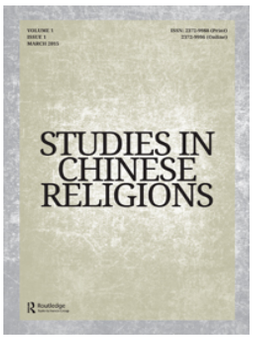

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

On the origins of the Great Fuxian Monastery 大福先寺 in Luoyang

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The Great Fuxian Monastery (Da Fuxian si 大福先寺) held a highly favored political and religious position in Luoyang, one of the twin capitals of the Tang and interregnum Zhou dynasties. The monastery's early rise to significance is most intimately associated with Wu Zhao, the only woman in Chinese history to rule in her own right. Under her patronage, Da Fuxian si hosted several translation projects, overseen by eminent monks such as Divākara, Yijing, and Bodhiruci. Further, a committee headed by the monk Huaiyi – and including several eminent monks affiliated with the Da Fuxian si (Faming, Chuyi, and Huiyan) – compiled a piece of propagandist Buddhist literature justifying Wu Zhao's rule. Yet, due in part to its relationship with the controversial female ruler, the monastery is intriguingly underrepresented in the historical records and, as a result, has yet to be fully explored in scholarship. Antonino Forte mends this oversight, providing a more complete history of the monastery by reconstructing its integral first thirty years in two parts: 1) from its establishment in 675 to the dissolution of the Tang in 690; and 2) the fifteen years of the successive Zhou dynasty, until the restoration of the Tang in 705.

Keywords: Taiyuan si; Da Fuxian si; Luoyang; Tang dynasty; Zhou dynasty; Wu Zhao; Yijing

The Da Fuxian si 大福先寺 (Great Fuxian Monastery), originally called by a different name when it was founded in 675, no longer exists. It was practically washed away during the Tianqi 天啟 era (1621–1627) of the Ming dynasty by a disastrous flood of the Luo River, a powerful tributary of the Yellow River. When the floodwaters receded, the inhabitants gathered those parts and objects that remained of the old monastery and reconstructed it several miles north of the original place.[1]

A place called Gu Tang si 古唐寺 (Old Tang Monastery), with some dilapidated buildings, still existed up until recently in the Tangsimen 唐寺門 village in the eastern suburbs of Luoyang. When I first visited the site on 29 November 1989, these buildings were all that remained of the seventeenth century monastery reconstructed after the flood. Almost 13 years later, I visited again on 6 October 2002 to check its present condition and, at the same time, to show the place to Erika Forte and Valerio Massa, two members of the Italian archaeological mission working at the site of the Da Fengxian si 大奉先寺 (Great Fengxian Monastery), another of the once great and glorious monasteries of Luoyang. But my surprise was great, indeed, when I arrived. Instead of the decrepit gate obstructed by a nauseating dump, a new, dazzling gate stood with the name of the monastery engraved in golden characters. Moreover, the previous name, Gu Tang si, had disappeared, and with the new look another name magically appeared before my eyes, precisely the same name the monastery had borne prior to the flood: Da Fuxian si.

Through the gate we entered a heavily restored complex. Since restoration too often means reconstruction in present-day China, I was worried that the few traces of the past in this monastery deserving preservation and protection were destroyed. I wondered, for

example, what had become of the two long inscriptions I saw in 1989 on both sides of the gate. Other inscriptions, some of huge dimensions, were at that time scattered here and there around the precincts. Where had they gone? To my questions, the people of the monastery answered that almost all the old inscriptions now lay on the ground in the corner to the right of the gate. Unlike other places within the enclosure, this muddy corner was infested by an incredible swarm of giant, aggressive mosquitoes. But I saw several old inscribed stones on the ground and noticed that the two inscriptions that, in 1989, had flanked the gate now lay behind a warehouse, leaning against the enclosure wall.[2]

However, I am concerned neither with the recent history of the monastery nor with its vicissitudes before and after the disastrous flood of the Luo River in the seventeenth century. I would rather say something about its early history, almost 1,000 years before the destructive flood.

The site of the original monastery is not yet clear. When in October 1994 a delegation (of which I was part) from the Istituto Universitario Orientale in Naples and the Italian School of East Asian Studies in Kyoto visited Luoyang to choose a place for joint Chinese-Italian archeological investigation, I asked that the chosen site be where the Da Fuxian si originally stood. The archeological authorities informed me that the site had not yet been clearly identified. We were shown a location near the river that was discouraging, indeed, as a prospective place for archeological investigation, as a railway crossing over a bridge occupied the site. Moreover, it was far from certain that this site was the right one. Some years ago, Wen Yucheng 温玉成, one of the best historians of Tang-period Luoyang, advanced a suggestion about the possible location of the site,[3] and it is my hope that one day archeological investigation of this once splendid Buddhist complex will begin.

There are many reasons why the Da Fuxian si in Luoyang, the Chinese capital of many dynasties, deserves our attention. In this monastery, the Central Indian Divākara (613–688), the Khotanese Devendraprajña (d. 690 or 691), the Chinese Yijing 義淨 (635–713), the Kashmiri Manicintana (d. 721), the South Indian Bodhiruci (d. 727), and the Central Indian Śubhākarasiṃha (d. 735) all worked as directors of translation teams that rendered into Chinese important Sanskrit Buddhist texts. Besides, some key members of the Northern Chan school, such as Du Fei 杜朏 (d. after 712) and Yifu 義福 (658–736), lived in the monastery.

Another well-known master of the Northern Chan school was Puji 普寂 (651–739). It is not yet clear to me whether he lived in the monastery or not, but it is certain that he was one of the masters of Daoxuan (or Dōsen, as Japanese call him) 道璿 (702–760), a monk of the Da Fuxian si who expatriated to Japan in 736. Daoxuan was one of the Chinese Buddhist monks who, 16 years later (in 752, Tenpyō Shōhō 4), assisted at the solemn ceremony for the inauguration of the great bronze statue of Rocana at the Tōdaiji 東大寺 in the capital Nara. A pair of Japanese monks, Eiei 榮叡, who died in China in 749 or 750, and Fushō 普照, who managed to go back to Japan where he died after 759 (Tenpyō Hōji 3), invited Daoxuan to Japan. They belonged to the Kōfukuji 興福寺, the Japanese headquarters of the idealistic school which was greatly influenced by Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) and was identified with the Hossō School 法相宗 in Japan. Eiei and Fushō arrived in China in 733 and studied at the Da Fuxian si under Daoxuan and Dingbin 定賓 (dates unknown). The master Dingbin was considered a patriarch of the Xiangbu School 相部宗 of Vinaya transmitted at the Da Fuxian si through Guangxuan 廣宣 (754?–827), a monk-poet known also through his connections to Bo Juyi 白居易 (772–846) and Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824).[4] In the world of art, the Da Fuxian si is remembered because the famous painter Wu Daoxuan 吳道玄 (dates unknown), particularly active during the reign of Xuanzong (713–756), worked there. The art historian Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (dates

unknown), who lived in the first half of the ninth century, admired some of Wu Daoxuan's paintings at the monastery.[5]

I think I have given an idea of the cultural importance of the monastery and of the international role it played in the late seventh century and in the first half of the eighth. I must confess, however, that these were not the reasons that first led me to become interested in this institution, practically unknown to many scholars. In fact, I too was at first unaware of its importance. At the beginning, it was the great master of the Avataṃsaka School, Fazang 法藏 (643–712), along with his life and the philosophical and religious system to which he subscribed, that above all attracted my interests. I knew that to try to understand Fazang, I needed to understand his time. It was thus that I started my inquiries in the historical period during which Fazang lived and operated. However, here consisted the most serious obstacle: Fazang lived precisely at the same time as Wu Zhao 武曌 (d. 705), better known as Empress Wu 武后. As is well known, Empress Wu was – and still is – an extremely controversial figure. Hated by Confucian-minded historians of all times, it is not hard to realize that accounts on the historical period when she was in power very often lack objectivity and suffer from serious biases. I began, then, to try to delve beneath the surface of such accounts to grasp some reliable fragments of that distant reality. Although I may never fully understand Fazang's life, his personality, and his superb philosophical and religious system, I have since tried to understand something of Fazang's time. And, I must say, I am very happy that Chen Jinhua is doing important work for us all concerning Fazang. His current research on the life of Fazang will certainly fill a void in our culture and will also contribute to our general knowledge of a very significant historical period.

