Buddhist Statecraft in East Asia

Studies on East Asian Religions

Edited by

James A. Benn (*McMaster University*)
Jinhua Chen (*University of British Columbia*)

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Cover illustration: Korean map (ca. 1800) of the world, which takes the mythical Buddhist mountain, Meru, as the center of the universe. British Library (Maps C.27.f.14.), public domain.

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Introduction

Stephanie Balkwill and James A. Benn

Perhaps the best way to approach this volume on Buddhist statecraft is with the following observation in mind: the proper functioning of the state is a Buddhist concern. Throughout the history of the tradition, Buddhists have engaged questions of statecraft in their creation and propagation of texts, doctrines, rituals, institutions, and visual cultures. Political actors have, in turn, employed these products both to support and contest political power and the means of governance. In creating these resources for "Buddhist Statecraft," Buddhists have acted both as members of religious communities and as agents of the state, often overtly. In this volume, we reject the idea that where Buddhists served as agents of the state they did so as politicians and not as religious actors, and we therefore seek to do away with the modern, secularist notion that politics and religion constitute different moral, ethical, and social spheres.[1] It is clear from the six case studies contained in this book that Buddhists have participated in statecraft as members of their own communities and that questions of authority, leadership, governance, and defense constituted a politics that was enacted through religion and not necessarily the other way around. This is not to say that Buddhist statecraft has never been employed cynically and within the context of *realpolitik*; rather, it is to foreground the inherently Buddhist nature of Buddhist statecraft and to argue that Buddhism has long been a strong partner in the governance of the state throughout East Asia.

Building on the initial assumption that Buddhist statecraft is inherently Buddhist, this volume aims to make an analytical intervention into the ways in which various forms of statecraft have been enacted in pre-modern East Asia. The studies in this volume all deal to some extent with the prominence of Sinitic forms of statecraft which were adopted and adapted across East Asia in pre-modern times. These Sinitic modalities of statecraft included within them a strong Buddhist component from the fifth century forward—the same historical era in which the non-Han Northern Dynasties as well as a variety of polities across modern-day Korea and Japan were beginning to employ the Chinese language, the Chinese calendar, and Chinese political and imperial policies

1 For a study of how the framing of religion in modernity, and in Asia, has embraced the western secularist notion of religious orthodoxy through the separation of church and state and thereby policed religious enactments of divine politics and superstition, see: Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

and infrastructures. As such, this larger East Asian adoption of Sinitic statecraft included aspects of Sinitic Buddhist statecraft; however, the Sino-centric model of Buddhism's relationship with the state cannot explain the independent and manifold instantiations of Buddhist statecraft that we see throughout the region. Indeed, just as the wide variety of states and independent polities across East Asia had their own unique forms of Buddhism, so, too, did they have their own forms of Buddhist statecraft that were in relationship with Sinitic Buddhist statecraft but in no way a mere reproduction of it.

Teasing out the diverse strands of the tangled historical relationships between Buddhism and the state in pre-modern East Asia may seem like an unnecessarily complex task. After all, from the perspective of modernity it appears evident that the countries of East Asia have shared a nexus of Buddhist texts, ideas, and rituals that have aided in the creation and maintenance of the state. And yet, the apparent similarities conceal a wealth of differences. In the case of East Asia, the cultural and literary prominence of China—whatever shape that name took throughout history—has affected how we see the history of Buddhism by consistently rooting East Asian Buddhist developments in formative impulses on the Chinese mainland. This, in turn, has created a regional model of cultural transmission from the center to the periphery, and Buddhism has come along for the ride. But we know that this is not entirely true: many of the states on the borders of the Chinese empire and beyond adopted Buddhism independently from Chinese political culture and did so in historically and geographically unique ways. Buddhism, it seems, had its own life; undeniably part of the transmission of Sinitic culture across East Asia, Buddhism also existed independently from it. As the case studies contained in this volume show, in some cases Buddhism was itself a source for the spread of Chinese political culture (instead of the other way around), in some cases Buddhism provided a method by which to assert difference from China, and, in other cases still, Buddhism allowed for "China" to become a flexible historical placeholder for both the legitimation of and opposition to new and innovative means of statecraft throughout the region.

From the distinct perspective of Buddhist Studies, this volume not only explores the ways in which Buddhists have thought about, served, and sometimes opposed the state across East Asia, but it also raises the question of the ways in which Buddhism, per se, holds the region together. As a powerful source for state formation, governance, and international relations, we argue that Buddhism, as an analytical category, should be understood as a kinetic force of cultural change and adaptation across the region that allowed for complex articulations of the relationship between the diverse states and polities that have exercised power at different times in history. In doing so, we follow the

lead of Jacqueline I. Stone, who, in her contribution to this volume cites Robert Campany's notion of "repertoire"[2] in her definition of Buddhism and reminds us that, "The notion of Buddhism, not as a discrete, systematic entity, but as a fluid 'repertoire' of ideas, practices, values, symbols, and models for action, has proved useful in accounting for internal inconsistencies, tensions, even contradictions within the tradition, without postulating problematic distinctions between a 'core essence' and later accretions." Additionally, building on the pioneering work of Tansen Sen[3] and others, we position our study of Buddhist statecraft in East Asia within the context of pre-modern transnational Buddhism. As a transnational cultural force, the strength and the longevity of the Buddhist tradition across East Asia is not due to the prominence of imperial China and its structures, but is in fact due to how the tradition allows for unique expressions of a shared cultural heritage in the region. With this volume focused on statecraft, we argue that rulers across East Asia looked to the Buddhist tradition as a form of state management precisely because the tradition was transregional and not because it was distinctly Chinese. Highlighting the transregional character of the tradition as it applies to statecraft allows us to expose and analyze the transregional networks of peoples, objects, ideas, and policies that define the region in all of its complexity.

1 What Is Buddhist Statecraft?

The typical narrative of the development of Buddhist interest in and means of governing the state begins with hagiographic legends from the tradition's history in India. As sources tell us,[4] the Buddha was born as a prince of the Śākyas but one who came into the world with auspicious bodily markings that

2 Robert Ford Campany, *Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 40–41.

3 For an example of this pioneering work, see: Tansen Sen, ed., *Buddhism Across Asia: Networks of Material, Intellectual, and Cultural Exchange, Vol. 1* (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2014).

4 The earliest extant written account that focuses on the final life arc of the Buddha (as opposed to previous life narratives, or *jātaka*s) is the poetic rendition of the poet Aśvaghoṣa (ca. 1st century CE), the *Buddhacarita* or *Acts of the Buddha*, likely dated to the first half of the first century of the Common Era [Edward Hamilton Johnston, trans., *Aśvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita, or, Acts of the Buddha, in Three Parts* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984), 17]. Harder to pin down, but likely from the first centuries of the Common Era, are the Pāli *Nīdānakathā* [Oskar von Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), § 111] along with a text preserved only in Chinese translation, *The Materials Collected by Saṃgharakṣa* (*Sengjialuocha suoji jing* 僧伽羅剎所集經: *T* no. 194).

spoke of his ambivalent fate: either he would become a buddha or a universal monarch, a cakravartin. As these same sources tell us, he would go on to renounce palace life and become a buddha, returning only to ordain many members of his family—including his son—into his newly-formed monastic community. Although it is possible to read the Buddha's life story as a rejection of kingship and of political involvement in general, the tradition has read it otherwise. Emphasizing the inherent connection between a buddha and a king in art, ritual, and literature, Buddhist traditions across Asia from historical times to the present have seen, in the Buddha's legend, the political idea that the buddha and the king are two sides of the same coin.[5] Both the king and the Buddha are partners in the ruling of the state; whereas the Buddha has cosmic authority, the cakravartin king has the authority to enact the Buddha's law in this world.[6]

These hagiographic legends that tell stories of the Buddha's last human life significantly postdate the conjectured life of the Buddha himself, having only been formalized in the early centuries of the Common Era alongside the legend of the prototypical Buddhist King, Aśoka (r. 268–232 BCE). Although Aśoka's own royal inscriptions show that he did not exclusively patronize Buddhism,[7] later Buddhist legends[8] of his life characterize him as the epitome of a *dharmarāja*,[9] or Buddhist King. The question of what came first—the mythical identification of a buddha as a king or the life of the historical Buddhist King Aśoka—is difficult to answer. What we can say is that the formation of the tradition's early mythologies spanned multiple centuries and that, across this span of time, they developed a connection between the Buddha and the king as well as between the Buddhist institution and the state that has been replicated across the entirety of Asia.

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5 For an example of a real-life scenario of the Buddha and the king being two sides of the same coin, see: Joe Cribb, "Kaniṣka's Buddha Coins—The Official Iconography of Śākyamuni and Maitreya," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 3, no. 2 (1980): 79–88.

6 The pre-eminent study of this buddha/king dynamic is: Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand Against a Historical Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

7 For primary sources attesting to Aśoka's alleged commitment to Buddhism, see minor rock edict one (MRE I) and rock edict twelve (RE XII) in: D.C. Sircar, *Aśokan Studies* (Calcutta: Indian Museum, 2000).

8 For an excellent study of the historical person and the legend of Aśoka, see: John S. Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the Aśokavādana* (Princeton Library of Asian Translations, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983).

9 Yün-hua Jan, "Rājadharma Ideal in Yogācāra Buddhism," in *Religion and Society in Ancient India, Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya Commemoration Volume* (Calcutta: Roy and Chowdhury, 1984), 221–234.

These Indic legends from the tradition's early history have been important across East Asia and more will be said about them throughout this volume; however, we begin our defining discussion of Buddhist statecraft in East Asia with a different foundational source: *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳: *T* no. 2059). The biographies contained in this Chinese collection from the Liang 梁 (502–557) dynasty speak to a relationship between Buddhists and the state from an explicitly Sinitic perspective and within the long-standing literary genre of biography. There are many biographies from the collection that would be instructive for a study of Buddhist statecraft—and indeed some of those stories are cited in this volume—but here we focus on the first biography in the collection, that of East Asia's first śramaṇa, the little-discussed Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga.[10] The biography[11] begins:

> Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga was originally from Central India. In manner, he was [like] a beneficent breeze. He understood the sūtras of the Greater and Lesser Vehicles and was always preaching and converting, considering it his duty. In the past, he went to a small vassal state of India to preach the *Sūtra of Golden Light* and met with an enemy state invading the borders. Mātaṅga simply said: "The *Sūtra* says: '[If one is] able to speak the law of this sūtra, then they we will be protected by the god of the earth. Because of this, wherever they dwell will be peaceful and happy.' Now all the bells and weapons [of war] have begun. How can this be beneficial?" Thereupon, vowing to forsake his body, he personally went forward with admonitions of peace. He succeeded [in establishing] cordial relations between the two countries. From this came his prestige.

This opening section of the biography tells us that not only was Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga an erudite scholar—one of the criteria for high prestige in Chinese biographies of all types—he was also a statesman and a Buddhist. In his missionary travels to spread the Buddha's law of both the Greater and Lesser Vehicles, he used the power of the teaching to protect the state, protect himself, and

10 Maspero has studied the monk within the context of the development of early Buddhism in China and includes a translation of an early version of the story from *Master Mou's Treatise on Settling Doubts* (*Mouzi Lihuolun* 牟子理惑論), which is a late 2nd or early 3rd Buddhist apologetic written by a Confucian convert to the tradition [Henri Maspero, "Le songe et l'ambassade de l'empereur Ming. Étude critique des sources." *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 10, no. 1 (1910): 95–130].

11 The biography is also translated (to French) in: Robert Shih, *Biographies Des Moines Éminentes* (*Kao Seng Tchouan*) *de Houei-Kiao* (Louvain: Université de Louvain, Institut Orientaliste, 1968), 1–2.

engage in international relations. In a way that resonates with Brian Victoria's study of Zen traditions in the Second World War, Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga supports the state through his own willingness to sacrifice his physical body—a notion that Victoria links to Buddhist understandings of the worthlessness of the physical body within a Buddhist eschatological scheme.[12]

One of the foundational themes studied across this volume is the concept of "state-protection Buddhism." State-protection Buddhism, variably enacted, is a type of Buddhist activity undertaken for the explicit purpose of safeguarding the state from enemies and from natural disasters. In this story of Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga we see perhaps the earliest East Asian association between state-protection and the *Golden Light Sūtra* (Skt. *Suvarṇa-prabhāsôttama-sūtra*; Ch. *Jin guangming jing* 金光明經: *T* no. 663), a connection that has been reinforced in many times and places across the region, most notably in the state-protection Buddhism of the semi-mythical Japanese prince, Shōtoku Taishi 聖徳太子 (r. 593–622), who considered the sūtra essential for the divine protection of his polity.[13] Furthermore, the apotropaic protection given to Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga by the sūtra resonates with ritual practices of state protection that were undertaken on a large scale across East Asia throughout the medieval period. Such rituals were sponsored by the court and included a significant presence of monastics.[14] Much more will be said on the topic of state-protection Buddhism throughout this volume; however, for now, let us return to the biography in order to help further define Buddhist statecraft. The biography continues:

> During the Yongping 永平 reign of the Han 漢 Dynasty (58–75), Emperor Ming 明 (r. 57–75) dreamt one night of a golden man who came flying through the sky to him. Subsequently there was great assembly of ministers who undertook to prognosticate on what the emperor had dreamt. The erudite Fu Yi 傅毅[15] respectfully answered: "Your servant has heard

12 Brian Victoria, *Zen War Stories* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003): 106–146.

13 For an authoritative study of the sūtra's political life in Japan, see: Asuka Sango, *The Halo of Golden Light: Imperial Authority and Buddhist Ritual in Heian Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015).

14 For examples of such rites, see: Jinhua Chen, "Pañcavārṣika Assemblies in Liang Wudi's (r. 502–549) Buddhist Palace Chapel," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 66, no. 1 (2006): 43–103; Geoffrey C. Goble, *Chinese Esoteric Buddhism: Amoghavajra, the Ruling Elite, and the Emergence of a Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

15 Maspero has a long footnote on Fu Yi (Maspero, "Le songe et l'ambassade," 98 n. 1) which directs the reader to his biography in the *Book of the Later Han* (*Hou Han shu* 後漢書 80. 2610–2613).

> that there is a spirit in the Western Regions whose name is 'Buddha.' This must be what Your Majesty has dreamt of!" Considering this to be the case, the Emperor straightaway dispatched his Gentleman-in-Waiting 郎中 Cai Yin 蔡愔,[16] the student of the Court Academy Qin Jing 秦景 and others, commanding that they go to India to seek out the law of the Buddha.

This section of the biography brings us to the second of our volume's foundational themes: the relationship between monastics and the state as part of the larger interactions between pre-Buddhist notions of statecraft and the Buddhist tradition. In the story of Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga we encounter the well-known narrative of Han Emperor Ming's dream of a golden man, whom his court advisers divined must have been the Buddha, or the "God of the Western Regions." Records of this story in historical documents suggest that though the story was known in Buddhist materials as early as the second century,[17] it was only in the fifth century that the story came to be told in court-produced materials of a political or secular nature: both the *Book of the Later Han* (*Hou Han shu* 後漢書)[18] and the slightly later *Book of the Wei* (*Wei shu* 魏書)[19] contain retellings of the story, as does the *Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang* (*Luoyang qielan ji* 洛陽伽藍記: *T* no. 2092).[20] Court-produced historical sources from the later Han do not speak of Buddhism, and there is no evidence that Buddhism was commonly practiced in the Western Regions of China during the

16 It is unclear who Cai Yin and Qin Jing are. As Maspero points out, there is a person by the name of Qin Jing known within the time period; however, it is nearly impossible to link that person with our text (Maspero, "Le songe et l'ambassade," 98 n. 2).

17 The two early versions of this story are found in the *Scripture in Forty-two Sections* (*Sishi'er zhang jing* 四十二章經, *T* no. 784: 722a14–23) and in *Master Mou's Treatise on Settling Doubts*. Worth mentioning is that only these two early versions of the story mention the above-discussed courtiers by name. As such, our text in *Biographies of Eminent Monks* stands out for its similarity to early texts and not to other texts from its own epoch.

18 *Hou Han shu* 88. 2922.

19 *Wei shu* 114. 3025. This is also translated and studied in: Leon Hurvitz, "Wei Shou. Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism. An English Translation of the Original Chinese Text of *Wei-Shu* CXIV and the Japanese Annotation of Tsukamoto Zenryū," in *Unkō sekkutsu. Seireki goseiki ni okeru Chūgoku hokubu Bukkyō kutsu-in no kōkogaku-teki chōsa hōkoku. Tōyō bunka kenkyū-sho chōsa Shōwa jūsan-nen Shōwa nijūnen* 雲崗石窟.西曆五世紀における中國北部佛教窟院考古學的調查報告東方文化研究所調查昭和十三年昭和二十年 [Yun-Kang [Pinyin: Yungang], the Buddhist Cave-Temples of the Fifth Century A.D. in North China. Detailed Report of the Archaeological Survey Carried out by the Mission of the Tōyō Bunka Kenkyū-Sho 1938–1945] Vol. XVI, Supplement, eds. Mizuno Seiichi, 水野清一, Nagahiro Toshio, and 長廣敏雄 (Kyoto: Jinbunkagaku kenkyū-sho, Kyoto University, 1956), 28–29.

20 *T* no. 2092: 1014b25-c17.

later Han; however, historical sources do attest to Han Emperor Ming being very active in the Western Regions. Ruling over a court that had made strategic alliances with steppe peoples[21] and heading a military that, for a short time, controlled Khotan and, along with it, the Tarim Basin,[22] Han Emperor Ming's reign is synonymous with engagement with the Western Regions. By the fifth century when Fan Ye 范曄 (398–446) was compiling and creating the *Book of the Later Han*, the Western Regions were heavily Buddhist and they represented a sort of Buddhist vanguard between the dominant cultural centers of the Iranian, Indian, and Sinitic worlds. In his drive to compile an authoritative history of the period of Han rule under Emperor Ming—from a distance of more than 350 years—Fan Ye looked to Buddhist sources as his own sources. This constitutes a certain re-shaping of Chinese historiography from the perspective of the fifth century[23] and points to the increasing importance of Buddhists and Buddhism in the governing structures of Fan Ye's time.

What we see in the early medieval popularization of the story of the Han Emperor and China's first śramaṇa, Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga, is the gradual development of a deep connection between Buddhism and the means of state governance that had reached maturity by the fifth century. That connection includes the meeting of the Buddhist tradition with what is often called Confucianism. The precise meaning of the term "Confucianism" is debated. For the purposes of this volume, the term "Confucian" is used to designate an elite stratum of literary men who served as courtiers and policy advisors to the emperor and to the state at a variety of bureaucratic levels from the capital to the provinces, and whose education and status depended on their knowledge of both classical and court-produced literature and whose politics were largely authorized through ancient precedent. As a group, court Confucians constituted an orthodox, patriarchal, and traditionalist power bloc which characterized the emperor as the Son of Heaven (*Tianzi* 天子) and served the state through the staffing of court and governmental bureaucracy at all levels. By the time of the writing of the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* and the *Book of the Later Han*, these Confucian courtiers were in regular contact with Buddhists at court, effectively losing some of their own power bloc to make space for the arising Buddhist power

21 For example, under the reign of Han Emperor Ming, a number of joint Sino-Xiongnu military ventures were undertaken against other steppe peoples in the borderlands, see: Sophia-Karin Psarras, "Han and Xiongnu: A Reexamination of Cultural and Political Relations (II)," *Monumenta Serica*, 52 (2004), 59–60.

22 *Hou Han shu*: 88. 2909 & 2915–2916.

23 For a study of Fan Ye's contribution to the shaping of Chinese historiography, see: Stephen Durrant, "Place of *Hou Han shu* in Early Chinese Historiography," *Monumenta Serica* 67, no. 1 (2019): 165–181.

bloc who characterized the emperor as a *dharmarāja*, and who sought a relationship of mutual benefit with the state and its ruler. As we will see throughout this volume, our theme of the meeting of Buddhist statecraft with pre-Buddhist modes of statecraft in China is articulated through a spectrum of ambivalence. From the full adoption of Buddhists as agents of the state to Buddhist/Confucian infighting and, finally, to the outright suppression of Buddhists and their means of statecraft, the relationship between the old Confucian elite at court and the new Buddhist contingent has long been fraught with tension and controversy, and sometimes, even, harmony.

Finally, this connection between Buddhism and governance in both China and the Western regions calls to mind a different telling of the dream of a golden man which is found in the *Book of the Jin* (*Jin shu* 晉書), a history that includes a chronicle of both the Jin 晉 Dynasty (266–420) and of the tumultuous period of the Sixteen Kingdoms (*shiliu guo* 十六國) (304–439) that coincided with the Jin. Compiled in the Tang 唐 (618–907) when the connection between Buddhism and the Western Regions was well known, the text's biography[24] of Lü Guang 呂光 (r. 386–400)—the founding emperor of the Later Liang 後涼 (386–403), one of the Sixteen Kingdoms ruled over by non-Han peoples—recounts that Lü had also had a dream of a golden man who was the Buddha. When campaigning in the Western Regions as a general, Lü and his army were poised to take the famous Buddhist city of Kucha. Lü then dreamt of a golden figure fleeing the city at night by flying into the air and soaring past the city walls. Because of this dream, the biography tells us, Lü knew that the people of Kucha had been deserted by their god and could therefore be defeated.[25] The abandonment of the state-protecting Buddha that we see in Lü's story, juxtaposed against the arrival of the Buddha that we see in the parallel dream of the Han emperor included in our biography of Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga as well as in Fan Ye's *Book of the Later Han*, works to position China as a protected and sacred land for the Buddha and for the spread of Buddhism. Both of these themes continue on in the biography below, which details how Han Emperor Ming's engagement with the Western Regions served to make space for the Buddhist tradition in his realm via his connection with (and suzerainty over) the Western Regions. The biography continues:

> While over there [in India/Western Regions], Yin and the others had the opportunity to see Mātaṅga and thereupon beseeched him to come to the

24 *Jin shu* 122. 3069–3072. The biography is also translated in: Richard B. Mather, *Biography of Lü Kuang* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959).

25 *Jin shu* 122. 3055.

> land of the Han. Mātaṅga declared his intention to spread [the Buddha's law] and did not fear weariness or suffering in his trek through the desert to arrive in Luoyang where Emperor Ming increased the prestige of his invitation by establishing [for him] a pure abode outside of the west gate of the city for him to dwell in. The land of the Han saw the commencement of its (lineage of) śramaṇas.

With this portion of the biography, we encounter the third of our volume's foundational themes: imperial sponsorship of Buddhists, their texts, institutions, and teachings by Buddhist rulers. The question of who can be a Buddhist ruler is particularly noteworthy in the context of the Sinitic model of state legitimation utilized across the region and traditionally supported by the Confucian bloc at court. Ideologically conceived of as the Son of Heaven, the Chinese ruler was normally male and Han Chinese.[26] As we will see in this volume, Buddhist rulers challenged the very notion of the Son of Heaven and therefore included both women[27] and non-Han[28] persons in their ranks.

This section of the biography of Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga also gives us space to consider what we might usefully call this type of Buddhism that was practiced under the direct patronage of East Asian rulers and often aligned with the court and the capital city. Throughout the medieval period and across East Asia, the Buddhist monastic institution developed as an organization that was in tandem to the court itself, with members of both institutions constantly blurring the often-porous boundaries between the two. We suggest that this form of Buddhism might be helpfully called "metropolitan Buddhism" in the sense that the major monastic institutions that have interacted with the central court and its bureaucratic structures have been located within or adjacent to major metropolitan areas, as we see above in the story of Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga. By the fifth century, a variety of courts had established a system of court/monastic

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26 Marc Abrahamson insightfully reviews the terms used in Chinese texts to refer to ethnic Self as opposed the ethnic Other and concludes that "Han" and "non-Han" are useful modern equivalents, see: *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 3.

27 The best-known example of a woman who employed Buddhist texts, teachings, and objects in the legitimation of her rule is Wu Zetian 武則天 (624–705), or Emperor Wu Zhao 武曌 (r. 690–705). For a recent overview of her use of Buddhism, see: Harry N. Rothschild, *Emperor Wu Zhao and Her Pantheon of Devis, Divinities, and Dynastic Mothers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015) pp. 191–227.

28 For a case study of precisely this dynamic, see: Scott Pearce, "A King's Two Bodies: The Northern Wei Emperor Wencheng and Representations of the Power of His Monarchy," *Frontiers of History in China*, 7 no. 1 (2012): 90–105.

ranks that allowed for imperial oversight of monastic institutions to be disseminated from the metropole to the provinces. Much like the role of the Metropolitan Bishop within episcopal Christian traditions, the rank of "Metropolitan Overseer" (*duweina* 都維那)[29] was one such role that a monk with close ties to the court might hold in this form of Buddhism. The primary duty of the role was the dissemination of court policies out to monasteries within a specific region, and it appears that perhaps Buddhists themselves did not always view their court-appointed overseers in a positive light.[30] Throughout this volume, metropolitan Buddhism is expressed in different ways. In some of the case studies below, the role of empire is stressed and the term "imperial Buddhism" seems a better fit, whereas in other studies the role of the Buddhist institution is stressed and "institutional Buddhism" works best. In all cases, however, the case studies in this volume point to a clear convergence of court and monastic institutions in metropolitan environments, which is anchored in the dynamic of imperial patronage of monastics and monastic support for state governance.

Moving on with our discussion of what constitutes Buddhist statecraft, we return to the biography of Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga for the penultimate time. At this point in the biography, we learn of Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga's activities undertaken while under the patronage of the emperor. The text continues:

> However, in this early phase of the teaching of the Great Law, there wasn't yet anybody who embraced it and trusted in it. As a result, his accumulation of deep understanding was not recounted or written down. He died a short while later in Luoyang. The record said: "Mātaṅga translated the *Scripture in Forty-Two Sections* in one scroll. Originally, this was sealed up in the fourteenth bay of the stone chamber of the imperial library. The

29 According to Jonathan Silk, although the origin of the terms *weina* and *douweina* are something of a mystery, the words are likely aligned with the Sanskrit *karmadāna*. In his study, Silk shows how the *weina* were involved in the intricate day-to-day running of the monastery, including locking the gates at night and keeping time. He also presents evidence that the appointment of a *weina* was to come from the monastic community and not from the laity. On this, see: *Managing Monks: Administrators and Administrative Roles in Indian Monastic Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 127 ff. In her review of Silk, Petra Kieffer-Pulz has also commented on the meaning of the word *karmadāna*, and though she understands it differently, she still relates it to the task of administering the monastery, see: "Review of Jonathan Silk's *Managing Monks. Administrators and Administrative Roles in Indian Buddhist Monasticism*." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 53, no. 35–94 (2010): 71–88, p. 80.

30 T.H. Barrett, "The Fate of Buddhist Political Thought in China: The Rajah Dons a Disguise," in *The Buddhist Forum, Vol. 4: Seminar Papers 1994–1996*, ed. Tadeusz Skorupski, (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1996), 1–7.

> place where Mātaṅga had lived was the present-day White Cloud temple just outside of the western city gate of Luoyang."

The fourth foundational theme to be considered in this introduction to Buddhist statecraft is the idea that Buddhism, itself, became a vector for the spread of Sinitic culture to the larger East Asian world. In the biography above we see a few hints as to how this happened when we understand that the story of Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga's struggle to spread the Buddha's law in his new home is none other than the story of the making of China into East Asia's Buddhist homeland.

On the cover of this book is a map.[31] Produced in Korea around the year 1800, it is both a political map and a religious one. It maps physical geography on to Buddhist cosmology by re-organizing land through the structure of Mt. Meru—the mythical Buddhist mountain at the center of the world surrounded by concentric rings of land and sea. At the center of the map is China, surrounded by the Great Wall and the Yellow River and labelled "Central Plains" (*zhongyuan* 中原), a classical name for China, which, like its modern equivalent of "Middle Kingdom" (*zhongguo* 中國), suggests cultural and geographical centrality. There has been a long history of scholarship on the connection between these Chinese words for China and the Sanskrit word that designates the land where the Buddha was supposed to have lived and preached, Madhyadeśa, or, the "Middle Country."[32] This scholarship emphasizes shifting notions of the center within a borderland complex that sees the Buddhist "center" shift from India to China during China's medieval period. In our map, the merging of Indic and Sinitic notions of the center sees China become the center of the Buddhist world; surrounded by the famed five peaks supplemented by other mountain ranges connected with Buddhist practice and belief, China, here, is depicted at the apex of Mt. Meru and the center of the Buddhist world.

Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga's biography is an example of Buddhist historiographical thinking in the medieval period which sought to highlight the passage of Buddhism to China and the emergence of China as a new center for Buddhism.[33]

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31 *'Cheonhado' world map. Seoul, c. 1800*. ca. 1800. *British Library* (Maps C.27.f.14), London. Accessed November 20, 2020, https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/cheonhado-world-map.

32 Max Deeg provides a useful overview of such studies in: "Wailing for Identity: Topical and Poetic Expressions of Cultural Belonging in Chinese Buddhist Literature," in *Buddhist Encounters and Identities Across East Asia*, eds. Ann Heirman, Carmen Meinert, and Christoph Anderl (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 225–252.

33 For a study on the same theme that uses a Tang-dynasty Buddhist gazetteer as the main source, see: Janine Nicol, "Daoxuan (c. 596–667) and the Creation of a Buddhist Sacred Geography of China: An Examination of the Shijia Fangzhi 釋迦方志" (PhD diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2016).

The monk's struggle to disseminate his new teaching in China goes hand-in-hand in the text with the building of a new Buddhist infrastructure in East Asia that includes early examples of Chinese Buddhist rock-cut caves, which were famed throughout the region, as well as the production of Buddhist literature written in Chinese and with only tenuous connections to any pieces of Indic or Central Asian literature.[34] Furthermore, when the biography was written in the sixth century, China had become the main global producer of Buddhist teachings and artifacts, flooding the market in East Asia with texts and objects of a Chinese provenance[35] and even sending samples of Sinitic Buddhism back to Central Asia and India.[36] Canonical Buddhist texts across East Asia are, for the large majority, written in literary Chinese and not Sanskrit, and dominant sectarian traditions across the region maintain important connections to Chinese Buddhist teachers, exegetes, and patriarchs even if they ultimately trace their lineages to India. This is not to say that Sinitic Buddhism is the de facto Buddhism of East Asia—indeed, the case studies in this volume would argue otherwise—but only that the presence of China in East Asian Buddhism is undeniable and that Buddhism, itself, was a source for the spread of Sinitic culture which, in the vast regions it was inherited and adapted, took on a variety of disparate forms within the context of geographical and historical specificity, location, and intersectionality.

Finally, we can return to the biography of Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga to introduce our last foundational theme: the persecution of Buddhism as a form of statecraft. Of the persecution of Buddhism, the text says:

> Traditionally, it is related that a king of a foreign land tried to destroy all of the temples and only the *Cāturdiśaḥ* (Four Directions) Temple was not destroyed and ruined. One night, there was a White Horse who circled the pagoda wailing sorrowfully. Straightaway, it was told to the king and the

34 Kāsyapa-Mātaṅga is said to be the translator of the foundational Chinese Buddhist text, *The Scripture in Forty-two Sections* though this has been challenged, see: Robert Sharf, "The Scripture in Forty-Two Sections," in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 360–371.

35 For a recent study on the topic of the replication and reproduction of Buddhist texts, images, and relics in medieval China, see: Hsueh-man Shen, *Authentic Replicas: Buddhist Art in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019).

36 For two notable studies of this back-transmission of Buddhist texts and ideas to Central Asia and India, see: Jan Nattier, "The Heart Sūtra: A Chinese Apocryphal Text?" *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 15, no. 2 (1992): 153–223; Diego Loukota, "Made in China? Sourcing the Old Khotanese *Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabhasūtra*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 139, no. 1 (January–March 2019): 67–90.

> king immediately ceased the destruction of all of the temples. Because of this the name "*Cāturdiśaḥ*" was changed to "White Horse" and therefore many monasteries were named after it.

Though the particulars of the persecution of Buddhism that we read of in this story are undisclosed and left largely to the historical imagination, the truth is that by the time of the writing of the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* there had been aggressive persecutions of the tradition. The most well-known is the persecution of Buddhism under the non-Han dynasty of the Northern Wei 北魏 (386–534), which was ruled over by the Tuoba 拓拔 branch of the Xianbei 鮮卑, nomadic peoples from the steppe who spoke a para Mongolic language. Their leaders were definitely "foreign kings" from the perspective of the southern dynasties. Although the Northern Wei eventually emerged as a major contributor to Buddhism and Buddhist Statecraft in East Asia, in the earlier half of the dynasty the rulers violently oppressed the tradition[37] and throughout the fifth century and early sixth centuries they continued to struggle with popular Buddhist rebellions in their polity.[38] What we see in the Northern Wei struggle with Buddhism is something that is repeated throughout the region: the Buddhism of the court—the metropolitan Buddhism of the monastic and the imperial elite—formed a Buddhist orthodoxy that was policed by both the court and the monastic institution but did not necessarily align or agree with other forms of Buddhist teaching, infrastructure, and action undertaken across the realm. As such, although there have been persecutions of Buddhism by non-Buddhists, there have also been persecutions or purges of Buddhism by Buddhists who were part of the apparatus of the state and its religious orthodoxy. In the case of our biography, the persecution of Buddhism is resolved by miraculous means: a wailing and peregrinating white horse at the eponymous foundational temple of metropolitan Buddhism mythically established by the Han Emperor was enough to stop the persecution of the tradition. Furthermore, from this story of persecution, do we also see an interrelated story of growth. The White Horse temple went on to become one of the most important centers of Buddhist practice in medieval China and housed famous monastic translators throughout the ages.[39]

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37 Liu Shufen, "Ethnicity and the Suppression of Buddhism in Fifth-Century North China: The Background and Significance of the Gaiwu Rebellion," *Asia Major* 15, no. 1 (2002): 1–21.

38 For a study of the most well-known of these rebellions, see: Erik Zürcher, "'Prince Moonlight.' Messianism and Eschatology in Early Medieval Chinese Buddhism," *T'oung Pao* 68, no. 1/3 (1982): 1–75.

39 Antonello Palumbo, "Dharmarakṣa and Kaṇṭhaka: White Horse Monasteries in Early

Finally, with this story of persecution and growth does the biography of Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga come to an end. So, too, does this wide discussion of the characteristics of what we have here termed "Buddhist statecraft in East Asia." In the above discussion we have laid out five themes of Buddhist statecraft that will be discussed throughout this volume. To summarize, they are:

1) State-protection Buddhism
2) The meeting of Buddhist statecraft with pre-Buddhist means of statecraft
3) Imperial sponsorship of Buddhism, often by Buddhist rulers
4) Buddhism as a source for the spread of Sinitic culture across East Asia
5) The persecution of Buddhism as a procedure of statecraft

In addition to identifying these five themes of Buddhist statecraft in East Asia, we have also suggested a potentially helpful term for how to conceptualize the strategic ways by which Buddhism and the court have existed as two arms of the state: metropolitan Buddhism. As we have seen in the biography of Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga—and as we will see further throughout the case studies in this volume—rulers from a variety of states across East Asia funded a Buddhism that served the state and that was in close physical proximity to the state's own centers of power and administration. And yet, this metropolitan Buddhism was not an unchallenged, top-down system to which all Buddhists across the polity adhered and agreed. Indeed, many of the case studies in this volume describe scenarios of intra-Buddhist disagreement as well as a certain governmental ambivalence toward the Buddhist tradition in various times and places.

2 Beyond Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga: The Case Studies in This Volume

In the above section we introduced the foundational themes employed in our discussion of Buddhist statecraft in East Asia through the story of Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga and his arrival in China. However, this is not a book specifically about China or specifically about monks. Though both China and monks will feature heavily throughout the volume, the case studies contained below move us beyond both monastic and Sino-centric spheres by analyzing a broad spectrum of examples of Buddhist statecraft from across East Asia. The case studies also employ a diverse array of source materials that purposely refocus the conversation in Buddhist studies from canonical texts to historical texts. The

Medieval China," in *Buddhist Asia 1: Papers from the First conference of Buddhist Studies held in Naples, May 2001*, eds. Giovanni Verardi and Silvio Vita (Kyoto, Italian School of East Asian Studies, 2003): 167–216.

authors utilize historical annals, dynastic histories, ritual texts, exegetical writings, entombed biography, and art-historical objects as primary sources alongside canonical texts in order to contextualize the historical and geographical specificity of Buddhist statecraft across the regions of East Asia. Similarly, to refocus the study of East Asian Buddhism away from the Chinese model of center and periphery, the case studies in this volume all point to what we might refer to as dynamic re-centering, wherein non-Han states within and on the borders of China, as well as states in modern-day Korea and Japan, constitute their own centers of cultural production and political power and have enacted their own forms of Buddhist statecraft therein. The chapters are arranged chronologically; however, they have been chosen to articulate the five themes laid out above. By way of an introduction, what follows is a brief outline of the case studies that highlights their related foundational themes, points to important conversations that take place between them, and helps to establish a chronology of Buddhist statecraft in East Asia that we hope is beneficial to the reader.

The first and earliest of the studies in the volume is Stephanie Balkwill's "Metropolitan Buddhism vis-à-vis Buddhism at the Metropolis: How to Understand the *Ling* in the Empress Dowager's Name." Balkwill tells four interrelated stories of Northern Wei Empress Dowager Ling 靈 (d. 528) which reveal intra-Buddhist and intra-court tensions that surrounded the dynamic, difficult, and dangerous female ruler who is famed for being both a murderess and a Buddhist. Balkwill's study advances our theme of imperial patronage by Buddhist rulers by revealing the ways in which the Empress Dowager's large-scale sponsorship of Buddhists and their projects aided in her own political rise while it simultaneously put her at odds with the old guard of Confucian courtiers at her non-Han court, many of whom had been brought on in order to aid the dynasty's policies of Sinification. The piece also explores another of our themes: the meeting of Buddhist statecraft with Confucian statecraft.

Richard D. McBride's, "King Chinhŭng Institutes State-Protection Buddhist Rituals" follows chronologically from Balkwill's study of Northern Wei Buddhism and, in fact, cites Northern Wei Buddhism as a potential source for Buddhism on the Korean peninsula. McBride's study introduces us to the first Buddhist monastic overseer in Silla 新羅 (trad. 57 BCE–935 CE), an emigré monk named Hyeryang 惠亮 (fl. 540–576) who aided King Chinhŭng 眞興 (r. 540–576) in his establishment of state-protection Buddhism. In analyzing the ways in which the Silla ruler sought to legitimize and enact his political power through his patronage of a form of Buddhism steeped in Sinitic imperial symbology, McBride provides an excellent example of this volume's theme of how, "Buddhism was an important vehicle by which Sinitic culture and mores were

adopted and adapted by the peoples of the Korean peninsula." Furthermore, by exposing Chinhŭng's employment of large-scale ritual events for the protection of his polity, McBride also demonstrates the second of our foundational themes: state-protection Buddhism.

Establishing a chronological linkage with McBride's study, the third of our case studies, Geoffrey C. Goble's, "The Commissioner of Merit and Virtue: Buddhism and the Tang Central Government" is a detailed study of the important esoteric turn taken in state-protection Buddhism that was initially pursued by the Tang court in the 8th century. The study articulates our theme of state-protection Buddhism, while it also explores a secondary theme of the patronage of Buddhism by Buddhist rulers. In his study, Goble raises the important and little studied question of Buddhist warfare. Like McBride, who discusses the establishment of court/monastic bureaucratic positions through his study of the monk Hyeryang, here, Goble examines the position of the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue (*gongde shi* 功德使), "who personally administered institutional Buddhists according to commands issued to them directly by the emperor and who were, almost without exception, commanders of imperial troops." In this study of the Buddhist-military complex, Goble cites a rare source: the entombed biography (*muzhi* 墓誌) of one such Commissioner who was a patron of the esoteric master Amoghavajra (Bukong jin'gang 不空金剛) (704/5–774) while also being a leading military man of his day.

The esoteric turn in state-protection Buddhism that Goble highlights in his piece is taken up by the fourth of our case studies, Megan Bryson's "Images of Humane Kings: Rulers in the Dali-Kingdom *Painting of Buddhist Images*." Here, Bryson focuses on visual representations of Dali 大理 Kingdom (937–1253) rulers who were depicted as "humane kings" and who undertook esoteric rites for state protection associated with the *Prajñāpāramitā Scripture for Humane Kings to Protect Their States* (*Renwang huguo bore boluomiduo jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經: *T* no. 246), a text which was re-edited and popularized in the Tang by Amoghavajra. Underscoring the cultural hybridity witnessed to in frontier spaces such as Dali, which sits between China, Tibet, and Southeast Asia, Bryson exposes how constellations of Buddhist rule in Dali served to express difference from the Chinese center. Ultimately, she argues that Dali's hybrid Buddhism did not exist as a mere copy of the Tang's esoteric tradition but in fact constituted a dynamic reassertion of independence from China which allowed for the Dali ruler to be seen as the "Emperor" (*di* 帝) and the Song ruler to be seen as the "Barbarian King" (*manwang* 蠻王). Bryson's piece therefore powerfully illustrates our volume's theme of the patronage of Buddhism by Buddhist rulers by pressing the question of who has more authority between the Buddhist ruler or the Chinese ruler.

With our fifth case study, we move back to the Korean peninsula for Gregory N. Evon's, "Buddhism and Statecraft in Korea: The Long View." In this piece, Evon weighs in on our theme of the meeting of Buddhist statecraft with Confucian statecraft by offering a macro-perspective on Korea's history of ambivalent engagement with Buddhist means of legitimating and governing the state, particularly focused on the events leading to and immediately following the founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty 朝鮮 (1392–1910). Arguing that Korea's relationship with Buddhist statecraft has always been about statecraft and not as much about Buddhism, Evon exposes the vicissitudes of Korean imperial support for Buddhism and spotlights "impassioned attacks on Buddhism" prevalent among early Chosŏn courtiers even if the dynastic founder, King T'aejo 太祖 (r. 1392–1398), was himself a "a devout Buddhist and general in the Koryŏ army." With specific focus on the Korean predicament in East Asia, Evon traces a history of transregional engagement through Buddhism, Buddhist diplomacy, and the development of literacy through Buddhism; however, he ultimately argues that the ideology of Buddhism was secondary to the concerns of the state and, furthermore, that the ruling elite came to maintain an arms-length interest in the tradition as a means of pleasing their populace.

Our sixth and final case study is Jacqueline I. Stone's, "Refusing the Ruler's Offerings: Accommodation and Martyrdom in Early Modern Nichiren Buddhism." In her case study, Stone addresses the issue of Buddhist resistance to the state in the early sixteenth century when newly emerging political powers strove to divorce Japanese statecraft from Buddhist statecraft. She focuses on one particular instantiation of Buddhist resistance to state ideology in the time period: the "neither receiving nor giving" (*fuju fuse* 不受不施) controversy within the Nichiren sect (Nichirenshū 日蓮宗). Exploring the doctrine of *fuju fuse*, which insists that a Buddhist should not accept offerings from an unfaithful ruler, Stone reveals how Nichiren himself had characterized the Japanese ruler as "not equal even to a vassal of the wheel-turning monarchs who govern the four continents. He is just an island chief." As such, Stone's piece dovetails with our theme of the patronage of Buddhism by Buddhist rulers by showing that—at least in one case—Buddhists would not accept the patronage of non-Buddhist rulers. More importantly, Stone connects the *fuju fuse* controversy to our theme of the persecution of Buddhism as a strategy of statecraft by showing how *fuju fuse* adherents were forced to either shed their *fuju fuse* status or face persecution that included arrest, exile, or execution. Finally, the piece also raises a new angle on the meeting of Buddhist statecraft with Confucian statecraft—another of our foundational themes—by showing how *fuju fuse* adherents in Japan looked to Confucian exemplars from China in their refusal to follow an unvirtuous ruler.

Beyond the focus on our volume's foundational themes, there is another way to read this volume. The pieces also all cohere around a handful of places, texts, and topics that we would like to briefly index here. The topic of merging cultural forms in the enactment of Buddhist statecraft is dealt with by both Bryson and McBride who each discuss how such statecraft, in Dali and in Silla respectively, shows complex hybrid features suggesting difference from China and Sinitic Buddhism via the signalling of Indic Buddhism. Similarly, Balkwill and Bryson share a focus on the question of the ways in which Buddhist rule counters Confucian notions of the Son of Heaven by showing how women and non-Han persons, respectively, have utilized Buddhist ideals of rulership in the legitimation of their power. In discussions of diverse instantiations of shared objects, texts, and rituals, both Balkwill and McBride discuss the Eternal Peace Pagoda and Bryson and McBride hone in the popularity of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, a likely Chinese apocryphon that was popular in cults of state-protection Buddhism. Bryson and Goble follow this line of inquiry through the esoteric turn in the latter half of the medieval period. Evon and Stone both tackle the interrelated issues of Buddhism in conflict with the state while simultaneously serving as a conduit for the transmission of Sinitic culture and Evon also overviews Buddhist accord with the Korean state that ties his piece back to McBride's. Goble and McBride both spotlight individuals who held court-appointed roles for the administration of Buddhism at the level of the state while Balkwill and Stone highlight individuals at the centre of court ambivalence about Buddhism in a back and forth between state-sanctioned Buddhism and the Buddhism of those outside the court.

3 Conclusion

The case studies in this volume all tell stories. Stories of individuals, institutions, texts, objects, and rituals, the case studies contained below have all been written to be approachable for the non-specialist yet densely researched for the specialist. It is our hope, therefore, that this volume will find utility in the classroom where it can contribute to conversations about the very nature of what it is that we call Buddhism and how we might study it. For the student, the case studies explicitly challenge popular depictions of Buddhism as an apolitical religious tradition, just as, for the scholar, the range of source materials cited within explores the richness of our primary sources in a wide breadth across time and space in East Asia. Moreover, by focusing on the relationship between the Buddhist tradition and the means of government across East Asia, we hope, with this volume, to enable further discussion of the history of the Buddhist

tradition alongside that of our world's other great monastic religion long intertwined with statecraft in a vast region of the world: Christianity. Our promotion of the term "metropolitan Buddhism" suggests a useful, structural discussion of the meeting of religion and politics between the traditions of Buddhism and Christianity. In future work, this discussion could be fruitfully undertaken both in the classroom and in print, and we hope to have helped inspire it with this volume.

As a volume, it is the diversity of the case studies that holds them together. Showing that Buddhism, per se, was a transregional political force in East Asia from as early as the fifth century and through to the present day, the case studies contained below reveal how it was, in fact, the flexibility and adaptability of the Buddhist tradition that allowed for the continuity of Buddhist statecraft across the region. Salient features of this malleable meeting of religion and politics include the five foundational themes discussed above: state-protection Buddhism, the meeting of Buddhist statecraft with indigenous forms of statecraft, imperial sponsorship of Buddhism by an often Buddhist ruler, Buddhism as a source for Sinitic political culture, and the persecution of Buddhism as a procedure of statecraft. Although we introduced these themes through the story of China's meeting with Buddhism, none of these five foundational themes is bound to a specific time or place; on the contrary, the structural nature of these themes that we have explored reveals how Buddhist statecraft has successfully functioned across time and space in East Asia, and how it has done so in order to support divergent political, social, and cultural aims. In sum, this volume has taken a transregional approach to the study of Buddhist statecraft in order to demonstrate that the transregional character of the traditions is, in fact, among the most important historical arguments for seeing East Asia as a dynamic whole in premodern times.

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CHAPTER 1

Metropolitan Buddhism vis-à-vis Buddhism at the Metropolis: How to Understand the *Ling* in the Empress Dowager's Name

Stephanie Balkwill

Empress Dowager Ling 靈 (d. 528) was the last independent ruler of the Tuoba 拓拔 Northern Wei 北魏 (368–534) dynasty.[1] Her official biography[2] in the *Book of the Wei* (*Wei shu* 魏書)[3] records that in order to achieve such heights of power she refused to step down when her son come of age and instead ruled in her own name until her death. The biography also tells us that she was ultimately implicated in her own son's murder, an act of regicide that led to her own murder and the disintegration of the dynasty. On the pretext of coming to defend the murdered emperor/son, the Xiongnu 匈奴 general Erzhu Rong 爾朱榮 (493–530) raided the capital city of Luoyang with his armies—razing it to the ground—and drowned the Empress Dowager and her new puppet emperor in the river alongside members of her court. Not surprisingly, her official biography takes a negative stance toward the contested part of her rule when she should have relinquished her dowager regency but did not, stating that "all the people detested her"[4] because of her ploys to stay in power.

1 The Northern Wei dynasty was a northern conquest dynasty that was ruled by the Tuoba clan of the Xianbei 鮮卑 peoples—one group of the famous "five barbarians" (*wuhu* 五胡)—who controlled large portions of northern and central China in the early and early medieval periods. The issue of the "foreign-ness" of these rulers shaped much of their policies and the court adopted far-reaching strategies of sinification that isolated some of their own people and led to increased division and factionalism within the empire.

2 The official biography is found in the *Book of the Wei* (*Wei shu* 13. 337–340) and with minimal differences in the *History of the North* (*Bei shi* 13. 503–505).

3 Written by Northern Wei literatus Wei Shou 魏收 (506–572) from the court of the successor dynasty, the Northern Qi 北齊 (550–577), the *Book of the Wei* is well known for its political bias, which served the politics of the successor. For a bibliographic overview of the text, see: Kenneth Klein, "*Wei shu* 魏書," in *Early Medieval Chinese Texts: A Bibliographic Guide*, ed. Cynthia L. Chennault, et al. (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California Press, 2015), 368–372.

4 *Wei shu* 13.340.

