

The Press as a Medium for Change: Periodical Publications and the Shaping of Modern Chinese Buddhism

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2019

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University of Pittsburgh, 2019

Through the lens of Buddhist periodicals, this dissertation argues that the modernization of Chinese Buddhism was shaped by debates, polemics, and communications via the periodical press, resulting in a multifaceted modernity discourse that allowed a progressive vision to coexist with a conservative one. Despite recent scholarship on the adaptation and transformation of Buddhism in Republican China, insufficient attention has been paid to the mediating role of Buddhist periodicals. This has led to a skewed historical view in which the reform discourse initiated by Taixu is seen as even more dominant than it actually was. By identifying seven periodicals from both conservative and progressive camps of Buddhists, this dissertation contends that the reform camp's successful employment of the new medium of periodicals resulted in the dominance of both its own position and its modernization rhetoric.

By exploring, however, periodicals published by the conservative camp led by Dixian and Yinguang, I illustrate that the conservative camp also produced periodicals for the purpose of propagating particular Buddhist teachings to a targeted audience. In order to show the dynamics of the Buddhist periodical press, this dissertation explores several themes: the relationship between Buddhism and science; the discussion of Buddhism and the state; concrete practices concerning the temple expropriation campaign; and the exposition of Buddhist asceticism and vegetarianism. Buddhist periodicals not only propagated arguments of elite leaders, but also included many

ordinary contributors who had similar concerns and who ruminated on these themes. These authors are the main disseminators and agitators whose texts directly influenced the Buddhist community.

Furthermore, this dissertation discusses the often-neglected writings on Buddhist asceticism and vegetarianism in these periodicals. By doing so, it shows the fluid boundary between the reform and conservative orientations—the reform camp valued ascetic practices that showed Buddhist faith and countered charges of corruption, while the conservative camp was willing to absorb modern interpretations to renew the vegetarian tradition. Overall, this dissertation shows that modern Chinese Buddhism was shaped by two camps and the periodicals they produced.

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List of Abbreviations

- B *Dazangjing bubian* 大藏經補編 (CBETA Edition)
- CBETA Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association 中華電子佛典協會
- MFQ *Minguo fojiao qikan wenxian jicheng* 民国佛教期刊文献集成
- MFQB *Minguo fojiao qikan wenxian jicheng bubian* 民国佛教期刊文献集成补编
- QS *Taixu dashi quanshu* 太虚大师全书
- T *Taishô shinshû daizôkyô* 大正新脩大藏經 (CBETA Edition)
- X *Xuzangjing* 卍新纂續藏 (CBETA Edition)

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Preface

With the completion of this project, I would like to express my deepest and sincerest gratitude to my professors at the University of Pittsburgh. First, I am grateful to the late Prof. Linda Penkower, who introduced me into the field of Buddhist studies, encouraged me to pursue an avenue of academic interest, and taught me the meaning of being a scholar. She generously shared her insights and provided timely feedbacks on my work, and also encouraged me to freely develop my own ideas. Without her rigorous training and emphasis on details, this dissertation would not have reached its final form. I wish to thank Prof. Evelyn Rawski for her kind advice, invaluable teaching, and broad knowledge in Chinese history, which shaped my perspective on the study of modern Chinese Buddhism and motivated me to delve deeper into my research materials. I am indebted to Prof. Clark Chilson for introducing me to the field of Japanese religions and patiently helping me to hone my Japanese reading ability even when he was on a tight schedule. Moreover, in the sad loss of Prof. Penkower, both Prof. Rawski and Prof. Chilson compassionately agree to chair my dissertation committee, for which I am eternally grateful.

I am also grateful to my committee members, Prof. Adam Shear, Prof. Rachel Kranson, and Prof. Kun Qian. Prof. Shear showed me the methodological potential of studying the print culture, and inspired me to pursue research on Buddhist periodicals. Prof. Kranson graciously introduced me to the landscape of American religions and diasporic studies, broadening my perspective on gender issues within religious studies. Prof. Qian's constructive comments make solid improvements on this dissertation.

Many people and supporting departments from the University of Pittsburgh community helped me tremendously, making my study and research experience delightful, enjoyable, and

without difficulties. I truly appreciate the University Library System, where my requests for book purchases were always satisfied, and the Asian Studies Center for the financial support which made my study possible. I especially thank Haihui Zhang from Pitt's East Asian Library for her constant support in gaining access to research materials held by Pitt and other institutions. My fellow colleagues from Department of Religious Studies created a positive and friendly environment where I always felt heartened and inspired. My fellow Asianists in the department, Hongyu Wu, Margarita Delgado Creamer, and Soorakkulame Pemarathana, have accompanied me through all the crucial milestones and graciously shared their knowledge and experience with me. Patrick Hughes, David Givens, and my other fellows in the graduate program sincerely extended their warm support to me, for which I am grateful.

My friends in Pittsburgh have cheered me up and provided me with their care, support, and advice. I thank Zhou Yu and Ma Bing for being my wonderful confidants. I am indebted to Ren Meng and Ma Rongqian for sharing their academic and career insights. I am fortunate to have support from Lu Xiaorui, and I have enjoyed many good conversations with Zhang Zinan.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents, Lu Tiepeng and Mo Zhijuan. Without your unfailing support and the exemplary education you have given me, I could not be what I am today and nor could I have achieved so much.

1.0 Introduction

In February 1913, a report was printed in the fourth issue of the journal *Buddhist Miscellany* (*Foxue congbao* 佛學叢報) about the proceedings of the memorial service for Master Jichan 寄禪, a renowned monk and late president of the Chinese Buddhist General Association. Jichan passed away in November 1912 during a negotiation for the protection of Buddhism with the newly-founded Beijing government.¹ The report stated that “The monk Taixu made a speech urging for three revolutions: an organizational revolution, an economic revolution, and a doctrinal revolution.”² However, after this report, there was an editorial comment critical of Taixu, which stated that “the notion of Buddhist revolution is new; yet it is a delusional idea propagated by the ignorant. It is vulgar to speak about it in public.”³ The report and comment were less than two pages in length, yet they reflected major tensions within both Chinese Buddhism and Chinese society. Moreover, criticism raised in the comment foretold the important role that Buddhist periodicals would play in shaping the modernization discourse of Buddhism for the next thirty years.

The anecdote above indicates several key issues for modern Chinese Buddhism: the external threat from the state and the social ethos of revolution; the internal radicalism and its opposition; and the use of periodicals to engage in debates and propagation. For Chinese

¹ Don A. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 79.

² “Jichan shangren zhuidaohui jishi 寄禪上人追悼會紀事 [Report of the Memorial Service for Master Jichan],” *Foxue congbao*, no. 04(1913), in MFQ 02: 92-93.

³ “Jichan shangren zhuidaohui jishi fu an 寄禪上人追悼會紀事：附按 [The Editorial Comment for Report of the Memorial Service for Master Jichan],” *Foxue congbao*, no. 04(1913), in MFQ 02: 93.

Buddhism, the twentieth century comes with grave external challenges. Unlike previous major persecutions of Buddhism, initiated mainly by the state, the crisis the Buddhist community faced in the modern age comes from all fronts. The deterioration of Chinese society due to encounters with the Western world led to growing hostility toward Chinese Buddhism. Chinese elites, who openly embraced Western learning, cast accusations of being unproductive, backward, and hidebound and severely undercut the reputation of Buddhism in Chinese society. Despite some intellectuals drawing inspiration from Buddhist teachings for social renewal, the Buddhist community, particularly the monastics, was deemed unfit for the new society that China ought to transform to.

The new age also brought a technical revolution, and advancement in communications was one of them. The appearance of newspapers, magazines, journals, and periodicals set up channels for the dissemination of new knowledge and interaction with new ideas. In this dissertation, I define periodicals as texts published at a regular interval and on a non-daily basis. Periodicals used by the Protestant Missionaries in the early nineteenth century became a medium for Chinese intellectuals to propagate their reform proposals for the country. Eventually, in the early twentieth century, the Chinese Buddhist community started to engage with periodical publications. Thus, this dissertation is about how Buddhist periodicals contributed to the shaping of the Buddhist modernization discourse in China.

The notion “modern Chinese Buddhism” carries two connotations. First it signifies Chinese Buddhism within the timeframe between the middle nineteenth century till the Communist takeover in 1949. Second, it implies a teleological narrative within that timeframe in which Buddhism in China was undergoing a tremendous transformation that involved a total breakaway from the past and a progressive development in accordance with the newly introduced Western

modernity discourse. It is this latter understanding for “modern Chinese Buddhism” that this dissertation aims to challenge and complicate.

Buddhist periodical literature belongs to the tradition of Buddhist print culture, which thrived ever since Buddhism entered China.⁴ Yet they are also an anomaly in that they were produced during a crisis for survival rather than on the basis of state patronage that Buddhism once received for production projects such as translating sutras in medieval China. Hence, Buddhist periodical literature denotes a particular historical contingency, distinguishing it from other representations of Buddhist print culture.

1.1 The Monastic Crisis: Buddhism and the Crisis of the State

Beginning in the late Ming dynasty (sixteenth century), Chinese Buddhism largely developed into two forms of organization: one as the public temple, which possesses a huge establishment with a monastic population as great as one thousand people, and another as the private temple with a much smaller property and as few as one or two monks. Holmes Welch, a pioneering scholar on modern Chinese Buddhism, astutely perceived the difference between those two forms of Buddhist temples.⁵ Generally speaking, the private temple is in closer contact with the local community because it relies on the income of community services like funerals and other rituals, while the public temple tends to be more reclusive and isolated from society as it enjoyed a regular land income. Therefore, the private temple performed ritual services for income, with the

⁴ John Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 164-185.

⁵ Holmes Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, 1900-1950* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967) 137.

public temple engaging in these services less frequently. This mechanism of operation became entrenched by the middle of the Qing dynasty (around the eighteenth century), so many Buddhist monks primarily focused on ritual technique and gradually lost interest in spiritual pursuit and doctrinal studies. The situation became even worse when lower-class candidates, who sought to avoid poverty due to wars and natural disasters, enlarged the monastic community population. In addition, the Certificate of Ordination system was abandoned by the Qing state in 1774,⁶ thus leaving the responsibility of monastic management to the temples, resulting in a deteriorating monastic community.

The crisis of Buddhism was associated with the crisis of the state. The expansion of the capitalist system forcefully pulled the Qing state onto the world map against its will. The Treaty of Nanjing, along with several ensuing treaties in the 1840s, opened the coastal border of China to Western powers, and Protestant Missionaries who had been trying to enter China finally gained legitimate access. The consequence was another blow to the Qing state. Inspired by Protestant teachings, a downhearted Chinese literatus who failed the entry-level civil service exam led a huge rebellion, the Taiping Rebellion, and tore up half of the Qing state, including its abundant lower Yangtze region, where Buddhism had thrived for more than centuries. After putting down this rebellion in 1863, the Qing state and some Chinese intellectuals started to acknowledge the inferior status of China and tried to emulate Western technological advancement. The failure of the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895 forced Chinese intellectuals to cogitate about the cultural and political reforms that enabled Japan to rapidly transform itself into a powerful state. The ethos of catching up with the West lasted well beyond the fall of the Qing state in 1911. In the process, Chinese

⁶ Guo Deng 果灯, *Mingmo Qingchu lvzong qianhuapai zhi xingqi* 明末清初律宗千華派之興起 [The Rise of Qianhua Faction in the Vinaya School at the End of Ming and Beginning of Qing Dynasties] (Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing Corp, 2004), 48.

traditions were evaluated with suspicion and underwent reconstruction, and the criteria of being modern, scientific, civilized, and progressive, became the most highly valued.

These circumstances did not favor the Buddhist community. Even though some Chinese intellectuals who pursued modern Western thought drew inspiration from Buddhist philosophers such as Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865–1898), Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869–1936), and Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929),⁷ the monastic community of Buddhism was disdained for its “parasitic” status.⁸ After China's defeat in the First Sino-Japan War at 1895, Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837–1909), a high-ranking Qing official who preferred to learn Western technology as a practical means to strengthening the nation while retaining the Confucian tradition as the Chinese essence, proposed to “build schools with temple properties (廟產興學),”⁹ thus providing an excuse for the government to confiscate both Buddhist and Taoist temples. Such a campaign set an example for the succeeding Republican government to imitate, particularly under the banner of anti-superstition and promoting science. This proposal had a negative impact on Buddhist temples across the nation, albeit to different degrees depending on the region. Studies by Paul Katz reveal that the situation was relatively more severe in northern China than in southern regions, and temples in urban areas were more frequently subject to confiscation than those in the rural area.¹⁰ For example, in Shanghai, 270 out of 1135 temples were expropriated by the authorities according to the survey, while in Ruian 瑞安 County near Wenzhou 溫州, 42 out of 340 temples were converted

⁷ See Sin-wai Chan, *Buddhism in Late Ch'ing Political Thought* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1985).

⁸ Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 33.

⁹ Paul R. Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014), 24. Also see Vincent Goossaert, “1898: The Beginning of the End for Chinese Religion?” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 65, no. 2 (May, 2006): 307-336.

¹⁰ Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate*, 38-43.

either to schools or government offices.¹¹ Shuk-wah Poon's research of temples in Guangzhou also illustrates that the municipal government attempted to extract resources from temple properties by either selling or heavily taxing them.¹² On *Sound of Sea Tide* (Haichao yin 海潮音), one of the Buddhist periodicals to be explored in this dissertation, an editor also summarized that at least eighty incidents on temple property were reported by the journal by 1935.¹³ All in all, the Buddhist community in the early twentieth century China was not considered a contributing force for the Chinese modernization envisioned by reform-minded intellectuals and the state, and this situation prompted the Buddhist community to respond.

In response to the challenge, two camps emerged within the Buddhist community. One was made up of prominent monks who were cultivated in line with the traditional Buddhist curriculum of learning and practicing Chan, Pure Land, and other Buddhist teachings, with an emphasis on doctrinal orthodoxy; Dixian 諦閑 (1858–1932), Yinguang 印光 (1862–1940), and Yuanying 圓瑛 (1878–1953), along with their disciples and followers, are representative of this practice. They were not ignorant of the need for reform, yet because of their close connection with the Buddhist establishment, they realized the difficulty of transforming the monastic community into a totally different form. This camp is generally described as the “conservative camp” by another camp, which was led by Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947). Taixu received a traditional Buddhist education in his early monastic years, but later studied at the Jetavana Hermitage 祇洹精捨, an institution founded

¹¹ Ibid., 47, 54.

¹² Shuk-wah Poon, *Negotiating Religion in Modern China: State and Common People in Guangzhou, 1900–1937* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2011), 42-65.

¹³ Daxing 大醒, “Shiwu nian lai jiaonan zhi huigu 十五年來教難之回顧 [Looking Back at Persecutions of Buddhism in the Past Fifteen Years],” *Haichao yin*, no. 01 (1935), in MFQ 189: 267.

by Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (1837–1911), where both monks and lay Buddhists were instructors. The Jetavana Hermitage included both traditional Buddhist doctrinal studies as well as secular learning, such as the study of modern Chinese literature and English.¹⁴ Thus Taixu was more receptive to the revolutionary ethos that pervaded early twentieth century China, and he emerged as the leading figure advocating Buddhist reform.

Dixian and Yinguang were one generation ahead of Taixu and were educated in a more traditional manner. Dixian was ordained at Guoqing Temple 國清寺 on Mt. Tiantai, where the Tiantai Buddhism was formulated by Zhiyi in the sixth century AD.¹⁵ He was subsequently admitted into the Tiantai lineage, and dedicated the rest of his life to the propagation of Tiantai Buddhist philosophy in modern China.¹⁶ Dixian was suspicious of Taixu's reform proposal, fearing it would lead Buddhism astray, and Taixu was not satisfied with Dixian's conservative stance either.¹⁷ Similar to Dixian, Yinguang was dedicated to a sectarian teaching — the Pure Land Buddhism, which preaches on universal salvation and is well-received by lay Buddhists.¹⁸ Born and ordained in Shaanxi province in Northwestern China, Yinguang spent his early years touring in the North and stayed three years in Zifu Temple 資福寺 at Beijing, which was an important site

¹⁴ Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 70.

¹⁵ Pan Guimin 潘桂明, and Wu Zhongwei 吴忠伟, *Zhongguo tiantaizong tongshi shang* 中国天台宗通史上 [The General History of Tiantai Buddhism in China Volume One] (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2007), 83-100.

¹⁶ Chen Yongge 陈永革, *Fojiao honghua de xiandai zhuanxin: minguo zhejiang fojiao yanjiu 1912-1949* 佛教弘化的现代转型: 民国浙江佛教研究 1912-1949 [The Modern Transformation of Buddhism Promulgation: Study of Zhejiang Buddhism in Republican China 1912-1949] (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2003), 80-84.

¹⁷ James Carter, *Heart of Buddha, Heart of China: The Life of Tanxu, a Twentieth Century Monk* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 66-67.

¹⁸ See: Charles B. Jones, "Foundations of Ethics and Practice in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 10, no. 2 (2003): 107-130.

dedicated to spreading the Pure Land teaching.¹⁹ In 1893, Yinguang moved to Mt. Putuo 普陀山 in the Lower Yangtze area and remained in the region for the rest of his life.²⁰ Yinguang was greatly venerated by lay Buddhists, and was on good terms with Dixian. He also recognized the necessity to spread Buddhist teaching through the print industry, but mainly focused on reprinting morality books rather than periodicals, as Chapter Two shall discuss.

Taixu was keen on modern knowledge and technology. Even though he did not start the first Buddhist periodical in China, he nevertheless recognized the importance of print media in the late Qing years.²¹ As he started to launch his Buddhist reform campaign, he and his followers swiftly engaged in periodical publications in various regions of China and even at some Chinese diaspora territories like Singapore. Therefore, the periodical publications became an important platform through which Taixu propagated his Buddhist reform vision. The camp of the Buddhist establishment also was sensitive to the changing social tide and the significance of the periodical press. Members of this camp also participated in the making and publication of Buddhist periodicals, using the channel to voice their concerns and visions for the modern transformation of Chinese Buddhism. As such, the Buddhist periodicals gained agency in terms of exerting a unique influence over Buddhist modernization. Though leading figures like Taixu, Yinguang, Dixian, and Yuanying still were revered, a growing number of participants relied upon periodicals to communicate with audiences with unprecedented speed and went beyond a small circle of elites to engage with the general Buddhist community. For example, there were sections in major

¹⁹ Zhang Xuesong, “A critical study on Yinguang and his reconstruction of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism” (PhD diss., Chinese University of Hongkong, 2008), 131-132; Chen Yongge, *Fojiao honghua de xiandai zhuanxin*, 143.

²⁰ Chen Yongge, *Fojiao honghua de xiandai zhuanxin*, 144.

²¹ Taixu, “Fojiao xunbao xuyan 佛化旬報緒言 (Preface to the Buddhistic Trimonthly),” in *Taixu dashi quanshu di sanshier juan* 太虛大師全書 第三十二卷 (Complete Works of Master Taixu, vol.32), (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2004), 377.

Buddhist periodicals in which epistolary exchanges were printed. These sections presented discussions of specific issues regarding sutra reading, personal practice, trends of social modernization, and so forth. Besides what was in these correspondence sections, there were the writings by hundreds of authors printed by Buddhist periodicals, sometimes indiscriminately selected by editors who welcomed debates. Thus, the modernization of Chinese Buddhism was democratized by a press that encouraged mass participation.

An examination of Buddhism at the time, including the Buddhist periodicals reveals a discrepancy of power between the two camps. The reform camp triumphed over the conservative camp in terms of their periodical propaganda, while the conservative camp controlled more monastic and economic resources. Not surprisingly, the reform camp periodicals more frequently advocated institutional changes, although they had no direct power over major institutions, while the conservative camp periodicals expressed a desire to maintain the status quo and to implement only adaptations that would fend off external threats.

1.2 The Role of Periodicals in Modern China

Protestant missionaries brought periodical publications to China in the early nineteenth century before the First Opium War. Both Robert Morrison and William Milne were sent to China by the London Missionary Society, and in 1815 Morrison, with the help of Milne, printed the first

Chinese periodical in Malacca, a Chinese diasporic community outside of Mainland China.²² Later on, more and more Western missionaries engaged in the publication of periodicals and newspapers as the Qing government was gradually forced to open its borders to the West. The primary purpose of these missionaries' periodicals was to introduce Christianity, specifically Protestantism, to the Chinese. However, the initial result was less than satisfactory, as few Chinese were converted. Very soon, these missionaries decided to include more secular content, such as news and introduction of Western knowledge, so as to attract more readers. And such tactics succeeded. For example, the *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* published by Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff, a Prussian missionary, included various secular content and printed about 900 copies of its first issue, with 300 more being required later.²³

The modern periodical became the foremost conduit for transferring Western knowledge into China, and its role grew more important as Chinese intellectuals utilized it to disseminate their own reform propositions. The periodical press played a crucial role in brewing the reform ethos advocated by Chinese intellectuals like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, and Chinese literati came to regard journalism as “a legitimate endeavor for themselves rather than clerical work reserved for minor functionaries.”²⁴ With wider engagement from Chinese literati, in particular those who aspired to modernize the nation through emulating the West and Japan, the Chinese press became

²² Xiantao Zhang, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese Press: The Influence of the Protestant Missionary Press in Late Qing China* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 35-41. Also see Fang Hanqi 方汉奇 ed, *Zhongguo xinwen shiye tongshi diyijuan* 中国新闻事业通史第一卷 [The General History of Chinese Journalism Volume 1] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1992), 247-260.

²³ Xiantao Zhang, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese Press* (London: Routledge, 2007), 40.

²⁴ Seungjoo Yoon, “Literati-Journalists of the Chinese Progress (Shiwu bao) in Discord, 1896-1898,” in *Rethinking the 1898 Reform Period: Political and Cultural Change in Late Qing China*, eds. Rebecca E. Karl and Peter G. Zarrow (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 51.

the platform through which various Western concepts and knowledge were introduced and discussed.

Another characteristic of the Chinese press in the late Qing era was its political orientation. The Qing government tried to impose limitations on the Chinese press by banning some presses and in other cases censoring content, as in the case of *Su Bao* (蘇報案),²⁵ but it could not stop the political debate and the “awakening” lessons that these presses tried to inculcate in the public. The 1911 Revolution, which brought an end to the dynastic rule in China, was catalyzed more by the ethos of revolution by the press than through military uprising. The political debates taking place in various Chinese newspapers and periodicals ignited the passion of both the general public and some officials within the Qing government, who also subscribed to some of the reformist publications.²⁶ It would not be an overstatement to argue that the Chinese press led to the demise of feudalism and the modern transformation of the nation.

Despite the political inspiration and agendas of many Chinese presses, they all strove to bring modern enlightenment to the public by introducing Western scientific knowledge, customs, and culture which they deemed essential for transforming the nation. Among these importations of knowledge, the idea of science has proved to have a lasting influence in China till this day. As has been noted, proposals and ideologies for transforming China into a modern nation had come and gone in the first half of the twentieth century, but the idea of science has remained powerful,

²⁵ The incident involving the newspaper *Su Bao* happened in 1903 when the Qing government arrested two of its chief writers, Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 and Zou Rong 鄒容, and forcibly stopped its publication for printing articles advocating political revolution. Elisabeth Kaske, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education: 1895 – 1919* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 163-165; Fang Hanqi 方汉奇, *Zhongguo jindai baokan shi* 中国近代报刊史 [A History of Modern Chinese Journalism] (Taiyuan, China: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1991), 230-252.

²⁶ Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: 'Shibao' and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 20-24.

not only for its power to facilitate material advancement, but for the equivalence of science with Western civilization that enjoys wealth and superior national strength.²⁷ The beginning of this dominating discourse of science started with the defeat of the Qing regime by the Western powers in the 1840s, and it was propagated as a social, cultural, and political ideology through newspapers and periodicals. David Wright observed that before any serious institutional education for science was available in China, Chinese readers in the mid-nineteenth century were exposed to some of the latest scientific discoveries in the West through popular journalism, mainly produced by Western missionaries.²⁸ In the 1890s, Chinese literati started to disseminate scientific knowledge through their own periodicals; for example, Yan Fu 严复 (1854 – 1921) serialized his translation of Thomas Henry Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* in *Guowen huibian* 國聞匯編 (Trimonthly of National News),²⁹ and thus launched the dominance of social Darwinism in turn-of-the-century China. The domination of science as an ideology reached its peak in the 1920s after the May Fourth Movement, and the study of natural science replaced social Darwinism as the predominant discourse.³⁰

The acceptance of science as a superior principle in early twentieth-century China inevitably posed a grave threat to many Chinese traditions and religions, including Buddhism, suffered critical onslaughts. The ideology of science, promulgated by the popular press, introduced the concept of superstition to justify the encroachment on Chinese religion, which fueled frequent social and political harassments on the religious territory. After the revolution, various

²⁷ Timothy Cheek, *The Intellectual in Modern Chinese History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 80.

²⁸ David Wright, *Translating Science: The Transmission of Western Chemistry into Late Imperial China, 1840-1900* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 149-151.

²⁹ Fang Hanqi ed, *Zhongguo xinwen shiye tongshi diyijuan*, 616-619.

³⁰ Timothy Cheek, *The Intellectual in Modern Chinese History*, 80.

governmental actors attempted seizure of religious properties. And the project of state modernization was deemed to inevitably involve the secularization or rationalization of Chinese religion, as the writings by Liang Qichao showed.³¹ Meanwhile, the dichotomy of religion and superstition, or *zongjiao* 宗教 and *mixin* 迷信, became a convenient weapon for many secular intellectuals to use against Buddhism, Taoism, and folk religions in China,³² and under such a banner the central and the local governments made repeated moves on religious property.

Realizing the predicament, defenders of Chinese religions also took their stand in the press, and lay Buddhists engaged in the production of periodicals most energetically. The first Buddhist periodicals, *Buddhist Miscellanies* (*Foxue congbao* 佛學叢報, 1912–1914), was founded by Di Chuqing 狄楚青 (1872–1941), a lay Buddhist who studied in Japan and was an ardent supporter of the 1911 Revolution. The interaction between monastics and lay Buddhists was a unique scenario in modern China. As mentioned, monastic decline or stagnation, in terms of Buddhist studies, led to a situation in which lay Buddhists assumed the roles of defender and proponent of Buddhism amid the rapid cultural and social changes. Yang Wenhui, who started the Jetavana Hermitage, was first known for his effort to reintroduce some of the lost Buddhist texts from Japan to China in the late nineteenth century; he was also one of the first Chinese intellectuals using the modern philological method to study Buddhism.³³ Therefore, in its inception, the Chinese Buddhist modernization effort was led by a lay Buddhist who profoundly influenced the trajectory of the project from aspects of printing, Buddhist scholarly studies, and new Buddhist education.

³¹ Rebecca Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 8.

³² Prasenjit Duara, "Knowledge and Power in the Discourse of Modernity: The Campaigns Against Popular Religion in Early Twentieth-Century China," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (1991): 75-80.

³³ Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 4-6.

The Chinese monastics quickly caught up with the trend. After *Foxue congbao*, several Buddhist periodicals were produced by clergy in the 1910s, including *Fojiao yuebao* 佛教月報 (The Buddhist Monthly, 1913), and *Jueshe congshu* 覺社叢書 (The Journal of the Awakening Society, 1918–1919), both of which included Taixu among their respective cofounders. As a monastic pioneer longing for Buddhist modernization, Taixu astutely perceived the importance of periodicals and their potential for propaganda, and he inspired a large group of followers, both monastic and lay Buddhists, to engage in the production of Buddhist periodicals, in which his followers spared no effort to disseminate the demand for Buddhist reform. After 1920, the number of Buddhist periodicals increased exponentially, and over the course of the first half of the twentieth century, about two hundred and thirty Buddhist periodicals appeared in China and Chinese diasporic communities.³⁴ Hence, Buddhist periodicals became a major platform through which Buddhists discussed issues deemed important for the formation of modern Chinese Buddhism; furthermore, as Gregory Scott has argued,³⁵ these periodicals themselves emerged as a unique agent in shaping the form and format of debates within the Buddhist community.

³⁴ Huang Xianian 黄夏年, ed., *Mingguo fojiao qikan wenxian jicheng bubian mulu* 民国佛教期刊文献集成补编 目录 [The Catalogue of the Collection of Buddhist Periodical Literature in Republican China] (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 2008), 1.

³⁵ Gregory Adam Scott, “Conversion by the Book: Buddhist Print Culture in Early Republican China” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 2013), 38.

1.3 The Internal Struggle

There was not a unanimous vision for the modern shape of Chinese Buddhism, as discussion of the aforementioned two general camps illustrated. Such a dichotomy resembles the tradition vs. modern model criticized by Paul Cohen, which posits the inertia of the traditional culture and the predominant role played by the West in shaping the modernization process in China.³⁶ However, despite similarities, the framework here differs in two specific aspects. First, the designation of reform and conservative came not from scholarly analysis in later days, but from the very start of the Buddhist modernization project since 1912. Holmes Welch detailed the Incident of Jinshan, or the Invasion of Jinshan 大鬧金山,³⁷ an important event signaling the chasm within the monastic community between radical reform and conservatism. In January 1912, Taixu and a group of reform-minded monks organized a conference in the Jinshan Temple in the name of the Association for the Advancement of Buddhism 佛教协进会, an organization founded by Taixu. During the conference, Renshan 仁山 (1887-1951), a radical reformist who had a personal feud with the senior monks of the temple, called for a takeover and for using the temple's resources to fund a new Buddhist seminary. The proposal was accepted by the conference, yet came as a surprise to resident monks of the Jinshan Temple. A few days later, a group of resident monks attacked Renshan and other reform monks; the resulting bloodshed shocked the Buddhist community.³⁸ As Taixu later recalled, "From this incident, the reputation of my Buddhist

³⁶ Paul Cohen *China Unbound: Evolving Perspectives on the Chinese Past* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 62-64.

³⁷ Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 28-33.

³⁸ Yin Shun 印順, "Taixu dashi nianpu 太虛大師年譜 [The Chronicle of Master Taixu]," in *Yinshun fashi foxue zuzuo quanji* vol. 06 印順法師著作全集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009): 33.

reformation spread, and since then it has been either respected, feared, despised, or admired by the people.”³⁹ The speech given by Taixu at the time of Master Jichan’s memorial service in 1913 was, not surprisingly, negatively received since the incident led to a severe confrontation between the reformists and the Buddhist establishment. However, besides the Jinshan incident, it was very rare for internal struggles within the Buddhist community in Republican China to result in violence and bloodshed.

Hence the dichotomy between modern reform and traditional conservatism pervaded the rhetoric of the Buddhist periodicals since they first appeared, and it has less to do with the antagonism between China and the West than the factional struggle within the Buddhist community. Second, these two camps were not static entities, but fluid in terms of their claims, practices, and proposals for the Buddhist modernization project. Self-contradictions were not uncommon as these Buddhists were responding to a changing environment. The rivalry between these two camps, often being reduced to the personal feud between Taixu and Dixian, Yinguang, and Yuanying, was later exaggerated by many of their followers. Study of the periodicals produced by these two camps reveals the complicated and intertwined relationship between these monastic leaders.

The internal struggle between these two camps was not characterized by personal feuds but by the different visions for the shape of and varied approaches to Buddhist modernization. For Taixu and his supporters, a systematic overhaul of Chinese Buddhism, from doctrinal interpretation to monastic organization and lay participation, was warranted and necessary. The Buddhist education Taixu received from Yang Wenhui’s Jetavana Hermitage enabled him to be more sensitive and receptive toward the social change and new ethos that permeated the period;

³⁹ Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 74.

Taixu thus evaluated the status of Chinese Buddhism through the lens of criticism. Dixian and Yinguang also perceived the drastic social change and the growing hostile social environment for Buddhism. Trained and educated earlier than Taixu in a more traditional setting, they resorted to the solution of emphasizing and reviving traditions deemed capable of rescuing Buddhism from the mire of oblivion, adopting an approach and rhetoric similar to that employed by Buddhists throughout history. Moreover, unlike Taixu who did not clearly belong to any Buddhist lineage system, Dixian and Yinguang were conversant with the monastic institution and its intricacies in the late Qing era; as a result, they were less idealistic about monastic reform than Taixu.

The internal struggle between these two camps has been noted and studied by scholars, with predominant attention given to the reform camp due to the prolific polemics produced through Buddhist periodicals. Welch observed that many Buddhist periodicals carried the banner of reform, while some magazines belonging to certain conservative groups eschewed discussion of Buddhist reform and focused more on religious practice and study.⁴⁰ Xue Yu also studied the tension revealed through Buddhist periodicals and the rhetoric of “new monks” vs. “old monks,” which became synonymous to the reformer vs. the conservative.⁴¹ Similar studies on the use of Buddhist journals to propagate institutional reform can also be found in Lai Rongdao’s research on the new Buddhist education and citizenship consciousness, where the fierce opposition between new monks trained by the newly formed Buddhist academy and the old monks was illustrated through journals like *Modern Sangha* (*Xiandai sengqie* 现代僧伽, 1928–1932).⁴² However, as has been shown, there is an imbalance in the power of discourse in the Foucaultian sense in that the reform

⁴⁰ Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 100-101.

⁴¹ Xue Yu, *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism: Chinese Monks in the Struggle Against Japanese Aggression 1931-1945* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 27-28.