I came, then, to be interested in the Da Fuxian si when I realized that Fazang was closely connected to three of the highest authorities of this institution in Luoyang: Faming 法明 (fl. 668–703), Chuyi 處一 (fl. 670–693), and Huiyan 惠儼 (fl. 685–699). These three figures were in prominent positions on the list of the 10 monks of the Palace Chapel who, in 690, wrote and presented to the Tang court – then under the regency of Wu Zhao in her position of Empress Mother – a document of political propaganda called *Dayun jing Shenhuang shouji yishu* 大雲經神皇授記義疏 (Commentary on the Meaning of the Prophecy about Shenhuang in the Great-cloud *Sūtra*). As it is known, this document was extremely important, both in terms of politics and ideology. Its main points are that the Empress Wu was both a bodhisattva and a *cakravartin* universal sovereign, and that her special destiny had been the object of a prophecy pronounced by the Buddha Śākyamuni, as attested in the *Great-cloud sūtra*, a work translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by the central India monk Dharmakṣema (385–433 or 436) in 417. An edict ordering the diffusion of this text throughout the empire was issued on 17 August 690 (Zaichu 1.7.8). Two months later, on 16 October 690 (Tianshou 1.9.9), the Tang dynasty was overthrown and the Zhou dynasty founded by Empress Wu came into power.[6] This dynasty lasted until 3 March 705 (Shenlong 1.2.4), when it was overthrown to restore the Tang dynasty abolished in 690. In the centuries that followed, historians wrote increasingly critical accounts of Wu Zhao's regency (684–690) and her short-lived Zhou dynasty. Thus, important historical evidence concerning Empress Wu was interpreted in a biased way or, quite often, completely obliterated.

The Da Fuxian si is an example of how an important institution of great historical and cultural relevance disappeared almost completely from history and was ignored by historians. Evidence concerning the monastery is so scarce and, above all, so sparse that it is not easy to reconstruct its history. In the early 1970s, I made a first attempt to collect and discuss the available material and published an article in 1973.[7] I soon realized,

however, that the article did not fully reflect the relevance of the monastery. Little by little, other material came to my attention. I mentioned above that a place called Gu Tang si existed until recently and that this place now bore its former name, Da Fuxian si. Although the connection between the old monastery and the present one is very weak, in a sense, we can say that the institution has never completely disappeared. It has a long history that deserves to be studied. In this paper, I will concentrate my attention on the first 30 years of its history, from its foundation in 675 until 705. Even so, I have to limit myself to a few points, leaving aside other materials, especially those uncertain and puzzling issues not yet ready for publication.

Given its significance, one would at first think that solid information about this monastery should be available in works concerning the topography and history of Luoyang, but unfortunately such is not the case. Let me take the example of the oldest extant of these works, the *Henan zhi* 河南志 (A Description of Henan [i.e. Luoyang]), completed during the Yuan dynasty, but essentially based on Song Minqiu's 宋敏求 (1018–1079) *Henan zhi* 河南志. As we shall see, the first name of the monastery was Taiyuan si 太原寺. In the *Henan zhi*, the Taiyuan si is mentioned only once, so briefly that not even its date of foundation is given.[8] In another instance, we are informed about a Fuxian si 福先寺 in connection with a water mill (no. 5410 –11) and a canal (no. 5724),[9] but we have no way of understanding whether or not this Fuxian si is the same institution as the Taiyuan si. In fact, nowhere are we told that Taiyuan si was the previous name of the Fuxian si. This situation gives the real measure of how this once glorious monastery came to be almost forgotten.

I will divide here the first 30 years of the life of the monastery into two sections: the first covering the 15 years from its foundation in 675 to the abolition of the Tang in 690; and the second covering the successive period of almost 15 years of the Zhou dynasty, from the foundation of the dynasty until the *stūpa* inscription of July or August 705, several months after the restoration of the Tang dynasty.

From the foundation of the Taiyuan si in 675 (or early 676) to 690

After the death of her mother on 22 August 670, Empress Wu decided to establish a monastery in Chang'an for her mother's 'posthumous well-being.' The monastery was a 'principality (or "provincial"?) monastery' (*guosi* 國寺), whose first name was Taiyuan si because Taiyuan 太原 was the aristocratic posthumous title of her parents at the time. It was founded between 9 November 670 and 14 February 671 (end of the first year Xianheng), and it is first attested to in a document of 3 July 671 (Xianheng 2.5.22).[10] The Taiyuan si was established by transforming Empress Wu's mother's house in Chang'an's Xiuxiang Quarter into a monastery.

Some years later, a Taiyuan si was built in the eastern capital Luoyang, too. The only source specifying the date of the foundation of this monastery is the *Tang huiyao,* where we read: 'The residence of Lady Yang, the mother of Empress Wu, in the second year Shangyuan (1 February 675 to 20 January 676) was erected as Taiyuan Monastery.'[11] The court was at that time in Luoyang. It had arrived from Chang'an on 25 December 674 (Shangyuan 1.11.23 [*wuchen*])[12] and would stay there for about 16 months, until 10 May 676 (Shangyuan 3.3 閏 .22 [*gengyin*]) when it would go back to Chang'an.[13] Incidentally, it was during this time, on 20 January 676 (Shangyuan 2.12.30), that the grandiose sculptural ensemble in the largest of the Longmen caves, eleven kilometers south of Luoyang, was completed. This cave belonged to the Da Fengxian si 大奉先寺 situated to the south of the caves. This Longmen monastery, whose name is so similar to the future name of the Taiyuan si (Da Fuxian si), had been initiated by an imperial order of 3 May

672 (Xianheng 3.4.1). It was a 'great monastery' of the Tang founded by Empress Wu's husband, Gaozong, but the empress had personally contributed funding to the construction of the sculptural ensemble.[14]

Who were the monks chosen as the leaders of the Taiyuan Monastery in Luoyang? In trying to identify the dominant thought system in place at the monastery, this question is a starting point. Unfortunately, the sources are completely silent on this issue. Even the abundant epigraphic production at Longmen, as far as I know, has not revealed any clue. However, we have no reason to think that Wu Zhao would have acted, in the case of this monastery, any differently from the way she acted five years earlier when the Taiyuan si in Chang'an was founded. To figure out her choices for this Luoyang monastery, we have to consider the origins of the monastery's sister institution in Chang'an. I have dealt with the foundation of this monastery in the appendix of an article published in 1996, but I was more concerned at that time with the date of its foundation, rather than with its initial leaders. I pointed out that the Taiyuan si of Chang'an is mentioned for the first time in a manuscript copied on 3 July 671 and that it specifies that, at this date, the chief of the monastery (*sizhu* 寺主) was Huili 慧立 (b. 615, d. after January 677), the very monk who wrote Xuanzang's biography.[15] On this and other Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* and *Vajraccheddikā-prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, Fujieda remarks,

> As the *hsiang-yüeh* (*xiangyue*) 詳閱, "examiners," four priests of the T'ai-yuan ssu 太原寺 monastery are listed, the four being the same in all the colophons except the first, where eight are listed. Some of them had participated in Hsüan-tsang's (Xuanzang) translation (…), and are recognized as eminent pupils of Hsüan-tsang. In other words, they were the most eminent scholarly priests just after the death of the great master, which occurred in 664 A.D.[16]

There is not yet a detailed study of the early history of this Chang'an monastery, but I think that such a study would probably confirm the strong Yogācāra characterization pointed out by Fujieda. We might speculate, then, that Yogācāra monks also directed the Taiyuan si in Luoyang.

The importance of the Taiyuan si in Luoyang seems to have been very limited during the first years of its founding. It may be, however, that such an impression is due only to scarcity of evidence. It is interesting to note, in any case, that soon after it was founded, a very special guest seems to have come to live in the monastery. This was the Indian Trepiṭaka,[17] Divākara, who probably arrived in Luoyang in 676. We have no firm evidence that he was living in the Taiyuan si at this early stage, but we know for certain that Divākara, 'In the fourth year, fifth month of Yifeng (June 14 to July 12, 679) presented a memorial, asking to translate the scriptures he had brought [from India].' The court was in Luoyang at that time, thus we can presume that Divākara must have been there when he presented his memorial. On the other hand, we know that an edict was issued to the effect that he would translate his works at the Taiyuan si in Luoyang. As a result, four translations were published at the monastery in February or March 680. Unfortunately, none of his collaborators at the monastery (usually called Dong Taiyuan si 東太原寺, Eastern Taiyuan Monastery in our sources, in order to distinguish it from the monastery in Chang'an called Xi Taiyuan si 西太原寺, Western Taiyuan Monastery) are mentioned, and we are left without the possibility of knowing some of the names of the monks belonging to the monastery in its early years. I would point out, nevertheless, that Divākara most likely would have felt quite comfortable in a monastery directed by Yogācāra figures. In fact, Divākara is perhaps best understood in a Yogācāra context.

Indeed, during his sojourn to India Yijing may have sent Divākara to Luoyang at the request of the leaders of the new Luoyang Taiyuan si.[18]

Given that an imperial edict had permitted Divākara to translate Sanskrit works there, the monastery must have been considered very important. It became, in fact, an official seat for translation activities, thus coming to occupy the prestigious position comparable to the Chang'an monasteries Hongfu si 弘福寺 and Ci'en si 慈恩寺 under Taizong and his son Gaozong, respectively.