She was also a Buddhist, at least publicly. As regent, she sponsored large-scale projects at the Buddhist cave site of Longmen 龍門[5] and she saw the completion of the most opulent Buddhist monastery in the land, the Eternal Peace Monastery (*Yongning si* 永寧寺),[6] which the semi-legendary founder of the Chan tradition, Bodhidharma, is said to have marveled at.[7] She also refused to enforce her own court's laws on where and how a monastery could be built inside of the capital city and similarly ignored her court's pleas to enforce a cap on the number of new members admitted to the Buddhist monastic order. On her death, there was no state funeral; rather, her body and that of the new child emperor behind whom she was ruling were interred in the Buddhist Monastery of the Two Numens (*Shuangling si* 雙靈寺), a name that perhaps signifies her own posthumous name, *Ling* 靈, or "Numen."

Ling is often translated as "numen/numinous" in English; however, given the complicated and contested nature of the Empress Dowager's powers and persuasions, the name implies ambiguity when associated with her and her reign. Among her fervently Buddhist populace who built and serviced a majestic Buddhist landscape in the capital, the resonances associated with the word "Ling" were likely good. As a name, it labeled her auspicious and divinely inspired. As we will see, she may have established such connections between herself and her posthumous name during her own life. For some of her courtiers, though, those who bestowed the name on her and who also ascribed to a form of metroplitan Buddhism similar to that discussed in the introduction to this volume, the name *Ling* held a different connation linking the Empress Dowager to political rebellion and failed leadership. With the goal of exploring questions of Buddhist statecraft that surrounded the Empress Dowager at the end of the dynasty, the present study tells four very short stories: The Story of the Empress Dowager; The Story of Buddhism at the Metropolis; The Story of Metroplitan Buddhism; The Story of her Name. By using the multivalent and ambiguous

5 Amy McNair argues that the Empress Dowager was the patron of Longmen's Huoshao 火燒 Grotto, the only Northern Wei grotto to exceed the size of Emperor Xuanwu's and which is also the highest of the Northern Wei caves at the site. On this, see: Amy McNair, *Donors of Longmen: Faith, Politics, and Patronage in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Sculpture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 65.

6 The pagoda at the Eternal Peace was so famous that it was copied in Silla, Korea at the Hwangnyong-sa, on which, see Richard McBride's contribution in this volume. See also: Frederick F. Carriere, *Silla Korea and the Silk Roads: Golden Age, Golden Thread* (The Korea Society, 2006) https://www.koreasociety.org/images/pdf/KoreanStudies/Curriculum_Materials/LessonbyTime/2_Silla/694-silla-korea-and-the-silk-road-golden-age-golden-threads-normal-quality.pdf, 178.

7 *Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang* (*Luoyang qielan ji* 洛陽伽藍記: *T* no. 2092: 51. 1000b19).

meanings of her posthumous name as a foil for understanding the Buddhism of her time, these four stories reveal how Buddhist Statecraft in the Northern Wei included both patronage and policing. Much to the chagrin of her courtiers, the Empress Dowager was more patron than police.

1 The Story of the Empress Dowager

The Empress Dowager was born in the Northwest of China to a family of the lower aristocracy. As a female child of the village, neither her birth name nor the year of her birth were recorded in her biography, though we know that she was from the Hu 胡 clan[8] of Anding 安定[9] and that her mother was a descendant of the illustrious Huangfu 皇甫 clan.[10] When the Empress Dowager was born, a strange light is said to have lit the sky, and, on account of this she was rushed to a diviner. The diviner made a prophecy that the newborn child would fulfill later in her life. Of the glowing sky, the diviner said: "This is an indication of the great nobility of the worthy girl. She will become the Mother of Heaven and Earth and will give birth to the Lord of Heaven and Earth. Do not let more than three people know this."[11] Beyond her birth and prophecy, her official biography in the *Book of the Wei* tells us little else about her childhood except that she was brought to the Northern Wei court in Luoyang by a woman whose religious name was Shi Sengzhi 釋僧芝 (d. 516). Sengzhi was a Buddhist nun, religious teacher of the emperor, and the aunt of the nameless girl who would go on to rule the dynasty as Empress Dowager.[12]

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8 Her father was Hu Guozhen 胡國珍, the Minister of Education (*cishi* 司徒) in Anding, from where they hailed.

9 Modern day Zhenyuan 鎮原 county in Gansu 甘肅 province. Not far from modern day Xi'an 西安, Anding was an administrative unit in Liangzhou 涼州, which was the region of present day Ningxia 寧夏 and Gansu [Dominik Declercq, *Writing Against the State: Political Rhetorics in Third and Fourth Century China*, Sinica Leidensia 39 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 161].

Liangzhou was also an important center for the development of Buddhism in China in pre-Tang times.

10 This was the same clan as the famous general Huangfu Song 皇甫嵩 (d. 195) and the scholar Huangfu Mi 皇甫謐 (215–282).

11 *Wei shu* 13. 337.

12 The biography of Sengzhi is presently the oldest known biography for a Buddhist nun in China and is found on her entombed inscription (*muzhiming* 墓誌銘) buried with her tomb at the Northern Wei mausoleum outside of Luoyang. For a study of the inscription, see: Wang Shan 王珊, "Beiwei Sengzhi muzhi kaoyi 北魏僧芝墓志考释 [A Study and

Once at court, the Empress Dowager's biography tells us that she quickly became the favorite of Emperor Xuanwu 宣武 (r. 499–515) and birthed a son by him. On the Emperor's death, the Empress Dowager completed her foretold rise to power by surviving an assassination attempt masterminded by Xuanwu's official empress and, in retaliation, then had the empress pushed to the imperial nunnery before eventually having her murdered.[13] The Empress Dowager began the first part of her regency as regent to her son, Emperor Xiaoming 孝明 (r. 516–528). During this regency she is said to have used the "Royal We" (*zhen* 朕) in self-reference, to have listened to court directly, and to have issued edicts in her own name.[14] As her son came of age alongside rising factionalism in court and polity, the relationship between the two rulers soured: first a *coup d'etat* created further danger and division at court; second, upon resumption of her regency, increased struggles with her son saw his murder, rumored to be at her hands. On his death, the Empress Dowager attempted to place his daughter—her own granddaughter—on the throne. When this plot failed, she placed another male child from the Tuoba line on the throne and both of them were murdered by Erzhu Rong and his armies.

The Empress Dowager was brought to court through her Buddhist connections—an act made possible by the fact that the Northern Wei court had adopted Buddhism as the state's religion in the year 452 under Emperor Wencheng 文成 (r. 452–465). Looking to subvert the oppressive policies of his own predecessor,[15] Wencheng and his court sought to police Buddhist currents in their dynasty by absorption and not by oppression. Wencheng's rule saw the establishment and standardization of a complex court/monastic bureaucracy created for the legal administration and oversight of the Buddhist monastic community[16] as well as the building of court-sponsored monasteries and

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Explanation of the Tomb Inscription of Northern Wei Sengzhi]," *Beida Shixue* 北大史学 13 (August 2008): 87–107. I have recently translated Sengzhi's biography, which can be found here: Stephanie Balkwill, "A Virtuoso Nun in the North: Situating the Earliest-Known Dated Biography of a Buddhist Nun in East Asia," *Hualin Journal of Buddhist Studies* 3, no. 2 (2020): 129–60.

13 For a study of the tensions between nuns/women of the harem in the Northern Wei's imperial nunnery, the Jade Radiance Nunnery (Yaoguang si 耀光寺), see: Stephanie Balkwill, "When Renunciation Is Good Politics: The Women of the Imperial Nunnery of the Northern Wei (386–534)," *Nan Nü: Men, Women, and Gender in China* 18, no. 2 (2016): 224–256.

14 *Wei shu* 13. 337.

15 Wencheng's rule succeeded that of Taiwu 太武 (423–452), an emperor widely known for his severe and violent oppression of Buddhists and his patronage of Celestial Master's Daoism as state religion.

16 The first monk to have held the title "Superintendent of the *Śramaṇas*" (*shamentong* 沙門統) was Tanyao 曇曜 (fl. ca. 450) who was an influential person at Wencheng's court.

nunneries which were administered by monks and nuns who held political portfolios as well as religious ones. Placing himself at the center of this court Buddhism, Wencheng also commissioned the first stratum of building at the Buddhist cave site of Yungang 雲崗, outside of his capital at Pingcheng 平城 (modern day Datong 大同), where it has long been argued that the original five colossal Buddha images are representations of the Northern Wei rulers themselves.[17] Wencheng's rule therefore marks the beginning of the Northern Wei's metropolitan Buddhism, which I define as a form of Buddhism created in the capital and for the sake of empire, and which was administered from the court via a variety of members of the monastic elite who worked closely with the court, who lived at resplendent court-funded monasteries, and who were tasked with disseminating the court's policies across Buddhist communities in the empire. This metroplitan Buddhism was explicitly established in the mid Northern Wei for the purpose of incorporating the Buddhist institution into the government, as a means of policing it from the inside.

By the time that the Empress Dowager arrived at the Northern Wei court the capital had been moved south to Luoyang and the court was there ruled by Emperor Xuanwu. By all accounts, Xuanwu continued with the Northern Wei's style of metropolitan Buddhism initiated by his great grandfather, Emperor Wencheng. Emperor Xuanwu is known to have personally lectured on the Dharma, to have invited monastics to court, and to have completed the building of the resplendent Jeweled Radiance Nunnery (Yaoguang nisi 瑤光尼寺), which was the only Buddhist building to be built within the palace compounds and was home to women of the court who had entered into monastic life.[18] He therefore carried forward the court's investment into and oversight of the monastic community in the capital city of Luoyang. Xuanwu's interest in Buddhism is also responsible for the Empress Dowager's arrival at the court because his cherished teacher of the Buddhist law was a nun, and that nun was the aunt of the Empress Dowager.

Having been brought to court by her auntie, the Empress Dowager continued to support the flourishing of monastic life in Luoyang, particularly when

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The nun Sengzhi also was awarded this title. For more on Tanyao and the court he served, see: Zenryū Tsukamoto, "The Śramana Superintendent T'an-Yao 曇曜 and His Time," *Monumenta Serica* 16, no. 1/2 (1957): 363–396.

17 For a recent study of the representations of Wencheng, see Scott Pearce, "A King's Two Bodies: The Northern Wei Emperor Wencheng and Representations of the Power of His Monarchy," *Frontiers of History in China* 7, no. 1 (March 5, 2012): 90–105.

18 Details on Xuanwu's Jeweled Radiance Nunnery are recorded in the *Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang* (*T* no. 2092: 51. 1003a01–a28).

she became regent. When one considers both her commissioning of the Eternal Peace and her sponsorship at Longmen, the Empress Dowager was the most generous of Buddhist patrons of the Northern Wei. Amy McNair argues that the Empress Dowager may have donated such large sums of money to Buddhist projects as a means of displaying to court and polity that it was she alone who controlled the imperial purse.[19] Furthermore, as leader of the court, she is reported to have participated in Buddhist international relations: for example, she sent two monastic emissaries to the Western Regions[20] who journeyed to Gandhara to hang a silk banner from the majestic stūpa there.[21] Finally, the Empress Dowager's support of the Buddhist community remained well known to later historiographers of China. For example, in his authoritative governmental history, the *Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government* (Zizhi tongjian 資治通鑑), Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) reports that:

> The Empress Dowager loved the Buddha and her court built monasteries without end. She commanded all of the prefectures to each build a five-story pagoda. So that the resources of the common people did not run low, the lords, the aristocracy, the eunuchs, and the imperial guards were to each build a monastery in Luoyang which was both tall and beautiful. The Empress Dowager established numerous vegetarian assemblies, provided the monastics with material and physical resources for their plans, granted rewards everywhere and without limit. There was not an expense that she did not pay and still she did not give as much as the common people.[22]

2 Buddhism at the Metropolis

The Buddhist landscape of Luoyang in the time of the reign of the Empress Dowager is recorded in a unique retrospective on the city written under the Northern Wei's successor dynasty, the Eastern Wei 東魏 (534–550) and by a

19 McNair, *Donors of Longmen*, 63.

20 *Wei shu* 102. 2279.

21 This story is recounted in the 13th-century Buddhist historiographical compendium, the *Complete Record of the Buddha and the Patriarchs* (*Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀); *T* no. 2035: 49. 0315a05.

22 Notes on the Empress Dowager's patronage of Buddhism are found in the Song Dynasty governmental history, the *Comprehensive Mirror of Governance* (Zizhi tongjian 資治通鑑 149: 4646–4649).

member of the literati who would have worked for the Empress Dowager, Yang Xuanzhi 楊衒之 (fl. ca. fifth century).[23] That text, the *Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang* (*Luoyang qielan ji* 洛陽伽藍記) is a celebration of the Empress Dowager's Buddhist capital in ruins. The text opens with praise for the past Buddhist architecture of the city and for the generosity of the city's wealthy patrons. It begins:

> During the Yongjia (307–313) period of the Jin dynasty, there were only forty-two Buddhist temples [in Luoyang], but when the imperial Wei received the plan to develop the residences of the Song-Luo area (i.e., by moving the capital there) sincere belief overflowed and multiplied and dharma teachings recovered and prospered. Lords, marquis, and nobles cast off their elephants and horses (as donations) just as though they were taking off their shoes. Commoners and influential families gave up their wealth and treasures as if they were just old relics. As such, the brightness accelerated, combing rows of precious pagodas side by side, competing to write their brilliance across the skies and vying to imitate the shadows of mountains. The golden shrines and numinous platform were as high and wide as the Apang [Palaces of the Qin Dynasty (221–207 BCE)].[24]

Yang's retrospective on the Buddhist landscape of Luoyang contains a monastery-by-monastery accounting of the city and its surroundings that details the splendors of the structures in question, as well as the surprisingly carnivalesque activities that took place within their walls. As perhaps the most noteworthy in his record, Yang describes the activities of the Nunnery of the Joyous View (Jingle si 景樂寺), saying that:

> At the time of the great fast,[25] there was constant music performed by female entertainers: the sounds of their songs coiled around the beams of

23 During the last, tumultuous years of the Empress Dowager's reign, he held the title of *fengchaoqing* 奉朝請, which Hucker defines as a "low-ranking member of the Department of Scholarly Counsellors." See: Charles Hucker, *A Dictionary of Imperial Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 212.

24 *T* no. 2092: 51. 0999a11–16. Translation adapted from: Wang Yitong (trans.), *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-yang* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 5–6.

25 This may be a reference to Buddhist *poṣadha* ceremonial days, which are undertaken for six days of every month. If so, this description of the activities in the nunnery is quite different from other such fasts which include the taking of vows, confession, and the recitation of monastic laws. This speaks to the unique character of urban Buddhism in Luoyang in the sixth century.

the roof and the sleeves of the dancers swirled around with the melodies from the instruments, bringing wondrous enchantment.

As this was a nunnery, men were not able to enter. Those who were allowed to look, considered to be like arriving in paradise. After the death of Prince Wenxian 文獻,[26] the temple's restrictions were more lenient and the commoners went in and out without obstruction. Thereupon, [Yuan] Yue, Prince of Runan, who was the brother of Wenxian, renovated the nunnery and summoned all kinds of musical performers to display their talents therein.

Strange birds and rare beasts danced in the courtyards and flew into the sky creating an illusion the likes of which nobody had ever seen. Bizarre and heterodox arts were all arrayed: "skinning the donkey," "pulling out of the well," and planting a date seed which would instantly bear fruit that everybody could eat.[27] The ladies and gentlemen who saw the performance were utterly bewildered.[28]

Descriptions like this fill the pages of Yang's record such that the image of Luoyang in the early sixth century that emerges to the reader is one of opulence, splendor, carnival, and wonder. Within this lively scene, however, Yang's

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26 Yuan Yi 懌 (488–520) was the son of Emperor Xiaowen 孝文 (r. 471–499) and, therefore, the half-brother brother of Xuanwu and the uncle of the child emperor Xiaoming, whom Empress Dowager Ling mothered, ruled over, and eventually murdered. He held the title of "Prince Wenxian of Qinghe" (Qinghe wenxian wang 清河文獻王), Qinghe being a prefecture in the Luoyang area, east of the city. His biography can be found in: *Wei shu* 22: 591–592. Though he was the Empress Dowager's lover, he was evidently not a supporter of her Buddhism for, as we will see below, he presented a memorial to her urging her not to support Buddhist elements in her polity. His death may therefore have ushered in a time of greater flourishing for the Buddhists of Luoyang.

27 The magic tricks listed here are hard to understand and Wang (1984, 52) reads "skinning the donkey" and "pulling out of the well" as one act of magic: "dismember an ass and throw the cut-up parts into a well, only to have the mutilated animal quickly regenerate its maimed parts." His translation leaves much to interpretation; however, the *Book of the Sui* (*Sui shu* 隨書) contains a passage which helps the interpretation. While describing a party hosted inside the women's chambers of the court in the beginning of the Northern Qi reign of Wuping 武平 (570–576), the text mentions "100 Games" that were featured (*Sui shu* 39.15.380) and these two acts are listed as two different tricks, and also uses *ba* 拔 as a variant for the *tou* 投 in our text, rendering the trick as "pulling out of a well." This magic trick is also listed in a list of heterodox magic tricks rejected by the Buddha in the Dunhuang text, the *Sūtra on the Nature of the Buddha, the Ocean-store of Wisdom and Salvation, and which Shatters the Marks of the Heart* (*Foxing haizang zhihui jietuo poxin xiang jing* 佛性海藏智慧解脫破心相經: *T* no. 2885: 85. 1399-a06).

28 *T* no. 2092: 51. 1003b08–b16. Translation adapted from: Wang, *Record*, 51–52.

Record details one other nunnery, a nunnery which stood out as a serious place of Buddhist scholarship: The Empress Dowager's personally-sponsored Nunnery of the Chief of the Hu Clan (Hutong si 胡統寺) where the women in residence were said to be the most learned teachers of Buddhism and the most skillful preachers of the dharma. According to the *Record*, the Nunnery of the Chief of the Hu Clan was built for the aunt of the Empress Dowager from the clan. Reading between the lines, we can understand that the nunnery must have been built for Sengzhi, the nun who brought the Empress Dowager to court. The nunnery was resplendent with a five-storied stūpa and spacious interior. Yang's description of the nunnery states that, the nuns "often came to the palace to lecture on Dharma for the Empress Dowager whose patronage of Buddhists and laymen was without equal."[29]

In the above descriptions of the nunneries of Luoyang, we see the various ways in which the Empress Dowager positioned herself as high patron of the Buddhist tradition within her city. Encouraging the building of Buddhist structures and participating as a Buddhist within them, the Empress Dowager was the authority behind Luoyang's resplendent and famed urban Buddhist landscape. Finally, at the very epicenter of all of this Buddhist fanfare was the Empress Dowager's personally commissioned Eternal Peace monastery, which was a rebuild of a previous structure in Pingcheng. The monastery was built just in front of the palace and housed political prisoners, monastic translators, and gifts of tribute from other Buddhist kingdoms.[30] It was the tallest structure that anybody had ever seen. Of its majesty, Yang writes:

> Within the precincts [of the monastery] was a nine-story pagoda built with a wooden frame. Rising nine hundred feet above the ground, it formed the base for a mast that rose another hundred feet. Together they soared one thousand feet above the ground. You could see it even at a distance of a hundred *li* from the capital. In the course of excavating for the construction of the monastery, thirty golden statues were found deep underground. The empress dowager regarded them as proof of the sincerity of her faith. As a result, she spent all the more lavishly on its construction.
>
> On the top of the mast was a golden vase inlaid with precious stones, with a capacity of twenty-five piculs. Underneath the jeweled vase were thirty tiers of golden plates. In addition, chains linked the mast with each

29 *T* no. 2092: 51. 1004a05–07. Translation adapted from: Wang, *Record*, 56.

30 The description of the Eternal Peace Monastery is found in: *T* no. 2092: 51. 999c10–1002b16.

> of the four corners of the pagoda. Golden bells, each about the size of a one-picul jar, were also suspended from the link works.
>
> There were nine roofs, one for each story, with golden bells suspended from the corner of each one, totaling one hundred twenty in all. The pagoda had four sides, each having three doors and six windows, all painted in vermilion lacquer. Each door had five rows of gold studs. Altogether there were 5,400 studs on twenty-four panels of twelve double doors. In addition, the doors were adorned with gold ring knockers. The construction embodied the best masonry and carpentry and its design reached the limit of ingenuity. Its excellence as Buddhist architecture was almost unimaginable. Its carved pillars and gold doorknockers fascinated the eye. When the bells chimed in harmony deep in a windy night, they could be heard over ten *li* away.[31]

Not only did the Empress Dowager commission this majestic structure, she also ascended its nine-story pagoda as a public show of her patronage alongside the then child Emperor Xiaoming. Yang's *Record* tells us that only the two rulers were allowed to climb the pagoda because the vantage point gained by its height gave one a view of life inside the walls of the imperial palace.[32] Such a dramatic display of imperial might and Buddhist affiliation must have been awe-inspiring among the polity of Luoyang and must have forever placed her at the center of the Buddhist carnival that was the Northern Wei capital in the early 6th century. And yet, just as this act of patronage and power placed her at the center of Buddhism at the metropolis, it appears that her support of Buddhists in her city made her courtiers very uncomfortable; practicing Buddhism with the people of her metropolis put her at odds with the metropolitan Buddhism advocated by her court.

3 Metropolitan Buddhism

Yang's *Record* celebrates the Buddhist landscape of Northern Wei Luoyang just as it places the Empress Dowager within it; however, his appreciation of the city and its ruler was not shared by all of his contemporaries, many of whom deeply feared that the Buddhists in their populace were dangerously out of control and were in need of oppressive intervention by the court. The *Book of the*

31 *T* no. 2092: 51. 1000a1–14. Translation by McNair, *Donors of Longmen*, 63.

32 *T* no. 2092: 51. 1000b16.

Wei records a damning memorial on the Buddhists of Luoyang presented to the Empress Dowager by her courtier, Yuan 元 (Tuoba) Cheng 澄 (467–520).[33] Cheng presented the memorial in 519, and stated, in part:

> As to the monasteries of today, there is no place that does not have them! Sometimes closely packed into the city walls, sometimes jammed together with the shops of butchers, sometimes as few as three or monastics together in one monastery! Sanskrit chants and the sounds of the butchers create intermingled harmonies and the statues and pagodas smell of raw meat so that the holy essence is drowned in sensual desires and truth and falsity are all mixed up in a confusing intercourse. Lower officials have become accustomed to this and are not against it, and the monastics stand facing them and are not questioned. In such filth does true practice become defiled, do skilled monastics become filthy, do fragrance and stench share the same vessel—is this not extreme?[34]

The scene invoked by Yuan Cheng in his memorial is that of a capital overrun by monasteries and stūpas funded by the populace and not the court. He depicts this Buddhism at the metropolis as so out of control that it had transgressed the boundary between sacred and profane. The memorial is lengthy. In one part, Yuan Cheng characterizes Buddhist monastics who benefit from the wealth of their donors as "the dregs of the Śākya clan, the shrine rats in the Law, whom their internal laws will not support and whom the imperial codes must repel"[35] and who "encroach on the fine people, liberally seizing their fields and houses."[36]

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33 Yuan Cheng was powerful courtier in the Northern Wei who accompanied the court's move from Pingcheng to Luoyang and held the title, "Prince of Rencheng" (*rencheng wang* 任城王). As this was a hereditary title used exclusively in the Northern Wei, the biography in question is attached to that of his father, who also held the same title. Rencheng is modern day Jining 濟寧, Shandong 山東 province: *Wei shu* 19: 461–489.

34 *Wei shu* 114. 3045. Translation adapted from: Leon Hurvitz, "Wei Shou. Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism. An English Translation of the Original Chinese Text of Wei-Shu CXIV and the Japanese Annotation of Tsukamoto Zenryū," in *Unkō sekkutsu. Seireki go-seiki ni okeru Chūgoku hokubu Bukkyō kutsu-in no kōkogaku-teki chōsa hōkoku. Tōyō bunka kenkyū-sho chōsa Shōwa jūsan-nen Shōwa nijūnen* 雲崗石窟.西曆五世紀における中國北部佛教窟院考古學的調查報告東方文化研究所調查昭和十三年昭和二十年 [*Yun-Kang* [*pinyin: Yungang*], *the Buddhist Cave-Temples of the Fifth Century A.D. in North China. Detailed Report of the Archaeological Survey Carried out by the Mission of the Tōyō Bunka Kenkyū-Sho 1938–1945*] *Vol. XVI, Supplement* (Kyoto: Jinbunkagaku kenkyū-sho, Kyoto University, 1956), 94–95.

35 *Wei shu* 114. 3045. Translation adapted from: Hurvitz, *Wei Shou*, 96.

36 *Wei shu* 114. 3045. Translation adapted from: Hurvitz, *Wei Shou*, 96.

If we dig deeper into stories of the Empress Dowager in the *Book of the Wei*, we see additional vexations from her courtiers over the Buddhism of the Luoyang metropolis. In the biography of Yuan Yi 懌 (488–520), the Empress Dowager's courtier and rumored lover, we find the following story:

> There was a *śramaṇa* named Huilian 惠憐 (d.u.) who spoke spells over people's drinking water and was able to cure their illness. Of the sick who went to him, there were a thousand a day. Empress Dowager Ling commanded that he be given clothing and food. Furthermore, because the power of his service was particularly favorable, he was sent to the south side of the west of the city to administer the healing of the commoners.
>
> [Tuoba] Yi brought a memorial of admonition: "The ministers hear that the law is submerged [by] bewildering schemes and that ritual has been cut off [by] licentious taboos. In all cases, therefore the ruler [must] remain orthodox and dispel heterodoxy! In ancient times at the end of the Han, there was one called Zhang Jue 張角 (d. 184) who used such arts to bewilder his contemporaries. In considering these actions against those of today, they are no different. On account [of them] [Zhang] was able to deceive and seduce the people and bring about the disasters of the Yellow Turbans wherein all the world was mud and ashes[37] for a period of ten years on account of following [Zhang] Jue. In the past and now, evil should be walled up so that it cannot ascend to the bright hall, squander the five benefits, and bring a death sentence to the young."[38]

Such memorials to the throne should be expected for there were no less than ten Buddhist-inspired peasant uprisings against the throne between the rules of Emperor Wencheng and Empress Dowager Ling. The most dramatic of these uprisings, the so-called "Mahāyāna Revolt" ended on the year of the accession of the Empress Dowager and had seen the deaths of thousands of people at the hands of "bodhisattvas" awarded merit levels for the number of political murders they had committed.[39] Similarly, Erik Zürcher's landmark study on the

37 Stephen Bokenkamp has commented on a similar use of this term and argues that, though it is generally thought to signify destruction, it can also be a referent to the Celestial Master's rituals of Repentance, called "mud and ashes." See: Stephen Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999): 168, n. †. Given that this is a memorial against popular religious practices, we may read the term similarly here.

38 *Wei shu* 22. 591–592.

39 For more information on this rebellion taken from the details in the *Book of the Wei*, see: Ware, 1933a, 172 (note 3). Tsukamoto discusses this rebellion in much more detail: Tsukamoto Zenryū 塚本善隆, *Shina Bukkyō shi kenkyū, Hokugi Hen* 支那佛教史研究,

messianic figure of Prince Moonlight and religio-political rebellion in the early medieval period describes very well the tense situation of violent Buddhist millenarianism in the early sixth century. In the study, Zürcher includes a passage on punishments from the *Book of the Wei* which notes that in the first two years of the reign of the Empress Dowager, the millenarian savior "Prince Moonlight" was incarnated in a young boy. Though such a threat to the sovereignty of the ruler would normally have earned the death penalty, in this case the boy was saved because the Empress Dowager considered him too young to have brought the story of the incarnation onto himself.[40] Perhaps his fate was also influenced by the Empress Dowager's own Buddhist sympathies and her general support for popular forms of Buddhism throughout her realm.

We likewise see the Empress Dowager's Buddhist sympathies in the way in which Prince Cheng presented his memorial to her. Though he clearly does not support the increasing presence of Buddhist buildings in the capital, and he fears the unrestrained activity found within them, he presents his memorial to the throne from the perspective of a pious Buddhist. He does this by cloaking his objection to the then-common practice of lay patronage of Buddhist temples and monasteries through reference to two eminent Buddhist patrons of old: first, he cites a past-life story of King Aśoka, the Buddha's royal patron and benefactor who is said to have presented a gift of dirt to a Buddha while just a child; second, he cites the story of the lay-disciple Cunda who provided the Buddha with his final meal. Yuan Cheng says:

> If one is able to be sincerely faithful, then even the dirt gathered by a child can be an altar and Cunda's meager offerings are worthy to be served to the twinned trees. How must it be that we indulge in such robbery to fund the construction of monasteries?[41]

Cheng uses Buddhist precedent to make his case for the need to police the building of Buddhist structures. He does so, perhaps, as a Buddhist, but also as a Buddhist who served the court's long-established form of metropolitan Buddhism. He argues that if awakening is profound how can it be quantified

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北魏扁 [*A History of Chinese Buddhism, Northern Wei Section*] (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1942), 269–290. Seiwert also discusses the rebellion in a general overview of Buddhist rebellions in the time period: Hubert Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 111–114.

40 Eric Zürcher, "'Prince Moonlight:' Messianism and Eschatology in Early Medieval Buddhism," *T'oung Pao* 68, nos. 1/3 (1982), 45–46.

41 The memorial is in *Wei shu* 114. 3044–3047; translation adapted from Hurvitz, *Wei Shou*, 92–99.

with money given for donation? Indeed, he argues that if even King Aśoka supported the Buddhist community with nothing but a sincere gift of dirt in his past life, and if Cunda gave the Buddha a simple meal, why is it that the populace, in Yang Xuanzhi's laudatory words, "cast off their elephants and horses (as donations) just as though they were taking off their shoes." What we see in Cheng's argument, therefore, is his allegiance to but criticism of the Empress Dowager. Not wishing to criticize Buddhism, per se, Cheng instead criticizes the extravagant practices of the Buddhists at the metropolis when he presents his memorial to their high patron, begging her to adhere to the metropolitan Buddhism of her predecessors.

Unlike Cheng, however, the author of the *Book of the Wei*, Wei Shou 魏收 (506–572), who was compiling his history after the death of the Empress Dowager and from the perspective of her successors, did not need to hide his disdain for the uncontrolled Buddhists of Luoyang by using Buddhist language. The final words of his text's unique treatment on the Buddhism of his time, contained in the "Treatise on Buddhism and Daoism" (*Shilao zhi* 釋老志) are a direct condemnation of the Empress Dowager's facilitation of the Buddhist takeover of Luoyang. Wei Shou concludes his history of Buddhism by lamenting that:

> From the time that the Wei had the Empire until they abdicated, the Buddhist scriptures that were in circulation and amassed in China numbered 415 sections, altogether 1119 rolls. After the Zhengguan 正光 (520–525 CE) reign, the empire had many worries and royal conscription was so intense that the people registered for it all "Entered the Way" under the pretense of wanting to become *śramaṇas* when in reality they were evading conscription. Such an extreme flood of persons, from the time that China had the Buddha's law, had never been seen: by a rough count, the numbers of monks and nuns was two million, the monasteries, more than thirty thousand. The current of such malpractice has not been reversed, and, at this point, persons of knowledge sigh deeply![42]

In all cases across the *Book of the Wei*, the attitude toward Buddhism that is displayed by both Wei Shou and the Empress Dowager's courtiers is one of caution. Looking to promote the court's metropolitan Buddhism, which was a form of the tradition necessarily in the service of the state, the men of the Empress Dowager's court urged her to police Buddhists at the metropolis and thereby

42 *Wei shu* 114. 3048. Translation adapted from: Hurvitz, *Wei Shou*, 103.

shape the tradition into a religio-political network that they controlled. The Empress did no such thing. Aligning herself with the Buddhist ideals and practices of the people of her metropolis, she is blamed in the *Book of the Wei* for facilitating the unrestrained spread of dangerous Buddhist elements across her polity, elements said to both defile the tradition of Buddhism and contribute to the instability of the dynasty.

4 The Story of Her Name

Like other Northern Wei rulers before her, Empress Dowager Ling had the precarious task of managing disparate factions in her polity, including the Buddhists in her populace and the members of her court who wanted her to police that populace from the inside. The kind of Buddhism that her courtiers envisioned, which I have called metropolitan Buddhism, was a form of court-policed Buddhist orthodoxy administered by elite members of the Buddhist community and sometimes at odds with what the religion looked like on the ground in Luoyang. However, as a woman who held very tenuously to power during a dangerous and tumultuous era, the Empress Dowager remained in close contact with the urban Buddhists of Luoyang, relying on them, their social networks, and their physical presence in the capital to help bolster her contested rule.

There are many ways in which the Empress Dowager benefited—as a political woman—by her alliance with Buddhists. As we saw above, the *very means by which she came to and ascended at court were Buddhist*. Appointed to court by a Buddhist nun of her patrilineal clan, the Empress Dowager ultimately seized power by pushing her own competitor, Xuanwu's Empress, into the court's own nunnery. She also attempted to evade her own death by shaving her head and becoming a Buddhist nun when it was clear that Erzhu Rong would soon be her murderer. Though we will never know if the Empress Dowager was a faithful Buddhist, we do know that she benefited personally and politically from the Buddhist institution. In a direct way, the Empress Dowager owed her existence at court to the Buddhist institution of female monastics which had, by her time, become an integral and powerful presence in the Northern Wei capital. She spent her rule in the company of monastics, many of whom were women. She repaid her debt to the institution by personally sponsoring the construction of a nunnery for her aunt, Sengzhi, which she herself is said to have frequented as a devotee, and by being Luoyang's most generous Buddhist patron, commissioning numerous other Buddhist structures and commanding the aristocracy to do the same.

The Empress Dowager's involvement in Buddhist social worlds in her capital also equated to her involvement in worlds gendered largely female—a significant departure from the world of her court. Yang's *Record* describes a large and noteworthy range of activities that the Buddhist nuns of Luoyang organized for the city's residents. From processions and parties to sermons and soirées, the nuns of Luoyang are recorded by Yang to have been a remarkably visible presence in the social fabric of the capital and the Empress Dowager was intimately involved in their worlds. Further to her participation in the religious spaces of women and female monastics, in a significant departure from the Buddhist strategies of her predecessors in the Northern Wei, the Empress Dowager (and perhaps Emperor Xuanwu as well) sponsored the translation of Buddhist texts at court,[43] notably the translation of a Buddhist text which postulates rule by a woman who miraculously turns into a man and then becomes a king of a Buddhist kingdom on account of her great virtue.[44] The existence of this text at her court may have been one of the ways in which she legitimized her own rule to her Buddhist polity and worked to foster a practice of the Buddhist religion which was open to women and which placed her at the center. While neither the Chinese court system nor Tuoba traditions of leadership leave room for women at the top, it appears that notions of Buddhist rule by a woman were possible in medieval China. The most famous example of this is China's only ever female emperor, Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690–705), whose use of Buddhist texts, Buddhist ideas, and Buddhist infrastructure in legitimating her own rule have been well studied.[45]

Finally, we also see from her biography that the Empress Dowager benefitted from the Buddhist worlds of Luoyang even in her death. As the text tells us, in the violent times at the end of the dynasty, no state funeral was organized for the conquered and murdered Empress Dowager; instead, her sister collected

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43 Though there were a few translators in Northern Wei territory, the dynasty is not known in the history of Chinese Buddhism for its textual production through court-sponsored translation bureaus. Outside of the Empress Dowager's sponsorship of translation of activities at the Eternal Peace, there are no other Northern Wei translation bureaus of note, though a few pieces of Chinese Buddhist apocrypha may be connected to the earlier stages of the Northern Wei.

44 The *Sūtra of the Woman, "Silver"* (*Yinsenü jing* 銀色女經: *T* no. 179) was translated by Buddhaśanta 佛陀扇多 who came to Northern Wei Luoyang around 508 CE and worked with Bodhiruci 菩提流支 (?-527) who was stationed at the Eternal Peace Monastery.

45 Recent noteworthy examples of this scholarship include: Jinhua Chen, "Śarīra and Scepter. Empress Wu's Political Use of Buddhist Relics," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 25, nos. 1–2 (2002): 33–150; Harry N. Rothschild, *Emperor Wu Zhao and her Pantheon of Devis, Divinities, and Dynastic Mothers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

her body and the body of the child emperor from the river where they had been drowned and had them interred in the Monastery of the Two Numens. Though a monastery with the name "Two Numens" is not known in any other source from the period in question and has not surfaced in the archeological record, other clues remain as to where and what the apparently anomylous monastery actually was. The *Record* retains information on two twinned structures known by people of the time as the "The Monastery of the Two Women" (*shuangnü si* 雙女寺). Each of these monasteries contained a large stūpa. One was commissioned by Empress Dowager Ling and one was commissioned by her sister, and they are said to have been mortuary temples for their deceased father.[46] The *Record* states that the Monastery of the Two Women was fully staffed by monastics and financed by the Empress Dowager in tribute to her father. Furthermore, the *Record* tells us that the monastery was built at the site of the Han 漢 dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) imperial observatory, or "Numinous Platform" (*lingtai* 靈臺). With a lack of any other evidence for the location of the Monastery of the Two Numens, would it make sense to postulate that the names of the Monasteries of the Two Women merged with that of the Numinous Platform, so that the "Monastery of the Two Women" at the "Numinous Platform" became the "Monastery of the Two Numens?" Indeed, Yang confesses some ambiguity on the name of the monastery in his record, saying simply that people called it the Monastery of the Two Women but not himself listing it by any formal name.

Though this identification of the Monastery of the Two Numens is conjectural,[47] it might make more sense if we consider the monastery to have been the place where the Empress Dowager and the child emperor were also interred. The numinous platform, and hence the Monastery of the Two Women, is located just next to the bridge on the river where the Empress Dowager and the child emperor were drowned, and we know that the monastery served the Empress Dowager's family as a sort of mortuary shrine. We know, too, that the same sister who co-commissioned the monastery with the Empress Dowager was also the one who gathered the bodies from the river and had them interred in the Monastery of the Two Numens. Given its uncertain name, its proximity to the site of the drowning, and its history of being a mortuary temple for the Hu clan, the Monastery of the Two Women emerges as a possible alternate name for the anomylous Monastery of the Two Numens, as well as the final resting

46 *T* no. 2092: 51. 1010c19–1011a05.

47 Though conjectural, this thesis is supported by Li Lan, a PhD candidate in Religious Studies at McMaster University, who was previously a member of the Longmen Grottoes Research Academy and is very familiar the Northern Wei materials.

spot for the Empress Dowager's body. The hybrid name of the monastery might also index the two persons potentially interred there: the Empress Dowager and the Emperor, who then would be known nominally as the "Two Numens." Just as with Buddhist texts justifying rule by women, the symbolism in this "two Numen" paradigm was repeated by two other female Buddhist rulers in early medieval times: Northern Wei Empress Dowager Wenming 文明 (442–490)[48] and Wu Zetian, who both utilized the regency-government symbolism of the "Two Sages" (*ersheng* 二聖). As for Empress Dowager Wenming who was, in many ways, Empress Dowager Ling's predecessor, we see evidence for her use of the "Two Sages" paradigm in a stele inscription of 488 CE[49] wherein it states that the building of the Radiant Blessings Monastery (*Huifu si* 暉福寺) was dedicated to the Two Sages of Empress Dowager Wenming and Emperor Xiaowen 孝文 (r. 471–499), whom she ruled behind. As for Wu Zetian, she and Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649–683) were known as the Two Sages[50] and undertook state sacrifices together that are strongly reminiscent of the ascension of the pagoda at the Eternal Peace by Empress Dowager Ling and Emperor Xiaoming. In the cases of Empress Dowager Wenming and Wu Zetian, it is clear how to translate the nominal title: They were sages ruling in complementarity with another sage. In the case of our Empress Dowager, it is more difficult: She is a *ling*, and a female one. With *ling* designating divine ability/agency, it might be that—to her Buddhist community at least—the name "Ling" suggested a divine agency and inspiration innate to the Empress Dowager that was translated to real-world concerns through her public and unprecedented support of the Buddhist community and reinforced through her own building of her patrilineal shrine at the site of the Han dynasty Numinous Platform. Indeed, her support of Buddhists alongside the story of her divine birth and her awe-inspiring ascension of the Eternal Peace pagoda, may have seen her labelled *ling*—a divine being, auspicious and capable of supernatural agency.

48 Also commonly known by her family name, Feng 馮, Empress Dowager Wenming ruled unchallenged, though not independently. She was also a public Buddhist. Her biography is preserved in the "Biographies of Empresses" section of the *Book of the Wei* (*Weishu* 13.328–331).

49 I am indebted to Gil Raz for bringing this stele to my attention. The transcription of the inscription is available on the CBETA database: I0001: *Dangchang gong huifu si bei* 宕昌公暉福寺碑 (Duke of Dangchang stele for Radiant Blessings Monastery).

50 For the most recent discussion of the rule of the Two Sages, see: Rothschild, *Emperor Wu Zhao*, 115 ff.

In his work on local religion in China, Kenneth Dean has helpfully analyzed the different polarities of *sheng* (Confucian Sage) and *ling* (spiritual power) and described them as "polar attractors" that exist in tension with each other in the syncretic field between universality and locality,[51] and Megan Bryson has skillfully shown how this field intersects with "the gendered plane demarcated by masculinity and femininity."[52] In the case of Empress Dowagers Wencheng and Ling as well as Empress Wu/Emperor Wu Zhao, the three female leaders employed similar strategies for legitimating their gendered rules; however, Empress Dowager Ling remained largely localized and feminine by ruling as Empress Dowager and high patron of Buddhism in the capital, whereas Empress Wu/Emperor Wu Zhao transgressed into the universal and masculine by ruling as emperor and embarking on large-scale projects of universal sovereignty.

And yet, the story of the name does not end there. Within the elite and largely male context of the court that the Empress Dowager had long been at odds with, the name "Ling" had a completely different resonance than it would have among Buddhists. To explore this resonance, we can make a direct comparison to a different head of state that held the same name: Emperor Ling 靈帝 (r. 168–189) of the Han Dynasty.[53] We have already met Han Emperor Ling in this study: he was the very emperor that ruled the Han when the Yellow Turbans brought it to its knees. He is therefore the very emperor that the Empress Dowager was herself compared to by Yuan Yi in his memorial to her cited above. Han Emperor Ling's failure to control the Yellow Turbans was well known to the Northern Wei court and was also used as a model by which to criticize a past emperor's support of Buddhists in the dynasty.[54] In a Confucian context, therefore—the very context of imperial naming, dynastic histories,

51 Kenneth Dean, *Lord of the Three in One: The Spread of a Cult in Southeast Asia.* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 26.

52 Megan Bryson, *Goddess on the Frontier: Religion, Ethnicity, and Gender in Southwest China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 9.

53 Han Emperor Ling's biography is available in the *History of the Later Han*: *Hou Hanshu* 8. 327–360. A translation of the portions of the *Complete Mirror of Governance* that deal with Han Emperor Ling's rule is available: Rafe de Crespigny, *Emperor Huan and Emperor Ling: Being the Chroncle of the Later Han for the years 157 to 189 AD as recorded in Chapters 54–59 of the Zizhitongjian of Sima Guang* (Australian National University: Faculty of Asian Studies, 1989).

54 For example, a similar memorial regarding the dangers of Buddhists and the necessity of oppressing them was presented to Emperor Xiaowen by his courtier, Lu Yuan 盧淵 (fl. ca. 5th century). This memorial is recounted in Lu Yuan's biography in the *Book of the Wei* (*Wei shu* 47. 1046–1049).

and official biographies—the name "Ling" would have associated the Empress Dowager with the ruler whose name she shared and with whom she also shared fault for ignoring disruptive religious factions in her polity which contributed to the fall of her dynasty. In the minds of her courtiers, the Empress Dowager's allegiance to Buddhists and their institutions was an unconscionable and destabilizing choice that they warned her would be her downfall. But she did not listen to them. Choosing instead to remain close to Buddhists as a means of supporting her tenuous female rule, she died with them as her only allies. On her death, the glorious Buddhist capital of Luoyang was completely destroyed, just as was her own reputation.

This imperial connection between the two failed rulers brings us to an understanding of how the name "Ling" was heard among the Empress Dowager's courtiers. Beginning with the name held by the Han Emperor, his own biography in the *Book of the Later Han* (*Hou Han shu* 後漢書) tells us exactly what is meant by *ling*. The text relates that Han Emperor Ling was duped by two of his courtiers to the extent that he was not acting in the position of ruler and that, therefore, it was his own courtiers which caused his downfall. On this, the biography exclaims, "In such a way, then, did Han Ling Di become *ling*."[55] Given that under the persuasion of these corrupt officials, Han Emperor Ling is known to have indulged himself in women and fineries, sold nobility titles, and ignored all matters of state,[56] there is no way in which the *ling* in his name had a positive resonance. So, what did it mean? Though there are no other rulers which share the posthumous name, "Ling," there is one official from the Northern Wei who came to be posthumously known as "Ling," and the meaning of his name is articulated in the same way as the idea of "becoming Ling" is expressed in the biography of Han Emperor Ling above.[57] Fortunately, this official, Gao You 高祐 (d. 499), has a biography in the *Book of the Wei*,[58] which states that, prior to his death, Gao You was insubordinate to imperial directions, was stripped of all of his titles, and exiled to the Huai 淮 river for three years. As to his posthumous name, the text tells us that "Not taking orders from above is called 'Ling;' it is appropriate that [he] shall posthumously

55 *Hou Han shu* 8.359.

56 These details of Han Emperor Ling's life, as retained in the *Complete Mirror of Governance*, can be found in: De Crespigny, *Emperor Huan and Emperor Ling*, 135–174.

57 Though one instance of the phrase "Became Ling" is found in the *History of the Later Han* and one found in the *Book of the Wei*, the parallel is telling because the *History of the Later Han* was written during the Liu Song 劉宋 Dynasty (420–479) and so the language would have been similar to the contemporary usage in the Northern Wei.

58 *Wei shu* 57. 1259–1263.

be called 'Ling'."[59] Within a Confucian[60] optic, therefore, we should read the Empress Dowager's name, Gao You's name, and the Han Emperor's name as bearing a negative connotation in that they are a veiled denunciation of the rulers' ability to rule as Heaven had ordained. This is, I believe, how the name sounded to the court at the time when it was given to the Empress Dowager under the reign of the last of the dynasty's puppet emperors, and it is a dramatic departure from how it would have sounded to the Buddhists of her time.

5 Conclusion

As a means of historicizing the court of the Northern Wei in its collapse at the violent end of empire, the present study has focused on the Empress Dowager who held the center of both courtly and religious life. As a figure whose existence was bisected by the demands of political life and the expectations of a fervently Buddhist populace, the Empress Dowager makes an excellent case study of how the Buddhism of her own time was constructed differently at court than among her populace. As the head of the court of the Northern Wei, the Empress Dowager was urged to police Buddhists at her metropolis and use the strong arm of government to create a legal and orthodox metropolitan Buddhism that was both funded by and overseen by the government itself. But she did not. Transgressing the boundary between the Buddhism of the court and the Buddhism of the people, the Empress Dowager remained very close to the Buddhists of Luoyang and refused to enforce the court's laws regarding who can

59 *Wei shu* 57. 1262. The wording of this phrase is likely modelled on older manuals for the naming of officials. A notable example of such a manual is the "Explanation for Methods of Posthumous Naming" (*shifa jie* 諡法解) section of the *Lost Book of the Zhou* (*yizhou shu* 逸周書), which states that the name "Ling" is used for individuals who, for example, did not succeed in their goals, had intimate knowledge of the supernatural, loved rituals for the spirits, and, notably, were rebellious or chaotic.

60 By using the term "Confucian optic" what I suggest is that though some of the Empress Dowager's courtiers were certainly Buddhists, they participated in a court system that sought to emulate models of Chinese antiquity, particular the Han Dynasty. They also sought to write about their courts and their policies in a way that accorded with a literary tradition long termed "Confucian." The very tradition of writing biography and dynastic history is an elite method of transmitting culture and is bound up with notions of the authority of history and with both the ruler's and the historian's role within that history. These notions are considered to have developed as integral to the Confucian tradition of social thought, which, it must be pointed out, is a tradition that transmits public modes of authority in a patriarchal mode.

build a Buddhist monastery, how many there can be, and who can be ordained in them. The tension that the Empress Dowager lived in her life stayed with her in her death and is emblematized in her own posthumous name, "Ling." This study has suggested that the name itself was spoken and heard with divergent resonance between the divergent worlds that the Empress Dowager was invested in. Indeed, whether the name meant something like "auspicious" or "insubordinate" depended entirely on what side of the Buddhist question one sided with in the first half of the sixth century on the central plains of China.