⁴² Lai Rongdao Lei Kuan, “Praying for the Republic: Buddhist Education, Student-Monks, and Citizenship in Modern China (1911-1949)” (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 2014), 167-171.

camp resorted more to the newly emerged media to voice its stand while the conservative camp seemed to be muted without putting up a fight. But in reality, the reform camp did not have the power nor resources to actually implement the desired institutional reform and had to rely on the media to make its case; in contrast, the conservative camp possessed tremendous wealth yet was unable to take a pronounced stand through the print media. Therefore, the scale of judgment is often tilted toward Taixu and the reform camp, consciously or not, by scholars and Buddhists in recent times. The reform camp is often viewed as the only force for modernization, as is evident in David McMahan's book on Buddhist modernism, in which Taixu is the only Chinese monk mentioned.⁴³

It is also worth pointing out that the language style employed by these Buddhist periodicals attracted different audiences, who in turn disproportionately echoed the reform camp. As shall be further discussed in Chapter Two, the reform camp periodicals tended to use plain Chinese writing style, or *baihua wen* 白话文, which was advocated by May Fourth intellectuals.⁴⁴ In contrast, the texts published by the conservative camp, particularly those written by prominent Buddhists like Yinguang and Dixian, were usually written in classical Chinese. The classical Chinese literary style was attacked by the May Fourth radicals like Lu Xun 鲁迅 (1881–1936) and Hu Shih 胡適 (1891–1962) and perceived as being culturally conservative.⁴⁵ Moreover, the plain Chinese writing style is more accessible compared to classical Chinese. The younger generation in China during the early twentieth-century often preferred the reform camp periodicals because they valued a plain style of Chinese and tended to be more antagonistic toward the Buddhist establishment.

⁴³ David McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 75.

⁴⁴ Elisabeth Forster, *1919 – The Year That Changed China: A New History of the New Culture Movement* (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2019), 27-28.

⁴⁵ César Guardé-Paz, *Modern Chinese Literature, Lin Shu and the Reformist Movement: Between Classical and Vernacular Language* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 2-3.

Besides the language style, many reasons contributed to the imbalanced perception of modern Chinese Buddhism, including the ethos of modernization and revolution that dominated political philosophy in early twentieth-century China; however, the role played by Buddhist periodicals was the most significant of all.

1.4 The Visible and the Neglected

Of the two hundred thirty Buddhist periodicals that appeared in the forty-year span of Republican China, those openly endorsing Buddhist reform under the banner of Taixu constituted a significant portion and overshadowed the rest by echoing the dominant ethos of revolution. Although the conceptual understanding of revolution was ambiguous even for intellectuals in early twentieth-century China, the cult of revolution nevertheless established its legitimacy in its sense of anti-tradition and its presentation as a solution for strengthening China. For Taixu, Buddhist reform and Buddhist revolution were interchangeable in so much as both represented a departure from practices of the immediate past. Yet even Taixu and other so-called conservative monks had to acknowledge revolution as the predominant ideology, and they tried to keep pace with it.⁴⁶ Hence Buddhist periodicals espousing reform and revolution became highly visible during this time.

⁴⁶ Li Xiangping 李向平, *Xinyang, geming, yu quanli zhixu --- zhongguo zongjiao shehuixue yanjiu* 信仰、革命与权力秩序——中国宗教社会学研究 [Faith, Revolution, and the Order of Power --- Studies of Chinese Sociology of Religion] (Shanghai: shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2006), 650.

Another reason for the disproportionate attention given to the reform camp is related to the longevity of their periodicals. *Sound of Sea Tide*, born out of the *Journal of the Awakening Society*, has been published longer than any other Buddhist periodical in modern China, from 1919 till the present day in Taiwan.⁴⁷ Two other important reform Buddhist periodicals were *Modern Sangha* and *Right Faith* (Zheng xin 正信), the former of which lasted from 1928 to 1933⁴⁸ and the latter almost twenty years from 1932 to 1949.⁴⁹ The detailed condition of these periodicals shall be explored in a later chapter, but suffice it to say that these three Buddhist journals espousing Taixu's idea of reform amplified the call for reform through their long-lasting publication periods and wide range of distribution. Many other Buddhist journals had much shorter lives: very few of them lasted for more than a decade and had only limited regional reach.

However, despite the high profile of reform Buddhist journals, it should not be ignored that the conservative camp also produced Buddhist periodicals. Many of these journals, aiming at traditional Buddhist practices, were organized around certain key Buddhist figures, such as Dixian, Yinguang, and Yuanying whom these journals' writers revered as their mentors. One thing worthy of attention is that the conservative camp was not made up of stubborn monks who stood in total opposition to Buddhist reform or regarded adaptations as unnecessary. Instead they strived for their own visions of change, which did not resonate with Taixu's propositions at large. They were willing to engage in the modern form of printing. For example, Yinguang was famous for his work, the *Collective Writings of Dharma Master Yinguang* (Yinguang fashi wenchao 印光法師文鈔), which became a publishing phenomenon, as described by Jan Kiely, as its print runs expanded

⁴⁷ Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 262.

⁴⁸ It changed its name to *Xiandai fojiao* 现代佛教 (The Modern Buddhism) in 1932.

⁴⁹ Huang Xiannian, ed., *Mingguo fojiao qikan wenxian jicheng bubian mulu*, 12-14.

with each volume.⁵⁰ Yuanying, who was of the same generation as Taixu, also participated in the production of Buddhist journals as early as 1919.⁵¹ In general, periodicals produced by Dixian, Yinguang, and Yuanying focused more on apologetic texts and introductory writings of Buddhism, emphasizing the orthodox way of Buddhist cultivation and practices. Though themes like reform, revolution, modernization, and science appeared less frequently, these issues did receive attention in the conservative camp's periodicals, an often-neglected fact. Thus their effort should be recognized as a discourse of restoration, through which they resorted to the admired historical forms and practices of Chinese Buddhism, voiced through print, so as to correct the deviations and degradation denounced by contemporary critics. Their efforts are easily neglected, but nonetheless are part and parcel of the Chinese Buddhist modernization project.

This dissertation aims at juxtaposing the periodicals produced by these two camps, the reform and conservative, to expound the intertwined relationship between the two in the formation of a modern Chinese Buddhism, and to illustrate the indispensable role of print media. To achieve this purpose, four periodicals from the reform camp and three from the restoration camp are explored. The four from the reform camp are *Sound of Sea Tide*, the *Young Men's Buddhist Monthly* (*Fohua xinqinnian* 佛化新青年, 1923–1925), *Right Faith*, and *Modern Sangha* (later as *Modern Buddhism*), and the three from the restoration camp are the *Buddha's Light Society Journal* (*Foguangshe shekai* 佛光社社刊, 1927–1932), *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation* (*Society Hongfa shekan* 弘法社刊, 1928–1937), and *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* (*Honghua yuekan* 弘化月刊, 1941–1958). These seven Buddhist periodicals are closely connected with

⁵⁰ Jan Kiely, "Spreading the Dharma with the Mechanized Press: New Buddhist Print Cultures in the Modern Chinese Print Revolution, 1866-1949," in *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Print Culture in Transition, Circa 1800 to 2008*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Christopher A. Reed (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 199-203.

⁵¹ Chen Yongge, *Fojiao honghua de xiandai zhuanxin: minguo zhejiang fojiao yanjiu 1912-1949*, 46.

particular Buddhist figures. The *Buddha's Light Society Journal* was dedicated to promoting the Pure Land Buddhist teaching advocated by Yinguang. *Hongfa shekan* grew out of the Hongfa she 弘法社 (The Dharma Propagation Society), a Buddhist seminary for Tiantai Buddhism established by Dixian. Although *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* started its publication after Yinguang's death in 1940, it was produced by Honghua hui 弘化會 (Society for Spreading the Teaching), which was founded under the guidance of Yinguang. The four periodicals of the reform camp all related to Taixu in one way or the other. *Sound of Sea Tide* was directly founded by Taixu while the rest were managed by Taixu's disciples. A general survey of these periodicals will be provided in Chapter Two, including their relationships with their mentors, their editorial boards, lay Buddhists, as well as prominent social elites. Their respective range of distribution will also be discussed. Even though these seven Buddhist periodicals are the main focus here, other related Buddhist periodicals will also be introduced and discussed.

Chinese journalism was a burgeoning industry during the Republican era, and both camps took advantage of the situation. Between 1919 and 1920, 312 new journals were created, averaging almost one new journal every other day.⁵² However, the print run for each journal varied significantly. For example, The Young Companion (*Liangyou huabao* 良友畫報 1926–1945), a fashion journal promoting the Shanghai modern lifestyle, enjoyed a distribution and marketing success with sales reaching 50,000 copies per issue. In Joan Judge's study of the *Women's Eastern Times* (*Funü shibao* 婦女時報, 1911–1917), she found that the journal had about “six thousand to

⁵² Wang Yuguang 王余光, Wu Yonggui 吴永贵, *Zhongguo chuban tongshi Minguo Juan* 中国出版通史 民国卷 [The General History of Chinese Publications - Republican Era] (Beijing: Zhongguo shuji chubanshe, 2008), 53.

seven thousand copies per issue,” which she claimed was “an unusually high circulation for this period.”⁵³ In contrast, *New Yorth* (*Xin Qingnian* 新青年 1915–1926), the foothold for the May Fourth intellectuals, only published 1000 copies in the beginning before slowly reaching 15,000 in the early 1920s.⁵⁴ Therefore, in the Republican era, a journal with a print run exceeding five thousand copies might be considered as a marketing success, especially considering the literacy rate in modern China had only reached 32% by 1949.⁵⁵ In terms of readership, due to economic constraints, it is reasonable to assume that several readers shared one copy. Joan Judge estimates that “there were approximately fifteen readers per newspaper copy in the late Qing—including people who rented, borrowed, or read copies in public spaces such as reading rooms.”⁵⁶ The major printing presses and publishers were located in Shanghai, yet many of them established a dispersed distribution network across China.⁵⁷ Some of the reform camp’s periodicals studied in this dissertation relied on these commercial printing houses for production and distribution. However, besides *Sound of Sea Tide*, *Right Faith*, and *Spreading the Teaching Monthly*, the other four periodicals could not match the print runs of these popular secular journals.

⁵³ Joan Judge, *Republican Lens: Gender, Visuality, and Experience in the Early Chinese Periodical Press* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 18.

⁵⁴ Wang Chuchu, “Appendix: Distributing *Liangyou*,” in *Liangyou, Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945*, eds. Paul G. Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 248; Wang Yuguang, Wu Yonggui, *Zhongguo chuban tongshi Minguo Juan*, 50-51.

⁵⁵ Christopher A. Reed, “Introduction,” in *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Print Culture in Transition, Circa 1800 to 2008*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Christopher A. Reed (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 28.

⁵⁶ Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: Shibao and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 41.

⁵⁷ Christopher A. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876-1937* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2004), 111.

1.5 Methodology and Literature Review

The study of periodical literature in modern China, or simply the role of journals in modern history, inevitably invokes “the public sphere” elaborated by Jürgen Habermas. Though Habermas studies a particular bourgeois trend within a spatio-temporal locale, he sheds light on the unique role of journalism during the rise of capitalist society, which lends insight for discussion of Buddhist periodicals in modern China. For Habermas, the rise and transformation of the public sphere went hand in hand with functional differentiation between the state and the private domain, in which the press serves as an important public organ.⁵⁸ Although the media was not the sole public organ, it provided the platform to engage in rational-critical discussion of public issues and was accessible to all, another important feature for the public sphere. Furthermore, the press enabled “a process of mutual enlightenment” through interactions between authors and readers.⁵⁹ Hence, Habermas provides a perspective of situating the press in the center during the capitalist social transformation. Following Habermas’s discourse, Nancy Frazer complicates and expands the applicability of the public sphere, and proposes the concept of “subaltern counterpublics” to analyze the stratification of the public within a layered society.⁶⁰ Frazer notices that Habermas’s paradigm of a singular “public sphere” cannot account for the emergence of social diversity, and hence it is necessary to perceive multiple publics within each social group. In the case of modern Chinese Buddhism, the periodicals formed a specific Buddhist public that was accessible to all willing participants and where “counterdiscourses” were invented and circulated. In the process,

⁵⁸ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 38, 42-43.

⁶⁰ Nancy Frazer, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text*, no. 25/26 (1990): 67.

authors and respondents emanated their own subjectivity and together constituted a Buddhist modernity. The growth of a Buddhist public enables Buddhism to adapt and respond, at least rhetorically, to a changing Chinese society; it thus facilitated a mutual exchange between the two, as Buddhism answered to the challenge posed by the state while the latter drew inspiration from the religion for its own nationalism and modernization purposes. In addition, through contesting in the Buddhist public sphere, charismatic leaders and religious authorities emerged in a modern way, making their voices heard by engaging in debates and seeking press coverage. In the Buddhist public, the power to influence public opinion signals the recognition of authority. However, due to social and cultural transition, reformers were bound to use their new authority to challenge conservatives, who drew their authority from lineage, the master-disciple relationship, and the dharma family. However, as I shall demonstrate, as long as the old authority was willing to engage with the press, it was able to survive and strengthen its charismatic power, as we see in the case of Dixian and his disciples. The Buddhist public was not necessarily inclined to reform and revolution, but it allowed space for the old established community to reshape itself, if it was willing to do so.

The public sphere framework is closely associated with issues of modernity and modernization, which are also of central concern to this dissertation. The discourse of modernity greatly informs the study of religion, as the coming of modern society finds a need to accommodate and redefine religion; and in the process the hegemonic position of Western religion — the model of Christianity — dominated the conceptualization of religions for the rest of the world.⁶¹

⁶¹ See: Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), Introduction; Jason A. Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), Chapter Three; Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Furthermore, for classical theorists like Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, and Max Weber, modernity predicted the demise of religion, a known secularization thesis which has been disproven by many. Yet for this dissertation, the time frame of the study is positioned right in the middle of the burgeoning modernity discourse, hence the complicated entanglement among different Buddhist camps reflected part of the characteristics of modernity as well as its antithesis. Since China is the locale, I resort to a comprehensive observation made by Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer, who list six elements for the label of modernity:

“(1) normative ideologies and discourses of modernization, which promote a particular worldview and advocate a specific direction to social change; (2) state expansion, policies, campaigns, and revolutions, which attempt to implement such ideologies by political means; (3) rationalized and industrialized modes of mass economic production made possible by new technologies; (4) the transformed social relations that result from economic and demographic changes; (5) new styles of individual subjectivity that emerge under the reconfigured social, political, economic, and cultural order; (6) new styles of production and dissemination in art, literature, religion, and other cultural areas, which express these new subjectivities, worldviews, and technological possibilities.”⁶²

Their observation enables us to understand the modes and motivations behind these authors and readers engaged with Buddhist periodicals in Republican China. Threads I explore in subsequent chapters (e.g., the crisis-consciousness of the new age, the transformed Buddhism-state relationship, reception and reaction toward Buddhism and science, the body discourse for modern Chinese Buddhists, and the renewed emphasis on vegetarianism), are influenced by modernity discourse. However, the teleological postulate within the modernity discourse emphasized a mechanical break from the past, rendering it less useful for this study. In particular, it bears an

⁶² David A. Palmer and Vincent Goossaert, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 8-9.

implicit secularism thesis most meaningful to a historical-specific European world, as a “historic epoch.”⁶³ An updated understanding of modernity, the multiple modernities discourse expounded by Shmuel Eisenstadt would be more effective for evaluating the intricacies exhibited by modern Chinese Buddhism through the lens of periodical publications.

The multiple modernities thesis elaborated by Eisenstadt draws from post–World War II dynamics exhibited in various parts of the non-Western world. Yet it reveals the viability and possibility of conceiving an alternative modernity discourse that deviates from the trajectory of the Western paradigm. Though the Western patterns of modernity continue to serve as “a basic reference point” for others, they are merely historical precedence rather than criteria. The essential feature of multiple modernities is “to see it as a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs.”⁶⁴ Thus for the case of Chinese Buddhism, the endeavor of adaptation to the changing society by all Buddhists, reform or conservative, laity or monastics, contributed to and fundamentally constituted a Buddhist modernity discourse of unique cultural dynamics. Issues and concerns discussed through Buddhist periodicals demonstrate the reflexivity of Chinese Buddhists when confronted with the aggressive Western modernity discourse, and this capability of reflection reveals their autonomy, or subjectivity, in the modern sense.

Besides the lens of the public sphere and the discourse of multiple modernities, the framework of print culture offers another essential methodological perspective on the Buddhist periodicals. Studies by Lucien Febvre, Henri-Jean Martin, Marshall McLuhan, Elizabeth Eisenstein, Roger Chartier, Benedict Anderson, and others reveal the previously overlooked role

⁶³ Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 14.

⁶⁴ Shmuel Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities,” *Daedalus*, Vol. 129, No. 1 (2000): 2.

of typography and the print industry during periods of social change and the underlying influence exerted by the printing revolution on modern cultural themes, including consumerism, nationalism, and progressivism.⁶⁵ Yet studies on printing tend to trace the long-term historical transformation from a macro-perspective; for this dissertation, the more relevant and informative frameworks would be from those concentrating on the interplay between the masses and the media. John B. Thompson evaluates the role of communicative media through the lens of social theory, and stresses “the use of communication media involves the creation of new forms of action and interaction in the social world, new kinds of social relationship and new ways of relating to others and to oneself.”⁶⁶ And for the relation between media and tradition, Thompson contends that the communication media results in a reshaped, or “dislodged” tradition, rather than the demise of traditions in modern society.⁶⁷ Previous studies of the Chinese press during the transition period between Qing and Republican eras often underline the power of the media in facilitating social change, political reform, and modernization. Studies by Xiantao Zhang, Barbara Mittler, Christopher A. Reed, and Rudolf G. Wagner are illustrative.⁶⁸ Their detailed studies reveal the prominent role played by the press in shaping public opinion and presenting modernization as the leitmotif of the time. Yet the press in China was not a uniform entity but exhibited mixed agendas

⁶⁵ See: Lucien Febvre, Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800*, trans. David Gerard (London; New York: Verso, 1997); Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962); Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, trans. Lydia G Cochrane (Durham : Duke University Press, 1991); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006).

⁶⁶ John B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 4.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 195-202.

⁶⁸ See: Zhang, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese Press*; Barbara Mittler, *A Newspaper for China? Power, Identity, and Change in Shanghai's News Media, 1872-1912* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004); Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai*; Rudolf G. Wagner, ed., *Joining the Global Public: Word, Image, and City in Early Chinese Newspapers, 1870-1910* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007).

and ideologies. It would be negligent to label the press as merely a progressive force, despite that Nicholas Garnham theorizes the relationship between media and modernity against the backdrop of “the death of tradition.”⁶⁹ The relationship between the two, however, is much nuanced in the context of Buddhism in China, as it was Yang Wenhui’s Buddhist printing project, which began in the 1860s, that forebode the re-emergence of Buddhism as a sub-sphere in modern China. The situation was not unique in China, as Shawn McHale also demonstrated similar concerns over tradition in Vietnam around the same time.⁷⁰ When confronting the challenges from modernization, the press allowed the formation of “subaltern counterpublics”⁷¹ through which traditions were discussed, adapted, transformed, and preserved.

Studies on modern Chinese Buddhism flourished in recent years after a forty-year interval from Holmes Welch’s trilogy surveying the Buddhist community in modern China. Welch’s scholarship remains an important reference and interlocutor, as he has touched upon almost every thread of modern Chinese Buddhism; this has propelled subsequent generations of scholars to further analyze various things, from the polemical debates on modernization issues to on-the-ground monastic practices, as well as many other areas of research. Welch acquired invaluable first-hand materials from Buddhists who fled Mainland China and resided in Hong Kong after the communist takeover. Hence his scholarship often has been treated by recent scholars as both interlocutor and primary source. He also noticed the appearance of various Buddhist periodicals and compiled a list of about fifty-seven of them.⁷² In general, Welch was not impressed with the

⁶⁹ Nicholas Garnham, *Emancipation, the Media, and Modernity: Arguments about the Media and Social Theory: Arguments about the Media and Social Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 10.

⁷⁰ Shawn Frederick McHale, *Print and Power: Confucianism, Communism, and Buddhism in the Making of Modern Vietnam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004).

⁷¹ Frazer, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” 67.

⁷² Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, Appendix 1.

Buddhist print culture in early twentieth-century China; he commented: “little was produced in the way of distinguished writing, creative thinking, or original research Buddhism has no Hu Shih.”⁷³

More recently, scholars have disagreed with Welch's assertion. Eric Hammerstrom's study on Buddhism encountering the scientific discourse draws heavily from articles from Buddhist periodicals to illustrate the dynamics among Buddhists in terms of reconciling with and appropriating science. Justin Ritzinger's work on Taixu and the Maitreya cult found sources in the *Right Faith* journal that testify to the devotional concern of the reform leader. Rongdao Lai's dissertation utilizes Buddhist periodical writings to elucidate the civil engagement from the sangha. And Gregory Scott's dissertation and articles on the Buddhist print culture in Republican China show “print culture was a catalyst for change among Buddhists in modern China.”⁷⁴ Though these examples of scholarship do not directly respond to Welch's assertion, they show the necessity of examining the Buddhist print culture to understand the complexity and diverse trajectories formulated by Buddhists when facing the modernization project. As this dissertation argues, Buddhism in China underwent a series of changes which could not be easily categorized but with a character of hybridity: the reform camp and the conservative camp shared commonalities and agreements. Their visions would eventually merge and constitute a repertoire for later generations of Buddhists.

⁷³ Ibid., 102.

⁷⁴ Erik Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism: Early Twentieth-Century Engagements* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Justin Ritzinger, *Anarchy in the Pure Land: Reinventing the Cult of Maitreya in the Modern Chinese Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Lai Rongdao, “Praying for the Republic”; Scott, “Conversion by the Book,” 38; Scott, “Revolution of Ink: Chinese Buddhist Periodicals in the Early Republic,” in *Recovering Buddhism in Modern China*, edited by Jan Kiely and J. Brooks Jessup (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016): 111-140; Scott, “Navigating the Sea of Scriptures: The Buddhist Studies Collectanea, 1918–1923,” in *Religious Publishing and Print Culture in Modern China, 1800-2012*, eds. Philip Clart and Gregory A. Scott (Boston; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015): 91-138.

Besides studies on modern Chinese Buddhism, scholarship on the press in the Republican China era also sheds light on this dissertation. Studies on the foreign impact on the Chinese press reveal the particular functionality of the medium during China's turn to the modern world. Alongside Xiantao Zhang's work on the role of Protestant missionaries informing the Chinese populace about modern Western knowledge, Mittler's study of *Shen bao* 申報 illustrates the domestication of the newspaper from a foreign format into an indigenous and accepted medium. Both of their studies reflect the scholarly focus on the political implication of the press and invoke the framework of the public sphere to evaluate the Chinese press. Joan Judge's study of *Funü shibao* 婦女時報 demonstrates a different perspective. Judge's previous work on *Shi bao* 時報 still focuses on political implications as she delves into the "middle realm" created by Chinese journalists,⁷⁵ yet her recent work on *Funü shibao* applies another strategy, with a horizontal "zoom in" for the periodical press and then "zoom out" to depict "remnants of opinions and experiences, vestiges of the language and modes of reasoning prevalent in the period" which are "invisible in the historical record."⁷⁶ Though gender is of central interest, Judge illustrates the possibility of approaching the periodical press through the lens of its social ecology, the circulation of ideas and arguments, and the interplay between authors and periodicals. This social analysis, while acknowledging the ideological influence from the political realm, is evident in the constitution of the sub-sphere by particular groups, which, in the case of this dissertation, is the Buddhist community.

⁷⁵ Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: Shibao and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

⁷⁶ Judge, *Republican Lens*, 39-48.

Studies centering on the modern Chinese press also reveal the cosmopolitan concerns of urbanites in the relatively developed regions. Shuang Shen's research on the Anglophone print culture in Shanghai argues for a cosmopolitan public "as a space of encounters between cultures and with other equally cosmopolitan cultures"⁷⁷ constituted by periodicals. For Shen, the cosmopolitan issues reflected in the English periodicals suggest the lack of an overpowering ideological concern on the ground level among these urban residents, in contrast to the popular narrative of revolution and modernization for Republican China. Shen's research corroborates Leo Lee's work on the mediating role played by the periodical press and everyday modernity in Shanghai. Lee perceives the print industry, from periodicals like *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 (The Eastern Miscellany, 1904–1948) and *Liangyou huabao* to textbooks produced by the Commercial Press as a repertoire of "cultural imaginary," where modern urban life with cosmopolitan characteristics was promoted and imagined.⁷⁸ Furthermore, Qiliang He's research on newspapers in Republican China reveals the opaque and messy situation in which the press strived to cater to audience interests and needs by providing more social news and even sensational rumors rather than dedicating itself to advancing the "enlightenment project" of which elite intellectuals boasted (thus rendering the reader with initiative and agency).⁷⁹ Therefore, these examples of scholarships allow us to relinquish the stereotype of perceiving the Chinese press in the Republican era as a dominant force for the modernization project, and make room for the analysis of Buddhist

⁷⁷ Shuang Shen, *Cosmopolitan Publics: Anglophone Print Culture in Semi-Colonial Shanghai* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 28.

⁷⁸ Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), chapter two. For more research on *Liangyou huabao*, see: Paul G. Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang, eds., *Liangyou, Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

⁷⁹ Qiliang He, *Newspapers and the Journalistic Public in Republican China: 1917 as a Significant Year of Journalism* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 11-15.

periodicals as a sub-sphere within the general print sphere. The sub-sphere constructed through the Buddhist print culture reflected the outer social surroundings, yet it also was filled with particular concerns from monastic clerics, lay Buddhists, and Buddhist intellectuals.

This dissertation aims to complement studies on modern Chinese Buddhism and on the modern Chinese press by examining the dynamics of modernization discourse being argued and reflected through Buddhist periodicals. It shall zoom in on the middle-level of periodical authors who were not the major initiators but the main propagators of ideas regarding the transformation of Buddhism. By thematic presentations of encounters with science, the Buddhism and state relationship, and traditional practices of asceticism and vegetarianism, I illustrate the undercurrent within the Buddhist community, from both camps, which interweaved both the progressive and the conservative stances and eventually shaped the trajectory of Chinese Buddhism in the modern era.

1.6 Structure of Chapters

The purpose of this study is twofold: First, to demonstrate how the Chinese Buddhist community utilized periodical publications to fend off external aggression and to foster internal consensus over Buddhist modernization, an effort that often resulted in division rather than unity. Second, it aims to present the thematic arguments made in periodicals. The articles in the periodicals, I argue, allow us to delineate interactions between the two camps in a way that illustrates the sophisticated mentality behind them for adapting to modern society. The reform camp shared common interests with the conservative camp, (i.e., restoration camp). when Buddhism as a religion was facing external threats, like the Campaign of Confiscating Temple for

Education; yet they diverged when it came to internal issues, including the institutional reshuffle and dealing with issues of Buddhism and state, as well as with science.

Chapter Two sets the stage by providing detailed accounts of the seven Buddhist periodicals of study. As mentioned above, these seven periodicals come from both camps. The first part of this dissertation focuses on the four belonging to the reform camp, while the second part discusses the remaining three from the conservative camp. For each periodical, I detail its founder, main editorial staff, format and style, contributors and authors, potential readership, and area of influence. The four periodicals of the reform camp generally had larger national influence as they were scattered across China, with national distributors, while the three conservative camp's periodicals were more closely connected with the Buddhist community in the lower Yangtze area, where the Buddhist establishment was prominent. Through comparison among these seven periodicals, I argue that the reform camp periodicals enjoyed greater influence due to their founders' acumen and adroit use of the print industry, as well as their eagerness to propagate their vision of Buddhism, which resulted in their successful employment and operation of the press. The conservative camp's periodicals were less ambitious and geared toward a more targeted audience: the clerical class and practicing lay Buddhists. These differences serve as a prelude to the respective attitudes, mentalities, and responses to specific themes of these two camps, which will be detailed in the following chapters.

For both camps, the most important reason for engaging in periodical publication was a sense of crisis. Hence Chapter Three investigates the two camps' response toward the crisis-consciousness of Buddhism. By presenting periodical articles written by prominent figures as well as less-known authors, I found that the reform camp closely interacted with the social crisis-consciousness prevailing in China around the 1910s and 1920s; by borrowing social crisis rhetoric

and applying it to Buddhism, the reform camp fostered a sense of urgency for Buddhism. The conservative camp showed less interest in responding to the social sentiment, and chose to urge action on more specific social issues. When the conservative camp used periodicals to discuss the issue of new vs. old, it was inclined to value the latter.

The crisis-consciousness of the time largely resulted from the remodeling of Chinese culture through the criteria of science, an essential component for the discourse of modernity. Thus Chapter Four investigates both camps' response to science as seen in the writing in their respective periodicals. Studies on the relationship between Buddhism and science in the modern era have depicted the sophisticated exchange and appropriation between the two, yet I choose to present a muddled picture at the time when Buddhist writers fervently discussed science. Having examined these discussions through the lenses of the reform and conservative camps, I contend that the Buddhist community was much more divided on the issue than previously suggested. Though elite Buddhist intellectuals and leaders, like Taixu and Wang Jitong, proposed innovative ideas, the voices from other Buddhist writers indicated there was still much left to debate. The conservative camp writers, who generally possessed less familiarity with modern scientific knowledge, came up with their own perspective criticizing science as the dominant social ethos.

The subsequent two chapters examine the relationship between Buddhism and the state, focusing on the rhetorical perception manifested by Buddhist periodical writers, and delving into the specific case of the Temple Confiscation Campaign to illustrate the diverse response and counter-proposals made by Buddhists from both camps. The discussion of the religion and state relationship by these Buddhist writers testifies to the divergent visions among the two camps in terms of positioning Buddhism in the modern state. The case of the temple appropriation movement also denotes the commonality, despite their differences, when faced with specific

external threats. In general, the reform camp Buddhists, who advocated for a constructive role for Buddhism, were more involved in the modern state-building process, while the conservative camp refrained from explicitly engaging in political ideological debates.

The final two chapters focus on how these two camps presented and propagated traditional Buddhist concerns and practices through periodicals. Chapter Six explores the body of discourse manifested from these periodicals, including issues of self-immolation, bodily mutilation, and blood writings. Chapter Seven concentrates on the propagation of vegetarianism by both camps. I argue that both camps shared a common interest in asserting traditional concerns within a modern form of Chinese Buddhism. The reform camp did not represent a total breakaway from traditional concerns while the conservative camp was well aware of the necessity to situate traditional practices in a modern context.

2.0 Buddhist Periodicals for Reform and Restoration

In this chapter, I examine the characteristics of seven Buddhist periodicals, with particular focus on their format, producers, range of distribution, potential readers, patronage, and literary style. Presenting their characteristics enables us to understand the dynamics of producing these periodicals and how they served as a new medium for the Buddhist community. By examining the specific features of each periodical, I demonstrate the advantages of treating Buddhist periodicals as a multifaceted prism through which we may understand the continuities and ruptures within modern Chinese Buddhism.

The first half of this chapter discusses four periodicals published by the reform camp, led by the Buddhist modernist Taixu. Taixu joined the sangha at a young age and came under the influence of the radical revolutionary ethos in the early 1900s, earning him the title of “revolutionary monk” according to Holmes Welch. Taixu’s revolutionary zeal reached its peak during the Invasion of Jinshan, an incident resulting in a clash between young monks supporting radical reform of the Jinshan Temple and the old Buddhist establishment. Following the incident, Taixu went into seclusion for three years on Mt. Putuo and thereafter emerged as a mature social activist with a comprehensive proposal for the Buddhist modernization project. He later socialized with prominent lay Buddhists, made acquaintances with influential political figures including Chiang Kai-shek, and organized several Buddhist seminaries. Two of these seminaries, the Wuchang Seminary 武昌佛學院 and Minnan Seminary 閩南佛學院, oversaw the publication of

several important periodicals of the reform camp.⁸⁰ Hence, the first half of this chapter examines Buddhist periodicals closely associated with Taixu. As shall be shown, the reform camp's periodicals were more influential in terms of their publication durations and wider targeted audiences. With *Sound of Sea Tide* as the nexus and the most comprehensive platform, the other three branched out with more specific audiences and themes.

This chapter's second half explores three periodicals published by the conservative camp. These journals were heavily influenced by Dixian and Yinguang, who were directly or indirectly involved with their creation and operation. Compared with the reform camp's journals, these three had shorter publication durations and more focused audiences, yet one of them, *Spreading the Teaching Monthly*, due to its large lay Buddhist audience, had print runs comparable to *Sound of Sea Tide*. Through my comparison of these periodicals with those of the reform camp, I argue that although differences existed between the two camps' publications in terms of specific concerns, audiences, and texts, they all share the common goal of better adapting and catering to the needs of modern Chinese society.

2.1.1 The Leading Voice: *Sound of Sea Tide*

Of all the Buddhist periodicals published during the Republican period, *Haichao yin* (*Sound of Sea Tide* hereafter) had the longest run, spanning more than three decades in Mainland China and resuming publication in Taiwan where it is still produced to this day. Thus, the history

⁸⁰ For a comprehensive biographical depiction of Taixu, see: Deng Zimei 邓子美, Chen Weihua 陈卫华, *Taixu dashi xinzhuan* 太虚大师新传 [A New Biography for Master Taixu] (Beijing: Huawen chubanshe, 2017).

of *Sound of Sea Tide* is crucial to our understanding of the Buddhist modernization movement, as it has borne witness to all the important discussions and debates on various issues concerning Chinese Buddhism in the modern era.

Sound of Sea Tide grew out of the *Journal of the Awakening Society*, which was published by the first lay Buddhist organization founded by Taixu. In 1918, when he was in seclusion at Mt. Putuo after the failed attempt to launch the monastic reform movement in the Invasion of Jinshan, Taixu was visited by several lay Buddhists—Chen Yuanbai 陳白元 (1877–1940), Huang Baocang 黃葆蒼 (1884–1923), and Jiang Zuobin 蔣作賓 (1884–1941)—who were military and government officers. They venerated Taixu and convinced him to leave for Shanghai to put his ideas into practice. Taixu originally considered fundraising in Southeast Asia but was persuaded to first establish a lay Buddhist society to promote Buddhist teachings.⁸¹ Thus the Awakening Society was founded, accompanied by its eponymous publication. In retrospect, Taixu commented that with the establishment of the Awakening Society, “[his] Buddhist reform movement revived.”⁸²

The *Journal of the Awakening Society* was the most important legacy in this effort. The lay society itself impacted neither the monastic nor the lay Buddhist community due to its failure to expand. In its original formulation, the Awakening Society was meant to spread beyond the area around Shanghai and to develop Taixu’s mission to propagate Buddhism domestically and internationally.⁸³ Yet due to its self-governing nature and the May Fourth Movement which

⁸¹ Eric Goodell, “Taixu’s (1890-1947) Creation of Humanistic Buddhism” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2012), 121-122.