After this evidence on Divākara, we have a document concerning the monastery that relates an auspicious event that occurred there. It is significant that this early extant document is a propaganda text favorable to the empress's political and religious power. We read in the *Memorial of Felicitations to Tianhou for the Herb Zhi Composed on Behalf of the Heir Prince (Dai Huang taizi he Tianhou zhicao biao* 代皇太子賀天后芝草表) by Cui Yong 崔融 (652–705), 'With respect I have learnt that the herb *zhi (zhicao* 芝草)[19] grows under the roof of the *stūpa* of the relics[20] of the Taiyuan si in Dongdu 東都 (Eastern Capital).'[21]

When was this memorial presented? There are several chronological keys in the few words I have quoted. The name Taiyuan si, by which the monastery is here indicated, permits us to understand that the memorial was presented before April 687, when the name of the monastery would be changed to Weiguo (see below). Further, Cui Rong's reference to Luoyang as Dongdu 東都 (Eastern Capital) permits us to deduce that the memorial was presented before 19 October 684 (Guangzhai 1.9.6 [*jiayin*]), when the designation Dongdu ceased to be used and was replaced by the new name Shendu 神都 (Divine Metropolis).[22] It is possible, however, to further narrow the time of the event. In fact, both in the title and in the memorial itself Wu Zhao is referred to as Tianhou 天后 (Heavenly Empress), a title she had from 20 September 674 (Shangyuan 1.8.15 [*renchen*]), when her husband Gaozong began to be called Tianhuang 天皇 (Heavenly August).[23] Gaozong bore this title until his death (27 December 683), while Wu Zhao maintained hers until 3 January 684; that is, until she began to be called Huang Taihou 皇太后 (August Empress Mother) when her son became emperor.[24] The memorial was then presented before 3 January 684. Moreover, we know from the title that the memorial was composed 'for the Heir Prince' *(dai huang taizi* 代皇太子). Who is the 'Heir Prince' alluded to here? Historians inform us that Cui Yong composed memorials and reports for Zhongzong (r. for less than two months in early 684, and then in 705–710) when he was the Heir Prince.[25] Since Zhongzong, that is, Li Xian 李顯 (656–710), became Heir Prince on 21 September 680 (Yonglong 1.8.23 [*yichou*]),[26] following the demotion of his elder brother, the homophonous Li Xian 李賢 (651–684),[27] if the Heir Prince in question was really Zhongzong, we deduce that the memorial could have been presented only after 21 September 680 and before 3 January 684, when he ceased to be Heir Prince because he became emperor.

The next evidence concerning the monastery probably refers to the year 685. We might assume, in fact, that by 685, besides Huaiyi 懷義 (d. 695), the Ten Bhadantas of the Palace Chapel in Luoyang included Faming 法明, Chuyi 處一, Huiyan 惠儼, Huileng 慧稜, Xinggan 行感, Degan 德感, Zhijing 知靜, Xuangui 玄軌 and Xuanzheng 宣政, as indicated in the biography of Huaiyi in the *Old Tang History*. If this is so, it is remarkable that the first three monks listed all held leading positions at the Taiyuan si. This would mean that by about 685 Taiyuan si was already the most important monastery in Luoyang. However, it is also possible that this list refers to after 690, when the Zhou dynasty had already been established.[28]

It is again in connection with Divākara that we next hear about the monastery. When the court headed back westward to Chang'an, Divākara came along, arriving in the

months before 4 November 680 (Yonglong 1.10.8 [*jiyou*]).[29] But when the court returned to Luoyang in 682, Divākara remained in Chang'an until 685, working at the Hongfu si. That year he went to Luoyang and asked to go back to India. Awaiting permission, he translated another work at the Taiyuan si. The work translated was a very particular one (though the circumstances of the translation work are not very clear). It was, in fact, one of the numerous Chinese versions of the *Buddhoṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī sūtra*. I deal with this question in an article devoted to the anonymous preface to the version allegedly written by the Jibin monk Buddhapālita (or, rather, Buddhapriya).[30] This text was by no means just a scripture, but rather the key document of a highly religious and highly political enterprise. It is no wonder, then, that the Taiyuan si in Luoyang, by this juncture called Weiguo si 魏國寺 (Weiguo Monastery) or Dong Weiguo si 東魏國寺 (Eastern Weiguo Monastery), was involved. This time too, we can only regret that almost no persons around Divākara in the monastery are mentioned. Only one collaborator is mentioned for this version, Huizhi 慧智, who was familiar with both Sanskrit and Chinese, but he probably did not belong to the Dong Weiguo si.[31] Divākara never realized his dream to go back to India. He died in this monastery on 4 February 688, one year after the Taiyuan si had changed its name to Weiguo si.[32]

Between 4 February 688 (date of Divākara's death) and 26 January 689 the monk Devendraprajña visited the monastery from Khotan, bringing with him more than one hundred Sanskrit texts.[33] How do we interpret Devendraprajña's presence in the monastery? After all, he came from a small and peripheral Buddhist country, and the shift from an Indian to a Khotanese master as the legitimating authority of Buddhist orthodoxy at the monastery must not have been considered an ideal solution. It is possible, then, that the Khotanese Devendraprajña was merely considered a provisional substitute for Divākara, awaiting the arrival of another celebrated Indian master who might occupy the prestigious position of Trepiṭaka at the yet young but already powerful monastery. During Devendraprajña's tenure at the monastery, six short translations of Sanskrit works were completed; another more engaging and ambitious project was underway when he died in 690 or 691.[34]

Although Devendraprajña stayed at the monastery for only a short time, and although he was not an Indian master, his presence in Luoyang during this period and in this monastery was precious for its monks, the natural supporters of Wu Zhao. Not only did the monastery give eminent Buddhist personalities from Chang'an and Luoyang the occasion to gather and discuss philosophical and religious matters, but it also provided an ideal venue for the construction of propaganda. In fact, it was among these people who grouped themselves around Devendraprajña, based in the Weiguo si, that the composition and diffusion of the above-mentioned *Commentary* was engineered and that the Buddhist propaganda in favor of Wu Zhao's policy and her maintenance of power was organized.

Sources name twelve of Devendraprajña's collaborators.[35] We are not told to what monastery they belonged, but we know that some among the dozen mentioned – including the previously noted monks Faming, Chuyi, and Huiyan – belonged to our monastery.[36]

Around the same period in the monastery lived two figures who came to be considered key masters in the history of Northern Chan: Du Fei and Yifu. The funerary inscription for Yifu, written by Yan Tingzhi 嚴挺之 (673–742) in 736, attests to their presence:

> [Yifu,] moreover, at the Fuxian si 福先寺 of [Dong]du [東]都,[37] followed as a master the Master of the Law Fei 朏法師 and broadly studied the *sūtras* and commentaries of the Great Vehicle. In categorizing and analyzing the doctrines and meanings [in these texts], he largely comprehended and mastered them. Feeling that he had not reached the "Mysterious

> Ultimate", he [attempted to] delve deep into the profundities of the classics. As at the time, Great Master Faru of Mount Song was expounding on the inconceivable essentials, engendering [in Yifu] a particular faith and esteem [so that Yifu] exerted himself [day and] night [to reach Mount Song], never daring to slacken. Upon arriving [there, he found that] Reverend Ru had already passed away. 又於都福先寺，師事胝法師，廣習大乘經論。區析理義, 多所通括, 以為未臻玄[38]極, 深求典奧. 時嵩嶽大師法如, 演不思議要，用特生信重, 夕惕不遑, 既至而如公遷謝. [39]

This inscription may be chronologically situated with some precision. Its text specifically indicates that by the time Yifu reached Faru's monastery, the latter was dead. Since Faru died at the Shaolin si 少林寺 on the 25th day of the 7th month of the 1st year Yongchang (15 August 689),[40] we may deduce that Yifu's sojourn at the Fuxian si under the guidance of the Master of the Law Fei preceded this date.[41]

This is not the only connection between the Fuxian si in Luoyang and Shaolin si: Renjian 仁儉 (dates unknown), another monk of the Fuxian si, attested to similar connections, as well. As of 695 or 696, he was a disciple of Huian 慧安 (582–709) of Mount Song 嵩嶽.[42] Moreover, as we shall see below, in 700 or 701, the head of the Shaolin si requested that the *shenwang* 神王 images in the Fuxian si be returned to his monastery.

Immediately following the passage in the inscription translated above, the author Yan Tingzhi states that Yifu received full ordination during the Zaichu era (15 December 689 to 15 October 690) and later went to visit the Chan Master Shenxiu 神秀 (606?–706) at the Yuquan si 玉泉寺 in Jingzhou 荊州. I do not know when precisely Yifu visited Shenxiu, but we may presume that after his frustrating visit to Faru's residence in 689 he continued to live at the Fuxian si for a certain time. It may be of interest to point out that we know for certain that by 7 October 693 (Changshou 2.9.3) the above-mentioned Buddhist leader Faming was one of the top authorities of the Da Fuxian si; he was its Elder (*shangzuo* 上座, *sthavira*), and I presume that he had already held this position for several years.