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CHAPTER 2

King Chinhŭng Institutes State-Protection Buddhist Rituals

Richard D. McBride II

When King Chinhŭng 眞興 (r. 540–576) assumed the throne of Silla 新 羅 (trad. 57 BCE–935 CE) in 540, at the tender age of seven, less than five years had passed since his uncle and predecessor King Pŏphŭng 法興 (r. 514–540) had begun construction on the first royally-sponsored Buddhist monastery in the country, Promoting the Wheel of Dharma Monastery (Hŭngnyunsa 興輪寺), in 535. The adoption of Buddhism had accelerated in this small but ambitious country located in the southeastern sector of the Korean peninsula in the years following the low-ranking noble Ich'adon's 異次頓 (d. 527 or 528) martyrdom in support of the foreign religion. According to tradition, the miracle of white blood instead of red spurting out of his severed neck when his head was chopped off demonstrated the subtle and sublime power of Buddhadharma.[1]

The early Korean state of Silla was the last of the polities on the Korean peninsula to adopt Buddhism as a state religion, suggesting that in the early sixth century Silla was finally ready to engage in interstate diplomacy and cultural exchange with the more advanced Chinese states on the Asian continent, besides its more sophisticated neighbors Koguryŏ 高句麗 (trad. 37 BCE–668 CE) to the north and Paekche 百濟 (trad., 18 BCE–660 CE) to the west. Chinhŭng was the son of Pŏphŭng's younger brother, the *kalmunwang* 葛文王 Ipchong 立宗, a kind of secondary king and representative of the nobility's interests in the council of nobles over which the king presided as first among equals. Pŏphŭng's daughter, Lady Sado 思道夫人 (d. 614), was his queen, demonstrating that the Silla royalty typically practiced endogamy to consolidate royal power.[2] For the first several years of his reign Chinhŭng was tutored under the

1 *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (History of the Three Kingdoms), 50 rolls, by Kim Pusik 金富軾 (1075–1151), completed between 1136–1145; critical apparatus by Chŏng Kubok 鄭求福, No Chungguk 盧重國, Sin Tongha 申東河, Kim T'aesik 金泰植, and Kwŏn Tŏgyŏng 權悳永; Kuksa Ch'ongsŏ 國史叢書 (National History Series) 96–1 (Seoul: Han'guk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, 1996), 4:50 (Pŏphŭng 15); cf. *Samguk yusa* 3, *T* no. 2039: 49.987b2–988b5 (Wŏnjong Pŏphŭng Yŏmch'ok myŏlsin).

2 Although the *Samguk sagi* records that her surname was Pak, this must be a mistake for Kim

regency of the Queen Dowager, his aunt Lady Podo 保刀夫人 (fl. sixth century CE) of the newly-designated Pak descent group 朴氏. Although Pŏphŭng had amassed much prestige for his fledging royal lineage in 532 with the assimilation of the Kŭmgwan Kaya 金官伽倻 state, centered in present-day Kimhae 金海 in southeastern Korea, Chinhŭng needed to bolster or supplement territorial expansion through military victories with symbolic resources to provide figurative legitimacy for the Kim 金 royal family. Chinhŭng accomplished this in part by making an émigré Koguryŏ monk, Hyeryang 惠亮 (fl. 540–576), the monastic overseer (*sŭngt'ong* 僧統), which was the government-appointed administrative head of the Buddhist church in Silla.[3] This is the story of Chinhŭng's institution of state-protection Buddhist rituals, which augmented royal prestige and power and used Buddhist means to promote the authority and legitimacy of the Silla royal family in the late sixth century.

According to the short biographical narrative on Kŏch'ilbu 居柒夫 (fl. 540–579) in the *History of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk sagi* 三國史記), compiled in the mid-twelfth century under the direction of the scholar-official Kim Pusik 金富軾 (1075–1151), the monk Hyeryang was a renowned lecturer on the Buddhist sūtras at his monastery, which was possibly in Hanyang 漢陽, in the region of present-day Seoul north of the Han River 漢江. Hyeryang's monastery was most likely in the Seoul area because Kŏch'ilbu travelled to this region to gain intelligence for Silla disguised as a monk prior to Silla's conquest of the region in 551.[4] Unfortunately, later gazetteers and other historiographical writings do not preserve any hints regarding the location of Hyeryang's monastery, but it seems reasonable to suggest that it was large enough to support a reasonably-sized monastic community and, in addition, it possessed tenuous connections to monastic communities in the region, whether they were farther north in the Koguryŏ heartland or overseas on the Shandong peninsula 山東半島. Although Koguryŏ emissaries usually took the overland route from its capital P'yŏngyang 平壤 to the capitals of the Northern Dynasties, the most convenient route from the Han River Basin was by sea to the port cities on the northern coast of the Shandong peninsula, such as Dengzhou 登州. Shandong had a flourishing Bud-

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if she were really the daughter of King Pŏphŭng; see *Samguk sagi* 4:51. However, because the Liang court in China mistook part of King Pŏphŭng's given name as his surname, the more likely scenario is that surnames were not yet common in Silla—even among the highest levels of nobility and royalty; see *Samguk sagi* 4:49.

3 The exact date when Hyeryang was made monastic overseer has not been preserved. However, he must have assumed this position between 551, when he moved to the Silla capital, and 572, when he oversaw the Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions. See *Samguk sagi* 44:423 (Kŏch'ilbu).

4 *Samguk sagi* 44:422–423 (Kŏch'ilbu).

dhist community and several monasteries during the Northern and Southern Dynasties 南北國 (ca. 386–589) and Sui 隋–Tang 唐 periods (581–907).[5]

Although little is known about Hyeryang, we know that he submitted to the conquerors from Silla and requested to be sent to the capital. Something about Hyeryang's credentials, personality, or knowledge of Buddhism and its rituals must have impressed Silla king Chinhŭng and other members of the court and nobility because he was the first monk in the country to be appointed to the position of monastic overseer, and he instituted the Convocation for the Recitation of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* by One Hundred Eminent Monks (*paekkojwa kanghoe* 百高座講會) and the Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions (*p'algwanhoe* 八關會).[6]

Hyeryang was probably in the Silla capital when Chinhŭng embraced the imagery of the cakravartin (*chŏllun wang*, Ch. *zhuanlun wang* 轉輪王) and constructed the state palladium August Dragon Monastery (also called Yellow Dragon Monastery; Hwangnyongsa 皇龍寺/黃龍寺) to combine Sinitic and Indian modes of legitimation. Chinhŭng enhanced his prestige and authority by drawing upon Buddhist imagery and symbolism and the cults of Śākyamuni and the cakravartin king. Veneration of the Buddha Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha Siddhārtha Gautama (trad. 563–483 BCE), is an ancient and enduring practice in Buddhism in all countries that have adopted the Buddhadharma as a state-sponsored religion. Śākyamuni conventionally stood in for all of the buddhas and, because he was also a royal prince by birth, in this semblance was emblematically linked to royalty. In East Asia, the symbolic connection of Śākyamuni to the royal family was first used by the Northern Wei 北魏 (386–534), which featured images of the Buddha prominently in grotto-temples constructed for its rulers at Yungang 雲岡 and imagined their kings as living buddhas.[7] The royal family of Silla augmented their employment of this kind of

5 F.S. Drake, "The Shen-t'ung Monastery and the Beginning of Buddhism in Shantung," *Monumenta Serica* 4, no. 1 (1939): 1–39.

6 *Samguk sagi* 44:423 (Kŏch'ilbu). The *Samguk sagi* calls these rituals *paekchwa kanghoe* 百座講會 and *p'algwan chi pŏp* 八關之法 respectively. For a slightly different approach to some of the same materials, see Kim Poksun 金福順, "6 segi *Samguk sagi* Pulgyo kwallyŏn kisa chonŭi," 6세기 『삼국사기』 불교관련 기사 存疑 (Doubts on accounts related to Buddhism in the sixth century in the *Samguk sagi*), *Silla munhwa* 新羅文化 39 (2012): 63–87, esp. 69–70 for a brief discussion of Hyeryang and Kŏch'ilbu, and 78–80 for a discussion of the *paekchwa kanghoe*.

7 Tsukamoto Zenryū 塚本善隆, *Shina Bukkyōshi kenkyū: Hokugi-hen* 支那佛教史研究：北魏篇 (Studies in Chinese Buddhist History: Northern Wei), Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1942, 75–76, 143–144; Satō Chisui 佐藤智水, "Unkō Bukkyō no seikaku: Hokugi kokka Bukkyō seiritsu no ichikōsatsu" 雲岡仏教の性格: 北魏国家仏教成立の一考察 (The Characteristics of Yün-kang Buddhism: A study of the establishment of Buddhism as the state religion of the Northern Wei Dynasty), *Tōyō gakuhō* 東洋学報 59, nos. 1–2 (1977): 27–66.

Buddhist symbolism by linking the Indian concept of the cakravartin king, an ideal Buddhist monarch, to their tandem attempt to recreate the family of the historical Buddha in the members of the royal family. A cakravartin was a king who ruled over the whole world comprising the Four Continents. The Indian prototype is King Aśoka (r. 268–232 BCE), who regulated and patronized the Buddhist church in India, and some scholars have accentuated the parallels between the two.[8] The term "cakravartin" means "wheel-turner" and suggests that the whole world submits to him because he turns "the wheel of the dharma." Buddhist literature lists four wheels turned by such a king: golden (*kŭmnyun*, Ch. *jinlun* 金輪), silver (*ŭllyun*, Ch. *yinlun* 銀輪), copper (*tongnyun*, Ch. *tonglun* 銅輪), and iron (*ch'ŏllyun*, Ch. *tielun* 鐵輪).[9] Chinhŭng drew upon this imagery directly, giving two of his sons the names of Tongnyun 銅輪 (copper wheel) and Saryun 舍輪 (or Kŭmnyun 金輪, golden wheel).[10] Saryun succeeded to the throne and reigned as Chinji 眞智 (r. 576–579), but *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* (*T* no. 2039: *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事), first compiled by the monk Iryŏn 一然 (1206–1289) and further compiled and edited by his disciple Mugŭk 無極 (Hon'gu 混丘, 1250–1322) and others, suggests he was later deposed by the nobility for immoral behavior.[11] Nevertheless, his grandson Kim Ch'unch'u 金春秋 (604–661) eventually ascended the throne as T'aejong Muyŏl 太宗武烈 (r. 654–661) and established the strongest dynastic line of Silla.

King Chinhŭng's military conquests and religious patronage more fully demonstrate his adherence to the model of the cakravartin king. Chinhŭng's martial achievements include the expansion of Silla's frontiers through his annexations of the Han River Basin 漢江流域 in 551 and Tae Kaya 大加耶 in 562.[12] He is also credited with organizing the "flower boy" (*hwarang* 花郎) order, which consisted of attractive young men who specialized in ritual and martial functions and which soon became associated with the influential Maitreya

8 Narendra M. Pankaj, "The Life and Times of the Silla King Chinhŭng," *Korean Culture* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 12–23.

9 *Apidamo jushe lun* 阿毘達磨俱舍論 (*Abhidarmakośabhāṣya*) 12, *T* no. 1558: 29.64b28-c9.

10 *Samguk sagi* 4:40 (Chinhŭng 33, Chinji). Kim Ch'ŏlchun 金哲埈 suggests that the *sa* of Saryun is likely a transliteration of *soe*, meaning "iron." Since the older brother of the crown prince represents the copper wheel, it is appropriate to refer to the younger brother as the iron wheel. See Kim's "Silla sangdae sahoe ŭi Dual Organization (ha)" 新羅 上代社會의 Dual Organization (下) (The dual organization of the ancient society of Silla II), *Yŏksa hakpo* 歷史學報 2 [1, no. 2] (October 1952): 85–113, esp. 91. See also, Lee Ki-baik (Yi Kibaek) 李基白, *Silla sasangsa yŏn'gu* 新羅思想史研究 (Studies in the intellectual history of Silla) (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1986), 81n12.

11 *Samguk yusa* 1, *T* no. 2039, vol. 49, p. 968a9 (Tohwanyŏ Pihyŏngnang).

12 *Samguk sagi* 4:38–39 (Chinhŭng 12, 19).

cult.[13] His patronage of the Buddhist church is likewise compelling. Promoting the Wheel of Dharma Monastery was completed in 544. In the spring of 549 the Chinese Liang 梁 court (502–557) dispatched an envoy bearing a Buddhist relic. He was accompanied by the Silla monk Kaktŏk 覺德 (fl. 549), who returned to his native land after studying Buddhism in Liang. King Chinhŭng met them publicly in the presence of one hundred ministers on the road in front of Promoting the Wheel of Dharma Monastery.[14] Although Chinhŭng dispatched emissaries to the courts of the southern Liang and Chen 陳 (557–589) dynasties, from whence Silla reportedly acquired scores of Buddhist scriptures and treatises, he was invested as king of Silla by the emperor of the Northern Qi 北齊 (550–577).[15] Although this anecdote from the *Samguk sagi* emphasizes contact with the Chinese Southern Dynasties, possibly because in Kim Pusik's time the Southern Dynasties were held to be "legitimate," influences from the Northern Dynasties were probably more substantial in sixth-century Silla as in Koguryŏ.[16] This is because the names selected by Silla rulers for ecclesiastical positions followed precedents set in the Northern Wei. For example, the position of monastic overseer or Buddhist overseer (*sŭngt'ong* 僧統, *kukt'ong* 國統; glossed as *saju* 寺主, "monastery authority"), chief Buddhist monk (*taedoyuna* 大都維那), chief Buddhist nun (*toyunanyang* 都維那娘), and great scribal inspector (*taesŏsŏng* 大書省), established during the reign of King Chinhŭng, correspond well to the Northern Wei and Northern Qi offices of Buddhist overseer (*datong* 大統, *tong* 統) and chief Buddhist monk (*duweina* 都維那), but not to the Liu-Song 劉宋 (420–478) and Southern Qi 南齊 (479–502) offices of monastic authority (*sengzhu* 僧主), monastic rectifier (*sengzheng* 僧正), and monastic chief (*sengdu* 僧都).[17]

Lavish patronage of the Buddhist church was a key component of Chinhŭng's rule. After sighting a yellow dragon (*hwangnyong* 黃龍) on an auspicious site where he had planned to build a palace, he set aside the land and established August Dragon Monastery in 553. This monastery was partially completed in 566, when two more monasteries were announced.[18] The last

13 *Samguk sagi* 4:40 (Chinhŭng 37). On the *hwarang*, see Richard D. McBride II, *Domesticating the Dharma: Buddhist Cults and the Hwaŏm Synthesis in Silla Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 20–21, 38–42, and *passim*; and Richard D. McBride II, "Silla Buddhism and the *Hwarang*," *Korean Studies* 34 (2010): 54–89.

14 *Samguk sagi* 4:38 (Chinhŭng 5, 10).

15 *Samguk sagi* 4:39 (Chinhŭng 26).

16 Richard D. McBride II, "Imagining Ritual and Cultic Practice in Koguryŏ Buddhism," *International Journal of Korean History* 19, no. 2 (September 2014): 1–43.

17 See McBride, *Domesticating the Dharma*, 31.

18 *Samguk sagi* 4:38–39 (Chinhŭng 14, 27).

years of his reign include the casting and enshrining of a large sixteen-foot Buddhist image in the Golden Hall of August Dragon Monastery.[19] Thus, his generous support of Buddhism and his military triumphs made him an archetypal cakravartin king, like the famous Indian ruler Aśoka, to his Buddhist subjects.[20]

The first Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions was held in the tenth lunar month of 572 at an unnamed monastery (*oesa* 外寺) on behalf of the war dead, and it lasted for seven days.[21] The date of the first Convocation for the Recitation of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* by One Hundred Eminent Monks has not been preserved, but it was almost certainly held at August Dragon Monastery, Silla's state palladium, between 553 and 569, or sometime just after 566, when the first stage of construction on this magnificent large-scale monastery was complete.

Āgama literature suggests that the eight prohibitions refer to a special dharma assembly for laymen, particularly kings, in which they empower themselves by fasting and following eight precepts that a monk would follow for a specified period of time. Full-fledged monks usually reviewed and rededicated (i.e., empowered) themselves to the monastic precepts (*kyeyul*, Ch. *jielü* 戒律; Skt. *vinaya*, *śīla*) twice a month on the seventh and fifteenth days in a special dharma assembly (Skt. *poṣadha*) in which the monastic code was recited.[22] Although scholars are not sure what was contained in the Silla assembly, they suggest that the Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions in Silla was used to empower the Silla kings and prosper the country and that it included worship of the native gods and spirits of Silla. The Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions links the most fundamental of Buddhist ritual observances, the *poṣadha*, to Maitreya worship because the Maitreya *sūtras* encourage aspirants to hold "abstention ceremonies or fasts of the eight precepts" (*p'algye chae*, Ch. *bajie zhai* 八戒齋).[23] A fast of the eight precepts appears to be another name for a fast of the eight prohibitions (*p'algwan chae*, Ch. *baguan zhai* 八關齋, Skt. *aṣṭāṅga-*

19 *Samguk sagi* 4:40 (Chinhŭng 35, 36).

20 See Kim Young-tai (Kim Yŏngt'ae) 金煐泰, "Mirŭk sŏnhwa ko" 彌勒仙花考 (Study of the transcendent flower of Maitreya), *Pulgyo hakpo* 佛教學報 3, no. 4 (1966): 135–149, esp. 145; Lee Ki-baik, *Silla sasangsa yŏn'gu*, 80–83.

21 *Samguk sagi* 4:40 (Chinhŭng 33); *Samguk sagi* 44:423 (Kŏch'ilbu).

22 See, for instance, *Zengyi ahan jing* 增壹阿含經 (*Ekottarāgama*) 16, *T* no. 125: 2.624b–626a.

23 *Guan Mile pusa shangsheng Doushuaitian jing* 觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經, *T* no. 452: 14.420a15; *Mile xiasheng jing* 彌勒下生經, *T* no. 453: 14. 422c27; *Mile dachengfo jing* 彌勒大成佛經, *T* no. 456: 14.432a8–9.

poṣadhe, Pāli *aṭṭhaṅguposatha*). The *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks* (*Haedong kosung chŏn* 海東高僧傳: *T* no. 2065), which was compiled by Kakhun 覺訓 (fl. late twelfth–early thirteenth cen.) in 1215, reports that an abstention assembly of the eight prohibitions (*p'algwanjae hoe* 八關齋會) was held for the war dead in a monastery outside of the capital.[24] Medieval Chinese Buddhist records preserve accounts of fasts of the eight prohibitions being held primarily in the Southern Dynasties.[25] A fast of the eight prohibitions refers to a fast kept by lay-men (*upāsaka*) and lay-women (*upāsikā*) in which they observe eight precepts for a full day and night: (1) not to kill living beings; (2) not to steal; (3) not to misuse sex; (4) not to lie; (5) not to drink intoxicants; (6) not to ornament the body with flowers or perfumes, sing, dance, or attend shows; (7) not to sleep on high or comfortable beds; and (8) not to eat at inappropriate times (viz. after noon).[26] Liang emperor Wu 梁武帝 (r. 502–549) held similar assemblies (*baguanzhai hui* 八關齋會) in the first half of the sixth century to expiate the sins of his people and to ward off calamities.[27] Korean Buddhist literature records that the assembly was held only once more, at a ceremony celebrating the completion of the nine-story wooden pagoda at August Dragon Monastery, perhaps in 646. It later became a regular Buddhist ritual held by the Koryŏ 高麗 court (918–1392).[28]

The Convocation for the Recitation of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* by One Hundred Eminent Monks (*Inwang-gyŏng paekkojwa kanghoe* 仁王經百高座講會) is the ritualized chanting or recitation of the "Protecting the State" chapter (*Huguo pin* 護國品) of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra for Humane Kings* (*T*

24 *Haedong kosung chŏn* 1, *T* no. 2065: 50.1019c4–5. The *Samguk sagi* calls it a *p'algwan yŏnhoe* 八關筵會; see *Samguk sagi* 4:53 (Chinhŭng 33).

25 *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 10, *T* no. 2059: 50.390c3–4 (Beidu 杯度); *Shenseng zhuan* 神僧傳 2, *T* no. 2064: 50.961a8 (Huishao 慧紹), roll 3, *T* no. 2064: 50.961c25–26 (Beidu); roll 6, *T* no. 2064: 50.989c27–28 (Hongfang 洪昉); *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 6, *T* no. 2122: 53.315a28–b2, roll 18, *T* no. 2122: 53, p. 417c24, roll 40, *T* no. 2122, vol. 53, p. 601c1, roll 61, *T* no. 2122, vol. 53, p. 747a12; roll 83, *T* no. 2122: 53.900c28–29.

26 *Baguanzhai jing* 八關齋經, *T* no. 89: 1.913a–b; see An Kyehyŏn 安啟賢, "P'algwanhoe ko" 八關會考 (Study of the Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions), *Tongguk sahak* 東國史學 4 (1956): 31–54.

27 Rhi Ki-yong (Yi Kiyŏng) 李箕永, *Han'guk Pulgyo yŏn'gu* 韓國佛教研究 (Seoul: Han'guk Pulgyo Yŏn'guwŏn, 1982), 217–264, esp. 221. See also, Kim Jongmyung (Kim Chongmyŏng) 金鍾明, "Buddhist Rituals in Medieval Korea (918–1392)" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1994), 98–102.

28 *Samguk yusa* 3, *T* no. 2039: 49.990c18–19; see also Ahn Kye-hyŏn, "P'algwanhoe ko." For the *p'algwanhoe* as practiced during the Koryŏ period see Kim Jongmyung, "Buddhist Rituals," 170–192.

no. 245, *T* no. 246: *Renwang bore boluomi jing* 仁王般若波羅密經) by one hundred eminent monks. The *Sūtra for Humane Kings* is arguably an apocryphal sūtra written sometime after 477 by a monastic opponent of Tanyao 曇曜 (fl. mid fifth century CE), the first monastic overseer (*shamentong* 沙門統) of the Northern Wei dynasty.[29] The Chinese monk-historian Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) reports that eminent monks lectured on this sūtra at the request of rulers in both Northern and Southern China during the second half of the sixth century at roughly the same time that Hyeryang must have been active in Koguryŏ, before he instituted the practice in Silla.[30] The monk-historian Zhipan 志磐 (fl. 1258–1269), who lived during the Song 宋–Yuan 元 transition period, supports this assertion, although neither writer provides any great detail on the extent of royal or imperial support.[31] This does not preclude the possibility that monks performed this ritual in monasteries prior to this time. In other words, Hyeryang may merely have been transferring to Silla a ritual practice that was quite familiar and one that he performed regularly in Koguryŏ.

The scripture stipulates that whenever a country is faced with difficult or threatening circumstances, the humane king should first prepare one hundred images and one hundred high seats. In the *Sūtra*, the Buddha teaches the Indian King Prasenajit a method for protecting the state (*hoguk*, Ch. *huguo* 護國). The ritual prescription is as follows: The monks performing the ritual procedures are to (1) hold, read, and recite this *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*; (2) adorn a ritual area by setting up one hundred Buddha images, one hundred bodhisattva images, and one hundred seats for Buddhist masters. Those who have commissioned the ritual are to (3) invite one hundred dharma masters to expound this scripture, (4) make offerings of flowers and lamps, clothes, and utensils, and burn

29 For research on the *Renwang jing* in China, see Charles D. Orzech, "A Buddhist image of (Im)perfect rule in fifth-century China," *Cahiers d'Extême-Asie* 8 (1995): 139–153, esp. 152; and Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*: The Scripture for Humane Kings *in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 121, 207–288. The first recorded performance of this convocation in China was in 585 in the state of Chen. In Japan, the first convocation using this *sūtra* was held in 660. See Marimus Willem de Visser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan; Sūtras and Ceremonies in use in the Seventh and Eight Centuries A.D. and Their History in Later Times*, 2 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1935), 1:116.

30 *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 2, *T* no. 2060: 50.436b29–c1 (Yancong 彥琮); roll 3, *T* no. 2060: 50.440c29–441a1 (Huize 慧賾); roll 17, *T* no. 2060: 50.565c10–11 (Zhiyi 智顗), and roll 24, *T* no. 2060: 50.633c21–22 (Huisheng 慧乘).

31 *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 37, *T* no. 2035: 49.353b19 (Deyuan 德元 3 [?]); roll 39, *T* no. 2035: 49.363b28–29 (Tang Taizong 唐太宗 [r. 627–649]), roll 51, *T* no. 2035: 49. 451a1–2 (Liang Wudi 梁武帝 [r. 502–549]), 49.451c24–25 (Chen 陳 dynasty [557–589]), and roll 53, *T* no. 2035: 49. 466a2–4.

incense. (5) Twice a day, during the course of the ritual, dharma masters are expected to expound the *sūtra*. The scripture promises that if a king, his great officers, and members of the saṅgha (monks and nuns) hear, read, and recite the *sūtra*, and practice the method, then disasters and difficulties will be eradicated in the country.[32] Different than the ritual utilizing the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra* or *Sūtra of Golden Light* (*Jinguangming jing* 金光明經), which invokes the power of the four heavenly kings (*sach'ŏnwang*, Ch. *sitianwang* 四天王) to protect the state, this convocation draws upon the merit produced by worshiping images of buddhas and bodhisattvas and the merit produced by eminent monks' reading, reciting, and lecturing on the *Sūtra*.

One of the visual aspects of this convocation was most likely similar to the practice of "coursing in a sūtra" (*chŏn'gyŏng*, Ch. *zhuanjing* 轉經). "Coursing" in a sūtra combines a few aspects of the Buddhist cult of the book: the rolls of the sūtra would be unrolled and rolled up again; the "coursers" would perhaps chant some lines or sections of the sūtra or even lecture on a few particular points; the whole performance would be done to generate merit for the one who commissioned the coursing. In a broad sense, however, "coursing in a sūtra" is merely one way of rendering the idea of sūtra-recitation or sūtra-chanting into Buddhist Chinese. Other compounds include "reading sūtras" (*tokkyŏng*, Ch. *dujing* 讀經), "chanting sūtras" (*p'unggyŏng*, Ch. *fengjing* 諷經), "chanting and reciting [sūtras]" (*p'ungsong*, Ch. *fengsong* 諷誦), "reciting sūtras" (*songgyŏng*, Ch. *songjing* 誦經), "looking at sūtras" (*kan'gyŏng*, Ch. *kanjing* 看經), and "contemplating sūtras" (*yŏmgyŏng*, Ch. *nianjing* 念經). Many Buddhist scriptures speak of the merit generated from reciting or chanting a Mahāyāna sūtra, such as the famous passage in the "Dhāraṇī" chapter in the *Lotus Sūtra* in which the Buddha teaches that people who chant, recite, or copy that sūtra will earn immeasurable amounts of merit. Furthermore, in the *Larger Pure Land Sūtra* (Skt. *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*; Ch. *Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經) there is a passage teaching that people will achieve the highest level of enlightenment if they accept the sūtra wholeheartedly in faith, chant the sūtra, and practice in accordance with its teachings.[33]

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32 *Renwang bore boluomi jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經 2, *T* no. 245: 8.829c29–830a8; *T* no. 246: 8.840a11–19; see also Chou Yi-liang, "Tantrism in China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 8. nos. 3/4 (1945): 241–332, esp. 296n10; Mochizuki Shinkō 望月信亨, *Bukkyō kyōten seiritsu shiron* 佛教經典成立史論 (Exposition on the compilation of the Buddhist canon) (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1946), 425–485; Rhi, *Han'guk Pulgyo yŏn'gu*, 163–193; Robert E. Buswell, Jr., *The Formation of Ch'an Ideology in China and Korea: The Vajrasamādhi-Sūtra, A Buddhist Apocryphon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 44n8.

33 See *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮花經 7, *T* no. 262: 9.58b10–12; *Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經 2, *T* no. 360: 12.279a3–6. McBride, *Domesticating the Dharma*, 115, 172n11.

The legacy of Chinhŭng's instituting Buddhist state protection rituals in Silla is closely tied to August Dragon Monastery, and other monasteries built by later Silla kings. The Convocation for the Recitation of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* by One Hundred Eminent Monks was held at least twice during the seventh century at August Dragon Monastery and purportedly featured the lectures of the eminent monk Wŏn'gwang 圓光 (d. ca. 640) in 613 and 636.[34] King Sŏngdŏk 聖德 (r. 702–737) founded Offering Virtue Monastery (Pongdŏksa 奉德寺) in order to perform rituals on behalf of his ancestor Kim Ch'unch'u, the posthumous King T'aejong Muyŏl. At that monastery he erected the Humane Kings' Enlightenment Site (Inwang toryang 仁王道場)—a hall for the recitation of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings*—and as part of the festivities lasting seven days he granted amnesty to prisoners.[35] The recitation assembly was held again in 779 in response to an earthquake that killed one hundred people in the Silla capital and other inauspicious omens in the sky. The state-protection ritual was conducted more frequently at August Dragon Monastery in the final years of Silla in 876, 886, 887, and 924, where it was held in conjunction with general amnesties and vegetarian feasts of Buddhist monks.[36]

Three monasteries were directly associated with state-protection Buddhism in Silla in the seventh century: August Dragon Monastery, Monastery of the Four Heavenly Kings (Sach'ŏnwangsa 四天王寺), and Responsive Grace Monastery (Kamŭnsa 感恩寺). August Dragon Monastery held a special place among all monasteries in Silla because it functioned as the state palladium. August Dragon Monastery was a massive structure; built northeast of the main palace complex of Silla at Half-Moon Fortress (Wŏlsŏng 月城). Including Chinhŭng's

34 *Samguk sagi* 4:43 (Chinp'yŏng 35); 5:47 (Sŏndŏk 5). The mid-seventh-century *Xu gaoseng zhuan* biography of Wŏn'gwang says that he died in 630 (Iryŏn amends it to 640 in an interlinear note), but since the *Samguk sagi* says he was alive in 636, modern scholars have attempted to amend his dates to roughly 555 to 638. Zanning's biography of Wŏnhyo contains a reference to another convocation that, if it indeed really occurred, must have taken place during the reign of either King Munmu (r. 661–681) or King Sinmun (r. 681–691). See *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 4, *T* no. 2061: 50.730a6–b29; Rhi, *Han'guk Pulgyo yŏn'gu*, 185; and Robert E. Buswell, Jr., "Hagiographies of the Korean Monk Wŏnhyo," in *Buddhism and Practice*, Princeton Readings in Religions, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 553–562. Although this and other assemblies were quite common during the succeeding Koryŏ (918–1392) as well, Buswell suggests that the allusion to the *Renwang jing* convocation in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* is almost certainly a legend since the date is unknown and no other historical evidence is extant. See his *Formation of Ch'an Ideology in China and Korea*, 44–47, especially 46n12.

35 *Samguk yusa* 2, *T* no. 2039: 49. 974a8–9.

36 *Samguk sagi* 9:97 (Hyegong 15); 11:117 (Hŏngang 2); 11:118 (Hŏngang 12); 11:119 (Chŏnggang 2); 11:119 (Chinsŏng 1); and *Samguk yusa* 2, *T* no. 2039: 49.977b25–27.

early development of the site, it took nearly ninety years of sporadic construction in several phases to bring to its final form, before being burned down by the Mongols in 1238 in an act of cultural terrorism. Construction on the monastery began in 553, and the nine-story pagoda was completed in 645.[37] Hwangnyong Monastery's nine-story pagoda was most likely modeled on the nine-story pagoda at the Eternal Peace Monastery (Yongning si 永寧寺) in Luoyang.[38] The Eternal Peace Monastery's wooden pagoda also served as a prototype for the Yamato court's building its own nine-story wooden pagoda on the site of the Kudara Ōdera 百濟大寺 (Great Paekche Monastery), also called Daikan Daiji 大官大寺, situated near Kibi Pond 吉備池 in the capital at Asuka 飛鳥 in 639.[39] August Dragon Monastery not only served as the location for the Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions and the Convocation for the Recitation of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings*, but was also the principal residence for the monastic leaders selected by the government and the location where Silla kings attended the Lantern Festival and other Buddhist gatherings.

As we have seen, August Dragon Monastery is actually rendered in two forms: "Yellow Dragon Monastery" 黃龍寺 and "August Dragon Monastery" 皇龍寺. These two constructions serve as labels accentuating its role as a seminal work of symbolic architecture in Silla empowering royal prerogatives, authority, and legitimacy. Buddhism was an important vehicle by which Sinitic culture and mores were adopted and adapted by the peoples of the Korean peninsula. The yellow dragon was and is an important emblem of imperial authority, and symbolically represented direction or location of "the center" (*chungang*

37 *Samguk sagi* 4:38 (Chinhŭng 14); 5:49 (Sŏndŏk 14). For a discussion of Hwangnyong Monastery from an art historical perspective, see Park Youngbok, "The Monastery Hwangnyongsa and Buddhism of the Early Silla Period," trans. Richard McBride and Karen Hwang, in *Transmitting the Forms of Divinity: Early Buddhist Art from Korea and Japan*, ed. Washizuka Hiromitsu, Park Youngbok, and Kang Woo-bang (New York: Japan Society, 2003), 140–153.

38 On the relationship between the nine-story pagodas at Hwangnyongsa and Yongningsi, see Yang Chŏngsŏk 梁正錫, "Silla Hwangnyongsa, Puk Wi Yŏngnyŏngsa kurigo Ilbon Taegwan Taesasa: 5–7 segi Tongasia tusŏngje wa kwallyŏn hayŏ" 新羅 黃龍寺 · 北魏 永寧寺 그리고 日本 大官大寺: 5–7 세기 동아시아 都城制와 관련하여 (Silla's Hwangnyong-sa, the Northern Wei's Yongningsi, and Japan's Kudara Ōdera: On the management of capitals in East Asia from the 5th–7th centuries), *Hanguksa hakpo* 韓國史學報 9 (September 2000): 9–56; and Yang Chŏngsŏk, *Hwangnyongsa ŭi choyŏng kwa wanggwŏn* 黃龍寺의 造營과 王權 (The construction of Hwangnyong-sa and royal authority) (Seoul: Sŏgyŏng Munhwasa, 2004).

39 On the relationship between the wooden pagodas of Hwangnyongsa, Yongningsi, and Kudara Ōdera, see Donald F. McCallum, *The Four Great Temples: Buddhist Archaeology, Architecture, and Icons of Seventh-Century Japan*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 90–92, 97–98, 109–115.

中央) in East Asian astrology and astronomy (*ch'ŏnmunhak* 天文學). Koguryŏ royal tombs of the sixth century, such as Wukui Tomb no. 4 五盔墳四號墓 in Ji'an district 輯安縣 (early sixth century) and the Great Kangsŏ Tomb 江西大墓 (late sixth century) in South P'yŏngan province, depict a yellow dragon in wall paintings (*pyŏkhwa* 壁畵) with the four heraldic animals, the deities of the four directions (*sasindo* 四神圖), or by itself (*hwangnyongdo* 黃龍圖). The depiction of yellow dragons on the ceilings of tombs, along with other asterisms and celestial phenomena, functioned as a means of depicting Koguryŏ's regional dominion.[40] King Chinhŭng's sighting of a yellow dragon at the site that would eventually become August Dragon Monastery suggests that the Silla king was asserting that dominance of the Three Kingdoms of Haedong (Haedong samguk 海東三國) had passed from Koguryŏ to Silla because it conceivably emulated an auspicious event from the legendary life of the Koguryŏ founder King Tongmyŏng 東明 (Chumong 朱蒙, r. 37–19 BCE).[41] The appearance of a yellow dragon at the proposed construction site of the new palace was an auspicious event symbolizing resonance between gods and humans (*ch'ŏnin kamŭng* 天人感應). For instance, the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 is an early Chinese text (second century BCE) comprising a collection of essays on a wide range of topics from ancient myths and legends to contemporary government, and from historical anecdotes to topography, astronomy, and philosophy.[42] It is an important repository of views that came to be inherited broadly in East Asia. The *Huainanzi* says that because the sagely person is one who embraces the mind of heaven and moves and transforms heaven and earth, the sage's sincerity is caused to be felt within. If phenomena and trends move in heaven, an auspicious star appears and a yellow dragon descends and an auspicious phoenix (*xiangfeng* 祥鳳) arrives.[43] In order for a yellow dragon to appear like

40 Kim Ilgwŏn 金一權, "The View of Astronomy and Nature and the Conception of the Heavens in Koguryŏ," in *The Culture and Thought of Koguryŏ*, compiled by the Northeast Asia History Foundation, translated by Richard D. McBride II (Seoul: Northeast Asia History Foundation, 2018), 247–296, esp. 282–286.

41 *Samguk sagi* 13:148 (Sijo Tongmyŏng 3), "Year three [35 BCE], spring, third month. A yellow dragon was seen on Kollyŏng 鶻嶺 [Falcon Ridge]. Autumn, seventh month. An auspicious cloud was seen to the south of Kollyŏng. Its color was bright red." Translation following Edward J. Shultz and Hugh H.W. Kang, with Daniel C. Kane and Kenneth J.H. Gardiner, trans., *The Koguryŏ Annals of the* Samguk Sagi (Seongnam-si: Academy of Korean Studies Press, 2011), 40.

42 On the *Huainanzi*, see Michael Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley, Calif.: The Society for the Study of Early Chinese Texts and The Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1993), 189–195.

43 *Huainanzi* 淮南子, 20:2 ("Taizu xun" 泰族訓), "故聖人者懷天心，聲然能動化天下者也。故精誠感於內，形氣動於天，則景星見，黃龍下，祥鳳至."

this, heaven and men must enjoy mutual understanding. The appearance of a yellow dragon on the site where he had planned to build a new palace is a commendation recognizing that the sincerity of King Chinhŭng communicated well with heaven. Construction on the monastery began at the height of success in Chinhŭng's drive for territorial expansion, a few years after Silla's conquest of the Han River Basin. The imprint of August Dragon Monastery was "imperial" in size, being 9,900 *p'yŏng* 坪 (ca. 59,528 sq. meters; one *p'yŏng* = 6.013 sq. meters), nine times the footprint of Buddha-Land Monastery (Pulguk Monastery 佛國寺; 1,100 *p'yŏng* = ca. 6,614 sq. meters), which was constructed in the mid-eighth century. The monastery conveyed royal might and entitlement in its massive size and three golden halls arranged on the east-west axis, with the middle golden hall larger than the two flanking buildings. Because the monastery began as a palace complex, it cleverly depicts how Silla king Chinhŭng combined and exploited the spiritual or sacral prestige of the Buddhist church to enhance his symbolic resources and depict himself more fully as a transcendent ruler vis-à-vis the nobility.[44] The majesty of the construction, in turn, made it the perfect place to perform rituals, such as the Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions and Convocation for the Recitation of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* by One Hundred Eminent Monks that promised sublime protection and unequalled prosperity of the state and the royal family.

Buddhist statecraft and kingship manifest in many interrelated forms in medieval East Asia. The case of Silla king Chinhŭng's deployment of Buddhist symbolism, ritual, and architecture to bolster his rule is an instructive example of how kings in East Asia integrated Indian and Sinitic imagery and conceptions of kingship and authority from the fifth through the seventh centuries CE. By presenting himself as a cakravartin king and staunch promoter of the Buddhadharma, Chinhŭng emulated the example of the Indian king Aśoka—as well as his elder sixth-century contemporary Liang emperor Wu whose patronage of the Buddhist church served as an exemplar for many future Buddhist kings in East Asia. Not only did Chinhŭng pose as a king who turns the wheel of the Dharma, but he reified the idea of such kings as rulers of Silla by naming his sons after two types of cakravartins. This seems to have prepared Silla rulers for further employing influences from the Northern Dynasties in creative ways. The Northern Wei emperor was regarded by Buddhists as a living Buddha, but Chinhŭng's descendants took this symbolism one step further by recreat-

44 See also Pankaj Mohan, "6 segi Sill esŏŭi wangkwŏn kwa Pulgyo kan ŭi kwan'gye" 6세기 신라에서의 왕권과 불교 간의 관계 (The relationship between royal authority and Buddhism in sixth-century Silla), *Pulgyohak yŏn'gu* 불교학연구 9 (December 2004): 135–152.

ing the Buddha Śākyamuni's family on the throne of Silla.[45] Chinhŭng followed Northern Wei and Northern Qi precedents in the organization of ecclesiastical positions, and also instituted state protection rituals after naming the émigré Koguryŏ monk Hyeryang as his monastic overseer after his conquest of the Han River Basin in 551. Like Liang emperor Wu, he held Assemblies of the Eight Prohibitions, which promised success and protection for the royal family and state. These assemblies were also promoted in the *sūtras* associated with Silla's dominant Maitreya cult. Following influences from the Northern Dynasties, Chinhŭng's institution of the Convocation for the Recitation of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* combined *sūtra*-recitation practices with image veneration mediated through the spiritual power of eminent monks to project the authority and legitimacy of the state. Chinhŭng's building August Dragon Monastery in the Silla capital is the clearest example of how architecture combined Indian and Sinitic symbolism to project royal power and authority. In terms of size, the monastery was a concrete manifestation of the royal family's deep commitment to the Buddhist church; but the size of the monastic complex enabled the state to host large and extravagant state-protection rituals that boosted royal prestige and authority. The monastery's names, alluding to Chinhŭng's seeing a yellow dragon on the site prior to the development of the site, however, draw upon and simultaneously advance the Sinitic symbolism of the color yellow and the dragon as indicative of the legitimate power occupying the central position. Chinhŭng's successors to the Silla throne continued to build on the foundation he laid by using the monastic complex as the state palladium and by building an impressive nine-story wooden pagoda on the site, following the example of the Northern Wei's nine-story wooden pagoda at the Eternal Peace Monastery. Taken together, the complex integration of symbolic imagery, ritual, and architecture by Buddhist kings in Northeast Asia functioned as Buddhist-inspired statecraft enabling them to maintain and project royal power and authority.

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45 McBride, *Domesticating the Dharma*, 19.

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CHAPTER 3

The Commissioner of Merit and Virtue: Buddhism and the Tang Central Government

Geoffrey C. Goble

Established in the eighth century, the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue (*gongde shi* 功德使) was a post in the central government of the Tang Dynasty (618–907) that initially exercised oversight of monastic Buddhists in the capital, Chang'an 常安, but subsequently expanded to administer both Buddhist and Daoist institutions in the Tang capital and other important locations.[1] The position of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue was created under Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779) and was consistently filled by men who held concurrent positions in the Tang imperial armies. In its origins, function, and staffing, the position of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue reflects the role of institutional Buddhism vis-à-vis the Tang state from around the mid-eighth century through the end of the dynasty. From the perspective of the central government, Buddhism was effectively a ritual accompaniment to the Tang imperial armies; it was a ritual technology for safeguarding the emperor and the imperium against both supernatural and mundane threats. The establishment of Commissioners of Merit and Virtue—who personally administered institutional Buddhists according to commands issued to them directly by the emperor and who were, almost without exception, commanders of imperial troops—reflects the ascendency of Buddhism as a state-protecting tradition from the second half of the eighth century onward. This was largely the result of Amoghavajra's (Bukong jin'gang 不空金剛, 704/5–774) introduction of Esoteric Buddhism to the Tang elite and the imperial patronage of Emperors Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713–756), Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756–762), and Daizong.

1 The foundational study of the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue is Tsukamoto Zenryū, "Tō chūki irai no chōan no kotokushi," *Chūgoku chūsei bukkyōshi ronkō*, vol. 3, Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1975, 251–284.

1 Esoteric Buddhism and Imperial Religion in the Tang

By Esoteric Buddhism, I refer to the Buddhist teaching that was effectively established by Amoghavajra and subsequently associated with him and with Śubhākarasiṃha (637–735) and Vajrabodhi (671–741). Amoghavajra typically referred to this articulation of Buddhism as the Teaching of the Five Divisions, the Teaching of the Diamond Pinnacle, the Teaching of Yoga, or some combination of such terms. Scriptures, ritual manuals, and compendia variously translated and written by Amoghavajra alongside Indic Buddhist scriptures translated by Śubhākarasiṃha and Vajrabodhi formed the textual basis of Esoteric Buddhism in the eighth century. Practically, Esoteric Buddhism centered on ritual performances typically involving visualization, mantra recitation, mudrā performance, and material offerings via the medium of fire (*humo* 護摩; Skt. *homa*) to an assortment of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and deities, many of whom were ferocious and terrible.

Along with soteriological realization for advanced monastic practitioners, Esoteric Buddhist practices were also believed to result in a range of worldly effects. In their particulars these effects were various, but they were generally categorized according to five classes of *siddhi* (*xidi* 悉地) or accomplishments (*chengjiu* 成就): pacification or the quelling of disasters (*xizai* 息災; Skt. *śāntika*), for augmenting blessings (*zengzhang* 增長; Skt. *pauṣṭika*), for attraction (*jing'ai* 敬愛; Skt. *vaśīkaraṇa*), and for subjugating and eliminating enemies (*xiangfu* 降伏; Skt. *abhicāra*).[2] Rituals productive of these effects were performed by practitioners who had been authorized to do so through initiation rites (*guanding* 灌頂; Skt. *abhiṣeka*) by a qualified master (*asheli* 阿闍梨; Skt. *ācārya*) either for themselves or on behalf of a patron.

Although both the careers and legacies of Śubhākarasiṃha and Vajrabodhi informed and influenced his Esoteric Buddhism, it was Amoghavajra who was its *de facto* founder insofar as it was he who defined and established this teaching at the most elite levels of Tang society. He was able to do this as a result of personal and patron-priest relationships among members of the imperial family and the ruling elite in both the bureaucratic and military sectors of the Tang state. Some of these relationships were effectively inherited from his lineal master Vajrabodhi upon his death in 741, but Amoghavajra cultivated these and other relationships so that he was in an ideal position to promote his Eso-

2 For *siddhi* in Amoghavajra's Esoteric Buddhism, see Geoffrey C. Goble, *Chinese Esoteric Buddhism: Amoghavajra, the Ruling Elite, and the Emergence of a Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 83–89.

teric Buddhism among the ruling elite during the political and military disruptions that characterized Tang China in the second half of the eighth century. The practical application of Esoteric Buddhism, especially its subjugation rituals, during this period when the survival of Tang Dynasty was imperiled by large-scale rebellion and foreign invasion further contributed to Amoghavajra's ascendency and led to the adoption of Esoteric Buddhism as a state-sponsored religion. This adoption entailed the development of the office of the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue for the administration of religious institutions and practitioners, particularly Buddhists, for the remainder of the Tang Dynasty and after.

Although institutionalized Buddhism had long operated in relationship to, if not always in concert with, the Chinese imperial state by the mid-eighth century, precedent forms of Buddhism in China tended to bolster the imperial state and a given ruler through propaganda, the generation of revenue, or through the performance of prophylactic ritual. Further, the position of institutional Buddhism and Buddhists in relation to the state tended to hinge on the perception of the tradition and its practitioners as being set apart from the mundane practices and concerns of the laity. However, the Esoteric Buddhism propagated by Amoghavajra represented a new direction in the role of institutional Buddhism vis-à-vis the imperial Chinese state. This was an articulation of Buddhism that was explicitly directed toward the concerns and aspirations of the ruling elite; it did not require any onerous ethical practices on the part of its lay adherents and it promised the ability to augment wealth and longevity, to acquire lovers and allies, and to bring death and destruction to enemies. This turn contributed to the incorporation of Esoteric Buddhism into the structures of the Tang state and the eventual inclusion of institutional religion as an arm of the imperial state that was administered by members of the central bureaucracy and the military leadership who were installed as Commissioner of Merit and Virtue.

As an example of the Chinese state's administration and appropriation of institutional Buddhism, the origins of the Tang Dynasty office of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue may be traced to the early official oversight of institutionalized Buddhism under the Northern Wei 北魏 (386–534) central government. However, the office of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue was established according to the more immediate history of the Tang government's oversight of Buddhism (and Daoism) and the men who occupied the post reflect sociopolitical and religious developments particular to the seventh and eighth centuries. By the Tang Dynasty, Buddhism had become an integral element of the Chinese religio-political landscape as Buddhist institutions, practices, and practitioners were incorporated into the larger complex of Tang imperial reli-

gion.[3] Imperial religion in mid-eighth century China was a composite of ritual observances drawn from ancient tradition as well as from institutional Daoism and Buddhism. The various rituals of the imperial religion complex were enacted and commissioned by the Tang rulers as an element of medieval Chinese statecraft; that is, they were undertaken as a means of winning supernormal assistance in securing the stability, prosperity, and longevity of the imperial state, its rulers, and the imperial family. From this perspective, Buddhism was a religious technology in the service of the Tang state. As such, institutional Buddhism was administered by the central government bureaucracy via specific offices and office holders.

2 Administering Institutional Buddhism in the Tang

Although the state administration of institutionalized Buddhism was an integral element of Tang statecraft from the inception of the dynasty in the seventh century, the nature of governmental oversight and investment shifted over the course of the Tang as the specific bureaucratic jurisdiction under which Buddhist (and Daoist) institutions fell tended to reflect the prerogatives and preferences of individual Tang rulers and the people who informed and influenced them. A passage from the *Newer Tang History* (*Xin Tang shu* 新唐書) gives an indication of this shifting bureaucratic terrain:

> Initially, all the [Buddhist] monks and nuns and the Daoist priests and priestesses in the imperium were subordinate to the Court of State Ceremonial (*honglu si* 鴻臚寺), but after the first year of the Empress Wu's Yantai 延載 [reign era] (694) [Buddhist] monks and nuns were subordinated to the Bureau of Sacrifices (*cibu* 祠部). In the twenty-fourth year of the Kaiyuan 開元 [reign era] (737/8), Daoist priests and priestesses were subordinated to the Court of the Imperial Clan (*zongzheng si* 宗正寺). In the second year of the Tianbao 天寶 [reign era] (744/5), Daoists were subordinated to the Bureau of Honors (*sifeng* 司封). In the fourth year of the Zhenyuan 貞元 [reign era] (789/90), the Academy for Venerating the [Daoist] Mysteries ended [the post of] Great Scholar[4] and the office

3 For an economic analysis of this development, see Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 37–40, 44–48.

4 i.e. the policy of drawing government officials from candidates who passed the official Daoism exam rather than the ordinary civil service exam. See Livia Kohn and Russell Kirkland,

> of the Great Commissioner of Merit and Virtue [for monasteries situated on] the Left and Right of the Avenue of the Capital, the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue for the Eastern Capital, and the Commissioner for the Cultivation of Merit and Virtue were reestablished and all [Buddhist] monks and nuns were recorded by and worked under them. In the second year of the Yuanhe 元和 [reign era] (808/9) Daoist priests and priestesses were subordinated to the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue for the Left and Right of the Capital Avenue. In the second year of the Huichang 會昌 [reign era] (843/4) [Buddhist] monks and nuns were subordinate to the Ministry of Receptions (*zhuke* 主客). The Palace of Grand Purity (*Taiqing gong* 太清宮) established the Academy of the Primordial Mystery and also produced Scholars. In the sixth year (848/9) this was abolished and [Buddhist] monks and nuns returned to being subordinate to the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue of the Two [sides of the] Avenue of the capital.[5]

These regular changes in the central government's bureaucratic oversight reflect the function and ideological valuation of institutional Buddhism and Daoism vis-à-vis the Tang rulers and their central governments. For example, early in the Tang, Buddhists were placed under the jurisdiction of the Court of State Ceremonial, the bureau in the Tang central government that was responsible for managing foreign emissaries and visitors, knowing the leaders and hierarchies of foreign peoples, and overseeing inauspicious rites (*xiong li* 凶禮)—ritual observances concerning death, crop failure, illness, and the like.[6] These bureaucratic affiliations in the early decades of the Tang marked Buddhism as a foreign tradition with certain prophylactic and apotropaic applications vis-à-vis the Tang state. Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690–705), whose reign was characterized by a pronounced patronage and appropriation of Buddhism, elevated the bureaucratic status of institutional Buddhism by placing it under the supervision of the Bureau of Sacrifices within the Ministry of Rites, the central administrative agency charged with overseeing imperial and court ritual.[7]

"Daoism in the Tang (618–907)," in *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 339–383.