⁸² Taixu, “Wo de fojiao gaijin yundong lveshi 我的佛教改進運動略史 [A Brief History of My Buddhist Reform Movement],” in QS 31: 79.

⁸³ “Jueshe zhangcheng 覺社章程 [Regulations for the Awakening Society],” *Jueshe congshu* 1(1918), MFQ 6: 500-502.

resulted in an anti-traditionalism climate, the society did not grow much in the first two years following its establishment.⁸⁴ However, the society's journal seemed rather successful as readers wrote letters to the society to suggest more frequent publication.⁸⁵ In many ways, the *Journal of the Awakening Society* resembles the first Chinese Buddhist periodical, *the Buddhist Miscellany* published in 1912, in the sense that it balanced content among discussions of the meaning of Buddhism in the modern world, Taixu's writings on the monastic Buddhist reform, and arguments for the doctrinal re-orientation toward the secular world. Journal contributors consisted of both monastic as well as lay Buddhists. Monastic writers included Taixu, Yuanying, and some other monks from various regions of China who were kindred spirits of Taixu's cause. Lay Buddhist contributors include Zhang Taiyan, Liang Qichao, Ouyang Jingwu 歐陽竟無 (1871–1943) and Taixu's disciples. It should be noted that not all articles or writings were specifically produced for the journal, but rather the journal printed many speeches or reprinted writings related to Buddhism by prominent intellectuals, such as Liang Qichao. Yet Taixu's writing appeared most frequently in the journal, clearly indicating his central role in the Awakening Society and his willingness to participate in the periodical activities.

After relocating to Hangzhou in 1920, the journal was renamed *Sound of Sea Tide*, thus marking a new stage of Buddhist periodical publications. This journal has been and continues to be of great value to scholars studying Taixu and modern Chinese Buddhism, and it has been credited as "one of the most important sources of public discourse on Buddhism,"⁸⁶ "a

⁸⁴ Goodell, "Taixu's (1890-1947) Creation of Humanistic Buddhism," 127-128.

⁸⁵ "Fojiao nianjian 佛教年鑒 [Chronicles of Buddhism]," *Haichao yin* 1(1920), MFQ 147: 188.

⁸⁶ Goodell, "Taixu's (1890-1947) Creation of Humanistic Buddhism," 128.

modernizing transformation of Chinese Buddhist piety and of the institutional structures,”⁸⁷ and simply “the most influential Buddhist periodical during the Republican Period.”⁸⁸ Taixu certainly devoted much of his time to the journal, as he edited the inaugural issue himself even while being occupied with various other duties.⁸⁹ The journal inherited much of the apparatus of the *Journal of the Awakening Society*, including its distributor Zhonghua Book Company, ensuring the journal’s wide distribution. The range of circulation for *Sound of Sea Tide* was greater than the area of any warlord’s domain before the 1927–1928 Northern Expedition by the KMT government.⁹⁰ The acknowledgment section printed in the first issue also attests to its wide circulation, as advertisements for it were printed in other newspapers and journals from Beijing to Hongkong.⁹¹ The promotion for *Sound of Sea Tide* was itself phenomenal, as it ran an ad campaign on an unprecedented scale for a Buddhist periodical, with advertisements for the journal which appeared in many other Buddhist and secular prints, dwarfing any other Buddhist publication from the Republican period.

Taixu’s influence on the editorial board lasted until his death. After editing the first issue, Taixu consigned the chief editorship to Shanyin 善因, an early monastic follower of Taixu but with few remaining records to his name. In 1921, after serving about one year as the chief editor, Shanyin resigned due to health concerns.⁹² The editorship was then handed to Shi Yiru 史一如 (1876–1925), a member of the Awakening Society and a devoted lay Buddhist. However, Shi Yiru

⁸⁷ Erik J. Hammerstrom, “Buddhists Discuss Science in Modern China (1895-1949)” (PhD Diss., Indiana University, 2010), 66.

⁸⁸ Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 94.

⁸⁹ Taixu, “Taixu zizhuan 太虚自传 [Autobiography of Taixu],” in QS 31: 222.

⁹⁰ Goodell, “Taixu’s (1890-1947) Creation of Humanistic Buddhism,” 129.

⁹¹ “Zhixie 致謝 [Acknowledgement],” in *Haichao yin* 1(1920), MFQ 147: 90.

⁹² Shanyin 善因, “Shi shanyin qishi 释善因啓示 [Notice from Shanyin],” in *Haichao yin* 09(1921), MFQ 151: 466.

also left the position three years later due to health problems.⁹³ Another member of the Awakening Society, Tang Dayuan 唐大圓 (1890–1941), next assumed the position of chief editor. The location of the editorial board moved between several places due to financial reasons, and the Second Sino-Japanese War which broke out in 1937 had its own impact on the continuance of the journal. Later on, chief editors included Manzhi 滿智 (n.d.), Daxing 大醒 (1899–1952), Zhifeng 芝峰 (1901–?), and Fafang 法舫 (1904–1951), all of whom were disciples of Taixu. As a result, *Sound of Sea Tide* constantly echoed Taixu’s call for reform and printed detailed reports on Taixu’s itineraries and Dharma lectures.

Yet, it is important to recognize that *Sound of Sea Tide* was by no means a univocal journal dominated by writings in total support of Taixu. In a notice calling for article submissions, the editorial board requested four types of articles: 1) advice on how to promote Mahayana Buddhism; 2) commentaries on Buddhist philosophy in history and comparative perspectives between the West and East; 3) discussions of or reflections on the practice of Buddhism, including personal experience in support of or casting doubt on Buddhism; 4) miscellaneous anecdotes or stories about Buddhists.⁹⁴

Though in the first few years contributors were limited to a small circle of Taixu’s acquaintances, gradually more people submitted writings to the journal, as it kept a fine balance between explication of Buddhist canonical works and participation in intellectual debate. In a brief recapitulation, the journal highlighted its contributions in discussing seminal intellectual works,

⁹³ Shi Yiru 史一如, “Shi Yiru qishi 史一如啓示 [Notice from Shi Yiru],” in *Haichao yin* 08(1924), MFQ 157: 72.

⁹⁴ “Haichao yin zhengwen 海潮音徵文 [Call for Submission by *Haichao yin*],” in *Haichao yin* 03(1920), MFQ 147: 338.

including comments on Hu Shi's (1891–1962) influential work *An Outline History of Chinese Philosophy* (中國哲學史大綱) and Liang Shuming's 梁漱溟(1893–1988) *Exegesis on Yogacara Philosophy* (唯識述義).⁹⁵ These writings involving prominent intellectuals' work indicates that *Sound of Sea Tide* was not solely dedicated to the spread of Taixu's reform message, but also to actively bringing Buddhism into the realm of public discussion with regard to Chinese culture and other heated social issues. Therefore, its contributors continued to expand, and their perspectives on Buddhism did not necessarily align with those of Taixu. Furthermore, monastic figures including Yinguang and Ouyang Jingwu, who were believed to not be on good terms with Taixu, also contributed articles to the journal.⁹⁶ Thus, on the one hand, the journal was an inclusive forum wherein discussions about Buddhism were encouraged, while on the other hand, it also suggests the influence of the journal in that it still attracted Buddhists who were not keen on Taixu's reform proposal to participate.

The journal also indicates connections between Taixu and the political elites, or more broadly, between the Buddhist community and the political realm in Republican China. After the 1911 Revolution, though many political elites—especially these within the Nationalist party—were opposed to Chinese tradition and advocated cultural Westernization, there was still a group of politicians who favored traditional Chinese culture, and many of them were in close relationships with the Buddhist community, such as Lin Sen 林森 (1868–1943), Xiong Xiling 熊希齡 (1870–1937), and Dai Jitao 戴季陶 (1891–1949). Lin Sen was an early follower of Sun Yat-

⁹⁵ “Haichao yin yuekan zhi tese 海潮音月刊之特色 [The Characteristics of Haichao yin],” in *Haichao yin* 10(1920), MFQ: 149: 94.

⁹⁶ Justin Ritzinger, *Anarchy in the Pure Land: Reinventing the Cult of Maitreya in the Modern Chinese Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 108.

sen 孫中山 (1866–1925), the founding father of Republican China, and he served as the Chairman of the Nationalist government in the early 1930s.⁹⁷ Xiong Xiling was briefly appointed as the Premier of the government of Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859–1916),⁹⁸ and Xiong maintained a good relationship with monastic figures like Jichan and assumed the titular position of Chairman of the Chinese Buddhist General Association 中華佛教總會 before the organization disintegrated.⁹⁹ Dai Jitao was a Buddhist practitioner and a political associate of Sun Yat-sen, and in the late 1920s and early 1930s he was a crucial figure within the KMT government in fending off charges made by the Anti-Superstition Campaign against Buddhism.¹⁰⁰

These political figures were sympathetic towards Buddhism, and maintained relationships with many monastic figures, including Taixu. Thus, *Sound of Sea Tide*, as well as many other Buddhist journals, became a platform to solidify these connections. For example, the calligraphy writing for the title of *Sound of Sea Tide* was often provided by these social and political elites. The one for the inaugural issue was by Li Yuanhong 黎元洪 (1864–1928), who once was the President of the Beiyang Government; the third issue by Tang Jiyao 唐繼堯 (1883–1927), the warlord of Yunnan Province; the fourth by Yan Xishan 閻錫山 (1883–1960), the warlord of Shanxi Province; and the seventh by Zhang Yilin 張一麐, the former Minister of Education in the Beiyang government.¹⁰¹ It is customary to have an influential elite pen an inscription for a work

⁹⁷ Edmund S. K. Fung, *In Search of Chinese Democracy: Civil Opposition in Nationalist China, 1929-1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 89.

⁹⁸ Julia C. Schneider, *Nation and Ethnicity: Chinese Discourses on History, Historiography, and Nationalism --- 1900s-1920s* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 69.

⁹⁹ Hong Jinlian 洪金蓮, *Taixu dashi fojiao xiandaihua zhi yanjiu* 太虚大师佛教现代化之研究 [Research on Master. Taixu's Buddhist Modernization] (Taipei: Fagu wenhua shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1999), 69.

¹⁰⁰ See Gregory A. Scott, "The Buddhist Nationalism of Dai Jitao 戴季陶," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 39(2011): 55-81.

¹⁰¹ MFQ 147: 1, 329, 465. MFQ 148: 379.

in the Chinese cultural tradition, such as those for books, paintings, stupas, and buildings. However, in this case, the inscription writer provided a merely calligraphic rendering of the title and nothing more. Therefore, the process of titling journal issues aimed to demonstrate political elites' appreciation for *Sound of Sea Tide*. Noticeably, not every Buddhist journal under examination here exhibits this practice.

The style of inscription also suggests the targeted audience of the *Sounds of the Sea Tide*. Eric Goodell notes that the inclusion of the tomb inscription of Yang Wenhui, a painting of Vimalakirti, as well as several pieces excerpted from the *Vimalakirti Sutra* in the inaugural issue demonstrate the intention to attract lay Buddhists.¹⁰² Inscriptions from various issues of the journal also attest to this effort. Having social and political elites writing title inscriptions not only demonstrated the wide connections of Taixu, but also their approval for what Taixu stood for: the effort to modernize Buddhism in China.

Judging by the variety of inscription contributors, the journal was primarily associated with political figures and social elites of the 'old establishment,' namely these who were influential in 1910s and early 1920s, while few of them were involved with the May Fourth Movement or approved of the radically anti-traditional sentiment expressed by the May Fourth activists. Hence, even though Taixu's proclamation for the journal stated that it would provide right Buddhist guidance for the new era under a new ethos,¹⁰³ the journal itself still maintained close ties with these conservative elites whom the May Fourth Movement criticized. Certainly, it would be premature to judge *Sound of Sea Tide* as an anti-May Fourth Movement journal based only on consideration of who provided inscriptions without delving into the journal's contents; however,

¹⁰² Goodell, "Taixu's (1890-1947) Creation of Humanistic Buddhism," 129.

¹⁰³ Taixu, "Haichao yin yuekan chuxian shijie zhi xuanyan 海潮音月刊出現世界之宣言 [Proclamation for the Appearance of Sound of the Sea Tide Monthly]," *Haichao yin* 1(1920), MFQ 147: 3.

judging from the fact that the journal continued to invite prominent people for title inscriptions in its first three years of publication, it does suggest the rather close relationship between the journal and these conservative elites. After 1923, the journal rearranged its page format and gradually stopped including title inscriptions.

Sound of Sea Tide's advertisement campaigns represent another characteristic of the journal indicating its targeted audiences as both the monastics and the laity. It is not unusual for Buddhist journals to print advertisements for other products within its pages. *The Buddhist Miscellanies* included different forms of advertisements, ranging from Buddhist sutras, canons, to paintings.¹⁰⁴ The *Journal of the Awakening Society* printed advertisements for Buddhist books published by the journal's printer and distributor.¹⁰⁵ *Sound of Sea Tide* inherited and expanded upon this practice. In addition to promoting Buddhist works and Taixu's writings, the journal also printed advertisements such as ones for the Society of Spirituality (靈學會),¹⁰⁶ the Chinese Dictionary by Zhonghua Book Company, as well as the company's printing services and Chinese medicines.¹⁰⁷ However, in terms of commercial variety *Sound of Sea Tide* is no match for the later *Foxue banyuekan* 佛學半月刊 (*Buddhist Semimonthly*, 1930–1944). Still, because the journal started its publication about ten years earlier than *Buddhist Semimonthly*, it is worthy of notice that *Sound of Sea Tide* became one of the first Buddhist journals to engage in commercial promotion of non-Buddhist products. Therefore, the journal clearly established a model for engaging with the

¹⁰⁴ See MFQ 1: 180, 365, 366, 545, 546.

¹⁰⁵ See MFQ 6: 498.

¹⁰⁶ For studies on this society, see: Huang Kewu 黃克武, *Minguo chunian Shanghai de linxue yanjiu --- yi Shanghai linxuehui weili* 民國初年上海的靈學研究 --- 以上海靈學會為例 [Study on Spiritualism in Shanghai of Early Republican China Era: The Case of Shanghai Society of Spiritualism],” *Zhongyang yanjiuyue jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan*, 55 (2007): 99-136.

¹⁰⁷ See MFQ 147: 132, 212, 217, 264. MFQ 169: 2, 264, 266.

external society for the reform camp, which distinguishes itself from many other Buddhist journals, especially those run by the conservative camp.

In general, *Sound of Sea Tide* was a leading voice not only for Taixu and his reform camp, but also for the whole Buddhist community to some extent. Its wide social connections, inclusive platform for contributors with different opinions, and experimentation with new modes of commercial promotion all suggest the unique position of the journal. In terms of content, *Sound of the Sea Tide* is also a comprehensive forum for a great variety of issues regarding Buddhism, and I shall often revisit its content throughout this dissertation. Hereafter, I will examine three Buddhist periodicals branching out of Taixu's umbrella, each with its own particular interests.

2.1.2 *The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly* 佛化新青年

Fohua xinqinnian (*The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly* thereafter) was published by the Society of New Buddhist Youth 佛化新青年會. It was initially named the Mission of Buddhist New Youth 佛化新青年團, founded by a group of college students in Beijing, including key figures Zhang Zongzai (張宗載, 1896–?) and Ning Dayun (寧達蘊, 1901–?). The Mission's membership consisted of college students interested in Buddhist philosophy from around the Beijing, Tianjing, and Hebei areas.¹⁰⁸ However, due to its disadvantageous locality as well as its reliance on Peking Common University 北京平民大學, Zhang and Ning decided to move the organization to Wuhan while they enrolled in Taixu's newly founded Wuchang Buddhist Seminary

¹⁰⁸ “Fohua xinqinnian hui zai Wuhan chengli xuanyan 佛化新青年會在武漢成立宣言 [Proclamation of the Establishment of the Society of Buddhist New Youth at Wuhan],” *Fohua xinqinnian* founding issue (1923), in MFQ 13: 10.

武昌佛學院, in the hope of acquiring greater support for the society.¹⁰⁹ Thus under the auspices of prominent lay Buddhists who were also supporters of Taixu, the Society of New Buddhist Youth relocated to Wuhan, and it printed *The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly* through the Right Faith Society 正信會, another high-profile lay Buddhist organization whose own journal I shall examine later.

As its name suggests, the Society of New Buddhist Youth consisted of young Buddhists and aimed to promote Buddhism among the younger generations. Its name echoes another renowned journal, the *New Youth* 新青年 edited by Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879–1942), which triggered the New Culture Movement in the mid-1910s China. The New Culture Movement was a response to the failure of the 1911 Revolution which failed in its proposed mission to lead the country to prosperity through modernization; thus, the movement took anti-traditionalism and advocacy for science and democracy as its core ideology.¹¹⁰ The Society of New Buddhist Youth resonated with calls for revolution and change, and it also believed in the urgency for Buddhism to revolutionize itself, break away from the immediate past, and modernize accordingly. It is little wonder then that its two leaders, Zhang and Ning, greatly admired and revered Taixu as the mentor of the society, despite the fact that they were not formally Taixu's disciples. Hence, the relationship between the Society of New Buddhist Youth and Taixu should not be understood as one of master and disciple. As Rongdao Lai has observed, it was a new type of relationship between teacher and

¹⁰⁹ Wang Jianchuan 王见川, "Zhang Zongzai, Ning Dayun, yu minguo shiqi de fohua xinqinnianhui 张宗载 宁达蕴与民国时期的佛化新青年会 [Zhang Zongzai, Ning Dayun, and the Society of New Buddhist Youth in Republican China]," *Yuanguang foxue xuebao* 02(1999):329-330.

¹¹⁰ Colin Mackerras, *China in Transformation: 1900-1949* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 41.

student in which Taixu had limited influence over these students, who revered Taixu but did not have to follow him unequivocally.¹¹¹

The Society of New Buddhist Youth was active on many fronts, and its journal was the primary platform for them to communicate their views. Notably, *The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly* was not the first journal the society published. While in Beijing in 1922 before the organization changed its name, the Mission of Buddhist New Youth printed a journal *Xin fohua xunkan* 新佛化旬刊 (*New Buddhist Thrice-monthly*). Extant are twelve issues with roughly 60 pages per print-run. Many contributors of the journal wrote under pseudonyms, and Zhang and Ning wrote consistently. Judging by the last two issues, no relatively influential Buddhists contributed to it, and the journal only reprinted some writings from prestigious figures like Tang Dayuan.¹¹² The Mission of Buddhist New Youth took charge of its own journal distribution, and although the Mission provided postal delivery, it is unlikely that *New Buddhist Thrice-monthly* circulated beyond Beijing and the surrounding area. Nevertheless, the Mission managed to attract several thousand members.¹¹³

The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly was similar to *New Buddhist Thrice-monthly* in many ways, as they shared the same editors, yet the new journal enjoyed more support after the society's relocation to Wuhan. In terms of financial status, the organization certainly received steady donations each month. In the founding issue of *The Monthly Journal of the New Buddhists*, it printed a summary of the Mission's ledger, indicating that the organization received approximately

¹¹¹ Lai Rongdao Lei Kuan, "Praying for the Republic: Buddhist Education, Student-Monks, and Citizenship in Modern China (1911-1949)," 164.

¹¹² See MFQ 11: 425.

¹¹³ "Fohua qinnianhui xuanyan 佛化青年會宣言 [Proclamation of the Society of Buddhist New Youth]," *Fohua xinqinnian* founding issue (1923), in MFQ 13: 8-9.

nine hundred and forty yuan in total in the previous year.¹¹⁴ After changing its name to the Society of New Buddhist Youth, the organization received donations from Taixu as well as many of Taixu's lay followers.¹¹⁵ Moreover, it also organized a fundraising branch in 1923, the World Propagation Team of the Society of Buddhist New Youth 佛化新青年世界宣传队, dedicated to raising funds for the Society to support its many its Buddhism propagation activities. The report of this fundraising team appeared in *Sound of Sea Tide*, detailing the team's personnel as well as its planned itinerary.¹¹⁶ With the help of this team, the Society steadily gained donations of around six to seven hundred yuan per month, thus allowing it to continue publishing the journal and producing other Buddhist propagation materials, including projection slides, flags, and advertisements.¹¹⁷ Taixu and Yuanying, along with many other prominent monks, wrote to support this fundraising team.¹¹⁸ With the improvement of its financial situation, the Society was able to organize several influential events to promote themselves as well as Buddhism, such as hosting a talk by Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore when he visited China in 1923.¹¹⁹

The format of *The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly* was not dissimilar from *Sound of Sea Tide*, and it basically reproduced the same page layout as *New Buddhist Thrice-monthly*. As mentioned above, *The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly* differed from its predecessor in terms of a greater range of contributors. After moving to Wuhan and changing its name, *The Young Men's*

¹¹⁴ MFQ 13: 79.

¹¹⁵ MFQ 13: 171.

¹¹⁶ "Fohua xinqinnian shijie xuanchuan dui zhi choubei 佛化新青年世界宣传队之筹备 [The Preparation of the World Propagation Team of the Society of Buddhist New Youth]," *Haichao yin* v.4 no.12, in MFQ 158: 33-36.

¹¹⁷ See MFQB 3: 381-382.

¹¹⁸ "Hainei gaoseng lianmin wei fohua xinqinnian shijie xuanchuandui tonggao guonei zhushan zhanglao shu 海内高僧聯合為佛化新青年世界宣传队通告全國諸山長老書 [Joined Letter from Prominent Masters in China for the World Propagation Team of the Society of Buddhist New Youth to Monastic Leaders]," *Fohua xinqinnian* v.2 no.5~6, in MFQB 4: 89-90.

¹¹⁹ MFQB 3: 172.

Buddhist Monthly attracted more prominent Buddhist writers, including Tang Dayuan and Wang Enyang 王恩洋 (1897–1964), two Buddhist scholars famous for their research on Dharmalakṣaṇa and Consciousness-Only philosophy. Ouyang Jingwu’s writings also were reprinted in the journal. Taixu did not exclusively write for the journal, but many of his writings on Buddhist reform and his speeches in other venues appeared in its pages. One aspect of the journal which distinguishes it from many other Buddhist periodicals is its introduction of medical knowledge. It was chiefly written by a Zou Daiquan 鄒代權 (dates unknown), a Chinese doctor living in Chongqing at the time. The Society of New Buddhist Youth proclaimed its eight missions, and the last of them was to use medical knowledge to help people extend their lives. This proclamation was carried over from the Mission of Buddhist New Youth when it was based in Beijing.¹²⁰ The medical section already appeared in *New Buddhist Thrice-monthly* and it continued after its relocation and renaming. Though it was not unique for a Buddhist journal to introduce medical knowledge, particularly Chinese medical knowledge, *New Buddhist Thrice-monthly* and *The Young Men’s Buddhist Monthly* were nevertheless the first ones to do so. This Buddhist youth organization was also receptive to the ideology of science which permeated China through the May Fourth Movement, and some of its self-proclaimed missions were iconoclastic, including removing the corruption of old Buddhists and advocating anti-superstition.¹²¹ Hence *The Young Men’s Buddhist Monthly* was concerned about the quality of this-worldly life and to that aim attempted to impart medical knowledge. Furthermore, the emphasis on this-worldliness also was in step with Taixu’s call for forging a Buddhism oriented towards life, rather than death.

¹²⁰ “Bentuan bada shiming 本團八大使命 [the Eight Missions of this Organization],” *Xinfohua xunkan*, no.12 (1922), in MFQ 11: 544.

¹²¹ “Fohua xinqinnianhui de dimian 佛化新青年會的覩面 [Meeting the Society of New Buddhist Youth],” *Fohua xinqinnian* founding issue (1923), in MFQ 13: 7.

The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly published until 1925, and the Society of New Buddhist Youth gradually ceased its operation around the same time for two reasons. The first was that Zhang Zongzai faced some personal misfortunes which led to his arrest. Though he was rescued and released,¹²² his activity faded from history. The second reason is the launching of the Northern Expedition by the KMT in south China in the hope of reunifying the country. The KMT's army occupied Wuhan in 1926, and it seized a great deal of temple property, including the Wuchang Buddhist Seminary, for military use.¹²³ Thus it was difficult for Buddhist organizations such as the Society of New Buddhist Youth to function. When compiling the biography of Taixu, Yinshun 印順 (1906–2005) summarized the conditions for the demise of the Society of New Buddhist Youth in terms of insufficient funding, insufficient understanding of Buddhism, and a lack of adamant support from Taixu.¹²⁴ Although his account is relatively accurate, Yinshun misconstrued the relationship between Taixu and the Society, as they were more like collaborators than mentor and disciple. The brief existence of the Society and its journal, however, provide valuable insight on the radicalism of Buddhist youths inspired by Taixu and the May Fourth ethos of science and revolution.

¹²² Wang jianchuan, "Zhang Zongzai, Ning Dayun, yu minguo shiqi de fohua xinqinnianhui," 341-342.

¹²³ Jichen 寄尘, "Wei Wuchang foxueyuan gao quanguo fojiaotu shu 為武昌佛學院告全國佛教徒書," *Haichao yin*, vol. 7, no. 12 (1927), MFQ 166:468.

¹²⁴ Yin Shun 印順, "Taixu dashi nianpu 太虛大師年譜 [The Chronicle of Master Taixu]," in *Yinshun fashi foxue zuzuo quanji* vol. 06 印順法師著作全集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009): 152.

2.1.3 Right Faith 正信

Right Faith was a weekly journal published by the Buddhist Right Faith Society based in Wuhan from 1932 to 1949,¹²⁵ between sporadic interruptions during the Second Sino-Japanese War. The Right Faith Society was a lay Buddhist organization with close ties to Taixu. Founded by Wang Sengpu 王森普 (1881–1934), Chen Yuanbai, and Li Yincheng 李隱塵 in 1920, it was originally named the Hankou Buddhist Society 漢口佛教會 after Taixu was invited to visit Wuhan for a Dharma lecture.¹²⁶ This lay Buddhist society was the main force behind Taixu’s Wuchang Buddhist Seminary. Taixu was revered as its guiding master, though their relationship was similar to the model of the New Buddhist Youth Society. Holmes Welch notes that the operation of the society was limited to lay Buddhists, who went so far as to assume certain monastic roles and duties, such as performing liturgies and rituals.¹²⁷ However, while this observation might hold true for the early 1920s, the situation changed slightly in 1932 when the monk Fafang, a disciple of Taixu and a graduate of Wuchang Buddhist Seminary, became the *Right Faith* journal’s chief editor. Yet the managing committee of *Right Faith* was still entirely made up of lay Buddhists in the 1930s. This suggests that a model of cooperation between laity and monastics, according to which the lay Buddhist attended to the daily affairs while the ordained were in charge of propagation, presenting themselves as “public intellectuals” and shaping a “media personality.”¹²⁸

¹²⁵ It started as a biweekly journal in 1932, and changed to a weekly journal in October 1933.

¹²⁶ Taixu, “Hankou fojiaohui chuangshi jixu 漢口佛教會創始記序 [Prologue for the Founding of Hankou Buddhist Society],” *Haichao yin* vol. 04 no. 05, MFQ 156: 223.

¹²⁷ Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 80-81.

¹²⁸ Francesca Tarocco, *The Cultural Practice of Modern Chinese Buddhism: Attuning the Dharma* (London: Routledge, 2005), 10.

The format of *Right Faith* was designed for lay Buddhists. A weekly journal, it had about fifteen pages per issue, with few lengthy introductory texts or polemical articles. When the journal ran more lengthy pieces, such as the doctrinal exegesis by Taixu and other argumentative articles, it serialized them over several issues. Its rhetorical style was relatively plain and accessible for people with basic literacy. It did not reprint many writings by prominent intellectuals such as Liang Qichao or Ouyang Jingwu, whose writings appeared in *Sound of Sea Tide* and *The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly*.

The journal had relatively fewer distributors, yet it still enjoyed a large print run for each issue due to its huge lay Buddhist base. The publisher for the *Right Faith* was the society itself, based in Wuhan. Judging from the advertisements in *Modern Buddhism* based in Xiamen, the distributor of the *Right Faith* was only the society itself, making subscription only available through postal service.¹²⁹ Justin Ritzinger observes that *Right Faith* even had more copies per issue than *Sound of Sea Tide* in the early 1930s.¹³⁰ Besides differences in format, content and rhetorical style, one reason for such an interesting phenomenon might be the purchase cost. *Right Faith* only cost a tenth of the price for an issue of *Sound of Sea Tide* in the early 1930s, as the former sold for two cents while the latter sold for twenty cents.¹³¹ Though each issue of *Right Faith* was only fifteen pages, also a tenth of the length of *Sound of Sea Tide*, it had a higher print frequency, especially after it became a weekly journal in 1933.¹³² A one-year subscription of *Right Faith*,

¹²⁹ See *Xiandai fojiao* 现代佛教 [现代佛教], vol.06 no. 02 (1933), in MFQ 68: 582.

¹³⁰ Ritzinger, *Anarchy in the Pure Land*, 138.

¹³¹ See *Zhengxin* 正信 [Right Faith], no.02 (1932), in MFQB 43: 18; *Haichao yin*, vol. 13, no. 01 (1932), in MFQ 180: 129. The Chinese currency units are yuan 圆, jiao 角, fen 分 in Republican China, and one yuan equals ten jiao, and one hundred fen.

¹³² “Benkan tebie qishi 本刊特别启示 [Special Notice of the Journal],” *Zhengxin*, vol. 02, no. 80 (1933), in MFQ 60: 411.

which was about one yuan, was still significantly lower than that of *Sound of Sea Tide*, which priced at two yuan.¹³³ Therefore, for readers, it was much easier to gain access to *Right Faith* than *Sound of Sea Tide* from a financial perspective.

The advertisements within the journal were also primarily aimed toward a lay readership. In *Sound of Sea Tide* and *The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly*, advertisements were mainly for texts and other journals, with a small portion for printing services by their distributors; whereas in *Right Faith*, advertisements were much broader and more inclusive, ranging from Buddhist texts to dairy products, reflecting the needs of its lay Buddhist audience. One noticeable characteristic of *Right Faith* advertisements is a strong emphasis on health products, particularly Chinese medicine and nutritional products. These health product advertisements began to appear in *Right Faith* in July 1933, about one year after the journal began to publish. This was the same year the journal began to print the price list for advertisements on its front page.¹³⁴

The first series of health product advertisements were sponsored by Foci yaochang 佛慈藥廠 (the Buddha's Compassion Pharmaceuticals Factory), a medicinal company founded by a lay Buddhist, Yu Huiguan 玉慧觀 (1891–1933), who was also a follower of Taixu. Yu wrote about the origin of this pharmaceutical factory in *Sound of Sea Tide*, expressing his motivation for researching and manufacturing Chinese medicine in a scientific way.¹³⁵ Many of the medicinal products were for women and children, as those printed in *Right Faith* show.¹³⁶ Two

¹³³ See *Zhengxin* 正信 [Right Faith], vol. 03, no. 03 (1933), in MFQ 60: 425; *Haichao yin*, vol. 13, no. 01 (1932), in MFQ 180: 129.

¹³⁴ See *Right Faith*, vol. 02, no. 07 (1933), in MFQB 43: 212.

¹³⁵ Yu, Huiguan, “Foci yaochang gailiang guoyao jihuashu 佛慈藥廠改良國藥計劃書 [Plan of the Buddha's Compassion Pharmaceuticals Factory to Transform Chinese Medicine],” *Haichao yin*, vol 12, no. 04 (1931), in MFQ 177: 485-491.

¹³⁶ See *Right Faith*, vol. 02, no. 13 (1933), in MFQB 43: 259.

interpretations could be made. The first is that with *Right Faith* expanding its readership base and attracting more and more lay Buddhists, it provided the perfect venue for a medicinal company related to Buddhism to promote its products. The second is that as part of the Buddhist modernization project, the Buddhists in the reform camp hoped to incorporate modern science with traditional Chinese medical knowledge as part of its endeavor to reshape the image of Buddhism, thereby demonstrating its relevance to this-worldly well-being.

The publication of *Right Faith* may be broken down into two stages. The first lasted from its inauguration in 1932 to 1937, when the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out, as Japanese troops occupied Wuhan in the same year. The second stage was from 1946 to 1949. In the second stage, the journal reflected the gradual decline of the Buddhist Right Faith Society due to the death of Taixu and the lack of resources, evident by the frequent appearances of combined issues. Taixu died in 1947, and the journal was full of memorial articles thereafter until its last issue. By this time, there was a large consensus on Taixu's vision of humanistic Buddhism, and Fafang, the chief editor of the journal before the war, became one of the leading voices propagating Taixu's ideas, along with other disciples of Taixu.¹³⁷ The rhetoric of the articles in the journal became less revolutionary and aggressive, with fewer charges toward the conservative Buddhist establishment. The lack of resources is also reflected by the disappearance of the charity division of the Society. Prior to the war, the Society had organized a charity branch named Zhengxin cijituan 正信慈濟團 (The Buddha's Compassion Group of Right Faith Society), which engaged in various social charity activities including disaster relief, distribution of medicine and vaccine, and the traditional congee

¹³⁷ Jiu gong 九公, "Huanying Fafang fashi 欢迎法舫法师 [Welcome Master Fafang]," *Right Faith*, vol. 14, no. 13 and 14 (1948), in MFBQ 46: 14.

offering to the poor. Their activities, including the meeting minutes, always appeared in *Right Faith*, but after the war, there is no sign of this group resuming activity.

