IA, CASS and Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 2010.

⁷⁶ Chen Yinqe 2001, 84.

⁷⁷ Xu Guangji 2002.

⁷⁸ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1984, 572–77.

⁷⁹ Ledderose 2000, 1.

⁸⁰ Ledderose 2000, 10, 23.

⁸¹ Ledderose 2000, 107–17.

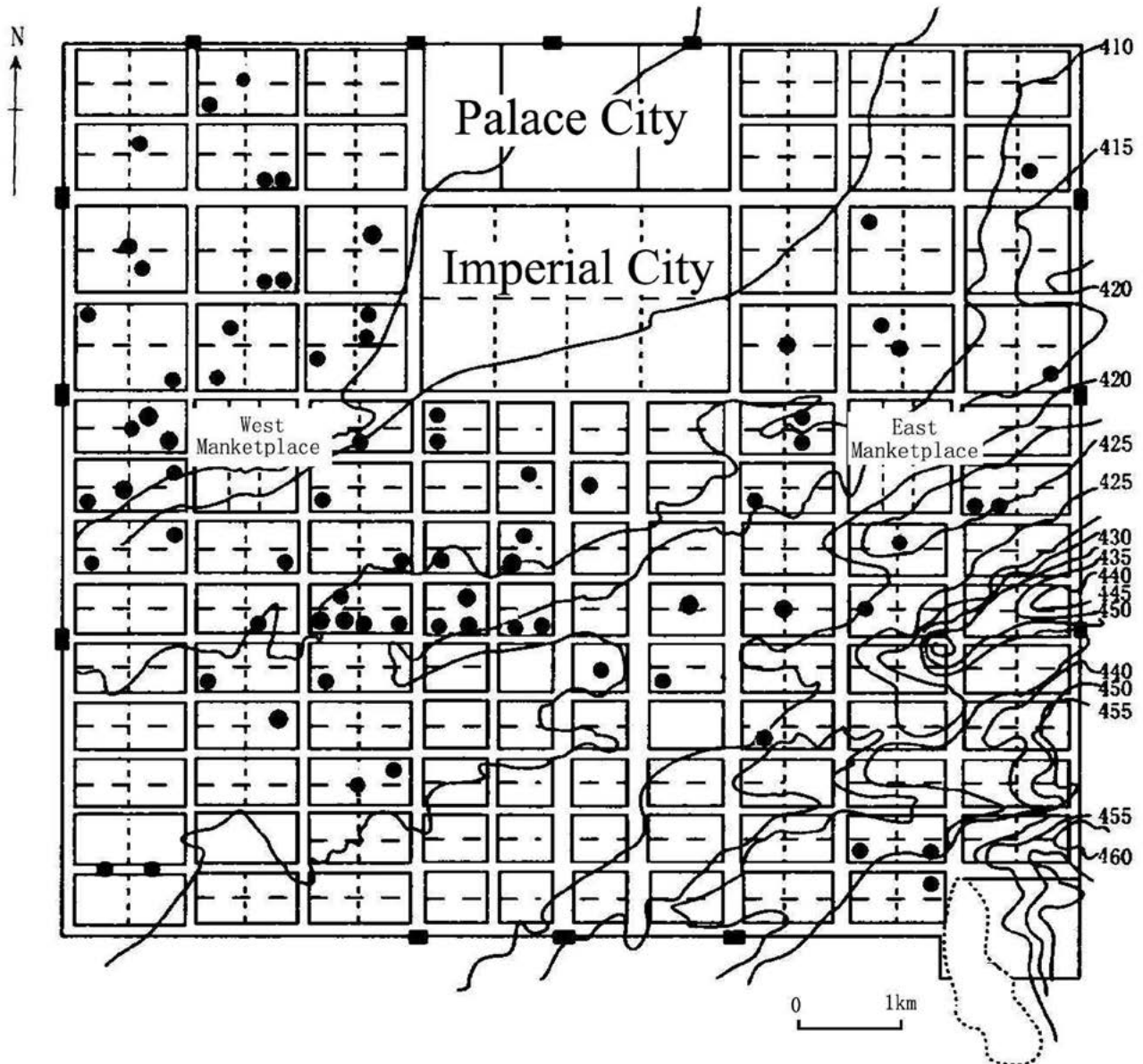


Fig. 6.19: Sketch plan of Chang'an City and the distribution of Buddhist monasteries and nunneries in every Ward, Early Tang Period (Modified from: Gong Guoqiang 2006, 73, fig. 10).

said, that 'each ward contained one or several courtyards, depending on their size and function. Inside were public agencies, monasteries, ancestor Temples, and countless larger and smaller residences. [...] The similarities in the layout of the courtyards made it easy to exchange functions – for instance, to convert a private residence into a monastery or a monastery into a government office.'⁸²

The prosperity of the Tang Empire after the mid-seventh century originated a movement of replicating Chang'an's layout in various cities in East Asia. Classical examples were Fujiwarakyo 藤原京, Heijokyo 平城京 and Heiankyo 平安京 in Japan, Gyeongju 慶州 in Unified Silla and Longquanfu of Balhae 渤海上京龍泉府.⁸³ Just like the urban planning of Tang Chang'an, the distribution and

construction of Buddhist monasteries strictly abided by the grid pattern principle (Figs 6.20–6.22). In the meantime, Buddhist monasteries in a multi-compound layout began to appear and became the prevailing style in East Asia. Therefore, from the perspective of urban planning, it seems plausible to assume that the popularity of the multi-compound monastery had a close relationship with the establishment and improvement of the grid pattern in urban planning.

As a foreign religious belief, since its first introduction into China, Buddhism has always been confronted with mutual adaptation and integration into the ideological system and religious practices of local Chinese traditions. Objectively speaking, in the process of 'the Buddhist conquest of China',⁸⁴ Buddhism underwent a tremendous compromise

⁸² Ledderose 2000, 115.

⁸³ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1984, 622–25; Fu Xinian 1995; Gong Guoqiang 2006, 231–33.

⁸⁴ Zürcher 1972.