5 *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 48.1252.

6 *Tang liudian* 16.504. For a study of Tang imperial ritual, see Howard Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

7 Antonino Forte, *Political propaganda and ideology in China at the end of the seventh century: inquiry into the nature, authors and function of the Tunhuang document S. 6502* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1976); Antonino Forte, *Mingtang and Buddhist Utopias in the History*

Bureaucratically and ideologically, Buddhism moved from the periphery to the center of Tang imperial religion under Wu Zetian. Imperial ideology shifted dramatically again under Emperor Xuanzong, whose reign was marked by an investment in and appropriation of institutional Daoism based on a series of mirabilia and a claimed genealogical relation to Laozi 老子 and this is reflected in the bureaucratic administration of Daoism by the central government.[8] In addition to creating the Palace of Great Purity (*Taiqing gong* 太清宮), in which Lord Lao (*Laojun* 老君) and the Tang imperial ancestors were ritually installed, Xuanzong also placed institutional Daoism under the oversight of the Court of the Imperial Clan, thereby marking the genealogical connection between the Tang rulers and the transcendent founder of the Daoist tradition, as the Court of the Imperial Clan was tasked with managing and keeping genealogical records of the imperial family and the related clans. The Court of the Imperial Clan also managed the Office for Venerating the Daoist Mysteries (*chongxuan shu* 崇玄署), which maintained a census of all the Daoist temples in the capital and provinces, the accounts and expenses of the Daoist clergy, and directed the rituals and offerings (*zhaijiao* 齋醮) performed by them for the welfare of the Tang state and its ruler.[9] However, after the rebellion of An Lushan 安祿山 (ca. 703–757), Xuanzong's abdication, and the ascension of Suzong to the throne in 756, the ideological and bureaucratic relationship between the central government and institutionalized religion underwent another marked shift. Just as the creation of the Office for Venerating the Daoist Mysteries is indicative of Emperor Xuanzong's personal and political investment in institutional Daoism, the establishment of the office of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue reflects a change in imperial ideology in favor of Buddhism under Emperors Suzong and Daizong. The Commissioners of Merit and Virtue, who personally administered institutional Buddhists in the capital and elsewhere according to the direct commands of the emperor and who were almost without exception also commanders of imperial troops, reflects the ascendency of

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of the Astronomical Clock: The Tower, Statue and Armillary Sphere Constructed by Empress Wu (Paris: Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1988); Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University. Press, 1998), 306–307.

8 Kohn and Kirkland, "Daoism in the Tang;" J. Russell Kirkland, *Taoists of the High T'ang: An Inquiry into the Perceived Significance of Eminent Taoists in Medieval Chinese Society*, PhD diss., Indiana University, 1987; Charles D. Benn. "Religious Aspects of Emperor Hsuan-Tsung's Taoist Ideology," in *Buddhist and Taoist Practice in Medieval Chinese Society*, edited by David W. Chappell (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), 127–145; Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "Time after Time: Taoist Apocalyptic History and the Founding of the T'ang Dynasty," *Asia Major* 7, no. 1 (1994): 59–88.

9 *Tang liudian* 16.465; Hucker 1985, 196.

Buddhism as a state-sponsored and state-protecting tradition from the second half of the eighth century onward. This was largely the result of Amoghavajra's introduction of Esoteric Buddhism to the Tang elite and the patronage that he received.

The passage above from the *Newer Tang History* indicates that the position of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue was re-established in 789/90, but it is not entirely clear when the office was created or who its first incumbent was. The *Outstanding Models from the Storehouse of Literature* (*Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜), a Song 宋 Dynasty (960–1279) encyclopedia (*leishu* 類書) completed in 1013, indicates that the office of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue existed as early as February 769 and that the position was occupied at that time by a Chan 禪 Buddhist monk named Kouqing 廓清 (d.u.) with the honorific title Daji 大濟 ("Great Ford"):

> February 769: on the anniversary of Empress Dowager Zhangjing's 章敬 death, the emperor [Daizong] permitted the ordination of some four hundred Buddhist monks and nuns and Daoist priests and priestesses. This month, they were selected by the Commissioner for Cultivating Merit and Virtue, Daji, the Chan Master Kouqing. The Director of the Palace Administration[10] Kouqing was a monk of the capital Flourishing Tang Monastery (*Xing Tang si* 興唐寺).[11]

Apparently referring to the same person, there is also a reference in Zanning's 贊寧 (919–1001) biographical account of Huizhong 慧忠 (d. 775) in the *Song Dynasty Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*T* no. 2061: *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳) to a monk named Daji of the Flourishing Tang Monastery who served as both Commissioner of Merit and Virtue and as Director of the Palace Administration.[12] However, in his *Brief History of the Sangha* (*T* no. 2126: *Seng shilue* 僧史略) Zanning writes that Kouqing was appointed Commissioner for the Cultivation of Merit and Virtue (*xiu gongde shi* 修功德使) under Emperor Zhongzong 中宗 (r. 684, 705–710)[13] and elsewhere in the same text he suggests

10 *Dianzhong jian* 殿中監. The Palace Administration was a department within the central government generally responsible for administering the operations and staff of imperial palace. It was typically a non-eunuch position held by trusted favorites of the court. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 502.

11 *Cefu yuangui* 52.5a.

12 *T* no. 2061: 50.763b13–14.

13 *T* no. 2126: 54.246a1920; Albert Welter, *The Administration of Buddhism in China: A Study and Translation of Zanning and the Topical Compendium of the Buddhist Clergy* (*Da Song Seng Shilüe*) (Amherst, NY: Cambria, 2018), 421.

that Kouqing was appointed Commissioner for the Cultivation of Merit and Virtue prior to the reign of Xuanzong (r. 712–756).[14] Whether Kouqing served in that capacity in the 760s or if he was appointed circa 710 is unclear and there appears to be no other information about Kouqing in the textual record. Although Zanning and the editors of the *Outstanding Models from the Storehouse of Literature* were perhaps working from some of the same documentary sources, those sources evidently did not provide a clear picture of Kouqing or the origins of the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue. In any case, it is only in the 770s that the position and person of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue becomes visible in the textual record as a relatively stable office in the Tang central government and it is clear that the emergence of this office in the 770s, its function, and the staffing of the position were largely the result of the Esoteric Buddhist patriarch Amoghavajra's relationship with the Tang court and the institutionalization of roles played by his elite patrons and his disciples vis-à-vis the Tang emperors and the central government.

3 Amoghavajra and the Establishment of the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue

Amoghavajra was a foreign-born Buddhist monk, though his place of birth is uncertain. From a young age he served as disciple to Vajrabodhi, who introduced him to the ritual techniques and scriptures of the Buddhism then emerging in south Asia.[15] Following Vajrabodhi's death, Amoghavajra sailed to Sri Lanka and southern India as part of a diplomatic mission from Emperor Xuanzong. While in South Asia, Amoghavajra obtained texts and training in Buddhist techniques and teachings, which he established as Esoteric Buddhism in China upon his return. Amoghavajra was the preeminent Buddhist of his day in China, serving three successive emperors of the Tang—Xuanzong, Suzong, and Daizong—and initiating them into certain practices of Esoteric Buddhism and performing Esoteric Buddhist rituals for the benefit of the Tang state and its rulers. He received numerous gifts and honors from emperors of the Tang, the most salient of which came when Emperor Daizong made Amoghavajra a specially-appointed minister in the Court of State Ceremonial in 765, thereby incorporating Amoghavajra and his Esoteric Buddhism directly into the Tang

14 *T* no. 2126: 54.250b11–12; Welter, *The Administration of Buddhism in China*, 523.

15 For Vajrabodhi, see Charles Orzech, "Vajrabodhi (671–741)," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, eds. Charles Orzech, Henrik Sørensen, and Richard Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 345–350.

central government, but he also received the patronage of empresses, princes, government officials, and military commanders. Through his connections with members of the imperial family and high-ranking members of the Tang central government and imperial military, Amoghavajra's influence and his Esoteric Buddhism directly contributed to the establishment of the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue and the ideological valuation of Buddhism within the imperial religion complex of the Tang state that the post reflects.

One of the central reasons for Amoghavajra's rise to influence was that the Esoteric Buddhism that he presented and propagated was broadly consistent with the prerogatives of the state. As a ritual tradition aimed in part at the production of mundane outcomes (*chengjiu* 成就; Skt. *siddhi*), Amoghavajra's Esoteric Buddhism provided the Tang rulers with a ritual technology for quelling disasters (*xizai* 息災; Skt. *śāntika*), augmenting blessings (*zengzhang* 增長; Skt. *pauṣṭika*), attracting allies (*jing'ai* 敬愛; Skt. *vaśīkaraṇa*), and eliminating enemies (*xiangfu* 降伏; Skt. *abhicāra*). In other words, Amoghavajra's Esoteric Buddhism was adopted by the Tang central government as the preeminent form of state-protecting Buddhism, one that was militarily applicable and, as such, particularly suited to the political situation in the second half of the eighth century, an era dominated by rebellion and invasion.[16]

The nature of Esoteric Buddhism attracted a number of lay patron-disciples drawn from the ranks of the Tang ruling elite, including several generals in the Tang military. Among Amoghavajra's several military patron-disciples was Li Yuancong 李元琮 (d. 777). Most of what can be gleaned of Li Yuancong's life and career comes from his epitaph (*Da Tang gu Baoying gongchen kaifu yitongsansi youlongwujun zhijunshi shangzhuguo Liangguo gong Li gong* 大唐故寶應功臣開府義同三司右龍武軍和軍事上杜國涼國公李公墓誌銘并序)[17] and from material contained in the *Memorials and Edicts of the Venerable Trepiṭaka Dabian Zheng Guangzhi* [*Amoghavajra*] (*T* no. 2120: *Daizongchao zeng sikong Dabian Zheng Guangzhi sanzong heshang biaozhiji* 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和上表制集), with the former providing a posthumous digest of his life and the latter including official correspondence concerning the still-living Li Yuancong. According to the epitaph, Li Yuancong hailed from

16 See Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "The An Lu-shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism in Late T'ang China," in *Essays on T'ang Society*, eds. John Curtis Perry and Bardwell L. Smith (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 32–60; Goble, *Chinese Esoteric Buddhism*, 112–115.

17 Wang Lianlong 王連龍, "Li Yuancong muzhi ji xiangguan wenti kao lun 李元琮墓誌及相關問題考論," *Jilin shifan daxue xuebao* 吉林師範大學學報 6 (2014): 35–38; Fan Jing 樊婧, "Tang Li Yuancong muzhi kaoshi 唐李元琮墓誌考釋," *Tangshi luncong* 唐史論叢, 18 (2014): 250–257.

an aristocratic family from the Yinshan 陰山 area, identified by Wang Lianlong as the Altai Mountain region in modern-day Mongolia, but he received the royal surname Li in recognition of his service to the Tang. Yuancong is described as having a fondness for Buddhist scriptures and is reported to have received initial consecration in Esoteric Buddhist practice from Vajrabodhi. He was placed in command of the Northern Armies during the Kaiyuan 開元 reign era (713–742) and by the early years of the Tianbao reign era (742–756) he had entered the administrative bureaucracy (*rushi* 入仕) owing to his martial skill. The epitaph further reports that in 752/3 Yuancong was dispatched to Nanhai, where he is said to have requested and received further Esoteric Buddhist teachings from Amoghavajra prior to the monk's departure for the southern Indic regions. In 754/5 Yuancong is said to have "received the Dharma of the Five Divisions of the Diamond Realm" along with the practical instruction and authorization in the essentials of fire offerings (Skt. *homa*) from Amoghavajra in the northwestern Wuwei Commandery (*Wuwei bu* 武威郡). Amoghavajra also alludes to these events in his Final Testament (*yishu* 遺書).[18] The epitaph reports that Yuancong accompanied Emperor Xuanzong in 756 when the ruler fled the capital for Ba-Shu (contemporary Sichuan) in the face of An Lushan's uprising (by that time led by Lushan's son, An Qingxu 安慶緒 [d. 759]). Following the restoration of Tang imperial control, Yuancong received multiple promotions, titles, and honorific bestowals.

Based on material from the *Memorials and Edicts*, it is evident that Li Yuancong's ascension was concomitant with the patronage and promotion of Amoghavajra and his Esoteric Buddhism by the central government. By 760, Yuancong had earned the esteem of Emperor Suzong and been installed as Commandant of the Right Inner [Palace] Guard (*you nei shuaifu* 右內率府), troops charged with safeguarding the Heir Apparent (the future Emperor Daizong).[19] This is based on a memorial from Amoghavajra to Emperor Suzong in which Amoghavajra requests that an Esoteric Buddhist initiation altar be installed in the Goodness-promoting Monastery (*Xingshan si* 興善寺). The justification for this request is that his Esoteric Buddhism (below, "the secret great vehicle" and "the consecration teaching") is a superior form of state-protecting Buddhism:

> I, your subject, humbly considers that among all rituals for enduring disasters and coping with calamities, none could surpass the Secret Great Vehicle, and within the category of [Secret] Great Vehicle, the teachings

18 *T* no. 2120: 52.844b15–16.

19 *T* no. 2120: 50.829b22–28; Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 352.

> of consecration are supreme. Now looking on the intercalary summer month,[20] one hundred flowers all bloom.
>
> Humbly, I hope [for You] to command Trepiṭaka Amoghavajra to construct an initiation altar for the kingdom in the aforementioned [Goodness-promoting] monastery. That altar holds the teaching of pacification and augmentation [*siddhi*]. [It] possesses the ability to subjugate [enemies] and attract [allies]. [I] respectfully submit this virtuous power in order to extinguish the crowd of evildoers. [I] send it up to increase the Sage's [i.e. the Emperor's] longevity without limit. [May You] grant this portent of enduring peace and tranquility.[21]

Here, Amoghavajra presents Esoteric Buddhism as an improvement on earlier forms of state-protecting Buddhism and specifically refers to the four classes of *siddhi* that his teaching promised to bring about: pacification, augmentation, attraction, and subjugation. By initiating others into the secrets of Esoteric Buddhism, Amoghavajra and his disciples would effectively help the Tang state eliminate its many enemies and contribute to Suzong's personal flourishing. The request was approved. According to official information contained in the memorial, it was conveyed to Emperor Suzong by Li Yuancong, whose titles are provided as "Commandant, Commandant of the Right Inner [Palace] Guard Command, the Supernumerary Auxiliary Associate Regular Official[22] Commissioner of the Inner Flying Dragon [Corral][23] Driver, granted the Purple-gold Fish Pouch,[24] Minister Yuancong 元琮."[25] Five years later in 765, under Emperor

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20 Intercalary months were added in order to bring the lunar calendar into conformity with the seasons as dictated by the solar ecliptic. An intercalary month occurred once every three years, twice every five years, and seven times in nineteen years in order that the Vernal Equinox always occur in the second month, the Summer Solstice in the fifth month, the Autumnal Equinox in the eighth month, and the Winter Solstice in the eleventh month.

21 *T* no. 2120: 52.829b24–29.

22 *zhengyuan* 正員: a reference to an appointee in an agency whose appointment is not temporary, provisional, acting, etc. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 125.

23 *feilong* 飛龍: generally headed by a eunuch Commissioner, the Flying Dragon Corral was one of the Six Palace Corrals where horses were raised within the palace grounds. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 210.

24 *zijin yudai* 紫金魚袋: an indicator of imperial esteem and administrative power, the fish pouch refers to the bag in which a fish-shaped tally (*fu* 符) was kept. This tally was a token of authority for receiving imperial commands and issuing orders to subordinates. The material from which these fish-shaped tallies were made indicated the level of authority of their bearer, with golden fish-tallies being superior to silver ones. *Xin Tangshu* 24.525.

25 *T* no. 2120: 52.829c03–05.

Daizong, Li Yuancong was promoted to command troops charged with directly protecting the person of the emperor; he also maintained his relationship with Amoghavajra and his role as liaison between the Esoteric Buddhist monk and the central government. Based on a memorial from Du Mian 杜冕 (d.u.), Vice Censor-in-Chief[26] under Daizong, Li Yuancong was appointed General of the Militant as Dragons Army (*longwu jun* 龍武軍) by Emperor Daizong in or about 765.[27] In his request, Du Mian writes:

> I especially hope that the Heavenly Beneficence [i.e. the emperor] will appoint Li Yuancong, the new General of the Militant as Dragons [Army], to meet with Trepiṭaka [Amoghavajra], the Great Worthy Jinzhen 縉真 of the Goodness-promoting Monastery, and all seven of the Great Worthies of the capital city's schools. Meeting together, the assembly can each translate twenty-one volumes and promulgate and teach the Way in the great monasteries of the capital city, then transmit it throughout one thousand worlds and promulgate it for ten thousand years. The hornet and scorpion appearances of non-subjects will be extinguished. The wolf-hearted aspects of insane barbarians will be swept clean.[28]

In addition to indicating that Li Yuancong had recently been promoted to commander of elite imperial troops, this passage also testifies to his ongoing relationship with Amoghavajra and his role as overseer of Buddhists for the Tang central government. The passage also plainly indicates the role of institutional Buddhism as a religious technology for safeguarding the Tang state. Following Amoghavajra's death in 774, Li Yuancong's role as intermediary for and overseer of institutional Buddhism, particularly Esoteric Buddhism, continued. On August 22, 774, just days after the master's death, Emperor Daizong commanded him to provide the names of Amoghavajra's disciples in the Conversion and Salvation (Huadu si 化度寺), Preserving Longevity (Baoshou si 保壽寺), and Goodness-promoting Monasteries.[29] This command is a brief missive and does not contain Li Yuancong's full titles, but an edict from October 774 ordering him to oversee the construction of a pagoda to house the relics

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26 *zhongcheng* 中丞: the second executive official of the Censorate occasionally, as in perhaps this case, acting as head of the head of the Censorate when the Censor-in-Chief post was vacant. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 189, 592.

27 *longwu jun* 龍武軍: by this time, the Militant as Dragons Army consisted of two of the six Imperial Armies and constituted the Northern Command at the capital of Tang. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 325.

28 *T* no. 2120: 52.832a07–12.

29 *T* no. 2120: 52.850c08–25.

produced from Amoghavajra's cremation, gives his title as "Commissioner of Merit and Virtue overseeing all of the [Buddhist] Monasteries and [Daoist] Temples in the capital city" as well as "Commander Unequalled in Honor, concurrently General of the Right Militant as Dragons Army."[30] By 774, Li Yuancong was simultaneously an imperial commissioner charged with overseeing institutional Buddhists—and also Daoists, it would seem—and a general in command of elite imperial troops, but it is unclear exactly when Li Yuancong's unofficial role became institutionalized with his appointment as Commissioner of Merit and Virtue. One suggestion comes to us from the biography of Xi Shimei 郗士美 in the *Newer Tang History*, in which Li Yuancong is described in relation to a conflict with Shimei's father, Chun 純:

> At that time, Yu Chaoen 魚朝恩 (722–770) made the Company Commander Li Cong Commissioner of Merit and Virtue of the Two [sides of the] Avenue of the capital. Cong relied on his strength and was as harsh and unreasonable as Jie 桀.[31] He disgraced Metropolitan Governor Cui Zhao within the Imperial Palace. [Xi] Chun said, "This is a humiliation to the kingdom" and went to call on [Yuan] Zai to request that he be speedily punished for this crime, but Zai did not receive him.[32]

If we lend credence to the statement that Yu Chaoen installed Li Yuancong as Commissioner of Merit and Virtue, then it is possible that he received this appointment between 765, when he was promoted to General of the Militant as Dragons Army and no later than 770, the year of Yu Chaoen's death. In any event, Li Yuancong held the post of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue for the rest of his life, carrying out imperial orders delivered to him by the court eunuch Li Xiancheng 李憲誠 (d.u.) to install Fagao 法高 (d.u.) as monastic controller (*duweina* 都維那) of Goodness-promoting Monastery in May 775[33] and to have Buddhist monks and nuns throughout the imperium annually perform the mantra of the Supreme Victor (*zunsheng zhenyan* 尊勝真言) in March 776.[34] Following Yuancong's death in January of 777, Amoghavajra's leading dis-

30 *T* no. 2120: 52.851a02, 851a08.

31 The tyrannical last ruler of the Xia Dynasty (21st–16th centuries BCE).

32 *Xin Tang shu* 143.4695.

33 *T* no. 2120: 52.859b18–28.

34 *T* no. 2120: 52.852c09–15. The "mantra of the Supreme Victor" refers to ritual procedures outlined in Amoghavajra's *Ritual Procedures for Reciting and Recalling the Supreme Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Pinnacle* (*Foding zunsheng tuolouni niansong yigui* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼念誦儀軌法), *T* no. 972.

ciple Huilang 惠朗 (d.u.) wrote to Emperor Daizong requesting that the post of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue be filled by a new appointee:

> Huilang has heard that only people can establish blessings and only blessing can benefit people. If left unfilled, this office's benefits will not long endure. With respect, His Majesty, the Civil and Martial Emperor, the Original Sage of Treasure Response who has ascended the heavenly throne, is a shield for the commoners, a bulwark against heretical paths; [he] protects and sustains the true Dharma, the myriad kingdoms all rejoice. How could it be that the specially appointed Commissioner of Merit and Virtue should stop in the capital city of our kingdom? The host of blessings increases daily; the gang of malefactors is gradually extinguished. The sovereign ascends the lofty heights of divine blessings and the black-robe teaching [i.e. Buddhism] severs humiliating dread. It is that which Heaven knows and humans rarely realize.
>
> Yesterday, [Li] Yuancong passed away and the monastics of the imperial capital all appear dejected. They lift their eyes with increasing sadness and tears fall among their words. They also fear that evil will take advantage [of the moment] to capture hearts and that heretics will work to harvest [followers]; the correct teaching will deteriorate, and the forest of heresy will grow luxuriant.
>
> I respectfully request that you, the Sage, benevolently select a virtuous servant for the Merit and Virtue office. Blessings for the kingdom will be renewed in perpetuity and the compassion of monks will be understood and cherished.
>
> I have solemnly relied on Censor Li Xiancheng to submit this memorial laying out the request so that it might be heard. I cannot bear the extremity of my terror.
>
> So said with great fear and trepidation by the *śramaṇa* Huilang.[35]

Following the death of Li Yuancong, it appears the position and title of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue was expanded or perhaps simply served as an ad hoc duty and title. For example, in May of 777, Huixiao 惠曉 (d.u.), one of Amoghavajra's leading disciples, was assigned to "cultivate merit" (*xiugongde* 修功德) at Mount Wutai by Emperor Daizong on the occasion of the emperor's birthday. In the command, Huixiao is referred to as the "Commissioner for the Cultivation of Merit and Virtue at Mount Wutai" (*Wutai shan xiu gongdeshi* 五

35 *T* no. 2120: 52.853b10–22.

臺山修功德使).[36] He also is referred to in this way in memorials from February and December of 778, but he does not bear the title in a memorial dated January 779.[37] But Huixiao was evidently not the only Commissioner of Merit and Virtue in 778. Li Xiancheng, who had conveyed Huilang's memorial request to fill the position following Li Yuancong's death, is referred to as the "Inner [Palace] Commissioner of Merit and Virtue" (*nei gongdeshi* 内功德使) in a memorial from May of that year.[38] The qualifier "Inner" refers to Li Xiancheng's primary position as a member of the eunuch domestic service and it seems that his duty as Commissioner of Merit and Virtue resulted from the fact that he had served to transmit memorials and edicts between Amoghavajra and the imperial court since at least 768 and continued to serve as liaison between the Esoteric Buddhist monks of the capital and the central government following Amoghavajra's death in 774.[39] Like Li Yuancong, Li Xiancheng's unofficial role as liaison between Amoghavajra and the Tang court became institutionalized with his official recognition as Commissioner of Merit and Virtue.

4 Beyond Li Yuancong

Emperor Daizong, who markedly expanded the official Buddhist establishment of the Tang, effectively established the position of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue as a function of that expansion and also of his investment in Esoteric Buddhism and relationship with Amoghavajra. Reflective of his commitment to Buddhism as an element of Tang statecraft, at the end of his life in 779 Daizong commanded that the multiple Vinaya commentaries be rectified and a definitive monastic code established. The command was delivered by Li Xiancheng to Liu Chongxun 劉崇訓 (d.u.), who was charged with overseeing the selection of qualified monks to complete the work. In the command, Liu Chongxun's titles are given as Commissioner of Merit and Virtue for the [Buddhist] Monasteries and [Daoist] Temples of the Capital City and General of the Right Militant as Dragons Army.[40] By 778, then, Liu Chongxun had succeeded Li Yuancong as the General of the Right Militant as Dragons Army and this was

36 *T* no. 2120: 52.858c11.

37 *T* no. 2120: 52.859a03, 22; 52.859b01–17.

38 *T* no. 2120: 52.860a01.

39 *T* no. 2120: 52.836b26–27; Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T'ang* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 86.

40 *Zhenyuan* [*Reign Era*] *Continuation of the Kaiyuan Catalogue* (*Da Tang zhenyuan xu kaiyuan shijiaolu* 大唐貞元續開元釋教錄) *T* no. 2156: 55.760b15–18.

probably the reason why he was also chosen to serve as Commissioner of Merit and Virtue.[41] Following Daizong's death in May 779, his successor, Dezong 德宗 (r. 779–805), commanded Liu Chongxun in his capacity as Commissioner of Merit and Virtue to select one hundred monks to perform services on behalf of the late emperor.[42] Shortly thereafter, though, Liu Chongxun himself drafted a memorial to the newly enthroned emperor requesting that the position of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue be ended.[43] Dezong acceded to this request, stating that Buddhist practices and military affairs should be completely separate; the positions of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue for the Capital City as well as the Inner [Palace] Commissioner of Merit and Virtue were eliminated and oversight of institutional Buddhism was returned to the Bureau of Sacrifices.[44]

Although Dezong eliminated the post of Commissioner for the Cultivation of Merit in 779/80, he reinstituted and expanded it to two commissioners by 789. From this time onward, oversight of institutional Buddhists in the Tang capital was divided between one Commissioner of Merit and Virtue charged with overseeing the Buddhist institutions on the left or eastern side of Chang'an and another who oversaw the institutions on the right or western side.[45] Also, from this time forward, the Commissioners were consistently eunuchs drawn from the palace domestic service who, in addition to serving as Commissioners of Merit and Virtue, were also commanders of the Army of Inspired Strategy (*shence jun* 神策軍).[46] In addition to indicating a reversal of Dezong's earlier view that Buddhist practices and military matters fall under separate domains, this development also reflects a reevaluation of the military in general, as eunuch officials came increasingly to command imperial troops in the ninth century.[47] The first pair of commissioners were Dou Wencheng 竇文場 (fl. 783–

41 Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T'ang*, 86.

42 *T* no. 2156: 55.761c24–25.

43 *T* no. 2156: 55.761c25–27; Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T'ang*, 89–90.

44 *T* no. 2156: 55.761c25–762a05.

45 The commoners' city of Chang'an was roughly bisected by the Avenue of the Vermillion Bird, which ran from the southern Gate of Brilliant Virtue north to the Gate of the Vermillion Bird, which marked the entry to the imperial government complex.

46 At least until 880, when the Army of Inspired Strategy was destroyed in the Huang-Chao Rebellion. David A. Graff, *Medieval Chinese Warfare, 300–900* (New York, Routledge, 2002), 234; Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 418.

47 Following the rebellion of An Lushan in 755/6 and the subsequent weakening of central control over the provinces of the Tang imperium, the Tang emperors rebuilt and strengthened the place armies, the center of which was the Army of Inspired Strategy. The installation of eunuch officials as commanders of the palace armies reflects a distrust of military elites in general and of provincial commanders in particular. See Graff, *Medieval Chinese*

797) and Wang Xiqian 王希遷 (d.u.), the latter of whom appears to have served as Commissioner of Merit and Virtue for the Right of the Avenue from about 792 until 795, when he was succeeded by Hou Xianming 霍仙鳴 (d. 798).[48] These men were drawn from the eunuch domestic service and were also placed in command of the Left and Right Armies of Inspired Strategy following the mutiny of troops from the Jing-Yuan 涇原 command centered in Gansu who were transiting through Chang'an in 783.[49] Dou Wenchang and Hou Xianming served as Commissioners of Merit and Virtue until about 798, during which time they oversaw Utpalavīrya's (*Wutitixiyu* 勿提提犀魚; d.u.) translation of the *Scripture of Ten Powers* (*T* no. 780: *Foshuo shili jing* 佛說十力經)[50] and the translation of the *Huayan Scripture* (*T* no. 293: *Da fangguanfo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經) by Prajñā 般若 (744–ca. 810),[51] among other state-sponsored projects.[52] In 804, two other eunuch officials, Yang Zhilian 楊志廉 (745–806) and Sun Rongyi 孫榮義 (d.u.), were Generals of the Inspired Strategy Army and Commissioners of Merit and Virtue of the Right and Left, respectively.[53] The tradition of Commissioners of Merit and Virtue drawn from the eunuch ranks and serving concomitantly as generals of the Army of Inspired Strategy continued under Dezong's successor, Emperor Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 805–820), with the appointments of Xue Yingzhen 薛盈珍 (d.u.) and Tutu Chengcui 吐突承璀 (?–820) in 806/7,[54] Cheng Wen'gan 程文幹 (d.u.) in 810/11,[55] Peng Xianzhong 彭獻忠 (d.u.) in 812/13,[56] and Liang Shouqian 梁守謙 (779–827) in 818/19.[57] The position of Commissioners of Merit and Virtue who served concurrently as generals of the Army of Inspired Strategy continued under Emperor Jingzong 敬宗 (r. 824–827), who appointed Liu Honggui 劉宏規 and Yang Qinyi 楊欽義 in 825.[58] In their capacity as Commissioners of Merit and Virtue, these men reported the miraculous appearance of a white-robed person at the Palace of Great Purity, who revealed the location of a hidden well. They also provided performers for

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Warfare, 233–234; David A. Graff, "The Sword and the Brush: Career Patterns and Military Specialisation in the Tang Dynasty," *War and Society* 18, no. 2 (October, 2000): 9–21.

48 Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the Tang*, 96; *T* 2061: 50.716b21; *T* no. 293: 10.849a05–08.

49 *Jiu Tang shu* 13.363–364, 184.4766.

50 *T* no. 780: 17.717a24–25.

51 *T* no. 293: 10.848c28–849a08.

52 *T* no. 2156: 55.764c1216; *T* no. 2061: 50.721b29–c01; *T* no. 2035: 49.245c29–246a03.

53 *Cefu yuangui* 667.2a–2b.

54 *Cefu yuangui* 667.2b.

55 *Cefu Yuangui* 667.3a.

56 *Cefu yuangui* 667.3a.

57 *Cefu yuangui* 667.17.

58 *T* no. 2035: 49.384c10–14, 386b07–13; *T* no. 2061: 50.743c24–25; *T* no. 2126: 54.245c18, 246a03; Welter, *The Administration of Buddhism in China*, 419.

the celebration of a new imperial name plaque at Conversion and Salvation Monastery, carried out an imperial command for ordaining new monks, and they oversaw the selection of monks and nuns who had memorized prodigious amounts of scripture to recite and take part in the celebrations.[59] Even Emperor Wuzong 武宗 (r. 840–846), who is perhaps most famous for commanding a large-scale persecution of Buddhism in 845 when he also eliminated the position, had appointed Tian Lingzi 田令孜 (?–893) to serve as Commissioner of Merit and Virtue and General of the Army of Inspired Strategy prior to that proscription in 843/4.[60] Wuzong's abolition of the post was temporary, though, as his successor, Emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 846–859) reinstated the position the next year in 846.[61]

5 Conclusion

Despite the vicissitudes that attended the succession of Tang emperors and attempts to maintain control of the imperium in the face of mutiny, rebellion, and invasion, the position of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue and the role of Buddhism as a key element of Tang statecraft that the post reflects remained persistent elements of the Tang central government from the mid-eighth century until at least the mid-ninth century. In fact, the position of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue outlasted the Tang Dynasty proper, as Zhu Zhen 朱瑱 (r. 913–923), the last emperor of the Later Liang 後梁 (907–923), maintained the post in his government[62] and Emperor Zhuangzong 莊宗 of the Later Tang 後唐 (r. 923–926) commanded his Commissioner of Merit and Virtue to select a Daoist priest to convey his personal thanks and recognition for having been informed of the miraculous revivification of a withered cypress tree in front of the Hall of the Sovereign of Mysterious Origin and the Sage Ancestors—a hopeful portent suggesting a return to glory for the Tang.[63] The post was also an element of the Later Jin's 後晉 (936–947) central government.[64]

Established in the eighth century, the office of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue is indicative of Tang imperial policy regarding institutional religion as

59 *Cefu yuangui* 52.12a.
60 Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T'ang*, 137; *Jiu Tangshu* 19b.721.
61 Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T'ang*, 137.
62 *Cefu yuangui* 194.23b–24a.
63 *Cefu yuangui* 25.17a–b.
64 *Cefu yuangui* 52.19b–20a.

a ritual means of supporting and protecting the imperial state. The creation of the office of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue in the Tang imperial government was informed by the precedent of bureaucratic oversight of institutional Buddhism, but it more directly reflects religious and historical developments particular to the Tang Dynasty. The position of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue was effectively established on the basis of Amoghavajra's relationship with emperors Suzong and Daizong and with members of their central governments. The early incumbents of the office, Li Yuancong, Huixiao, and Li Xiancheng were elite patron-disciples of Amoghavajra and served as go-betweens for Amoghavajra and the Tang emperors, an informal role that was formalized and institutionalized as Commissioner of Merit and Virtue. Further, the position of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue and the merging of religious and military affairs that the office represents may be seen as the institutionalization of Amoghavajra's Esoteric Buddhism as the preeminent form of state-protecting Buddhism and one that was militarily applicable. Reflecting the application of Esoteric Buddhist ritual technology to the military and political challenges of the day, Li Yuancong was a general in the Tang imperial armies. The precedent of Li Yuancong's dual role as military commander and overseer cum go-between for Daizong and Amoghavajra was maintained following his death, when Liu Chongxun, general of the Longwu army became acting Commissioner of Merit and Virtue in 779. From the 780s, the Commissioners were consistently eunuchs in the palace domestic service and generals of the Army of Inspired Strategy. This is reflective not only of the deployment of Buddhist ritual in the service of protecting the dynasty but also of the increasing distrust with which military officers were viewed by the Tang emperors. The development of the office of Commissioner of Merit and Virtue in the waning years of Tang rule, particularly in respect to its staffing by eunuchs who concurrently commanded imperial troops in the capital, echoes the socio-political conditions and concerns of the Tang rulers as their imperium became more circumscribed and the fidelity of commanders in the field and in the provinces fell increasingly under suspicion. From this light, the history of the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue reflects certain socio-political trends in the late Tang Dynasty as well as the preeminent role of institutional Buddhism as an integral element of Chinese statecraft.

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CHAPTER 4

Images of Humane Kings: Rulers in the Dali-Kingdom Painting of Buddhist Images

Megan Bryson

One of the most widely embraced models for Buddhist kingship in the Sinitic Buddhist world came from the *Prajñāpāramitā Scripture for Humane Kings to Protect Their States* (Ch. *Renwang huguo bore boluomiduo jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經; hereafter, *Scripture for Humane Kings*), a text that was probably composed in northern China during the fifth century, and later revised in the Tang 唐 dynasty (618–907) by the esoteric master Amoghavajra (Ch. Bukong 不空; 704–774).[1] These two versions of the scripture, along with its commentaries, sub-commentaries, ritual texts, and visual culture, were adopted by courts and monastics from Tang China, Koryŏ 高麗 Korea (918–1392), Heian 平安 Japan (794–1185), the Khitan Liao 遼 dynasty (907–1125), and the Tangut Western Xia 西夏 dynasty (1038–1227). The Tang court sponsored recitations of the scripture to dispel invasions; in Heian Japan, maṇḍalas based on the scripture and its ritual texts became the foundation for state protection rites; and in the Western Xia monastic ordinands had to master the recitation of the *Scripture for Humane Kings* whether they read Sinitic script, Tangut, or Tibetan.[2]

The *Scripture for Humane Kings* also found favor in the kingdom of Dali 大理 (937–1253; Figure 4.1), centered in what is now southwest China's Yunnan province and surrounded by the Song 宋 dynasty (960–1279), Tibet, Pāla India (750–1174), Bagan (1044–1287), and Đại Việt 大越 (1010–1225). Dali's location suggests cultural hybridity, and Buddhist visual and material culture circulated in Dali across multiple routes, but the Dali kingdom's textual corpus shows a strong orientation toward Sinitic Buddhism. Textual and visual sources indi-

1 Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The* Scripture for Humane Kings *in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 78. *Renwang huguo bore boluomiduo jing* is the title of Amoghavajra's version, *T* no. 246. The earlier version is titled *Prajñāpāramitā Scripture for Humane Kings, Spoken by the Buddha* (Ch. *Foshuo renwang bore boluomi jing* 佛說仁王般若波羅蜜經; *T* no. 245).

2 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 160–161; Cynthea J. Bogel, *With a Single Glance: Buddhist Icon and Early Mikkyō Vision* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 284–285; Shi Jinbo 史金波, "Buddhism and Confucianism in the Tangut State," *Central Asiatic Journal* 57 (2014): 139–155; 145–146.

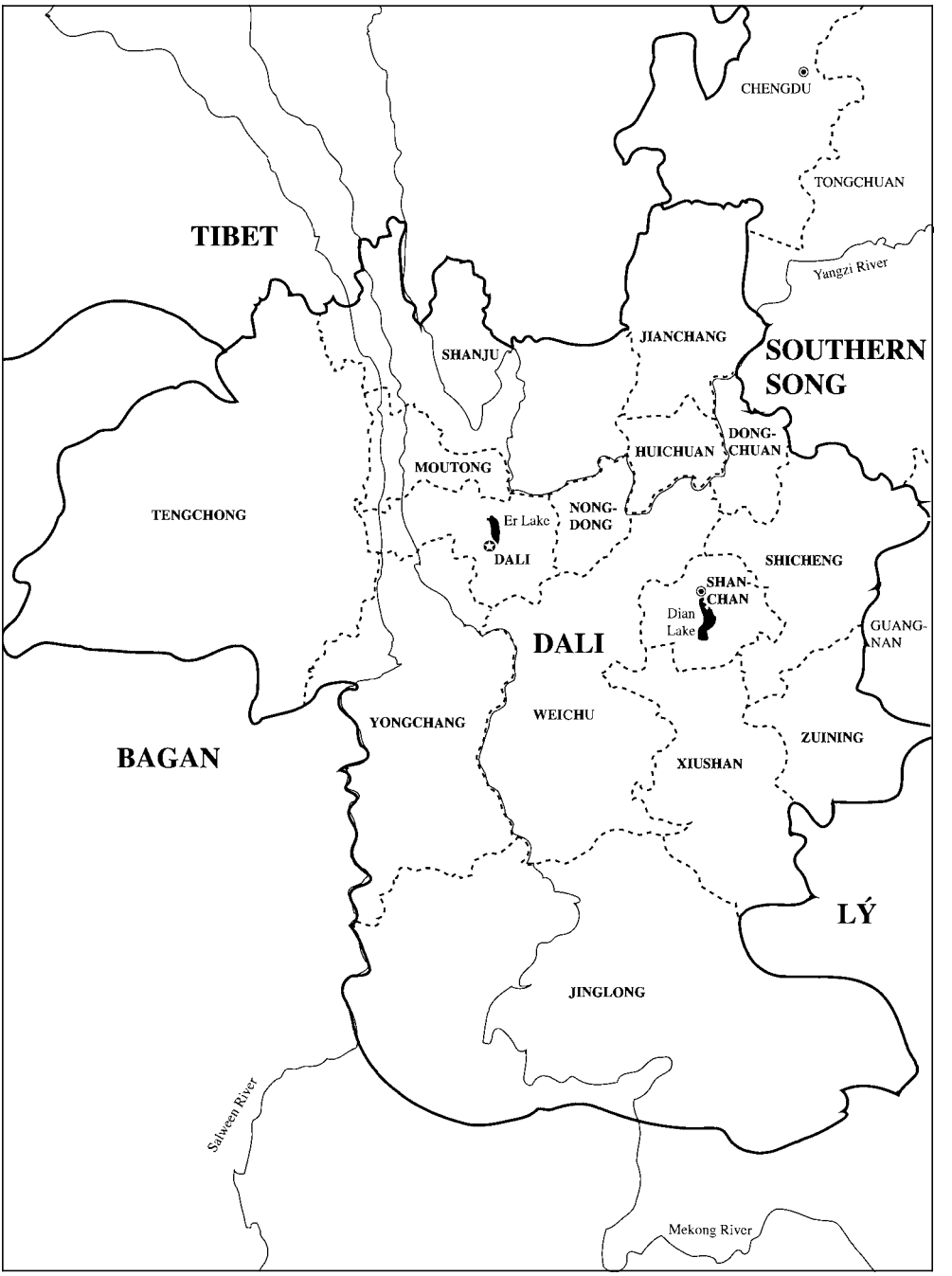

FIGURE 4.1 Dali Kingdom (937–1253)

cate that the *Scripture for Humane Kings* enjoyed a place of prominence in Dali court Buddhism: two partial manuscripts of the scripture survive with commentary and sub-commentary; a 1052 abridged copy of a tenth-century sub-commentary known as the *Compass for Protecting the State Sub-commentary* (Ch. *Huguo sinan chao* 護國司南抄; hereafter, *Sub-commentary*) has only been found in Dali; there is an extended section on the "State-Protecting *Prajñā* Buddha Mother" in the 1136 ritual text *Rituals for Inviting Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Vajra Beings, Etc.* (Ch. *Zhu fo pusa jin'gang deng qiqing yigui* 諸佛菩薩金剛等啟請儀軌; hereafter, *Invitation Rituals*) found only in Dali; and the 1170s *Painting of Buddhist Images* (Ch. *Fanxiang juan* 梵像卷) includes multiple scenes based on the scripture.[3]

This essay focuses on the visual representation of Dali rulers as humane kings in the *Painting of Buddhist Images*, which opens and closes with royal scenes: the former depicts the painting's imperial sponsor Duan Zhixing 段智興 (r. 1172–1199) and his retinue, and the latter depicts the "Kings of Sixteen Great States" (Ch. *shiliu daguo wangzhong* 十六大囿王眾) from the *Scripture for Humane Kings*. The royal images that open and close the painting adopt Chinese imperial symbols for the Dali ruler while demoting the Song ruler to the level of barbarian. These images simultaneously participate in transregional Buddhist visual culture and respond to Dali rulers' specific situation near the end of the twelfth century. The *Painting of Buddhist Images* does not only shed light on the reign of Duan Zhixing in the 1170s; instead, its connections to other Dali-kingdom visual and textual materials (including manuscripts of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, esoteric ritual texts, carvings and statues of identical figures, etc.) also allow it to shed light on Dali court Buddhism more broadly, especially on developments in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

While rulers of the preceding Nanzhao 南詔 kingdom (649–903) had to accept subservient positions in their alliances with Tang and Tibet, the Dali

3 The common Chinese name for this painting is *Fanxiang juan*, which translates to *Scroll of Buddhist Images*, but the painting was originally made in the accordion-fold format and only remounted as a scroll in the fifteenth century. Because it was not in a scroll format during the period under consideration here, I refer to it as *Painting of Buddhist Images* instead. Li Lin-ts'an and Sekiguchi Masayuki originally observed that the alternating *vajra* and flower designs on the border suggested an accordion-fold format, and Matsumoto's close analysis confirmed this based on paint transfer from one scene to the next. Li Lin-ts'an 李霖燦, *A Study of the Nan-chao and Ta-li Kingdoms in the Light of Art Materials Found in Various Museums* (Taibei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan minzuxue yanjiusuo, 1967), 29; Sekiguchi Masayuki, 関口正之, "Dairikoku Chō Shōon ga bonzō ni tsuite (1)" 大理国張勝温画梵像について (上), *Kokka* 国華 no. 875 (1966): 9–21; 10; Matsumoto Moritaka, "Chang Sheng-wen's Long Painting of Buddhist Images," PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 1976.

kingdom's relative independence let its rulers elevate themselves over their neighbor to the east: the inscription on the thirteenth-century dhāraṇī pillar at Kṣitigarbha Temple (Ch. Dizang si 地藏寺) refers to the Dali rulers as "emperor" (Ch. *di* 帝) and places the Song king (Ch. *wang* 王) on the same level as the "barbarian king" (Ch. *man wang* 蠻王).[4] However, foreign powers were not the only threat to Dali rulers' authority. The Duan ruling family also had to contend with powerful prime ministers from the Gao 高 clan who usurped the throne in 1094–1095 and continued to wield considerable political clout throughout the second half of the Dali kingdom; the thirteenth-century dhāraṇī pillar in fact commemorated a member of the Gao family. Gao power stemmed in large part from their role in quelling rebellions that reflected the fragmentation and diversity of Dali's population, which was spread over varied terrain.

All Dali-kingdom sources tied to the *Scripture for Humane Kings* came from the court and had specific connections to the Duan rulers. The two manuscripts of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, the *Sub-commentary*, and *Invitation Rituals* came from a scriptural cache at Dharma Treasury Temple (Ch. Fazang si 法藏寺), the temple of the Dong 董 family who served as state preceptors (Ch. *guoshi* 國師) at the Dali court. Duan Zhixing commissioned the *Painting of Buddhist Images*, which includes images of Nanzhao and Dali rulers throughout the painting, and also features arhats, Chan patriarchs, well known forms of buddhas and bodhisattvas, local manifestations of Avalokiteśvara, and wrathful dharma guardians. Dali court Buddhism centered around esoteric rites for state protection, and the *Scripture for Humane Kings* was a key part of these practices.

1 The *Scripture for Humane Kings* and Buddhist Kingship

It was Amoghavajra's version of the *Scripture for Humane Kings* (*T* no. 246) that found favor with the Dali court, but the scripture had a longer history: its earlier version (*T* no. 245) was probably written in fifth-century North China under the Tuoba 拓跋 Northern Wei 北魏 (386–534). Sixth-century Buddhist sources classify the text as a "suspect scripture" (Ch. *yijing* 疑經), but the 597 *Record of the Three Jewels throughout History* (Ch. *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記, *T* no. 2034)

4 *Dali guo fo dizi yishi buxie Yuan Douguang jingzao foding zunsheng baochuang ji* 大理國佛弟子議事布燮袁豆光敬造佛頂尊勝寶幢記, in Yang Shiyu 楊世鈺 and Zhang Shufang 張樹芳, eds., *Dali congshu: jinshi pian* 大理叢書: 金石篇 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1993), v. 10: 6. Kṣitigarbha Temple was located in Shanchan (modern-day Kunming).

claims that it was translated by the prolific monks Dharmarakṣa (Ch. Zhu Fahu 竺法護; 230?–316), Kumārājiva (Ch. Jiumoluoshi 鳩摩羅什; 344–413), and Paramārtha (Ch. Zhendi 真諦; 499–559).[5] Even before this attribution, the *Scripture for Humane Kings* was adopted by the rulers of the Chen 陳 dynasty (557–589), who invited Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顗 (538–597) to lecture on the scripture.[6] Tang Taizong 太宗 (r. 626–649) also embraced the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, and in 630 ordered monks in Chang'an 長安 to recite the scripture once a month.[7] Most standard commentaries (i.e., those titled Ch. *shu* 疏) on the *Scripture for Humane Kings* follow this earlier version and come from a Tiantai perspective, with its emphasis on the Three Truths.[8]

Amoghavajra "retranslated" the scripture in 765 at the behest of Tang Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779), who also called for a *Scripture for Humane Kings* ritual to be performed in the wake of Tibetan attacks.[9] This retranslation project involved removing obvious references to Chinese concepts that might have revealed the text's indigenous provenance.[10] Amoghavajra also brought the text more in line with its Perfection of Wisdom (Skt. *prajñāpāramitā*) genre and the system of esoteric Buddhism in which he was trained, and he removed arguments against religious involvement in statecraft.[11] However, the *Scripture for Humane Kings*'s distinctive message remained its identification of rulers with bodhisattvas and its promise that upholding the scripture would help rulers protect their countries.[12]

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5 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 75; *Lidai sanbao ji*, *T* no. 2034: 49.62c18, 64c14–15, 78a23, 79a9–10, 99a2, 99a14–16. It should be noted that none of these translators worked under the Tuoba Wei.