Faming came from Jingzhou 荊州, the same place where the Yuquan si of Shenxiu was situated.[43] Yifu's visit to Shenxiu might then be related to Faming's presumed connection with the Yuquan si and with Shenxiu. Actually, Faming may well have been the architect of Shenxiu's visit to the court in 701 or 702, on which occasion Yifu attended him. Yifu, in turn, may have been a special messenger of Faming. It is well-known that the *Chuan fabao ji* 傳法寶紀 (Record of the Transmission of the Dharma-treasure) considers Shenxiu the successor of Faru, but in all other works he is known as the heir of Hongren 弘忍 (601–674). Yampolsky remarks that there is:

> . . . no adequate explanation for this attribution; it must be left as one of the many puzzles and unsolved problems which so clutter the history of Ch'an of this period. One might hazard a guess that he (that is, Faru) was a priest of considerable prestige at the Shao-lin Temple near the capital, who perhaps had a school of his own but died before he had produced any disciple of note.[44]

Faru must have been the privileged reference point of the Imperial Court in Luoyang at the prestigious Shaolin si. It does not seem extraordinary, then, that on the eve of the Zhou revolution of 690, Empress Wu wished to establish a special connection between the famous monastery and the Taiyuan si she had founded in Luoyang in 675. It is possible that by sending to Faru's place a monk like Yifu (and perhaps also Puji?), the leaders of the Fuxian si wished to involve their monastery in the legitimate Chan Shaolin si lineage of Faru. The sudden death of Faru, however, must have rendered the project difficult, hence Shenxiu's choice must have been adopted instead. Faming may have been precious

if he had a connection with Shenxiu's monastery. In other words, Shenxiu's rise was due do Faru's death and to the necessity of finding a successor closely aligned with Wu Zhao's political interests. As for Yifu, given his affiliation with the Fuxian si, it is not surprising that he would reside at this monastery in the years 725 to 727, when he accompanied the emperor on a visit to Luoyang.[45]

690–705: From 'Principality Monastery' (*guosi* 國寺) to 'Great Monastery' (*dasi* 大寺)

Following the proclamation of the Zhou dynasty on 16 October 690 and the consequent change in the posthumous status of Wu Zhao's parents, our monastery, which until that moment had been a principality monastery (in as much as it was a private institution of the family to which originally Wu Zhao belonged), became a dynastic monastery. As such, it was entitled to become a Great Monastery (*dasi* 大寺). The change of status did not necessarily take place at the very moment of the proclamation of the dynasty. I guess that it was necessary to follow the established bureaucratic passages. But I would not enter here into the very complicated question of the precise date when the monastery changed its name and became a great monastery. It is sufficient to know that sometime after 16 October 690 (date of foundation of the Zhou Dynasty) the monastery appears under two different names, Da Zhou dong si 大周東寺 and Da Fuxian si 大福先寺. The first name does not necessarily indicate a Great Monastery: if the first two characters, Da Zhou 大周, refer to the newly founded dynasty, we should understand the name as meaning Eastern Monastery of the Great Zhou, in which 'eastern' indicates that it was in Luoyang in the east, in order to distinguish it from the Da Zhou xi si 大周西寺 (Western Monastery of the Great Zhou) in Chang'an, the western capital. Instead, the name Da Fuxian si 大福先寺 certainly indicates that it became a Great Monastery. And we have no reason to argue that the date of 691 given in the *Tang huiyao* for the adoption of the name Fuxian si 福先寺 is incorrect.[46]

Considering that the monastery thus became in principle (both for being situated in the main capital and for acquiring the status of Great Monastery) the most important dynastic monastery of China, we would expect that it assumed a preeminent role among the other monastic institutions. However, when we inquire about the activities taking place in this monastery, during the short-lived Zhou Dynasty (16 October 690 to 3 March 705), we are at first surprised to realize that such activities were, after all, rather modest and, above all, discontinuous. For example, in the fundamental field of the translation activities, in the very first phase of this period, Devendraprajña, as seen above, may have worked in the monastery, if he was still alive in 691. Then, due to his death, we have to wait for the arrival of the South Indian monk Dharmaruci in 692 or 693. He published in 693 seven works that he had translated during his residency at the monastery.[47] A period of seven years followed during which, strangely enough, no translations were produced at the monastery. Translation activity then resumed under Yijing, who published, on 27 May 700, a work that he had translated at the monastery.[48] From this moment on we notice a more regular use of the monastery. Yijing carried out a certain number of translations at the monastery, including two published on 5 February 701; seven on 28 October 701; and three in 705.[49] In 705, Yijing was not the only Trepiṭaka conducting the translation work at the Da Fuxian si: Manicintana, one of Yijing's main collaborators, published three translations here in the same year, two of them dated 21 February 705, just two days before Wu Zhao's destitution.[50] Manicintana's collaborators, however, were few, and this perhaps indicates that his translations were marginal relative to the main activity conducted by Yijing.

When we consider other fields of activities, evidence becomes even scarcer. We are told that in 696 Huicheng 慧澄, the head of the monastery, requested that the *Laozi*

Huahu jing 老子化胡經 (The Conversion of the Western Foreigners by Laozi) be destroyed. The fact that his petition was rejected might even be interpreted, at first sight, anyway, as an indication of how little importance was attributed to the monastery.[51]

It appears, instead, that from 693, precisely the year when translation activities were interrupted at the Da Fuxian si, another monastery of Luoyang, the Foshouji si 佛授記寺 (Monastery of the Buddha's Prophecy), became prominent as a centre for translation activities. It was there that Dharmaruci completed the translation of 13 works in 693. Among these, the most relevant was the *Baoyu jing* 寶雨經 in 10 fascicles, the translation of which was finished on 7 October 693, almost exactly three years after the proclamation of the dynasty (16 October 690). This text was in fact extremely important for the empress because an interpolation inserted in the first fascicle permitted her ideologues to legitimize her as bodhisattva and *cakravartin*. And it was there that other works in the following years were translated, preeminent among which was the translation of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* completed on 5 November 699.[52] The monks of the Foshouji si certainly supported Wu Zhao and her policies, but the monastery had originally been a dynastic monastery of the abolished Tang dynasty. At that time it had been called Da Jing'ai si 大敬愛寺.[53]

What happened? Why, as a center for Buddhist translation projects, would Wu Zhao have preferred a great monastery of the previous dynasty to a great monastery of her own dynasty? Would this not be contradictory to her policy of having Taiyuan si, the monastery she founded in 675, play host to the most important Buddhist activities?

The answer to these questions is that the word 'great' preceding the name of a monastery was not an abstract qualification, but was applied only to a limited number of institutions that had been granted the title 'great monastery.' There was, then, first of all, a change of status. The necessary corollary and consequence was, however, that the monastery had to become larger both in terms of its surface and in terms of the number of monks allowed to live there.[54] The change of status meant, in other words, that the monastery had to be 'great' or 'large' not only in name, but also physically. There was then the necessity for the Taiyuan si/Weiguo si, which until 690 had been a principality monastery, to be spatially enlarged to become an actual 'great monastery.' Of course, we have to distinguish the moment when the status changed and the monastery began officially to be called 'great' from the actual completion of the enlargement work when the monastery in reality – as well as name – became 'great.' Setting aside the question of precisely when the monastery's status was formally elevated to 'great monastery' (in any case, as noted above, this occurred shortly after 16 October 690), the problem I would like to answer here is when the enlargement work started and when it was finished.

Even if some enlargement work may have started earlier, the large-scale work must have begun in 693. The reason for suggesting this date is that it was in 693 that the monastery ceased to be used as a place for translation activities; that same year marked the emergence of the Foshouji si as the preeminent center for Buddhist translation. The evidence we have on Dharmaruci is revealing in this respect. As seen above, after having translated in 693 seven works in the monastery founded by Empress Wu, Dharmaruci translated most of his other works that date from that same year in the Foshouji si. In other words, the Foshouji si, during the enlargement and rebuilding of the Da Fuxian si, served as a provisional place for those activities that could not be carried out in the monastery for the simple reason that it was under reconstruction.

I have found so far no evidence explicitly stating that the monastery was reconstructed, but the related evidence confirms the hypothesis. I here give only some of such evidence implicitly proving this. As a matter of fact, not only was the translation work transferred to the Foshouji si, but also a certain number of the monks who lived at the Da

Fuxian si (we cannot say precisely how many) appear to have transferred to the Foshouji si. The funerary inscription of Wŏnch'ŭk (Yuance) 圓測 (613–696), a Korean monk originally belonging to the Ximing si 西明寺 in Chang'an, who by 7 December 695 (Tiance Wansui 1.10.26) had become affiliated with the Da Fuxian si,[55] states that he died at the Foshouji si on Wansui Tongtian 1.7.22 (25 August 696).[56] Normally he should have died in his monastery, the Da Fuxian si. The fact that he died instead at the Foshouji si suggests that his monastery at the time was not inhabitable because it was under reconstruction. It seems possible to speculate, then, that he had taken up temporary residency at the Foshouji si when he died. Although it is possible to suggest that his affiliation with the Da Fuxian si had simply ceased after 5 December 695, I do not think that this is a tenable hypothesis.