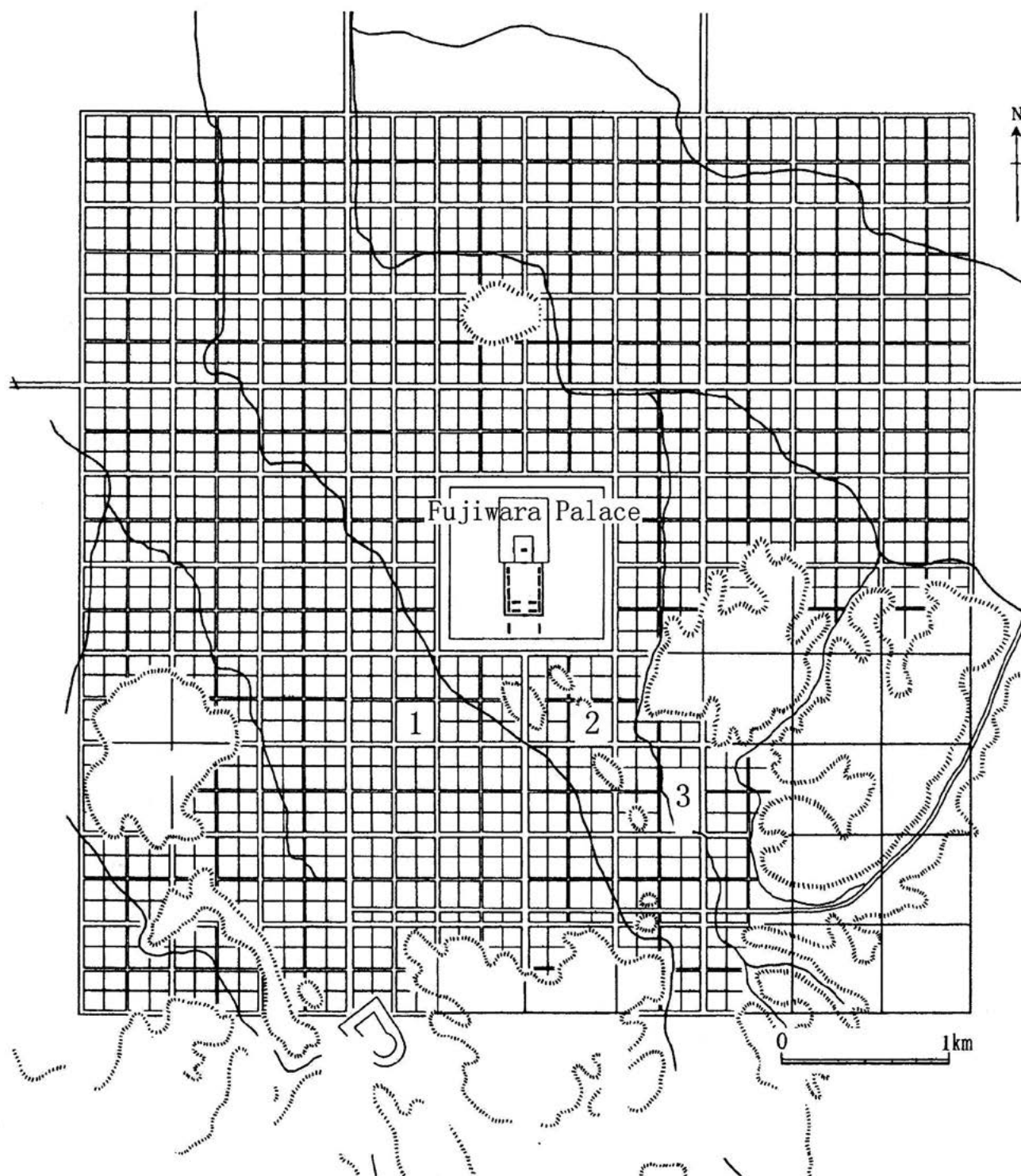


Fig. 6.20: Sketch plan of Fujiwarakyo (Modified from: Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 36).

both in its external manifestation and internal connotation to succeed in adapting to the situation of China.

Buddhist above-ground monasteries and cave-temples centered on the *stupa* were a typical monastery layout of India.⁸⁵ Undoubtedly, the layout of early Chinese

monasteries was strongly influenced by the tradition of ancient India and Central Asia.⁸⁶ However, the multi-story wooden pagoda, the hall and the multi-bay structure, as well as the axial and symmetrical layout, are all representative architectural forms of ancient China. A remarkable feature of early Buddhist State Monasteries in China was that they imitated the architectural form and standard of the

⁸⁵ Sarkar 1993, 79–96. Sketch plan *stūpas* and monasteries at Nagarjunakonda see Sarkar 1993, plate XIII.

⁸⁶ Li Chongfeng 2014.

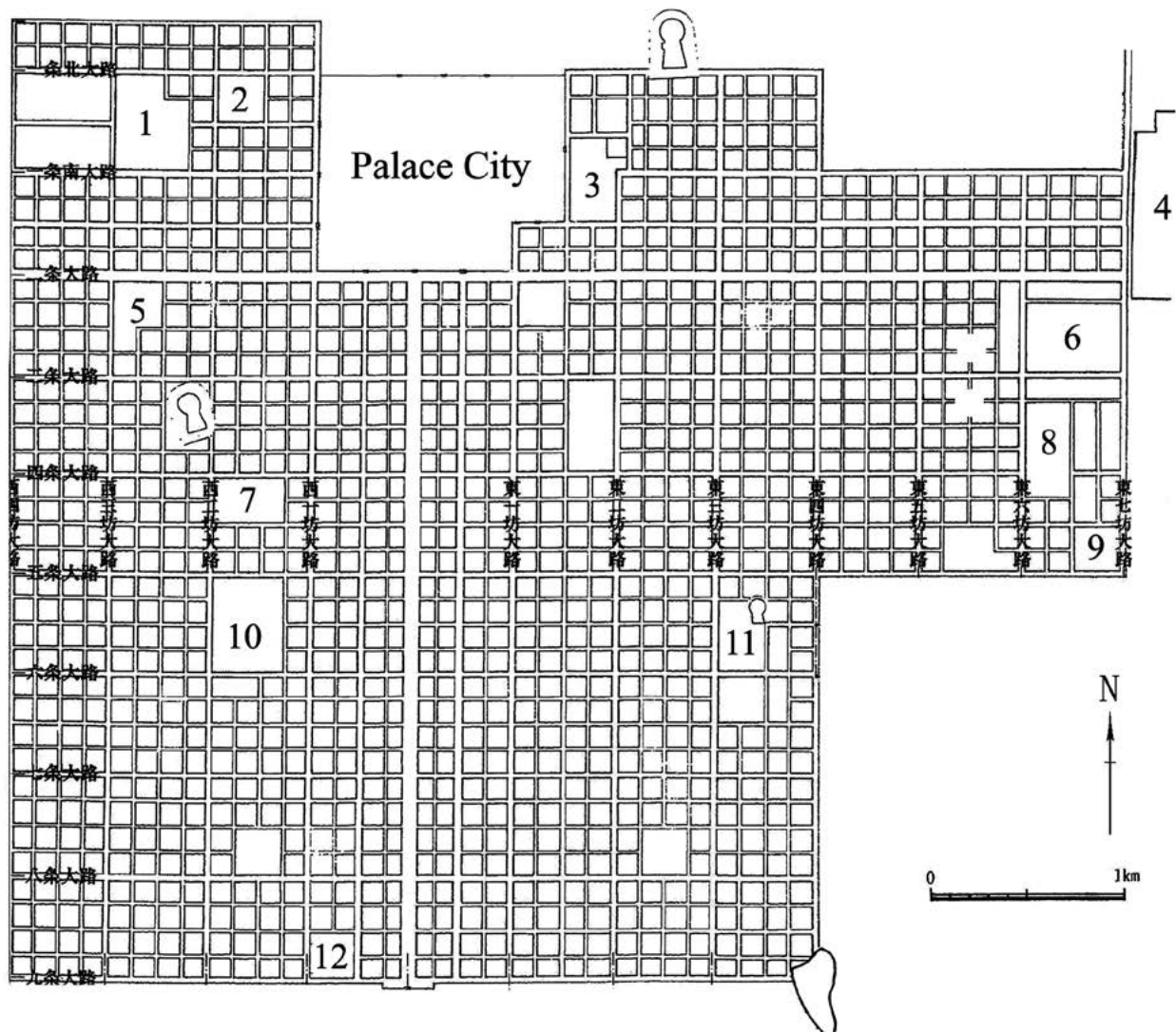


Fig. 6.21: Sketch plan of Heijōkyō and the distribution of important monasteries (Modified from: Nara National Research Institute of Cultural Properties 2002, 54).