6 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 76; *Fozu tongji*, *T* no. 2035: 49.182c5–6.

7 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 77; *Fozu tongji*, *T* no. 2035: 49.363b28–29.

8 The Three Truths refer to emptiness, provisional existence, and the mean that encompasses both. See the following commentaries in the Taishō canon: *Commentary on the Prajñā Scripture for Humane Kings* (Ch. *Renwang bore jing shu* 仁王般若經疏; *T* no. 1707), by Jizang 吉藏 (549–623); *Commentary on the Humane Kings Scripture* (Ch. *Renwang jing shu* 仁王經疏; *T* no. 1708), by Wŏng-ch'ŭk 圓測 (fl. 640–660); the early Tang *Commentary on the Prajñā Scripture for Humane Kings to Protect Their States* (Ch. *Renwang huguo bore jing shu* 仁王護國般若經疏; *T* no. 1705); and *Commentary on the Prajñāpāramitā Scripture for Humane Kings to Protect Their States, Spoken by the Buddha* (Ch. *Foshuo renwang huguo bore boluomi jing shu* 佛說仁王護國般若波羅蜜經疏; *T* no. 1706), by Shanyue 善月 (1150–1241). Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 127, 326.

9 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 160; *Fozu tongji*, *T* no. 2035: 377c25–378a3; *Jiu Tang shu*, 11: 280; 118: 3417.

10 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 99–100, 163.

11 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 165–166.

12 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 95.

Only one standard commentary was written on Amoghavajra's *Scripture for Humane Kings*, the *Commentary on the Prajñāpāramitā Scripture for Humane Kings to Protect Their States* (Ch. *Renwang huguo bore boluomiduo jing shu* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經疏, *T* no. 1709). Its author was the monk Liangbi 良賁 (717–777), who assisted Amoghavajra with his *Scripture for Humane Kings* revision. Liangbi's text was the basis for Dali-kingdom sub-commentaries on the scripture, including the *Sub-commentary*. However, Amoghavajra's *Scripture for Humane Kings* also sparked several ritual commentaries attributed to Amoghavajra himself.[13] One of the ritual commentaries based on Amoghavajra's *Scripture for Humane Kings* was among the sources used in the 1136 Dali-kingdom *Invitation Rituals*.[14] Court Buddhists in Dali, like their counterparts in late Nara and Heian Japan, used Amoghavajra's *Scripture for Humane Kings* texts to develop their own ritual, textual, and visual system aimed at protecting the state. These courts' adoption of Amoghavajra's version of the scripture, rather than the earlier Tiantai version, may stem from the ritual commentaries' greater focus on practical, direct means for protecting their states in comparison to standard commentarial exegesis. In the case of Dali and Nara-Heian Japan, Amoghavajra's *Scripture for Humane Kings* also fit into the larger system of esoteric Buddhism that found favor at court.

2 The Dali Kingdom in Historical Perspective

Duan Siping 段思平 (r. 937–944) founded the Dali kingdom in 937 after a series of short-lived regimes that arose in succession after the fall of Nanzhao 南詔 (ca. 649–903).[15] Dali-kingdom rulers looked to their Nanzhao predecessors for their governmental structure, titles, and religion, but lived in a very different geopolitical world. The rulers of Nanzhao found themselves in the middle of a power struggle between Tang and Tibet in the eighth century. By skillfully forming alliances with these larger empires, Nanzhao conquered its regional

13 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 70–71 n. 7.

14 This text was *Ritual Procedures for Reciting the Dhāraṇī of the Prajñāpāramitā Scripture for Humane Kings to Protect Their States* (Ch. *Renwang huguo bore boluomiduo jing tuoluoni niansong yigui* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經陀羅尼念誦儀軌; *T* no. 994). The other two ritual texts based on the *Scripture for Humane Kings* and attributed to Amoghavajra are the *Methods for the Humane Kings Prajñā Recitation* (Ch. *Renwang bore niansong fa* 仁王般若念誦法; *T* no. 995) and *Explanation of the Humane Kings Prajñā Dhāraṇī* (Ch. *Renwang bore tuoluoni shi* 仁王般若陀羅尼釋; *T* no. 996).

15 These were the Changhe 長和 (903–927), Tianxing 天興 (927–928), and Yining 義寧 (928–937) kingdoms.

rivals to expand its territory and eventually challenge Tang control of Annam in what is now Vietnam.[16] Based on extant records, the Dali kingdom had fewer diplomatic and military interactions with its neighbors, prompted in part by Song Taizu's 太祖 (r. 960–975) decision to use the Dadu River as the boundary between the two states.[17] The Song court only allowed Dali to present tribute a handful of times in order to avoid entanglements in the southwest.[18] As a result, there are more Tang (and to a lesser extent, Tibetan) records about Nanzhao than there are Song records about Dali. However, more Buddhist materials survive from the Dali kingdom than from Nanzhao, making Buddhism one of the best documented facets of Dali-kingdom culture.

One of the challenges in distinguishing Dali-kingdom Buddhist materials from Nanzhao materials (for example, undated statues and manuscripts) is that there are so many similarities between them. Buddhism had become a prominent part of Nanzhao ruling ideology by the mid-ninth century, when the Temple for Revering the Holy One (Ch. Chongsheng si 崇聖寺) and its Thousand-League Pagoda (Ch. Qianxun ta 千尋塔) were built in the Nanzhao capital.[19] The first dated Buddhist objects are statues of Amitābha and Maitreya from 850 at Stone Treasure Mountain (Ch. Shibao shan 石寶山), located in the Jianchuan region northwest of the Dali plain; they were probably commissioned by a Nanzhao official.[20] Tang records report that the Nanzhao ruler Shilong 世隆 (r. 860–877) "revered the buddhadharma," and this religious ori-

16 Nanzhao's conquest of the other *zhao* 詔, kingdoms, in the Dali Plain during the seventh and eighth centuries, was only possible because the Tang court, needing an ally close to Tibetan territory, supported them. However, the Nanzhao ruler Geluofeng 閣羅鳳 (r. 748–779) broke with Tang in 752, claiming unfair treatment at the hands of regional Tang officials, and allied with the Tibetan empire instead. This lasted until 794, when Nanzhao turned back to Tang after facing excessive taxation and corvée labor from Tibet. Even after Nanzhao reestablished an alliance with Tang, Nanzhao armies raided Chengdu and initiated conflicts over territory such as Annam. See: Charles Backus, *The Nan-chao Kingdom and T'ang China's Southwestern Frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 106–130.

17 *Yuhai* 玉海 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983) 153: 44b.

18 *Song shi* 宋史, Toghto 脫脫 et al. (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1980) 347: 11016.

19 Thousand-League Pagoda resembles the contemporaneous Wild Goose Pagoda in Xi'an, suggesting that it was built on Tang models. Fang Guoyu 方國瑜, "Dali Chongsheng si ta kaoshuo" 大理崇聖寺塔考說, *Sixiang zhanxian* 思想戰線 6 (1978): 51–57; 51.

20 *Zhang Banglong zaoxiang ji* 張傍龍造像記, in Yang Shiyu and Zhang Shufang, eds., *Dali congshu: jinshi pian*, 10: 5–6. The donor, Zhang Banglong 張傍龍, was probably a Nanzhao official, as the *Nanzhao tuzhuan* recounts a *qiuwang* named Zhang Bang 張傍 encountering a monk Jin (probably Kim) 金 in Yizhou (near Chengdu). *Nanzhao tuzhuan*, in Li Lin-ts'an, *A Study of the Nan-chao and Ta-li Kingdoms in the Light of Art Materials Found in Various Museums*, 145.

entation appears clearly in the 899 *Illustrated History of Nanzhao* (Ch. *Nanzhao tuzhuan* 南詔圖傳; hereafter, *Illustrated History*).

The Nanzhao officials Wang Fengzong 王奉宗 (d.u.) and Zhang Shun 張順 (d.u.) commissioned the *Illustrated History* to explain in images and text to the penultimate Nanzhao ruler Shunhuazhen 舜化貞 (r. 897–902) how Buddhism entered the region.[21] According to the *Illustrated History*, Acuoye (Skt. Ajaya; Eng. Invincible) Guanyin 阿嵯耶觀音 took the form of an Indian monk to spread the Buddhist teachings, and helped the first Nanzhao rulers found their new kingdom. Near the end of the illustrations is an image of Shunhuazhen's father Longshun 隆舜 (r. 878–897) standing before a statue of Acuoye Guanyin: Longshun is barefoot, wears only a *dhoti*, and has his hands in an *añjali mudrā*; behind him are two youths holding vases. This image, combined with the text's statement that Longshun was "sprinkled by the basin" in 897, suggests that Longshun performed an esoteric consecration rite centered on Acuoye Guanyin.[22] The *Illustrated History*'s text additionally credits Acuoye Guanyin with "opening the marvelous gate of the esoteric" and identifies the bodhisattva as the "worthy of the Lotus Family," one of the three sections of the Garbhadhātu (Ch. Taizangjie 胎藏界; Eng. Womb Realm) maṇḍala.[23] This shows that by the late ninth century Nanzhao rulers embraced a model of Buddhist kingship effected through esoteric rites.

Further evidence of Nanzhao rulers' esoteric orientation appears in the *Sub-commentary*, which was originally written in five fascicles during the early tenth century by the monk Xuanjian 玄鑒 (d.u.), "Recipient of the Purple Robe, Master of Exegesis, Abbot of the Temple of Revering the Holy One, and Monk of Inner Offerings."[24] Xuanjian wrote his sub-commentary on the Tang monk

21 *Nanzhao tuzhuan*, 150.

22 *Nanzhao tuzhuan*, 150.

23 *Nanzhao tuzhuan*, 149.

24 In Chinese: *Neigongfeng seng, Chongsheng si zhu, yixue jiaozhu, cizi shamen* Xuanjian 內供奉僧崇聖寺主義學教主賜紫沙門玄鑒. *Huguo sinan chao* 護國司南抄, Xuanjian 玄鑒, in Yang Shiyu 楊世鈺, Zhao Yinsong 趙寅松, and Guo Huiqing 郭惠青, eds., *Dali congshu: dazangjing pian* 大理叢書: 大藏經篇 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2008), v. 1: 1–83; 3. "Monk of Inner Offerings" refers to a monk who performed rituals at court in the inner ritual area (Ch. *nei daochang* 內道場). I mainly follow the manuscript reproductions of the *Huguo sinan chao* in volume 1 of the *Dali congshu: dazangjing pian*, but I also consult Hou Chong's transcription of the text in Fang Guangchang 方廣錩, ed., *Zangwai fojiao wenxian* 藏外佛教文獻 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2000), 7: 68–113. The *Sub-commentary* survives as a 1052 manuscript that gives its original date as the sixth year of the Anguo reign era, which it gives as a *jiayin* 甲寅 year. Anguo 6 corresponds to 908, but 908 was a *wuchen* 戊辰 year, not a *jiayin* year. The closest *jiayin* year was 894, but that preceded the Anguo era. It seems most likely that the monk Daochang who copied

Liangbi's commentary to Amoghavajra's version of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, meaning that the rulers of the Changhe 長和 kingdom (903–927), and probably the late Nanzhao rulers as well, would have been familiar with this scripture's model of Buddhist kingship and its methods for state protection. Though Xuanjian declines to comment on the scripture's dhāraṇī or esoteric methods, it is clear from his explanation that he is aware of them.[25]

The Duan rulers of the Dali kingdom followed the esoteric Buddhist kingship of the *Illustrated History* and *Sub-commentary* as part of their larger adoption of Nanzhao models of governance. Dali-kingdom rulers presented themselves as heirs to Nanzhao in several ways: they claimed Nanzhao royal titles such as Piaoxin 驃信, meaning "Lord of Pyu" (modern-day Myanmar); donned the same tall crowns; and continued to worship Acuoye Guanyin as a tutelary deity. In fact, the *Painting of Buddhist Images* reproduces almost the entire visual narrative of the *Illustrated History*, culminating in a scene of all the Nanzhao rulers worshipping Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara.[26] Dali rulers—or at least Duan Zhixing, who commissioned the painting—thus claimed to carry on the Buddhist mandate originally bestowed by Acuoye Guanyin upon the early Nanzhao kings.

The greater number of extant sources from the Dali kingdom means that these Nanzhao legacies coexisted with other Buddhist teachings. Chan and Huayan texts and visual culture appear in scriptural collections and the *Painting of Buddhist Images*, and popular Mahāyāna scriptures such as the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, *Lotus Sūtra*, and *Diamond Sūtra* also circulated in Dali. These texts all appear in their Sinitic translations, but there are six ritual texts that appear to have been composed in Dali. Though at least two of these texts draw extensively on Chinese scriptures, commentaries, and ritual manuals, they still show how Dali-kingdom Buddhists—especially those with ties to the court—created their own Buddhist materials.[27] A similar dynamic characterized Dali-kingdom

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the *Sub-commentary* in 1052 wrote the date incorrectly. Hou Chong 侯沖, "Dali guo xiejing *Huguo sinan chao* jiqi xueshu jiazhi" 大理國寫經 "護國司南抄"及其學術價值, *Yunnan shehui kexue* 雲南社會科學 4 (1999): 103–110; 105.

25 *Huguo sinan chao*, 82.

26 *Fanxiang juan*, in Li Lin-ts'an, *A Study of the Nan-chao and Ta-li Kingdoms*, 112.

27 These two texts that quote from Chinese sources are the aforementioned *Invitation Rituals* and *Invitation Rituals for General Use* (*Tongyong qiqing yigui* 通用啟請儀軌). The other four are the *Rituals for the Bodhimaṇḍa of the God Mahākāla* (*Dahei tianshen daochang yi* 大黑天神道場儀), *Rituals for the Bodhimaṇḍa of Widely Giving without Restriction* (*Guangshi wuzhe daochang yi* 廣施無遮道場儀), *Rituals for the Dharma Assembly of Unlimited Lamps and Food* (*Wuzhe dengshi fahui yi* 無遮燈食法會儀), and *Rituals for the Bodhimaṇḍa of the Great Vajra Consecration* (*Jingang daguanding daochang yi* 金剛

Buddhist art. Images of the popular buddhas and bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara (in many forms), Maitreya, Amitābha, Kṣitigarbha, Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, and others appear among the figures of the *Painting of Buddhist Images*, the Buddhist grottoes at Stone Treasure Mountain, and the statues found in Thousand-League Pagoda and other structures in the region. Dali-kingdom visual culture generally drew on Tang and Song styles, forms, and iconographies, but there were exceptions, for example in images of Acuoye Guanyin and Mahākāla that display iconographies not found in Tang-Song territory.

3 The Duan and Gao Families

Most surviving sources for Dali-kingdom Buddhism come from the court, but the court included more than just the Duan rulers. While it is clear that the Duan family sponsored multiple Buddhist projects, the Gao family did as well. Among the handful of extant inscriptions from the Dali kingdom, most concern members of the Gao clan and their Buddhist devotion. Aside from these materials, the earliest account of Duan-Gao relations appears in the *Yuan History* (*Yuan shi* 元史, 1370), which states that at the time of the Mongol conquest of Dali, "The Duan ruler of Dali was weak, and state affairs were all decided by the brothers Gao Xiang and Gao He."[28] It is only in the Ming (1368–1644) *Unofficial History of Nanzhao* (Ch. *Nanzhao yeshi* 南詔野史; hereafter, *Unofficial History*) that a more detailed account of Duan-Gao relations appears, but this text must be treated with suspicion when used as a historical record.[29] I consult the *Unofficial History* when its contents accord with those of Dali-era materials.

The Gao family rose to prominence in the late eleventh century when Duan Silian 段思廉 (r. 1045–1075) granted the title Grand Guardian (Ch. *taibao* 太保) to Gao Zhisheng 高智昇 after the latter quashed a rebellion.[30] According to the

大灌頂道場儀). All of these texts were found at Dharma Treasury Temple along with the *Sub-commentary* and many other Buddhist sources.

28 *Yuan shi* 元史, Song Lian 宋濂 et al. (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1981), 4: 59.

29 Hou Chong makes a convincing argument that the *Nanzhao yeshi* contains many legends that developed in Dali as a response to the Ming conquest, as they do not appear in earlier sources. See Hou Chong 侯冲, *Baizu xinshi: Bai gu tong ji yanjiu* 白族心史, 白古通記研究 (Kunming: Yunnan minzu chubanshe, 2002), 439, 443.

30 A 1230s epitaph for Gao Shengfu 高生福 identifies Gao Zhisheng as his great-great-great grandfather, and notes that Gao Zhisheng had the title *taibao bang'an xiandi* 太保邦安賢帝 (Grand Guardian, Realm Pacifier, Wise Emperor). *Gao Shengfu muzhiming*, 高生福墓誌銘, in Yunnan sheng bianji zu 云南省编辑组, ed., *Baizu shehui lishi diaocha* (4) 白族社會歷史調查 (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 1988), 106. This is corroborated in

Yuan *Concise Gazetteer of Yunnan* (Ch. *Yunnan zhilue* 雲南志略), Duan Zhengming 正明 (r. 1082–1094) abdicated his throne for Zhisheng's son, Gao Shengtai 昇泰 (d.u.), who established the Great Central Kingdom (Ch. Dazhongguo 大中國) in 1094.[31] However, his sons reportedly refused to take the throne after his death in 1095, so the Dali kingdom was restored under Duan rule.[32] It is only with Gao Shengtai's son Gao Taiming 泰明 (d.u.) that we find an example of Gao Buddhist activity, in this case sponsoring a manuscript of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* in gold ink on indigo silk as a gift for a Song envoy in 1118.[33] Over the twelfth century Gao Taiming's descendants continued to serve as high officials who suppressed rebellions and sponsored Buddhist structures. One such figure, Gao Miaoyin Hu 妙音護 (fl. late twelfth century), showed his Buddhist devotion by building the Temple of Great Flourishing (Ch. Gaoxing si 高興寺) on the east side of Er Lake.[34] Miaoyin Hu also married well: his wife was Duan Yizhang Shun 段易長順, the sister of Duan Zhixing, sponsor of the *Painting of Buddhist Images*.[35] Gao men continued to occupy top official positions until the Mongol conquest, when the invading army executed Gao Xiang and Gao He.

The Duan emperors had a similar background to the Gao prime ministers in that Duan men served as prime ministers under the Nanzhao kingdom. Duan Siping, in founding the Dali kingdom, drew on his martial prowess in joining with the "thirty-seven tribes" (Ch. *sanshiqi bu* 三十七部) to unify the region after the series of short-lived kingdoms in the tenth century.[36] However, other Duan rulers were less inclined toward military affairs. At least two Duan emperors abdicated to become monks, which could reflect their Buddhist devotion, political coercion, or both.[37] Several inscriptions from the Dali kingdom men-

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the *Nanzhao yeshi*, which further explains the reason behind Gao Zhisheng's enfeoffment with his defeat of the Vietnamese Nùng Trí Cao's 儂智高 rebellion in 1054 (Huangyou 皇祐 5). *Nanzhao yeshi huizheng* 南詔野史會證 (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 1990), 242–243.

31 *Yunnan zhilüe* 雲南志略, in Fang Guoyu 方國瑜, ed., *Yunnan shiliao congkan* 雲南史料叢刊 (Kunming: Yunnan daxue chubanshe, 1998), 3: 120–133; 127.

32 *Yunnan zhilüe*, 127.

33 Li Lin-ts'an, *A Study of the Nan-chao and Ta-li Kingdoms*, 19, 69 Plate I (B).

34 It is unclear how Gao Miaoyin Hu fits into the Gao lineage that goes back to Gao Zhisheng, but it appears that he belongs to the same generation as Gao Liangcheng given that his daughter Gao Jinxian Gui died by the 1230s.

35 *Dali guo gu Gao Ji muming bei* 大理囿故高姬墓銘碑, in Yang Shiyu and Zhang Shufang, eds., *Dali congshu: jinshi pian*, 10: 11.

36 *Duan shi yu sanshiqi bu huimeng bei* 段氏與三十七部會盟碑, in Yang Shiyu and Zhang Shufang, eds., *Dali congshu: jinshi pian*, 10: 6.

37 According to the *Concise Gazetteer of Yunnan* the emperors Duan Siying 思英 (r. 945–946) and Duan Sulong 素隆 (r. 1023–1026) became monks, but the Ming *Nanzhao yeshi* claims

tion the emperor (often bestowing titles on illustrious Gao officials), but few discuss Duan figures in detail. An inscription on a gilt bronze statue of Acuoye Guanyin from the Temple for Revering the Holy One reads:

> The Emperor and Piaoxin Duan Zhengxing 正興 makes this record on behalf of the princes Duan Yizhang Sheng 易長生 and Duan Yizhang Xing 興. May their blessings be as numerous as metaphorical motes of dust and grains of sand, and may they preserve this good fortune for their descendants for a thousand years, with the banners of Heaven and Earth passed down through myriad generations.[38]

An image of Yizhang Guanshiyin 易長觀世音 appears in frame 100 of the *Painting of Buddhist Images*, suggesting that this form of the bodhisattva may have been the tutelary deity of at least some Duan rulers.[39] Aside from this, the *Painting of Buddhist Images* as a whole reflects the Buddhist devotion of Duan Zhixing, and the Duan rulers probably participated in the range of Dali-kingdom Buddhist traditions that survive in images, texts, and objects.

Dali-kingdom records illuminate several facets of the world in which materials related to the *Scripture for Humane Kings* circulated. First, the preponderance of inscriptions from different sites about the Gao family in surviving Dali-kingdom records strongly suggests that their political and military power rivaled or surpassed that of the Duan family. Duan power was consolidated in the main capital of Yangjumie 陽苴咩 (modern-day Dali) but the Gao seemed to control a larger area, including the eastern capital of Shanchan 鄯闡 (modern-day Kunming). Second, for the period in which *Scripture for Humane Kings* sources appear (the mid-eleventh century through the twelfth century), the Gao family was involved in a variety of Buddhist projects that touched on Chan, the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, a dhāraṇī pillar with esoteric imagery, and the building of temples tied to both esoteric and Chan monks. In this way, their commitments mirror the kinds of Buddhist materials that have survived from the Dali kingdom. Finally, the Buddhism of the Gao and Duan families was

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that in addition to these two, Duan Suzhen 素真 (r. 1027–1041), Duan Silian, Duan Zhengming, Duan Zhengchun, Duan Zhengyan 正嚴 (aka Duan Heyu 和譽; r. 1108–1147), Duan Zhengxing 正興 (r. 1147–1171), and Duan Zhixiang 智祥 (r. 1205–1238) also abdicated to become monks. *Yunnan zhilue*, 126; *Nanzhao yeshi huizheng*, 237, 242–243, 253, 269, 273, 275, 283, 307.

38 Li Lin-ts'an, *A Study of the Nan-chao and Ta-li Kingdoms*, 26, 73 G. The princes' sister Duan Yizhang Shun was mentioned above in connection with her marriage to Gao Miaoyin Hu.

39 *Fanxiang juan*, 111.

intertwined, as were the families themselves. Gao men and Duan women intermarried, and members of the two families jointly sponsored Buddhist temple construction.

The dated materials related to the *Scripture for Humane Kings* were created during this period: the *Sub-commentary* was copied under the reign of Duan Silian, as Gao power was growing; *Invitation Rituals* was compiled under Duan Zhengyan 正嚴 (r. 1108–1147); and the *Painting of Buddhist Images* was completed under Duan Zhixing, who was an affinal relation of Gao Miaoyin Hu. These projects were attached to the court, but the court included Gao as well as Duan figures. In addition, both Gao and Duan men became monks, which complicates our understanding of court-saṅgha relations. One of the key tensions that emerges in the *Scripture for Humane Kings* and ideals of Buddhist kingship more broadly is the relative authority of rulers and monastics. While one of Amoghavajra's goals in revising the *Scripture for Humane Kings* was to remove arguments against religious involvement in statecraft, and to promote the authority and independence of the saṅgha, rulers did not always interpret the text that way in practice.[40] Examining in more detail the *Scripture for Humane Kings* in the Dali kingdom, and specifically its scenes in the *Painting of Buddhist Images*, will clarify how the Dali rulers presented themselves as humane kings within their foreign and domestic geopolitical contexts.

4 The *Scripture for Humane Kings* in Dali

The 1052 copy of the tenth-century *Sub-commentary* offers the first evidence for the importance of the *Scripture for Humane Kings* in Dali-kingdom Buddhism. Additional evidence comes in the form of two partial manuscripts of the text (as well as a fragment), which include parts of Liangbi's commentary as well as annotations and a sub-commentary that differs from that of the tenth-century *Sub-commentary*. The State-Protecting Prajñā Buddha Mother section of *Invitation Rituals* further demonstrates interest in the esoteric ritual tradition based on the *Scripture for Humane Kings*. These texts indicate that the Dali court—including its high-ranking monks—devoted considerable time and resources to making sense of the *Scripture for Humane Kings* and putting its rituals into practice.

40 Sem Vermeesch, "Representation of the Ruler in Buddhist Inscriptions of Early Koryŏ," *Korean Studies* 26.2 (2002): 216–250; 228.

Compared to other Dali-kingdom materials related to the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, the *Sub-commentary* gives the clearest sense of the kinds of kingship that elite monks of the Changhe and Dali kingdoms promoted, namely, a combination of classical Chinese rulers—e.g., the sage-king Yao—and paradigmatic Buddhist rulers, such as the cakravartin Aśoka (r. ca. 269–ca. 232 BCE) who is credited with spreading Buddhism in the Mauryan empire (ca. 383–ca. 185 BCE). These two kinds of rulers come together in the Liang dynasty's Emperor Wu (Liang Wudi 梁武帝; 464–549), whom Xuanjian credits with adapting his Confucian ritual obligations to Buddhist principles of nonviolence.[41] Given the Tang context in which Liangbi composed his commentary on Amoghavajra's *Scripture for Humane Kings*, it is no surprise that the *Sub-commentary* also lauds Tang emperors: for example, Liangbi's praise for the reigning emperor Suzong 肅宗 (r. 711–726) inspires Xuanjian's comments on ideal Confucian rulership.[42] However, the Dali-kingdom monk Shi Daochang's 釋道常 (d.u.) one-fascicle abridgement of Xuanjian's five-fascicle original actually *adds* a section on the first eight Tang emperors, showing how important Tang models remained for Dali court monks.[43]

While the *Sub-commentary* praises rulers like Emperor Liang who perfectly combine Buddhist and Confucian aspects of statecraft, it also suggests that ideal rulers are those who properly respect Buddhist authorities. In his commentary, Liangbi defines the scripture's key terms: "'Humane king' is the good name of an inviting host who shows widespread respect; 'protecting the state' is the great work of those who spread universal love."[44] Xuanjian expands on this by citing an episode in the *Scripture for Humane Kings* in which King Prasenajit (Ch. Bosini *wang* 波斯匿王), ruler of Śrāvasti, had invited the Buddha to lecture on the bodhisattva path, thereby "showing widespread respect."[45] By extension, humane kings are those who consult and honor Buddhist advi-

41 For example, Emperor Wu makes offerings of grain instead of meat at the Grand Temple. *Huguo sinan chao*, 50.

42 Liangbi praised Suzong for "reviving Yao's cultivation" and "renewing rites and music." *Renwang huguo bore boluomiduo jing shu*, *T* no. 1709: 33.430b22–23, 26.

43 Daochang abridged the sub-commentary in an irregular way, such that the extant manuscript preserves more content from the beginning of the text, while leaving out most of the content from the middle and end sections. Hou Chong, "Dali guo xiejing *Huguo sinan chao* jiqi xueshu jiazhi," 106.

44 *Renwang huguo bore boluomiduo jing shu*, *T* no. 1709: 33.434b20–21. The Taishō version of Liangbi's commentary gives *zhu* 諸 ("all") instead of the *Sub-commentary*'s *qing* 請 ("invite"), but based on the meaning I believe the latter is correct.

45 *Huguo sinan chao*, 45–46. For some reason, Xuanjian reads the term *lingyu* 令譽, which generally means "good name," as "good strategy" instead. King Prasenajit is the scripture's main interlocutor and represents the ideal "humane king."

sors, a message that undoubtedly appealed to the monks who wrote and copied the *Sub-commentary*.

Daochang's copy of Xuanjian's *Sub-commentary* underscores court monks' desire to make sense of the *Scripture for Humane Kings* through Liangbi's commentary. The two partial manuscripts of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, which also include annotations, passages from Liangbi's commentary, and separate sub-commentary, further attest to this desire.[46] Though neither manuscript bears a date nor the name of a scribe or author, it is highly likely they were created in the Dali kingdom: their script resembles that of other dated Dali-kingdom manuscripts, and the second manuscript's two colophons suggest a Dali-kingdom date.[47] Moreover, the *Sub-commentary*'s date shows that the *Scripture for Humane Kings* was known in Dali as early as the turn of the tenth century, making it reasonable to conclude that the Dali-kingdom court had access to the scripture as well.

The surviving portion of the first *Scripture for Humane Kings* manuscript covers part of chapter five, "Protecting the State," all of chapter six, "The Inconceivable," and part of chapter seven, "Receiving and Keeping This Scripture." It gives the text of Amoghavajra's *Scripture for Humane Kings* and Liangbi's commentary, but often abridges both and occasionally adds or alters characters. Interlinear notes in red ink mark the scriptural text, usually to turn a single character (e.g., Ch. *wang* 王, "king") into a binomial (e.g., Ch. *guowang* 國王, "king of state").[48] The second manuscript includes unabridged passages from

46 Dharma Treasury Temple also held a fragment with a few lines from chapter three, "Bodhisattva Conduct," of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, as well as Liangbi's commentary. See Yang Shiyu, Zhao Yinsong, and Guo Huiqing, eds., *Dali congshu: dazangjing pian*, v. 3: 121–123; *T* no. 1709: 33.463c15–17, 478b23–c1.

47 The first reads, "Created for Shi Xinghai 釋行海." Though the monastic name Xinghai is fairly common, there was a monk-poet from Jiangnan 江南 named Shi Xinghai (aka Xuecen 雪岑, fl. 1244–1270) whose works include reflections on his time in India and one "For the Superior Man of Yunnan" (Ch. *Song Yunnan shangren* 送雲南上人). *Xuecen heshang xuji* 雪岑和尚續集, Shi Xinghai 釋行海 (Song) (Fujitashi rokubyōe 藤田氏六兵衛, 1665) 2: 5b. This could indicate that the text was copied on his behalf, as a way to dedicate merit. He may have traveled to India by way of the Dali region and exchanged gifts with an eminent Dali monk with ties to the court. The other colophon indicated that the manuscript belonged in the collection of "Emperor Zhiwen" (Zhiwen *di zang* 置文帝藏). This figure is unknown, but the same colophon appears on a manuscript of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* (Ch. *Shou lengyan jing* 首楞嚴經) from Dharma Treasury Temple that was copied by the monk Yang Yilong 楊義隆, who also copied the 1136 *Invitation Rituals*. Hou Chong, 侯沖, "Dali guo xiejing yanjiu" 大理國寫經研究, *Minzu xuebao* 民族學報 no. 4 (2006): 11–60; 24. It is also possible that the colophon related to Zhiwen was a later interpolation.

48 *Renwang jing* 仁王經 (1), in Yang Shiyu, Zhao Yinsong, and Guo Huiqing, eds., *Dali con-*

Amoghavajra's scripture, selected parts of Liangbi's commentary, and a sub-commentary. It also comes from the second half of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, picking up in the middle of the seventh chapter and continuing to the end of the eighth and final chapter, "The Charge." Both manuscripts show Dali court monks' effort to make sense of the scripture's meaning, in the first manuscript's annotations and the second manuscript's sub-commentary. The former may also have made the text more suitable for preaching or teaching.

Among the extant manuscripts from Dharma Treasury Temple, the *Scripture for Humane Kings* manuscripts are unique in their amount of annotation and sub-commentary. The section on the State-Protecting Prajñā Buddha Mother in *Invitation Rituals* tells us that the Dali court looked to this text not only for its meaning, but also for its efficacy. The court monk Shi Zhaoming 釋照明 (d.u.), né Yang Yilong 楊義隆, copied *Invitation Rituals* in 1136.[49] As its title indicates, *Invitation Rituals* consists of rituals for inviting around forty divine beings, from buddhas to bodhisattvas to ferocious dharma guardians. Like other ritual texts unique to Dali, it draws heavily on Tang ritual texts, particularly those credited to Amoghavajra and his esoteric lineage.[50] In the State-Protecting *Prajñā* Bud-

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gshu: dazangjing pian, v. 1: 87–169; 95. This also appears in the second manuscript; see also *Renwang jing* 仁王經 (2), in Yang Shiyu, Zhao Yinsong, and Guo Huiqing, eds., *Dali congshu: dazangjing pian*, v. 1: 173–233; 202.

49 The manuscript's colophon explains that Zhaoming copied the text for the benefit of his young son, Yang Longjun, who was probably the father of Yang Junsheng, another court monk-official who wrote the epitaph for the imperial niece Gao Jinxian Gui (d. ca. 1230s). Yang Junsheng himself received a funerary stele with 28 lines of Sanskrit, and one line in Sinitic script noting his posthumous title, "Shi Zhaoming, National Preceptor of Perfect Awakening." Based on the identical monastic name of Zhaoming, Yang Yanfu identified Yang Yilong and Yang Junsheng as the same person, but they were active approximately 100 years apart, and the patronymic linkage system suggests a grandfather-grandson relationship instead. Hou Chong, "Dali guo xiejing yanjiu," 23; Yang Yanfu 楊延福, "Dali guo gaoshou fotu Yang Yilong" 大理國高壽佛徒楊義隆, *Dali shizhuan xuebao* 大理師專學報 no. 42 (1999): 72–73.

50 Kawasaki Kazuhiro argues that while Dali ritual texts rely mostly on Tang esoteric sources, they also drew on materials coming directly from India, specifically the *Māyājāla Tantra* for its set of sixteen bodhisattvas. Kawasaki Kazuhiro 川崎 一洋, "Dairikoku jidai no mikkyō bunken *Shobutsu bosatsu kongō tō keishō shidai* ni shūroku sareru 'Hannyo shingyō hō' ni tsuite" 大理国時代の密教文献諸仏菩薩金剛等啓請次第に収録される般若心経法について, *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度学仏教学研究 57.1 (2008): 93–98; 95, 98. This is a compelling argument that deserves in depth research. Huang Huang has also demonstrated several direct borrowings from Tang esoteric works in *Invitation Rituals*. See especially Huang Huang 黃璜, "Dali guo xiejing *Zhu fo pusa jingang deng qiqing* yu Tangdai Bukong suo chuan jinggui de bijiao yanjiu" 大理国写经《诸佛菩萨金刚等启请》与唐代不空所传经轨的比较研究, *Guji zhengli yanjiu xuekan* 古籍整理研究学刊 no. 6 (Nov. 2017): 8–14.

dha Mother section the main sources are Liangbi's commentary and the *Ritual Procedures* text attributed to Amoghavajra.

The ritual for inviting the State-Protecting *Prajñā* Buddha Mother begins with standard procedures found throughout *Invitation Rituals*. The practitioner first forms *mudrās* and *mantras* to summon *vajra* guardians, purify the dharma realm, and invoke the three families of buddhas, bodhisattvas, and *vajra* beings. Through visualizations, the practitioner then invites the Buddha Mother, makes a series of offerings to her, and finally identifies with her. Next the practitioner lays out the maṇḍala on the altar and carries out another set of visualizations so that "all the calamities and disasters within the state will be eradicated."[51] After inviting Vajrapāṇi of the east and Vajraratna of the south, the practitioner visualizes a letter-displaying maṇḍala (Ch. *buzi lun* 布字輪) in which the Siddham letters of the state-protecting dhāraṇī are arranged in three layers that dissolve into the central syllable *dhiḥ* (the manuscript also gives an illustration of this maṇḍala).[52] As the text explains, the goal of this visualization is to destroy the three disasters and seven calamities, which are a key concern in the *Scripture for Humane Kings*. After this visualization, the practitioner continues by inviting the three remaining *vajra* beings: Vajratīkṣṇa of the west, Vajrayakṣa of the north, and finally Vajrapāramitā of the center. Each of these five *vajra* beings is identified with a bodhisattva and a *vidyārāja*.[53] The ritual ends by distinguishing between the inner and outer forms of protection:

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51 *Zhu fo pusa jingang deng qiqing yigui*, in Yang Shiyu, Zhao Yinsong, and Guo Huiqing, eds., *Dali congshu: dazangjing pian*, v. 2: 53–265; 121.

52 *Zhu fo pusa jingang deng qiqing yigui*, 123–125. *Invitation Rituals* is unique among Sinitic texts for including both the Siddham letters of the state-protecting dhāraṇī and an illustration of the letter-displaying maṇḍala, neither of which appear in transmitted versions of Amoghavajra's *Scripture for Humane Kings* or *Ritual Procedures*. The version of the state-protecting dhāraṇī is close to Hatta Yukio's reconstruction, which I discuss further below. See: Hatta Yukio 八田幸雄, *Shingon jiten* 真言事典 (Tokyo: Hirakawa shuppansha, 1985), 246–247. One of the challenges in identifying the dhāraṇī in this section of *Invitation Rituals* as the state-protecting dhāraṇī from Amoghavajra's *Scripture for Humane Kings* is that the former abbreviates the first sixteen words to their first syllable. This negates Huang Huang's creative explanation that the sixteen letters of the *maṇḍala's* outermost layer represent the Sixteen Worthies of Amoghavajra's translation of the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* (Ch. *Jingang ding yiqie rulai zhenshi she dasheng xianzheng da jiaowang jing* 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經; *T* no. 865). Huang Huang, "*Dali guo xiejing juan* 'fajie lun' tu yuanliu kao," 109–110.

53 Vajrapāṇi is an avatar of Samantabhadra and Trailokyavijaya; Vajraratna is an avatar of Ākāśagarbha and Kuṇḍali; Vajratīkṣṇa is an avatar of Mañjuśrī and Yamāntaka; Vajrayakṣa is another avatar of Yamāntaka and is not identified here with a bodhisattva (though elsewhere he is identified with Maitreya); and Vajrapāramitā is an avatar of the "Wheel-Turning Bodhisattva" and Acala. *Zhu fo pusa jingang deng qiqing yigui*, 122, 125–126.

here the former refers to the letters of the maṇḍala spell, while the latter refers to destroying the "three disasters and seven calamities" (Ch. *sanzai qinan* 三災七難) through visualization.[54]

Though this section makes passing mention of inner protection, the outer protection of eradicating disasters and calamities from the state receives more attention. This theme also recurs throughout the surviving sections of the Dharma Treasury Temple *Scripture for Humane Kings* manuscripts and (sub-)commentaries. *Invitation Rituals* was compiled in 1136, under the long reign of Duan Zhengyan 正嚴 (r. 1108–1147), the only Dali emperor to have received titles from the Song court.[55] It was around this time that Gao Taiming's sons and grandsons were distinguishing themselves for their military successes in quashing rebellions. The benefits promised in the *Scripture for Humane Kings* would have appealed to a Dali court facing various uprisings. As James Anderson argues in analyzing the different fates of the Dali and Đại Việt kingdoms during the Mongol conquest, the former was made up of a loose federation of clans that could not resist the onslaught, while the latter rested on strong alliances that allowed Đại Việt to remain independent.[56] The Dali court may have appealed to the *Scripture for Humane Kings* and its esoteric rituals for divine assistance in keeping this fragile coalition together.

Dali-kingdom textual sources related to the *Scripture for Humane Kings* tell us a lot about how the court engaged with this text and its ritual tradition. However, it is only in the *Painting of Buddhist Images* that we see how the Dali court appealed to the *Scripture for Humane Kings* in representing themselves in relation to other rulers. While the Duan rulers and their high officials may have turned to the scripture and its rituals to foster domestic peace and prosperity, they also used it to elevate themselves above their neighbors (even if their neighbors were not the intended audience).

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54 In general, inner protection (Ch. *neihu* 內護) refers to following the path to awakening, while outer protection (Ch. *waihu* 外護) refers to the more conventional concerns related to statecraft. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 105.

55 *Song shi* 21: 397, 488: 14073. Duan Zhengyan, aka Duan Heyu, received these titles in 1117 after Dali paid tribute to the Song court. The titles were: Grand Master of the Palace with Golden Seal and Purple Ribbon (Ch. *jinzi guanglu daifu* 金紫光祿大夫), Acting Minister of Works (Ch. *jianjiao sikong* 檢校司空), Military Commissioner of Yunnan (Ch. Yunnan *jiedushi* 雲南節度使), Supreme Pillar of State (Ch. *shangzhuguo* 上柱國), and King of Dali (Ch. Dali *guowang* 大理國王).

56 James A. Anderson, "*Man* and Mongols, the Dali and Đại Việt Kingdoms in the Face of the Northern Invasions," in James A. Anderson and John K. Whitmore, eds., *China's Encounters on the South and Southwest: Reforging the Fiery Frontier Over Two Millennia* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 106–134; 130–131.

5 Pillars of State: *Scripture for Humane Kings* Imagery in the *Painting of Buddhist Images*

A few decades after Yang Yilong compiled *Invitation Rituals*, the painter Zhang Shengwen 張勝溫 (d.u.) oversaw the creation of the *Painting of Buddhist Images*, which according to its opening colophon was "Painted [for] the Lizhen Emperor and Piaoxin," i.e. Duan Zhixing.[57] The extant painting is over sixteen meters long, though indications of water damage and mismatched sections show that it was originally longer.[58] In addition, the painting was made in an accordion-fold (or concertina) format, so that viewers could open it to any section, but was later remounted as a scroll, which entails sequential viewing.[59] Art historians who have studied the *Painting of Buddhist Images* agree that Zhang Shengwen and his underlings were primarily trained in Chinese styles and techniques, but disagree on whether Tang or Song styles dominate.[60]

One of the challenges in identifying the painting's style and influences stems from its diverse array of figures, from arhats and Chan patriarchs, to buddha assemblies featuring Amitābha, Śākyamuni, and Bhaiṣajyaguru, to reproductions of the *Illustrated History*, to wrathful dharma guardians. This diversity has thwarted scholars' attempts to connect the painting to any single influence, such as a maṇḍala or sūtra. However, we can discern an organizing principle in the painting, namely, the protection of the Dali state. Duan Zhixing and his retinue, facing left, open the painting in its first six frames (Figure 4.2), followed by two muscle-bound *vajra* guardians (Figure 4.3). The painting ends with four frames featuring the kings of sixteen great states, facing right (Figure 4.4),

57 The extant colophon reads, Lizhen *huangdi piaoxin hua* 利貞皇帝皫信畫, which implies that it was painted *by* the Lizhen Emperor. Hou Chong hypothesizes that the character *wei* 為, "for" or "on behalf of," is missing from the beginning of the colophon. Hou Chong 侯沖, *Yunnan yu Ba Shu fojiao yanjiu lungao* 雲南與巴蜀佛教研究論稿 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2006), 100.

58 Sekiguchi Masayuki, "Dairikoku Chō Shōon ga bonzō ni tsuite (1)," 10. Matsumoto Moritaka has done a thorough reconstruction of the painting's original sequence based on the surviving content. See Matsumoto, "Chang Sheng-wen's Long Roll of Buddhist Images."

59 See note 3 above.

60 For example, Helen Chapin saw greater Tang influence, but Matsumoto Moritaka identified various Song paintings and texts as the main sources for the painting's imagery. Helen B. Chapin and Alexander Soper, "A Long Roll of Buddhist Images (11)," *Artibus Asiae* 32.2–3 (1970): 157–199; 159. Matsumoto also theorized that different artists were responsible for different sections: he sees an archaic local style (i.e., a style closer to that of the Tang) at work in most scenes, but a more dynamic Song style in other parts of the painting. Matsumoto, "Chang Sheng-wen's Long Roll of Buddhist Images."

FIGURE 4.2 Duan Zhixing and retinue, *Painting of Buddhist Images*
COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL PALACE MUSEUM

FIGURE 4.3 Vajra beings, *Painting of Buddhist Images*
COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL PALACE MUSEUM

FIGURE 4.4 Kings of Sixteen Great States, *Painting of Buddhist Images* COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL PALACE MUSEUM

preceded by two frames, each with a painted dhāraṇī pillar (Figure 4.5): the pillar on the left is the "Precious State-Protection Pillar" (*huguo baochuang* 護國珕幢); the one on the right is the "Precious [Prajñāpārami]tā Heart Pillar" (*duo xin baochuang* 多心珕幢), which features an error-filled Siddham text of the *Heart Sūtra*.[61] In addition to these direct references to the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, several frames depict Nanzhao kings, tutelary deities tied to the Duan family, and cakravartins surrounded by the seven precious things.[62]

The Precious State-Protection Pillar in frame 130 appears as a long rectangle topped with a Song-style two-tiered stūpa, standing on an hourglass-shaped lotus base.[63] A buddha sits in the top half of the stūpa as multicolored

61 Soper notes that this text, like the state-protection dhāraṇī on the other pillar, is riddled with errors. Helen B. Chapin and Alexander Soper, "A Long Roll of Buddhist Images (IV)," *Artibus Asiae* 33.1–2 (1971): 75–140; 133.

62 For Nanzhao kings, this includes all the frames that copy scenes from the *Nanzhao tuzhuan* (58, 86, 99, and 101) as well as the images of the Mahārāja Longshun in frames 41 and 55 and the scene of all the Nanzhao kings in frame 103. The main tutelary figure tied to the Duan family is Yizhang Guanshiyin in frame 100. Cakravartins appear in frames 64–66, 85, and 94, and are the main focus of 115.

63 Chapin and Soper, "A Long Painting of Buddhist Images (IV)," 134.

FIGURE 4.5 Dhāraṇī pillars, *Painting of Buddhist Images* COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL PALACE MUSEUM

light shines up diagonally from the middle of the stūpa. The text of the dhāraṇī is black, unlike the red lettering used for Sanskrit characters in most Dali manuscripts. I am unaware of any other Sanskrit versions of this *dhāraṇī*, making this image (along with the abbreviated version in the *Invitation Rituals*) valuable for making sense of its many Sinitic transcriptions. This version closely matches Hatta Yukio's reconstruction, but appears to differ in certain areas.[64]

64 I have tentatively transcribed the dhāraṇī as follows: *namo ratna-trayāya, namaḥ āryā-vairocanāyā tathāgatāya arheti samyak-saṃbuddhāya, namaḥ āryā-samanta-bhadrāya bodhisattvāya-mahāsattvāya mahākaruṇikāya, tadyathā oṃ jñāna-pradīpe akṣaya-koṣe pratibhanavati sarva-buddhāvalokite yoga-pariniṣpanne gambhīrā-durvagahe tri-yadhva-pariniṣpanne bodhi-citta-saṃjānani sarvabhiṣekaviṣiktete dharma-sagara-saṃbhute āmogha-sravaṇiṃ mahā-samanta-bhadra-bhūmi-niryate vyākaraṇa-pariprāptāni sarva-siddha-namaḥ-skrte sarva-bodhi-sattva-saṃjānani bhagavati-buddhamati araṇi karaṇi araṇu karaṇe mahā-prajñā-pārāmite svāhā.*

Hatta Yukio's transcription is: *namo ratna-trayāya, nama ārya-vairocanāya tathāgatā-*

The state protection dhāraṇī extends a little more than halfway down the pillar, and what follows is another dhāraṇī with too many corruptions to be legible.[65] However, the semantic legibility is not the main point of dhāraṇī, whose power derives from their sounds and their talismanic function.

While stone dhāraṇī pillars are known throughout the Sinitic Buddhist world starting in the late Tang, I am unaware of any other examples of painted dhāraṇī pillars.[66] Stone dhāraṇī pillars from Tang territory tend to be octagonal and feature Buddhist figures and lotus decorations as well as dhāraṇī and dedicatory inscriptions in Sanskrit and/or Sinitic script.[67] A dhāraṇī pillar conforming to these specifications was erected in Kunming's Kṣitigarbha Temple in the early thirteenth century to honor Gao Taiming's son, Gao Mingsheng 明生. Its third level from the bottom includes thirty-eight Sanskrit dhāraṇīs (written horizontally, but right to left), including the text of the *Heart Sūtra*.[68] The dhāraṇī pillars in frames 129 and 130 of the *Painting of Buddhist Images* display several differences from their stone counterparts, even beyond their media: the painted pillars are presented as two-dimensional rectangles standing on apparently round lotus bases and topped by implicitly three-dimensional decorations, including (for the *Heart Sūtra* pillar) a *cintamaṇi* jewel and (for the

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yārhate saṃyak-sambuddhāya, nama ārya-samanta-bhadrāya bodhisattvāya mahāsattvāya mahākāruṇikāya, tad yathā: jñāna-pradīpe akṣaya-kośe pratibhānavati sarva-buddhāvalokite yoga-pariniṣpanne gambhīra-duravagāhe try-adhva-pariniṣpanne bodhicitta-saṃjānāni sarvābhiṣekābhiṣikte dharma-sāgara-sambhūti amogha-śravaṇe mahāsamanta-bhadra-bhūmi-niryāte vyākaraṇa-pariprāptāni sarva-siddha-namaskṛte sarva-bodhi-sattva-saṃjānāni bhagavati-buddhamāte araṇe akaraṇe araṇakaraṇe mahā-prajñā-pāramite svāhā. Hatta, *Shingon jiten*, 246–247.