Another remarkable example is that furnished by Yijing. When he entered Luoyang in June or July 695, he went to live in the Foshouji si.[57] However, in the above-mentioned list of monks dated 7 December 695 (Tiance Wansui 1.10.26), Yijing appears as a monk of the Da Fuxian si.[58] This must have been the reason why Wang Bangwei 王邦維 states that, in the tenth month of the first year of Tiance Wansui, Yijing lived (*zhu* 住) in the Da Fuxian si.[59] The tenth month of the first year of Tiance Wansui, precisely the twenty-sixth day (7 December 695), is the date given, as seen above, in the list of the *Great Zhou Catalogue*. However, this source does not specify that Yijing 'lived' in the Da Fuxian si, it just indicates that he belonged to it. Of course, we might interpret the sources as meaning that Yijing was soon transferred from the Foshouji si to the Da Fuxian si. But such a change of residence soon after his arrival would be strange. In my opinion, from the moment of his arrival in Luoyang, if not before, Yijing was considered a monk of the Da Fuxian si; he only went to live in the Foshouji si upon his arrival because his monastery was under reconstruction. An analogous case is that of Manicintana who, according to the list of 7 December 695 also belonged to the Da Fuxian si, but went to live in another Luoyang monastery, the Tiangong si 天宮寺, from the time of his arrival in Luoyang in late 693.[60]

We might be inclined to date the completion of the reconstruction of the Da Fuxian si in the year 700, when, after seven years of no recorded activity, Yijing completed a translation at the monastery on 27 May 700. This hypothesis is confirmed by the fact – which cannot be merely coincidental – that the last translation completed at the Foshouji si bears the date 1 October 700 (Jiushi 1.8.15 [*gengshen*]), when Li Wuchan 李無諂 (fl. 693-705) succeeded in publishing there his version of the *Bukong juansuo tuoluoni jing* 不空羂索陀羅尼經 (*Dhāraṇī sūtra of Amoghapāśa Avalokiteśvara*) (*T.* vol. 20, no. 1096).[61]

Another circumstance points to the year 700 as the completion date of the monastery: during the first year of Jiushi (27 May 700 to 14 February 701) the head of the Shaolin si on Mount Song requested that the *shenwang* 神王 images belonging to his monastery be returned from Da Fuxian si, since the latter monastery already had 15 *shenwang*.[62] I suppose that the *shenwang* of the Shaolin si may have served as model[s] for sculpting the *shenwang* of the Da Fuxian si when it was enlarged, but it is also possible that they were previously borrowed under some other pretext. In any case, it seems to me that the request of the head of the Shaolin si is in some way related to the advanced stage of the expansion of the Da Fuxian si. As 15 *shenwang* already fulfilled the needs of the various structures of the great monastic complex, there was no reason to prolong the absence of the two statues from their original home, the Shaolin si. Perhaps these statues (or this statue?) were the same *shenwang* introduced to the imperial palace on 22 April 692 (Ruyi 1.4.1 [*binghen*]), on the occasion of the adoption of the new reign name Ruyi, or on 1 September 692 (Ruyi 1.7.15 [*wangri* 望日]), on the occasion of the festival of the dead.[63]

If my above hypothesis that the enlargement and restructuring of the Da Fuxian si started

in 693 is correct, then perhaps the same statues, after being presented at the imperial palace, were not returned to the Shaolin si but remained in Luoyang and were moved, in 692 or 693, to the Da Fuxian si to serve to its needs. If so, these statues of the Shaolin si must have been considered great works of art.

Yet, we cannot state with certainty that the reconstruction of the Da Fuxian si was completed by the year 700. It is possible that in the year 700 the rebuilding work had advanced enough to permit the translation centre to resume its activities, but not enough to be considered complete. Such a possibility is suggested by the date of an inscription whose text was personally written by Wu Zhao. To this important inscription I will now turn some attention.

The inscription appears under the title of *Da Fuxian si futu bei* 大福先寺浮圖碑 (*Stūpa* Stele of the Great Fuxian Monastery) in the *Quan Tangwen*, where, unfortunately, no date is given.[64] Examination of the inscription affords, however, helpful chronological evidence through the titles by which Wu Zhao addresses her parents: her father is mentioned under the title of Wushang Xiaoming Gao Huangdi 無上孝明高皇帝 (High and August Emperor of Unsurpassed Piety and Clairvoyance), and her mother is called Wushang Xiaoming Gao Huanghou 無上孝明高皇后 (High and August Empress of Unsurpassed Piety and Clairvoyance).[65] These titles were conferred on 18 October 693,[66] but I do not know precisely when they were abolished. Sima Guang mentions a Prince of Taiyuan 太原王 under the date of 27 September 705 (Shenlong 1.9.5 [*renwu* 壬午]), and the commentator Hu Sanxing states that this is Wu Shihuo 武士彠 (577-635), the father of Wu Zhao.[67] If this is correct, we may deduce that by the aforementioned date of 27 September 705, the above titles had already been abolished and the original titles of Prince and Princess of Taiyuan, titles the parents of Wu Zhao held from 31 October 670 to 3 November 684,[68] had been restored.

Although there is no certainty about the precise date when the titles of her parents were abolished, let us provisionally say that the inscription must have been written after 18 October 693 and before 27 September 705. For our purposes, this information remains inadequate; from Wu Zhao's text itself we find no definitive answer regarding the date of the *stūpa*'s completion. However, an epigraphical source permits us to date the inscription more precisely. Zhao Mingcheng 趙明誠 (1081–1129) and his wife Li Qingzhao 李清照 (1084–1147) had in their collection two rubbings of this inscription. They are catalogued as no. 854 and no. 855 in their catalogue *Jinshi lu* 金石錄 (List of Metal and Stone [Inscriptions]), compiled between 1119 and 1125. The title they give to the inscription is *Tang Fuxian si futu bei* 唐福先寺浮圖碑 (*Stūpa* Stele of the Tang Fuxian Monastery),[69] slightly different from the one given in the *Quan Tangwen, Da Fuxian si futu bei* 大福先寺浮圖碑. Thanks to them, we come to know that Wu Sansi 武三思 (?-707), Wu Zhao's nephew, calligraphed the text in the *zhengshu* 正書 style and that the inscription was dated the seventh month of the first year of Shenlong (25 July to 23 August 705). Huang Shujing 黃叔璥 (ca. 1677 – ca. 1753) also referred to the inscription in his *Zhongzhou jinshi kao* 中州金石考 (Metal and Stone [Inscriptions] in the Central Province). Unfortunately, however, he does not provide any supplementary information.[70]

It is regrettable indeed that the editors of the *Quan Tangwen* in 1814 did not specify their source. As I thought that they might have copied the text of the inscription from an epigraphic source, I consulted a great number of epigraphic works. Though my search was fruitless, I have not lost the hope that one day the source might be found. From it we might get a text more faithful to the original carved on stone and other evidence. But unless the source used by the editors of the *Quan Tangwen* comes to light, we must content ourselves with the present edition.

The text of the inscription is an outstanding composition, both in historical and literary terms. Wu Zhao, by that time more than 80 years old, gives here excellent proof of her literary talent, which admirably integrates her complex cultural world – both deeply Chinese and deeply Buddhist. A worldview, grandiose and simple at the same time, comes out from this composition, possibly her last, as she wrote it in July or August of 705. She died just months later, on 16 December 705 (Shenlong 1.11.26 [*renyin*]).[71] We might doubt whether she was the real author and whether some other person wrote it on her behalf, but there is no reason to do so. She was elderly and not in good health, but nowhere, as far as I know, is it stated that she had lost her lucidity. A complete and competent translation of this text would reveal to us, more directly than any study based on other evidence, her character and way of thinking. If the date given by Zhao Mingcheng and his wife is correct, as it seems, then this text was written about five months after the Tang restoration and about four months before Wu Zhao's death. In any case, it was written after the Tang restoration, at a moment when the Zhou dynasty she had founded had been abolished and she had lost her power, as is confirmed by the fact that the character Tang – omitted in the title given in the *Quan Tangwen* – appears in the title mentioned by Zhao Mingcheng and Li Qingzhao.

For the purpose of the present paper, our question is: can this inscription, which according to its title was composed for the completion of the *stūpa*, also be understood to mark the completion of the reconstruction of the whole monastery? Considering that the *stūpa* was the most sacred and symbolic part of a monastic complex – actually the very *raison d'être* of a monastery – and also that it was the most engaging from the architectural point of view, it would be only too logical to think so. Such is precisely the impression we have on reading the inscription. Wu Zhao does not merely limit her attention to the *stūpa*, but she describes the whole monastery. She explains that the Da Fuxian si was originally the living place of the 'previous Saints' (*xiansheng* 先聖), that is, her father and mother, called in the inscription, as seen above, by the high titles they still held at that moment, Wushang Xiaoming Gao Huangdi and Wushang Xiaoming Gao Huanghou.[72] Actually, if it were not for the inscription's title itself, in which the term *stūpa* is explicitly mentioned, we would simply think that the inscription was written for the whole monastery. I would suggest, then, that the completion of the *stūpa* in 705 marked the completion of the monastery. On the other hand, we know that the celebrated painter Wu Daoxuan worked at the monastery until a certain date that is not specified.[73] Wu Daoxuan, as mentioned above, is known to have been active during the reign of Xuanzong (713–756) and, unless we think that he worked in the monastery when he was very young, this might be interpreted to suggest that the monastery was not yet completely finished in 705. But I would rather think that Wu Daoxuan was called for some supplementary embellishment after completion. My overall impression is that we may consider the date of the seventh month of the first year Shenlong (25 July to 23 August 705), given by Zhao Mingcheng and Li Qingzhao for the inscription, as the date of the completion both of the new *stūpa* and of the Da Fuxian si's rebuilding and enlargement.