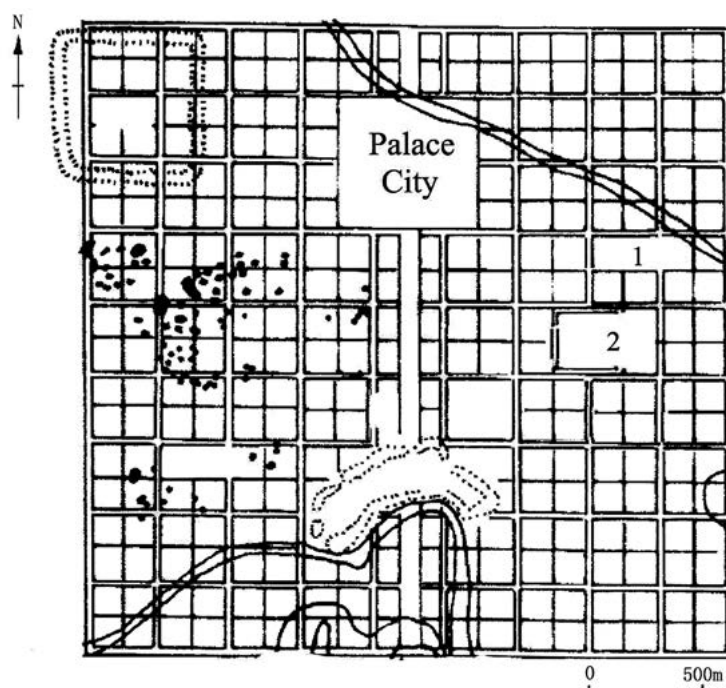


Fig. 6.22: Sketch plan of the capital of Unified Silla (Modified from: Gong Guoqiang 2006, 224, fig. 56).

secular Palace City, which has been confirmed repeatedly by contemporary documents and recent excavations at the *Yongningsi Monastery* and the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery*. From this perspective, the evolution of the monastery layout from the Northern Dynasties to the Tang Dynasty reflected the localization process of Buddhist belief in China. By means of traditional Chinese architectural form, Indian Buddhist thought was able to be visualized and spread widely. Just as Seckel remarked, this process, turning the classical Indian style into a traditional Chinese layout of multiple courtyards, was a 'translation' of foreign concepts into Chinese architectural language.⁸⁷

6.4. The Interaction between Space and Function in the Layout of Buddhist Monasteries

It has been pointed out that, between the fifth and seventh centuries, the Chinese Buddhist monastery underwent a development from the 'Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear' layout to the 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' layout. Correspondingly, the architectural forms and monastery layouts of the Korean Peninsula and Japan were strongly influenced by contemporary Chinese monasteries. Although local characteristics existed in each country, the general evolutionary trend of the monastery layout was consistent.

It would be too simplistic to assume that the evolution of the monastery layout was determined by one specific reason. Actually, a number of factors, including the political situation, economic conditions, cultural traditions, engineering technology and urban planning, would all have a larger or smaller impact on the development of the Buddhist monastery. These are all secular factors, which can be considered as external conditions. However, I would rather emphasize the fact that it was mainly the evolving Buddhist belief that put forward new demands on Buddhist architecture. Given the interaction between space and function, it is reasonable to assume that adjustments in the architectural space were essentially an answer to newly arisen functional needs. Therefore, this book pays more attention to the internal conditions causing these changes. In other words, it is concerned primarily with the role Buddhism itself played in the evolutionary process of monastery layout, and how the space (monastery layout) and function (religious thought and practice) interacted in the period between the fifth and seventh centuries.

As mentioned above, similarities and differences in monastery layout in early medieval China were concentrated mainly in the spatial relationship between the Pagoda, the Buddha Hall and the Compound. However, a deeper reason must have been the functional conversion of relevant buildings and building complexes in Buddhist monasteries. It is appropriate here to briefly review the original meanings and the origin of the pagoda. As the central building of early monasteries, the Chinese pagoda

derived from the prototype of the Indian *stūpa* and *caitya*. Regardless of the *stūpa* being used to hold the relics of Buddha, or the *caitya* being utilized to commemorate the Buddha's meritorious deeds, in their essence, both buildings symbolized Sakyamuni; in essence, the centrality of the *stūpa* reflects the prevalence of the worshipping Sakyamuni. From the beginning of the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Buddhist thought spread swiftly throughout China. A large number of sutras, both *Mahāyāna* and *Hīnayāna* in content, were translated and widely circulated. Together with the spread of Buddhist literature, various Buddhist deities, such as *Amitābha* 阿彌陀, *Maitreya* 彌勒, *Vairocana* 盧舍那 and *Avalokiteśvara* 觀世音, ascended the altar and were worshiped. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that, before the sixth century, worshipping the Sakyamuni was the mainstream of Buddhist faith.

Taking into account the fact that, up to the end of the Tang, most above-ground Buddhist monasteries fell into oblivion and were mercilessly buried as time passed by, the extant cave-temples provide irreplaceable data for the exploration of the layouts and figures worshiped in early monasteries. Prior to this discussion, it should be kept in mind that a consensus has been reached among scholars in the field of Buddhist archaeology: the cave-temples and the above-ground monasteries were similar in content; the central pillar of the caves was a symbol of Indian *stūpa*.⁸⁸ The Kizil Grottoes is one of the earliest and largest rock monasteries in the Xinjiang region, with 236 caves consecutively numbered. As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, the German expedition team of LeCoq and Grünwedel repeatedly investigated the site, and published survey reports and their research achievements.⁸⁹ Several decades later, the archaeological team of Peking University also carried out a series of investigations and studies.⁹⁰ Research data show that early caves of Kizil were cut into the vertical cliff before the fourth century, and the Kizil Grottoes reached its peak in the fifth to sixth centuries. Caves with a central pillar were the most common and distinctive cave type of Kucha.⁹¹ It is worth noting that these caves can be divided into different groups according to their locations at the site, and that each group, which is represented by one or several caves, might have used to be a Buddhist monastery.⁹² Such a fact can be regarded as the transmutation of the above-ground monastery focusing on the pagoda into rock monasteries (Fig. 6.23). Although the statues in these caves were all destroyed, fortunately, a great deal of wall paintings survived on the central pillars and on the walls of the caves. The main themes of these paintings are *jātakas* (*bensheng gushi* 本生故事), *avadānas* (*yinyuan gushi* 因緣故事) and Buddha's biography (*fozhuan gushi* 佛傳故事),

⁸⁷ Seckel 1980, 249–56.

⁸⁸ Education Department of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage 1993, 5, 15.

⁸⁹ Grünwedel 1912, 1–6.

⁹⁰ Department of Archaeology, Peking University and Institute for Cultural Management in Kizil Caves 1997, vol. 1, 1–2.

⁹¹ Su Bai 1996 c, 21–38.

⁹² Wei Zhengzhong (Giuseppe Vignato) 2004; 2013, 22.