65 Chapin and Soper, "A Long Painting of Buddhist Images (IV)," 134. Soper reproduces Alex Wayman's translation of the dhāraṇī, and Wayman also weighed in on the legibility of the following text.

66 Kuo Liying notes that some Dunhuang paintings based on the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* (Ch. *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經) include scenes of people worshiping dhāraṇī banners, but these are closer to the Indian *dhvaja* (which the character *chuang* 幢 translates) in consisting of a pole with dhāraṇī-inscribed cloth banners attached to the top, rather than the Chinese-style stone pillar. Kuo Liying, "Dhāraṇī Pillars in China: Functions and Symbols," in Dorothy C. Wong and Gustav Heldt, eds., *China and Beyond in the Mediaeval Period: Cultural Crossings and Inter-Regional Connections* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2014), 351–385; 366–369.

67 Kuo, "Dhāraṇī Pillars in China," 351.

68 Angela F. Howard, "The Dhāraṇī Pillar of Kunming, Yunnan: A Legacy of Esoteric Buddhism and Burial Rites of the Bai People in the Kingdom of Dali (937–1253)," *Artibus Asiae* 57.1–2 (1997): 33–72; 36; Walter Liebenthal, "Sanskrit Inscriptions from Yunnan I: And the Dates of Foundation of the Main Pagodas in that Province," *Monumenta Serica* 12 (1947): 1–40; 36–37.

State-Protection Pillar) a buddha figure; they include none of the different layers of images and texts that characterize stone dhāraṇī pillars. In addition, while the *Heart Sūtra* commonly appears on stone pillars, I have found no other examples of the State-Protection dhāraṇī from the *Scripture for Humane Kings*.

Inasmuch as the painted stone pillars in the *Painting of Buddhist Images* follow Tang practices of creating stone pillars inscribed with dhāraṇī, they further show the Dali court's adoption of Chinese and Indian models. Dhāraṇī pillars belonged to Tang esoteric practices that used exotic Indian images—whether script or figural representations—to instantiate Buddhist power.[69] This logic operates in the *Painting of Buddhist Images*, where the two painted pillars at the end of the scroll perform the same protective role as do the wrathful guardians that populate the work's final third. The pillars even resemble bodies, with lotus-base feet, text torsos, and stūpa heads with a buddha in the crown (in the case of the state protecting pillar). Moreover, these bodies are Indian (in a stereotypical sense): the wrathful dharma guardians evoke ethnic otherness with their exaggerated masculinity, while the pillars do so with their Sanskrit text. Not only do the pillars fit into the painting's final section, they also fit into its symmetrical structure. Just as the sixteen kings mirror Duan Zhixing's retinue, so too do the pillars mirror two ferocious *vajra* beings that follow the imperial retinue. They thus draw on the Tang visual culture that celebrated Indian exotica as well as drawing on the *Scripture for Humane Kings*.

We can make a similar observation about the kings of sixteen states that form the *Painting of Buddhist Images*'s final scene, who are primarily distinguished by their appearances: each king has different features and sports a different style of dress. Soper identifies similarities between this image and Dunhuang murals that show kings coming from all directions to see the debate between Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī, as narrated in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*.[70] He notes that the Dunhuang murals place the Chinese ruler on one side, and rulers of other states on another.[71] The *Painting of Buddhist Images* draws the same division between the Dali court and rulers of the sixteen great states, which are separated by most of the painting. Though the kings of the sixteen great states are not labeled and no Chinese kingdoms are on the *Scripture for Humane*

69 Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 32.

70 See *Weimojie suoshuo jing* 維摩詰所說經, *T* no. 475: 14.544a25 ff. for the extended conversation between Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī.

71 Chapin and Soper, "A Long Roll of Buddhist Images (IV)," 134.

FIGURE 4.6 *Thirteen Emperors*, detail
PHOTOGRAPH © 2019 MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

King's list, Soper identifies the second from the right as a Chinese ruler based on his attire.[72]

When compared to Yan Liben's (閻立本; 601–673) painting of the "Thirteen Emperors" (*Lidai diwang tu* 歷代帝王圖) from the second half of the seventh century (Figure 4.6), it is clear that the figure in the *Painting of Buddhist Images* resembles these Tang depictions of historical Chinese rulers. The difference is that Yan's rulers have sun and moon insignia on their robes to denote their

72 Chapin and Soper, "A Long Roll of Buddhist Images (IV)," 134.

FIGURE 4.7 *Image of Barbarian Kings Worshiping the Buddha*, detail
THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

imperial status; in the *Painting of Buddhist Images*, it is Duan Zhixing, and not the Chinese ruler at the end of the painting, who wears these insignia.[73] Another analogous genre is that of foreign dignitaries paying tribute to the Chinese emperor, but this genre emphasizes the exotic animals and goods being offered to the Chinese emperor, elements that do not appear in the *Painting of Buddhist Images*.[74]

The royal scenes that open and close the *Painting of Buddhist Images* show the Dali court's continued reliance on Tang-Song visual culture, and specifically images based on the *Scripture for Humane Kings*. In addition to Dunhuang scenes of rulers coming to see Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī, and Tang-Song scenes of foreign dignitaries paying tribute to the Chinese emperor, another possible source for this image is the tenth-century *Image of Barbarian Kings Worshiping the Buddha* (*Manwang lifo tu* 蠻王禮佛圖) attributed to Zhao Guangfu 趙光輔 (fl. 960–976) (Figure 4.7). The left side of the painting depicts a heavily bearded Buddha sitting on a lotus throne and facing proper left, flanked by Ānanda and Mahākāśyapa and two additional attendants; a group of sixteen "barbarian kings" stands facing him, with the front figure holding a censer in the same way as Duan Zhixing holds the censer in the *Painting of Buddhist Images*'s opening scene.[75] Though the tenth-century painting does not bear a colophon or cartouche that explicitly connects it to the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, the text arguably inspired its set of sixteen rulers. The difference, of course, between the *Painting of Buddhist Images* and the *Image of Barbarian Kings* is that the former includes a Chinese ruler among the set of sixteen, while the latter does not.

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73 Li Lin-ts'an, *A Study of the Nan-chao and Ta-li Kingdoms in the Light of Art Materials Found in Various Museums*, 36.

74 See the Northern Song copies of the Liang Emperor Xiao Yi's (蕭繹; 508–555) *Image of Foreign Tribute* (*Zhigong tu* 職貢圖) and Yan Liben's painting by the same name.

75 This posture is common for all figures shown honoring the Buddha.

Including the Chinese ruler among the Sixteen Kings of Great States fits the Dali-kingdom pattern of demoting the Song ruler to the level of "king" rather than "emperor." While this practice probably only occurred in internal documents (such as the dhāraṇī pillar at Kṣitigarbha Temple), it shows the Dali court's attempt to raise itself above its most powerful neighbor.[76] Inscriptions from the Dali kingdom also regularly use the Empress Wu (aka Wu Zetian 武則天; r. 690–705) character *guo* 囝 to refer to Dali, but the standard *guo* 國 to refer to other states.[77] This could indicate the Dali kingdom's Buddhist orientation, given Empress Wu's (in)famous devotion, or it could merely set apart the Dali kingdom from other states.[78]

Duan Zhixing's retinue is visually set apart from the "Kings of Sixteen Great States" in a way that privileges the Dali kingdom. The placement of these two scenes suggests a structural homology by way of doubling as well as opposition. Both depict Buddhist monarchs, foregrounding the painting's message of state protection. Another connection ties the scriptural fate of the kings of sixteen states to the fate of at least a few Duan rulers. In the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, the kings renounce their thrones to become monks, just as some Duan rulers did in Dali. Visual references to the *Scripture for Humane Kings* in the *Painting of Buddhist Images* underscore the Dali kingdom's superiority as a Buddhist regime and invoke the scriptural tradition for state protection. The *Scripture for Humane Kings*'s framing role reveals its centrality in Dali-kingdom Buddhism, especially in the twelfth century.

6 Conclusion

The Dali court embraced the *Scripture for Humane Kings* for the same reason other courts did: the scripture promised to eradicate disasters, championed Buddhist rulers as bodhisattvas, and offered specific ritual techniques for augmenting royal power. It is less clear from extant sources how the *Scripture for Humane Kings* played a role in saṅgha-state relations in Dali. Unlike in Tang or

76 *Dali guo fo dizi yishi buxie Yuan Douguang jingzao foding zunsheng baochuang ji*, 6.

77 This usage appears in the colophon of the 1118 *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* given to a Song envoy and the *Hufa Ming gong deyun beizan moyai* 護法明公德運碑贊摩崖, in Yang Shiyu and Zhang Shufang, eds., *Dali congshu: jinshi pian*, v. 10: 7. For the former, see Li Lin-ts'an, *A Study of the Nan-chao and Ta-li Kingdoms in the Light of Art Materials Found in Various Museums*, 69 Plate 1 (B).

78 The *Fozu lidai tongzai* attests to the Dali rulers' support of Buddhism by including the Dali kingdom in a list of states whose "dharma kings" or *dharmarājas* (*fawang* 法王) allow Buddhism to thrive. *T* no. 2036: 489b4–8.

Song China, the saṅgha in Dali did not face threats from rival religious groups like Daoists or Confucians. There are no indications that Nanzhao or Dali rulers sought to curtail the power of Buddhist monks. This might stem from the fact that Dali was a much smaller regime in which a small number of families—Duan and Gao, but also Yang, Li, and Dong—occupied most official positions, including monastic roles. It is possible that Dali also held debates about the proper relationship between monks and emperors, but if so these records have been lost.

The *Scripture for Humane Kings* can operate at the level of state-saṅgha relations, but it also operates on the levels of foreign relations and domestic affairs. From what we know of Dali-kingdom history, the greatest threats were not invasions, such as the Tibetan attacks that prompted Daizong to call for a *Scripture for Humane Kings* ritual. Instead, internal unrest was the biggest problem, as shown by the many Gao generals who earned their fame through military exploits. The Dali court likely performed *Scripture for Humane Kings* rituals and sought to understand the scripture through commentaries and subcommentaries in order to suppress the rebellions that threatened their state. In addition, the *Painting of Buddhist Images* suggests that the *Scripture for Humane Kings* offered a framework for Duan Zhixing (and by extension, other Duan rulers) to present himself as a *dharmarāja*, if not a cakravartin, and thus elevate his position above the Gao officials whose real political and military power exceeded his own.[79] Duan Zhixing appears as a monarch who worships and invokes the various gods, buddhas, and bodhisattvas that populate the scroll, which conforms to the scripture's image of its humane kings.

The Dali court's elevation of itself in contrast to the Song implicitly argues that it was Dali, rather than the Song, that inherited the Tang imperial mandate. Such a claim is belied by Dali's repeated attempts to pay tribute to the Song court, as well as by the geopolitical realities that made such a claim absurd. However, the relatively remote relationship between Song and Dali, as well as the Song court's defeats at the hands of northern regimes, gave the Dali court and high officials more rhetorical room to maneuver. It is unlikely the Song court was the intended audience for the *Painting of Buddhist Images* and the Dali rulers' claims to be the scripture's titular "humane kings." Instead, such claims probably reflected internal Dali-kingdom political dynamics and were

79 I follow John Strong's understanding of *dharmarāja* as a monarch who rules in accordance with Buddhist teachings, and a cakravartin as a kind of *dharmarāja* who possesses the thirty-two marks (Ch. *xiang* 相; Skt. *lakṣaṇa*s) that also distinguish buddha bodies. That is, all cakravartins are *dharmarājas*, but not all *dharmarājas* are cakravartins. See: John Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 56.

aimed at high officials as well as the Dali kingdom's fragmented population. Considering the Dali kingdom's domestic challenges, invoking the Tang models embedded in the *Scripture for Humane Kings* may in fact be seen as an act of weakness or desperation. The twelfth-century Dali court sought recognition as Buddhist monarchs because this was the one area in which they could claim supremacy.

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CHAPTER 5

Buddhism and Statecraft in Korea: The Long View

Gregory N. Evon

When Buddhism arrived on the Korean peninsula in the fourth century, there was no "Korea" but rather a collection of competing polities that were finally incorporated into the state of Unified Silla 統一新羅 (668–935). The consolidation of political power and Buddhism's arrival on the Korean peninsula were interconnected, albeit for reasons that went far beyond matters of religious faith. Instead, the influence of Buddhism stimulated the growth of literacy in Chinese, and with it, a growing understanding of China's daunting intellectual legacy and technical know-how. Buddhism thus played a crucial role in the Sinicization of Korean life, and in that respect, it was deeply implicated in statecraft from the outset. Much the same was true in Japan, where Buddhism's arrival, roughly a century later, is typically credited to monks from the Korean peninsula.[1] Over the following centuries, Buddhist monks—rather than Confucian scholars and statesmen—played the leading role in establishing what can be called (if somewhat anachronistically) transnational networks.[2] But Buddhism's prominence became a massive problem in Korea by the end of the fourteenth century, as growing assertiveness over proper forms of statecraft collided with the longstanding assumption that the state could draw on "the power of the Buddhas" for security.[3] This question was central in the fall of the Koryŏ 高麗 (936–1392) dynasty to the Chosŏn 朝鮮 (1392–1910), and it was exemplified in Chŏng Tojŏn 鄭道傳 (1342–1398), a leading figure in the dynastic transition, whose impassioned attacks on Buddhism sat alongside efforts to establish secure institutional footings for the new dynasty.[4] Chŏng Tojŏn's

1 On the historical context of these exchanges, see Okazaki Takashi and Janet Goodwin, "Japan and the Continent," in *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 1: Ancient Japan*, ed. Delmer M. Brown (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 268–316.

2 For an excellent survey, see Jonathan W. Best, "Paekche and the Incipiency of Buddhism in Japan," in *Currents and Countercurrents: Korean Influences on the East Asian Buddhist Traditions*, ed. Robert E. Buswell Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 15–42.

3 Sem Vermeersch, *The Power of the Buddhas: The Politics of Buddhism During the Koryŏ Dynasty (918–1392)* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008).

4 For a detailed study on Chŏng Tojŏn's anti-Buddhist polemics and the defense of Buddhism offered by the monk Kihwa 己和 (1376–1433), see A. Charles Muller, *Korea's Great Buddhist-Confucian Debate: The Treatises of Chŏng Tojŏn (Sambong) and Hamhŏ Tŭkt'ong (Kihwa)* (Hon-

views, however, conflicted with those of his patron, King T'aejo 太祖 (r. 1392–1398), a devout Buddhist and general in the Koryŏ army who became Chosŏn's dynastic founder.

Chŏng Tojŏn was not alone. Within days of Chosŏn's founding, T'aejo was offered belligerent advice on the danger Buddhism posed to the state. The framework was set. Tension between kings and officials became a running theme in court business for the next two centuries. The central question was statecraft, specifically, the position of Buddhism within the polity, the relationship between the state and the Buddhist institution, and finally, the relationship between the people and Buddhism. The consistent assumption was that it was the duty of the reigning king to set an example to the people at large in withdrawing support for Buddhism. Although there were notable exceptions, especially during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as discussed below, kings for the most part did not overtly reject the advice, even if they did not necessarily act on it. Indeed, a large part of the problem was the difficulty in enforcing policies over Buddhism. The result was ongoing tension and eventually, a high degree of ambiguity over the position of Buddhism within the Chosŏn dynastic order.[5]

Buddhism's critics insisted that the Buddhist faith, the institution, and its clerics undercut the foundations of the state through the misuse of finite resources and the false belief that Buddhist prayers could have tangible effects in protecting the state. Furthermore, the detailed documentation of daily court business in the *Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty* (*Chosŏn Wangjo Sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄, 1392–1928) demonstrates that there was little attempt to defend Buddhism.[6] In the fifteenth century, this overarching view on the negative effects of Buddhist influence was expressed tersely in the dictum that "heterodoxy (i.e., Buddhism) and orthodoxy (i.e., Confucianism) are irrecon-

olulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015). For Chŏng Tojŏn's importance in establishing the foundations of the Chosŏn dynasty's state structures, see Chai-sik Chung, "Chŏng Tojŏn: 'Architect' of Yi Dynasty Government and Ideology," in *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and JaHyun Kim Haboush (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 59–88.

5 The complex Confucian-Buddhist intellectual atmosphere in the early Chosŏn dynasty is the subject of a nuanced study by Michael C. Kalton, "The Writings of Kwŏn Kŭn: The Context and Shape of Early Yi Dynasty Neo-Confucianism," in *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and JaHyun Kim Haboush (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 89–123.

6 These records have been digitized and are cited as follows throughout: *cws*: Korean reign year [year in the western calendar]/month/day, entry number. Amended records are noted as such in parentheses.

cilable" (*sajŏng pul yangnip* 邪正不兩立).[7] This idea would have made little sense prior to the founding of the dynasty, and it provided Chosŏn thinkers with a rough and ready guide to interpret preceding dynastic formations of the peninsula. In that historical reading, the collapse of preceding dynasties and their successors in the centuries prior to Chosŏn's founding was traceable to the baneful influence of Buddhism and, even worse, the failure of successor dynasties to learn from the mistakes of the past: thus Silla, which supported Buddhism, fell to the Koryŏ dynasty, which likewise—and against all good historical sense—continued to support Buddhism, only to be overthrown by the Chosŏn dynasty.

The Chosŏn dynasty's founding elite saw themselves at an historical turning-point and were eager not to repeat the mistakes of the past. The anti-Buddhist diatribes thus came from a tiny minority of the overall population, and within that tight grouping, there may have been greater diversity in viewpoints than appears in the historical record.[8] But whatever the case, to defend Buddhism exposed one to attack, and even kings were ridiculed for having Buddhist sympathies. Either a negative attitude towards Buddhism prevailed among the officials or those who disagreed kept their mouths shut due to peer pressure. As a result, the idea that Buddhism posed a threat to political stability and dynastic longevity went unchallenged, and soon after the dynastic transition, officials came to emphasize that their disdain for Buddhism distinguished them from their predecessors on the Korean peninsula as well as their peers in China and Japan.

To look at this self-conscious shift in attitudes through the prism of statecraft draws attention to the degree to which what is typically seen as a religious question was, in fact, largely religious by implication. Critiques of Buddhism mocked the foolishness of beliefs in karmic merit, rebirth, enlightenment, and

7 Although the core idea took shape early in the dynasty, this precise phrase can be traced to a petition submitted by students at the State Confucian Academy (Sŏnggyun'gwan 成均館), and it underscored their insistence on calling kings to account for showing any sympathy for Buddhism; see *CWS*: Sejong 24[1442]/8/12, #2. Over the following decades, such conduct grew more conspicuous, causing kings great annoyance as they sought to balance Buddhist beliefs among family members, on the one hand, and the anti-Buddhist calls from the Academy's students and their officials, on the other. Such discord was especially fierce during the reign of King Sŏngjong 成宗 (1457–1494), whose mother was a devout Buddhist. Moreover, Sŏngjong's grandfather was King Sejo, a devout Buddhist discussed further below, and Sŏngjong was called on to repudiate Sejo's legacy from the very start of his reign.

8 For the ideological rigor that shaped the dynastic transition, see John Isaac Goulde, "Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea: The Emergence of Confucian Exclusivism" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1985).

the efficacy of prayer. But these attacks were framed by the assumption that Buddhist beliefs and the Buddhist institution could not be reconciled with the demands of statecraft founded on Confucian principles of orderliness, respect for authority, and above all else, the state's right to demand obedience. Religious beliefs mattered because they influenced statecraft, and for Buddhism's critics, it was a matter of historical record that religious beliefs had a pronounced influence on statecraft in three key respects: first, those who believed in Buddhism were prone to immoral behavior since they thought that they could atone for their sins through Buddhist rituals; second, they were prone to wastefulness, diverting limited resources towards an institution that produced nothing of tangible value; and third, they were prone to look towards miraculous intervention by the "power of the Buddhas" when what was required was stable, rational governance. Once one assumed that belief in "the power of the Buddhas" protected the interests of the Buddhist institution, then it became clear that it and the state were locked in competition over limited resources. The longstanding assumption that the interests of Buddhism and the state were in alignment, each supporting the other, was thus reconfigured. Buddhism was no longer a complement to statecraft, but instead an impediment.

In charting the shift in attitudes over Buddhism and statecraft, I begin with a sketch of the principal motifs and contrasts in the two earliest extant Korean histories, one each by a Confucian statesman and a Sŏn 禪 Buddhist monk. These two works help to explain the anxieties over Buddhism and statecraft that are marked in the Chosŏn dynastic annals, but which typically are not fully explained. I then turn to specific examples from the Chosŏn dynasty, including instances marked by pushback against the anti-Buddhist agitation at court. I also examine the effect of the Japanese invasions of the late sixteenth century and the role of Buddhists monks in the fighting, something that forced a recalibration of the relationship between Buddhism and statecraft over the second half of the Chosŏn dynasty.

1 The Looming Crisis: Buddhism and the State in Korea's Earliest Histories

The Koryŏ statesman Kim Pusik 金富軾 (1075–1151) began work on *The Records of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk sagi* 三國史記) hot on the heels of suppressing a rebellion led by a Buddhist monk, Myoch'ŏng 妙淸 (d. 1135), who initially had gained influence at court through claims of mastery in geomancy and prognostication. After putting the rebellion down in 1136, Kim Pusik was rewarded and given the resources needed to produce his collection. A century later, the Koryŏ

Buddhist monk Iryŏn 一然 (1206–1289) sought to redress what he regarded as lacunae in Kim Pusik's work, producing *The Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk yusa* 三國遺事). While Kim Pusik traced the rise and fall of earlier polities to justify Koryŏ's right of succession, Iryŏn, it appears, was at least partly motivated by the chaos of his era and in particular, the threat of the Mongols, who finally brought Koryŏ into submission in 1273 after successive invasions.

Notwithstanding criticisms of *The Records of the Three Kingdoms* and the massive difficulties surrounding the composition and transmission of *The Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*, these two works each are marked by a coherent vision of Buddhism's historical role on the Korean peninsula. Moreover, the commonplace idea that Kim Pusik and his *Records* represented an anti-Buddhist, Confucian viewpoint sets up a pleasingly simple contrast with Iryŏn and his *Memorabilia*. But this idea owes its origins to a set of assumptions that took shape during the Chosŏn dynasty. On the contrary, the works have much in common. The difference is a matter of emphasis.

Both Kim Pusik and Iryŏn take it for granted that Buddhism had played a significant role within royal houses and courts since its arrival on the Korean peninsula. Both also record miraculous events associated with the Buddhist faith and its monks, and both duly record omens and oddities of various types. Viewed from the vantage point of cultural, political, and historical assumptions that grew into prominence during the Chosŏn dynasty, Kim Pusik does not appear as some ideological warrior in the Confucian cause. The noteworthy, if partial, exception is to be found in his treatment of Kungye 弓裔 (d. 918), a former monk and rebel against Unified Silla, with whom the Koryŏ founder, Wang Kŏn 王建 (r. 918–943), was initially allied. Even by the standards of the incessant fighting and machinations of the late ninth and early tenth centuries, Kungye was spectacularly awful. Much of his influence derived from a pervasive Buddhist religiosity, which enabled him to bolster support by claiming to be a living Buddha. This claim to divinity was eventually reinforced by his insistence that he possessed magical powers through which he could see the invisible and read others' minds. His downfall came when he "raped his wife to death with an iron club heated in a fire" (*i yŏrhwa yŏlch'ŏl chŏ, tang ki ŭm sal chi* 以烈火熱鐵杵, 撞其陰殺之) on the grounds he had "seen" her adultery, before murdering their two children and going after his officials.[9]

But to read that account against the treatment of how Buddhism, for instance, became the state religion of Silla gives little inkling that Kim Pusik saw

9 Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, trans. Yi Chaeho with original texts (Seoul: Sol Ch'ulp'ansa, 1997), vol. 3, 529.

Buddhism as abhorrent in and of itself. Kim's interest was instead in statecraft, and he seems to have had no qualms over Buddhism's historical role in promoting stability through its alliance with ruling houses. Kungye and Myoch'ŏng, for that matter, might have been bad Buddhists, but that did not mean that Buddhism was perforce bad. It simply meant that the Buddhist institution, its clerics, and Buddhist beliefs in general needed to be restrained or otherwise made to work on behalf of the state, as part of the vast repertoire of tools needed for successful statecraft.

Like Kim Pusik, Iryŏn examined events preceding the founding of the Koryŏ dynasty, showing a great interest in what would now be regarded as nativist myths as well as Buddhism's role in safeguarding monarchs, their states, and people. Unlike Kim Pusik, however, Iryŏn was extremely interested in oddities of various types and above all else, in Buddhist miracles. It is no surprise that there are crucial differences between the two works, and it is also necessary to remember that Iryŏn's *Memorabilia* was not produced with the benefit of the funds, staff, and resources that went along with Kim Pusik's royal imprimatur. What is of significance here is instead the mindset that is revealed in the *Memorabilia*. At critical junctures, Iryŏn explains that this or that account can be found elsewhere and was already part of the historical record, and the implication is that he was drawing on the authority of Kim Pusik's *Records* as much as possible.

The critical difference between the two is illustrated in the account of the fall of the state of Koguryŏ 高句麗 (37 BCE–668 CE). Both record a prophecy of Koguryŏ's collapse in conjunction with a discussion of a famed monk, Podŏk 普德 (fl. seventh century), who lost favor as Koguryŏ's last king, Pojang 寶藏 (r. 642–668), turned to Daoism. For Kim Pusik, this was but one detail, and he seems to suggest that it was something that Buddhists believed had affected Koguryŏ's fate. But his account concludes with a discussion of the role of statecraft and geography in leading Koguryŏ to destruction. His judgements are couched in explicit Confucian terms to make his essential point: dynastic integrity rests on the proper treatment of one's people and careful management of the relationships with neighboring states.[10] Iryŏn likewise accepts that Pojang had become captivated by Daoism, but he pushes much farther than Kim Pusik and draws a different conclusion. In Iryŏn's account, the king's loss of faith in Buddhism led to ruin, and in contrast to Kim Pusik's Confucian-inspired and nuanced analysis of Koguryŏ's downfall, Iryŏn concludes with a poem that censures those who fail to recognize that the teachings of Buddhism

10 Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, vol. 2, 257, 269–271.

are far mightier than Confucianism and Daoism.[11] In short, Koguryŏ got what it deserved—and beware to all rulers who do not extol Buddhism!

To be sure, Iryŏn treats Confucian themes such as filial piety, but even then, wondrous miracles abound and are recounted to show Buddhism's efficacy and the need to support it through patronage. The *Memorabilia* thus inadvertently illuminates the practical effects of Buddhist beliefs and practices that enabled Myoch'ŏng to exert such influence and that finally led to disaster. Yet the assumption of the tension between the pluralistic Buddhist Iryŏn and the Confucian ideologue Kim Pusik makes little sense when their works are seen together. Iryŏn was far more strident as a Buddhist than Kim Pusik was as a Confucian, and the possibility that Buddhists—or at least, Iryŏn—felt threatened can be understood through Kim Pusik's sequence of events surrounding the implantation of Buddhism in Silla. The marvel attending the celebrated self-sacrifice of the faithful Buddhist Ich'adon 異次頓 (506–527)—whose execution at the hands of Buddhism's opponents was accompanied by the mysterious gushing of milk-colored blood—cleared the way for Buddhism's acceptance in 528, with official permission granted for those who wanted to become monks and nuns following in 544. The next year, however, attention turned to the importance of compiling a state history (*kuksa* 國史) of the dynasty for the explicitly Confucian purpose of recording the moral and political conduct of kings and ministers.[12]

Kim Pusik's final verdict is contained in his concluding passages on Silla's downfall, where he noted that the veneration of Buddhism had led to a proliferation of stūpas, monasteries, and monks, resulting in insufficient soldiers and farmers, and thus, disorder and finally, collapse.[13] But it is difficult to see this as an attack on Buddhism as a religion per se. Kim Pusik's principal focus was statecraft. His vision was inverted in Iryŏn for whom the state's safety was to be secured through the dissemination of Buddhism. For those who came to identify themselves more narrowly as orthodox Confucians by the closing decades of the Koryŏ dynasty, Buddhism was a problem because it became harder and harder to reconcile it with an increasingly refined sense of proper statecraft.

11 Iryŏn, *Samguk yusa*, trans. Yi Chaeho with original texts (Seoul: Sol ch'ulp'ansa, 1997), vol. 1, 427.

12 Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, vol. 1, 142–144, 165–169.

13 Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, vol. 1, 462, 470.

2 Thrust and Parry: The Evolution of Buddhism-State Relations in the Chosŏn Dynasty

One of the first submissions to the throne after the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty focused on urgent matters ranging from military organization to land use. These were recognizable statecraft questions, and it is in no way surprising to see them on the top of the agenda in the immediate aftermath of the Koryŏ-Chosŏn transition. Yet the same document addressed Buddhism as a specific area of concern and moreover, devoted greater attention to it than any other single topic. This discussion placed Buddhism within the broader sweep of Chinese and Korean history to argue that Buddhists had cleverly exploited the fears of rulers by promising that support for Buddhism would safeguard the state when, in fact, Buddhism had prospered at the expense of rulers and their states. Rulers who put their faith in Buddhism were doomed, and the recent events surrounding the collapse of the Koryŏ dynasty were touched on to illustrate the point.

But there was more at issue than simply the transactional relationship between rulers and the Buddhist institution. The document instead argued that the demonstrable falsity of Buddhism's claims underscored the falsity of the teaching of karmic retribution. Therefore, the king had nothing to fear by disavowing the longstanding relationship between the royal house and the Buddhist institution. This proposed strategy to strip the Buddhist institution of protection and thus leave it open to attack resolved on a formulation that demonstrates why Buddhism, in the very broadest sense, was a statecraft problem. Noting how Buddhism taught that those who are good are rewarded while those who are bad are punished, the submission exhorted the king to set things right and thus illuminate for all the grand historical and moral lesson of the recent dynastic transition. In this vision of the way things ought to be, the state was to be merciful and generous, thus teaching the people that they had no need to pray to the Buddha, consult with monks, or otherwise support the Buddhist institution in the hope of improving their situation in this life or the next. Effective statecraft was to obliterate the foundations for Buddhist faith and thus the institutional structures that supported it.[14]

14 Or, as the document put it, "unclear crimes are to be punished lightly, while unclear acts of merit are to be rewarded heavily" (*choe ŭi yu kyŏng, kong ŭi yu chung* 罪疑惟輕, 功疑惟重). The conceptual and moral framework of this formulation reflected the view that people's beliefs in Buddhism were driven by fear over karmic retribution and desire for good fortune. See *CWS*: T'aejo 1 [1392]/9/21, #3.

This 1392 framework for how Buddhism ought to be dealt with and thought about by all right-thinking statesman largely remained in place for the next five centuries as the official position of the court. But things did not go fully to plan, and the Confucian moral assumption that the example set by the king would affect his subjects proved to be wishful thinking. On the one hand, some kings were themselves devout Buddhists or at least had mothers or wives who were (an enduring headache for the officials). On the other hand, kings also tended to balk at their officials' insistent demands, largely, it seems, because they were wary of the fact that they ruled over people for whom the Buddhist faith was important.

Nonetheless, over the following decades policies were put in place to strip Buddhism of its influence and above all else, its ability for renewal. Among these, the best known was the 1424 order that mandated the drastic reduction of allowable monasteries, clerics, and schools or sects. Thereafter, Buddhism was typically referred to as the "Two Schools of Meditation and Doctrine" (Sŏn-Kyo Yangjong 禪敎兩宗), or simply the "Two Schools" (Yangjong 兩宗).[15] The actual effects of these policies constitute a thorny set of questions beyond the scope of this discussion. One overarching point must be emphasized, however. The 1424 order was one among many, and the general trend in discussions over Buddhism was frustration that, in turn, led to yet more restrictive policies.

There were, however, exceptional moments that allow us to see the relationship between Buddhism and statecraft from a different angle. One of these occurred with the usurpation of the throne by King Sejo 世祖 (r. 1455–1468) and the killing of his nephew, the boy-king Tanjong 端宗 (r. 1452–1455), as well as several scholar-officials. Adding to the complexity surrounding Sejo's position among Chosŏn's monarchs is the fact that he was a patron of Buddhism, and in the popular historical consciousness, there appears to be an implicit link drawn between his acts of political malfeasance and Buddhist piety.[16] In this line of interpretation, Sejo saw Buddhist patronage as a way to atone for his

15 *CWS*: Sejong 6[1424]/4/5, #2. For what appears to be the earliest discussion on reducing the whole of the Korean Buddhist tradition to "two schools," see *CWS*: Sejong 2[1420]/1/26, #4. Although much of the discussion centered on the distribution of land to monasteries that were to be allowed to continue operating after the closure of others, Sejong's principal concern was with the advice to amalgamate all Buddhist schools under the heading of "Meditation and Doctrine."

16 See, for example, William E. Henthorn, *A History of Korea* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 173: "The blood bath [sic] he instituted to secure the throne may have been an element in King Sejo's intense patronage of Buddhism … The cruel purges which put Sejo on the throne and kept him there opened up fractures in Yi [i.e., Chosŏn] dynasty society which would never heal."

misdeeds. But such an interpretation is problematic. Sejo's Buddhist piety was apparent long before he seized the throne, and the evidence instead strongly suggests that he seized the throne, at least in part, in order to protect Buddhism due to the increasingly heated rhetoric at court.

This scenario is even more compelling given that Sejo's effort to reaffirm the link between the royal house and Buddhism was aided by his uncle, Prince Hyoryŏng 孝寧大君 (1396–1486), a devout Buddhist whose acts of patronage had caused a commotion at the court of his younger brother and Sejo's father, King Sejong 世宗 (r. 1418–1450). Together, Sejo and Prince Hyoryŏng pushed back against the anti-Buddhist attitudes that prevailed at Sejong's court, reaffirming the historic link between Buddhism and the state through the royal house. Well apart from their own Buddhist beliefs, there was a practical issue of statecraft at stake, something that had troubled Sejong who grew impatient with his officials' insistent harping over Prince Hyoryŏng and the danger Buddhism posed to the state. The court elite constituted a tiny fraction of the population. Most of the people over whom Sejo ruled were not government officials with a vested interest in decrying Buddhism's harmful effects on the state. Buddhist faith was instead a part of daily life for the majority over whom Sejo ruled. Equally important, Sejo's court did not collapse due to how he came to the throne or his open profession of Buddhist faith. Notwithstanding the shrill attacks over the early decades of the Chosŏn dynasty, the anti-Buddhist rhetoric died down while Sejo was on the throne.

This situation did not last, however. In the decades following Sejo's death, attacks on Buddhism resumed, and two things became increasingly clear. First, the Buddhist institution cared little for government directives, and second, it was evident that part of the problem was the government's inability to institute effectively its ever-growing policies that aimed at crippling the Buddhist institution. By the early sixteenth century, the situation had grown absurd. As one particularly cogent report to the court explained, Buddhist monks continued to submit letters to local government offices despite the fact that interactions between officials and monks were strictly forbidden; furthermore, by that point mere mention of the word "monk" was liable to induce fury because changes to the laws surrounding ordination enacted at the end of the fifteenth century meant that, in theory, all monks ought to have died off. And there they were—either oblivious or uncaring—still sending letters to provincial government offices bearing official seals, most likely dating back to the Koryŏ dynasty and before.[17]

17 The implication is that the monks were sticking with the earlier legal code, the *Kyŏngguk*

When King Myŏngjong 明宗 (r. 1545–1567) ascended the throne, Buddhism *in toto* was a horrendous statecraft problem. The main practical concern of taxation (specifically, corvée labor and military service), had remained constant since the start of the dynasty, but by the middle of sixteenth century, it was patently clear that the Buddhist institution was impervious to the state's legislation. Therefore, the mere existence of monks and functioning monasteries represented an outright challenge to the state's authority. At the same time, successive regulations had generated ambiguity around the legal status of the Buddhist institution, and that, in turn, had created disorder due to a breakdown of supervisory structures.

At least one notable monk, Pou 普雨 (1509–1565), understood the full implications of the situation and moreover, was able to act, at least in part, due to the power shift at court and Myŏngjong's youth. Myŏngjong's mother, Munjŏng Wanghu 文定王后 (1501–1565), who acted as regent on his behalf in the early years of his reign and otherwise exerted strong influence until her death, was a devoted Buddhist and had a close relationship with Pou. Moreover, Munjŏng Wanghu's younger brother secured his power and influence at court. In the short term, this arrangement meant that the royal house was able to employ Pou with minimal interference, and in 1550 Myŏngjong reestablished a rational legal framework for the regulation of the Buddhist institution; that, in turn, allowed Pou to create supervisory structures that granted legitimacy to the Buddhist institution and in effect, placed it under the care of the throne.[18] It was a house of cards. The death of Munjŏng Wanghu in 1565 led to the exile and execution of her younger brother as well as ferocious attacks on Buddhism. Myŏngjong was immediately placed under intense pressure by court officials and Confucian scholars from throughout the country to roll back Pou's work, have him executed, and order the total dismantlement of institutional Buddhism. When Pou was executed in murky circumstances—and in defiance of Myŏngjong's orders that exile was sufficient—the position of the court officials was fully revealed. Nothing was left to chance.

This short-lived Buddhist renewal at Myŏngjong's court turned out to be significant for reasons no one could have guessed at the time. It was the training ground for the most famous Chosŏn monk, Hyujŏng 休靜 (1520–1604), who played the key role in organizing clerical militias when the Japanese invaded in the late sixteenth century. Hyujŏng's career traced the Buddhist institution's

Taejŏn 經國大典 (late fifteenth century), and either strategically or out of ignorance submitting reports on the selection of abbots long past the time when such a practice ought to have ended. See *cws*: Chungjong 7[1512]/5/9, #1.

18 *cws*: Myŏngjong 5[1550]/12/15, #2.

parlous situation and changing fortunes under Pou. When Hyujŏng decided to become a monk, he did so without any apparent legal authorization. Years later, however, he took the top score on clerical examinations that had been held as part of Myŏngjong's suite of reforms. The chaos that had ensued due to the government's hydra of policies over the previous century meant that what was needed at that point, above all else, was a coterie of monks of proven quality, with authorization from the state, who could then assume leadership positions and implement order within the institution at large. In short order, Hyujŏng became Pou's assistant and slated successor for administering the Buddhist institution. But in 1557, Hyujŏng simply quit his position to take up a peripatetic life and work to improve the educational standards of monks.

3 Hyujŏng, the Indispensable Man

Hyujŏng would have been little more than a footnote in the history of Korean Buddhism were it not for the catastrophe that struck from 1592 to 1598, when Korea was devastated by the Japanese invasions launched by Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537–1598). On one side of the ledger was the failure of Confucian statecraft in Chosŏn Korea, much of it fueled by incessant bickering among court officials; on the other side was Hideyoshi's grandiose plans. The Korean people were trapped between their government's incompetence and Japanese brutality.[19] In this disastrous set of circumstances, Hyujŏng led in organizing armies of monks who played an important role in fighting the Japanese.[20]

The bare outlines of the story are well known and have provided the framework for envisioning Korean Buddhism in patriotic-nationalist terms, a trend that came to dominate in the twentieth century. But none of this was obvious in 1592, and without Hyujŏng, it is difficult to imagine it would have happened at all. To begin with, Hyujŏng understood from firsthand experience under Pou both the operations of the court and the difficulties in attempting to administer the Buddhist institution. While the Confucian court officials did not like

19 See the comments in James B. Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the late Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1996), 1003–1004. On the Japanese invasion and its broader East Asian context, see Jurgis Elisonas, "The Inseparable Trinity: Japan's Relations with China and Korea," in *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 4: Early Modern Japan*, ed. John Whitney Hall and James L. McClain (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 235–300.

20 Samuel Dukhae Kim, "The Korean Monk-Soldiers in the Imjin Wars: An Analysis of Buddhist Resistance to the Hideyoshi Invasion, 1592–1598" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1978).

or trust the Buddhist institution, and judged it to be inherently anti-patriotic, the Buddhist institution as a whole was fractious, with conspicuous displays of rivalry and skullduggery among Buddhist clerics providing a counterpoint to the better-known Confucian examples.[21] This was far from the makings for success. Equally important, in the years after Hyujŏng quit his official positions under Pou, he spent much time travelling throughout the kingdom and was thus in an excellent position to have an even deeper understanding of the workings of the Buddhist institution as well as the quality of its clerics. Finally, in 1589 Hyujŏng and his trusted confidante, the monk Yujŏng 惟政 (1544–1610), came under suspicion of participating in a planned rebellion that originated in the ranks of a disgruntled court official. The specific allegations against the two, however, were made by a fellow monk.

As much as anything else, those allegations pointed to debilities in statecraft. Taking advantage of Munjŏng Wanghu's death, the government refused to countenance any state-recognized structures to grant the Buddhist institution and its clerics legitimacy. One result was disorder since there was little to check those who entered monasteries for practical, rather than religious, reasons. That problem of "non-genuine monks" was destabilizing. It at least partly had motivated Myŏngjong's support for Pou; led, in turn, to attacks on Pou within the Buddhist institution and then Hyujŏng's decision to quit his Buddhist-administrative position in 1557; and explains the 1589 allegations against Hyujŏng and Yujŏng. An additional factor was Buddhism's strong link in Korea with popular geomancy, which operated in defiance of state-sanctioned practices and in 1589 was stirring beliefs about the imminent collapse of the Chosŏn dynasty.[22]

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21 The Buddhist "revival" at Myŏngjong's court was far more complex than typically supposed. Pou had enemies among both Confucian officials and his fellow Buddhist monks. Myŏngjong saw the Buddhist infighting as a result of a breakdown of discipline that his legislation was meant to curb, and likewise, he worried that Confucian officials refused to accept their failure in killing off the Buddhist institution. In one crucial instance, he made all this explicit, explaining that assertions over his Buddhist faith were absurd, because his main interest in supporting Pou was to restore order to what had become a lawless institution; attacks on Pou—and thus Myŏngjong's reforms—within the Buddhist institution signaled that some monks refused to recognize royal authority or the state's right to impose limitations over ordination. For his analysis, see *CWS*: Myŏngjong 8[1553]/6/2, #2.

22 For more on Hyujŏng's decision to quit his position and the allegations of 1589, see John Jorgensen, *A Handbook of Korean Zen Practice: A Mirror on the Sŏn School of Buddhism* (Sŏn'ga Kwigam) (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 14–15, 18; on the distinction between "genuine" and "non-genuine monks," see esp. 15. On geomancy in Korea, see John Jorgensen, *The Foresight of Dark Knowing: Chŏng Kam Nok and Insurrectionary Prog-*

Hyujŏng was eventually released from prison at royal command, in what was one of the most important events in the history of Buddhism over the course of the Chosŏn dynasty.[23] But it was only so due to the Japanese invasions that began in 1592. The sheer magnitude of what occurred goes unrecognized due to the assumption that Hyujŏng's efforts in organizing monks' armies were a natural reflection of Korean Buddhists' inherent patriotism. But if so, one might wonder, why was Hyujŏng important at all? Setting aside the hagiographic emphasis in the premodern accounts, it seems that most with some understanding of the events sense—if will not say outright—that there was nothing to be taken granted from the outset. Hyujŏng matters not because he embodied some core characteristic of patriotism, but rather because the mere notion of widespread Buddhist patriotism at the end of the sixteenth century is questionable at best. Hyujŏng understood this in a way that few others could, with the notable exception of Yujŏng and perhaps some few other luminaries who helped him organize monks' armies. He knew the Buddhist institution in detail from his time under Pou and subsequent travels; furthermore, he understood the link between monks and the anti-dynastic bent in popular religiosity that had seen him and Yujŏng implicated in the 1589 plot.

The Japanese invasions posed an existential threat to Chosŏn Buddhism due to the view that the Buddhist institution weakened defense by decreasing the number of men participating in military service and that Buddhism, as then constituted, was, by its very nature, anti-dynastic. The strong association among popular Buddhism, monks, and prognostication of dynastic collapse underscored the point. Even so, Korean Buddhist monks did not simply join the fight against the Japanese to prove their detractors wrong. Efforts to convince them were accompanied by high-level politicking at court, orchestrated by Hyujŏng, to secure recognition of their service, and the critical issue was the push to restore the state-level recognition of the Buddhist institution that had ended in 1566.[24] This is no way undercuts the bravery of monks, but it puts their courage in much-needed perspective. They needed Hyujŏng to lead in negotiations with the court, and they wanted something in return.

The conduct of the Confucian officials also provides much-needed perspective. They were eager to renege on deals and continued to search for reasons to attack Buddhism. Whether out of deep commitment to Confucian principles, ideological sclerosis, general stupidity, or envy of Hyujŏng (and most likely,

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nostication in Pre-modern Korea (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), esp. 111, 115, 116–117 for Buddhist involvement in the 1589 plot.

23 *CWS*: Sŏnjo sujŏng sillok (amended veritable records) 23[1590]/4/1, #7.

24 For a compact example, see *CWS*: Sŏnjo 26[1593]/7/20, #13.

some combination thereof), officials complained that Hyujŏng was disrespectful to them, and they attacked him for taking pleasure in the prestige offered him by the king rather than enjoining the enemy in battle.[25] In sum, Hyujŏng and the soldier-monks were depicted as cowards and cheats, eager to save their own necks. It is difficult to believe that this view was shared by all, but it was prominent. Indeed, that type of complaint would be aired later in another context that suggests that at least some were eager to have the monks fight so they could be killed by the Japanese, thus destroying the very foundations of the Buddhist institution. By this calculation, death in battle was the sole meaningful contribution a monk could make.[26]

Once again, the Confucian ideologues got it wrong. Their fecklessness meant that there was every reason for the Buddhist institution to enjoy enhanced prestige among the people at large. That anxiety was palpable in the allegations that clerics were insufficiently deferential towards Confucian officialdom. One indication of this subtle change in circumstances is found in the fact that when the war was over, the monk Yujŏng played a crucial role in working through the Tsushima diplomatic channels to negotiate with the Japanese. Not only had he fought them, but he was then used to establish the peace *because* he was a Buddhist monk. According to the civilizational distinctions drawn by the Chosŏn officials, the uncivilized Japanese worshipped the Buddha whereas the officials themselves upheld the highest standards of civilized conduct through an exclusive commitment to orthodox Confucianism. At the turn of the seventeenth century, the dangers of such condescension had been laid bare.

But this did not mean that even Yujŏng was automatically held in high esteem. It meant simply that he was necessary for dealing with the Buddhist Japanese. And whatever pride Buddhist monks might have felt was tempered by the reality that the longstanding aim of court policies had been to break the back of the institution once and for all. Wariness over those policies lurks behind a pathetic appeal sent to the court by Yujŏng on Hyujŏng's behalf, some four years after the Japanese had withdrawn. Yujŏng requested a replacement for an official document identifying Hyujŏng that had been lost in a fire. The note of urgency in the request suggests that this was more than simply a matter of losing some treasured memento, and read against the long arc of Hyujŏng's career, the anxiety makes sense. Even at that late stage—and after all Hyujŏng's contributions to the state—there was a perceived need to document who he was and prove his legitimacy. The request was granted, but true to form, this

25 *CWS*: Sŏnjo 26[1593]/5/15, #2.
26 *CWS*: Sŏnjo 33[1600]/1/27, #3.

was not out of any apparent concern for Hyujŏng. Instead, the court was eager to make certain that Yujŏng had no distractions since he was then "engrossed in state affairs" (*i kuksa punju* 以國事奔走).[27] In sum, they wanted Yujŏng in tip-top shape for negotiations with the Japanese.

4 The Reorientation of Buddhism as a Statecraft Question

Hyujŏng's maneuvering managed to wedge the court's options and reorient Buddhism as a statecraft question. In short order, it was taken for granted that monks were to pay their taxes by undertaking corvée labor and military service; in exchange, they received from the state implicit acknowledgement of their rightful status as monks. There was no dramatic announcement, nor any explicitly articulated shift in policy. Instead, this change appears in dribs and drabs in the court documents, and it was evident when the Chosŏn dynasty was threatened again by the Manchu invasions in 1627 and 1636. Although the involvement of monks in fighting the Manchus was less dramatic than in the war against Japan, that was at least partly a consequence of how the court adapted the change engineered by Hyujŏng. Monks were largely used to construct and defend fortifications around the capital. The Manchu invasions settled matters. Thus, by the mid-to-late seventeenth century, the longstanding problem of the legality of clerical status was effectively brushed aside by accepting the framework put in place by Hyujŏng and integrating monks into the machinery of state through the taxation system.

This arrangement proved durable over the second half of the Chosŏn dynasty, and its eventual breakdown paralleled the breakdown of the dynasty itself. The general success of the system is visible in the subtle shifts in how Buddhism was discussed at court. For the most part, grandiose vituperations over Buddhism's inherent barbarism and the dangers posed to the state by monks gave way to attempts to deal with specific, practical problems. This shift was evident in the spate of difficulties the court faced at the end of the seventeenth century. These encompassed everything from the implication of monks and popular Buddhist religiosity in potential rebellions to fears that monasteries, located deep in the mountains, might become lairs for criminals and insurgents. In 1696, the government even uncovered a plot for a mutiny within the ranks of the monks undertaking military duties; one had forged military orders as part of a plan to murder his commander and spark an uprising among his fellow

27 *CWS*: Sŏnjo 35[1602]/10/7, #1.

soldier-monks.[28] But such problems merely confirmed longstanding anxieties over Buddhism. The critical difference was that the court finally accepted that since Buddhism could not be made to disappear through legislation, it had to be managed in the interests of the state.