It so happens that in late works such as the *Henan tongzhi* 河南通志, whose preface is dated 1731 (Yongcheng 9), it is stated that the Fuxian si was built (建, 創建) in the first year of Shenlong (705).[74] Wang Chang 王昶 (1725–1806), the well-known author of the *Jinshi cuibian* 金石萃編 (A Miscellany of Choice Inscriptions on Metal and Stone), objected that the date of the first year of Shenlong, given in the *Henan tongzhi,* was wrong.[75] Andō Kōsei 安藤更生, too, had no doubt that the local gazetteers mentioned above were wrong.[76]

To be sure, at first glance, we have the impression that this was a gross mistake: the evidence we have about the monastery, which according to the *Tang huiyao* was founded in 675,[77] seems to leave no doubt. Yet, I do not think that the date of 705 given by these late gazetteers is mistaken. It is, on the contrary, a very important date in the history of the monastery, precisely the date when the monastery's restructuring and enlargement were fully completed. And I would not exclude from consideration the possibility that such gazetteers were basing their remarks, more or less directly, on the date mentioned in the original inscription by Wu Zhao. We should not forget that up until the date of the flood in the early seventeenth century, the *stūpa* still existed. We are told that the overflowing river destroyed the *stūpa*, but it is possible that the base of the *sūtra* inscription, and other evidence, survived for some time. In any case, we cannot underrate the fact that this date corresponds precisely to the one indicated in the epigraphic work by Zhao Mingcheng and his wife Li Qingzhao as the date of the *stūpa* inscription.

Probably begun in 693, the restructuring of the monastery continued practically throughout the rest of the existence of Wu Zhao's Zhou dynasty. This may give us an idea of the scale and grandiosity of the project that Wu Zhao intended to realize for the institution which, for her and for the Buddhist leaders who had brought her to power and supported her, was intended to be the number one monastery of the empire, perhaps even more vast and majestic than other previous Great Monasteries (though different, in its plan and architecture, from them, if its model was the Great Monastery of Nālandā).[78] A critical passage by the great minister Yao Chong 姚崇 (651–721) in 713 also attests to the impressive scope of the monastery.[79]

Close examination of the evidence from Wu Zhao's inscription yields several clues as to the plan and architecture of the monastery. Seemingly astonished by its majesty and beauty, at a certain point Wu Zhao remarks: 'One knows not whether one is staring at the abode of Śakra, Lord [of gods] (Śakra devendra); one seems to have chanced upon the seat of the [Buddha] Dengwang 燈王.'[80]

Perhaps this is simple rhetoric, but I do not think so. Wu Zhao might be sincere in her wonderment, expressing at once marvel and satisfaction with the results achieved after so many years of work. I would also note that Wu Zhao, presented by her Buddhist ideologues as a living bodhisattva, possibly did not wish her readers to forget that she had personally known the Buddha Dengwang in the remote past of a previous life and that it was that very Buddha who was involved in the prophecy of her formidable future destiny – namely that she would become a bodhisattva and a universal sovereign, with the aspect of a woman, according to the current interpretation of the *Great Cloud sūtra*.[81]

We have seen, then, that the physical transformation of the old principality monastery, founded in Luoyang in 675, into a great dynastic monastery, began in 693 and was completed in 705, when the new *stūpa* was finished.[82] This does not mean, of course, that the monastery did not exist during the rebuilding process. Indeed, it existed as an institution, and most of its monks presumably conducted their activities from their temporary headquarters at Foshouji si or elsewhere. Who were these monks and what was their role in the religious and political life of the new Zhou dynasty? To deal with these issues here would take much space. In part, I have treated them elsewhere, but certainly much remains to be done.[83] I would only say here that during the period of reconstruction the importance of the Da Fuxian si cannot be fully understood in terms of what religiously and politically relevant activities were being carried out there. It is more relevant that we pay attention to the persons affiliated with the monastery. I have mentioned above four of them: Bodhiruci, Manicintana, Yijing, and Wŏnch'ŭk (Yuance). Other names are mentioned

in the appended table, and of others we will perhaps never know. However, one point deserving attention is that during the period the monastery was being physically enlarged, its staff also had to be enlarged.

We can easily imagine not only that Wu Zhao tried to attract eminent monks from other monasteries, but also that a good number of these monks were attracted by the prospect of belonging to what had become the foremost monastery in the empire. Unfortunately, we do not yet have much evidence on these matters, but a good example is certainly that of Wŏnch'ŭk (Yuance), a famous monk of the Ximing Monastery 西明寺 in Chang'an who became affiliated with the Da Fuxian si sometime before 7 December 695. Another example is that of Fuli 復禮 (fl. 681–705), a monk of the Daxingshan Monastery 大興善寺 in Chang'an. Like Wŏnch'ŭk, he, too, had affiliated himself with the Da Fuxian si in Luoyang by 7 December 695 and he, too, was a Bhadanta-translator who collaborated with Divākara, Devendraprajña, Śikṣānanda, and Yijing. By 8 August 705 he had become the chief of Da Fuxian si, thus succeeding Huicheng and Faming.[84] The power of irresistible attraction exerted by the Da Fuxian si encourages us to suggest that the aforementioned Huicheng 慧澄, who in 696, in his capacity as the head of the monastery, requested the destruction of the *Laozi Huahu jing* 老子化胡經, might be none other than the 'master of the Law Cheng' (Cheng *fashi* 澄法師), Elder (*shangzuo*) of the Ximing si in Chang'an. On the eve of the overthrow of the Tang dynasty, he was in Luoyang, where he associated with the monks of the Foshouji si, the leaders of which presented the *Commentary on the Great-cloud sūtra*. Huicheng had a very important role in legitimating the story told in the anonymous preface of how the Jibin monk Buddhapālita came to realize the version of the most celebrated of the numerous Chinese versions of the *Buddhoṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī sūtra*. As mentioned above, the preface was the key document of a highly religious and political enterprise. The fact that Wŏnch'ŭk, too, was involved in the project is another element indicating his connection with 'master of the Law Cheng.' It seems logical, then, that both of these high monks of the prestigious Ximing si became affiliated with the Da Fuxian si.[85]

Built for the 'posthumous well-being' of Wu Zhao's father and mother, but above all for the glory of the Zhou Dynasty, the Da Fuxian si had a strange destiny indeed! It was completed and could be admired in all its splendor and magnificence at the very moment the Zhou dynasty ceased to exist and its only sovereign was about to die. In 705, the Da Fuxian si was probably the most splendid monastic institution in China, hosting the most important university of Buddhist culture. However, it was at that very moment that its crisis began. The Tang was restored on 3 March of that year, and the emperor Zhongzong left Luoyang on 18 November 706, transferring the political capital westward to Chang'an. This meant that Chang'an became the main religious capital, too, supplanting Luoyang. Besides, there was a more serious reason why the monastery entered a critical phase. It was the greatest dynastic monastery of the abolished Zhou dynasty, and this had an enormous relevance. With the passing of the time, there was increasing hostility towards the woman who had dared to eliminate the Tang and establish her own dynasty.

Its later history shows, however, that the Da Fuxian si did not wane from the political and religious scene so easily. After all, there must have been good reasons why the Japanese monks Eiei and Fushō, when they arrived in China in 733, as mentioned above, went to study at this monastery. And there must have been good reasons why Pei Du 裴度 (764–839), Regent (*liushou* 留守) of Luoyang, decided to do restoration work on it.[86]

Acknowledgments

This paper is based on a lecture delivered by Antonino Forte (1940–2006) at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada in the fall of 2002 at my invitation. It was later submitted as a contribution to a volume co-edited by James Benn, Lori Meek, and James Robson. For this purpose, the article was reviewed by Lori Meek, now an associate professor at the University of Southern California. Due to his unexpected passing in the summer of 2006, Professor Forte was unable to fully revise the article in line with the comments provided by the reviewer. On the suggestion of Erika Forte, the paper has been presented in this publication as it was left, with only minimal edits provided by Kelly Carlton, an executive editor of this journal. Erika Forte, Norman Harry Rothschild, and I have extensively reviewed this edited version to ensure the preservation of Professor Forte's authorial voice. Certainly, this is not the final version Professor Forte would have published if alive. Nevertheless, we thought the information might still prove useful for other scholars.