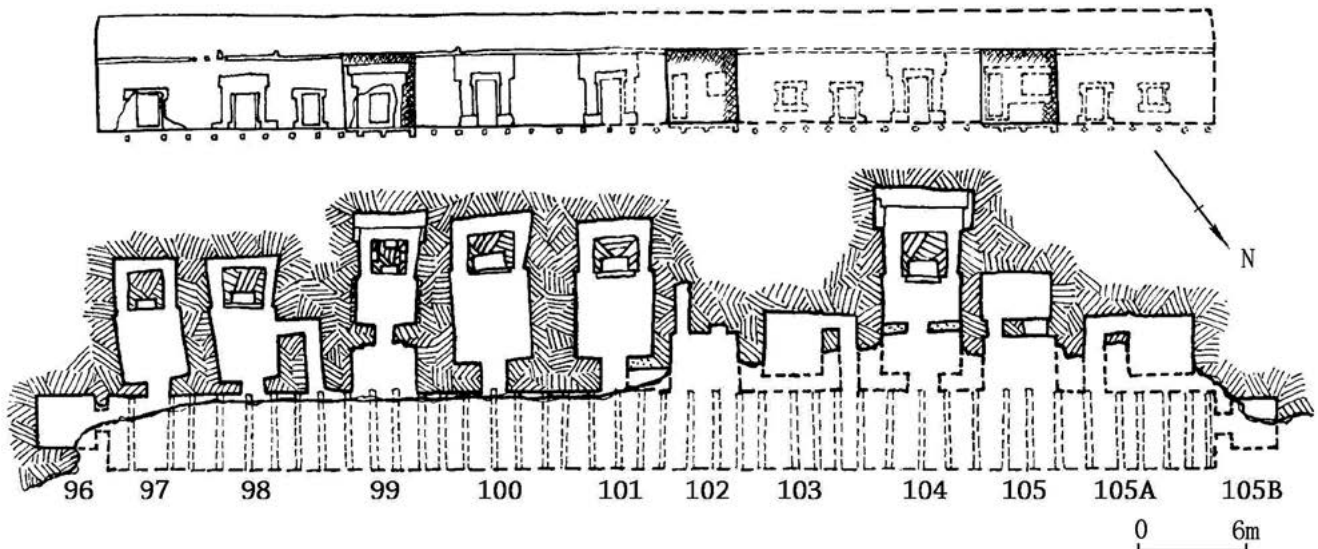


Fig. 6.23: Sketch plan of Caves 96–105B in the Kizil Grottoes (Modified from: Wei Zhengzhong (Giuseppe Vignato) 2013, 22, fig. 17).

which describes distinctive deeds and achievements of Sakyamuni in his previous and last lives.⁹³ Most researchers believe that this is an objective reflection of ‘paying supreme tribute to Sakyamuni’ 唯禮釋迦。⁹⁴ This thought derived from the Indian Buddhist School of *Sarvāstivāda* (*genben shuoyiqieyou bu* 根本說一切有部), which had been extremely popular in ancient Kucha until the seventh century. When Xuanzang 玄奘 went to India by way of Kucha, he mentioned that local monks learned the doctrines of the *Sarvāstivāda* School and complied with the precepts and rituals of India.⁹⁵

The caves with a central pillar still prevailed in cave-temples in Dunhuang and the Hexi Corridor Region 河西走廊地區 during the Sixteen Kingdoms period (317–439 AD). The Grottoes of Tiantishan in Wuwei 武威天梯山石窟, initially built by Juqu Mengxun 沮渠蒙遜, the King of Northern Liang (北涼 397 or 410–439 AD), are supposed to be the famous ‘Liangzhou Grottoes’ recorded in ancient texts. Under the influence of the grottoes of Xinjiang, caves with a central pillar were constructed in Tiantishan, and the sculptural themes represented on the central pillar had a close relation with the Buddha of the Three Ages, i.e. the Buddha’s past, present and future lives, as narrated in sutras.⁹⁶ The periodization of the Grottoes of Tiantishan, based on a comparison with early grottoes of Dunhuang, falls into four phases. The earlier two are dated to the Northern Liang and mid-Northern Wei Period, a period in which caves with a central pillar were the mainstream and occupied the central position on the cliff (Fig. 6.24).⁹⁷

Therefore, Su Bai summarized the features of early cave-temples in the Hexi Region, and pointed out that the caves with a central pillar were the mainstream grotto type. The most important sculptures were Sakyamuni and Bodhisattva *Maitreya*, seated and with ankles crossed, while secondary figures were the Buddha *Maitreya*, Meditating Bodhisattvas and Buddha of the Ten Directions.⁹⁸

After the mid-fifth century, under the direct influence of the Hexi Grottoes, the Yungang Grottoes were carved in Pingcheng, the capital of Northern Wei.⁹⁹ The development of the Yungang Grottoes has been divided into three phases. The first period comprises Caves 16–20, built in 460 by Tanyao in honor of five emperors of Northern Wei. The construction of the second stage is presumed to have begun around 471 and lasted until 494 AD. The construction of these caves was supervised and supported by the imperial family and state dignitaries. In contrast, the caves of the third period, from the end of the fifth century to the early sixth century, were carved under private patronage after the capital of Northern Wei was moved to Luoyang. Apart from ‘the Five Caves of Tanyao’, which were caves peculiar in shape and aimed at commemorating the emperors, the majority of caves were caves with a central pillar, which represented a significant percentage and occupied a striking position among the caves carved before the end of the fifth century. The motifs included Sakyamuni, Maitreya and the Buddha of the Three Ages, as well as the Thousand Buddhas, *jātakas* and Buddha’s biography.¹⁰⁰ After the second half of the fifth century, with the spread of the *Lotus Sutra*, related sculptures became commonly seen in the caves of North China. There are sufficient documents and material evidence to show the intrinsic connection between the three Buddhas and the

⁹³ Ding Mingyi, Ma Shichang and Xiong Xi 1989, vol. 1, 185–222; Ma Shichang 1996, vol. 2, 174–226.

⁹⁴ Education Department of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage 1993, 12.

⁹⁵ *Da Tang Xiyu Ji* 大唐西域記, 48.

⁹⁶ Dunhuang Academy and the Museum of Gansu Province 2000, 127–29.

⁹⁷ Fan Jinshi, Ma Shichang and Guan Youhui 1982, 185–97.

⁹⁸ Su Bai 1986.

⁹⁹ Su Bai 1996 a.

¹⁰⁰ Su Bai 1978 b.