Therefore, as a journal primarily for lay Buddhists, *Right Faith* provided a venue for Buddhist reformers to address the laity and social issues directly. Topics discussed in the journal were presumably of interest to lay Buddhists, and it also incorporated the reform Buddhists' vision of re-orientating toward worldly concerns by discussing a variety of political and social issues, expressing a Buddhist perspective to society, thus reflecting one of the core components for the Buddhist modernization project. However, if Taixu's reform was mainly about new ways of cultivation and social engagement for the laity, then it would have been much less controversial. Rather, it was Taixu's call for monastic institutional reform that incited heated debate, and the next Buddhist journal to be examined directly partook in such controversy.

2.1.4 Modern Sangha / Modern Buddhism

As suggested by its name, *Xiandai sengqie* 現代僧伽 (*Modern Sangha* hereafter) concentrates on the monastic Buddhist community. Based at the Minnan Buddhist Academy, editors of the journal were followers and supporters of Taixu, who founded the academy in 1925 with the resources of Nanputuo Temple 南普陀寺. Unlike Wuchang Buddhist Academy, the funding for which Taixu relied upon his lay Buddhist patrons, the Minnan Buddhist Academy drew its support from the Nanputuo Temple, thereby mandating that it admit only monastic students.¹³⁸ Thus, *Modern Sangha* resonated with Taixu's call for monastic reform; its message

¹³⁸ Gao Zhenong 高振农, *Fojiao wenhua yu jindai zhongguo* 佛教文化与近代中国 [Buddhism Culture and Modern China] (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexue chubanshe, 1992), 81-89.

was more radical as many of the articles were written by young monks educated in this new Buddhist educational system, as Lai Rongdao observed that Taixu was only “the provider of the ideological foundation of his students undertakings.”¹³⁹ Taixu’s students Daxing and Zhifeng were behind the publication of *Modern Sangha*. Graduates of the Wuchang Buddhist Academy, they followed Taixu to Xiamen when he assumed the abbotship of Nanputuo Temple in 1925.¹⁴⁰

Modern Sangha started its print run in 1928 and lasted until the end of 1933, at which time it was rebranded as *Modern Buddhism*. The latter journal had a predecessor, *Fohua cejinhui huikan* 佛化策進會會刊 (The Journal of Society of Buddhicization Advancement), which only published two issues in 1927, and the society decided to combine its efforts with *Modern Sangha*, as many of its members had been admitted into the academy.¹⁴¹ *Modern Sangha* started as a semimonthly journal, then changed to monthly publication in its run as *Modern Buddhism*. However, due to financial restraints, it is not uncommon to see the journal combine several issues into one print, a frequent practice for Buddhist journals at the time. The journal did not rely on a secular press as its publisher or distributor, and it was printed by local print houses in Xiamen. Despite its locality, *Modern Sangha*’s coverage and discussions of monastic affairs ranged beyond the confines of Xiamen, addressing the broader national monastic community. Daxing, one of the editors of the journal, reported that the journal subscriptions ranged from “south to the Southeast Asian islands,

¹³⁹ Lai Rongdao Lei Kuan, “Praying for the Republic: Buddhist Education, Student-Monks, and Citizenship in Modern China (1911-1949),” 164.

¹⁴⁰ Lai Rongdao Lei Kuan, “Praying for the Republic: Buddhist Education, Student-Monks, and Citizenship in Modern China (1911-1949),” 16.

¹⁴¹ “Fohua cejinhui qishi 佛化策進會啓示 [Notice from the Society of Buddhicization Advancement],” *Xiandai Sengqie*, no.01 (1928), in MFQ 139: 334.

Guangdong, Yunan, and Guizhou provinces, west to Sichuan, and Shaanxi provinces, and north to Peking and Manchuria.”¹⁴²

In its founding issue, the editorial board of *Modern Sangha* expounded six purposes for the journal, three of which are directly concerned with monastic Buddhism: the reform of Buddhist temples, improvement of the sangha’s living conditions, and connection of the monastic community across the nation.¹⁴³ The editorial board recognized that their power to promote institutional reform was limited, and they acknowledged that among their aims the connection of the monastic community was the most important. Hence, reports and commentaries on the current affairs regarding the monastic community became a feature of *Modern Sangha*. Articles about the corruption in temples across the nation were printed, alongside vehement criticisms and relentless satires. In general, the rhetorical style was plain and unsophisticated by the request of the editorial board.¹⁴⁴ The major contributors to the journal were student monks educated at the Minnan Buddhist Academy, though few of them had lasting impact within and without the sangha. Occasionally, Taixu’s writings appeared in the journal, but many were likely reprinted from other sources.

Reception of the journal was mixed. Due to its aggressive and revolutionary tone, as well as its focus on corrupt monastic practices, it was disdained by the conservative monastic establishment but welcomed by young monks who lacked their seniors’ resources and fame. Daxing reported that after the first issue was printed, editors sent copies to prominent temples such

¹⁴² Daxing 大醒, “Gao aihu yu aidu benkan de zhujun 告愛讀與愛護本刊的諸君 [To Readers Who Love to Reading this Journal],” *Xiandai Sengqie*, no. 43-44 (1930), in MFQB 39: 263-264.

¹⁴³ “Chuang kanci 創刊辭 [Proclamation of the Journal],” *Xiandai Sengqie*, no.01 (1928), in MFQ 139: 335-338.

¹⁴⁴ “Benkan qishi 本刊啟示 [Notice of the journal],” *Xiandai Sengqie*, no.01 (1928), in MFQ 139: 334.

as Jingshan Temple 金山寺, Guanzong Temple 觀宗寺, and Tiantong Temple 天童寺; the Jingshan Temple's head monk tore up the journal without reading it, while the monks in charge of the other two temples kept the journal from ordinary monks.¹⁴⁵ *Modern Sangha* did not shy away from exposing the decline and backwardness of the monastic community, but it also defended Buddhism when another wave of the movement promoting "Build School with Temple Properties" was proposed by Tai Shuangqiu 邵爽秋, a professor of Soochow University, and supported by Xue Dubi 薛篤弼, the Interior Minister. The journal published a special issue regarding this movement and solicited articles against it from Buddhists across the nation.

After four years in publication, *Modern Sangha* was renamed *Modern Buddhism*, and its content shifted from focusing on monastic affairs to Buddhist doctrinal discussions. Taixu was not in favor of such a shift, and he urged the journal to resume its original focus on monastic reform, stating that "after the journal changed to monthly publication and focused more on doctrinal studies, it gradually lost its original function [of pushing monastic reform]."¹⁴⁶ However, to Taixu's regret, the journal did not resume its previous aggressive stance on monastic reform. The reason for this change is left for speculation, but it nevertheless demonstrates the relationship between the journal and its mentor, who held little sway over the selection of its content. Similar to his relationship with *The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly*, Taixu was venerated as a guiding master by editors of *Modern Buddhism*, but the journal was not subject to the direct control of Taixu, and editors had the freedom to decide the content and style of the journal. After *Modern Sangha* became *Modern Buddhism*, its emphasis shifted more towards doctrinal education, and it

¹⁴⁵ Daxing, "Gao aihu yu aidu benkan de zhujun," in MFQB 39: 264.

¹⁴⁶ Taixu, "Xiandai fojiao zhoukan zhi luxiang 现代佛教周刊之路向 [The Direction of the Modern Buddhism Weekly]," *Xiandai Fojiao*, no.01 (1933), in MFBQ 39: 311.

printed essays of students graduating from Minnan Buddhist Academy in two issues, indicating the journal's effort to promote the achievements of the new Buddhist education system which was more than capable of cultivating qualified Buddhist clergy.

Toward the end of 1933, the journal ceased operations due to the loss of its core editors. Zhifeng ended his involvement with the journal in the middle of 1933,¹⁴⁷ and Daxing left Xiamen for Wuhan to assume the editorship of *Sound of Sea Tide* that same year.¹⁴⁸ In its five-year run, the journal made a real impact on propagating monastic reform. In this dissertation, its polemics and discussions of reform shall be further explored in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, along with its communication with Buddhists across the nation.

In the polemics of *Modern Sangha*, the authors often identified two factions within the monastic community: the new vs. the old.¹⁴⁹ For the editors of the journal, the new faction was represented by Taixu and these who received the new Buddhist education. The ideology of the new faction was to modernize and reform Chinese Buddhism, while the old faction referred to those who remained loyal to the old monastic organization and management structure, refusing to adapt to the new age. Many names of members in the old faction were identified by authors in *Modern Sangha*, as well as in other pro-reform Buddhist periodicals. Among these names, Dixian and Yinguang are most noticeable. The conservative faction is depicted in these journals as recalcitrant and indifferent to the changes in society. However, as it turns out, this was not the case, at least not in its entirety. Dixian and Yinguang certainly recognized the coming of a new

¹⁴⁷ Zhifeng 芝峰, "Zhifeng tebie qishi 芝峰特別啓示 [Special Notice from Zhifeng]," *Xiandai Fojiao*, no. 08 09 10 (1933), in MFQ 68: 566.

¹⁴⁸ "Fojiao xinwen 佛教新聞 [News of Buddhism]," *Renhai Deng*, no.03(1934), in MFQB 49: 37.

¹⁴⁹ See: Daxing, "Zhongguo fojiao tanhua: Zhongguo fojiao xinjiu liangpai zhi qushi 中國佛教講話: 中國佛教新舊兩派之趨勢 [The Talk on Chinese Buddhism: Trend between the New and the Old Factions]," *Xiandai sengqie*, vol. 02 (1929-1930). in MFQ 66: 361-163.

age, and they made their own efforts to adapt to it. Engagement in periodical publication was not monopolized by the reform camp; Yinguang, Dixian, and their followers also utilized the new mode of communication to promote their views. The next three Buddhist periodicals I will examine are products of their efforts.

2.2 Conservative Camp's Periodicals

2.2.1 *Foguangshe shekai* 佛光社社刊

In 1928, Jiang Qian 江謙 (1875–1942, courtesy name Yiyuan 易園), a lay follower of Yinguang and Dixian, founded the lay Buddhist society named Foguang she 佛光社 (the Buddha's Light Society) in his hometown of Wuyuan 婺源 in Anhui province, and the society published *Foguangshe shekai* (*The Buddha's Light Society Journal* hereafter). Jiang Qian and the society promoted Pure Land Buddhism. It seems that Yinguang held greater influence over this society than Dixian, as he was venerated as the president of the Buddha's Light Society.¹⁵⁰

Jiang Qian was a traditional Chinese intellectual who strove to promote Buddhism as the country embarked on a path to rapid modernization. His personal background and conversion experience to Buddhism exemplify the typical profile of a lay supporter of the conservative camp of Buddhism. Born in the final days of the Qing dynasty, Jiang was gradually exposed to the new

¹⁵⁰ Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬, "Jiang Yiyuan jushi zhuan 江易園居士傳 [Biography of Jiang Yiyuan]," *Jueyouqing banyuekan* 覺有情半月刊, no. 85 and 86 (1943), in MFQB 61: 490.

educational system while still under the strong influence of traditional Confucianism as he studied for and passed the entry-level civil service exam at the age of seventeen.¹⁵¹ The majority of his career centered on education, as he helped to found the Nantong Normal School 南通師範學校 and later in his life served as the president of Nanjing Higher Normal School 南京高等師範學校.¹⁵² After three years of tenure, Jiang Qian retired from the position due to neurasthenia, and he briefly served in the Ministry of Education in Beijing but had to retreat to his hometown of Wuyuan to rest. It was around this time that he converted to Buddhism and subsequently took Dixian and Yinguang as his mentors. His devotion to Pure Land Buddhism alleviated his disease, and he dedicated himself to promoting Pure Land teachings by establishing the Buddha's Light Society. For Jiang Qian, as Jiang Weiqiao observed, Buddhism was perfect as the other-worldly teaching while Confucianism served better as guidance for this-worldliness.¹⁵³ Jiang Qian also envisioned promoting Buddhist teachings in preliminary school classrooms, as Beverly F. McGuire has studied, since he accumulated experience in managing educational institutions, but much of his plans remained on paper.

The relationship between Jiang Qian and his Dharma masters, Dixian and Yinguang, was amicable in the beginning. There was not much interaction between Dixian and the Buddha's Light Society, as few of his writings appear in the journal; however, Dixian did write a congratulatory article for the establishment of a division of the Buddha's Light Society in Chongtian county of

¹⁵¹ Ibid.,

¹⁵² Beverly F. McGuire, "Bringing Buddhism into the Classroom: Jiang Qian's 江謙 (1876-1942) Vision for Education in Republican China," *Journal of Chinese Religions*, 39:1 (2011): 34.

¹⁵³ Jiang Weiqiao, "Jiang Yiyuan jushi zhuan."

Anhui province.¹⁵⁴ The journal mainly interacted with Yinguang, venerating him as the president of the society. Photos of Yinguang, as well as his writings and letters, appeared in all four issues of the *Buddha's Light Society Journal*, and the journal proudly proclaimed Yinguang's approval on the last page of the second and third issues.¹⁵⁵ However, Jiang Qian and Yinguang did not remain in good terms, as Jiang was drawn in the late 1930s to planchette writing (*fujī* 扶乩), a divination method originating in Daoism that gradually gained a wider popularity among Chinese intellectuals since the fifteenth century in the Ming Dynasty. The trend continued through to the Republican period, and many Chinese intellectuals, especially these with interest in self-cultivation and Chinese traditions, practiced planchette writing, including some devout lay Buddhists like Wang Yiting 王一亭 (1867–1938).¹⁵⁶ Yinguang was not in favor of Buddhists practicing this kind of divination ritual, as he considered it to be “beneficial for drawing philanthropical works but detrimental for the cultivation of Buddhism.”¹⁵⁷ The relationship between Buddhism and the practice of planchette writing is further complicated by sectarian tensions and mutual appropriation.¹⁵⁸ But it is sufficient to know that Yinguang was against this practice, as he scolded

¹⁵⁴ Dixian, “Anhui Wuyuan Chongtian fenshe fougangshe xu 安徽婺源翀田分設佛光社敘 [On the Establishment of Chongtian Division of the Buddha's Light Society in Wuyuan, Anhui],” *Foxue banyuekan*, no.40 (1932), in MFQ 47: 439-440.

¹⁵⁵ See *Foguang sheshekan* no. 02 and 03, in MFQ 16: 337, 503.

¹⁵⁶ Taixu, “Zhuinian zhangzhe Wang Yiting 追念长者王一亭 [For the Memory of Elder Wang Yiting],” *Haichao yin*, vol. 19, no. 11 (1938), in MFQ 199: 137-138.

¹⁵⁷ Yinguang 印光, “Fu zhandeke shu 复战德克书 [Response Letter to Zhan Deke],” in *Yinguang Fashi Wenchao Vol. 1* 印光法师文钞 上册, edited by Zhang Yuyin 张育英 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 1999): 389.

¹⁵⁸ See Fan Chunwu 范纯武, “Jinxiandai Zhongguo Fojiao yu fujī 近現代中國佛教與扶乩 [Modern Chinese Buddhism and the Planchette Writing],” *Yuanguang Foxue Xuebao*, 3(1999): 261-292. And Wang Jianchuan 王見川, “Jindai Zhongguo de fujī cisha yu ‘mixin’ --- Yi Yinguang wenchao wei kaocha xiansuo 近代中國的扶乩、慈善與[迷信] --- 以印光文鈔為考查線索 [The Planchette Writing, Philanthropy, and ‘Superstition’ in Modern China --- Using the *Collected Work of Master Yinguang* as Thread],” in *Belief, Practice and Cultural Adaptation: Papers from the Religion Section of the Fourth International Conference on Sinology*, eds. Paul R. Katz and Shufen Liu (Nankang: Academia Sinica Press, 2013): 525-562.

Jiang Qian's fascination in a letter with another lay Buddhist Hu Huiche 胡慧彻, in which Yinguang wrote "He [Jiang] was deluded by the compliments produced by the planchette writing... Please tell others not to follow Jiang Qian's example."¹⁵⁹ Yet for the duration of the print run of the *Buddha's Light Society Journal* from 1927 to 1932, there was no discord between them.

The *Buddha's Light Society Journal* produced only four issues published in its five years print run, but the journal reflects that lay Buddhists took the initiative to propagate Buddhism themselves in support of the conservative faction. As Jiang Qian's speech in the first member conference of the Society indicates, Yinguang, Hongyi 弘一 (1880–1942, a prominent Vinaya master), and Tang Dayuan were all invited via mail correspondence to serve as president and committee members of the society, though they had not visited the county themselves.¹⁶⁰ Thus the relationship between the Buddha's Light Society and its guiding masters was as loose as that between Taixu and his associated lay Buddhist societies. The support of Yinguang, Hongyi, Tang Dayuan and others manifested in their writings which appeared in the journal's pages, some of which were produced exclusively for the publication. Yinguang's correspondence with other lay Buddhists, such as with Jiang Qian, was printed in the journal along with his exegetical writings on certain Buddhist concepts. Letters from Hongyi and Dixian to other lay Buddhists were also printed by the journal.

¹⁵⁹ Yinguang, "Fu Hu Huiche jushi shu 復胡慧徹居士書 [Response Letter to Hu Huiche]," in *Yinguang Fashi Wenchao Vol. 1*, 563-564.

¹⁶⁰ Jiang Qian, "Diyici sheyou dahui Jiang Yiyuan jushi yanjiangci 第一次社友大會江易園居士演講詞 [Jiang Qian's Speech in the First Member Conference of the Buddha's Light Society]," *Foguangshe shekan*, no. 01(1927), in MFQ 16: 165.

The page length of the *Buddha's Light Society Journal* tended to run long, ranging from one hundred to two hundred pages, with the exception of the first issue which only featured roughly seventy pages. Despite variations in length, the organization of content remained consistent, including forums, literary writings, biographies, and correspondences. The designated sections for biographies and correspondences distinguish this Buddhist journal from those of the reform camps. The biography sections contained many deliverance stories (*wang shengji* 往生記), which recorded the Buddhist virtue of its subjects and attested to the efficiency of Pure Land belief. They had been a popular biographical style in Pure Land Buddhism since the Tang dynasty.¹⁶¹ Supernatural omens often appear in this type of deliverance biography, and superstition was what the May Fourth Movement was opposed. The epistolary section is another characteristic of this journal, which could include more than thirty letters. Most of them are the correspondence between lay Buddhists and guiding masters such as Yinguang, Dixian, and Hongyi. Occasionally exchanges between one lay Buddhist to another prominent or respected lay Buddhist are included. In the case of the *Buddha's Light Society Journal*, Jiang Qian's letters appear in every issue. The content of these exchanges ranges from courteous compliments to discussion of some doctrinal issues. This section occupies a significant portion of the journal, suggesting that one function of Buddhist journals was forming a close Buddhist community based on frequent opinion exchange and the resulting consensus.

The circulation of the journal is difficult to estimate. Yet, because it was printed in Shanghai, it was possible for it to spread beyond the confines of Wuyuan county in Anhui. Except

¹⁶¹ See Whalen Lai, "Legends of Births and the Pure Land Tradition in China," in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, edited by James Foard, Michael Solomon and Richard Payne (Berkeley: Regents of the University of California, 1996): 173-232.

for the first issue, the remaining three issues clearly record that the publishers used a printing house in Shanghai, and the fourth issue was even distributed by the Shanghai Buddhist Company.¹⁶² The cost of the journal per issue was three *jiao*, which is ten cents higher than *Sound of Sea Tide* in 1932. However, it was free for society members, and the journal attracted generous donations from some patrons; hence it was unlikely that the majority of its readers paid full price. In addition, the journal always printed a list of members in every issue, and all four issues counted 139, 207, 359, and 939 respectively.¹⁶³ It is evident that members of the Buddha's Light Society grew rapidly over the five-year publications of the journal, and potentially reached several thousand readers if we presume one copy might be shared by several readers.

The content of this journal shall be discussed in later chapters, but it is important to point out that the issues and rhetorical styles of the *Buddha's Light Society Journal* differed from the reform camps' foregoing publications. Besides the emphasis on activities and writings of guiding masters like Yinguang, the *Buddha's Light Society Journal* aimed primarily to induce conversion through printing elementary Buddhist doctrines, confessional stories, and the efficacy of Buddhist salvation. Issues concerning modern science, social changes, the conundrum of the monastics, and modernization at large are rather limited and inconspicuous within its pages. The journal's strong Pure Land Buddhism orientation inherited some of the Buddhist propagation strategies from the Late Imperial era, and it also resembled the function of morality books in some respects. Furthermore, its writing style predominantly featured classical Chinese, in an age when vernacular Chinese styles dominated many periodicals, especially these of the reform camps such as *Modern Sangha*. This insistence on writing in classical Chinese can also be found in other periodicals

¹⁶² See *Foguangshe shekan*, no.04 (1932), in MFQ 17: 221.

¹⁶³ MFQ 16: 186-190, 329-335, 489-500; MFQ 17: 201-219.

published by the conservative camp, like the one to be discussed next, the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*.

2.2.2 *Hongfa shekan* 弘法社刊

The publication *Hongfa shekan* (the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society* hereafter) was based at Guanzong Temple 觀宗寺 in Ningbo 寧波, Zhejiang province, with Dixian as the resident abbot and primary initiator of the journal's establishment. Belonging to Tiantai Buddhism, an important Buddhist school indigenous to Chinese Buddhism, Dixian was acclaimed as the modern reviver of the school for his efforts to restore Guanzong Temple, found a Tiantai educational institute within the temple, produce numerous exegeses on Tiantai Buddhism doctrine, and use journals and printed texts to propagate Tiantai Buddhist teachings.¹⁶⁴

The restoration of Guanzong Temple provided Dixian with a foothold to promote his vision of Buddhist propagation. Dixian, though being viewed as an important figure in the conservative camp, in fact was aware of the crisis Buddhism faced in the modern era. Receiving Upasampada ordination at Guoqing Temple 國清寺 on Mt. Tiantai, Dixian was formally admitted to the Tiantai lineage in 1886 by Jiduan Dingrong 跡端定融 (dates unknown), the abbot of Longhua Temple 龍華寺 in Shanghai, and he thereafter traveled around the lower Yangtze area for training.¹⁶⁵ Hence Dixian witnessed the social changes in coastal China, and he was one of the first to participate in the monastic education revival project as he assumed the position of President of the Jiangsu

¹⁶⁴ Chen Yongge, *Fojiao honghua de xiandai zhuanxin*, 79-80.

¹⁶⁵ Fang Zuyou 方祖猷, *Tiantaizong Guanzongjiangsi sizhi* 天台宗觀宗講寺志 1912-1949 [Gazetteer of Guanzong Lecture Temple of Tiantai Buddhism] (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2006), 44.

Monastic Normal College 江苏僧师范学堂 in 1910 and also organized a Buddhist Studies Society 佛学研究社 in Shanghai, 1912.¹⁶⁶ In 1913, Dixian was invited to restore Guanzong Temple, where he continued his efforts to promote proper training for Buddhist monks and established the Guanzong Research Society 觀宗研究社, Guanzong Studies Society 觀宗學社, and Guanzong Dharma Propagation Studies Society 觀宗弘法學社.¹⁶⁷

The *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society* began publication in 1928 when Dixian summoned one of his disciples, Baojing 寶靜 (1899–1940), back from the south to Guanzong Temple to manage the Dharma Propagation Studies Society. Hence Baojing was also in charge of the journal under the auspices of Dixian. After Dixian passed away in 1932, Baojing, as Dixian's Dharma successor, inherited the abbotship of Guanzong Temple and kept managing the Guanzong Dharma Propagation Studies Society and the periodical. The periodical ceased its publication in 1937 when the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out. Baojing traveled to Hongkong and Shanghai to fundraise and kept Guanzong temple open during the war so as to accommodate other monks who lost their residence and suffered due to the war.¹⁶⁸

The *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society* had lasted for almost a decade, during which time it witnessed the turmoil within the Buddhist community and provided a platform for the conservative camps to voice their opinions in regard to various controversial issues. The periodical itself also attests to the reputation of Dixian and his endeavor to promote Tiantai Buddhism in the modern era. As mentioned above, Dixian was not ignorant of the changing social

¹⁶⁶ Chen Yongge, *Fojiao honghua de xiandai zhuanxin*, 82-83.

¹⁶⁷ He Jianming 何建明, "Minchu xinjiao fengchao yu Ningbo Guanzong yanjiushe de kaiban 民初兴教风潮与宁波观宗研究社的开办 [The Revival of Buddhism in Early Republican China and the Founding of Ningbo Guanzong Studies Society]," *Fayin* 法音, no. 11(2009): 46-55.

¹⁶⁸ Fang Zuyou, *Tiantaizong Guanzongjiangsi sizhi*, 62.

perception regarding Buddhism in the late Qing era. Though coming relatively late to the periodical publication industry, Dixian did value the importance of its communicative format.

The *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society* was not the first periodical Baojing managed either; he also published *Nanhua xunkan* 南华旬刊 (*South China Thrice-monthly*) and *Hongfa xunkan* 弘法旬刊 (*Dharma Propagation Thrice-monthly*) in his sojourn at Guangzhou between 1926 and 1928.¹⁶⁹ After being summoned back to Guanzong Temple, Baojing noticed that there was no one periodical for the study society; thus he took it upon himself to start the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*, primarily in order to provide a venue for students of the research society to have their works read by a wider audience, but the periodical was also meant to attract profound and incisive writings from other Buddhists in China as well as abroad. Generally speaking, monastic authors contributed the most content for the periodical during its ten-year run.

From 1928 to 1937, a total of thirty-five issues were published, with the frequency between three to four issues per year. Hence the periodical ran at a frequency similar to a quarterly journal, with around a hundred seventy pages per issue. The earlier issues of the periodical tend to be shorter and with fewer sections than later ones. Sections appearing throughout the periodical's print run include Dharma research 研究, Buddhism literature 文苑, and correspondences 通訊. Later on, there was a biography section dedicated specifically for deliverance stories and memorials.

Compared to Buddhist periodicals from the reform camp discussed earlier, the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society* did not emphasize either Buddhist news nor polemics about

¹⁶⁹ Baojing 宝静, "Fakan ci 發刊辭 [Proclamation of the Periodical]," *Hongfa shekan*, no.01 (1928), in MFQB 36: 3; Fang Zuyou, *Tiantaizong Guanzongjiangsi sizhi*, 61.

monastic corruption or reform, and it was preoccupied, similar to the *Buddha's Light Society Journal*, with the elaboration of doctrinal issues, especially the introduction and rudimentary exegesis of Tiantai Buddhist thoughts. Occasionally, the periodical published the newly-introduced governmental regulation on Buddhist temples, and it also printed articles—often congratulatory writings—on some Buddhist events such as the completion of the construction of Buddhist temples. Thus, the journal was not totally uninterested in the current affairs of the Buddhist community, but did not consider covering these affairs a priority for the periodical. One of the few news affairs the periodical did publish concerned the activities of Dixian, as well as Baojing after he assumed the abbotship of Guanzong Temple in 1932. In this respect, the periodical resembles the reform camp's journals by providing close coverage of their mentor's engagements.

Publication and distribution of *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society* continued to be managed by the Guanzong Temple throughout the periodical's print run. The cost of publication was chiefly met through patronage and donations; hence the periodical itself was free of charge, and for nonlocal readers, receiving the periodical only required a postal fee.¹⁷⁰ The exact number of copies and the range of circulation remain unclear. Yet judging from the correspondence section in which there were Buddhists writing from all parts of China, including Hongkong and Taiwan, it is reasonable to deduce that these readers had access to the periodical. However, the major audience of the periodical would be located in the Lower Yangtze area, as the Buddhist affairs discussed mainly center on this region. There was only one special issue called “Hongfa tekan 弘法特刊” (“The Special Issue of *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*”).

¹⁷⁰ “Benkan qishi er 本刊启示二 [No.2 Notice of the Periodical],” *Hongfa shekan* no. 01 (1928), in MFQB 36: 2.

Published in 1932 when Baojing was on a tour of Yunan Province under the invitation of Yunnan fojiao jushilin 雲南佛教居士林 (Yunnan Lay Buddhists Association), it was published with the support of the lay Buddhist association and provided free of charge.¹⁷¹

The last issue was published in October 1937, about three months after total war broke out between China and Japan. The chief editor, Baojing, acknowledged the impact of war on the publication, including the rising cost of paper,¹⁷² and that he could not promise the continuation of the journal. The Second Sino-Japanese War lasted from 1937 to 1945, during which time many Buddhist periodicals were, like the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*, forced to cease publication. However, one Buddhist periodical, *Honghua yuekan* 弘化月刊 (*Spreading the Teaching Monthly*, 1941–1958), started its print run in the middle of the war and miraculously extended its run into the early years of the People’s Republic of China. This is the last, but not the least, significant Buddhist periodical of the conservative camp.

2.2.3 *Honghua yuekan* 弘化月刊

Of all the Buddhist periodicals studied here, *Honghua yuekan* (*Spreading the Teaching Monthly* hereafter) is unique in the sense that it was published as a commemoration journal for Yinguang, who passed away one year before this periodical appeared. Similar to the *Buddha’s Light Society Journal*, *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* focuses on disseminating Yinguang’s teaching and Pure Land Buddhism specifically. However, unlike *the Buddha’s Light Society*

¹⁷¹ See *Hongfa tekan*, no. 01(1932), in MFQB 46: 340-522.

¹⁷² “Hongfa kan xukan qishi yi [弘法刊续刊启示一] (The No. 1 Notice for the Continuation of *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*),” *Hongfa shekan*, no. 35(1937), in MFQB 38: 195.

Journal which carried Jiang Qian's idiosyncratic style, in terms of its content and relationship with other established Buddhist figures, *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* was more of a collective effort by Yinguang's prominent lay followers to preserve and spread his teachings.

Yinguang's reputation as an esteemed Pure Land master, as well as the number of his followers, reached their peak in his later years in the 1930s. Scholars have described this phenomenon as a modern Pure Land movement in China;¹⁷³ some even call it a form of religious pietism.¹⁷⁴ It is worth providing some biographical accounts of Yinguang here so as to better understand how he could attract so many lay followers across social class. The rise of Yinguang's reputation closely relates to the emergence of the modern publication industry, particularly the appearance of Buddhist journals. Born in the northwestern province of Shaanxi, Yinguang's early monastic life was confined to the northern part of the country until 1893, when the monk was invited to Mt. Putuo, one of the sacred Buddhist mountains, in the lower Yangtze area, where Chinese Buddhism enjoyed lavish support from the wealthiest region of China.¹⁷⁵

During Yinguang's sojourning at Mt. Putuo, he was visited by a lay Buddhist named Gao Henian 高鹤年 (1872–1962), who was acquainted with Yinguang and admired his knowledge of Buddhism as well as his talent for preaching Pure Land doctrine. They started to cooperate in publishing annotated Pure Land texts and related morality books, and in 1912, when the first Buddhist periodical, *Buddhist Miscellany*, appeared, Gao provided four articles written by Yinguang to publish under a pseudonym, which attracted a group of newly-emerged cosmopolitan

¹⁷³ Jan Kiely, "Spreading the Dharma with the Mechanized Press: New Buddhist Print Cultures in the Modern Chinese Print Revolution, 1866-1949," 200-203.

¹⁷⁴ Wing-tsit Chan, *Religious Trends in Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), 67.

¹⁷⁵ Zhang Xuesong, "A critical study on Yinguang and his reconstruction of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism," 131-134.

lay Buddhists including Xu Weiru 徐蔚如 (1878–1937) and Wang Yiting,¹⁷⁶ the latter of whom also kept a good relationship with Taixu later on. Xu Weiru edited and published the first version of the *Collected Writings of Master Yinguang* 印光法师文钞 (hereafter the *Collected Writings*) in 1918,¹⁷⁷ which further cemented Yinguang’s reputation as a prominent Pure Land master.

The *Collected Writings* went through several editions over fifteen years with growing contents, which were published by large printing companies such as The Commercial Press 商务印书馆 and Zhonghua Books 中华书局.¹⁷⁸ As Jan Kiely notes, the genre of the *Collected Writings* is not similar to the prevalent form of Buddhist propaedeutic texts written in plain Chinese developed during the same period.¹⁷⁹ It was largely comprised of missives, correspondences between Yinguang and lay disciples, discussing a variety of issues and written in classical Chinese, a rare talent among the late Qing monastics as many were not fully literate. An insistence on using classical Chinese can be found in other Buddhist texts, including journals and periodicals, which echo Yinguang and his teachings. However, Chinese scholar Zhang Xuesong rightfully contends that journal and periodical publication was not Yinguang’s primary choice of method for propagating Buddhism, as few of Yinguang’s journal articles were voluntarily submitted by the master himself, and the majority were submitted by his followers.¹⁸⁰ There is no doubt, however, that the rise of Yinguang’s reputation was due to the modern publishing industry which utilized

¹⁷⁶ Jan Kiely, “The Charismatic Monk and the Chanting Masses --- Master Yinguang and His Pure Land Revival Movement,” in *Making Saints in Modern China*, eds. David Ownsby, Vincent Goossaert, and Ji Zhe (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 34-36.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁷⁸ Zhenda 真达, Miaozhen 妙真, Liaoran 了然, and Desen 德森, “Zhongxin jinzong Yinguang dashi xingyeji 中兴净宗印光大师行业记 [Biography of the Pure Land Reviver, Master Yinguang],” in *Yinguang dashi yongsiji* 印光大师永思集 [Collections of Memorial Writings for Master Yinguang], edited by Chen Hailiang 陈海量 (Shanghai: Honghua she, 1941), 3.

¹⁷⁹ Kiely, “The Charismatic Monk and the Chanting Masses,” 51.