For reasons that have remained a mystery to me, Professor Forte did not visit North America until the fall of 2002, when he turned 62, years after he established a worldwide reputation as a Sinologist. This occasioned my joking comparison of his visit to Vancouver with the epochal exploration into the American Continent attempted by his Italian compatriot Cristoforo Colombo (1450–1506). In retort, Professor Forte remarked, quite seriously, that while Colombo came for gold, he came for paper: an excuse to write on a cosmopolitan monastery in seventh to eighth century China closely related to the sole woman thearch – both in name and in reality – in the history of imperial China.

The female ruler he referred to is, as many readers of this journal know, Wu Zhao (624–705; reigned 690–705), the fascinating and controversial woman who intrigued Professor Forte for a substantial part of his life. Although primarily renowned for his research on the state-*samgha* relationship under the Great Tang and Zhou dynasties, particularly under the unprecedented reign of Wu Zhao, Professor Forte's research extends far beyond the territory of the Tang–Zhou empire – despite the immensity of this area of research in itself. He is also respected and remembered for his work on several ancient religious traditions in medieval China (such as Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism), as well as on Tang China's multifaceted interactions with its neighbouring regimes, particularly those in Central Asia.

Not merely a devoted scholar, he was also a keen promoter of international education. His work benefitted a number of younger scholars around the globe, including me. In addition to being an inspiring mentor, he is also fondly remembered as a caring friend. In the course of his long stay in Kyoto as the Director of the Italian School of East Asian Studies (ISEAS), it became a Forte family tradition of sorts to invite international students to spend the New Year's Eve at their cozy house in Hieidaira on the outskirts of Kyoto. I am always reminded, whenever I celebrate New Year's Eve with my family and my own students, of the scene of his student-guests lining up to accept New Year gifts (typically a sizeable loaf of *panettone*) that he and his wife, Lilla, 'distributed' at the end of each New Year party.

Above all, Professor Forte endeavoured to boldly break down boundaries he perceived might prevent the enhancement of scholarship or hinder communication among different cultures and peoples. I believe this barrier-shattering desire must have underlain his heroic effort to establish and maintain for so many years the ISEAS in Kyoto, a heaven and haven for several generations of international students of East Asian Studies and Buddhology working in Kyoto. It is therefore meaningful that this journal, a scholarly enterprise jointly sponsored by a leading research institution in China (the Institute of World Religions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) and one of the foremost scholarly presses in Europe (Routledge) includes in its inaugural issue a manuscript left by one of the greatest Sinologists of our day, a man who devoted his life to bridging the scholarly worlds in the West and East. (Jinhua Chen, on February 24, 2015, in Vancouver, Canada).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

1. Xu and Huang, *Luoyang-shi wenwu zhi*, 175.

2. The two inscriptions are not so old. In 1989, I managed to read, overcoming the smell of the dump, the date Guangxu [21].6.26 (16 August 1895) on the inscription on the right side of the gate; the one on the left might be of the same date.
3. See Wen, "Da Fuxian si," 1996, 331; 2001, 351.
4. On Eiei and Fushō, see *Nihon kodai jinmei jiten* 1.272b-c and 6.1476c-78a, respectively. On the importance of Dingbin – his thought and his influence as a vinaya and Ekayāna advocate – on the Japanese monks Jianzhen (Jap. Ganjin) 鑑眞 (688–763) and Saichō 最澄 (767–822), see Moro, "Sōbu risshū Jōbin," 95–112.
5. *Lidai minghua ji* 3.49; Acker, *Some T'ang and pre-T'ang Texts*, vol. 1, 305.
6. See Forte, *Political Propaganda.*
7. Forte, "Monastero dei grandi Chou," 417–29.
8. *Henan zhi*, 26.
9. Ibid., 18, 26.
10. Forte, "Chongfu-si," 456–57.
11. *Tang huiyao* 48.848.
12. *Zizhi tongjian* 202.6373.
13. Ibid. 202.6380.
14. Forte, "The Origins and Role of the Great Fengxian Monastery," 367, 373.
15. Forte, "Chongfu-si," 457–58.
16. Fujieda, "Tunhuang Manuscripts," 32.
17. On the title Trepiṭaka, see Forte, "The Relativity of the Concept of Orthodoxy," 247–48 (where I also give the reason for adopting "Trepiṭaka" rather than "Tripiṭaka").
18. See Forte, "Jibakara."
19. Needham translates the term as "magic mushrooms." Needham et al., *Science and Civilisation in China*, 159.
20. *Shelita* 舍利塔, *Śarīra-stūpa*. We know neither what kinds of relics were in the *stūpa* nor the origin of the relics. One possibility is that these were part of the relics found in the Guangzhai Quarter of Chang'an in 677. On these relics, see Chen, *Monks and Monarchs,* 122ff.
21. *Quan Tangwen* 218.4a4–5 (5.2784). This event also appears to have been alluded to in 690 in a passage from the *Commentary on the Great-cloud sūtra*. See Forte, *Political Propaganda*, 316n–317n.
22. Shendu was the name of Luoyang from 19 October 684 (Guangzhai 1.9.6 [*jiayin*]) to 3 March 705 (Shenlong 1.2.4 [*jiayin*]). See *Zizhi tongjian* 203.6421 and 208.6583, respectively. Before (from 658) and after (until 742) Luoyang was named Dongdu 東都, or Eastern Capital, it was first called Dongdu from 22 January 658 (Xianqing 2.12.13 [*dingmao*]) when it became the second capital (*Zizhi tongjian* 200.6308). It was renamed Dongjing 東京 on 31 March 742 (Tianbao 1.2.20) (*Zizhi tongjian* 215.6852).
23. The titles of Tianhuang 天皇 (Heavenly August) and of Tianhou 天后 (Heavenly Empress) were adopted by Gaozong and Wu Zhao on 20 September 674 (Shangyuan 1.8.15 [*renchen*]), the same day the new *nianhao* Shangyuan was adopted (see *Jiu Tang shu* 5.99; *Xin Tang shu* 3.71; *Tang huiyao* 3.24; *Zizhi tongjian* 202.6372).
24. *Zizhi tongjian* 203.6416; *Tang huiyao* 3.24.
25. *Jiu Tang shu* 94.2996.
26. *Zizhi tongjian* 202.6397.
27. Li Xian 李賢, second son of Wu Zhao, born in 651, was proclaimed the heir apparent on the first of July, 675. He was dismissed and reduced to the status of a commoner on 18 September 680. In 681 he was exiled to Bazhou 巴州, where he died in 684 (see Fitzgerald, *The Empress Wu*, 85–88, 95). Li Yanjie (*Tangren nianshou yanjiu*, 296–97) suggests, however, that he was born in 654.
28. See Forte, *Political Propaganda*, Chapter Two.
29. *Zizhi tongjian* 202.6399.
30. Forte, "The So-called Buddhapālita."
31. On Huizhi, see Forte, "Hui-chih," l05–34.
32. Forte, "Jibakara."
33. Forte, "Le moine Khotanais Devendraprajña," 290–91.
34. Forte, *A Jewel in Indra's Net*, 58–59.
35. Forte, "Le moine Khotanais Devendraprajña," 293.
36. Forte, *Political Propaganda*, esp. 108–23.