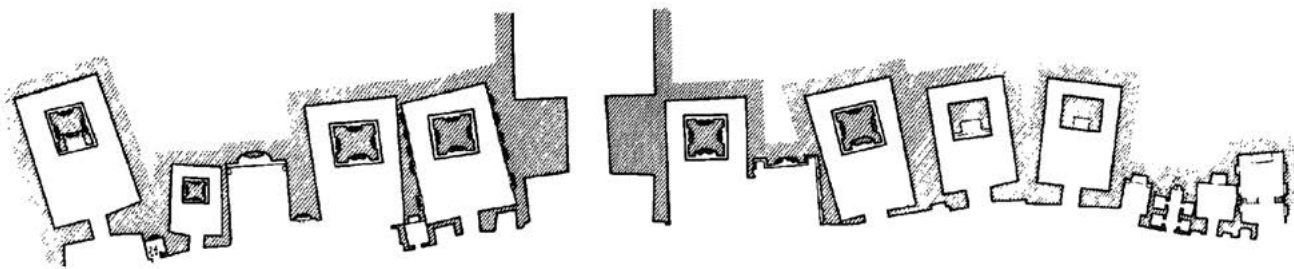


Fig. 6.24: Sketch plan of early caves in the Dunhuang Grottoes (Modified from: Fan Jinshi, Ma Shichang and Guan Youhui 1982, 185, fig. 1)

thought of the *Lotus Sutra*.¹⁰¹ Actually, in spite of the multiplicity of themes in this period, including setting the Buddha of the Three Ages, Sakyamuni and *Prabhūtaratna* 釋迦多寶 sitting side by side, or the emphasis on the merit of building a pagoda in the *Lotus Sutra*, as well as setting the Past Seven Buddhas, *Nirvāṇa* Buddha, *Maitreya Bodhisattva* seated in crossed-ankle pose, *jātaka* stories and the Buddha's biography, the core idea was based on or derived from the original worship of Sakyamuni.

A large number of dedicatory inscriptions on the Buddhist sculptures provide visual evidence to explore the figures worshiped during this period. Statistical analyses of the themes of statuary of the fifth to sixth century indicate that there were three noteworthy characteristics. The first is that the themes of official statues were significantly different from those cast by common people. Secondly, the image of Sakyamuni appeared in the majority of the votive inscriptions honoring the Buddha. And thirdly, despite the fact that *Avalokiteśvara* was the most commonly seen folk statuary, the percentage of Sakyamuni and Maitreya statues made under the auspices of officials or monks and nuns was significantly higher than that for other Buddhist figures.¹⁰² The data also clearly show that, at the end of the Northern Dynasties, Sakyamuni was still one of the most influential worshiped figures, especially for believers of a higher social status.

Another reason why such great importance attached to the pagoda might be the prevalence of meditation practice in North China. Since the time of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period, Buddhism had taken on different trends in South and North China. In the south, Buddhism was very well integrated with traditional Chinese Confucianism and Daoism, and thus gained the support of Chinese intellectuals and elites. In South China, monks and nuns were inclined to explain the Buddhist doctrines to the public in terms of traditional Chinese thought, and thereby they laid the foundation for Chinese Buddhist philosophy. Conversely, Buddhism in North China paid more attention to meditation practice. Normally, famous monks of North China were versed in the profound knowledge and meditation culture, even

though they did not come from the Meditation School.¹⁰³ It is generally believed that, in addition to the purpose of preserving Buddhism, the construction of grottoes on a large scale was closely related with the prevalence of meditation during the Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties.¹⁰⁴

There were countless ways of meditating; however, 'circumambulating the pagoda' 繞塔禮拜 and 'contemplating while entering the pagoda' 入塔觀像 were undoubtedly among the most important methods. Given contemporaneous meditative sutras, it is obvious that the pagoda played a crucial role in the practice of meditation. *The Sutra on the Ocean-like Samādhi of the Visualization of the Buddha* (*Guanfo sanmeihai jing* 觀佛三昧海經), translated by *Buddhabhadra* 佛陀跋陀羅 in the Eastern Jin Period (317–420 AD), in which the purposes and methods of meditation were explained in detail, had great significance for guiding meditation practice. For example, the sutra states that after Sakyamuni entered *Nirvāṇa*, his believers should practice the Path of Meditation. 'Buddha visualization' (*guanfo* 觀佛) was possible only upon entering a pagoda:

Buddha told *Ananda* that currently there was no Buddha after Buddha attained *Nirvāṇa*, and that (believers) should contemplate upon looking at the image of the Buddha. Those who should contemplate upon looking at the image of the Buddha include *bhikṣu*, *bhikṣuṇī*, *upāsaka*, *upāsikā*, the Eight Kinds of Celestial Beings and all sentient beings. If one wanted to contemplate upon looking at the image of the Buddha, one must first enter a pagoda. Then, he/she should clean the ground by daubing it with fine incense mud and earth of tiles. After that, in accordance with one's abilities, incense should be burned and flowers should be scattered to worship the Buddha. One should worship the Buddha with confession and repentance by confessing the sins and evils one has committed.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Tang Yongtong 1997, 292–95, 571–73.

¹⁰⁴ Liu Huida 1978.

¹⁰⁵ *Guanfo Sanmeihai Jing* 觀佛三昧海經, 690, '佛告阿難: 佛滅度後, 現前無佛, 當觀佛像。觀佛像者, 若比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷、天龍八部、一切眾生, 欲觀像者, 先入佛塔, 以好香泥及諸瓦土塗地令淨, 隨其力能, 燒香散花, 供養佛像, 說已過惡, 禮佛懺悔。'

¹⁰¹ Liu Huida 1958.

¹⁰² Hou Xudong 1998, 106–34.

Certain religious rites, such as the confession of and atonement for sins, could also be performed by meditating within a pagoda. By eliminating various sins of their previous and present lives, the believers would ascend to *Tuṣita* Heaven 兜率天.

If a *bhikṣu* violates the *Dharma*, the sheen of the urna becomes dark and cannot be identified. He should enter the pagoda, and contemplate while looking attentively at the glabellum of the Buddha's figure, for one day to three days, sniveling with hands held together, and contemplating the truth wholeheartedly. Then (he) should join the *samgha* to confess his earlier mistakes. This is to erase his sins.

[...] If (the meditator) cannot visualize the characters of the Buddha, he should enter the pagoda to contemplate. While in the pagoda, he should meditate to illuminate his thoughts, wholeheartedly with hands held together, kneeling with one knee and contemplating the truth. After one day to three days, he will not be confused (anymore). After death, (he) will be in *Tuṣita* Heaven.¹⁰⁶

There are six extant *Contemplation Sūtras*, which were translated into Chinese in the early fifth century. Another important work, *The Sūtra on the Visualization of Two Bodhisattvas of Bhaiṣajya-rāja and Bhaiṣajya-samudgata* (*Guan yaowang yaoshang er pusa jing* 觀藥王藥上二菩薩經), refers to the role of the pagoda in meditation practice as well:

(The third method is) practicing meditation hard and staying away from bustling places. [...] One should enter the pagoda to look at the Buddha's image and to worship (the Buddha), achieving Ocean-like *Samādhi* in front of the image.¹⁰⁷

These practice methods mentioned in the Buddhist sūtras, when corroborated by extant grottoes and related images, appear to be historically reliable. It seems plausible to link this reality with the prevalence of the pagoda in North China.

Starting from the end of the fourth century, the Buddha Hall began to play an increasingly important role in Buddhist monasteries. Compared with the pagoda, the function of the Buddha Hall allowed for more diversification, and the figures worshiped inside the Buddha Hall could vary and multiply. According to literary records, there were a considerable number of Buddhist monasteries during the fifth to sixth centuries in which the Buddha Hall could be regarded as the main building. For example, statistics

show that most monasteries recorded by *Stories about Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang* did not have a pagoda.¹⁰⁸ However, such monasteries were normally small or medium-sized, and were in most cases converted from the mansions of princes and ministers. Therefore, their status was far inferior to that of Buddhist State Monasteries, which still centered on the pagoda during this period.