¹⁸⁰ Zhang, “A critical study on Yinguang and his reconstruction of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism,” 143.

cheap production costs and speedy communication infrastructure. In the proclamation of *Spreading the Teaching Monthly*, Desen 德森, the acolyte to Yinguang in his later life, summarized the two life projects of Yinguang: first, the restoration of Linyanshan Temple 靈岩山寺 in Suzou, and second, the establishment of Honghua she 弘化社 (the Society of Spreading the Teaching).¹⁸¹ The main task of the latter was to print and disseminate Buddhist texts and morality books edited and approved by Yinguang.

It is difficult to attribute the ascension of Yinguang's prominence to one particular factor. Besides taking advantage of the modern print industry, Yinguang's emphasis on Pure Land teaching also attracted lay followers from all social strata. The employment of the modern printing industry certainly was one aspect of his genius; for many Buddhists, especially the laity, his Pure Land message was nevertheless the primary attraction. As Wing-tsit Chan, Zhang, Kiely, and many other scholars have observed, no matter how one interprets Yinguang's Buddhist doctrinal stance, they all admit the importance of Yinguang's propagation of Pure Land soteriology which made salvation attainable for the majority of lay Buddhists.¹⁸²

The *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* testifies to the allegiance of Yinguang's followers. During Yinguang's life, he seldom took monastic disciples, not even for the famous Buddhist monk Hongyi, but he did take many laypersons as his disciples, as the estimation for his lay followers reaches tens of thousands because Yinguang was famed for "not turn[ing] anyone

¹⁸¹ Desen 德森, "Fakan ci 发刊辞 [Proclamation of the Periodical]," *Honghua yuekan*, no.01 (1941), in MFQB 68: 4.

¹⁸² See Chan, *Religious Trends in Modern China*, 65-68; Zhang, "A critical study on Yinguang and his reconstruction of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism," 207-209; Kiely, "The Charismatic Monk and the Chanting Masses," 52; Chen Yongge, *Fojiao honghua de xiandaihua zhuanxing*, 176-182; Chen Bing 陈兵, Deng Zimei 邓子美, *Ershi shiji zhongguo fojiao* 二十世纪中国佛教 [Buddhism in Twentieth Century China] (Beijing: minzu chubanshe, 2000), 331-333.

away.”¹⁸³ Thus, the majority of Yinguang’s writings were preserved through his correspondence with various lay Buddhists and other prominent figures. Several expanded editions of the *Collected Work* reflect the high correspondence frequency between Yinguang and his followers, as many of these letters were specific discussions of certain doctrinal and practice issues. Even though the latest edition encompasses three volumes, it did not include all of Yinguang’s writings.¹⁸⁴ Many other texts from Yinguang’s followers, acquaintances, and friends, written in memory of the master, appeared after Yinguang’s death in 1941, and some of them were included in *Spreading the Teaching Monthly*.

The fact that the journal started its print run after the death of Yinguang reflects cohesion among the master’s followers. Furthermore, the veneration of Yinguang as the thirteenth patriarch of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism was facilitated by lay followers even prior to Yinguang’s death.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, soon after Yinguang passed away, a lay Buddhist named Yang Shisun 杨石荪 (dates unknown) wrote a petition to venerate Yinguang as a Pure Land Buddhism patriarch,¹⁸⁶ which was echoed by many others, thus forming a consensus on Yinguang’s status in Pure Land Buddhism.

As noted above, the majority of Yinguang’s followers were lay Buddhists, mainly coming from the coastal cosmopolitan areas such as Shanghai and Hongkong. Thus, the maintenance and operation of *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* also largely relied upon these lay Buddhists’ support.

¹⁸³ Kiely, “The Charismatic Monk and the Chanting Masses,” 49.

¹⁸⁴ See Zhang ed, *Yinguang fashi wenchao*.

¹⁸⁵ Chen Jianhuang 陈剑隍, “Jindai queli lianzong shisanwei zushi de guocheng jiqi shiyi 近代确立莲宗十三位祖师的过程及其释疑 [The Process and Illustration of Confirmation of the Thirteenth Pure Land Buddhism Patriarch in Modern China],” *Jingtuzong yuekan* 净土宗月刊, no. 04(2013), 8-15.

¹⁸⁶ Yang Shisun 杨石荪, “Nizun linyan dashi wei lianzong di shisanzu yi 拟尊灵岩大师为莲宗第十三祖议 [Petition to Venerate Master Yinguang as the Thirteenth Pure Land Buddhism Patriarch],” *Foxue banyuekan*, no. 34(1941), in MFQB 61: 185.

The chief editor was first Desen, one of Yinguang's later acolytes, followed by Yang Xinlian 杨欣莲 (dates unknown).¹⁸⁷ The publisher and distributor of the journal was a branch of Society of Spreading the Teaching based in Shanghai, named the Forever Memorial Association for Master Yinguang 印光大师永久纪念会, and members of the society were entitled to a free copy of the journal, while non-members needed only pay for postage.¹⁸⁸ It was not until 1946 when the economy in cosmopolitan areas of China was crippled that the journal started to charge non-members a subscription fee.¹⁸⁹

Similar to other Buddhist periodicals of the restorationist camp, the content layout of *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* usually included sections for forums, speeches, literary works, deliverance stories, and minutes of the Spreading the Teaching Society's meetings. Yet one of the most distinctive sections of the journal deals with the legacy of teachings by Master Yinguang, in which many of Yinguang's writings— primarily in the form of epistles—were printed in practically every issue before 1949. After the Communist takeover, the tenets of the journal changed drastically and began to emphasize its compatibility with Marxist ideology, which is outside the purview of this dissertation. Therefore, the focus of research for this Buddhist journal will concentrate on the period from its inception up to 1949, during which time the editorial board faced less political pressure and enjoyed relative autonomy.

As its name indicates, *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* was published on a monthly basis, with about thirty pages per issue in its first thirteen publications. Beginning with the fourteenth issue, the publication society increased the paper size, a change which resulted in an average of

¹⁸⁷ Gao Zhenhong, *Fojiao wenhua yu jindai zhongguo*, 397-398.

¹⁸⁸ See *Honghua yuekan*, no. 01 (1941), in MFQB 68: 19.

¹⁸⁹ See *Honghua yuekan*, no. 55 (1946), in MFQB 70: 13.

fifteen pages per issue.¹⁹⁰ In terms of the number of printed copies per issue, there was a notice in the journal's nineteenth issue asking readers to return their used copies to the society so as to recirculate them, which stated that the journal usually had six to eight thousand copies printed each month,¹⁹¹ a trend which continued into the Communist period, up to 1955.¹⁹² Hence the influence of this Buddhist journal cannot be underestimated, as it may be the Buddhist journal with the largest print run during the Republican era.

Besides Yinguang's writings, other texts were produced to memorialize the master and to expound and propagate Pure Land Buddhist teachings. Noticeably, deliverance stories and stories attesting to the efficacy of commitment to Buddhism appeared in almost every issue of the journal through 1949. These stories were influential among the Pure Land Buddhism believers, as many of these stories were used as conversion stories as well. Yet in modern China, deliverance stories and those advocating karmic retribution faced accusations of superstition, from which Buddhists in the reform camp tried to keep their distance.

Advertisements are included in the journal, though in a less conspicuous form than in other journals. The *Buddhist Semimonthly*, which is perhaps the most commercialized Buddhist periodical as it featured advertisements on all pages with pictures, special font types, or other eye-catching designs. In contrast, advertisements in *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* blend into the journal in forms similar to other texts. At first glance, they resemble any other Buddhist writing, with descriptions and sometimes narratives, such as the first advertisement of the journal in its

¹⁹⁰ Gao Zhenong, *Fojiao wenhua yu jindai zhongguo*, 397-398.

¹⁹¹ See "Zhenqiu gaoge yuekan zhihuan benhui qishi 徵求高閣月刊擲還本會啓示 [Notice for the Return of Past Read Journals]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 19 (1943), in MFQB 69: 80.

¹⁹² Xiong Yuezhi 熊月之, ed, *Shanghai tongshi: dangdai wenhua* 上海通史: 当代文化 [The General History of Shanghai: Modern Culture] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1999), 354.

sixth issue which promotes vegetarian soap.¹⁹³ The journal also contains a form of implicit advertisement, which does not directly promote products, but introduces products or services of a charitable nature and urges people to give donations. Examples include a call for donations to produce images of Avalokiteshvara,¹⁹⁴ or an introduction by a doctor in Shanghai for a fundraising campaign for medical goods.¹⁹⁵ In general, advertisements appeared infrequently in the journal, and seldom would the journal promote anything unrelated to Buddhism, particularly Pure Land Buddhist practice. One particular form of notification, however, was constantly printed: Chinese traditional medicine prescriptions. The journal offered one or two medical prescriptions almost each issue, ranging from simple tonics to treatments for a plague.¹⁹⁶ These notifications describe the ingredients and processes for making medicines for people who could not afford medical care. This kind of notification appeared in some other Buddhist periodicals of study here, but with the highest frequency in *Spreading the Teaching Monthly*.

Contributors to the journal unexceptionally ranged from monastic to lay Buddhists, with prominent figures such as Hongyi, Yuanying; Xia Mianzun 夏丕尊 (1886–1946); Fan Gunong 範古農 (1881–1951); Zhang Yiliu 張一留 (?–1947); and Chen Hailiang 陳海量 (1910–1983). After the communist takeover, Zhao Puchu 赵朴初 (1907–2000) also published articles in the journal from time to time. Basically, all of these prominent elite figures within the Buddhist community and outside it were on good terms with Yinguang, as Hongyi once wished to be admitted as

¹⁹³ See *Honghua yuekan*, no. 06 (1941), in MFQB 68: 208.

¹⁹⁴ See *Honghua yuekan*, no. 03 (1941), in MFQB 68: 98.

¹⁹⁵ See *Honghua yuekan*, no. 06 (1941), in MFQB 68: 208.

¹⁹⁶ See *Honghua yuekan*, no. 04 (1941), in MFQB 68: 121; and no. 10 (1941), MFQB 68: 393.

Yinguang's disciple,¹⁹⁷ and Fan Gunong was the one who submitted Yinguang's writings to the *Buddhist Miscellany* in 1912.¹⁹⁸ Many of them were in close contact with Yinguang, accepting his teachings on Pure Land Buddhism and willing to contribute writings to propagate Yinguang's philosophy.

The estimated readership of the journal was comparable to that of *Sound of Sea Tide*, though the latter is often credited as the number one Buddhist periodical in Republican China. As mentioned earlier, *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* usually printed six to eight thousand copies per issue, and *Sound of Sea Tide* produced about twenty thousand copies per issue in its heyday.¹⁹⁹ Hence, in terms of readership, *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* was the only periodical produced by the conservative camp that had as many potential readers as *Sound of Sea Tide*, especially considering the former only started to publish in 1941 at the wartime Shanghai with limited circulation channels. These two journals differ in their content, contributors, and purposes, as well as many other aspects. The disparity of these two journals reflects the different visions and concerns for Buddhism held in modern society.

The primary motivation for Buddhists in engaging in public media in modern China was the propagation of Buddhism, especially in an age when the religion had to fight for its survival, legitimacy, and social utility. The two Buddhist camps and their respective periodicals made various claims and propositions in regard to what shape modern Chinese Buddhism should take—for both monastics and lay Buddhists—and what should be preserved and innovated as well as what ought to be discarded. In the following chapters, I will examine the discussions on the

¹⁹⁷ Xia Jinhua 夏金华, ed, *Yinguang dashi nianpu changbian* 印光大师年谱长编 [The Extended Collection of Master Yinguang's Chronicle] (Xinbei, Taiwan: Huamulan wenhua chubanshe, 2011), 104.

¹⁹⁸ Kiely, "The Charismatic Monk and the Chanting Masses," 35.

¹⁹⁹ Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate*, 76-77.

perceptions of new versus old, the relationship between Buddhism and the state, the proper form of Buddhist teachings, the usefulness of Buddhism for different groups of people, and how these Buddhist periodicals revolved around their guiding mentors.

Table 1 Seven Buddhist Periodicals

| Periodical | Orientation | Location | Years of Publication (in Mainland China) | Copies per issue (at most) |
|--|--------------|---------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| <i>Sound of Sea Tide</i> 海潮音 | Reform | Hangzhou, Wuhan, Shanghai | 1920 – 1950 | 20,000 |
| <i>The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly</i> 佛化新青年 | Reform | Wuhan | 1923 – 1925 | Unknown |
| <i>Right Faith</i> 正信 | Reform | Wuhan | 1932 – 1937, 1946 – 1949 | 3500 |
| <i>Modern Sangha</i> 現代僧伽 | Reform | Xiamen | 1928 – 1933 | Unknown |
| <i>The Buddha's Light Society Journal</i> 佛光社社刊 | Conservative | Wuyan (Anhui Province) | 1927 – 1932 | Unknown |
| <i>the Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society</i> 弘法社刊 | Conservative | Ningbo | 1928 – 1937 | Unknown |
| <i>Spreading the Teaching Monthly</i> 弘化月刊 | Conservative | Shanghai | 1941 – 1958 | 8,000 |

3.0 Responses to Crises in a New Era for Buddhism

In his palace memorial addressed to the Qing emperor in 1874, Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823–1901), the most important high-ranking official in the Qing government in the second half of the nineteenth century, commented: “this changing situation is unprecedented for thousands of years.”²⁰⁰ Li refers to the new world order which confronted the ancient civilization of China and urges the importation of Western technology to preserve the Chinese essence, a proposal which later gave rise to the Self-Strengthening Movement. However, Chinese elites, dismayed by their country’s defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), began to reflect on the validity of the movement’s call for preserving Chinese studies for essential knowledge while learning about Western technology for practical purposes.²⁰¹ After a time, Western learning began to supplant, rather than supplement, Chinese cultural learning.²⁰² This tension reached its peak between 1911 and 1919, after the fall of the Qing Dynasty and the feeble Beijing government failed to fend off colonizers at the Versailles Peace Conference. The May Fourth Movement pushed the anti-traditionalism sentiment to the extreme and vehemently criticized much of Chinese traditional culture and values.²⁰³ Unsurprisingly, Chinese Buddhism was caught in the middle of this intellectual transition.

²⁰⁰ Li Hongzhang 李鴻章, “Chouyi haifang zhe 筹议海防折 [The Palace Memorial for Establishing Maritime Defense],” in *Li Hongzhang quanji Vol. 6 李鴻章全集 六* [Complete Works of Li Hongzhang], eds. Gu Tinglong 顾廷龙, Dai Yi 戴逸 (Anhui: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2008), 159.

²⁰¹ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York; London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990), 216-224.

²⁰² Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: Volume One: The Problem of Intellectual Continuity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 61.

²⁰³ See Lin Yusheng, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Anti-traditionalism in the May Fourth Era* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979).

Ironically, Buddhist thought was as much a source of inspiration for Chinese intellectuals in the late nineteenth century to imagine a cultural alternative in opposition to the Confucian system and the Western paradigm as it was an example of conservative Chinese tradition. For Tan Sitong, Buddhist philosophy was an integral part of his seminal work, *An Exposition of Benevolence* 仁學.²⁰⁴ Similarly, Zhang Taiyan employed Buddhist epistemology in dialogue with Western traditions, particularly German Idealism, so as to bridge the dichotomy between the East and West and to overcome the potential pitfall bearing within the nascent Western capitalist system.²⁰⁵ As for Liang Qichao, Buddhism was an important touchstone for unifying a modern Chinese nation.²⁰⁶ However, these Chinese scholars consciously distinguished between Buddhist thought and Buddhism, or rather, between Buddhist philosophy and its social presence.

Many late Qing intellectuals perceived Buddhist philosophy to be a source of inspiration for cultural reform, yet the sangha itself was despised at the same time. Yang Wenhui, the lay Buddhist who founded the Jinling Scripture Carving House 金陵刻经处 and is often credited as the father of Buddhist revival in modern China,²⁰⁷ fiercely criticized the incompetence and corruption of Chinese monks: “Since the government regulation on ordination loosened, monks, whatever their competence, all were formally ordained, yet they knew nothing about Buddhist

²⁰⁴ See Sin-wai Chan, *Buddhism in Late Ch'ing Political Thought* (Hongkong: Chinese University Press, 1985); Scott Pacey, “Tan Sitong’s ‘Great Unity’: Mental Processes and Yogācāra in *An Exposition of Benevolence*,” in *Transforming Consciousness: Yogacara Thought in Modern China* ed. John Makeham (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 103-122.

²⁰⁵ Viren Murthy, *The Political Philosophy of Zhang Taiyan: The Resistance of Consciousness* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), chapter 3.

²⁰⁶ Liang Qichao, “Lun fojiao yu zhiqun zhi guanxi 论佛教与群治之关系 [On the Relationship between Buddhism and Community],” in *Liang Qichao zishu* 梁启超自述 [Self-Accounts by Liang Qichao] (Beijing: renmin ribao chubanshe, 2011), 199-207.

²⁰⁷ Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 9.

sutras nor the Vinaya [discipline texts]... So they were despised by Confucian gentlemen.”²⁰⁸ Liang Qichao did not speak highly of Buddhist monks either.²⁰⁹ As discussed in Chapter One, the monastic community in the late Qing era was largely unregulated, and many temples predominantly relied on income earned from ritual services, resulting in a lack of interest for doctrinal studies. Furthermore, joining the sangha became a way of making a living for many lower-class people who had no profound religious commitment, thereby leading to the ill-perceived image of the monastic community held by intellectuals. The Japanese monk Ogurusu Kōchō 小栗栖香頂 was disappointed by the decay of the monastic community in Beijing during his visit in the 1870s as well.²¹⁰

The assault on the Buddhist community originated with Qing reform-minded officials, beginning with Zhang Zhidong’s proposal to confiscate Buddhist—as well as Taoist—properties, in order to fund new schools in 1898. Although Zhang’s plan was not actually put into practice, the idea of appropriating property from traditional religious communities for the cause of modernization nevertheless left a heavy impression. Several waves of advocacy to “build schools with temple properties” cropped up throughout early twentieth-century China, and oftentimes the purpose of confiscation was expanded to military use and other local government projects.²¹¹ The

²⁰⁸ Yang Wenhui, “Shishi xuetaang neiban kecheng chuyi 釋氏學堂內班課程芻議 [Discussion about the Curriculum of the Buddhist Seminary],” CBETA, B28n0157_016, p. 0606b10.

²⁰⁹ Francesca Tarocco, *The Cultural Practices of Modern Chinese Buddhism: Attuning the Dharma* (London; New York: Routledge, 2012), 53.

²¹⁰ Chen Jidong 陈继东, “他者として映された日中仏教 ——近代の経験を通して (The Other as Reflected in Sino-Japanese Buddhism: Through the Prism of Modernity),” online resource: <http://publications.nichibun.ac.jp/region/d/NSH/series/kosh/2012-03-16/s001/s010/pdf/article.pdf>. Accessed on September 20, 2018

²¹¹ See Shao Jiade 邵佳德, “近代佛教改革的地方性實踐 ——以民國南京的寺廟、組織、信眾為中心 (Buddhist Reformation in the Local Community- A Study on Buddhist Temples, Organizations and Believers in Republican Nanjing)” (Ph.D dissertation, Chinese University of Hongkong, 2015), chapter 2.

encroachment on Buddhist temple property instigated great panic amongst the Buddhist community, so much that as early as 1904 there were thirty-five Buddhist temples in Zhejiang province that declared their affiliation with Higashi-Honganji 東本願寺, a Jōdo Shin Buddhist sect headquartered in Tokyo, an act meant to acquire foreign protection for these Chinese temples.²¹² Although this trend of seeking extraterritorial protection status was quickly condemned and dissipated in China, it was only the beginning of a crisis and new challenges for Chinese Buddhism.

Politically, the fall of the Qing dynasty and the rise of the Republic of China regime left Chinese Buddhism in unchartered territory. Despite Buddhism having long enjoyed state protection and patronage in late imperial China, the new Republic's unstable central government clearly was unable to safeguard Chinese Buddhism as previous regimes did. In spite of the promulgation of the Temporary Regulation for Temple Management 寺院管理暫行規則 in 1913 after intense lobbying from Buddhist sympathizers, the newly-founded Beijing government was in no position to offer the Buddhist community much real protection from covetous eyes. In addition, the regulation itself stripped monks' total control of the temple, stating "the abbot or any other related person cannot sell, mortgage, or bestow the temple property to anyone," and gave regional officials the power to adjudicate the proper disposition of temple property.²¹³ The Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China (中華民國臨時約法), drafted in 1912, stated in

²¹² Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 12-13.

²¹³ "Shiyun guanli zanxing guize 寺院管理暫行規則 [the Temporary Regulation for Temple Management]," in *Zhonghuaminguo dang'an ziliao huibian disanji wenhua* 中華民國檔案資料匯編 第三輯 文化 [The compilation of Documents from the Republic of China], ed. Zhongguo di'er lishi dangangan 中國第二歷史檔案館 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1994), 692.

article seven that “people shall enjoy the freedom of religion,”²¹⁴ but subsequently promulgated regulations on religion targeting Buddhism and Taoism, while excluding Christianity and Islam.²¹⁵ Thus, in general, the Buddhist community in the new era faced political encroachment upon its economic bases, and this became a crucial factor for the community to resort to various channels to protest, with the Buddhist periodical being a crucial channel.

Culturally, Buddhism soon found itself out of favor among most intellectuals in the wave of anti-traditionalism prompted by the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement. After the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, the ensuing regime failed to deliver on the hope of making China a modern society, and internecine political struggles further convinced Chinese intellectuals of the necessity for a cultural overhaul. As Vera Schwartz observes, “once the optimism of anti-dynastic mobilization wore off, the tenacity of outworn cultural values became all the more apparent... Their conclusion was that China needed a radical transvaluation of values.”²¹⁶ So arose the May Fourth ethos, which treated much of Chinese traditional culture with disdain and argued for a breakaway with past conventions. Accordingly, Buddhism belonged to the past.

Under such circumstances, the Buddhist community, from its leaders to its ordinary members, felt the burden of proof for the legitimacy of Buddhism on their shoulders. Furthermore, the new paradigmatic division between religion and superstition demanded that the Buddhist

²¹⁴ Guo Wei 郭卫, ed, *Zhonghua minguo xianfa shiliao* 中华民国宪法史料 [Historical Documents of the Constitution of the Republic of China] (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1947), 14.

²¹⁵ He Jianmin 何建明, “Cong guanli simiao dao jiandu simiao --- Minguo shiqi zongjiao lifa guannian de zhuanbian 从管理寺庙到监督寺庙: 民国时期宗教立法观念的转变 [From Managing Temples to Supervising Temples: The Changing View of Religious Legislation in the Republic of China],” *Jindai shi xuekan*, no.02 (2017), 50.

²¹⁶ Vera Schwartz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 6.

community revamp its system of belief and practice. This religion/superstition discourse bore not only a cultural challenge, but also political ramifications, as Rebecca Nedostup aptly shows.²¹⁷ Therefore, the Chinese Buddhist community was pressed to come up with responses to their new hostile cultural surroundings, and they resorted to the journal publication to mount a defense by first forming public opinions among themselves.

Thus, this chapter explores how the Buddhist community tackled new issues raised by the modernist turn in China. It aims to provide a comprehensive picture with regard to the crisis-consciousness within the Buddhist community, featuring a range of voices from monastic leaders to ordinary journal contributors. The crux of the issue is the perception of a new age. The Buddhist community was forced to confront the ensuing societal changes, yet how it engaged with the changes reflect their mentality of coping with modernization. While previous scholarship has looked at these periodicals as sources for particular arguments, I will interpret them as a comprehensive religious ecology, a method resembling that of David A. Palmer and Vincent Goossaert,²¹⁸ and treat the platform formed by these important Buddhist periodicals from a holistic point of view, with their own dynamics and agency.

3.1 The Perception of New Age

Generally, the Buddhist community at large lagged behind in their reflection on the new age compared to their Confucian counterparts like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. When the first

²¹⁷ Rebecca Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 11-16.

²¹⁸ David A. Palmer and Vincent Goossaert, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 12-13.

Buddhist periodical appeared in 1912, the editors tried to catch up and expressed their understanding of how the new age influenced Buddhism and *vice versa*.

Before Taixu presented his radical plan for Buddhist reform in the late 1910s, Buddhists had been trying to respond to the challenges of the new age and make a compelling argument for the relevance of Buddhism. In the *Buddhist Miscellany*'s inaugural proclamation, the editor wrote: "The European culture and Christianity is coming from the West to the East... people mistake God as the Amitabha Buddha... they know psychology but not Yogācāra philosophy."²¹⁹ Here the chief editor, Pu Yicheng 濮一乘 (dates unknown), observed the crisis in terms of the threat of Western culture which overshadowed and was likely to replace Buddhism. Thus, at the end of the proclamation he declared, "so the publication of this periodical is to defend against the accusation of inaction [of Buddhism] and resolve the doubt of superstition [for Buddhism]."²²⁰ This suggests that accusations against Buddhism around this time included the unproductive and superstitious nature of Buddhism. It is noteworthy that the notion of superstition (*mixin* 迷信) was only introduced to China through Liang Qichao at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it was also Liang who proposed the elimination of superstition from religion so that the latter would retain only its moral teachings.²²¹ Here Pu clearly applied Liang's proposition to Buddhism and wished to clear the tradition of accusations of superstition. In another article, Pu also followed Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan in viewing Buddhism from a nationalistic perspective, arguing that

²¹⁹ "Fa kan ci 發刊辭 [Proclamation of the Periodical]," *Foxue congbao* no.01 (1912), in MFQ 01: 14.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 8.

Buddhism represents the national essence of China as it had undergone intense localization and engendered influential sectarian teachings.²²²

Zongyang 宗仰(1865–1921), a famous revolutionary monk who had a good relationship with Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 (1866–1925), the founding father of the Republic of China, also published an article in *Buddhist Miscellany* expressing the necessity of preserving Buddhism in modern China so as to foster national morality. Zongyang believed that Buddhism would be able to play a crucial role in national salvation in the age of Social Darwinism for three reasons. First, he argued that neither Confucianism nor Christianity was suitable for China, as the former promotes vulgar worldly pursuit and the latter shackles civilization. Second, Buddhism is supplementary and beneficial to the rule of law and state politics, as Japan had exemplified. Third, Buddhism advocates equality among people and nations in accordance with the Republican spirit.²²³ Zongyang, therefore, used a moral argument to justify the promotion of Buddhism. Though he did not explicitly articulate the moral crisis of the time, Zongyang built his whole argument upon the fundamentality of moral teachings, stating “What can save us from starvation? What can save us from death? What can strengthen the foundation of our nation? What can promote the wellness of our nation? The fundamental principle is morality.”²²⁴

Juxtaposing Buddhism with the survival of national morality became the prevalent rhetoric in Buddhist journals in the 1910s, and many of them followed the argument made in the *Buddhist*

²²² Pu Yicheng 濮一乘, “Zhonghua minguo zhi fojiaoguan 中华民国之佛教观 [The View of Buddhism in the Republic of China],” *Foxue congbao*, no. 01 (1912), in MFQ 01: 19-34.

²²³ Zongyang 宗仰, “Lun zuncong fojiao wei jinri zengjin guomin daode zhi qieyao 論尊崇佛教為今日增進國民道德之切要 [On the Necessity for Venerating Buddhism for the Strengthening of National Morality],” *Foxue congbao* no. 04 (1913), in MFQ 02: 11-16.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

Miscellany. Buddhism Monthly (Fojiao yuebao 佛教月报), the bulletin journal for the Chinese General Buddhist Association circulated in 1913,²²⁵ printed an article further arguing that Buddhism is the spirit of the nation, and it likened religion's function to that of the military since religion also safeguards the people's wellbeing, albeit spiritual. Another notable point of the article is the author's eagerness to present the utility of religion to the nation by stating: "To utilize religion's pure and noble doctrine and morality... to achieve the betterment of spirit for today's military and people, and then realize the prosperity of this world."²²⁶

In the same issue, Yuanying also wrote a short article advocating the promotion of Mahayana Buddhism, as he perceived that "the competition of civilizations and the dominating ideas of reform nowadays lead to the espousal of either freedom, or equality, or fraternity love, or republicanism... but the purpose of them coincides with the aim of Mahayana Buddhism." He also pointed out that the reason why Buddhism was despised by the people was due to "first, most people do not study Buddhist doctrine, but follow the superficial accusation of Buddhism as superstition, and second, the majority of the monastic community practices Hinayana ways and only care for themselves."²²⁷ Here Yuanying tries to assert the superiority of Mahayana Buddhism—the predominant branch of Buddhism which flourished in East Asia—over newly-introduced Western ideologies and attributes the crisis of Buddhism not to the external competition but internal deficiencies. His use of "Hinayana" was more of a figurative expression than asserting

²²⁵ For more information about this association, see Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 35-40; Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 50-51; Xu Xiaozheng 许效正, "Shehui jibianzhong de fojiao yu guojia: Zhonghua Fojiao Zonghui yu minchu zhengfu guanxi shuping 社会剧变中的佛教与国家——中华佛教总会与民初政府关系述评 [Buddhism and the Nation in a Changing Society: the Relationship between the Chinese General Buddhist Association and the Early Republican Government]," *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu*, no. 04 (2015): 55-66.

²²⁶ Xiang xian 象先, "Minguo zhi hun 民国之魂 [The Spirit of the Republic of China]," *Fojiao yuebao*, no.01 (1913), in MFQ 05: 34-35.

²²⁷ Yuanying 圆瑛, "Cujin fojiao dacheng sixiang 促进佛教大乘思想 [On the Promoting of Mahayana Buddhism Thought]," *Fojiao yuebao*, no.01 (1913), in MFQ 05: 36-37.

the prevalence of Hinayana schools in China, since there were few monastics in China practicing Hinayana, a synonym for Theravada Buddhism for Chinese Buddhists.

Yuanying's way of perceiving the crisis facing Buddhism was well-received, as many other articles found in the *Buddhist Monthly* resonate with his position. For example, Qinghai 清海 (dates unknown), the managing editor of the journal, also credited the decay of Buddhism to the prevalence of escapism among Buddhists. Moreover, Qinghai criticized the selfish morality of escapism practiced by Buddhists who do not care about the worldly affairs.²²⁸ Yuanying, in another article, tackled the morality issue from the perspective of national education, arguing that Buddhism is able to provide education services in areas where the state does not have adequate resources. He further advocated that Buddhist education for the common people is beneficial to building national morality, suggesting it was a prerequisite for forging a strong nation.²²⁹

Taixu, then one of the editors for the *Buddhist Monthly*, also provided his insights with regard to Buddhism and morality. In a speech he made in the Guanzong Lecture Temple which later appeared in the journal, Taixu challenged the common understanding of morality based on the emulation of ancient exemplifications and urged the seeking of morality within oneself.²³⁰ Though Taixu did not follow the argument on the necessary role played by Buddhism for the national morality, he implicitly called for a reflection on the issue of morality and deemed it a paramount task for the modernization of society. In 1913, Taixu was heavily under the influence of anarchism and “disoriented,” argues Justin Ritzinger, by two moral frameworks: a utopian

²²⁸ Qinghai 清海, “Lun baochi fojiao zhi biyao 论保持佛教之必要 [On the Necessity of Maintaining Buddhism],” *Fojiao yuebao*, no.01 (1913), in MFQ 05: 64.

²²⁹ Yuanying, “Fojiao yu minguo zhi guanxi 佛教与民国之关系 [Relationship between Buddhism and the Republic of China],” *Foxue yuebao*, no. 02 (1913), in MFQ 05: 483-484.

²³⁰ Taixu, “观宗讲寺弘誓研究会演说辞,” *Foxue yuebao*, no. 01 (1913), in MFQ 05: 69-72.

vision for the perfect society and the hypergood of Buddhahood centering on the ideal of a perfected self.²³¹ Clearly, Taixu possessed a more ambiguous view on the issue of morality in 1913, yet he still believed in the value of Buddhism in the reconstruction of Chinese morality in a tumultuous age. Thus, for Taixu the new age not only presented a challenge to the legitimate existence of Buddhism, but also a deeper confrontation between tradition and modernity. Taixu's thought would evolve as the cultural and ideological surroundings in China rapidly shifted, and although in 1913 he had not yet begun to map out his well-known plan for Buddhist reform, it is evident that he was willing to take a different path for Buddhist modernization in comparison with many of his colleagues.

Yinguang also started to publish in Buddhist journals in the 1910s. However, he did not voluntarily choose to print his writings in Buddhist journals; it was, in fact, his lay followers who submitted Yinguang's work to *Buddhist Miscellany*, and there five writings under Yinguang's pseudonym appear in the journal in total.²³² In all these articles, Yinguang did not show much perceptions of or reflection on how the coming of the new age would influence Buddhism. He cared primarily for doctrinal issues, such as the distinction between the Buddhist school and sectarian teachings.²³³ Though his writing does bear the intention to clarify certain doctrinal confusions for common Buddhist practitioners, it does not provide much insight into his thoughts concerning the new age, at least not yet. Dixian's case is similar; only one writing of his appeared in *Buddhist Miscellany* in 1914, which was actually a courtesy epistolary to a preacher from Southeast Asia.²³⁴

²³¹ Ritzinger, *Anarchy in the Pure Land*, 73-74.

²³² Kiely, "The Charismatic Monk and the Chanting Masses," 34-36.

²³³ Shi Chancan 釋常慚 (A Pseudonym of Yinguang), "宗教不宜混濫論," *Foxue congbao*, no. 10 (1914), in MFQ 04: 11-17.

²³⁴ Dixian, "卓三上人致南洋布教師書," *Foxue congbao*, no. 11 (1914), in MFQ 04: 302.