37. The character *du* 都 here stands for Dongdu 東都, the official name of Luoyang at the time when Yan Tingzhi wrote his text in 736. Yanagida (*Shoki no zenshi*, vol. 1, 324) writes that the Fuxian si mentioned in this inscription was in Chang'an. This is certainly an oversight. There is no trace of a Fuxian si having existed at Chang'an.
38. At this point *Jinshi cuibian* skips the character *xuan* 玄, indicating that it is a "mausoleum taboo" (*miaohui* 廟諱).
39. This inscription, whose complete title is *Da Tang gu Dazhi chanshi beiming bing xu* 大唐故大智禪師碑銘并序 (Great Tang Stele Inscription with Preface for the Late Chan Master Dazhi), is here quoted according to the rubbing reproduced in Beijing tushuguan jinshi zu, *Beijing tushuguan cang*, vol. 24, 14 (see lines 6–7). Among the editions, see *Jinshi cuibian* 81.25b9-26a2 (First Series, vol. 2, 1372) and *Quan Tangwen* 280.12b1-4 (6.3596).
40. See the rubbing of the inscription for Faru reproduced, edited, and explained in Huang and Zhu, *Luoyang mingbei jishi*, 112–15.
41. That Yan Tingzhi called the monastery Fuxian si (rather than Taiyuan si or Weiguo si, as it would be appropriate for the time in question) is probably because this was the name of the monastery when he was writing the text of the inscription.
42. *Jingde chuandeng lu* 4.232c14-21.
43. On Faming, see Forte, *Political Propaganda*, 108–19.
44. Yampolsky, *Platform Sutra*, 15.
45. Yan Tingzhi's inscription states that Yifu stayed at Fuxian si from Kaiyuan 13 (725) and that he went back to Chang'an in Kaiyuan 15 (727). Note that Xuanzong arrived at Luoyang on 12 December 724 (Kaiyuan 12.11.22 [*wuyin*]) (*Zizhi tongjian* 212.6762) and left on 9 November 727 (Kaiyuan 15.9 interc.22 [ge*ngshen*]) (*Zizhi tongjian* 213.6780).
46. *Tang huiyao* 48.848.
47. Forte, "The South Indian Monk Bodhiruci," 90.
48. *Quan Tangwen* 97.8a9 (3.1254).
49. *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* 9.567a-568a.
50. Forte, "The Activities in China of the Tantric Master Manicintana," 312.
51. In reality it was not so, and the episode should be interpreted in a larger context. See Forte, *Political Propaganda,* 116–19.
52. Forte, "Bodhiruci," 91–93.
53. This monastery, too, should be the object of a special study. For the time being, see Forte, "Daiji," 701a-03a.
54. Ibid., 683–84.
55. See the list of the collaborators to the *Great Zhou Catalogue, Da Zhou kanding zhongjing mulu*, 476.
56. *Da Zhou Ximing si gu dade Yance fashi Fo sheli ta ming bing xu,* in *Jinshi cuibian* 146.35a8-9, 2714.
57. *Da Tang zhongxing Sanzang Shengjiao xu*, in *Quan Tangwen* 17.20a9-b1 (1.242).
58. *Da Zhou kanding zhongjing mulu*, 476a4.
59. Wang, *Da Tang xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan jiaozhu*, 262.
60. Manicintana transferred to the Tianzhu si 天竺寺 in Longmen, south of Luoyang, in 711. See my article on Manicintana, Forte, "The Activities in China of the Tantric Master Manicintana," 313. However, contrary to what I stated in 1984 ("We do not know where he went to live after 706"), I now think that Manicintana was affiliated with the Da Fuxian si until 711, when he transferred to the Tianzhu si.
61. *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* 9.556b13-14.
62. Ōmura, *Shina bijutsu shi chōso hen*, 437–39; Soper, *Evidence for Early Buddhist Art*, 106.
63. Ōmura, *Shina bijutsu shi chōso hen*, 438.
64. *Quan Tangwen* 98.7a-11a (3.1264-1266).
65. Ibid. 98.7b6, 7b9-8a1.
66. *Zizhi tongjian* 205.6492.
67. *Zizhi tongjian* 208.6595.
68. See above, p. 49.
69. *Jinshi lu* 5.3b10-4a2 (First Series, 12.8826). See also Jin, *Jinshu lu jiaozheng*, 86.
70. *Zhongzhou jinshi kao* 6.10a4 (First Series, 18.13711).
71. *Zizhi tongjian* 208.6596.

72. Before the proclamation of the Zhou dynasty, Wu Zhao referred to her deceased husband Gaozong of the Tang dynasty as *xiansheng* 先聖. But here the term designates her parents who at that time had still the posthumous titles of emperor and empress; that is, as "saints" in the dynastic terminology.
73. *Lidai minghua ji* 3.49.
74. *Henan tongzhi*, 50.16a2-3 (2.1094). See also the *Henanfu zhi*, quoted in Andō, *Ganjin*, 79.
75. *Jinshi cuibian* 71.5a4-7 (First Series, 2.1209).
76. Andō, *Ganjin,* 79.
77. See Note 11.
78. I will discuss this important issue on another occasion.
79. *Zizhi tongjian* 210.6689.
80. *Da Fuxian si futu bei*, 9a3 (3.1265).
81. Clearly, the authors of the *Commentary on the Great-cloud sūtra* identify the Buddha Tongxingdeng 同姓燈 with Dengwang 燈王. See Forte, *Political Propaganda*, 262 and 262n–263n.
82. This *stūpa* clearly took the place of the original *stūpa* of the relics where, as seen above, in the early 680s the magic mushroom (*zhi* 芝) had been found.
83. For evidence attesting to their connection with the monastery and for more details on several of them, see *Political Propaganda*. For their names, see especially Chapter Two, Appendix A, 171–89. (Editorial Note: Please see this appendix reproduced in a table at the end of the article.)
84. Forte, *Political Propaganda,* Chapter Three.
85. Forte, "The So-called Buddhapālita."
86. *Xin Tang shu* 176.5267-68.

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Abbreviation

T. *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*. See Bibliography B.

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Da Fuxian si futu bei 大福先寺浮圖碑 [*Stūpa* stele of the Great Fuxian Monastery], by Wu Zhao 武曌 (d. 705), calligraphed by Wu Sansi 武三思 (d. 707). Inscription dated Shenglong 1.7 (25 July to 23 August 705). In *Quan Tangwen* 98.7a-11a (III, 1264-1266). Kyoto: Chūbun 中文, 1976.

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Appendix. Provisional table of monks affiliated with the Great Fuxian Monastery 大福先寺 in the years 675–705

Editorial note: When preparing this manuscript, the second edition of Professor Forte's book, *Political Propaganda*, had yet to be published. Professor Forte reproduced – without the introductory part and the notes – Appendix A of Chapter Two from this book manuscript to illustrate the ways in which some eminent monks were connected to the monastery. Now that the book has been published (in 2005, 171–89), we have decided to remove this appendix and instead provide a table showing its main contents.

Date		Name by which Da Fuxian si was known	Affiliated Monks			
Imperial date	Western date		*Sizhu* 寺主	*Shangzuo* 上座	*Duweina* 都維那	Other Monks
	ca. 676–679	Taiyuan si 太原寺	The Indian Divākara (613–688) translates four works in this monastery			
	ca. 685		?	Faming 法明 (?)	Chuyi 處一 (?) Huiyan 惠儼 (?)	
Chuigong 3.12.27	4 February 688	Weiguo dong si 魏國東寺	Divākara dies at the monastery.			
Before Yongchang 1.7.25	Before 15? August 689		Master of the Law Fei 胐法師 and his disciple Yifu 義福			
	Before 690	Weiguo dong si	Meditation Master Cheng 澄禪師			
	689-691	Weiguo dong si first and then Da Zhou dong si 大周東寺	Huicheng 慧澄 (?)	Faming 法明 (?)	Chuyi 處一 (?) Huiyan 惠儼 (?)	The Khotanese Devendraprajña (d. 690 or 691) worked in this monastery from before 26 January 689 to 690 or 691, Fuli 復禮 (?)
Ruyi 1	22 April – 22 October 692	Da Fuxian si 大福先寺	Fazang 法藏 (637–714)			
Changshou 2.2.13	24 March 693	Da Zhou dong si	Xuansi 玄嗣 (d. u.)			
Changshou 2.9.3	7 October 693	Da Zhou dong si	Huicheng 彗澄 (?)	Faming 法明	Chuyi 處一 Huiyan 惠儼	Dharmaruci/Bodhiruci
Changshou 2	Late 693		Manicintana			

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*).

Date		Name by which Da Fuxian si was known	Affiliated Monks			
Imperial date	Western date		*Sizhu* 寺主	*Shangzuo* 上座	*Duweina* 都維那	Other Monks
Tiance Wansui 1.10.26	7 December 695	Da Fuxian si	Huicheng 彗澄	Faming 法明 (?)	Huiyan 惠儼 Chongye 崇業	Bolun 波崙, Fuli 復禮, Yijing 義淨, Bodhiruci, Manicintana, Wŏnch'ŭk (Yuance) 圓測, Daoxiong 道夐, Xuantai 玄泰, Shenyan 審言, Huaiyan 懷琰, Cixun 慈訓, Huaigan 懷感, Yikong 義空, Wudeng 無等, Huaidao 懷道, Chengxing 澄性, Yanwang 彦汪, Huijue 惠覺, Zhengsui 貞邃, Huizheng 惠貞, Daizhen 待眞, Huiyi 會一, Xuanta 玄沓, Huiyou 慧猷, Xidao 晞道, Chongyan 崇彦, Fazang 法藏 (637–714)
Tiance Wansui	22 October 695 – 11 January 696	Da Fuxian si	Renjian 仁儉			
Shengli 2.10.8	5 November 699	Da Fuxian si	Faming 法明 (?)	Bolun 波崙	Huiyan 惠儼	Fuli 復禮, Yijing 義淨
Dazu 1.9.23	28 October 701	Da Fuxian si	Faming 法明	Bolun 波崙	Huiyan 惠儼 (?)	Cixun 慈訓, Sŭngjang (Shengzhuang) 勝莊, Yijing 義淨, Baosiwei 寶思惟 (Manicintana), Shilimoduo 尸利末多 (Śrīmata)
Chang'an 3.10.4	17 November 703	Da Fuxian si	Faming 法明	Bolun 波崙	Cixun 慈訓	Sŭngjang (Shengzhuang) 勝莊
Chang'an 4.1.15	24 February 704	Da Fuxian si	Fuli 復禮 (?)			
Shenlong 1.7.15	8 August 705		Fuli 復禮			