Hyujŏng's success was nowhere more evident than in the 1790s, when Catholic teachings, imported from China by members of Korean diplomatic delegations, created a political crisis. The flashpoint was the realization that Confucian and Catholic funereal requirements were irreconcilable due to the papal ruling that forbade Catholics from using Confucian mortuary tablets. The state saw that any challenge to Confucian rituals was a direct challenge to the moral order it espoused and thus tantamount to *lèse-majesté*. Although the analyses of core Catholic teachings at the court emphasized Catholicism's fundamental similarities with Buddhism (due to its teachings of miracles and rebirth in heaven, they determined it to be a hitherto unknown subsect of Buddhism), there were two critical differences. First, the Confucian core teaching of filial piety had been integrated into Buddhism centuries earlier. Second, there was the example of Buddhist monks, led by Hyujŏng, who had fought to protect their king and state. That enabled King Chŏngjo 正祖 (r. 1776–1800) to appeal to the history of Chosŏn Buddhism in a bid to stop the spread of Catholicism and strengthen the state against external threats. Catholicism bumped Buddhism off the top spot of the list of heterodox horrors and further confirmed the need to promote filial piety and loyalty to the state as core Buddhist virtues.[29]

To be sure, even the practical necessities of statecraft could not fully erase the inherent tension over Buddhism. Faced with this predicament, Chŏngjo laid the blame on the Chinese who had, he insisted, never used official prohibitions to stamp out Buddhism, Daoism, or the deviant, Buddhism-influenced Confucian teachings of figures such as Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529), who was a particular source of dread.[30] But if Chŏngjo was keen to invoke an image of Buddhist loyalty to the Chosŏn dynasty, he was also adept at carefully

28 For representative examples, see *CWS*: Sukchong 17[1691]/11/25, #2 and *CWS*: Sukchong 23[1697]/5/18, #3; on the foiled mutiny, see *CWS*: Sukchong 22[1696]/11/5, #3.

29 As I have discussed at length elsewhere, the Catholic-Buddhist question was connected to general concerns over the quality of intellectual life and thus Chŏngjo's rightful claim to rule in a dynasty committed to upholding orthodox Confucianism. I say "Chosŏn Buddhism" because Chŏngjo emphasized the links between the Buddhist institution and the throne that were in place at the start of the dynasty, ignoring the fact that those links swiftly came under attack. For greater detail on Chŏngjo and Buddhism, see Gregory N. Evon, "Tobacco, God, and Books: The Perils of Barbarism in Eighteenth-Century Korea," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 73, no. 3 (August 2014): 643–646, 648, 655.

30 *CWS*: Chŏngjo 12[1788]/8/3, #1.

parsing the historical record to downplay Buddhism's historical importance.[31] These intellectual acrobatics were a symptom of discomfort over the mismatch between ideological ideals and on-the-ground necessities made unavoidable due to fears over the spread of Catholicism. At the end of the eighteenth century, however, it was understood that Buddhism could not simply be classified as heterodoxy and ignored. Instead, it had to be used to protect the state.[32]

5 Conclusion

With the notable exception of the volume edited by Ian Harris, there has been little comparative attention given to the intersection of Buddhism and politics.[33] The benefits of a transnational approach are apparent, however, in the Korean case. Two striking points of comparison are the anti-Buddhist movements that erupted in ninth-century China and then during the Tokugawa-Meiji transition in nineteenth-century Japan, both of which attested to the danger that confronted the Korean Buddhist institution in the late fourteenth century. Identification with the state, coupled with the transactional relationship such identification entailed, meant that the Buddhist institution was automatically left exposed to charges of interfering in statecraft when the state's priorities shifted. In this respect, however, the Korean experience was distin-

31 This ability was something he would have learned early on, and it is evident in an account of his visit, as crown-prince, to the site of an old nunnery with his grandfather, King Yŏngjo 英祖 (r. 1724–1776). In the ensuing discussion, the nunnery's history was described as a sign of royal kindness for a sorrowful, widowed queen, with no connection to the veneration of the Buddha (*ch'a pi sungsin pulssi ya* 此非崇信佛氏也)—an astonishingly agile interpretation given that the benefactor for the nunnery's reconstruction was the Buddhist patron King Sejo, who had killed the queen's husband after usurping the throne, as discussed earlier. See *cws*: Yŏngjo 47 [1771]/9/6, #1.

32 This is not to downplay indications of a real growth in interest in Buddhism among the intellectual elite, but it is impossible to make full sense of that phenomena beyond the larger concerns that grew so prominent in the late eighteenth century. The complexities of this issue are especially stark in the disjunction between actions in aligning Buddhism with the needs of the state, on the hand, and what is found in the various pronouncements and voluminous body of writings, on the other. Efforts to highlight loyalty to the state among Buddhists did not preclude envisioning the Chosŏn dynasty in idealistic Confucian terms and therefore as fundamentally different from earlier dynastic formations which were tolerant of Buddhism. The result of this tension between statecraft necessity and orthodox ideals was selective amnesia; for a particularly vivid example, see *cws*: Chŏngjo 23[1799]/12/21, #2.

33 Ian Harris, ed., *Buddhism and Politics Twentieth-Century Asia* (London and New York: Pinter, 1999).

guished by the high degree of self-consciousness over orthodox Confucianism. That feature, conspicuous from the outset of the Chosŏn dynasty, continued to shape "official" attitudes even after the Buddhist institution's role in state security was confirmed at Chŏngjo's court at the end of the eighteenth century.[34]

A large factor in Korea was that unlike in China, the dissemination of Buddhism fostered the growth of Chinese learning, and so historiography, an exemplar of statecraft principles, had to contend with Buddhism's antecedent role in the competing polities on the Korean peninsula. As discussed above, this question of historical sequence was laid bare in Kim Pusik's analysis of Silla, but it would only erupt into a major crisis with the fall of the Koryŏ dynasty at the end of the fourteenth century. At that point, the position taken by Kim Pusik was extended to encompass outright attacks on core Buddhist teachings and applied to the Koryŏ dynasty and its links with Buddhism. As a result, one of the central issues raised early in the Chosŏn dynasty was the need for the state to usurp Buddhism's authority through the application of well-implemented principles of statecraft. In this heady conception, people would no longer have any need for prayers to the Buddha, and thus no need to support the Buddhist institution. That ambitious plan, nonetheless, quickly incorporated laws that aimed at weakening the Buddhist institution by setting limits on the number of recognized schools or sects, monasteries, and clerics.

But whatever the relative strength of high-minded, Confucian-moral statecraft in the early decades of the Chosŏn dynasty, it was insufficient to bring the Buddhist institution under firm control. On the contrary, the government's inability to enforce its laws meant that it inadvertently lost any semblance of control, leading to increasing frustration among officials. An additional factor was tension between the throne and officialdom over Buddhism, something that was particularly marked during the reigns of Sejo and Myŏngjong. As seen above, the reinvigoration of the historic links between monarchs and Buddhism at their courts resulted in backlashes by which officials sought to disavow the very idea that Buddhism or its clerics might have any useful role to play in supporting the state or facilitating statecraft.

That assumption finally came under pressure with the Japanese invasions at the end of the sixteenth century. The involvement of Buddhist clerics in fighting the Japanese reflected, at least in part, Hyujŏng's practical understanding of the Buddhist institution's predicament following its loss of legal recognition

34 Or put another way, it is hard to see that Buddhism or Buddhists were wholly trusted. For an especially clear example, see the comments in *CWS*: Kojong 30[1893]/2/25, #4.

at the end of Myŏngjong's reign. Hyujŏng understood that his fellow Buddhists had to fight, for to have done otherwise would have provided iron-clad proof for the longstanding claims that monks were idlers whose existence sapped the vitality of the state and the people at large. Judging by the attacks on Buddhism that continued even during the war, it seems that the Buddhist leadership and at least some Confucian officials saw the Japanese invasions as a golden opportunity: for the Buddhists, to assert their status and show that they were loyal to the state; and for the officials, to use the war as a means to finally break the institution's back.

Over the second half of the dynasty, however, tensions decreased dramatically, even if they did not entirely disappear. A critical factor in this change was the role played by Hyujŏng, the Buddhist leadership, and rank-and-file monks in fighting the Japanese. But that alone was insufficient. It was also necessary for the government—or more precisely, the courts of successive kings—to accept that Buddhism met the needs of the people in ways that it did not and to adjust assumptions over the practicality of policies directed against the Buddhist institution. Kings and ministers thus boasted among themselves over their exclusive fidelity to orthodox Confucian values, even as they worked to assure that the Buddhist institution was aligned with the practical needs of the kingdom. Statecraft finally had trumped ideology, producing a workable relationship between the Chosŏn Confucian state and Buddhist institution that remained in place until the dynasty was, at last, overwhelmed by pressures from within and without.

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CHAPTER 6

Refusing the Ruler's Offerings: Accommodation and Martyrdom in Early Modern Nichiren Buddhism

Jacqueline I. Stone

Throughout its history, Buddhists have at times faced opposition, even outright persecution, from rulers inimical to their tradition. The topic of Buddhist statecraft raises its obverse: How have Buddhists dealt with hostile regimes? Unlike the ethics of Buddhist rule, political defiance has seldom been thematized as an issue in canonical texts. Nonetheless, Buddhists have drawn on their shared repertoire of scriptures, doctrines, values, and practices to formulate modes of ethical resistance to the state.[1] This chapter investigates one such instance that arose within the Nichiren sect (Nichirenshū 日蓮宗; also known as the Lotus sect or Hokkkeshū 法華宗) in early modern Japan.

Over the latter part of the sixteenth century, the military ventures of three successive warlords brought Japan under unified rule, ushering in the country's early modern period (1603–1868). In their campaigns of conquest, the "three unifiers"—Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 (1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1536–1598), and Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543–1616)—strove to break the independent power of Japan's Buddhist institutions. Thus ended the medieval Japanese institution of the "mutual dependence of the king's law and the Buddhist law" (*ōbō buppō sōi* 王法仏法相依).[2] The architects of Ieyasu's shogunate, or Bakufu, would subsume Buddhist temples under the new Tokugawa order and ideology of rule, which they legitimized in absolute terms as "the way of heaven" (*tendō* 天道).[3] Tokugawa religious policy particularly threatened the Nichiren sect, whose teachings explicitly mandate loyalty to the *Lotus Sūtra* (*T* no. 262: *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經) over the demands of rulers. Eventually the sect split over the choice between pragmatic accommo-

1 On religion as a repertoire, see Robert Ford Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions (In the Modern West and in Early Medieval China)," *History of Religions* 42, no. 4 (2003): 287–319.

2 Kuroda Toshio, "The Imperial Law and the Buddhist Law," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, nos. 3–4 (1996): 271–285.

3 Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570–1680* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 1985. See, for example, 66–67.

dation in the interests of institutional survival versus principled resistance and martyrdom; the oppositional faction, known by the epithet "neither receiving nor giving" (*fuju fuse* 不受不施), was persecuted in the mid-1660s, becoming the second religion, after Christianity, to be proscribed by the Tokugawa Bakufu and driven underground. The main part of this chapter focuses on a key issue in the controversy: should one accept donations from a ruler who does not embrace the *Lotus Sūtra*? Its concluding section links the *fuju fuse* movement to broader, transregional patterns of Buddhist resistance.

1 Origins of the Controversy

1.1 *Nichiren,* Shakubuku*, and Admonishing the State*

Fuju fuse means that followers of the sect should not accept donations from those who do not embrace the *Lotus Sūtra*, nor make offerings to them. Its clerics should not join in ritual performances with their counterparts from other sects or accept offerings from non-believers; lay followers should not visit other sects' temples or shrines, solicit their ritual services, or make donations to their priests. This principle stemmed from the teachings of the sect's founder Nichiren 日蓮 (1222–1282), who preached exclusive devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra*, expressed in the chanting of its *daimoku* 題目, or title, Namu Myōhō-renge-kyō 南無妙法蓮華経. Nichiren had emerged from the Tendai sect 天台宗, which revered the *Lotus* as supreme among the Buddha's teachings; all others were deemed provisional and incomplete. Like many of his contemporaries, Nichiren believed the world had entered an evil era known as the Final Dharma age (*mappō* 末法), when the Buddha's message becomes obscured and liberation is difficult to achieve. Now in the Final Dharma age, he asserted, provisional teachings had lost their efficacy; only the *Lotus Sūtra* was powerful enough to lead all persons to buddhahood. Indeed, the spread of faith in the *Lotus* would reverse the dark current of the age and transform the present world into an ideal buddha land. Yet all around him he observed that devotion to the *Lotus* was being eroded by the spread of "inferior" provisional teachings such as Pure Land, Zen, and esoteric practices that, in his eyes, had lost their efficacy in the *mappō* era. Nichiren equated rejection of the *Lotus* with the grave sin of "slandering the dharma" (*hōbō* 謗法), and upon this error he blamed the disasters confronting Japan in his day: famines, earthquakes, epidemics, and the Mongol threat. In his proselytizing, Nichiren therefore rejected *shōju* 摂受, a mild approach of leading others gradually without challenging their views, in favor of *shakubuku* 折伏, a strict method of directly rebuking attachment to provisional teachings.

Nichiren saw this aggressive proselytizing as a compassionate act. Even if others refused to listen, hearing the message of the *Lotus* would implant in their hearts the seed of buddhahood that would assure their eventual liberation. At the same time, he held, *shakubuku* freed its practitioner from the sin of complicity (*yodōzai* 与同罪) in dharma slander. Even the most committed practitioners lived within a web of social and economic interdependence and could thus easily become implicated, albeit indirectly, in others' slander of the *Lotus*. Nichiren therefore urged his followers to speak out and admonish parents and other relatives who were not devotees. The same held true on a larger scale: "If you would escape the offense of dwelling in a country of dharma slanderers, then you should admonish the ruler, even though you may be exiled or killed."[4] Such an act, he taught, would accord with the spirit of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which says, "We do not cherish bodily life. We value only the supreme way."[5] Nichiren himself on three occasions warned Bakufu officials that the disasters ravaging the country stemmed from rejection of the *Lotus Sūtra* and urged them to withdraw support from priests advocating other teachings. Here we can see the remote roots of the later medieval *fuju fuse* prohibition on making donations to nonbelievers in the *Lotus* and its connection to *shakubuku*. Nichiren's later disciples, following his example, established a tradition of "admonishing the state" (*kokka kangyō* 国家諫暁), an act of *shakubuku* directed specifically toward the ruler—the emperor, the shogun, or his representatives—urging him for the country's sake to abandon support for priests espousing provisional teachings and to promote faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* alone.[6] "Now with all speed you must quickly reform your faith and at once devote it to the single good of the true vehicle," Nichiren urged. "Then the threefold world will all become a buddha land, and how could a buddha land ever decline?"[7]

Nichiren's criticisms of other Buddhist forms drew hostility from government officials and prominent clerics. He was repeatedly attacked and twice exiled; his followers were sometimes arrested, banished, or even killed. The *Lotus Sūtra* predicts that its devotees in a latter, evil age will be maligned and persecuted by persons in power. Thus, in Nichiren's eyes, the opposition he encountered fulfilled the *Sūtra*'s prophecy and confirmed the rightness of

4 "Akimoto gosho" 秋元御書, *Shōwa teihon Nichiren Shōnin ibun* 昭和定本日蓮聖人遺文 (hereafter, *Teihon*), 4 vols., ed. Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo 立正大学日蓮教学研究所 (Minobu-chō, Yamanashi Prefecture: Minobusan Kuonji, 1952–1959; revised 1988), 2: 1738.

5 *Miaofa lianhua jing* 4, *T* no. 262: 9.36c18.

6 Jacqueline I. Stone, "'Admonishing the State' in the Nichiren Buddhist Tradition: The History and Significance of *Kokka kangyō*," *Nichiren gaku* 日蓮学 4 (2020): 1–54.

7 *Risshō ankoku ron* 立正安国論, *Teihon* 1: 226.

his course. The legitimation conferred by meeting persecution at the ruler's hands—thus confirming the *Lotus Sūtra*'s prediction and reenacting Nichiren's example—would inspire and sustain early modern *fuju fuse* proponents.

1.2 Fuju fuse *in the Medieval Nichiren Sect*

While Nichiren had clearly opposed making donations to nonbelievers, because his community was small and little known, the question of accepting offerings from outsiders did not become pressing during his lifetime.[8] It arose, however, as his later following expanded, especially in the region of Kyoto, the imperial capital. Concessions had to be made to aristocratic patrons and powerful warriors if the sect were to prosper, and early prohibitions on accepting donations from nonbelievers often made exceptions for the court, the shogun, and other high officials whose protection and support were necessary in order to spread Nichiren's teaching. Some Nichiren clerics even argued that accepting donations from such persons could be an expedient means of leading them toward faith in *Lotus Sūtra*.

The *fuju fuse* principle began to be explicitly articulated from the early fifteenth century, as part of a growing recommitment to *shakubuku*. A landmark statement appears in the 1413 regulations of the Nichiren temple Myōkakuji 妙覚寺 in Kyoto, which forbade visiting shrines and temples of other sects or making offerings to their priests, except when unavoidable in the course of official affairs or as social convention; they also prohibited accepting alms from dharma slanderers (nonbelievers), even as an enticement to faith.[9] Similar prohibitions appear in the 1466 Kanshō-era Accord (*Kanshō no meiyaku* 寛正の盟約), in which several Kyoto-based Nichiren lineages, in response to threats posed by the older religious establishment, pledged themselves to a strict *Lotus*-only stance.[10] Soon after, the sect began to seek and obtain formal exemptions from the successive Ashikaga shoguns, the de facto rulers,

8 Tradition holds that, at one point, Nichiren was offered official support if he would join with the priests of other sects in performing prayer rites to defeat the Mongols, but he refused, convinced that only faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* could solve the crisis facing Japan. On the background of *fuju fuse* ideas in Nichiren's thought, see Miyazaki Eishū 宮崎英修, *Fuju fuse-ha no genryū to tenkai* 不受不施派の源流と展開 (hereafter, *Genryū to tenkai*) (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1969; reprint 1981), 13–84, and Jeffrey Robert Hunter, "The *Fuju Fuse* Controversy in Nichiren Buddhism: The Debate between Busshōin Nichiō and Jakushōin Nichiken" (hereafter, "*Fuju fuse* Controversy") (PhD diss., Wisconsin-Madison, 1989), 19–86.

9 Articles 1–3, Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 125; Hunter, "*Fuju fuse* Controversy," 99.

10 Articles 2–5, Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 157–158; Hunter, "*Fuju fuse* Controversy," 115–116.

from participating with priests of other sects in Bakufu-sponsored rituals.[11] This growing exclusivism served to unify Nichiren devotees—largely samurai, merchants, and townspeople—and to protect their interests against those of the older, land-based authority of aristocrats and the religious institutions that supported them. It was also stimulated by a turn toward Nichiren's writings as the chief source of religious authority, rather than the more inclusive, Tendai approach to *Lotus Sūtra* interpretation widespread among medieval Nichiren Buddhist scholastics. Significantly, those Nichiren lineages most committed to this hardline approach were the ones most active in spreading Nichiren's teachings in the provinces, laying the foundation for broad *fuju fuse* support.[12]

Nichiren clerics' refusal to participate in Bakufu-sponsored ceremonies was countenanced because political power was fragmented and the Ashikaga shoguns were weak. That changed, however, with the rise in the mid-sixteenth century of Nobunaga, who refused to tolerate the independence of Buddhist institutions. He had razed Enryakuji 延暦寺, the great Tendai center on Mt. Hiei, and destroyed Ishiyama Honganji 石山本願寺, headquarters of the influential Jōdo Shin or True Pure Land sect 浄土真宗. He also struck a blow at the Nichiren sect in a rigged debate, held in 1579 at his headquarters at Azuchi castle, with their Jōdoshū 浄土宗 or Pure Land sect counterparts, whose victory had been decided in advance. After declaring the Pure Land representatives victorious and executing the alleged instigators of the debate on the Nichiren side, Nobunaga had forced the Nichiren sect's leaders to submit a written apology, threatening that he would otherwise kill some two or three hundred Lotus devotees whom he had arrested and also destroy all Nichiren temples and believers in both Kyoto and his own domains.[13] Observing firsthand Nobunaga's unprecedented consolidation of power, influential Nichiren clerics in Kyoto saw a need to abandon strict *shakubuku*, rebuking attachment to teachings other than the *Lotus Sūtra*, in favor of a more accommodating, *shōju* approach.

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11 Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 159–160, 177–180. The first known exemption, dated 1492, refers to earlier precedent, so the practice would have begun before that.

12 On these developments see Fujii Manabu 藤井学, "Hokke senju no seiritsu ni tsuite" 法華専修の成立について, 1959; reprinted in his *Hokkeshū to machishū* 法華衆と町衆 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2003), 143–171.

13 On the Azuchi debate, see *Zenshi*, 470–493; Neil McMullin, *Buddhism and the State in Sixteenth-Century Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 204–209.

1.3 *The Incident of the Great Buddha Rites*

These concerns came to the fore under Hideyoshi, who as retired regent (*taikō* 太閤) and actual power-holder was continuing Nobunaga's project of conquest. In 1595, Hideyoshi demanded that each of the ten Buddhist sects provide one hundred priests to participate in a series of monthly memorial services for his deceased relatives, to be held before a great buddha image he had erected at Higashiyama, east of Kyoto. Erecting massive buddha images and sponsoring "thousand-priest offering rites" (*sensō kuyō* 千僧供養) were markers of imperial legitimation, and participation in the rites by clerics of all sects would solidify, and showcase, Hideyoshi's authority over Buddhist institutions.[14] For the Nichiren priests, taking part would clearly violate *fuju fuse* principles: they would be participating together with priests of other sects and accepting alms, in the form of an offertory meal, from Hideyoshi, a nonbeliever in the *Lotus Sūtra* and thus, a slanderer of the dharma. However, they were poorly placed to refuse, as Hideyoshi had warned them that, even if participation contravened Nichiren's teaching, this time, no exception would be granted. Fearing that Hideyoshi would destroy their temples if they refused, the majority of the Nichiren abbots in Kyoto reluctantly decided to participate just once, as a sign of respect, and then reassert their sect's *fuju fuse* position.

The most vocal opponent was Busshōin Nichiō 仏性院日奥 (1565–1630), abbot of Myōkakuji. Nichiō's teacher Jitsujōin Nichiden 実成院日典 (1528–1592) had studied in the east and instilled in Nichiō the strict *shakubuku* ethos upheld among Nichiren lineages there. Participating in the rites even once, Nichiō protested, would irrevocably compromise the sect's principle, and they would then find it impossible to refuse on subsequent occasions. Rather, they should remonstrate with Hideyoshi, following Nichiren's example. Nichiō argued:

> Refusing to accept offerings from those who slander the dharma is the first principle of our sect and its most important rule. Therefore, the saints of former times all defied the commands of the ruler in order to observe it, even at the cost of their lives … If our temples are destroyed because we uphold [our] dharma-principle, that is [still in accord with] the original intent and meaning of this sect. What could there be to regret?[15]

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14 "Thousand-priest offering rites" were initiated by the retired emperor Shirakawa 白河上皇 (1053–1129) as a ritual of state protection. See Heather Blair, "Rites and Rule: Kiyomori at Itsukushima and Fukuhara," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 73, no. 1 (2013), 27–28. I thank Haruko Wakabayashi for this reference.

15 *Shūgi seihō ron* 宗義制法論, ed. Kashiwahara Yūsen 柏原祐泉 and Fujii Manabu 藤井

In other words, Nichiō urged an act of "admonishing the state." By his time, however, that practice seems to have lapsed for well over a century,[16] and his colleagues were not eager to challenge Hideyoshi. Isolated by his refusal to compromise, Nichiō immediately left Kyoto and settled at Koizumi in Tanba province, writing and travelling to preach the *fuju fuse* doctrine. As he had anticipated, the Nichiren clerics proved unable to participate only once but took part for the entire twenty years that the rites were continued. Nichiō could thus point to an ongoing egregious violation of the sect's rules, sharply contrasting with his own principled stance, and he began to win significant lay support. Fearing his influence, the leaders of the Kyoto-based conciliatory faction within the sect lodged a formal complaint with Ieyasu, who at the time was "inner minister" (*naidaijin* 内大臣) under Hideyoshi. Ieyasu saw their suit as an opportunity to suppress a potential source of conflict and summoned Nichiō to Osaka castle, to confront his opponents within the sect in debate. Like the Azuchi debate staged by Nobunaga some twenty years earlier, the outcome had been decided in advance. Ieyasu declared Nichiō a danger to the realm and banished him to Tsushima, an island off the coast of Kyushu, in 1600.[17] Nichiō's writings during his dozen years in exile, often drawing on Nichiren's own words, reflect how deeply he had internalized Nichiren's sense of mission, even honor, in meeting persecution from the ruler for the *Lotus Sūtra*'s sake.[18]

The Nichiren clergy had begun to polarize into two factions: fierce advocates of *shakubuku*, concentrated in eastern Japan, who upheld an uncompromising *fuju fuse* stance, and accommodationists, based chiefly in Kyoto, who, being closer to the center of power, recognized that concessions would have to be made to the emerging new order if the sect were to survive. Where the scholar-priests of the hardline contingent emphasized fidelity to Nichiren's writings and his uncompromising *Lotus* exclusivism, their conciliatory opponents leaned toward *shōju* and inclusive Tendai-style readings of the *Lotus Sūtra*.[19]

学, *Kinsei bukkyō no shisō* 近世仏教の思想 *Nihon shisō taikei* 日本思想大系 (hereafter, *NST*) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973) 57: 309–310.

16 Nisshin cites, as an analogous prior case, a thousand-priest ceremony sponsored in 1440 by Lord Fukōin 普広院殿 (Ashikaga Yoshinori), when the Nichiren sect successfully petitioned to be excused from participating (*NST* 57: 265, headnote). This may refer to the thirty-third-year memorial service for Yoshinori's predecessor Yoshimitsu, the third Ashikaga shogun.

17 For the events leading up to Nichiō's exile, see Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 203–253; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 131–192.

18 Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 256–268.

19 For the background of this doctrinal controversy, see Takagi Yutaka 高木豊, "Kinsei shotō

2 The Conflict Escalates

After Hideyoshi's death, Ieyasu seized power and established his Bakufu in 1603, moving his capital to the eastern city of Edo (Tokyo). Perhaps due to the efforts of Nichiō's disciples who had campaigned for his release, Nichiō was pardoned in 1612 and returned to Kyoto. There, several abbots of the Nichiren temples who had taken part in Hideyoshi's Great Buddha rites formally apologized to Nichiō and joined him in reaffirming the sect's *fuju fuse* stance. The memorial rites had come to an end in 1615, when Ieyasu destroyed Hideyoshi's heirs, so participation was no longer an issue. In 1620, Nichiren clerics applied to the Bakufu for official recognition of their *fuju fuse* policy, which was granted in 1623 by Itakura Katsushige 板倉勝重 (1544–1624), who had served as Ieyasu's deputy and had also issued Nichiō's pardon.[20] However, tensions within the sect still smoldered.

2.1 *The Dispute between Nichiō and Nichiken*

The *fuju fuse* controversy next surfaced in an acrimonious written exchange between Nichiō and Jakushōin Nichiken 寂照院日乾 (1560–1635). Nichiken had originally sided with Nichiō in urging the sect to refuse Hideyoshi's demands but at the last moment was persuaded to change sides by his teacher Ichinyoin Nichijū 一如院日重 (1549–1623).[21] Unlike some of the Kyoto abbots, Nichiken had not apologized to Nichiō when the latter returned from exile but remained firm in opposing him. Nichiken was a respected scholar and leader among the Kyoto Nichiren Buddhist clerics. Twice, in 1602–1603 and again in 1609–1614, he was appointed chief abbot of the temple Kuonji 久遠寺 on Mt. Minobu 身延山 in the eastern province of Kai. Minobu, where Nichiren had spent his last years and which housed his grave, enjoyed special status among the various Nichiren lineages as a holy pilgrimage site, so appointment to its abbacy was a signal honor. Nichiken also had close ties to the new shogunate and enjoyed the patronage of Yojūin 養珠院, or Oman no kata お万の方 (1577–1653), a favored consort of Ieyasu.

Sometime after Nichiō's return from exile, Yojūin's brother, one Miura Tameharu 三浦為春 (1573–1652), a highly placed Bakufu official, became his follower. In 1615, Nichiō compiled for Tameharu a brief history of notable *fuju fuse* pro-

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ni okeru Kantō Nichiren kyōdan no dōkō" 近世初頭における関東日蓮教団の動向, 1962; reprinted in his *Chūsei Nichiren kyōdan shikō* 中世日蓮教団史改 (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2008), 478–479.

20 Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 287–293; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 200–209.

21 Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 222; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 148–150.

ponents in all six major Nichiren lineages. Here—as in all his writings—Nichiō represented refusal to accept the ruler's offerings as an absolute principle handed down unaltered since Nichiren's time. This understanding was shared by *fuju fuse* advocates generally, as the earlier history of making exceptions for donations from persons in power had by now been forgotten or overwritten.[22] The incendiary passage that triggered the exchange with Nichiken appeared in Nichiō's opening account, dealing with the Minobu lineage. All Minobu abbots, Nichiō asserted, had staunchly upheld the *fuju fuse* principle, but since its egregious violator Nichiken had acceded to that post, this most holy place, by rights equal to the site of the Buddha's preaching at Eagle Peak in India, had been reduced to a place of dharma slander.[23] Probably through Tameharu's connection with Yojūin, Nichiken learned of Nichiō's attack and felt compelled to respond. He authored a lengthy tract known as "Refuting Nichiō" (*Haōki* 破奥記).[24] To this, Nichiō responded with a still longer work of rebuttal, the *Treatise on the Regulations Based on the Teachings of our Sect* (*Shūgi seihō ron* 宗義制法論). Their exchange would set the terms of the subsequent *fuju fuse* debate. Here we will examine a central issue in their exchange: whether or not official land grants to temples constitute dharma offerings. Behind this seemingly legalistic dispute lay incommensurable views of the relationship between the buddha-dharma—specifically, the *Lotus Sūtra*—and worldly authority.

As others have noted, Nichiken's argument in "Refuting Nichiō" is inconsistent.[25] He first states that Nichiren clerics had participated in the rites before the great buddha to encourage Hideyoshi, who had shown signs of faith. Then he shifts to a defensive note, protesting that the sect had tried unsuccessfully to obtain an exemption and that in the end it had proved "difficult to refuse the ruler's stern command"—thus suggesting that compliance had been a mere expedient. The order was obeyed, Nichiken continues, "for the survival of the

22 Miyazaki Eishū, "Nichiren kyōdan ni okeru kyōgaku ronsō" 日蓮教団における教学論争, 1981; reprinted in *Nichiren Shōnin to Nichirenshū* 日蓮聖人と日蓮宗, ed. Nakao Takashi 中尾堯 and Watanabe Hōyō 渡辺宝陽 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1984), 275.

23 *Hokkeshū shomonryū kindan hōse jōjō* 法華宗諸門流禁断謗施条々, published in *Nichiren kyōgaku kenkyūjo kiyō* 日蓮教学研究所紀要 (hereafter *NKKK*) 15 (1988): 8–11 (8–9). Nichikan's *Haōki*, discussed below, appears in the same issue.

24 In writing it, Nichiken consulted his disciple Nichion 日遠 (1572–1642), and the work was presented as that of Nichion's disciple Nissen, introduced below. On the issue of authorship, see "Haōki," s.v., in Nichirenshū Jiten Kankō Iinkai 日蓮宗事典刊行委員会, ed., *Nichirenshū jiten* 日蓮宗事典 (Tokyo: Nichirenshū Shūmuin, 1981), 314c, and Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 240. Hunter has translated the entire exchange: I am indebted to his study.

25 Noted in Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 243.

teaching," and for that reason, those Nichiren priests who took part had "abandoned a minor regulation to establish the great way."[26] Finally, Nichiken settles into his main argument and asserts that no violation of principle had in fact occurred. Nichiō and his supporters, he argues, already receive dharma offerings from the ruler in the form of lands and tax exemptions granted to temples by the shogunate; temple appointments and honorific titles, such as the title "great bodhisattva" (*daibosatsu* 大菩薩) conferred by the court upon Nichiren in 1358, are also the ruler's offerings. Further, Nichiken notes, when travelling, priests of the Nichiren sect walk the roads of the country and drink from its wells; since the land and its products all belong to the ruler, these too are dharma offerings. Compared to these great offerings, Nichiken asserts, accepting the offertory meal provided by Hideyoshi after the memorial ceremonies pales to insignificance. Even if Nichiō should reject the ruler's more specific offerings, how could he possibly avoid accepting land and water?[27] This was not a new criticism for Nichiō. Prior to his exile, Ieyasu had reportedly rebuked him, saying that, if he were really determined to refuse the ruler's offerings, he should follow the example of the ancient Chinese moral exemplars Boyi 伯夷 and Shuqi 叔齊, who, in protesting the misrule of King Zhou 紂王 (1105–1046 BCE), last emperor of the Shang 商 dynasty (ca. 1600 BCE–ca. 1046 BCE), had refused to eat the products of his realm and starved to death.[28]

To bolster his argument, Nichiken makes curious use of proof texts. Chief among them is a passage from the *Brahmā*'s *Net Sūtra* (*Fanwang jing* 梵網經, *T* no. 1484), the locus classicus for the bodhisattva precepts, which states, "One who intentionally violates the holy rules of discipline is not qualified to receive any offerings from lay supporters. Nor is he entitled to walk the land of the king's realm, nor to drink the king's water."[29] He then cites from several commentaries on this passage, beginning with that of the Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi 智顗 (538–597), who clarifies: "The ruler of the realm provides land and water to the virtuous. Those who are without virtue have no claim to them."[30] Nichiken then quotes from another reading by Fazang 法蔵 (643–712), which explains that monks are exempt from taxes on the land and water they use because of the virtue of their precept observance. "If they neither pay taxes

26 *Haōki*, NKKK 15: 13, 23–24; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 332, 362.

27 *Haōki*, NKKK 15: 33–34; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 385–387.

28 *Ōsaka tairon ki* 大阪対論記, in Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 240; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 175.

29 *Fanwang jing* 2, *T* no. 1484: 24.1009a, 13–15.

30 *Pusajie yishu* 菩薩戒義疏 2, *T* no. 1811: 40.579b, 7–8.

nor uphold the discipline, how could they claim any portion [of the land or water]? One who has no claim to a portion but takes it anyway is a bandit."[31] Nichiken follows with yet another comment by the Korean exegete Daehyeon (大賢, eighth cent.), which elaborates, "If monks, being exempt from national service, are not fields of merit, they deserve no gratitude from the ruler and thus have no right to the water of the realm; therefore they are called great bandits."[32]

In fact, these passages have no bearing on the *fuju fuse* issue. They do not support Nichiken's contention that land grants and tax exemptions from the ruler are his offerings to the dharma. Their thrust is rather to urge rigorous observance of the monastic rule. As persons not engaged in productive labor, monastics are qualified to receive tax exemptions and make use of the ruler's land and water only so long as they remain good merit fields for the people and the realm by virtue of their strict precept observance. This idea expresses the basic social contract between Buddhist institutions and the state recognized across East Asia. No one had ever previously criticized the *fuju fuse* stance as a precept violation; Nichiken appears to have been groping for some scriptural justification for having participated in Hideyoshi's rites. Nonetheless, his use of these passages accomplishes two things. First, because they mention land and water bestowed by the ruler side by side with references to donations from lay supporters, they seem to underscore Nichiken's claim that the roads and water provided by the ruler fall into the same category as devotees' offerings to the dharma. And second, because they condemn monks who illegitimately receive the produce of the land, they seem also to suggest that Nichiō and his supporters have somehow betrayed the ruler, violating the contract between state and saṅgha, and are therefore "great bandits." *Haōki*, in short, argues by suggestion and innuendo. Nevertheless, the passages identified by Nichiken would be invoked again and again in subsequent decades as the *fuju fuse* controversy unfolded.

Nichiō's response was scathing. Hideyoshi had shown no sign whatsoever of taking faith, so it was false to say that cooperating with him served to encourage his devotion. The only "difficulty" in refusing Hideyoshi's command, he retorted, was Nichiken's own cowardice. A true disciple of Nichiren would have refused to compromise and instead admonished the ruler to discard provisional teachings and embrace the *Lotus Sūtra* alone, being ready to risk his life for the dharma's sake as Nichiren had taught. Nichiō charged that, among those

31 *Fanwang jing pusa jieben shu* 梵網經菩薩戒本疏 6, *T* no. 1813: 40.653c, 10–12.

32 *Beommanggyeong gojeokgi* 梵網經古迹記 2b, *T* no. 1815: 40.717b, 9–10.

Nichiren priests outside Kyoto whom Nichiken had summoned to participate in the rites, many had abandoned their temples and fled to remote provinces, returned to lay life, hidden in mountains and forests, or even taken their own lives rather than compromise with dharma slander. Far from preserving the sect, accepting Hideyoshi's demand had shaken the confidence of lay devotees and made the Nichiren sect a laughingstock for abandoning its principle. If refusing alms from a ruler who did not embrace the *Lotus Sūtra* were a mere "minor regulation," then why had the patriarchs of the sect risk their lives to admonish the ruler and obtain exemptions from participating in rituals that he sponsored?[33]

2.2 *Worldly and Transcendent Perspectives*

The core of Nichiō's response lies in his rebuttal to the assertion that Nichiren priests already accept the ruler's offerings in the form of land grants and tax exemptions. First, he raises the issue of intent: Not all gifts made to temples are dharma offerings. The ruler may bestow gifts as a worldly reward, to sponsor Buddhist rites and ceremonies, or to acknowledge virtue. Official clerical ranks and titles are bestowed on priests in recognition of their service, not as dharma offerings; the same holds true of temple lands. "If they are given as worldly rewards, there is no need to decline them. But if they are offerings made for the performance of Buddhist rites, accepting them becomes slander of the dharma, and we must refuse them."[34]

The distinction between worldly rewards and dharma offerings was by no means new. It appears, for example, in *Lectures Heard and Recorded* (*Onkō kikigaki* 御講聞書), a record of oral teachings on the *Lotus* attributed to Nichiren but probably composed around 1500. One passage comments on the primordially awakened Śākyamuni Buddha's original disciples who, in the *Sūtra*, emerge in a vast throng from beneath the earth and receive the Buddha's mandate to propagate the *Lotus* in an evil age after his nirvāṇa. The *Sūtra* text praises them as "unstained by worldly dharmas, like lotus blossoms in the [muddy] water."[35] The commentary reads in part:

> As for "worldly dharmas": Even if one should be granted lands or official rank by the ruler or his great ministers, one does not become corrupted

33 This paragraph summarizes several of Nichiō's points in *Shūgi seihō ron*. See in particular *NST* 57:270, 289, 309–310, 320–321, 323; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 432–433, 479–480, 530–531, 552–554, 560–561.

34 *NST* 57:315–316; Hunter, "*Fuju fuse* Controversy," 543–544, slightly modified.

35 *Miaofa lianhua jing* 5, *T* no. 262: 9.42a, 5–6.

> thereby. "Unstained by worldly dharmas" means rejecting the offerings of dharma slanderers.[36]

Nichiken took this to mean that one may accept dharma offerings from nonbelievers if one does not become defiled by greedy attachment.[37] But the passage seems rather to support Nichiō's reading, that lands and titles are worldly matters, distinct from dharma offerings. Ample precedent supported this reading. The Kanshō-era accord, mentioned above, which had mandated refusal of offerings from nonbelievers, nonetheless made exceptions for donations stemming from "such worldly virtues as humanity, righteousness, love, and propriety."[38] Within the medieval Nichiren sect, temple lands bestowed by the ruler had generally been deemed worldly arrangements, not subject to the *fuju fuse* restriction.[39]

Nichiō explains the reason behind the *fuju fuse* prohibition as having two aspects: worldly and transcendent. From the worldly perspective (*sekai ichiō no gi* 世界一往の義), those who dwell in the ruler's realm receive their sustenance from the ruler's land, not unconditionally, but in exchange for their labor at their various professions. The carpenter, the wheelwright, the cart-maker, and so forth all eat by virtue of their labor. The same holds true for priests of the Nichiren sect, who, while living in the ruler's realm, are entitled to consume its fruits by the "diligent practice of our house" (*ie no gyō o tsutomete* 家の行を勤めて). That "practice," Nichiō explains, is to rebuke the ruler's dharma slander and undergo exile or other resulting punishments, just as Nichiren taught. In short, Nichiō reframes the social contract between state and saṅgha in a *Lotus*-only mode: Nichiren priests are qualified to consume the produce of the land by virtue of practicing *shakubuku* and admonishing the ruler to discard provisional teachings and embrace the *Lotus Sūtra*. Those priests of the sect who make no effort to rebuke the ruler's dharma slander are bandits and traitors. In quoting the *Brahmā's Net Sūtra* and its commentaries, Nichiō concludes, Nichiken merely undermines his own position.

But that is only the worldly perspective. From the ever-abiding, transcendent perspective (*shusse saiō no gi* 出世再往の義), Nichiō continues, the ruler does not own the country. All sovereigns hold their lands in fief from Śākyamuni Buddha, who declared in the *Lotus Sūtra* that "this threefold world is

36 *Onkō kikigaki*; a.k.a. *Nikō ki* 日向記, *Teihon* 3:2578.
37 *Haōki*, *NKKK* 15:21; Hunter, "*Fuju fuse* Controversy," 354.
38 Article 4. See n. 10 above.
39 Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 172–177.

all my possession."[40] Here Nichiō drew on Nichiren himself, who had elaborated a cosmic hierarchy with the eternal Śākyamuni Buddha of the *Lotus* at its apex. Brahmā and Indra, the Indian world-ruling deities, hold their domains in tenure from Śākyamuni Buddha and protect his true disciples, the *Lotus* devotees. The four deva kings who guard the four quarters are gatekeepers to Brahmā and Indra, while the monarchs of the four continents are vassals to the four deva kings. "The ruler of Japan," Nichiren had written, "is not equal even to a vassal of the wheel-turning monarchs who govern the four continents. He is just an island chief."[41] Nichiren's idea of Śākyamuni as "lord of the threefold world" thus radically subordinated the ruler's authority to that of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Connecting this hierarchy to the issue at hand, Nichiō argues that Nichiren priests, being the direct disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha of the *Lotus Sūtra*, are perfectly entitled to receive the products of the land, as they come directly from that Buddha himself. Boyi and Shuqi, he adds, understood worldly loyalty, but because they lived before Buddhism had arrived in China, they had no way of knowing this transcendent principle and thus needlessly starved themselves to death.[42]

Whether from the worldly or transcendent perspective, the mandate of Nichiren's disciples remains the same: to practice *shakubuku*, the refuting of attachment to provisional teachings, and to admonish the ruler to take faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* alone. Only then are they qualified to consume the products of the land. The transcendent perspective differs in explicitly asserting the superior authority of the *Lotus Sūtra* and thus relativizing the ruler's position. In contrast, Nichiken's stance, which exempted the ruler's offerings from the prohibition against accepting donations from nonbelievers, tacitly endorsed—or at least did not contradict—Bakufu claims to absolute authority.

As a scripturally grounded justification for having taken part in Hideyoshi's rites, Nichiken's argument was weak and his use of proof texts flawed, as Nichiō unsparingly demonstrated. Nonetheless, although perhaps unwittingly, Nichiken made a crucial innovation that shifted the terms of the debate. While initially put forth to legitimate his own actions, his redefining of temple lands as the ruler's dharma offerings would become instrumental in the eventual *fuju fuse* suppression.

40 *Miaofa lianhua jing* 2, *T* no. 262: 9.14c, 26.

41 "Hōmon mōsarubekiyō no koto" 法門可被申様之事, *Teihon* 1:448.

42 *NST* 57:327–332; Hunter, "*Fuju fuse* Controversy," 568–581.

3 The Minobu-Ikegami Conflict

With the move of government to Edo, Buddhist lineages, including the several Kyoto-based branches of the Nichiren sect, began expanding into the eastern provinces. Disciples in Nichiken's lineage now occupied the chief abbacy of the temple Kuonji at Mt. Minobu, also in the east. These clerics enjoyed personal connections to prominent Bakufu figures—Yojūin's patronage has already been mentioned—and they began to strategize how they might use those connections to bring the entire sect under Minobu's leadership. However, the eastern provinces were a *fuju fuse* stronghold. The next phase of the *fuju fuse* controversy unfolded as a struggle between an accommodationist faction led by Minobu and a hardline *fuju fuse* contingent headed by the temple Ikegami Honmonji 池上本門寺, located close to Edo and the leading Nichiren Buddhist temple in the east. The contest between the two factions now assumed a dual character: on one hand, an internecine struggle for control of the sect, but at the same time, a clash of earnest but incommensurable opinions over how best to secure the sect's future under a regime intent on circumscribing religious activity.

3.1 *Nissen Petitions the Bakufu*

The next major round in the conflict was initiated by a petition to Bakufu officials submitted in 1629 by Chiken'in Nissen 智見院日暹 (1586–1648)—a second-generation disciple of Nichiken and at the time the chief abbot of Minobu—against Chōon'in Nichiju 長遠院日樹 (1574–1631), chief abbot of Ikegami Honmonji and an ardent admirer of Nichiō. Nissen of Minobu and Nichiju of Ikegami now represented the leadership, respectively, of the conciliatory and hardline factions within the sect. Compared to the lengthy internal exchange between Nichiō and Nichiken, Nissen's official complaint and Nichiju's rejoinder are brief documents, directed toward outsiders. Nonetheless, they show how arguments articulated by Nichiō and Nichiken some fifteen years earlier were being deployed in the evolving *fuju fuse* controversy.

Nissen launches his complaint with a selectively abridged account of the memorial rites sponsored by Hideyoshi, making no mention of the *fuju fuse* principle. Priests of the Nichiren sect attended, Nissen states, because the ruler had required it. At that time, Nichiō denounced their participation as slander of the dharma and a sin leading to rebirth in the hells. However, the sect's scholar-priests agreed that Nichiō did not understand the meaning of dharma slander and was merely spewing arbitrary abuse. As a result, the sect's abbots in Kyoto lodged a complaint against him, and Ieyasu had him exiled to Tsushima. Now, Nissen, continues,

> Nichuju of Ikegami, desiring to promote Nichiō's heresies [...] irresponsibly maligns our temple [Minobu], saying that because its former abbot Nichiken took part in the rites sponsored by Hideyoshi and received his offerings, our mountain has become a place of dharma slander, and those who visit here will surely fall into the Avīci hell. Thus he deters pilgrimage and curtails offerings. Determined to destroy Minobu with all possible speed, he commits such calumnies to writing and also travels around the provinces, widely preaching them from the lecturer's seat.[43]

Clearly the next generation of *fuju fuse* proponents had taken up Nichiō's accusation that the sacred ground of Minobu had become defiled by the dharma slander of Nichiken and his supporters and were promulgating it, with serious economic consequences.

Nissen next accuses Nichiju of hypocrisy, charging that, while condemning receipt of the ruler's donations as dharma slander, Nichiju nonetheless administers his own temple on the proceeds of lands bestowed by the ruler—the same charge that Nichiken had leveled against Nichiō. Nissen asserts: "The country's ruler, provincial governors, and local headmen donate paddies and fields to priests and bestow [income from] districts and villages on temples so that, by protecting the unsurpassed true dharma, those priests can pray for the pacification of the four directions; cultivate precepts, meditation, and wisdom; and become excellent merit fields."[44] The particular duty of Nichiren priests to rebuke attachment to provisional teachings goes unmentioned. Nissen cites the same passages Nichiken had quoted from the *Brahmā's Net Sūtra* and its commentaries about kings giving land and water to the virtuous and monks receiving tax exemptions in return for their strict precept observance. He also introduces another passage with similar purport from the *Heap of Jewels Sūtra* (Ch. *Baoliang jing* 寶梁經; Skt. *Ratnarāśi-sūtra*, *T* no. 310): "One who does not practice purity and yet says that he practices purity, who breaks the precepts while claiming to uphold them, is not qualified to receive even land sufficient to spit upon, let alone to come and go, or even to bend and stretch. Why? Because in the past, kings gave that land to monastics who uphold the precepts."[45] Here again, these quotations serve to reinforce by suggestion the claim that temple

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43 *Shinchi tairon kiroku* 身池対論記録 1, Ōsaki Nichigyō 大崎日行, ed. *Genbun taiyaku bandai kikyōroku* 原文対訳万代亀鏡錄 (hereafter, *Bandai*), 2 vols. (Kyoto: Bandai Kikyōroku Kankōkai, 1931–1933), 2: 62 (*yakubun* 訳文), 108 (*honbun* 本文).

44 Ibid., 2:63 (*yakubun*), 108 (*honbun*).

45 The corresponding passage would be *Baoliang jing* 113, *T* no. 310: 11.640a, 7–11. Nichiken's phrasing differs slightly from the Taishō text and appears to incorporate some wording

lands bestowed by the ruler are dharma offerings; that Nichiju and his associates contradict themselves in accepting them; and that they have violated proper state-saṅgha relations by receiving offerings to which they are not entitled.

Nichiju's response to the complaint invokes in idealized form the *fuju fuse* history that Nissen had glossed over. The founder Nichiren himself, Nichiju says, had established the principle of not receiving donations from nonbelievers, and the entire sect had upheld it for more than three hundred years. It was Nichiken who had initiated a new doctrine permitting the acceptance of such offerings, in order to conceal his shame. As a result, Nichiren's jewel-like teachings have become buried in dust, and the sect devoted to them is no longer able to save living beings, but on the contrary, draws them into the sin of dharma slander and certain future suffering. Nissen also points out that the *fuju fuse* stance had been officially recognized, pointing to the exemption from participating in Bakufu-sponsored ceremonies granted by the former shogunal deputy Itakura a mere seven years before.