Therefore, among the later so-called conservative camp of Buddhists, Yuanying was one of the earliest to make known his reflections on the challenge faced by Buddhism in the new age. In the first half of the 1910s, there was no clear divide between reform and conservative camps among Buddhist community, yet Taixu had already started to demonstrate unorthodox views as he was under the heavy influence of anarchism and other social ethos. On the other hand, Yinguang, Dixian, and Yuanying still largely operated within the framework set by intellectuals such as Yang Wenhui, Zhang Taiyan, and Liang Qichao with regard to the response mechanism for the legitimacy of Buddhism in the new age.

3.2 The Reform Camp's Evolving Response

The social ethos shifted rapidly in early twentieth-century China, and the early generation of intellectuals known for their reform ideas soon found themselves classified under the conservative camp after the May Fourth Movement in 1919. Intellectual movements convened under the banner of “Mr. Democracy and Mr. Science” advocated by the May Fourth ideology, and, despite the fact that these movements embraced different Western epistemologies imported to China, they aimed for a “Chinese Enlightenment,” or *qimeng* in Chinese, which actually bears a Buddhist connotation.²³⁵ Yet Buddhism was seldom appreciated by the young May Fourth radicals, and even Liang Shuming, a professor of Buddhism at Peking University, believed

²³⁵ Schwartz, *The Chinese Enlightenment*, 36.

Buddhism was unfit for China at the time, not because Buddhism was inferior to the Western civilization, but because it was premature for China to fully embrace Buddhism.²³⁶

Between 1914 and 1918, no Buddhist periodicals were in print. The *Buddhist Miscellany* stopped running in 1914, and the *Buddhist Monthly* published only four issues in 1913. Dismayed by the Jingshan Temple Incident in which he suffered a grave setback from his radical proposal to transform an established temple into an ideal modern Buddhist institution,²³⁷ Taixu opted for seclusion on Mt. Putuo to contemplate his project for the modernization of Chinese Buddhism.²³⁸ It was during this time that Taixu finished his systematic blueprint, *Zhengli sengqie zhidu lun* (The Reorganization of the Sangha System), in which he detailed procedures for the institutional reform of the Buddhist monastic community. Taixu wished to “forge a new Buddhism with Han Chinese Buddhism as its foundation,”²³⁹ suggesting the nationalistic sentiment within Taixu’s Buddhist reform movement.

As examined in Chapter Two, in 1918 Taixu was persuaded by several lay Buddhists to end his seclusion and travel to Shanghai to form the Awakening Society and begin the publication of a Buddhist periodical once more. By this time, Taixu was more confident about relating Buddhism to the modern world. He contended that “the study of Buddhism is the study of progress, the study of positivity, the study of salvation, and the study of evolution.”²⁴⁰ Taixu provided some reasons for his confidence more specifically in another article by referring to the devastating war

²³⁶ Liang Shuming 梁漱溟, *Dongxifang wenhua jiqi zhexue* 东西方文化及其哲学 [Cultures and Philosophies of the East and West] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2006), 187-197.

²³⁷ See Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 28-33.

²³⁸ Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 81-82.

²³⁹ Taixu, “wode fojiao geming shibai shi 我的佛教革命失败史 [The Failure History of My Buddhist Revolution],” in *Taixu dashi quanshu vol.31*, 58.

²⁴⁰ Taixu, “Jueshe yiqu zhi gaiyao 觉社意趣之概要 [The Gist of the Awakening Society],” *Jueshe congshu*, no. 01 (1918), in MFQ 06: 382.

in Europe, and the warlord's brutal battles with each other in China since 1911, and lamented that "the way of humanity is almost extinguished."²⁴¹ Hence, the change in social and cultural surroundings led to a new argument for the necessity and legitimacy of Buddhism in the new age. Taixu started to consciously employ concepts such as progress and evolution to support his claim for the superiority of Buddhism, and he extended this logic further when he engaged with the Debate between Science and Metaphysical View on Human Life (科玄論戰) in the early 1920s. If in the 1900s and early 1910s the Buddhist community was forced to confront the challenge posed by the Western ethos in a passive way, then by the 1920s Taixu began to take an offensive posture.

For Taixu, Buddhism was in a very different position in the late 1910s. He started to assert the subjectivity of Buddhism without compromising the position for Buddhist reform. In the field of cultural perception, Taixu tried to bring Buddhism in conversation with the prevailing social ethos such as scientism and other political ideologies. Confronted with the growing radicalism among the Chinese intelligentsia where the debate between the new and the old intensified, Taixu offered his insight. He suggested first that there is no absolute dichotomy between the two, and second, the essence of the two concepts is emptiness, so there is no point arguing for the superiority of one over another.²⁴² Though Taixu's argument here remains within the confines of the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness, it is noticeable that he, following the example of Zhang Taiyan, believed Buddhist philosophy could contribute to the intellectual debate of the time. More important, Taixu's stance in the Buddhist periodical was disseminated to the Buddhist masses, rather than the

²⁴¹ Taixu, "Jueshe congshu chuban zhi xuanyan 觉社丛书出版之宣言 [The Proclamation for the Publishing of the Journal of the Awakening Society]," *Jueshe congshu*, no. 01 (1918), in MFQ 06: 384.

²⁴² Taixu, "Xinjiu wenti de genben jie jue 新舊問題的根本解決 [The Fundamental Solution for the Issue of the New and the Old]," *Haichao yin*, no. 01 (1919), in MFQ 147: 23-30.

May Fourth intellectuals. Therefore, Taixu demonstrated the relevance and significance of studying Buddhism in the new age to Chinese Buddhists.

In the field of monastic practice, Taixu still insisted on his early proposal for a monastic overhaul to forge a strong and centralized national Buddhist leadership. He reflected on the establishment of several Buddhist organizations since the beginning of the twentieth century, and he concluded that “all of them were instigated by external forces without solid support within [the Buddhist community]. Thus, they did not live up to their names. Because, lacking actual effect, they soon disappeared.”²⁴³ Implicitly, Taixu expressed his disappointment for the ineffectiveness of these Buddhist organizations, and further of the Buddhist community itself, lamenting its numbness to the new age and lack of desire for self-renovation.

Therefore, Taixu’s perception of the new age evolved in accordance with the general social and cultural atmospheres, yet his determination to produce a Buddhist modernization project remained steadfast. He set down several objectives for this project, including the emulation of and dialogue with secular thoughts and monastic reform to reshape the sangha. Through Buddhist periodicals, Taixu voiced his position, yet it is important to examine the resonance among Buddhists with regard to his reform initiative.

In *Sound of Sea Tide*, many authors contributed articles considering the idea of a new culture. They mainly argued within the framework laid down by Taixu, which asserted the superiority of Buddhism by finding similarities and precedence in Buddhist canons and philosophy for modern concepts. Tang Dayuan, a prominent lay Buddhist and close associate of Taixu, wrote an article trying to prove that there already was precedent within Buddhist scriptures providing for

²⁴³ Taixu, “Taixu xuanyan 太虛宣言 [The Proclamation of Taixu],” *Haichao yin*, no. 01 (1919), in MFQ 147: 19.

a biological account of the relationship between parents and children. In this manner, Tang Dayuan mourned the ignorance of the New Cultural Movement followers who treasured Western chemistry and biology and did not study Chinese classical language, nor read Buddhist canons.²⁴⁴ Another author, Hua Sheng 化聲, made an argument about the standard of culture for the world. Through juxtapositions between material and spirit, religion and philosophy, and positivism and idealism, unsurprisingly, he concluded that only the Buddhist philosophy of “round and perfect” and Yogācāra epistemology could reconcile these dichotomies.²⁴⁵ Yang Ditang 楊隸棠 also agreed with Taixu in his criticism of the New Cultural Movement by contending that those imported ideologies—such as materialism, idealism, and intuitionism—which Chinese intellectuals so cherished were in fact discarded waste in the West, especially the political ideologies of anarchism and socialism. Furthermore, Yang admitted the achievements of Western science by giving mankind a better advantage over nature; however, he did not believe that the same knowledge applies to human society. In a similar fashion to Taixu, he arrived at the necessity of applying Buddhist teachings for the benefit of the world, human society, and the individual.²⁴⁶

Some authors also directly engaged with Taixu’s writing. One contributor, Zhensong 真嵩, published a review on Taixu’s new book, *Mahayana Buddhism and the Two Cultures in the World* 大乘與人間兩般文化,²⁴⁷ which communicates Taixu’s view on spiritual and material cultures

²⁴⁴ Tang Dayuan, “Jieshao xinwenhua zhi youlai 介紹新文化之由來 [Introduction of the Origin of the New Culture],” *Haichao yin*, no. 10 (1923), in MFQ 157: 377.

²⁴⁵ Huan Sheng 化聲, “Shijie xinwenhua de biao zhun 世界新文化的标准 [The Standard of the World’s New Culture],” *Haichao yin*, no. 06 (1922), in MFQ 153: 367-382.

²⁴⁶ Yang Ditang 楊隸棠, “Ershi shiji wenhua zhi dachaoliu dang yi fofa wei guisu lun 二十世紀文化之大潮流當以佛法為歸宿論 [the Cultural Trends in the Twentieth Century Shall Converge on Buddhist Teachings],” *Haichao yin*, no. 02 (1924), in MFQ 158: 302-304.

²⁴⁷ See Taixu, *Dacheng yu renjian liangban wenhua* 大乘與人間兩般文化 [the *Mahayana Buddhism and the Two Cultures in the World*], <http://www.nanputuo.com/nptlib/html/200904/2309570773499.html>

from the perspective of Buddhism. Zhensong highly valued Taixu's efforts, praising the book which had made "corrections on [new cultural] terminologies," established "appropriate distinctions," presented "the essence of these two cultures," pinpointed "the deficiencies among them," and edified "the mass with the spirit of compassion."²⁴⁸

Besides resonating with Taixu's ideas, contributors to *Sound of Sea Tide* also confronted other intellectuals whose paths crossed with Buddhism. As mentioned earlier, Liang Shuming's work *Cultures and Philosophies of the East and West* listed the culture of India (i.e. Buddhist culture), as the highest among the world civilizations, though believing it was not the best time for Buddhism to develop in China in the current age. Yet Liang's prioritization of Buddhism was well-received among Buddhists. An author under the pseudonym Meimei 昧昧 wrote a review for Liang's book, praising it as "the best work [on culture] since the New Cultural Movement." But the author repudiated the accusation made by Liang that Buddhist teaching "was too aristocratic" for the day. For the author, it was because so few Buddhists actually studied the doctrine and were unable to communicate with the masses, and thus the masses were infatuated with superstitious practices and did not know the true essence of Buddhism. In the end, Meimei contends that the present was the best time to promulgate Buddhist teachings alongside Western science, as the former attends to people's minds while the latter focuses on the material world.²⁴⁹ Another review by Yang Ditang is less favorable toward Liang's work. Yang was not pleased with Liang's assertion that "if Buddhism prevails in China today, then the nation must fall into disarray," and

²⁴⁸ Zhensong 真嵩, "Lun dacheng yu liangban wenhua 論大乘與人間兩般文化[On the *Mahayana Buddhism and the Two Cultures in the World*]," *Haichao yin*, no. 10 (1925), in MFQ 163: 292-295.

²⁴⁹ Meimei 昧昧, "Ping Liang Shuming jun zhi dongxifang wenhua jiqi zhexue 評梁漱溟君之東西文化及其哲學 [Review of Liang Shuming's *Cultures and Philosophies of the East and West*]," *Haichao yin*, no. 11 (1921), in MFQ 152: 77-80.

neither was he persuaded by Liang's three-stage classification of human civilization. Yang argues that Buddhism in China's history had never caused war or unrest, unlike Confucianism, which Liang believes was better suited for China in the early twentieth century.²⁵⁰

Besides *Sound of Sea Tide*, Taixu's perception of the new age and how Buddhism should adapt resonated in other reform-oriented Buddhist periodicals as well. Yang Ditang's article, "The Cultural Trends in the Twentieth Century Shall Converge on Buddhist Teachings" which was printed in *Sound of Sea Tide*, also appeared in *The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly* in the same year. Another author, Huiru 慧如, also contributed a commentary on Liang Shuming's book for the journal; while his tone was generally less critical, Huiru still contends that Liang incorrectly interpreted Buddhist teachings and their potential application to the real world.²⁵¹ The dichotomy between Western and Eastern cultures became a prevalent theme for many contributors to tackle, such as Ning Dayun, one of the founders of *The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly*, who wrote an article resonating with this binary view as well.²⁵² One issue of *Modern Sangha* included a lecture given by Huiting 蕙庭, who also employed the binary rhetoric between Western and Eastern cultures, asserting Buddhism as the superior essence of Eastern culture with the potential to make up for the materialistic drawbacks of Western culture.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Yang Ditang, "Ping dongxifang wenhua jiqi zhexue yishu 评东西文化及其哲学一书 [Review on the Book *Cultures and Philosophies of the East and West*]," *Haichao yin*, no. 04 (1925), in MFQ 162: 100-103.

²⁵¹ Huiru 慧如, "Guanyu Liang Shuming xiansheng dongxifang wenhua jiqi zhexue de yidian yijian 关于梁漱溟先生'东西文化及其哲学'的一点意见 [A Few Opinions on Liang Shuming's *Cultures and Philosophies of the East and West*]," *Fohua xinqinnian*, no. 01 (1923), in MFQ 13: 2-3.

²⁵² Ning Dayun, "Fohua yu wenhua 佛化与文化 [Buddhization and Culture]," *Fohua xinqinnian*, no. 06 (1923), in MFQ 14: 11-14.

²⁵³ Huiting 蕙庭, "You foxue yu shijie wenhua zhi guanxi jiangdao sengqie zhi yiyi 由佛学与世界文化之关系讲到僧伽之意义 [From the Relationship between Buddhism and World Culture to the Meaning of the Sangha]," *Xiandai sengqie*, no. 39-40 (1929), in MFQB 39: 169-174.

As Taixu continued to voice his position on various cultural issues debated in the 1930s, his followers closely followed his lead. In 1935, about ten professors who were dissatisfied with the idea of total Westernization published the “Declaration of the Construction of a China-based Culture (中國本位文化建設宣言),” in which they called for a China-based approach leading to a “constructive cultural reform.”²⁵⁴ Taixu quickly responded by pointing out that the term “China-based” carried tradition-centered and conservative implications, and suggested using “modern China” to replace “China-based.” Moreover, he cautiously argued for the necessity to receive Western learning, especially scientific knowledge, so as to forge a modern nation.²⁵⁵ Only a week later, a follower under the pseudonym Meng 夢 contributed a review on the declaration and Taixu’s article, and further advocated a blended approach to construct a modern Chinese culture. This author also reiterated the cultural imperative of forging a strong morality based on Buddhist teachings.²⁵⁶

Thus, in general, many authors in the reform-oriented Buddhist journals shared similar sentiments with Taixu, following and echoing his position on the new age. They demonstrate the eagerness to legitimize and rationalize the existence of Buddhism in the newly-formed society, particularly with the cultural sphere under transformation, and they admit the necessity for Buddhism to better adapt to this new environment through self-reform. Morality became a primary rhetorical point, and these authors, including Taixu, followed the theory of the moral bankruptcy

²⁵⁴ Q. Edward Wang, *Inventing China Through History: The May Fourth Approach to Historiography* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 152-154.

²⁵⁵ Taixu, “Zhongguo benwei wenhua jianshe lveping 中國本位文化建設略評 [Brief Review on the Construction of a China-based Culture],” *Zhengxin*, no. 06-07 (1935), in MFQB 43: 409-410.

²⁵⁶ Meng 夢, “Dule zhongguo benwei wenhua jianshe lveping yihou de ganyan 讀了中國本位文化建設略評以後的感言 [Afterthoughts on the Brief Review on the Construction of a China-based Culture],” *Zhengxin*, no. 08 (1935), in MFQB 43: 433-434.

of the West popularized by Liang Qichao, Zhang Taiyan, and Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (1887–1969),²⁵⁷ who were disillusioned with the dominant scientism and its aftermath as seen in World War I. As debates over the construction of a new culture in modern China became heated, these Buddhist authors saw the opportunity to weigh in on behalf of Buddhism. They positioned Buddhism as an integral part of the proposal for the construction of a new culture which split away from the May Fourth ethos, thereby transforming the religion to avert its existential crisis. For Taixu and his followers in the reform-oriented Buddhist periodicals, one of their tasks was to refute the accusation that Buddhism was part of the “old culture.” Successful or not, these Buddhist authors mounted a concerted defense against the hostile tide facing Chinese traditions.

For the conservative camp of Buddhists and their journals, it seems their perception of the dawning new age was less acute, and they cared more about practical issues on-the-ground. In the *Buddha's Light Society Journal*, there is scant reflection or rumination from chief editor Jiang Qian or other contributors on the impact of the new age, and few texts concerning the plight of Chinese traditions under attack. The only relevant argument Jiang mounted was a practical proposition to bring Buddhism into primary school curricula, with the aim of self-cultivation and preserving the essence of Chinese culture.²⁵⁸ In the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*, two authors, Xianci 顯慈 (dates unknown) and Zemin 則明 (dates unknown), reflected on the issue of the new versus the old. In a sense, their rhetoric resembles Taixu's article, “The Fundamental Solution for the Issue of the New and the Old” in *Sound of Sea Tide*, since they also apply dialectical logic and the view of emptiness to “dispel” the illusion of the dichotomy between the

²⁵⁷ Zhang Junmai was the starter of the Debate between Science and Metaphysical View on Human Life. Under the influence of Henri Bergson, Zhang questioned the universal claim of science for human life. See: Timothy Cheek, *The Intellectual in Modern Chinese History* (Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press, 2015), 80-84.

²⁵⁸ McGuire, “Bringing Buddhism into the Classroom,” 40-46.

new and the old. Yet these two authors clearly demonstrate the attitude of criticism towards the reform agenda advocated by Taixu. Xianci's article rebukes the self-label of "the new sangha" used by many followers of Taixu, who, as Xianci argues, lacked the proper Buddhist training in disciplines and religious cultivations and only recognized fashionable terminology and jargon.²⁵⁹ Zemin's article, written in 1935 against the background of the New Life Movement launched by the nationalist government,²⁶⁰ criticizes the blind pursuit of forging a new morality and argues that the New Life Movement was about the restoration of "old morals."²⁶¹ These two authors' positions illustrate the distance between the two Buddhist camps.

Another prominent figure in the conservative camp, Yinguang, also kept a little distance from the iconoclastic culture of the new age. Yinguang specifically wrote an article on the agreement between Buddhism and Confucianism, in an age when "smashing the Confucianism shop" was in fashion.²⁶² The article, printed in the *Buddha's Light Society Journal*, argues that both Buddhism and Confucianism pursue similar moral cultivation, only along different paths, as Confucianism emphasized achieving the goal through external effort in the secular world while Buddhism promoted using internal effort through spiritual training. Yinguang also refuted the incompatibility argument made by famous Confucian scholars Han Yu 韩愈 (768–824) and Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072), whom Yinguang believed had created the wrong impression

²⁵⁹ Xianci 显慈, "Wo zhi xianjiu guan 我之新旧观 [My View of the New and the Old]," *Hongfa shekan*, no. 04 (1928), in MFQ 144: 48-50.

²⁶⁰ More about the New Life Movement, see: Arif Dirlik, "The Ideological Foundations of the New Life Movement: A Study in Counterrevolution," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (1975): 945-980; Wennan Liu, "Redefining the Moral and Legal Roles of the State in Everyday Life: The New Life Movement in China in the Mid-1930s," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, no. 7 (2013): 30-59.

²⁶¹ Zemin 则明, "Wo zhi xianjiu guan 我之新旧观 [My View of the New and the Old]," *Hongfa shekan*, no. 28 (1935), in MFQ 24: 381-383.

²⁶² David Elstein, *Democracy in Contemporary Confucian Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 11.

that the two traditions were mutually exclusive.²⁶³ Therefore, as Zhang Xuesong observes, Yinguang was politically eclectic in regard to the new age, and culturally conservative.²⁶⁴

Yinguang's stance was well-received by his followers, who continued to make similar arguments after Yinguang passed away in 1940. In *Spreading the Teaching Monthly*, an author discussed Buddhism and social reform in 1944, following Yinguang's tone and arguing that the reform of society needed to start from within people's hearts, or through moral cultivation. Furthermore, the author applied Yinguang's criticism on Han Yu, Ouyang Xiu, and the Neo-Confucians of the Song Dynasty (960–1279) to analyze the failure of the old social system in China and the unsuccessful attempt to forge a new culture since 1911.²⁶⁵ Another author of this journal, in discussing the characteristics of Chinese culture, fiercely repudiated the possibility of cultural Westernization and denied the suitability of Neo-Confucianism for the modern age.²⁶⁶ Therefore, Yinguang exerted great influence over his followers' understanding of the new world. Certainly, it is entirely reasonable for them to follow Yinguang's teaching; they were averse to the May Fourth ideology from the start. In either case, Yinguang provided a conservative Buddhist response which was friendly to Confucian moral teachings, against the challenge posed by radical modernizers such as Taixu and advocates of the May Fourth ideology.

How Buddhists perceived and responded to the new age forebode their answers and proposals to the specific issues concerning the survival of Buddhism in the modern era. Buddhist periodicals became the essential platform through which many modern issues, including the

²⁶³ Yinguang, "Rushi yiguan xu 儒釋一貫序 [Preface for the Consistency between Confucianism and Buddhism]," *Foguangshe shekan*, no. 02 (1926), in MFQ 16: 249-252.

²⁶⁴ Zhang, "A critical study on Yinguang and his reconstruction of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism," 151-153.

²⁶⁵ Qu Bin 去病, "Fofa yu shehui gexin yundong 佛法與社會革新運動 [Buddhist Dharma and the Social Reform Movement]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 40 (1940), in MFQB 69: 310-311.

²⁶⁶ Yu Gong 愚公, "Lun woguo wenhua shang de tedian 論我國文化上的特點 [The Characteristics of Our National Culture]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 50 (1945), in MFQB 69: 462-464.

relationship of Buddhism with science and the new discourse on superstition, were discussed and debated. Ever since the Enlightenment age, religion, science, and superstition became entangled with each other with shifting boundaries. Concepts like religion and superstition, first translated and coined in Japanese using Chinese characters and later imported to China as loanwords, generated “a triangle in modernist rhetoric.”²⁶⁷ Notably, the concept of superstition, when translated into Japanese, self-consciously implies the inferiority of the local traditional practices in Japan.²⁶⁸ Therefore, when Chinese intellectuals integrated the concept of superstition into the nation’s modernization project, they naturally targeted local traditional practices, including those of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Hence, it was critical for Buddhists to make their case in order to withstand the oncoming storm of scientism. The next chapter examines how contributors to Buddhist journals from both camps responded.

²⁶⁷ Goossaert, Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 50.

²⁶⁸ Jason Ananda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 177.

4.0 Debating Science in Buddhist Periodicals

David McMahan, using Charles Taylor's framework, summarizes three discourses of modernity, which are "western monotheism; rationalism and scientific naturalism; and Romantic expressivism, along with their successors."²⁶⁹ Under these discourses, McMahan observes that the modernization project of Buddhism, including those taking place in Asia since the nineteenth century, consciously engages in dialogue and self-transformation with these three crucial elements of modernity. Chinese Buddhists in the early twentieth century certainly made endeavors within this framework. On the institutional level, efforts were made to emulate the church structure of Western monotheism, aiming to establish a similar organizational entity to represent the Buddhist community for negotiation with the state. On the cultural and social perception levels, the Chinese Buddhists expressed mixed feelings toward science in their periodicals; they often used a Romantic expressivism sentiment to legitimize their Buddhist stand, as they "maintained an ambivalent relationship with science, allying itself with its basic claims on the one hand while attempting to serve as its corrective on the other."²⁷⁰

Erik Hammerstrom has conducted more specific research on the relationship between Chinese Buddhism and science. He delineates the scenario in which Chinese Buddhists tried to understand and appropriate the discourse of science to their own advantage between the 1920s and 1940s. Describing the situation as a "compelling discourse," Hammerstrom demonstrated both the initiative and the passive stand of Chinese Buddhists to the prevalent ethos of science in early-

²⁶⁹ McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 10.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

twentieth century China.²⁷¹ Taking its cue from the Debate between Science and Metaphysical View on Human Life, Hammerstrom organizes his argument around “a philosophy of life,” a heated concern that dominated Chinese intelligentsia discussion in the 1930s and 1940s,²⁷² thus putting his research on the path of intellectual history. Therefore, the group of Buddhists that draw his interest is mainly lay Buddhist intellectuals and these reform-minded monastics whom Hammerstrom termed “the Wuchang School,” named after the Wuchang Buddhist Seminary founded by Taixu in 1922; Hammerstrom admits that besides Taixu and his group, Buddhist masters such as Yinguang and Yuanying did not have much interest in discussing Buddhism and science.²⁷³

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to complement Hammerstrom’s research by presenting the reception and contemplation of this “compelling discourse of science” from the perspective of lesser-known Buddhist contributors on periodicals. My study of this group does not intend to dispute the grand narrative set down by McMahan and Hammerstrom; rather, it is to reflect upon how the intellectual discourse established and popularized by the elite Buddhists was received in the popular Buddhist press. This examination is conducted in terms of revealing the interaction between leading Buddhist intellectuals and Buddhist masses, and highlighting the role that periodicals played in disseminating the Buddhist interpretation of scientific discourse. Furthermore, by exploring discussions about science from the periodicals of the conservative camp, my study helps to capture the Buddhist establishment's response to science. Even though few Buddhist masters commented directly on science, articles in periodicals under their influence frequently discussed the issue.

²⁷¹ Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*, 4-8.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 15.

The response to science in Buddhist periodicals built upon the work of Buddhists in the late nineteenth century, who laid out the basic strategy for Buddhists to engage with science. For example, Yang Wenhui became interested in scientific development during his visit to England in 1878, acquiring “special interest in astronomy, geography, and optics,” and brought some equipment to promote science back to China.²⁷⁴ Yang, along with another lay Buddhist, Shen Shandeng 沈善登 (1830–1902), set down the standard claim that “Buddha talked about two modern astronomical notions – a round earth orbiting a sun and a multitude of worlds in the universe,” which was widely received by Buddhists in the Republican era.²⁷⁵ Zhang Taiyan, on the other hand, reinterpreted the Yogacara Buddhist philosophy in the 1900s, using its complex conceptualization system to construct an ontological understanding of the modern world.²⁷⁶ Though Zhang did not directly engage with science, he nevertheless provided a framework to discuss science from the Yogacara system, and inspired many Buddhists in the Republican era to present arguments in a similar vein to criticize the narrow empiricism of science.

4.1 The Reform Camp’s Discussion of Science

Major discussion of science in Buddhist periodicals emerged in the 1920s, in the context of disillusion over the catastrophic result of World War I and the ramifications of the Debate between Science and Metaphysical View on Human Life, in which Buddhists found vulnerability, in their understanding of science. In the beginning, the writing of leading figures like Taixu and

²⁷⁴ Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 4.

²⁷⁵ Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*, 55-61.

²⁷⁶ Murthy, *The Political Philosophy of Zhang Taiyan*, 110-123.

Liang Qichao appeared in print. Taixu published his work “The Materialistic Science and the Yogacara School of Thoughts” in the *Journal of the Awakening Society*, the predecessor of *Sound of Sea Tide*. In the article, Taixu argued that many scientific discoveries had been acknowledged or contained within the Buddhist teachings, as “The Buddha says human bodies are made of worms, and also said a drop of water contains a great many of them. This observation is only possible with the heavenly insight of the Buddha and his prominent disciples, not for ordinary people. Hence there is no proof. Today with the scientific microscope, we can see this phenomenon.”²⁷⁷ What Taixu referred to here is a “explanatory verse for the spell recited when drinking water,”²⁷⁸ which is “The Buddha saw in one bowl of water 84,000 worms (佛觀一鉢水八萬四千蟲).”²⁷⁹ Hammerstrom notes that Zhang Taiyan was the first to mention the connection between Buddhist scripture and modern microorganism, yet Zhang did not further pursue the case, and it fell to Taixu and his cohorts to popularize this argument.²⁸⁰ In Taixu’s article, he also contended that the study of photology and electrons supported the Buddhist philosophy of interconnectedness of all things, as well as the central Mahayana Buddhist concept of emptiness, which holds that things lack a fundamental solid component.²⁸¹ Although Taixu was not the first Buddhist to consider the relationship between Buddhism and science, he played an important role in promoting such dialogue and reflection in the 1920s.

²⁷⁷ Taixu, “Weiwu kexue yu weishi zongxue 唯物科學與唯識宗學 [The Materialistic Science and the Yogacara School of Thoughts],” *Jueshe congshu*, no. 03 (1919), in MFQ 07: 191-197.

²⁷⁸ Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*, 98.

²⁷⁹ Xing zhi 性祇, *Pini riyong lu 毗尼日用錄*, CBETA, X 60n1114_001 0146b14.

²⁸⁰ Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*, 96-100.

²⁸¹ Taixu, “Weiwu kexue yu weishi zongxue,” 196.

Huang Baocang, a monastic disciple of Taixu with the ordained name Daci 大慈, contributed writing on World War I and Buddhism in the *Journal of the Awakening Society*. His writing followed the prevalent sentiment of the European cultural bankruptcy thesis. Huang wrote, “the so-called evolution through competition, peace through armament, and happiness of science, all become counterexamples.”²⁸² Though Huang did not directly tackle the issue of science in rest of the article, he explicitly argued that the moral superiority of Buddhist teaching rendered Buddhism as the only solution to the modern world crisis, hence implying that Buddhism was the remedy for the consequences of science.

After the journal became *Sound of Sea Tide* in 1920, articles discussing science appeared more frequently. First, an excerpt from Liang Qichao’s *Impressions of Travels in Europe* 歐游心影錄, “The Dream of the Omnipotent Science 科學萬能之夢,” was published in the periodical. Over a prolonged period of travel to several Europe countries in 1919, Liang became deeply influenced by the pessimism of European intellectuals about the consequence of science; this marked a turning point in Liang’s thinking.²⁸³ In the excerpt in *Sound of Sea Tide*, Liang fiercely criticized the mechanistic law of the inevitability of science, and doubted its application for the guidance of such human spiritual activity as morality and free will.²⁸⁴ Yet in the end, Liang praised the potential contribution of Buddhism to science, as he believed Buddhism, especially Yogacara Thought, reconciled the dichotomy between this-worldliness and other-worldliness, which neither

²⁸² Huang Baocang 黃葆蒼, “Ouzhan hou shijie renxin yu fojiao 歐戰後世界人心與佛教 [Buddhism and the Heart of People after World War I],” *Jueshe congshu*, no. 02 (1919), in MFQ 07: 14-19.

²⁸³ Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 160.

²⁸⁴ Liang Qichao, “Kexue wanneng zhi meng 科學萬能之夢 [The Dream of the Omnipotent Science],” *Haichao yin*, no. 3 (1920), in MFQ 147: 433-435.

Henri Bergson nor Rudolf Christoph Eucken had solved. Though Liang used terms such as “this-worldliness and other-worldliness,” which bore a strong Buddhist connotation, it seems that what Liang actually referred to is the dichotomy between materialism and idealism.²⁸⁵ For Liang, Buddhist philosophy might supplement the lack of transcendental concern in science. Liang’s writing was greatly valued by Buddhists, as this article was reprinted in the same journal five years later; the only revision was in the last paragraph, which changed from Liang extolling Buddhism to his clarification that he was not a supporter of “the bankruptcy of science” but one for “the omnipotence of science.”²⁸⁶ This interesting change of tune might be attributed to the outcome of the Debate between Science and Metaphysical View on Human Life, which gave the camp of science a bigger voice resulting in scientism being better received by Chinese intellectuals at the time. Hence for Buddhists, it was unwise to challenge the dominance of science under the circumstance.

Therefore, Taixu presented another means of coping with science, the compatibility model. In a speech Taixu made at the World Buddhist Alliance Conference (世界佛教聯合會), which subsequently appeared on *Sound of Sea Tide*, he reiterated how modern scientific discoveries attested to the claim of truth in Buddhist canons. Furthermore, Taixu argued that science could be of service to Buddhism, though not a conduit to the Buddhist faith.²⁸⁷ Manzhi, a disciple of Taixu who wrote under the pseudonym Yupu 育普,²⁸⁸ advocated for the use of applied science to reorganize Buddhism for modern propagation. First, Manzhi admitted the sophistication and

²⁸⁵ Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Modern Science in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 224-225.

²⁸⁶ See MFQ 158: 249.

²⁸⁷ Taixu, “Fofa yu kexue 佛法與科學 [Buddhist Dharma and Science],” *Haochao yin*, no. 4(1924), in MFQ 157: 12-17.

²⁸⁸ Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*, 208.

comprehensiveness of Buddhist teachings and canons, as well as the literary style of Buddhist scriptures, rendered the religion difficult for mass inculcation. He then proposed using a scientific manner to categorize Buddhist teachings into fields like Buddhist astronomy, Buddhist psychology, Buddhist political sciences, and so forth. Essentially, Manzhi was invoking the call for submission of writing on Buddhist science to *Sound of Sea Tide*, which tried to elicit book manuscripts for many modern science disciplines from the Buddhist perspective.²⁸⁹ Manzhi argued that the promotion of Buddhism should take the social and cultural context of the era into consideration, and the ethos of science, though challenged by the consequences of World War I, still was widely applied throughout the world. Thus, Buddhism should also be organized in a scientific way, breaking away from the traditional style of abstruse expression, in order to reach more people.²⁹⁰ It is noteworthy that Manzhi's proposal coincided with the modern historiography method in terms of reorganizing the Buddhist canons. Though he did not specifically mention reinterpretation, the compatibility of Buddhism and science is implied within the proposal as he saw no contradictions in applying a scientific historiographical method and the new divisions of academic disciplines to Buddhist canons. Clearly, Manzhi's perception of this scientific categorization of Buddhist scriptures was under the influence of the scientific historiography method advocated by such May Fourth intellectuals as Hu Shi,²⁹¹ and he certainly echoed Taixu's position of applying science to help promote Buddhism in the modern era.