The Buddhism of South China was quite different from that of the northern regions, which attached importance to meditation practice and normally had the pagoda constructed at the center of Buddhist monastery. The Buddhism of South China paid more attention to witty conversations and Buddhist theories, and advocated debates about metaphysics and philosophy. Combined with metaphysics (*xuanxue* 玄學), *Mahāyāna* Buddhism was preached by cultured monks to aristocrats and became extremely popular in the south.¹⁰⁹ Various Buddhist schools kept pace with each other, thus resulting in the worship of multiple objects; consequently, the focus of the monastic architecture began to shift from the early Pagoda to the Buddha Hall.

According to Buddhist literature, the earliest monasteries in a 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' layout were built in South China. The *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks* states:

(Emperor Wu of Liang) set up *Da'ajing Monastery* for Emperor Wen of Taizu along the north stream in Mount Zhong. [...] The pagoda was established to embrace the wonders of the cliffs and groves. By sitting in a contemplative pose, (one could) exhaust the remoteness of forest and springs. The structure of the Buddhist monastery was as exalted as the imperial ancestor temple, and with the magnificent construction and decoration, the monastery was just like the heavenly palace. It extended seven *li* from the middle compound to the front door, with roofed corridors overlapping and eaves side by side. Thirty-six compounds were established by the side, with a pond and a platform all surrounded by eaves. For over one thousand monks, the Four Things (i.e. accouterment, food, bedding and medicine) were offered. The main hall in the middle compound included a sandalwood figure of one *zhang* and eight *chi* in height. [...] Emperor (Wu) also created a figure of one *zhang* and eight *chi* in another hall, called Longyuan Hall. He personally made offerings to (Buddha's figure), and paid homage each time upon entering.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ *Guanfo Sanmeihai Jing* 觀佛三昧海經, 655–56, '若比丘犯不如罪, 觀白毫光, 闇黑不現。應當入塔, 觀像眉間。一日至三日, 合掌諦觀。然後入僧, 說前罪事, 此名滅罪。……若坐不見, 當入塔觀。入塔觀時, 亦當作此諸光明想。至心合掌, 胡跪諦觀。一日至三日, 心不錯亂。命終之後, 生兜率天。'

¹⁰⁷ *Foshuo Guan Yaowang Yaoshang Er Pusa Jing* 佛說觀藥王藥上二菩薩經, 663, '深修禪定, 樂遠離行。……即應入塔觀像禮拜, 於像前得觀佛三昧海。'

¹⁰⁸ Gong Guoqiang 2006, 122.

¹⁰⁹ Pletcher 2011, 92.

¹¹⁰ *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* 續高僧傳, 427, '為太祖文皇帝于鐘山北澗建大愛敬寺。……創塔包岩壑之奇, 宴坐盡林泉之邃, 結構伽藍同尊園寢, 經營雕麗奄若天宮。中院之去大門, 延袤七里, 廊廡相架簷雷臨屬。旁置三十六院, 皆設池台周宇環繞。千有餘僧四事供給。中院正殿有栴檀像, 舉高丈八。……相好端嚴色相超挺, 殆由神造屢感徵跡。帝又于寺中龍淵別殿, 造金銅像舉高丈八, 躬伸供養每入頂禮。'

Another document further points out the functional differences of various compounds and halls. The *Records of the Miraculous Responses to the Manifestations of the Vinyana* states:

The *Hedong Monastery* of Jingzhou was quite large. [...] Since the Jin, Song, Qi, Liang and Chen Dynasties, there had been tens of thousands of monks. [...] The pagoda in front of the hall was established by (Liu) Yiji, Qiao King of the Song Dynasty, and statues were molded inside. The *Maitreya* of the east hall should have been created by the craftsmen of the thirty-three heavens. There were many golden-bronze statues in the west hall, treasure curtains, flying fairies, beaded canopies and ornate decorations should all have been created by the craftsmen of the heaven of the Four Heavenly Kings. [...] The monastery had five rows of chambers, each row seven bays wide. There were ten other compounds varying in size; both the compounds of *pratyutpanna* and *vaipulya* were the most gorgeous.¹¹¹

These documents not only help us to understand the origin of the 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' layout in South China, but also reveal that there were different votive objects in various halls. What is particularly important is that they record the fact that some compounds were named after Buddhist concepts, such as *pratyutpanna* 般舟 and *vaipulya* 方等. Despite the lack of unearthed evidence, on the basis of the above documents, Chinese researchers are inclined to believe that the 'Multi-compound and Multi-hall' layout derived from South China.¹¹²

At the end of the fifth century, after the sinicization policies of Emperor Xiaowen were completely implemented, varieties of Buddhist thought became active, and many Buddhist schools appeared in North China. With the transfer of the capital to Yecheng, this city replaced Luoyang as the political and religious center of North China.¹¹³ According to Buddhist documents, Yecheng's Buddhism reached its peak in the mid-sixth century. The *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks* speaks highly of the achievement of Yecheng's Buddhism. It comments that since the capital was moved there, famous monks throughout the country visited Yecheng in succession. Buddhist assemblies were constantly held to interpret Buddhist doctrines. The most celebrated masters of the time attended the assemblies and discussed or debated together, while regular visitors numbered more than ten thousand.¹¹⁴ In Yecheng's heyday, various Buddhist Schools flourished here. Many Buddhist doctrines, such as the *Abhidharma* (*pitan* 毗曇) and *Satyasiddhi* (*chengshi* 成實) of *Hīnayāna*, *Nirvāṇa* (*niepan* 涅槃), *Prajñā* (*bore* 般

若), *Lotus* (*fahua* 法華), *Treatise on the Bhumis* (*dilun* 地論), *Avatamsaka* (*huayan* 華嚴), *Dhyāna* (*chan* 禪), *Vinaya* (*lü* 律) and Pure Land (*jingtu* 淨土) of *Mahāyāna*, spread widely in the territory of Northern Qi.¹¹⁵

It is worth noting that sectarianism was not a serious issue at that time, and so different Buddhist Schools coexisted and shared ideas with each other. Huiguang 慧光, the most prominent leader of the Buddhist community, also known as the forerunner of the *Treatise on the Bhumis* 地論, *Avatamsaka* 華嚴 and *Vinaya* 律 Schools, as well as his disciples Daoping 道憑, Fashang 法上, Lingyu 靈裕 and Huiyuan 慧遠, were well versed in various Buddhist doctrines of the time. Other famous monks, such as Huisong 慧嵩, the saint of *Abhidharma* 毗曇, *Bodhidharma* 菩提達磨 and Huike 慧可, the founders of the *Dhyāna* Sect (*chanzong* 禪宗), Huiwen 慧文 and Huisi 慧思, the founders of the Tian Tai Sect (*tiantaizong* 天台宗), Xingxing 信行 and Sengyong 僧邕, the founders of the Teaching of Three Levels (*sanjiejiao* 三階教), sooner or later were all engaged in missionary activities in Yecheng or in the Northern Qi.¹¹⁶