Nichiju then turns to the issue of accepting fields and paddies from the ruler. Nissen's charge of hypocrisy, he says, confuses the worldly realm with the realm of the buddha-dharma. Here he enlarges on the distinction drawn earlier by Nichiō. From a worldly perspective, Nichiju acknowledges, the ruler is a parent to all people. Thanks to his beneficence, priests can spread the teachings of their sect and sustain their temples. Priests of the Nichiren sect repay that beneficence by admonishing the country's dharma slander, conducting ceremonies based on the wonderful dharma of the *Lotus*, and praying for the welfare of the ruler and his ministers.

From a Buddhist standpoint, however, Śākyamuni Buddha is the teacher of all living beings. From this perspective, Nichiju argues, the question of devotion becomes crucial. Giving temple lands to priests in whose teaching one has personal faith is a Buddhist offering. Giving temple lands to priests in whose teaching one has no personal faith is an act of ordinary beneficence. The two are altogether different. Nichiren's writings offer no support whatsoever for Nissen's claims, Nichiju asserts. Although Nissen cites the *Heap of Jewels Sūtra*, he does not understand it and merely undermines his own position.[46]

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from a version of the same passage cited by Zhanran 湛然 (711–782) in his *Zhiguan fuxing zhuan hongjue* 止觀輔行傳弘決 1–5, *T* no. 1912: 46.177c, 18–24.

46 *Shinchi tairon kiroku* 2, *Bandai* 2:64–67 (*yakubun*), 109–110 (*honbun*).

Both Nissen and Nichiju, for polemical purposes, oversimplify the history of the *fuju fuse* dispute, each portraying the other as promoting a new and harmful doctrine. Whether or not the Bakufu officials reading their arguments could follow them, they may well have discerned that, while Nissen and other accommodationists offered no challenge to Bakufu authority, *fuju fuse* priests considered themselves obligated to admonish the ruler in the name of an authority greater than his own.

3.3 *A Foredoomed Contest*

Perhaps in response to Nissen's petition, Nissen and Nichiju, representing their temples at Minobu and Ikegami respectively, along with five prominent Nichiren clerics as supporters on each side, were summoned to debate in the presence of Bakufu officials and six clerical judges drawn primarily from the Tendai and Zen sects. The Minobu-Ikegami debate (Shinchi tairon 延池対論) began on 2/21/1630.[47] The Minobu side opened by charging that to reject the ruler's offerings was to oppose him; hence Nichiō's exile as an enemy of the realm. The Ikegami side countered that Ieyasu had pardoned Nichiō. In refusing to acknowledge the recent exemption from participating in Bakufu-sponsored ceremonies issued in 1623, Minobu supporters were the ones opposing the ruler. The Minobu representatives then put forth the peculiar argument that the 1623 exemption applied only to donations from ordinary people and not to the ruler himself. The Ikegami contingent retorted that it applied particularly to the ruler; it was precisely because "neither receiving nor giving" applied to offerings from the ruler that an official exemption had been sought in the first place. The major part of the debate, however, focused on whether temple lands bestowed by the ruler are dharma offerings. The Ikegami representatives upheld, and expanded upon, the earlier distinction drawn by Nichiō:

> Temple lands are donated as an expression of the ruler's benevolent government. Dharma offerings arise from faith and are given to sponsor Buddhist ceremonies and generate merit [...] How could the two be confused? Moreover, of the four debts [to parents, all sentient beings, rulers, and the three treasures], dharma offerings correspond to the fourth, the debt owed to the three treasures [the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha]. If it were as you say, there would be no distinction between the third debt, [that

47 Two records survive, representing the two sides. The one representing the conciliatory faction purports to be an official Bakufu record but was produced by the Minobu side some thirty-six years later (See Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 384). I cite here from the Ikegami version.

> owed to the ruler], and the fourth. And there would be no distinction between the ruler's law and the Buddhist law, or between worldly and Buddhist affairs.[48]

A war of scriptural quotations ensued. To support their assertion that gifts of temple lands are in fact the ruler's dharma offerings, the Minobu side mustered all the passages put forth earlier by Nichiken and Nissen: the *Brahma's Net Sūtra*, its commentaries, the *Heap of Jewels Sūtra*, and the *Lectures Heard and Recorded* attributed to Nichiren. In their rebuttal, the Ikegami side displayed superior textual skills, rebuking their opponents for parsing passages incorrectly and lifting them out of context. For example, they noted that Minobu's reading of the *Brahma's Net Sūtra* passage conflated two issues. "One who intentionally violates the holy rules of discipline is not qualified to receive any offerings from lay supporters" clearly refers to dharma offerings. But the subsequent statement—"Nor is he entitled to walk the land of the king's realm, nor to drink the king's water"—is a separate sentence and makes a different point, indicating a distinction between the offerings of devotees and the ruler's gift.[49]

A month into the debate, Nichiju decided that the victory of his own side must be evident, and he petitioned for a decision to that effect. But the contest was not judged on the basis of fidelity to scripture, and the Minobu side was pronounced victorious on 4/2/1630. Indeed, as in the Azuchi debate orchestrated by Nobunaga some fifty years earlier, and in the Ōsaka debate of 1600 that led to Nichiō's exile, the outcome had almost certainly been decided in advance. Throughout the medieval period, religious debate had been a formidable weapon in the Nichiren sect's arsenal of propagation, and its scholar-monks, especially of the hardline faction, excelled in its use. By the tactic of staging such debates but rigging the outcome, officials representing the new order turned the legitimizing power of this weapon against the troublesome *fuju fuse* contingent.

In the wake of the decision, Nichiju and his five associates were banished to remote areas throughout the archipelago, and Nichiō, who had died the month before, received a second, posthumous sentence of exile. Two major *fuju fuse* temples, Nichiō's Myōkakuji in Kyoto and Nichiju's Ikegami Honmonji near Edo, along with their hundreds of branch temples, were placed under Minobu governance. At one stroke, Minobu became the largest faction within the sect.[50] Nissen issued a statement to all branch temples now under his

48 *Shinchi tairon kiroku* 3, *Bandai* 2: 71–72 (*yakubun*), 113 (*honbun*).

49 Ibid., 2: 73 (*yakubun*), 113 (*honbun*).

50 In 1633, three years after the debate, in a Bakufu-mandated report, Minobu claimed 1,059

administration, in which he declared that, as the result of the debate, the false position asserted by Nichiju and his party, rejecting the ruler's offerings, had been silenced. "The doctrine of our mountain [i.e., the Minobu lineage] is that the ruler's offerings are always to be accepted, and this is not to be disputed," he declared.[51] As always, offerings from ordinary nonbelievers would be refused.

Early in the debate proceedings, Nichiju had submitted a list of errors he perceived in Minobu's position. The following is especially relevant here:

> If the ruler's donations are to be accepted, then those of ordinary nonbelievers should be accepted. Their wealth derives from the ruler's beneficence, so if you [Nissen] reject their offerings, you should reject those of the ruler as well. The reason we reject the offerings of ordinary nonbelievers is to save [ourselves] from the sin of complicity in dharma slander and to cause all to obtain the great fruit [of enlightenment] in this life and the next. [By accepting his alms and not reproving his dharma slander] you prevent the ruler—to whom you are deeply indebted—from reaping this great benefit. By making common people [alone] the object [of the *fuju fuse* restriction], you protect your own house but make light of the nation.[52]

Nichiju here reasserts Nichiren's teaching that reproving others' lack of faith in the *Lotus* is a compassionate act, enabling them to form a karmic tie to the *Sūtra* that will ensure their eventual buddhahood. By avoiding confrontation with the ruler, he says, Nissen protects his own interests but denies salvation to the ruler and, by extension, the country he governs. He also notes that exempting the ruler alone from the *fuju fuse* principle is logically inconsistent. From the outset, it was not a doctrinally grounded position but an expedient; perhaps that was why Nissen had simply decreed, without elaborating, that it was "not to be disputed." As *fuju fuse* hardliners such as Nichiju discerned, that expedient in effect collapsed the realms of the buddha-dharma, deemed absolute, and of worldly authority, seen as relative. Since the Tokugawa Bakufu itself represented its administrative order as absolute, its interests lay in supporting the Minobu side, which did not challenge its ideology of rule.

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branch temples, roughly half the number of temples reported by the entire sect. See Takagi, "Kinsei shotō," 489–492, and Fujii Manabu, "Edo Bakufu no shūkyō tōsei" 江戸幕府の宗教統制, *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi* 岩波講座日本歴史, vol. 11: *Kinsei* 近世 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963), 144.

51 *Shinchi tairon kiroku* 10, *Bandai* 2: 99–100 (*yakubun*), 129–130 (*honbun*).

52 *Shinchi tairon kiroku* 5, *Bandai* 2:94 (yakubun), 125–126 (*honbun*).

4 *Fuju Fuse* Suppressed

While the verdict against Nichiju and Ikegami in the debate had in theory given the Minobu-led accommodationist faction the upper hand, over the next three decades, the conflict between the two parties only continued to escalate.[53] Priests of the branch temples turned over to Minobu refused to obey their new chief abbots and often decamped, along with their lay parishioners, to establish independent temples of their own. *Fuju fuse* scholar-priests instituted new seminaries (*danrin* 檀林), especially in the eastern provinces, pouring their efforts into educating young priests, who were then dispatched to preach the *fuju fuse* doctrine among the laity. For their part, the conciliatory faction—now contemptuously dubbed by their opponents *ju fuse* ("not giving but receiving")—sought to exploit their Bakufu connections by relentlessly petitioning the commissioners of temples and shrines (*jisha bugyō* 寺社奉行) against their *fuju fuse* adversaries. Invariably, they urged that lands granted to temples be defined as the ruler's dharma offerings, which would make it impossible for *fuju fuse* adherents to accept them.

The Minobu-Ikegami debate and Nichiju's exile, like that of Nichiō before him, had reflected the early Tokugawa Bakufu's piecemeal approach to religious issues, which dealt with perceived threats and troublemakers as they arose. But by the mid-seventeenth century, comprehensive administrative policies for regulating religion were being implemented. Edicts issued in 1665 forbade the preaching and advertising of religious services in public places, harshly curtailing the activities of those itinerant preachers, ascetic holy men (*hijiri* 聖), mediums (*miko* 巫女), and other independent practitioners who had peopled the medieval religious landscape. Regulations (*hatto* 法度) previously issued individually for certain temples and sects were now promulgated universally, exhorting priests to disciplined study and moral conduct and forbidding the preaching of heresies. The same period saw a tightening of mandatory identification of temples by sect and, within each sect, the establishment of clear head temple/branch temple hierarchies. The system of temple certification (*terauke* 寺請), by which temple abbots affirmed that their lay member families did not embrace the forbidden Kirishitan 切支丹 (Christian) faith, was gradually extended as a form of population oversight. All households were required

53 For developments during this period, see Miyazaki Eishū, *Kinsei Fuju fuse-ha no kenkyū* 禁制不受不施派の研究 (hereafter, *Kinsei*) (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1959; reprint 1964), 3–80, and Takagi Yutaka, "Kanbun hōnan zengo: Fuju fuse shi kenkyū danshō" 寛文法難前後—不受不施史研究断章, 1957; reprinted in his *Chūsei Nichiren kyōdan shikō* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2008), 408–438.

to join Buddhist temples and to receive temple certification; these certificates were then compiled by village and ward officials into population "registries of sectarian inspection" (*shūmon aratamechō* 宗門改帳). By 1664, temple certification was required annually, and officials were appointed in each domain to oversee registry compilation.[54]

4.1 *A Diabolical Strategy*

As part of this restructuring, in 1665, temple and shrine commissioners reviewed and reconfirmed the vermillion-seal lands (*shuinchi* 朱印地) granted by the Bakufu to temples and shrines. This seemingly routine bureaucratic operation proved an ideal opportunity to deal decisively with the *fuju fuse* issue, the last major obstacle to implementing Bakufu religious policy. Officials now stipulated that these lands were the ruler's dharma offerings and demanded written statements (*otegata* お手形) from each recipient temple, acknowledging their receipt in exception to the *fuju fuse* rule. This demand trapped *fuju fuse* priests in a horrifying quandary, similar to that faced by Christian believers required to tread on an image of Jesus or the Virgin Mary (*fumie* 踏み絵).[55] To refuse the land grants as offerings tainted by dharma slander was to be arrested and punished as an enemy of the ruler. To accept them was to publicly betray the *fuju fuse* principle, turning apostate in one's own and others' eyes. *Fuju fuse* priests could not even evade the choice by abandoning their temples to live as itinerant preachers, as such activities were now prohibited. Again, Bakufu officials had drawn on the practice of a religious group deemed troublesome for a weapon to be turned against them. Yet, although promulgated by government functionaries, the strategy of using *otegata* in this way was surely inspired by the Nichiren sect's accommodationist faction, which had persistently petitioned that land grants to temples be defined as dharma offerings.

The Bakufu then issued a yet harsher ordinance: certification by *fuju fuse* temples would no longer be recognized.[56] Without annual temple certification, individuals could not be entered into the registry of sectarian inspection, which was necessary to work, marry, travel, or change residence; unregistered persons had no legitimate social place. This new edict in effect banned *fuju*

54 See Fujii, "Edo Bakufu no shūkyō tōsei," 142–157, and Takagi, "Kanbun hōnan zengo," 421–423. On temple certification and sectarian registration, see Nam-lin Hur, *Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan: Buddhism, Anti-Christianity, and the* Danka *System* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), 14–16, 82–87, 95–100.

55 Fujii, "Edo bakufu no shūkyō tōsei," 165.

56 While most scholars accept 3/5/1669 as the date of this edict, 1665 has also been proposed. See Aiba Shin 相葉伸, *Fuju fuse-ha junkyō no rekishi* 不受不施派殉教の歴史 (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1976), 83.

fuse practice; for priests and laity alike, the alternatives were grim. Some *fuju fuse* priests, followed by their lay supporters, went over, at least outwardly, to their *ju fuse* opponents, probably reasoning that, even if forced into complicity with dharma slander, it would be better from a long-range view to preserve their temple institutions. Others went underground to live furtively as unregistered persons, subject at any time to arrest, followed by exile or execution, were they to be discovered. A surprising number of priests and laity chose this course, practicing their faith in secret communities until legalized in 1876, more than two hundred years later.[57] Other priests chose to defy the government and accept arrest, imprisonment, or exile as martyrs for the *fuju fuse* principle. They must have been sustained by Nichiren's example and his teaching that to meet persecution from worldly authorities for the *Lotus Sūtra*'s sake proves the righteousness of one's faith and guarantees one's future buddhahood. Still other individuals committed suicide in protest. One Anjūin Nichinen 安住院日念 (1656–1732), a priest in the underground *fuju fuse* community, later recalled the moment:

> In the sixth year of the Kanbun era (1666), the fire-horse year, when the true dharma was utterly destroyed, I was still a child, but I remember faintly. Several believers gathered. "Shall we commit suicide? Drown ourselves? Or flee, and simply die wherever we drop? Alas, how sad!" I watched them as they neglected their work to talk over possible courses. "We should not throw away our lives just yet; better to wait until there is no other choice," they concluded, and each sought out a [new] family temple. But among them were some persons of intense faith who hung themselves and died.[58]

4.2 *Defying the "Land and Water Offerings Edict"*

Throughout the archipelago, known *fuju fuse* hideouts were torched; arrests, executions, and deaths in prison are also recorded.[59] Among those who took

57 *Fuju fuse* adherents were better equipped to survive underground than were the Christians, as they were able to maintain priestly leadership and extensive communication networks among their communities. On the underground *fuju fuse*, see Miyazaki, *Kinsei*, 143–156, 212–256.

58 *Min'yu mōha ki* 愍諭盲跛記, *Bandai* 2, Appendix, 256.

59 On the history of *fuju fuse* martyrs, see Aiba, *Fuju fuse-ha junkyō no rekishi*, 89–139; Kageyama Gyōō, "Fuju fuse no hōnan narabi ni ryūsō seikatsu ni tsuite" 不受不施の法難並びに流僧生活について, in *Nichiren Fuju fuse-ha no kenkyū*, ed. Kageyama Gyōō, 142–198 (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1956; revised 1972); and "Hōnan junkyōsha meibo" 法難殉教者名簿, *Shiryōshū*, 195–222.

their own lives rather than compromise with "slander of the dharma," the number of suicides by fasting stands out. Several occurred in Okayama, where the domain lord, Ikeda Mitsumasa 池田光政, an ardent neo-Confucian, authorized especially harsh anti-*fuju fuse* measures, destroying 313 *fuju fuse* temples out of 1,044 Buddhist temples in his domain and exiling 585 *fuju fuse* priests out of 1,957 Buddhist clerics.[60] In 1669, four nuns, together with Kenjūin Nissei 堅住院日勢, the priest of their temple, sequestered themselves in an ancient burial mound (*kofun* 古墳) in Fukuda in nearby Mimasaka province. There they fasted to death while chanting the *daimoku*.[61] The nun Myōjō 妙浄, also of Okayama, immured herself in a hole she had dug in the ground and fasted to death, and the priest Nichien 日円 similarly fasted to death inside a coffin he had made.[62] Suicides by fasting are also attested in Edo, Kyoto, and elsewhere. This method may have been chosen in response to the "land and water offerings edict" (*dosui kuyō rei* 土水供養令) issued in 1666.[63] In language clearly informed by the arguments of the *ju fuse*, accommodationist faction, this edict proclaimed that the earth one treads and the water one drinks are all the ruler's dharma offerings, and demanded written acknowledgment of their receipt. Like Nichirenist versions of the Chinese exemplars Boyi and Shuqi, those persons who fasted to death seem to have decided that, if the land and its produce were the offerings of a ruler steeped in slander of the dharma, they would rather starve than consume them.

The idea that the land and its products all belong to the ruler was ancient and appears in Japanese sources early on.[64] However, the more specific claim that the land and water are all the ruler's dharma offerings was, as we have seen, invented by Nichiren scholar-priests of the *ju fuse* faction to support their

60 Mizuno Kyōichirō 水野恭一郎, "Bizen-han ni okeru shinshoku uke seido ni tsuite" 備前藩における神職請制度について, 1956; reprinted in his *Buke jidai no seiji to bunka* 武家時代の政治と文化 (Ōsaka: Sōgensha, 1975), 257.

61 The women initially asked Nissei, as their religious guide, to watch over their terminal fast and their final moments. Nissei is said to have drowned himself in an act of self-immolation. Several details concerning the Fukuda martyrs remain unclear. For one theory, see Aiba, *Fuju fuse-ha junkyō no rekishi*, 105–113.

62 Ibid., 103.

63 Kageyama, "Fuju fuse no hōnan," 144. On the "land and water offerings edict," see Miyazaki, *Kinsei*, 125–128. This edict was initially directed against the Noro 野呂 and Tamatsukuri 玉造 seminaries in Shimōsa province, which did not have land grants. How broadly it was applied remains unclear. It is mentioned, for example, in *Shushō gokoku shō* 守正護国章, cited below, and in *Kanbun hōnanki* 寛文法難記, *Shiryōshū*, 8.

64 See, for example, the concluding episode of *Nihon ryōiki* 日本霊異記 3: 39, trans., Kyoko Nakamura, *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 286.

conciliatory position. At the same time, the idea of demanding receipts for such "offerings" reveals the pretensions of the Tokugawa regime to represent nothing less than the cosmic order itself. Let us look at one Nichiren priest's refusal.

Ankokuin Nichikō 安国院日講 (1626–1698) was a leading scholar-priest based at a seminary at Noro in Shimōsa province and active in the *fuju fuse* cause. Ordered to provide a receipt for land and water, Nichikō instead wrote a moving admonition. "You may say," he writes,

> that the water we drink and the earth we walk upon, the light of the sun, moon, and stars in the heavens that warms our bodies, and the five grains produced from the earth that sustain our vital spirit (*tamashii* 神) are all the ruler's offerings. But in Buddhism, these are considered the effects of collective karma [...] and in Confucianism, they are deemed the natural workings of *yin* and *yang* and the five elements.[65]

We speak of the land and water as belonging to the ruler, Nichikō continues, because he governs them. But the notion that they represent his dharma offerings is a new idea put forth by the Minobu faction, based on a misreading of passages from the *Brahmā's Net* and *Heap of Jewels* sūtras. These passages are rather intended to reprove precept-breaking monks and in fact support the very distinction between worldly beneficence and dharma offerings that the accommodationists seek to collapse.

"The ruler of Japan," Nichikō clarifies, "is not a devotee of the *Lotus Sūtra*. But because our sect has believers among the people of this country, he supports it as a matter of [worldly] beneficence. It is like the case of those emperors of Tang China who, while personally devoted to Confucianism, nonetheless funded Buddhist monasteries." Nichikō continues: "Before Buddhism arrived [in Japan], government comprised a single, [worldly] dimension. But after Buddhism was introduced, government acknowledged both worldly and Buddhist realms. How can the present government confuse the two?" He concludes:

> If you insist that all things are [the ruler's dharma] offerings, then what about my own person, which Buddhists term the result of past karma, and Confucians, the workings of the five elements? Is my own person, too, an offering from the ruler? If you insist that [all things] are the ruler's dharma offerings, then I refuse the specific offering of temple lands, but I accept

65 *Shushō gokoku shō* 守正護国章, *Bandai* 2: 218.

> the general offering of water to drink and roads to walk upon, and I will use them to spread the [*fuju fuse*] teaching throughout the country.[66]

Nichikō was charged with disobedience to the ruler and exiled to the remote province of Hyūga (Miyazaki prefecture) in eastern Kyushu. He would become a leader of the underground *fuju fuse* community. By his own account, when he and another condemned *fuju fuse* priest, Myōjōin Nichikan 妙静院日浣 (1616–1676), departed—bound by ropes and under official escort—for their respective places of banishment, more than a thousand weeping followers gathered along the road to see them off.[67]

4.3 *A Paradoxical Outcome*

In a set of regulations for his temple Myōkakuji written in 1623 after his return from exile, Nichiō had stated:

> Even if we meet with persecution and our temples are destroyed, we must not bring harm to our dharma-principle. Although our temples may be destroyed, they can readily be rebuilt through the power of our lay supporters. But an injury to the dharma-principle is difficult to heal, even over long ages.[68]

Evidently, the repercussions that Nichiō envisioned from opposing Hideyoshi did not go beyond a razing of temples that could be restored with lay support. Such a case had occurred in recent historical memory, when the sect's temples in Kyoto, torched in 1536 by the forces of Mt. Hiei, began to rebuild within a decade.[69] Nichiō, however, seems not to have recognized the emerging of a new form of power able to obliterate the sect's very existence. Even if every Nichiren Buddhist abbot in Kyoto had firmly sided with him from the outset, it is doubtful they could have prevailed in the end. And, had its institutions been wiped out, in what sense would the Nichiren sect have survived?

In contrast, the *ju fuse*, accommodationist leaders quickly perceived that the worldly order was shifting and that temples would have to submit to the subordinate role that the new regime demanded. They were understandably reluctant to resist and sacrifice their entire sectarian institution—with its many

66 Ibid., 219, 222.

67 *Ha chōso ron* 破鳥鼠論, *Bandai* 2: 245.

68 "Myōkakuji hattō jōjō" 妙覚寺法度条々, *FFS* 1: 329; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," slightly modified, 222–223.

69 *Zenshi*: 368, 379–396.

hundreds of temples and seminaries, cumulative works of scholarship, and thousands of priests and their lay followers—built up over nearly four hundred years. Were that institution to continue, however, the traditional practices of *shakubuku* and admonishing the state, as well as confrontational debate with other sects, would no longer be tenable. From a distance their capitulation may appear inglorious; certainly, it had strong elements of self-interest and rewrote what many considered the very identity of Nichiren Buddhism. Nonetheless, the sect survived.

For their part, *fuju fuse* advocates, too, are easily dismissed from a modern perspective as narrow, rigid, and unattuned to the times. Yet they left behind a compelling example of defying worldly power out of commitment to a transcendent principle. They held fast to Nichiren's teaching that the true path of loyalty and compassion lies in refusing to compromise with "dharma slander," regardless of personal consequences. Though forced to live underground or face imprisonment, exile, or death, their resistance kept alive in the collective memory of the Nichiren tradition a normative ideal of readiness to give even one's life for the *Lotus Sūtra*.

The practice of *shakubuku* and the dream of realizing an ideal buddha land in this world based on the *Lotus Sūtra* powerfully resurfaced with the Meiji Restoration (1868) and the promulgation of a constitution guaranteeing religious freedom (1889). This resurgence sprang, neither from traditional Nichiren temple institutions, which had become domesticated under Tokugawa rule, nor from the sect's recently legalized Fuju Fuse branch, which, after more than two hundred years in hiding, had developed a closed identity. Modern Nichirenism was spearheaded chiefly by lay believers who had studied Nichiren's writings and absorbed his exhortation to spread the *Lotus Sūtra*. Still, one could say, it was the legacy of both sides in the *fuju fuse* controversy that made this reemergence possible: the one in preserving the sect's institutions, and the other by a sacrifice that kept memory of the *shakubuku* ethos alive. Paradoxically, it may have been the very conflict itself—pragmatic accommodation *and* principled defiance—that enabled the Nichiren tradition to endure.

5 *Fuju fuse* in a Larger Frame

While particular to the Nichiren sect and to early modern Japan, the *fuju fuse* movement also reflects broad patterns that have recurred, with local variation, across time and region among Buddhists facing persecution from oppressive regimes. It is difficult to trace direct historical connections between the

fuju fuse case and prior instances of Buddhist protest. Nonetheless, resources shared within the Buddhist repertoire—narratives, teachings, ideals, and norms of conduct—seem to have prompted roughly similar responses. This final section considers three modes of action adopted by *fuju fuse* proponents that can also be found, with regional variation, in both past and present instances of Buddhist resistance to the state.

One was to disrupt the reciprocal exchange, fundamental to institutional Buddhism, that traditionally binds monastics and laity. This exchange has both economic and soteriological dimensions: Lay people gain merit by offering food and material support to monastics, who in turn provide them with ritual services and religious instruction. Nonetheless, early canonical sources stipulate that monastics should refuse alms from lay persons who show disrespect or enmity toward the Buddha, Dharma, or Saṅgha.[70] Alms refusal—literally, "turning over the bowl" (Pāli: *pattanikujjana kamma*)—not only publicly shames would-be donors but also denies them the opportunity of generating merit for better rebirth. Its intent is thus to induce such persons to reflect on and reform their misconduct, so that their alms will again be accepted. A politicized version of this practice drew widespread attention in the late twentieth century, when Burmese monks refused to accept donations from the military as a form of protest.[71] No demonstrable historical connection exists between the Nichiren *fuju fuse* movement and the Southern Asian Buddhist practice of "turning over the bowl," although the parallel has been suggested.[72] Indeed, premodern instances of alms refusal directed against a ruler are hard to find anywhere; the *fuju fuse* advocates may represent a rare instance. Nonetheless, their stance of "not accepting" (*fuju*) donations from a ruler seen as inimical to the *Lotus Sūtra* reflects a logic with some similarities to that of the modern Burmese monastic protestors.

As for "not giving" (*fuse*): In principle, lay people have traditionally been free to withhold alms from monks whose laxity or corruption makes them unworthy merit fields. Such unworthiness is of course open to interpretation. In his famous 1260 admonitory treatise *Establishing the True Dharma and Bringing Peace to the Land* (*Risshō ankoku ron* 立正安国論), Nichiren drew on a passage from the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* (Ch. *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經; Skt.

70 *Pattanikujjana Sutta*, in *Aṅguttara Nikāya* 8:87 and *Cullavagga* v:20.

71 Martin Kovan, "The Burmese Alms-Boycott: Theory and Practice of the *Pattanikujjana* in Buddhist Non-Violent Resistance," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 19 (2012): 95–129.

72 Yoichi Aizawa, "Almsgiving and Alms Refusal in the Fuju-Fuse Sect of Nichiren Buddhism with a Consideration of These Practices in Early Indian Buddhism" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1984).

Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra, *T* no. 374), in which the Buddha warns the householder Cunda against one type of person to whom alms will yield no merit and should never be given: namely, the *icchantika*s, those "who speak in a malicious manner, disparaging the true dharma ….never regretting such remarks or feeling shame."[73] *Icchantika*s are those without faith, persons unable to arouse the aspiration for enlightenment, and thus, without prospects for realizing buddhahood. Nichiren used the term *icchantika*s to designate those who refuse to take faith in the *Lotus Sūtra*, and the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*'s admonition against giving alms to *icchantika*s informed his appeal to government official to cease their patronage of clerics who promote teachings other than the *Lotus*. Nichiō and his successors mobilized a similar argument in urging the Nichiren Buddhist laity not to make pilgrimages to sites controlled by their accommodationist opponents. By their actions of "not receiving" and "not giving," *fuju fuse* leaders disrupted the traditional reciprocity of monastics and laity to resist both the opposing faction within their own sect and the new Bakufu regime. Their watchwords of "not receiving" and "not giving" both have scriptural warrant, and—although perhaps rare—are not unique in Buddhist history.

A second element of *fuju fuse* resistance attested in other Buddhist contexts is a clear imperative that, whatever the consequences, one must speak out in opposition to worldly authority when the future of the dharma is at stake. *Fuju fuse* advocates inherited this mandate from the founder Nichiren. And here—although *fuju fuse* documents seldom draw on them directly—we can find historical precedents, notably, in medieval China. Before the introduction of Buddhism, China had no monastic tradition and no autonomous religious institutions. As Buddhism spread and took root, tensions developed between the saṅgha, which sought institutional autonomy, and imperial dynasties that asserted absolute authority over their subjects. Monastic celibacy and rejection of family ties in pursuit of the individual, transcendent goal of liberation also drew criticism as a threat to social stability. Often such tensions found expression in disputes over the ceremonial issue of whether Buddhist monks should bow before the emperor and pay ritualized respect to parents—actions symbolic of the prime Confucian virtues of loyalty and filial piety.[74] Debates over the matter at court began in 340 under the reign of Emperor Cheng 成 (r.

73 *Da banniepan jing* 10, *T* no. 374: 12.425b, 3–6; trans. Mark L. Blum, *The Nirvana Sūtra* (Berkeley: Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai America, 2013), vol. 1, 320, very slightly modified. Nichiren's indebtedness to the *Nirvana Sūtra* is discussed below.

74 For an overview of these conflicts, see Mario Poceski, "Evolving Relationship between the Buddhist Monastic Order and the Imperial States of Medieval China," *Medieval Worlds* 6 (2017): 40–60.

325–342) of the Eastern Jin 晉 (266–420), when the regent Yu Bing 庾冰 (296–344) urged that monks should bow before the emperor; it resurfaced in 402, when the usurper Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369–404) renewed this demand and also attempted to laicize prominent monks in order to impress them into his service as officials. On the latter occasion, the monk Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416) of Lushan 廬山 submitted a celebrated treatise arguing that monastics, in leaving the household life, had transcended society and were not to be bound by its conventions.[75]

Huiyuan's example inaugurated a tradition of monastic remonstration. When the controversy recurred under later dynasties, often in conjunction with Daoist attacks on Buddhism and state attempts to curtail or suppress the saṅgha, clerical leaders memorialized the emperor, mobilized support, and spoke out in Buddhism's defense. In 578, Emperor Wu 武 (r. 561–578) of the Northern Zhou 北周 (557–581), having conquered the Northern Qi 北齊 (550–577), planned to proscribe Buddhism in that region. At that time, another Huiyuan 慧遠 (523–592), of the Jingying monastery 淨影寺 in the capital at Chang'an 長安, admonished him, warning that, regardless of their rank, those who destroy the three treasures (Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha) will fall into the Avīci Hell. In consequence, it is said, the emperor relented.[76] In 606, when Emperor Yang 煬 (r. 604–618) of the Sui 隋 (581–618) dynasty ordered that Buddhist monks should bow before him as Daoists did, the eminent scholar-monk and saṅgha leader Mingshan 明瞻 (d. 628) united all monks in refusing to bow and argued against the emperor's requirement on five occasions, eventually winning his respect.[77] In 662, when Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649–683) of the Tang 唐 (618–907) decreed that both Buddhist and Daoist monks should bow to the emperor and to their own parents, the monk Weixiu 威秀 (c. 613–712) organized some two hundred monks in the capital to draft a memorial, and

75 *Shamen bujing wangzhe lun* 沙門不敬王者論, translated in Leon Hurvitz, "'Render unto Caesar' in Early Chinese Buddhism: Hui-yüan's Treatise on the Exemption of the Buddhist Clergy from the Requirements of Civil Etiquette," *Sino-Indian Studies* 5, parts 3–4 (1957): 80–114. See Erik Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China* (1959; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 106–108, 160–163, for the 340 controversy, and 214, 231–239 for that of 402. For translation and discussion of a later defense of the Buddhist position, see Thomas Jülch, "On Whether or Not Buddhist Monks Should Bow to the Emperor: Yancong's (557–610) 'Futian lun' (Treatise of the Fields of Blessedness)," *Monumenta Serica* 60 (2012): 1–43.

76 *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (hereafter *XGSZ*) 8, *T* no. 2060: 50.490a23–c25; see also Shan Shan Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma in Daoxuan's *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*," unpublished MA thesis (McMaster University, 2019; http://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/handle/11375/25029, last accessed 12/13/2021), 99. I thank Ms. Zhao for permission to cite her study.

77 *XGSZ* 24, *T* no. 2060: 50.632c12–633a3; Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 53–54.

the famed vinaya master Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) similarly led monks at the imperial Ximing monastery 西明寺 in drafting petitions of protest to influential nobility and officials of the central government.[78]

Daoxuan's involvement is especially significant, because, as the author of the *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*T* no. 2060: *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳), he recorded the actions of these monastic protestors and transmitted them to posterity. To the typology of virtuous monks employed in Chinese monastic biography, *Xu gaoseng zhuan* adds the category of "Protecting the Dharma" (*hufa* 護法). In her study of this section of Daoxuan's biographical collection, Shan Shan Zhao notes the prominent place that Daoxuan accords to monks who actively resisted anti-Buddhist policies and attributes this emphasis to clerical concerns about possibilities of state interference. With two anti-Buddhist persecutions under the Northern Wei (386–534: 446–452) and Northern Zhou (557–581: 573–578) still fresh in historical memory, and repeated attacks on Buddhism by Daoists and by the court in the sixth and seventh centuries, Sui- and Tang-dynasty monks were keenly aware of the precarious nature of state-saṅgha relations. Daoxuan held up resistance to anti-Buddhist state policy, Zhao argues, as an important mode of "protecting the dharma" in an age seen as one of decline.[79]

While some such efforts proved successful in persuading rulers to postpone, mitigate, or even abandon their efforts to restrict the saṅgha, this was not universally the case, as we see Daoxuan's accounts of two monks who protested Tang Emperor Taizong's 太宗 (r. 626–649) 637 decree that the Daoist clergy should take precedence over Buddhist monastics in ranking and at ceremonies. Zhishi 智實 (601–638) of the Great Zongchi monastery 大總持寺 in the capital, together with one Fachang 法常 (567–645) and nine other eminent monks, submitted a memorial in protest. When the emperor sent a messenger to declare that those who disobeyed his edict would be punished, Zhishi alone spoke out and was severely beaten with a staff, later dying from his injuries.[80] Another prelate of the capital, Falin 法琳 (571–640), submitted several memorials to the throne protesting Daoist calls for the suppression of Buddhism; he too protested Emperor Taizong's directive. In 639, he was arrested and banished to

78 *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 25, *T* no. 2103; see the documents at 52.284c4–25; 284c26–285a22; 285a23–286c9; and 290b22–c4, as well as Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 6.

79 Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 2–8.

80 *XGSZ* 24, *T* no. 2060: 50. 635b18–636a9. See also Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 16–17, and Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 59.

Yi prefecture but died from illness en route.[81] Daoxuan praises these individuals as persons willing to give their lives to protect the dharma, thus stressing the value of their remonstrations, even when they did not succeed.

Nichiren, as we have seen, similarly stressed the need to rebuke those in power when they are guilty of "slandering of the dharma." He, too, praised Chinese exemplars who risked their lives to remonstrate with the emperor, including Huiyuan of the Jingying monastery and also Dao'an 道安 (d.u.), mentioned below, who both appear in Daoxuan's collection.[82] The mention of Huiyuan may be particularly significant. In his biographical treatment, Daoxuan writes that Huiyuan must surely exemplify what "the Great Sūtra" (*dajing* 大經) means by a "dharma protector bodhisattva."[83] Zhao suggests that "the Great Sūtra" here likely refers to the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, which stresses the theme of protecting the dharma in the evil age after the Buddha's passing.[84] If so, Daoxuan and Nichiren shared a source of inspiration in their valorizing of remonstration with worldly authority for the dharma's sake. The Tiantai/Tendai Buddhist exegetical tradition regards the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* as a restatement of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and Nichiren often drew on it in stressing the willingness to give even one's life, if need be, to protect the dharma, as seen, for example, in this passage from the *Sūtra*:

> It is like the case of a royal envoy, fluent in argument and skilled in expedients. When sent on a mission to another country, in the end he will not conceal his ruler's message, even if it should cost his life. Wise persons should do the same. In the midst of ordinary people and without

81 *XGSZ* 24, *T* no. 2060: 50. 636c13–638c12; Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 62–65.

82 "Sado gosho," *Teihon* 1:612. Nichiren also praises a later figure, the monk Fadao 法道 (1086–1147), who protested the anti-Buddhist measures of Emperor Huizong 徽宗 of the Northern Song 北宋 (960–1127) and in punishment was branded on the face and exiled south of the Yangzi River. (For Huizong's edicts targeting Buddhism, see J.J.M. de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China* [Amsterdam: Johannes Mueller, 1903] 1: 79–80.) In extolling the virtues of risking one's life to admonish the state, Nichiren also cited non-Buddhist examples, chiefly conscientious ministers of China's remote antiquity who had admonished the misrule of their respective emperors and were executed in consequence: Bigan 比干, who rebuked the excesses of King Zhou 紂王 of the Shang dynasty, and Guan Longfeng 關龍逢, who admonished the corruption of the last ruler of the Xia (tr. 2070–1600 BCE) dynasty, Jie 桀 (tr. 1728–1675 BCE). Nichiren drew in addition on Chinese moral classics, such the Former Han-dynasty collection *Xinxu* 新序 (New arrangements), which states, "One who fails to admonish a ruler's tyranny is not a loyal minister. One who fails to speak out for fear of death is not a man of courage" (quoted in *Yorimoto chinjō* 頼基陳状, *Teihon* 2: 1356).

83 *XGSZ* 8, *T* no. 2060: 50. 490c25.

84 "Protection of the Dharma," 2.

> begrudging their lives, they must proclaim without fail the Tathāgata's secret treasury of the Mahāyāna *vaipulya* [sūtras], that all sentient beings have the buddha nature.[85]

For Nichiren, the "secret treasury of the Mahāyāna" was the *Lotus Sūtra*, and this passage resonated with the *Lotus Sūtra*'s reference to the "envoy of the Tathāgata," who willingly confronts all obstacles to declare its teachings in an evil latter age.[86] He often cited the Tiantai master Guanding's 灌頂 (561–632) comment on this passage: "One's body is insignificant, but the dharma is weighty. One should give one's life to propagate the dharma."[87] This ethos informed Nichiren's own assertive proselytizing and acts of "admonishing the state," as well as the actions of the early modern *fuju fuse* practitioners, beginning with Nichiō, who remonstrated with government officials and were exiled or imprisoned in consequence.

A third element of *fuju fuse* protest with resonances in the larger Buddhist world is "relinquishing the body" (*sheshin* 捨身). Although controversial even within Buddhist communities, the practice of self-immolation for soteriological reasons is well attested across Asia.[88] Practitioners have set their bodies aflame, fasted to death, drowned themselves, or leapt from cliffs for a range of stated motives: as an offering to the Buddha or his dharma, as a compassionate self-sacrifice for others' sake, or in order to reach the pure land of a buddha or bodhisattva. Often these acts have been legitimized if not inspired by scriptural accounts of past actions of the Buddha or other great bodhisattvas who in prior lifetimes sacrificed bodily parts or even life itself for the sake of living beings. In the modern era, self-immolation has been and is being carried out to protest political suppression, as in the cases of Vietnamese monks and lay persons who burned themselves in the 1960s to oppose the anti-Buddhist policies of the Diệm regime, or the many Tibetan Buddhists who in recent years have similarly immolated their bodies to protest ruthless destruction of Tibetan religion and

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85 *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (*Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*) 9, *T* no. 374: 12.419a15–19. Nichiren first quotes this passage in his *Kyōkijikoku shō* 教機時国鈔 (*Teihon* 1: 245).

86 For the reference to the "Tathāgata's envoy," see *Miaofa lianhua jing* 4, *T* no. 262: 9.30c27–28. Predictions of hostility to be encountered by bodhisattvas who propagate the *Lotus Sūtra* in an evil latter age appear in the verse section of the "Perseverance" chapter, 36b21–37a1.

87 *Da banniepan jing shu* 大般涅槃經疏 12, *T* no. 1767: 38. 114b10–11.

88 There exists a substantial body of scholarship on this issue. See James Benn, *Burning for the Buddha: Self-Immolation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), and the sources listed there. I follow Benn in using "self-immolation" for all forms of religiously motivated self-sacrifice, not only burning the body (8).

culture under Chinese occupation.[89] James Benn rightly notes that Buddhist scriptural accounts of the past lives of the Buddha and other bodhisattvas do not include examples of "relinquishing the body" to oppose government suppression of Buddhism.[90] Nor do premodern historical cases reflect the concern for Buddhist national identity that inform many modern self-immolations. Nonetheless, we can find premodern examples of self-immolation with strong overtones of political protest—again, notably, in the "Protecting the Dharma" section of Daoxuan's *Continued Biographies*, as well as later collections.

Daoxuan records several instances among monks who retreated to the Zhongnan mountains south of Chang'an during the anti-Buddhist persecution of the Northern Zhou. In 574, when Emperor Wu abolished both Buddhism and Daoism, the monk Jing'ai 靜藹 (534–578) admonished him to his face; when his efforts failed, he withdrew to Zhongnan, where he sheltered some thirty monks who had also fled the persecution. Four years later, grieving that he had been "unable to protect the dharma," Jing'ai disemboweled himself.[91] According to his biography, Jing'ai's last testament gave additional, more conventional reasons for his act, such as disgust for the body and a desire to quickly behold the Buddha. Nonetheless, by placing him in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*'s section on "Protecting the Dharma," rather than "Abandoning the Body" (*yishen* 遺身), Daoxuan invests Jing'ai's self-immolation with a strong element of political protest. This element also occurs in the monk Daoji's 道積 (d. u.) response to Emperor Wu's edict, when he and seven companions fasted and prayed in repentance before an image of Maitreya; all died at the same time.[92] The monk Dao'an is similarly said to have refused Emperor Wu's invitation to serve him as a lay official and instead fasted to death to protest the persecution.[93]

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89 See for example Edward Miller, "Religious Revival and the Politics of Nation Building: Reinterpreting the 1963 'Buddhist Crisis' in South Vietnam," *Modern Asian Studies* 49, no. 6 (2015): 1903–1962, and Katarina Plank, "Living Torches of Tibet: Religious and Political Implications of the Recent Self Immolations," *Journal of Religion and Violence* 1, no. 3 (2013): 343–362.

90 Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 81.

91 *XGSZ* 23, *T* no. 2060: 50. 626c27–627b21; Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 27–29. See also the discussion of Jiang'ai's death in Stephen F. Teiser, "'Having Once Died and Returned to Life': Representations of Hell in Medieval China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48, no. 2 (1988), 437–439.

92 *XGSZ* 23, *T* no. 2060: 50.626c, 16–18; Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 29.

93 Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 29–32. Dao'an's terminal fast appears in the *Complete Chronicles of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs* (*Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀) 38, *T* no. 2035: 49. 358c10–12; Dao'an's biography in *XGSZ* 23 (*T* no. 2060: 50. 628a9–631b1) does not mention his manner of death.

Here again, we cannot trace a direct line of historical influence from medieval Chinese self-immolators to the early modern Japanese *fuju fuse* practitioners who took their own lives during the mid-1660s persecution. Nichiren himself did not endorse self-immolation, although he praised those who gave their lives in defending the dharma.[94] Nonetheless, self-immolation is well attested in other premodern Japanese Buddhist traditions, as is suicide committed for a range of ethical reasons. Those *fuju fuse* practitioners who took their lives would scarcely have lacked examples close at hand. Yet at the same time, their action would seem to represent appropriation from a broader Buddhist repertoire that also inspired Daoxuan's idea of self-immolation as a form of "protecting the dharma." While on one hand a selfless offering of one's life, "relinquishing the body" is simultaneously a transaction, in which the body of an ordinary person, bound by delusion, is exchanged for the superior body of an enlightened being.[95] Benn notes how some among Daoxuan's exemplars displayed confidence in "their ability to influence history in quite profound ways by bargaining with their bodies"[96] and cites the case of the monk Puji 普濟 (d. 581), who had taken refuge in the Zhongnan mountains from the Zhou emperor's persecution. Puji vowed that if Buddhism should flourish again, he would cast off his body as an offering. When Buddhism was restored under the Sui, in accordance with his vow, Puji assembled a crowd of witnesses on a western cliff and flung himself into the valley below.[97] The death of Puji, along with those of modern Vietnamese and Tibetan self-immolators, suggest themselves as politically inflected examples of self-immolation as a form of exchange in which practitioners offer their lives so that the dharma, suppressed under the existing regime, might one day again flourish.

What of the *fuju fuse* suicides? In their case, there was no realistic hope of mobilizing public opinion or changing government policy. Did they act in despair, seeing no other tenable course? Did they embrace the heroic ethos of the bodhisattvas of Buddhist scriptures, who gave their lives for the dharma's sake? While motives were likely varied and complex, the written record, frag-

94 Even though auto-cremation has its locus classicus in the *Lotus Sūtra*, in the story of Bodhisattva Medicine King (Skt. Bhaiṣajyarāja; Jp. Yakuō 薬王), Nichiren considered it a practice appropriate only to great saints of prior eras and not to ordinary practitioners of the Final Dharma age. See Jacqueline I. Stone, "Giving One's Life for the *Lotus Sūtra* in Nichiren's Thought," *Hokke bunka kenkyū* 33 (2007): 51–70.

95 Reiko Ohnuma, *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 217–223.

96 Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 81.

97 *XGSZ* 27, *T* no. 2060: 50.680c, 16–20; Benn, ibid., 80–81.

mentary though it is, suggests that these individuals may indeed have offered up their bodies in the spirit of the *Lotus Sūtra*'s words: "We do not cherish bodily life. We value only the supreme way."[98] A short account survives, written or dictated by Nissei, the *fuju fuse* priest, mentioned above, who secluded himself in an ancient tomb with four nuns to watch over them during their terminal fast as their religious guide and who also joined them in death. "We entered this tomb rejoicing," Nissei said, "as though it were Sacred Eagle Peak, [the buddha land of] Ever-Tranquil Light (*jakkō ryōzen* 寂光霊山). We hung several maṇḍalas and offered flowers, incense, and lamps that we had brought. Then we five as one placed our palms together, closed our eyes, and chanted Namu Myōhō-renge-kyō over and over, not sparing our voices. Nothing, I think, could be more sublime. Surely at this time the three treasures and all deities have descended here in response." In the future, Nissei added, sincere persons should visit this tomb as a holy site where *Lotus Sūtra* devotees had practiced in accordance with its teaching.[99]

The notion of Buddhism, not as a discrete, systematic entity, but as a fluid "repertoire" of ideas, practices, values, symbols, and models for action, has proved useful in accounting for internal inconsistencies, tensions, even contradictions within the tradition, without postulating problematic distinctions between a "core essence" and later accretions. The case of the early modern Nichiren *fuju fuse* proponents suggests that the idea of Buddhism as a repertoire also helps explain the recurrence of similar patterns of action across Buddhist cultures and time periods, even where evidence for direct historical connection is lacking. Although inflected by their particular strand of exclusive *Lotus Sūtra* devotion, the actions undertaken by early modern Japanese *fuju fuse* proponents—alms refusal, direct remonstration with the ruler or his functionaries, and self-immolation—are also found, *mutatis mutandis*, in other instances of Buddhist resistance to hostile regimes.

Sometimes these acts have succeeded in changing or at least meliorating government policy; often, as with the *fuju fuse* movement, they have not. Yet one element they seem to share, across time and region down to the present day, is an underlying conviction on the actors' part that, being grounded in the dharma, such actions are ultimately efficacious, even if not in an immediately visible register or timeframe. Where karmic causality is presumed to operate,

98 *Miaofa lianhua jing* 4, *T* no. 262: 9.36c18.

99 "Shashin no gyōja sutegaki" 捨身の行者捨書 3, *Shiryōshū*, 20–21. The tomb, one among the Sarayama tumuli cluster 佐良山古墳群 in Fukuda in Tsuyama city, Okayama prefecture, has indeed become a shrine honoring the five.

the cosmos must respond to human resolve. That premise distinguishes these modes of action from other, secular forms of principled civil disobedience and identifies them as "Buddhist" protest.

Abbreviations

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FFS *Fuju fuse shiryō* 不受不施史料. Ed. Nichiren Fuju Fuse-ha Kenkyūjo 日蓮不受不施派研究所. Vols. 1 and 5. Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1981, 1983.

NKKK *Nichiren kyōgaku kenkyūjo kiyō* 日蓮教学研究所紀要. Published by Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo 立正大学日蓮教学研究所.

NST *Nihon shisō taikei* 日本思想大系. 67 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970–1982.

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T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大蔵経. Ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭. 100 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1935.

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XGSZ *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, *T* no. 2060. Compiled by Daoxuan 道宣.

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