²⁸⁹ "Fohua kexue daquan zhengwen guanggao 佛化科學大全徵文廣告 [Advertisement for Manuscripts of Buddhist Sciences]," *Haichao yin*, no. 02 (1925), in MFQ 161: 334.

²⁹⁰ Shi Yupu 釋育普, "Yingyong kexue zhi fangfa zhengli foxue shuo 應用科學之方法整理佛學說 [We Ought to Use the Methods of Science to Arrange Buddhist Theories]," *Haichao yin*, no. 10 (1925), in MFQ: 163: 295-298.

²⁹¹ For more about May Fourth Movement historiography, see Wang, *Inventing China Through History*, chapter 3.

Some Buddhists in the reform camp went one step further, transforming the compatibility model into an inclusive model. One article in *Young Men's Buddhist Monthly* discussed the relationship between Buddhicization and scientification, as the author, Xianliang 顯亮, argued that, in terms of perception, Buddhism teaches people to perceive more than what microbiology or a telescope could offer: the scientific equipment only observes within the material realm while Buddhist teaching enables people to perceive the spiritual realm, acquiring the power of the Three Sights and other Super-knowledges.²⁹² Here the author clearly extended the concept of “perception,” so as to assert the inclusive power of Buddhism over scientific observation. This mode was also popular among Buddhists when discussing science, though not without controversy.

Applying Yogacara thought to understand and appropriate scientific claims became a prominent trend in the 1920s among Chinese Buddhists actively participating in the discussion of science. The revival of Yogacara studies in modern China was a noteworthy intellectual phenomenon, driven by two impulses: first, because Yang Wenhui managed to reintroduce many lost exegetical texts from Japan, and second, because Chinese intellectuals found a similar logical and epistemological sophistication between Yogacara thought and the German Idealist tradition from Kant to Hegel.²⁹³ The Yogacara thought, often translated as “the Consciousness-only school,” contained a systematic epistemological framework in which “the initial stages of their analysis follow a similar trajectory to that typically found in epistemological idealism.”²⁹⁴ As

²⁹² For more on the Three Insights and Six Superknowledges, see Robert E. Buswell Jr., Donald S. Lopez Jr. eds., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 8-9.

²⁹³ Eyal Aviv, “Differentiating the Pearl from the Fish Eye: Ouyang Jiangwu (1871-1943) and the Revival of Scholastic Buddhism” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2008), 38-39.

²⁹⁴ Dan Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogacara Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-Shih Lun* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 5.

Yogacara thought takes consciousness as its central point of consideration, it does not confirm the centrality of consciousness, or mind, but seeks to realize the obstacle that consciousness poses to Buddhist salvation, *nirvana*. Within such a framework, Yogacara thought develops Buddhist cognitive concepts such as xianliang 現量 (intellection) and biliang 比量 (directed perception), with the former meaning “the pure cognition of objective sense data, such as colors, sounds, and smells, without the interference of conceptualization,” and the latter built on concepts “constructed through an abstract process of comparison and classification on the basis of past experiences of direct perception.”²⁹⁵ Therefore, for modern Chinese intellectuals, it was convenient to engage in dialogue with Western philosophy through the framework of Yogacara thought; this was true for Zhang Taiyan, who found Yogacara thought highly valuable for constructing an indigenized truth-seeking philosophy,²⁹⁶ and for Liang Shuming, who recognized that the Yogacara epistemological system could supplement shortcomings in Western empiricism.²⁹⁷ Yogacara thought was particularly expedient for engaging with science.

We should bear in mind that these Buddhists, particularly ones who wrote for Buddhist periodicals, took the Buddhist faith as the underlying premise of their discussion. In other words, they took the Buddhist truth to be *the* truth. In Hammerstrom’s study of Wang Xiaoxu, a British-trained scientist and a prominent lay Buddhist whose writings frequently appeared in Buddhist periodicals and in books from the 1920s to the 1940s, he notes the unique Buddhist modernism exemplified in Wang’s thought, as Wang assumed “the rational and empirical nature of Buddhism”

²⁹⁵ Thierry Meynard, *The Religious Philosophy of Liang Shuming: The Hidden Buddhist* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 93-94.

²⁹⁶ John Makeham, “Research and Reflections on Zhang Taiyan,” *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China*, no. 03 (2013): 342.

²⁹⁷ Meynard, *The Religious Philosophy of Liang Shuming*, 81-83.

and never “disavowed belief in karma, rebirth, or the supernatural powers gained through meditation.”²⁹⁸ Wang’s article, “The Basic Problematic of Science,” first appeared in the *Journal of the World Buddhist Association* (Shijie Fojiao jushilin 世界佛教居士林) in 1926, and then in *Sound of Sea Tide* as well as *Eastern Culture* (Dongfang wenhua 東方文化) in 1927.²⁹⁹ *Sound of Sea Tide* reprinted this article for its readers, showing how much it was valued by the editorial board. It was a sophisticated article by a scientist critically evaluating the limitation of scientific methodology through demonstrating the changing history of common sense (常識) from the Euclidean system to Einstein's theory.³⁰⁰ The noteworthy point here is that Wang invoked the popular phrase with Yogacara connotation, “the three realms are only mind, the myriad dharmas are only consciousness (sanjie wei xin, wanfa wei shi 三界唯心, 萬法唯識),” as the framework to counter the limitation of science. Hammerstrom noted that the invocation of this phrase to encounter Western thought in the Republican period had already started in 1912 with an article published in *Buddhist Miscellany* by Lei Xileng 雷西楞 (dates unknown); the phrase then appeared in Taixu’s “The Materialistic Science and the Yogacara School of Thoughts” in 1919 in the *Journal of the Awakening Society*; and, still later, it was included in a 1926 article by Wang Xiaoxu.³⁰¹ In fact, the utilization of this phrase was so frequent that many Buddhist periodical contributors resonated with Taixu and Wang Xiaoxu in their texts by invoking it.

²⁹⁸ Hammerstrom, “Science and Buddhist Modernism in Early 20th Century China: The Life and Works of Wang Xiaoxu,” *Journal of Chinese Religions*, no. 06 (2011): 5.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁰⁰ Wang Xiaoxu 王小徐, “Kexue zhi genben wenti 科學之根本問題 [The Basic Problematic of Science],” *Haichao yin*, no. 04 (1927), in MFQ 167: 484-486.

³⁰¹ Hammerstrom, “The Expression ‘The Myriad Dharmas are Only Consciousness’ in Early 20th Century Chinese Buddhism,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal*, no. 23 (2010): 81-85.

Before presenting the popularity of this “Consciousness-only” rhetoric, I shall briefly recount a debate regarding Yogacara thought that took place primarily in *Sound of Sea Tide*. In 1928, an author named Jin Han 錦漢 serialized an essay that later became a book, *Criticism and Research on the Buddhist Eight Consciousnesses* 佛學八識之批評與研究. The essay was serialized in *Shanghai News* 上海新聞報, and then reprinted in several Buddhist periodicals, including the *Journal of the World Buddhist Association* and *Great Cloud* (Dayun, 大雲).³⁰² The essay sparked controversy due to its scientific interpretation of the Eight Consciousnesses, as Jin Han confirmed the materiality of the first seven consciousnesses and then questioned the viability of the eighth, the famous Alaya-vijnana, which was considered of fundamental importance for Yogacara thought.³⁰³ Fafang, a close disciple of Taixu and one of the editors of *Sound of Sea Tide*, promptly wrote a rebuttal, published in the journal, that firmly offered a standard counterargument criticizing Jin Han’s misunderstanding of the nature of materials from the Yogacara philosophy perspective. The notable part is Fafang’s statement about the origin of this rebuttal article: he stated “in the fall of 1928, Professor Tang Dayuan returned from Shanghai, and showed me this *Criticism and Research on the Buddhist Eight Consciousnesses*, and said: ‘this ignorant writing is particularly misleading for the Buddhist beginners... you should write a piece of rebuttal.’ I feel myself still being shallow about Buddhist Dharma, and might not be up to this task, and Professor Tang then said: ‘This was published in *Shanghai News*, and has misled many people... if you do not unveil the fallacy of this argument, then how can there be anyone to believe in Buddhism in

³⁰² Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*, 115, 220.

³⁰³ Jin Han 錦漢, “Foxue bashi zhi piping yu yanjiu 佛學八識之批評與研究 [Criticism and Research on the Buddhist Eight Consciousness],” Dayun, no. 83 (1928), in MFBQ 18: 437-458.

this day?”³⁰⁴ Hence Fafang wrote the article repudiating Jin Han’s argument and, by providing the reason behind producing the article, he indicated how much Buddhists in the Republican China era valued the function of periodicals. Jin Han’s work was originally published in a secular newspaper, yet the Buddhist community picked it up and reprinted it so as to defend the “correct” understanding of the issue, as Buddhist periodicals served as the primary outlet for these defensive voices. Moreover, Fafang’s rebuttal of Jin Han’s article reflected the convoluted relationship between Buddhism and science, even among these reform-Buddhists who welcomed dialogue between the twain. In another article published in the *Sound of Sea Side*, Wang Xiaoxu argued that Buddhist teaching surpasses science in its profound empiricism and observation technique, and he used the Eight Consciousnesses theory to explain the origin of universe.³⁰⁵ Though not refuting Jin Han’s essay directly, Wang dismissed those who claimed to believe Buddhism yet did not truly understand the religion. In the article, Wang also demonstrated another trend among Buddhists by correlating Buddhism with psychology, which was popular in the 1920s.³⁰⁶ Many Buddhist writers picked up this connection in their work.

The debate between Buddhism and science continued in the early 1930s. One author, Liu Tianxing 劉天行, offered a comprehensive summary of the debate and a syncretized position about the issue. Liu’s article was a direct response to the preface Hu Shi wrote for Wang Xiaoxu’s work, *Comparative Study of the Buddha-dharma and Science* (佛法與科學之比較研究). Hu’s preface was full of criticism and disbelief about Wang’s work, and called the foundation of the Buddhist

³⁰⁴ Fafang, “Weishi xue yu kexue 唯识学与科学 [The Yogacara Thought and Science],” *Haichao yin*, no. 04 (1929), in MFQ 172: 355.

³⁰⁵ Wang Xiaoxu, “Fofa zhi kexue de shuoming 佛法之科學的說明 [The Scientific Explanation of Buddhism],” *Haichao yin*, no. 08 (1929), in MFQ 173: 233-243.

³⁰⁶ Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*, 102.

faith superstition,³⁰⁷ which instigated fierce responses from the Buddhist community.³⁰⁸ Liu's article contained a rather modest tone without a vehement rebuttal or personal attack, unlike the response article by Yu Huiguan, in which he questioned the character of Hu Shi.³⁰⁹ In his reflections on Wang's book and on two articles by Yang Ditang and Xing Dingyun 邢定雲 (dates unknown) that were also published in Buddhist periodicals, Liu first criticized the illusion of science as omnipotent by using works of literature as counterexamples; for example, Liu used the case of *Faust* to demonstrate the limitation of science on human emotion, in the process invoking the phrase "the myriad dharmas are only consciousness" to refute the scientific aesthetic theories of Adolf Zeising and Gustav Theodor Fechner. Liu believed a unified scientific theory of beauty was a failure as people's perceptions were different, dominated by "consciousness."

Second, Liu argued against the anti-science sentiment among Buddhists, particularly those who believed Buddhist teachings already contained scientific knowledge. Liu was well aware that, despite similarity in expressions, the so-called scientific phenomena found in Buddhist canons were only clumsy correlations, as the Buddhist scripture only provided inaccurate descriptions. Furthermore, Liu contended, it was meaningless to locate the overlapping accounts between Buddhism and science because they have completely different orientations for humans. The only element within Buddhist teaching that might potentially engage in dialogue with science, according to Liu, was the Buddhist system of logic.³¹⁰ Liu's overall argument was in line with those of Liang Qichao and Liang Shuming, who saw the potential for Buddhism to supplement

³⁰⁷ Hu Shi, "Fofa yu kexue 佛法與科學 [Buddha-dharma and Science]," *Xinyue*, vol. 03, no. 09 (1931): 149-152.

³⁰⁸ Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*, 91.

³⁰⁹ Yu Huiguan, "Lu Hu Shi de fofa yu kexue 論胡適的佛法與科學 [On the Buddha-dharma and Science by Hu Shi]," *Haichao yin*, no. 11 (1931), in MFQ 179: 279-283.

³¹⁰ Liu Tianxing 刘天行, "Lveping Hu Shi zhi lun fofa yu kexue 略评胡适之论佛法与科学 [Brief Commentary of On the Buddha-dharma and Science by Hu Shi]," *Haichao yin*, no. 02 (1932), in MFQ 180: 154-158.

Western learning, yet the remarkable part here is that Liu implicitly refuted the Buddhist fanaticism that dismissed science in favor of Buddhism. In addition, Liu's argument exhibited rhetoric similar to the secularization thesis as he advocated the distinction between the Buddhist Dharma and the secular learnings, and explicitly proposed a prototype "functional differentiation" model articulated by José Casanova.³¹¹ Discussions on the relationship between Buddhism and science and on their respective roles and functions in the modern world continued in the 1930s and 1940s in *Sound of Sea Tide*, yet the majority of the literatures remained within the parameters set down by Wang Xiaoxu, Taixu, and other Buddhist intellectuals in the 1920s.

Another trend seen in discussions of Buddhism and science was to apply scientific discourse to Buddhist practices, which might be outside the Yogacara philosophy framework, and when the phrase "the myriad dharmas are only consciousness" was invoked, it was not always referring only to Yogacara thought. The Chinese scholar Wang Hui noticed the expansion of the discourse of science outside the nascent scientific community in China, and he observed "increasing numbers of nonscientists begin using scientific language and concepts to describe social issues unrelated to science," and "the contributors to *New Youth* and *Eastern Miscellany* (Dongfang zazhi), for instance, were for the most part not members of the scientific community, but the vast majority of them used scientific language to analyze cultural and social issues and thereby played a major role in expanding the community of scientific discourse."³¹² Thus during the early Republican era in China, the conceptualization of the discourse of science was fluid and volatile, as different groups appropriated science for their own agenda, with their own

³¹¹ José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 37-38.

³¹² Wang Hui, "Discursive Community and the Genealogy of Scientific Categories," in *Everyday Modernity in China*, eds. Madeleine Yue Dong, Joshua Lewis Goldstein (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006): 85-86.

explanations. Buddhists were no different. In a speech printed in *Sound of Sea Tide*, the lay Buddhist Liu Linhua 劉靈花 (dates unknown) advocated “Applying Scientific Method to Revive Buddhism and Realize the Land of Bliss (用科學方法大興佛化實現樂土).” However, for Liu, the scientific method applied to almost every intellectual and social realm of the day. Liu discussed her proposal in fifteen aspects, ranging from psychology to social ethics, the scientification of Buddhist Dharma to the relationship between superstition and soul. In general, Liu asserted a basic humanistic position for Buddhism, and then coated it with the framework of science to examine the prospective integration in various disciplines.³¹³ This was hardly a consistent proposal, yet Liu’s understanding of how Buddhism should exert its power under the umbrella of scientific discourse reflected the outlook of a group of Buddhists who acknowledged the superiority of science yet tried to leave enough room for Buddhism, though blurring the boundaries in the process.

Besides Liu’s comprehensive argument for the utilization of science on Buddhism, more specific interpretations and proposals emerged in reform camp periodicals as well. In 1933, a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner, Wen Jingxiu 溫敬修 (1876–1951),³¹⁴ published an article in *Right Faith* entitled “Protecting Life and Abstention of Killing from the Scientific Perspective.” Wen argued that spiritual forces bear influence over physical materials, and cited an experiment conducted by an American professor at the University of Washington that proved that

³¹³ Liu Linhua 劉靈花, “Yong kexue fangfa daxing fohua shixian letu 用科學方法大興佛化實現樂土 [Applying Scientific Method to Revive Buddhism and Realize the Land of Bliss],” *Haichao yin*, no. 02 (1931), in MFQ 177: 192-198.

³¹⁴ For more about Wen’s biography, see: Huang Youlin 黃有霖 ed, *Mintai zhongyiyao wenhua congshu fujiansheng zhengxie wenshi ziliao xuanbian yijialei* 闽台中医药文化丛书 福建省政协文史资料选编 医家类 [Mintai Chinese Medicine Series – Selections of Fujian Province People’s Political Consultative Conference Historical Materials – Medicine] (Xiamen: Xiamen University Press, 2015), 153-156.

after air is blown into the water, colors of condensation change when the breather is in different moods,³¹⁵ thus implying the potential toxic effect of a living being's mood over material matter. Based on this evidence, Wen exhorted people to follow the Buddhist sense of compassion and to abstain from killing and eating meat.³¹⁶ In 1943, a lay Buddhist, Xiong Muxin 熊慕新, wrote an article in *Sound of Sea Tide* about the practice of Holding the Sutra from a scientific perspective. Similar to Wen's method but covering a wider range of issues, Xiong wished to apply a scientific reasoning to this Buddhist practice advocated by the Diamond Sutra. For Xiong, Holding the Sutra was not limited to its literal meaning, but also implied the practice of Buddhist teaching. First, he set out to discuss the origin of humans, using the astronomical finding of nebulas to argue that the formation of matter starts from gas, transfers to liquid, and then arrives at solid matter. Interestingly, he also cited the neo-Confucian idea of *qi* 气 to corroborate this cosmological framework and to elucidate the distinction between the clear and the turbid *qi*, which would apply to the Buddhist vegetarian diet, as Xiong argued that animal meats, as well as strong-smelling plants like garlic, chive, and leek, contain the turbid *qi*. Consuming these would pollute the human body which incorporates the clear *qi*, according to Xiong. Second, Xiong used the example of hereditary diseases and prenatal development to prove the necessity of habitual cultivation; his point here was that the long-term cultivation practice advocated in Buddhism fits the scientific truth of long-term habits affecting people and their descendants.³¹⁷ For both Wen and Xiong, the

³¹⁵ I failed to locate reports of this experiment, nor did Wen provide further source information about it.

³¹⁶ Wen Jingxiu 温敬修, "Kexuehua hushing jiesha shuo 科学化护生戒杀说 [Protecting Life and Abstention of Killing from the Scientific Perspective]," *Zhengxin*, no. 05 (1933), in MFQB 43: 186-187.

³¹⁷ Xiong Muxin 熊慕新, "Cong kexu zhi jianjie yilun chijing 从科学之见解以论持经 [On Holding the Sutra from the Scientific Perspective]," *Haichao yin*, no. 02 (1943), in MFQ 201: 161-164.

approach was to use scientific explanation, at least their versions of it, to rationalize certain Buddhist practices, rendering them more cogent and convincing.

The discussion of Buddhism and science was an important theme among Buddhist periodicals, and there were significantly more writings from the reform-camp than from the conservative-camp periodicals. Of the four reform-camp Buddhist periodicals, *Sound of Sea Tide* was the major platform with the greatest impact. The other three periodicals, though they also produced writings regarding Buddhism and science, did so on a more limited scale. For example, *Modern Sangha*, which focused primarily on monastic issues, only published one article in 1931 explicitly discussing Hu Shi's comment on Wang Xiaoxu's work, without offering much new in terms of rhetoric and refutation other than questioning Hu Shi's understanding of Buddhism.³¹⁸ *Right Faith* also only printed the one article by the aforementioned Wen Jingxiu on the scientific rationale of abstaining from taking lives. It was only in 1946 that the journal started to serialize an essay by You Zhibiao 尤智表 (1901–?), titled “Report of a Scientist Studying the Buddhist Sutras — 一個科學者研究佛經的報告,”³¹⁹ which later turned into a popular book with a preface by Wang Xiaoxu.³²⁰ However, this took place a decade after the heated discussions on this issue.

³¹⁸ Duhuan 度寰, “Ping Hu Shi de fofa yu kexue 评胡适的佛法与科学 [On Hu Shi's the Buddha-dharma and Science],” *Xiandai sengqie*, no. 03 (1931), in MFQ 67: 176-178.

³¹⁹ See: You Zhibiao 尤智表, “Yi ge kexuezhe yanjiu fojing de baogao 一個科學者研究佛經的報告 [Report of a Scientist Studying the Buddhist Sutras],” *Zhengxing*, no. 05 and no. 06 (1946), in MFQB 45: 133-142, 163-168.

³²⁰ Wang Jitong 王季同, “Yi ge kexuezhe yanjiu fojing de baogao xu 一個科學者研究佛經的報告序 [Preface for Report of a Scientist Studying the Buddhist Sutras],” *Zhengxing*, no. 09 (1946), in FMQB 45: 255.

4.2 The Conservative Camp's Response to Science

While the conservative-camp periodicals printed many fewer texts on Buddhism and science than their reform-camp counterparts, there were indeed some articles that touched upon this issue. Admittedly, as Hammerstrom noted, few prominent monks from the Buddhist establishment had much interest in discussing science.³²¹ In fact, Dixian, in a letter responding to a lay Buddhist printed in the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*, wrote that “I know Buddhism but I do not know much about science,” but he maintained the attitude that science cannot reach the same limit of cognition as Buddhism.³²² Yinguang merely mentioned science in passing without further ponderation.³²³ Yuanying also produced few texts mentioning science. Chinese scholar Deng Zimei believed Yuanying was not against science, but against the thorough modernization path advocated by Taixu, who tried to incorporate science into Buddhism.³²⁴ Despite the lack of discussion from these prominent Buddhist leaders, a few contributors still published some articles discussing science and Buddhism in periodicals of the conservative camp. In his articles in the *Buddha's Light Society Journal*, Jiang Qian exhibited an attitude that asserted the superiority of Buddhism over science from both cosmological and eschatological perspectives. In one article, Jiang related Karmic retribution to the causality principle in science, which served as the basic rule for empirical observation. Jiang stated, “scientists observe rules of the natural

³²¹ Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*, 15.

³²² Dixian, “Da fengtian Ruru jushi shisize 答奉天如如居士十四則 [Responses to the Fourteen Questions from Householder Ruru in Fengtian Province],” *Hongfa shekan*, no. 03 (1928), in MFQB 36: 51-53.

³²³ See: Yinguang, “Fu Anhui wanan xiaozhang shu 復安徽萬安校長書 [Reply to the Principal of Wanan School at Anhui Province],” *Jinye yuekan*, no. 05 (1926), in MFQB 17: 41-42.

³²⁴ Deng Zimei 邓子美, *Chuantong Fojiao yu Zhongguo jindahuai—bainian chongtu yu wenhua jiaoliu* 传统佛教与中国近代化—百年文化冲突与交流 [Traditional Buddhism and the Modernization of China: A Hundred Years of Cultural Conflict and Communication] (Shanghai: Huadong shifandaxue chubanshe, 1994), 263-264.

world and apply them back on the natural world,” but “for a matter [in the human world], it might relate with elements from three generations ago.”³²⁵ Thus, for Jiang, the scientific causality rule cannot apply to the human world. In another article, Jiang stated that national salvation rested in the promotion of the moral cultivation of the three teachings in China, meaning Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Though “the utilization of science is necessary” and “the use of science is a speedy way [for saving the nation],” “the promotion of Buddhism is faster and more effective,” according to Jiang.³²⁶ Therefore, for Jiang Qian, despite the functional value of science, he still maintained the spiritual superiority of Buddhism over science. This position was very close to some authors from the reform-camp journals, and ultimately related to the rhetoric of Liang Qichao, Liang Shuming, and other intellectuals who admired Buddhist philosophy.

Articles from the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society* were more critical about science. An author named Haishan 海珊 (dates unknown) wrote his reflections after limited study of scientific knowledge; his overall attitude was negative, as he contended “although it [science] is beneficial for the people and the nation, and produces great material civilization and scholarships, the human desire grows more greedy and crisis of the world deepens.” In addition, he did not hold Western science in high regard because he believed that there was also scientific development in ancient China, citing cases of Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139)³²⁷ and Xu Guangqi 徐

³²⁵ Jiang Qian, “Yinguo lu xu 因果錄序 [Preface on the Collection of Karmic Stories],” *Foguangshe shekan*, no. 01 (1927), in MFQ 16: 142-143.

³²⁶ Jiang Qian, “Jinggao quanguo jiuji guonan zhu junzi shu 敬告全國救濟國難諸君子書 [A Letter to the Nation and Gentlemen who Wish for National Salvation],” *Foguangshe shekan*, no. 04 (1932), in MFQ 17: 66-68.

³²⁷ Zhang Heng was an astronomer, mathematician, engineer, and painter who lived during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220). For more information, see Lien, Yeong-Chung E, “Zhang Heng, Eastern Han Polymath, His Life and Works” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2011).

光啓 (1562–1633).³²⁸ The author argued that there was no inferiority in ancient Chinese science, but only different perspectives and social environments that resulted in disparities in development. In the end, he echoed the rhetoric of spirituality over materiality.³²⁹ For unknown reasons, Haishan considered Xu Guangqi’s scientific achievement to be genuinely indigenous and did not acknowledge the Jesuit missionaries’ influence. Another article by Shoupei 守陪 went further to attack the validity of science. Shoupei’s article was a vehement response to the “Standards to Determine Temples to be Destroyed and Maintained 神祠存廢標準,” promulgated by the Home Ministry in 1928, which categorized temples, in the broadest sense, into four categories and labeled for removal those worshipping ancient deities and illicit/improper shrines as superstition.³³⁰ Shoupei was furious about classifying the cult of ancient deities as superstitious practices, and in the article he argued that the way of deities, 神道, was part of the national essence; therefore, to save the way of deities was to preserve the nation-body 國體. The abolishment of ancient deities, according to Shoupei, was a deluded act initiated by science. Thus, for Shoupei to prove his argument, it was necessary to invalidate the authority of science, and he did so by attacking various scientific claims, from empirical observations to astronomy. Admittedly, it was a naïve argument, such as Shoupei’s refusal to acknowledge Earth’s rotation and orbital revolution, or heliocentrism, simply on the basis of direct observation.³³¹ It revealed the author’s lack of scientific training, and

³²⁸ Xu Guangqi was a scholar-bureaucrat, Catholic convert, agricultural scientist, astronomer, and mathematician during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). See Catherine Jami, Peter Mark Engelfriet, and Gregory Blue, eds., *Statecraft and Intellectual Renewal in Late Ming China: The Cross-Cultural Synthesis of Xu Guangqi (1562-1633)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

³²⁹ Haishan, “Kexue dayi bing wenxi hou zhi jianjie lveyanzhi 科学大义并闻习后之见解试略言之 [A brief reflection on Science after Studying and Practice],” *Hongfashe shekan*, no. 06 (1929), in MFBQ 36: 177-178.

³³⁰ Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate*, 23.

³³¹ Shoupei, “Jiuhu guoti lun 救护国体论 [On Saving and Protecting the Nation-Body],” *Hongfashe shekan*, no. 07 (1929), in MFBQ 36: 219-226.

also his eagerness to refute the government's charge of superstition associated with the ancient deities. It should be noted that the Standards acknowledged the legitimacy of Buddhist temples. However, many Buddhist temples since the Late Imperial era, particularly these with close ties to the local community, had mixed with other deities and shrines. If the Standards were fully executed, many Buddhism-related temples would inevitably be affected, and this explains Shoupei's aggressive response. Another author, Shengyi 聖一, also wrote in the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society* about his reflections on Wang Xiaoxu's book, *Comparative Study of the Buddha-dharma and Science*, as well as on the preface for the work by Hu Shi and Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940). Shengyi's basic attitude toward these two prefaces, particularly the one by Hu Shi, was no different from authors in *Sound of Sea Tide* or other reform-oriented periodicals, as he disagreed with Hu Shi's assertion of Buddhism as superstition. However, Shengyi also lamented the source of Hu Shi's misunderstanding, which he attributed to the loss of correct teachings that led to the rampant spread of heretical misunderstanding of Buddhism. In the article, Shengyi further reflected on the dichotomy between the new and the old and questioned the superiority of the new learning over the old, i.e. science over Buddhism. He presented the case of a paradigm shift from Newtonian physics to Einstein's theory of relativity to argue that the new might not always be correct, as Newton's theory was once new, and Einstein's theory might be overthrown someday.³³² The noteworthy part here is how Shengyi reflected on the dichotomy between the old and the new, and his assertion that ultimately this dichotomy was an illusion and only Buddhist teaching, by which he meant Yogacara thought, was able to transcend time and

³³² Shengyi, "Shu fofa yu kexue zhi bijiao ji cai hu erxu hou 书佛法与科学之比较研究及蔡胡二序后 [Reflections on Comparative Study of the Buddha-dharma and Science and Prefaces by Cai and Hu]," *Hongfashhe shekan*, no. 21 (1933), in MFQ 22: 365-369.

space. Shengyi presented a restorationist attitude, which is less frequently seen in writings from the reform-camp journals. Thus, in general, articles discussing science in the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society* were more critical and defensive, and they more frequently resorted to scriptures and historical precedences, advocating the importance of preserving the tradition for the sake of the nation.

Attitudes toward science exhibited in articles in *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* were multifaceted due to the complexity of political climate during this journal's print run. As mentioned previously, this periodical started publication in 1941 and continued till 1958; with regime change in 1949, the overall rhetoric of writings in the journal changed drastically to suit the Marxist ideology of the new Communist regime. Therefore, the discussion of science in the journal exhibited two different tones. The one before the Communist takeover was similar to other Buddhist periodicals, which maintained a superior position for Buddhism over science, while the one after 1949 eagerly tried to prove the scientific spirit of Buddhism. The main focus here will be on the period before 1949.

In 1942, in a *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* article discussing how young people should study Buddhism, the author, under the pseudonym Qiusheng Jingtū 求生淨土, urged that the propagation of Buddhism should be tailored to the needs of young people, and should “explain [Buddhist] philosophy from a scientific ground.” Furthermore, when discussing the last stage of Buddhist practice, zheng 證 [realization],³³³ the author compared this last stage to the empirical method of science, which prioritizes evidence.³³⁴ Here the author perceived the value to

³³³ See Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*, 82.

³³⁴ Qiusheng Jingtū, “Qinnian xuefo tan 青年學佛談 [Talks on How Young People Should Study Buddhism],” *Honghua yuekan*, no. 11 (1942), in MFQB 68: 419-424.

appropriate scientific discourse to assist the propagation of Buddhism. But the journal generally took a more critical stance on science in its pages. In a speech published in the journal in 1943, a lay Buddhist, Yang Zhijian 楊智堅, made the argument for Buddhism over science, which in itself did not contain much in the way of innovative claims. The majority of the speech reiterated previous arguments, such as Buddhist logic preceding its Western counterpart, the Buddhist dialectics over Hegelian dialectics, and the use of the case of Wang Xiaoxu, all to argue for the scientific side of Buddhism. In the end, he rested his case on the popular rhetoric that besides science, religion, especially Buddhism, is necessary for the modern world.³³⁵ In another similar but more vehement piece of writing, the author Kuairan 塊然 contended that the advancement of science proved the correctness of Buddhism, and cited the case of “The Buddha saw in one bowl of water 84,000 worms.”³³⁶

However, in 1945, another article discussing the spirit of science took a much friendlier stance. The article by Ni Zhenghe 倪正和 was serialized in three issues of *Spreading the Teaching Monthly*. It is noteworthy that the article did not engage with Buddhism at all, but solely focused on science, as the author recognized that the nation had reached consensus on the necessity of spreading scientific knowledge for the sake of nation-building and modernization. He contended that the spirit of science consisted of “order of study, dedication for research, and the pursuit of truth,” and by “truth” he actually meant accurate reflection of the research material. Furthermore, unlike the rhetoric of moral condemnation employed by other Buddhists, Ni did not criticize

³³⁵ Yang Zhijian, “Fofa bu kexue me 佛法不科學麼 [Is Buddhist Dharma not scientific?],” *Honghua yuekan*, no. 26 (1943), in MFQ 136: 490.

³³⁶ Kuairan, “Kexue yu foxue 科學與佛學 [Science and Buddhism],” *Honghua yuekan*, no. 89 (1948), in MFQ 137: 52.

science for presenting a moral hazard, but instead argued that science was merely a tool and how it functioned depending on the people wielding it.³³⁷

Therefore, articles published in *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* appear to be more diverse on the issue of science, and its authors echoed with rhetoric and models dealing with Buddhism and science from previously published Buddhist journals. In issues published closer to the Communist takeover, the general tone toward science became more and more welcoming and the compatibility model gradually came to dominate. In addition, as a latecomer, *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* reflected the rumination and mixed responses within the Buddhist community over the issue of Buddhism and science in the 1920s and 1930s. A variety of coping models appeared in the journal, and the rhetoric of prominent figures who monopolized the discussion in the 1920s and 1930s continued to be referred to and introduced. Hence, though the journal was dedicated as a memorial to a Pure Land master, it was not exclusively sectarian.

In this chapter, I examined mentalities, rhetoric, and tropes employed by Buddhist authors in their periodical writings. The majority of them were not forerunners in producing and leading the discourse of Buddhism and science, yet they were important participants who testified to the significant influence of the intellectual debates. Through their responses and pondering on this issue, they revealed the convoluted moods and attitudes within the Buddhist community toward science. Naturally, the reform-camp Buddhists were more outspoken and willing to confront the discourse of science. By coming up with various coping mechanism, the reform Buddhists illustrated their capacity to engage with the relevant social ethos and demonstrated their vision of Buddhism as socially and intellectually engaged. The conservative-camp was concerned less about

³³⁷ Ni Zhenghe, “Lun kexue jingshen 論科學精神 [On the Spirit of Science],” *Honghua yuekan*, no. 43, 44, 45 (1945), in *MFQB* 69: 355, 369, 387.

presenting Buddhism as compatible with science than with exhorting the danger of foregoing tradition, and its members questioned the prevalent claim of superiority of the new over the old. The Buddhist community was not responding to the discourse of science voluntarily. The dominance of science in early twentieth-century China bears an innate teleological purpose for national salvation, and hence science was capable of “transcendence of the dichotomy between fact and value.”³³⁸ This means the promotion of science became an imperative task for the Chinese modernization project, and thus pushed the Buddhist community to respond. Furthermore, the discourse of science constituted part of the rising nationalist ideology, which brought to the fore the issue of religion and its relationship to the state. Buddhism, after about one thousand and five hundred years, found itself in need of recalibrating its relationship with the state once more. This renewed debate was recorded vividly in these Buddhist periodicals.