The diversification of Buddhist thought can also be reflected by the translated Buddhist scriptures and the extant stone inscriptions carved in the caves or on rock cliffs. Statistics indicate that a total of 40 sutras (163 volumes) were translated by Indian monks or *Brahmin* during the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi.¹¹⁷ What is particularly important is the fact that many stone inscriptions on cave walls in the vicinity of Yecheng are well preserved, and therefore they offer a glimpse of the prevalence of different Buddhist schools in late Northern Dynasties.¹¹⁸

In accordance with the flourishing Buddhist Schools, the diversity of objects worshiped was gradually revealed in the themes of cave-temples and freestanding statues. After the sixth century, despite the fact that the caves with a central pillar, the symbol of a *stūpa*, still enjoyed an important status in the grottoes patronized by the royal family, such as Caves 1, 3 and 4 in Gongxian Grottoes 鞏縣石窟, Caves 1 and 2 in South Xiangtang Mount Grottoes 南響堂山石窟, and the North and South Caves in the North Xiangtang Mount Grottoes 北響堂山石窟, it cannot be denied that the Cave of the Buddha Hall (*fodianku* 佛殿窟), which is on a square plan with three niches, or altars, on three walls, imitating the Buddha Hall in the above-ground monasteries, had already become the prevalent style in cave-temples.¹¹⁹ Given the motifs of the stone inscriptions and the main and subordinate statues worshiped in these cave-temples, undoubtedly the thought of various schools was already being fully presented in the grottoes of the late sixth century.¹²⁰

¹¹¹ Lüxiang Gantong Zhuan 律相感通傳, 877–78, '荊州河東寺者。此寺甚大。……自晉宋齊梁陳代，僧徒常有數萬人。……殿前塔，宋譙王義季所造，塔內塑像。及東殿中彌勒像，並是忉利天工所造。西殿中多金銅像，寶帳飛仙珠幡華珮，並是四天王天人所造。……寺房五重，并皆七架，別院大小合有十所，般舟、方等二院，庄严最胜。'

¹¹² Li Yuqun 2009; He Liqun 2010.

¹¹³ He Liqun 2007.

¹¹⁴ Xu Gaoseng Zhuan 續高僧傳, 548.

¹¹⁵ He Liqun 2007.

¹¹⁶ He Liqun 2007.

¹¹⁷ He Liqun 2014.

¹¹⁸ Li Yuqun 1997; He Liqun 2008.

¹¹⁹ Li Yuqun 2003, 157–207.

¹²⁰ Ding Mingyi 1988.

Table 6.1: Buddhism in Yecheng during the Late Northern Dynasties

Buddhist School	Title of Stone Scripture	Translator	Site	Representative Monks
Treatise on the <i>Bhumis</i> 地論	Shi Di Jing Lun 十地經論	<i>Bodhiruci</i> 菩提流支	Wahuanggong 渦皇宮	Huiguang 慧光 Sengfan 僧範 Daoping 道憑 Fashang 法上
<i>Avatamsaka</i> 華嚴	Da Fang Guang fo huaYan Jing 大方廣佛華嚴經	<i>Buddhabhadra</i> 佛跋跋陀羅	S.Xiangtang Mount 南響堂山 Xiangquan si 香泉寺 Dazhusheng Cave 大住聖窟 Xiaonanhai 小南海	Sengfan 僧範 Huishun 慧順 Tanyan 曇衍 Tanzhun 曇遵 Tanqian 曇遷 Lingyu 靈裕 Huiyuan 慧遠 Zhirun 智潤
<i>Nirvāṇa</i> 涅槃	Da Bo Nie Pan Jing 大般涅槃經	<i>Dharmarakṣa</i> 曇無讖	S.Xiangtang Mount 南響堂山 N.Xiangtang Mount 北響堂山 Dazhusheng Cave 大住聖窟 Xiaonanhai 小南海	Daoping 道憑 Fashang 法上 Jingsong 靖嵩 Lingyu 靈裕 Daoshen 道慎
	Mo He Mo Ye Jing 摩訶摩耶經	Tan Jing 曇景	Dazhusheng Cave 大住聖窟	
	Fo Chui Bo Nie Pan Lue Shuo Jiao Jie Jing 佛垂般涅槃略說教戒經	<i>Kumārajīva</i> 鳩摩羅什	Wahuanggong 渦皇宮 Bahui si 八會寺	
Lotus 法華	Miao Fa Lian Hua Jing 妙法蓮花經	<i>Kumārajīva</i> 鳩摩羅什	S.Xiangtang Mount 南響堂山 Wahuanggong 渦皇宮 Dazhusheng Cave 大住聖窟 Bahui si 八會寺	Sengfan 僧範 Fashang 法上 Lingyu 靈裕 Huiyuan 慧遠 Huiwen 慧文 Huisi 慧思
	Wu Liang Yi Jing 無量義經	<i>Dharmajātayaśas</i> 曇摩伽陀耶舍	N.Xiangtang Mount 北響堂山	
	Sheng Man Shi Zi Hou Yi Sheng Da Fang Bian Fang Guang Jing 勝鬘獅子吼一乘大方便方廣經	<i>Gunabhadra</i> 求那跋陀羅	N.Xiangtang Mount 北響堂山 Dazhusheng Cave 大住聖窟	
Pure Land 淨土	Wu Liang Shou Jing You Bo Ti She Yuan Sheng Ji 無量壽經優波提舍願生偈	<i>Bodhiruci</i> 菩提流支	N.Xiangtang Mount 北響堂山	Fashang 法上 Lingyu 靈裕 Huiyuan 慧遠 Tanyan 曇衍 Zhenyu 真玉
	Fo Shuo Mi Le Xia Sheng Cheng Fo Jing 佛說彌勒下生成佛經	<i>Kumārajīva</i> 鳩摩羅什	N.Xiangtang Mount 北響堂山 Bahui si 八會寺	
<i>Prajñā</i> 般若	Wei Mo Jie Suo Shuo Jing 維摩詰所說經	<i>Kumārajīva</i> 鳩摩羅什	N.Xiangtang Mount 北響堂山	Huiguang 慧光 Sengfan 僧範 Huishun 慧順 Daoping 道憑 Huiyuan 慧遠
	Mo He Bo Re Bo Luo Mi Jing 摩訶般若波羅蜜經	<i>Kumārajīva</i> 鳩摩羅什	N.Xiangtang Mount 北響堂山 S.Xiangtang Mount 南響堂山	
	Wen Shu Shi Li Suo Shuo Mo He Bo Re Bo Luo Mi Jing 文殊師利所說摩訶般若波羅蜜經	<i>Mandṛa</i> 曼陀羅仙	S.Xiangtang Mount 南響堂山	

Buddhist School	Title of Stone Scripture	Translator	Site	Representative Monks
Teaching of Three Levels 三階教	Da Ji Yue Zang Jing 大集月藏經	<i>Narendrayaśas</i> 那連提離耶舍	Dazhusheng Cave 大住聖窟	Xingxing 信行 Sengyong 僧邕
	Fo Shou Fo Ming Jing 佛說佛名經	<i>Bodhiruci</i> 菩提流支	N.Xiangtang Mount北 響堂山 Dazhusheng Cave 大住聖窟 Bahui si 八會寺	
	Xian Zai Xian Jie Qian Fo Ming Jing 現在賢劫千佛名經	Anonymous	N.Xiangtang Mount 北響堂山 Bahui si 八會寺	
	Qi Jie Li Chan Wen 七階禮懺文	Xing Xing 信行	Dazhusheng Cave 大住聖窟	
	Fo Shuo Jue Di Pi Ni Jing 佛說決定毗尼經	Dunhuang <i>Tripitaka</i> 敦煌三藏	Dazhusheng Cave 大住聖窟	
	Guan Yao Wang Yao Shang Er Pu Sha Jing 觀藥王藥上二菩薩經	<i>Kalayasas</i> 曷良耶舍	Dazhusheng Cave 大住聖窟 Bahui si 八會寺	
<i>Dharma-character</i> 法相	Shen Mi Jie Tuo Jing深密解脫經	<i>Bodhiruci</i> 菩提流支	Wahuanggong 渦皇宮	

From the perspective of the themes represented by Buddhist statuary unearthed in North China, the objects worshiped expanded from the early Sakyamuni to *Amitābha* 阿彌陀, *Maitreya* 彌勒, *Bhaiṣajyaguru* 藥師, *Vairocana* 盧舍那, *Avalokiteśvara* 觀世音 and *Cintanā* Prince 思惟太子, which gradually played a role equal to or even more important than that of Sakyamuni.¹²¹ The turning point of this trend began at the end of the fifth century, after Emperor Xiaowen implemented the policies of sinicization, and can be seen in the evolution of the motifs of the statuary in the Longmen Grottoes 龍門石窟,¹²² and also in the unearthed statues from *Xiudesi Monastery* 曲陽修德寺 in Quyang and *Longxingsi Monastery* 青州龍興寺 in Qingzhou.¹²³ Quite recently, 2,895 pieces of Buddhist statues and several thousand tiny shards were excavated by the Ye City Archaeological Team in the east suburb of Yecheng. An overwhelming number of them were made in the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi Dynasties. Over 300 of them have dedicatory inscriptions, which provide us with direct evidence to explore the diversity of objects worshiped in the sixth century.¹²⁴ In the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* of the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi, features of the ‘Multi-compound and Multi-hall’ layout began to emerge, but the monastery was still focused on the pagoda. Perhaps this was a case in point to reflect the diversification of

Buddhist thought and concepts concerning worship during this period.

During the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the ethos of the Teaching Classification (*panjiao* 判教) increasingly prevailed. Various Buddhist Schools originating in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, based on different *sutras* and commentaries, created their own theoretical system and practice. Each school paid more attention to its own origin, tradition and doctrines. In order to emphasize orthodoxy, various factions were keen to magnify their own doctrine and belittle others, and thus sectarianism deepened. During this period, the ethos of Teaching Classification and the division within the Buddhist community became the mainstream of Chinese Buddhism. Ultimately, the so-called five, seven, ten, even thirteen Sects came into being in Buddhist history.¹²⁵ In this context, several freestanding compounds were named after different Buddhist Schools in monasteries of the Tang, a fact that can be regarded as the objective reflection of the division of Buddhism into Sects. The diversification of objects worshiped also caused the early monastery layout focusing on the pagoda to be replaced by a new mode emphasizing the combination of compounds and halls.

¹²¹ Hou Xudong 1998, 105.

¹²² Tsukamoto Zenryū 1974, 254–65.

¹²³ Yang Boda 1960; Liu Fengjun 2002.

¹²⁴ Joint Ye City Archaeological Team of the Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Institute of Cultural Relics of Hebei Province 2013 a; He Liqun 2014.

¹²⁵ Tang Yongtong 1982, 200–04.

Conclusion

Generally speaking, the earliest Buddhist monasteries in mainland China completely imitated the layout of those in ancient India and Central Asia, which normally focused on a pagoda with rows of small chambers set along the perimeter wall of the monastery. As time went on, the Buddha Hall played an increasingly important role in the monastery. Under the influence of traditional Chinese construction techniques and the arrangement of secular courtyards, the north–south axial plan with a Buddha Hall behind the Pagoda became the major type of monastery layout in the second half of the fifth century, until the beginning of the seventh century. This monastery layout of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, with its strong Chinese characteristics, had a far-reaching impact on early Buddhist monasteries in neighboring countries. The monasteries of the Goguryeo Kingdom might derive from the secular architectural forms of North China, while the monasteries of the Baekje Kingdom had a closer relationship with those of South China. The early monastery layouts of the Silla Kingdom and Japan, which lacked direct contact with China, were mainly influenced by the neighboring Baekje and Goguryeo kingdoms. In short, before the mid-seventh century, the monastery layout of Baekje’s monasteries on the Korean Peninsula and those with a similar layout in Japan all derived directly or indirectly from the Chinese monasteries with a ‘Central Pagoda and One Hall in the Rear’ layout, which remained the most significant monastery layout for a quite long period.

With the development of Buddhist thought, the veneration of images increasingly exceeded the early veneration of relics. As a result, the Buddha Hall gradually took over the crucial status of early pagodas and occupied the central position in Buddhist monasteries. After the mid-seventh century, the ‘Multi-compound and Multi-hall’ layout became the mainstream layout of the Buddhist State Monasteries in China. Frequent official exchanges promoted the transmission of this new monastery layout: Buddhist monasteries of the Unified Silla Period and Japanese Nara Period were able to directly imitate the monastery layouts in Chang’an and Luoyang. The Central Hall was the absolute core for all the monasteries of Unified Silla and contemporary Japan; at the same time, multiple compounds began to emerge and became the most remarkable characteristic in the layout of the Buddhist monastery.

The shift in the focus of monastery layout took place between the mid-sixth and mid-seventh centuries. It is worth noting that several monasteries, especially some well-preserved Japanese and Korean ones, offer a first glimpse of this transformation process. For example,

the *Hōryūji Monastery* and the *Kawaradera Monastery*, the *Manmu Daikandaiji Monastery* and the *Daianji Monastery* illustrate vividly the process by which the crucial status of the central pagoda was progressively substituted by that of the Buddha Hall. On the other hand, the *Zhaopengcheng Monastery* and the *Mireuksa Monastery* are the earliest unearthed instances that display a ‘Multi-compound and Multi-hall’ layout. They reflect a transitional phase linking the past and the future. In spite of the fact that each country considered in this book has its own culture and traditions, this overview of the monastery layouts of East Asia between the fifth and eighth centuries has revealed a consistent general trend, i.e. turning from focusing on the pagoda to centering on the Buddha Hall, and contemporaneously turning from a single-compound layout to a multiple-compound layout.

The last chapter of my book attempted to analyze the intrinsic causes that brought about these changes in monastery layout from the perspective of the religious significance and functions of Buddhist architecture. Through the book I have analyzed a number of different factors, such as the original meanings and functions of the Pagoda, the Buddha Hall and the Compound, the cult of Sakyamuni and other deities as reflected in dedicatory inscriptions, the themes and the roles of cave-temples, and the rise of Buddhist Schools in the Northern Dynasties and their evolution into Buddhist Sects in the Sui and Tang Dynasties. On the basis of these investigations, I have proposed that the process by which the monastery layout evolved from the single-compound layout focusing on the Pagoda to the ‘Multi-compound and Multi-hall’ layout reflects the evolution of Chinese Buddhist belief from the early Sakyamuni cult to diversification of Buddhist Sects and veneration of a variety of Buddhas.

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