³³⁸ Wang Hui, *The End of Revolution: China and the Limits of Modernity* (London and New York: Verso, 2009), 139.

5.0 Buddhist-State Relations Debated

As has been shown, when addressing science in early twentieth-century China, Buddhists were not merely engaging in discussion for the sake of intellectual exploration, but for the greater scheme of contesting for a legitimate position in the modern state, i.e., the newly founded Republic of China in 1911. Needless to say, the Buddhism-state relation was a perennial concern for both parties. Ever since Buddhism entered China in the second century AD, the religion faced the difficult task of survival in an environment of doubt and hostility, especially from the state. Although state patronage, largely determined by rulers' proclivities, did exist and led to the sinification of Buddhism, there was no lack of state persecutions against Buddhism. The early anti-clericalism arguments in China, summarized by Erik Zürcher, consisted of four aspects: political and economic arguments, utilitarian arguments, arguments based on feelings of cultural superiority, and moral arguments.³³⁹ Chinese states in the medieval era launched campaigns to limit the expansion of Buddhism, and thus the eminent medieval monk, Dao'an 道安 (312–386), famously proclaimed "it would be difficult to serve the Buddhist law without relying on rulers of the state (不依國主 則法事難立),"³⁴⁰ Since then, seeking state patronage became an important task for the Buddhist community. Traditionally, Buddhism offered Chinese emperors alternative forms of ideology, in addition to Confucianism, for purposes of legitimation and political

³³⁹ Erik J. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 255.

³⁴⁰ Huijiao 慧皎, *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks), T.50.2059.0351c03.

control.³⁴¹ In turn, the state guaranteed the property rights and regulated the clerical population of the monastic community, an institutional management system that matured in the Ming and Qing eras,³⁴² which generally put major Buddhist monasteries under governmental supervision but left local community temples in a semi-autonomous status. Yet with the debilitation of the Qing dynasty in the nineteenth century, the state began to covet Buddhist temple resources for its own modernization project, particularly for the cause of education; this led to escalated tension between the state and Buddhism, a trend that lasted intermittently until the 1930s. Therefore, the reconceptualization of the Buddhism-state relationship was also a major theme for Chinese Buddhists, and Buddhist periodicals became the major outlet for them to voice their stand. In this chapter, I shall present the general reaction, perception, and conceptualization of the new state from the perspectives of both the reform and conservative camps.

Buddhists acutely perceived that the Republic of China was uniquely different from previous dynastic regimes. The editor of *Buddhist Miscellany*, Pu Yicheng wrote an article arguing for the inalienable relationship between Buddhism and China, giving as one reason that Buddhism was the most commonly shared religion among the five ethnic groups recognized by the Republic.³⁴³ The article implied that only Buddhism might serve as the nexus among these five diverse ethnic groups, hence proving the indispensability of Buddhism to the new regime. Pu's article reflected the mentality of justification by utility to the state, a frequent rhetorical strategy

³⁴¹ Thomas Jülch, "Introduction," in Thomas Jülch ed, *The Middle Kingdom and the Dharma Wheel: Aspects of the Relationship Between the Buddhist Samgha and the State in Chinese History* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 7-14.

³⁴² Barend J. ter Haar, "State and Samgha in the Qing Period: A New Look at Old Figures," in *The Middle Kingdom and the Dharma Wheel*, 404.

³⁴³ Pu, "Zhongguo Mingguo zhi fojiao guan," 21-22. The five ethnic groups, under the principle of "Five Races under One Union" advocated by Sun Yat-sen and others, are Manchus, Han, Mongols, Hui, and Tibetans. See Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-state by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 68.

employed by Buddhists throughout Chinese history. A few years later, Taixu provided another reflection on the new Chinese regime. In the article “Expounding on the Republic of China,” Taixu cited the Buddhist concept of “five aggregates,” which normally refers to the five constituents of a sentient being’s physical and mental activities,³⁴⁴ to interpret the characteristics of Republican China. Taixu perceived this new regime with acumen, as he incorporated “the Three People’s Principles”³⁴⁵ with the idea of popular sovereignty and the Buddhist “five aggregates” in order to creatively present the five aggregates of the republic. Taixu equated the People’s Livelihood with form and sensation, the People’s Right with perception and mental activity, and Nationalism with consciousness. Then Taixu further explicated the four kinds of moralities needed for a republic: the morality of internalizing the state as one’s natural responsibility, the morality of constantly reflecting on the polity of the state, the morality of making progress for the benefit of the state, and the morality of treating the state as the ultimate priority.³⁴⁶ Hence, Taixu was one of the few Buddhists, and probably the first monk, to come up with a Buddhist interpretation for the popular sovereignty of Republican China. As his later writings further show, Taixu developed a sophisticated and comprehensive understanding of the modern state in a progressive manner.

³⁴⁴ The Five Aggregates are form, sensations, perceptions, mental activity or formation, and consciousness. See Steven M. Emmanuel, ed, *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy* (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 587-588.

³⁴⁵ The Three People’s Principles were the guiding political principle advocated by Sun Yat-sen, including “nationalism, people’s right, and people’s livelihood.” See Pamela Crossley, *The Wobbling Pivot, China since 1800: An Interpretive History* (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 161.

³⁴⁶ Taixu, “Shi zhonghua minguo 释中华民国 [Expounding the Republic of China],” *Jueshe congshu*, no. 03 (1919), in MFQ 07: 197-207.

5.1 Taixu's Perception of Buddhism and the New State

Eric Goodell conducted a comparative study between Taixu and Dixian, focusing on their divergent models of Buddhism and the state, in which he uses the *Scripture for Humane Kings* as the thread to compare these two monastic leaders' interpretations. Goodell observed that, in comparison with Dixian, Taixu's utilization of the scripture was more progressive and innovative. The *Scripture for Humane Kings* was aimed at an imperial audience and exhorted rulers to recognize that the responsibility for cultivating virtue should be on their shoulders.³⁴⁷ Taixu, however, turned this duty over to the people, and argued that the protection of the nation relied on each individual to improve themselves to their fullest potential.³⁴⁸ In the 1931 article "The Republic and Buddhism,"³⁴⁹ Taixu further developed his Buddhism and state theory, as Goodell summarized, to mean "by carrying out one's proper duties, one attains rights, freedom and the Buddhist idea of self-mastery."³⁵⁰ Hence the crux of Taixu's model of Buddhism and the state lies in the individual's cultivation of morality, and he linked the individual's morality to the well-being of the state. For Taixu, the individual's cultivation of morality through the teaching of Buddhism would ultimately promote public morality, thus benefiting the state.

Taixu's morality model for Buddhism and the state underwent a period of development, as several writings in Buddhist periodicals suggested. In 1919, Taixu published "The Relation

³⁴⁷ Charles Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 67-74.

³⁴⁸ Goodell, "Conservative and Progressive Models for Buddhism Under the Republic of China," in Albert Welter, and Jeffrey Newmark eds, *Religion, Culture, and the Public Sphere in China and Japan* (Singapore: Springer, 2017), 60.

³⁴⁹ Taixu, "Minguo yu fojiao 民國與佛教 [The Republic and Buddhism]," *Haichao yin*, no. 03 (1931), in MFQ 177: 321-328.

³⁵⁰ Goodell, "Conservative and Progressive Models for Buddhism Under the Republic of China," 66.

between the Morality of Citizens of Republican China and Buddhism” in *Awakening Society Collectanea*, in which he lamented moral decline since the founding of the Republic. Despite strong voices from Chinese intellectuals urging for morality to serve as the foundation of the republic, there had not been any successful endeavors to reshape and revitalize the morality of the nation. For Taixu, the reason lay in “the false direction, the lack of foundation ... the advocated moral campaign failed to meet the need of the people.”³⁵¹ Thus the urgent mission of the day was to establish a “true idealism,” which only Buddhism was capable of offering. By “idealism,” Taixu suggested that the core issue lay within people’s minds rather than their surroundings, and he further contended that by adopting Buddhism people would be able to perceive the fundamental truth, thereby discerning falsehoods, eradicating doubts and fear, and being released from annoyance. One noteworthy argument was Taixu’s juxtaposition of George Washington, Leo Tolstoy, and Plato with the Chinese sages Yao, Shun, Confucius, and Laozi, as he believed these figures were fostered by “real idealism”;³⁵² in other words, they acted in accordance with the spirit of Buddhism. Providing no further explanation, Taixu contended for the potential of Buddhism to serve as the moral bedrock of the state, and by referring to these Western figures, he further implied that Buddhism bears the ability to transform China into a modern state. Then in 1925, in a lecture on the *Scripture for Humane Kings* given at a ritual initiated by warlord Xiao Yaonan 蕭耀南 (1875–1926), Taixu provided a unique interpretation of *ren* 仁 (humaneness), as “harmony and ease resulting from mastery,” and applied this concept starting from the individual, to the family,

³⁵¹ Taixu, “Zhonghua minguo guomin daode yu fojiao 中華民國國民道德與佛教 [The Relation between the Morality of Citizens of Republican China and Buddhism],” *Jueshe congshu* no. 03 (1919), in MFQ 07: 188-191.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 190.

to the region, and all the way up to nations in the world.³⁵³ In this manner, Taixu universalized “the concept of the benevolent king into a moral stance for individuals,”³⁵⁴ and further equipped Buddhism with the potential for serving a modern state. In the same year, Taixu published another article that called to “save China through the Chinese way,” locating the predicament for the nation in the lack of a “morality for the national character.” Drawing from the syncretism tradition of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, Taixu proposed to construct morality through scrutiny of modern Western science, philosophy, and religious values, which should be distinguished from the vulgar restoration of the traditional “Three Teachings as One” by such redemptive societies as the Tongshan Society (同善社), Daode Society (道德學社), and Daoyuan (道院).³⁵⁵ Thus it is apparent that Taixu was aware of the moral salvation rhetoric of other contemporaneous religious societies and tried to distance his Buddhist proposal from them. In 1931, Taixu finally provided a comprehensive articulation of the relation between Buddhism and the Republic of China, for which Goodell provided a detailed analysis. Taixu reiterated this stance on various occasions, such as in the speech “Discussing Centers of the State and Buddhism from Centers of Geography and Transportation,” in which he identified the state, the society, and Buddhism as the linchpins of the era. According to Taixu, the crisis of the state was due to the selfishness of the individual, and the chaotic society was due to the people’s lack of remorse and reflection and their unscrupulousness led by avarice. The teaching of Buddhism, whose central idea was “dependent arising and emptiness,” would release people from the delusional reality and help them realize true liberation

³⁵³ Taixu, “Renwang huguo bore boluomiduo jing 仁王護國般若波羅密多經 [On the Humane King State-Protection Perfection of Wisdom Sutra],” *Haichao yin*, no. 02 (1925), in MFQ 161: 304-305.

³⁵⁴ Goodell, “Conservative and Progressive Models for Buddhism Under the Republic of China,” 60.

³⁵⁵ Taixu, “Zhongguoren yong zhongguofa zhi ziji 中國人用中國法之自救 [Chinese Self-Salvation through Chinese Way],” *Haichao yin*, no. 10 (1925), in MFQ 163: 277-282.

from suffering.³⁵⁶ Again, Taixu situated Buddhism as the ultimate moral solution for the worldly problems the state was confronting, and closely linked religion and the state in a complementary relationship.

Taixu constructed a sophisticated model dealing with the Buddhism and state relationship, which no doubt was well received among his supporters. A great many articles appeared in the reform-camp periodicals echoing the Buddhist moral salvation rhetoric. In *Sound of Sea Tide*, author Huizhong 會中 in 1925 called for saving the state through Buddhicization; his article identified “internecine conflicts, suppression of livelihood, and backwardness of scholarship” as phenomena of the tumultuous state. Huizhong believed Buddhist teaching was capable of providing solutions to each problem, essentially through a moral campaign to eradicate inner moral drawbacks and subsequently the improved individual would continue to perfect the outer world.³⁵⁷ Manzhi, in a response to the Nanjing Nationalist government’s anti-superstition campaign, also argued for the benefit of Buddhism to the state. Of all the assistance Buddhism might offer, Manzhi positioned universal moral salvation in the primary position, citing Taixu’s Dharma propagation campaign as an example.³⁵⁸ In 1928, after the Northern Expedition, through which the Nationalist government politically unified China, Huijue 會覺 wrote about Buddhism and the national character; Huijue stated that he believed that the Republic provided a unique opportunity to interweave Buddhism into political life. According to the author, cultivation through Buddhist

³⁵⁶ Taixu, “Cong dili shang jiaotong de zhongxin shuodao guojia shehui fofa de zhongxin 從地理上交通的中心說到國家社會佛法的中心 [Discussing Centers of the State and Buddhism from Centers of Geography and Transportation],” *Haichao yin*, no. 01 (1932), in MFQ 180: 45-47.

³⁵⁷ Huizhong, “Fohua jiuguo lun 佛化救國論 [Saving the Nation through Buddhicization],” *Haichao yin*, no. 07 (1925), in MFQ 162: 389-392.

³⁵⁸ Manzhi, “Wei cuican fojiao shang minguo zhengfu shu 為摧殘佛法上民國政府書 [The Letter to the Republican Government for the Destruction of Buddhism],” *Haichao yin*, no. 04-05 (1927), in MFQ 167: 351-360.

moral teaching would deliver virtuous individuals for public service, people would be contented with material production, and social philanthropy would thrive.³⁵⁹ Zhou Dexin 周德馨, a newly converted Buddhist of the Wuchang Buddhist Seminary, reflected on his conversion experience, and stated “the Buddhism I am believing in is positive, life-oriented, and Mahayana”; he then argued, in a similar vein to the others described above, that the moral hazards confronting the nation were due to the lack of proper teaching. Naturally, he perceived Buddhism as the prime option for salvation; Zhou's argument thus not only resonated with Taixu, but also echoed Gandhi's call for salvation through nonviolence.³⁶⁰ Although Gandhi was not, strictly speaking, a Buddhist, Zhou was able to connect Gandhi's message back to the individual moral cultivation model advocated by Taixu.

The reform Buddhists were sensitive to the political climate, and acted accordingly to demonstrate the relevance of Buddhism. In 1932, Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石, 1887–1975), the chairman of the national government of the Republic of China, made a speech in Wuhan regarding national salvation, and *Sound of Sea Tide* reprinted the full speech. A mere week later, Taixu gave a talk concerning the establishment of moral standards for citizens.³⁶¹ Although Taixu's talk made no reference to Chiang's speech, editors of the journal consciously juxtaposed these two addresses and commented that Taixu's speech complemented Chiang's, in that the master's message was for all people in China while Chiang was primarily focusing on government officials.³⁶² The Chinese

³⁵⁹ Huijue, “Fojiao yu jinhou zhongguo de guominxing 佛教與今後中國的國民性 [Buddhism and the Chinese National Character Thereafter],” *Haichao yin*, no. 07 (1928), in MFQ 170: 495-509.

³⁶⁰ Zhou Dexin, “Cong Xinfo de yinyuan shuodao jiuguo de gengen wenti 從信佛的因緣說到救國的根本問題 [From the Conversion to Buddhism to the Fundamental Question of National Salvation],” *Haichao yin*, no. 03 (1932), in MFQ 180: 259-262.

³⁶¹ Fafang, “Daode jiuguo de xinsichao 道德救國的新思潮 [The New Ethos for the Moral Salvation of the Nation],” *Haichao yin*, no. 10 (1932), in MFQ 182: 7-8.

³⁶² Taixu, “Ruhe jianli guomin de daode biao zhun 如何建立國民的道德標準 [How to Establish Moral Standards for the People],” *Haichao yin*, no. 10 (1932), in MFQ 182: 17-19.

national crisis deepened, as Japan expanded its encroachment in China between 1931 and 1932, through the Mukden Incident and Shanghai Incident, and Buddhists also quickly responded to this scenario and infused nationalist sentiment into their writings. Thus the rhetoric of salvation through Buddhism started to bear a more specific reference. Dai Jitao, the prominent political figure of the nationalist government and a lay Buddhist, frequently voiced the necessity of modernizing Buddhism so it would shoulder the responsibility of national salvation.³⁶³ In the meantime, Taixu also gave talks on various occasions to bridge Buddhism and the practical need for national salvation. In 1933, a speech and an article by Taixu appeared in *Sound of Sea Tide* specifically dealing with this issue. In “the Buddhist Dharma and National Salvation 佛法與救國,” Taixu called for Buddhists to discover teachings that might be useful for serving the nation, and to carry out deeds beneficial for the state while also complying with Buddhist teachings. As he stated in his speech, this was a direct response to the deteriorating national condition.³⁶⁴ Then, in his article “Appeal to Buddhist Youths of the Whole Nation to Form a League in Protecting the Nation,” Taixu urged Buddhist youth, both laity and clergy, to take up their responsibilities as Chinese citizens, and fulfill their duty by engaging in the national defense.³⁶⁵ Interestingly, Taixu also proposed that monks “who cannot practice the Dharma should go into society and make their contributions to the nation, rather than drifting alone aimlessly within the sangha and tarnishing Buddhist institutions.”³⁶⁶ Thus for Taixu, serving the nation would both legitimize the position of

³⁶³ Scott, “The Buddhist Nationalism of Dai Jitao 戴季陶,” 66-76.

³⁶⁴ Taixu, “Fofa yu jiuguo 佛法與救國 [the Buddhist Dharma and National Salvation],” *Haichao yin*, no. 01 (1933), in MFQ 183: 19-22.

³⁶⁵ Taixu, “Quan quanguo fojiao qinnian zu huguotuan 勸全國佛教青年組護國團 [Appeal to Buddhist Youths of the Whole Nation to Form a League in Protecting the Nation],” *Haichao yin*, no. 05 (1933), in MFQ 184: 15-21.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 20. Also see: Xue Yu, *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism*, 80.

Buddhism in the modern state and potentially purge the “unworthy” out of the sangha. Though Taixu’s proposal was not unilaterally accepted within the reform camp or among the young clergy, there is no question that, around 1932, the majority of the reform-minded sangha was willing to become involved in the national defense, despite the unsettled issue regarding a particular way of involvement.³⁶⁷ It should be noted, however, that the Buddhist sangha’s willingness to involve itself with the national defense was contingent upon the nationalist fervor of that time period, because after the war with Japan ended in 1945 and the Chinese civil war broke out in 1946, Taixu was against enlisting the Buddhist sangha in the Nationalist government’s army.³⁶⁸

For the reform camp, the majority of discussions about Buddhism and the state relation took place in *Sound of Sea Tide*, while other periodicals reprinted articles by Taixu and his followers. One of the reasons might be related to the longevity of the journal, as the other three reform-oriented periodicals existed for shorter periods. The *Young Men’s Buddhist Monthly* lasted from 1923 to 1925; *Modern Sangha* and *Modern Buddhism* were published from 1928 to 1933; and *Right Faith* from 1932 to 1948, but with a seven-year gap due to the Second Sino-Japanese War. Moreover, each of these Buddhist periodicals had a specific content preference or targeted audience in mind, whereas *Sound of Sea Tide* provided a comprehensive forum with prestigious contributors and diverse topics, aiming to attract readers with any interest in Buddhism. Hence it naturally became the most visible platform for Buddhists to voice their stand on this political issue. In addition, Taixu was one of the few figures in the Buddhist community with systematic theoretical reflections on Buddhism and the state in the modern era, and unlike intellectuals such as Liang Qichao, Zhang Taiyan, and Liang Shuming, Taixu’s conception was grounded in the

³⁶⁷ Xue Yu, *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism*, 43-76.

³⁶⁸ Anonymous, “Taixu fashi wei fu binyi shi zaichen guofangbu 太虛法師為服兵役事再陳國防部[Master Taixu’s Appeal to the Ministry of Defense for Issue of Enlisting],” *Zhengxin*, no. 12 (1947), in MFQB 45: 302.

Buddhist community rather than in pure philosophical considerations. Thus Taixu's stand was practical enough to be echoed and understood by fellow Buddhists. In addition, Eric Goodell also observes a "Dixian's model" dealing with this issue, which took a similar moral stand to defend Buddhism's position relative to the state, but with a conservative tenor focusing mainly on the Buddhist sangha.³⁶⁹ I would like to expand on Dixian's model, to link it to a broader conservative camp model.

5.2 The Conservative Camp Model

Interestingly, one of the earliest discussions from the conservative camp on the relationship between Buddhism and the state appeared in *Sound of Sea Tide* in 1923, in an article by Yinguang. In the article "On the Right Path of Reversing the Portentousness, Saving the Nation, and Protecting the People," Yinguang provided an argument for the necessity of Buddhism engaging with the state. The primary perspective is still delivered from the moral standpoint, yet unlike the writing of Taixu and many other reform Buddhists, Yinguang continued the classical Chinese literary writing style and made frequent references to the Chinese tradition. First, Yinguang grounded the foundation of Chinese morality in Buddhism by arguing that, before Buddhism entered China, neither teachings by Confucius, Mencius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi were able to prevent even sagacious rulers from behaving cruelly toward their people. Then Buddhism came and inculcated in people "the principle of karmic retribution, exhorted abstention from killing and

³⁶⁹ Goodell, "Conservative and Progressive Models for Buddhism Under the Republic of China," 51-58.

releasing lives, urging the abstaining from consuming meat and starting to be vegetarian.”³⁷⁰ To Yinguang, it was Buddhism that introduced a “humanistic” concern in Chinese morality through its philosophy of causation and nonviolence, which subsequently became an integral part of Chinese ethics. Second, Yinguang promoted Pure Land Buddhism because it was suitable for all the people, even with different intellectual and spiritual capacities, and could provide salvation in the Pure Land for both elites and common people with “impure karma.” To Yinguang, the decay of Chinese morality in recent years had demoralized the people and resulted in natural catastrophes; thus, preserving and reviving traditional Buddhist teachings became paramount. Although he did not explicitly discuss Buddhism and the state relationship, and in fact did not even mention the new Republican regime, his article connotes the rhetoric of Buddhism serving as the “cure for the chaotic time, and source of prosperity” for the state,³⁷¹ proposing Buddhism as the moral defender for the nation, regardless of the polity. In the end, Yinguang further implicitly lamented the anti-traditional sentiment of his time that treated “words” as worthless. For Yinguang, words represented the crystallized wisdom of traditions, and this shaped his resistance to abolishing the old words and his willingness to continue the tradition, including the old Buddhism and state model, in the new era.

The moralistic understanding and tradition-favored approach adopted by Yinguang was further expanded later in the 1920s. Part of the reason why Buddhists paid more attention to the religion and state relationship might be attributed to another wave of Confiscating Temple Properties for Schools Movement, proposed by Tai Shuangqiu, a Columbia University–educated

³⁷⁰ Yinguang, “Wanhui jieyun huguo jiumin zhengben qinyuan lun 挽回劫運護國救民正本清源論 [On the Right Path of Reversing the Portentousness, Saving the Nation, and Protecting the People],” *Haichao yin*, no. 09 (1923), in MFQ 157: 157-162.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 161.

professor who was favored by Xue Dubi, the interior minister.³⁷² The conservative camp was more sensitive toward this movement because they actually were owners of much of the monastic property as compared with the reform-camp monks. Leaders of the conservative camp such as Yinguang and Dixian felt compelled to voice their stand. Thus there appeared many articles concerning the relationship between Buddhism and state in the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*, the journal under the direct control of Dixian and his disciples. Some of these articles were also reprinted elsewhere, as in the *Buddha's Light Society Journal*.

In the first issue of the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*, an author named Qinghuai 清淮 explicitly discussed Buddhism and the state. Goodell suspected Qinghuai was a pseudonym for Dixian, or Baojing, Dixian's close disciple.³⁷³ Although difficult to ascertain, it is noteworthy that this article appeared in the inaugural issue of the periodical, and therefore should represent the overall attitude of Dixian and his followers. In "On the Relationship Between National Governance and Buddhism," Qinghuai expressed two key points. First, the fate of Buddhism should be closely associated with the quality of the sangha, which is obliged to exemplify high moral standards. Second, Buddhist teaching is capable of strengthening the morals of people, thus stabilizing the governing of the state; therefore, the state ought to provide protection to Buddhism, as it derives benefits from Buddhism.³⁷⁴ Here the author proffered a similar argument to Yinguang's by emphasizing the mutual dependency between Buddhism and the state, regardless of the polity of the state, and went one step further by situating the sangha in the center of Buddhism. No doubt this was a response to the proposal of abolishing the Buddhist clergy and

³⁷² Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate*, 21.

³⁷³ Goodell, "Conservative and Progressive Models for Buddhism Under the Republic of China," 55.

³⁷⁴ Qinghuai, "Lun fojiao yu guozheng zhi guanxi 論佛教與國政之關係 [On the Relationship Between National Governance and Buddhism]," *Hongfa shekan*, no. 07 (1928), in MFQB 36: 9-11.

letting lay Buddhists assume all the duties and studies of Buddhism.³⁷⁵ Then Dixian provided an article named “On Salvation by Buddhicization,” in which he stated, “to save the [secular] world, one needs to save the heart first.”³⁷⁶ For Dixian, this role of saving the heart falls upon Buddhism because Buddhist teachings revealed the fundamental problems of the world: the three poisons of delusion, greed, and ill-will. Although other teachings and religions, such as Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity, and Islam, had exhorted moral elevation in similar ways, for Dixian, moral transformation through Buddhist teachings, or Buddhicization, was the most suitable choice. The article did not give any further account on why Buddhism was the best choice of the time, but Dixian’s rhetoric suggested the superiority of Buddhism's moral teachings for the world. It was a short article, yet the *Buddha's Light Society Journal* reprinted it three years later.³⁷⁷

The phrase “salvation by Buddhicization” was widely shared among Buddhists from the 1920s to the 1940s. Dixian was not the first to utilize it to legitimize the role of Buddhism in the modern era, yet he invoked this slogan with a restrained tone compared with the reform camp. In 1924, Minyao 明耀, a graduate of the Wuchang Buddhist Seminary, presented an argument in the seminary’s student newsletter about protecting the state by Buddhicization, in which he emphasized that people ought to take the initiative against fatalism, stating “in history, those who achieved greatly did so either through illustrating their morality or their talent, but never had there been one who only waited the fate to bestow success.” He concluded by describing the power of

³⁷⁵ Ouyang Jingwu had expressed disdain toward the sangha, and tried to assert authority for lay Buddhists who were proficient in scholastic studies. See Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光, *Xichao you Dongfeng: Wanqing Minchu Sixiang Zongjiao yu Xueshu Shijiang* 西潮又东风: 晚清民初思想, 宗教与学术十讲 [The Eastern Wind of Westernization – Ten Talks about Late Qing’s Thought, Religion and Scholarship] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), 126.

³⁷⁶ Dixian, “Fohua jiushi shuo 佛化救世說 [On Salvation by Buddhicization],” *Hongfa shekan*, no. 06 (1929), in MFBQ 36: 35-36.

³⁷⁷ See: *Foguangshe shekan*, no. 04 (1932), in MFQ 17: 54-55.

Buddhism for moral perfection, thus corroborating the reform camp's tendency toward this-worldly affairs.³⁷⁸ His classmate, Wuyi 晤一, argued for Buddhization as well, yet with the more specific aim of remodeling the sangha and expanding its social engagement, another theme closely echoing Taixu's reform proposal.³⁷⁹ Certainly, Taixu also frequently invoked this "salvation through Buddhist teaching" rhetoric, such as the speech he gave while visiting Singapore.³⁸⁰ However, these arguments on Buddhization enunciate more than a moralistic stand, exhibiting more specifically a strong tenor of social engagement, as well as an acute perception of the era through acknowledgment of the specific modern challenge involving the state, society, and Buddhism.

Meanwhile, in the conservative camp, the moralistic polemics for Buddhization took precedence. Following Dixian's article, two more texts with identical titles appeared in the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*, one by Chengguan 澄觀 and another by Dazan 達贊, both of which echoed Dixian's stand with more direct reference to the society. Chengguan's article emphasized universal compassion (tongti dabeii 同體大悲), and contended that due to the lack of Buddhization, people lost the Buddhist teaching on compassion, and thus fell into moral dilapidation, which in turn led to social decay.³⁸¹ Dazan's article presented a similar depiction of the social and moral decline of the time, and situated "followers of the Buddha," implying the

³⁷⁸ Minyao, "Fohua jiuguo lun 佛化救國論 [On the National Salvation by Buddhization]," *Foxueban diyi tongxuelu*, no. 01 (1924), in MFQB 04: 379.

³⁷⁹ Wuyi, "Jiu shishuo 救世說 [On Salvation]," *Foxueban diyi tongxuelu*, no. 01 (1924), in MFQB 04: 353-359.

³⁸⁰ Taixu, "Jiushi jueren zhi fofa 救世覺人之佛法 [The Salvation and Awakening of Buddhist Teachings]," *Xindeng*, no. 15 (1926), in MFQB 15: 451-453.

³⁸¹ Chengguan, "Fohua jiushishuo 佛化救世說 [On Salvation by Buddhization]," *Hongfa shekan*, no. 24 (1934), in MFQ 23: 467-468.

monastic, in a central position to promote Buddhization and moral education for the world.³⁸² Chengguan cited the ruling of Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (598–649) as the prime example of peace and prosperity brought about by prioritizing Buddhism, and Dazan noted the catastrophic impacts of World War I and scientism. They were not ignorant of the new era, yet they maintained a moralistic stand by linking Buddhism closely with moral salvation and trying to put the sangha in the center of Buddhization. Yuanying, another prominent monastic leader in the conservative camp, gave a talk on the central radio station, and his speech was printed in the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*. In the speech, Yuanying was well aware of the imminent threat of war and the flooding disaster in China, and his suggestion was still for the promotion of Buddhism, primarily for the moral cause. The slight difference in Yuanying’s speech was his urge to conduct charitable activities for disaster relief based on Buddhist compassion.³⁸³ It should not be surprising to see Yuanying’s emphasis on social philanthropy given his involvement with the Buddhist orphanages in Ningbo, Quanzhou, and Shanghai.³⁸⁴

In general, the conservative camp’s model of Buddhism and the state concentrated on the moral salvation that Buddhism provided, which benefited the state, thus requiring the state to offer protection and promotion for Buddhism, regardless of the polity. Unlike the frequent invoking of the nationalist state’s Three People’s Principles, the conservative camp seldom made explicit reference to political ideologies. Hence for the conservative camp, the Republican state did not differ politically from Chinese feudalistic regimes, and as they felt the necessity to renew, not

³⁸² Dazan, “Fohua jiushishuo 佛化救世说 [On Salvation by Buddhization],” *Hongfa shekan*, no. 24 (1934), in MFQ 23: 468-471.

³⁸³ Yuanying, “Yuanying fashi jiang fojiao dacidabei jiushi 圓瑛法師講佛教大慈大悲救世 [Master Yuanying on the Great Compassion and Salvation by Buddhism],” *Hongfa shekan*, no. 31 (1936), in MFBQ 38: 115-116.

³⁸⁴ Chen Yongge, *Fojiao honghua de xiandai zhuanxin*, 134-135.

remodel, the relationship between Buddhism and the state, frequent references to historical precedents were made. On the other hand, for the reform camp, especially Taixu and his followers, the new Republican state bred a brand-new opportunity to transform Buddhism into a modern religion, and place Buddhism in the center of the religious landscape. As Gray Tuttle has observed, Taixu even tried to make the state dependent on Buddhism when dealing with the irredentist agenda with Tibet.³⁸⁵ Thus the reform camp advocated a more engaged approach with the state, striving to offer not only moral, but also concrete political, assistance on issues such as state protection, nationalism, and other particular social problems. The reform camp did not shun political ideologies while the conservative camp refrained, at least explicitly, from engaging with the political debate.

³⁸⁵ Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhism in the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 121-124.

6.0 Defending Temple Property through Buddhist Periodicals

One issue kept haunting Chinese Buddhism in the early twentieth century like the Sword of Damocles and cast a shadow over the relationship between Buddhism and the state: the temple property problem. In Chinese history, the tension between the state and monastic Buddhism was aggravated from the fourth to the eighth centuries, as Buddhist institutions were gradually established and took up a significant portion of social and economic resources. The economic accusation was one of the main anti-clericalism polemics, studied by Erik Zürcher.³⁸⁶ There was no shortage of cases when the state reached for the Buddhist temple to supplement its own coffers in medieval China.³⁸⁷ However, in the Late Imperial era – that is, since the fifteenth century – Buddhist temple property became less of a target but more of a conduit for the gentry class to exhibit its social prestige and influence by patronage.³⁸⁸ Furthermore, since the Great Rites Controversy (大禮議) in the early sixteenth century, the construction of familial lineages proliferated among commoners and family temples were widely erected in villages.³⁸⁹ This inadvertently led to an expansion of temples. In addition, case studies on Chinese cities also reveal that a great many temples, which might not exclusively be Buddhist temples but were managed by monks, steadily provided necessary religious services to the community and became important

³⁸⁶ Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 256-262.

³⁸⁷ Longdu Shi, “Buddhism and the State in Medieval China: Case Studies of Three Persecutions of Buddhism, 444-846” (PhD Dissertation, SOAS, University of London, 2016), 115-116.

³⁸⁸ See: Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1993).

³⁸⁹ David Faure, *Emperor and Ancestor: State and Lineage in South China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 9-11.

locales for social and cultural communication.³⁹⁰ Therefore, the state had not encroached upon Buddhist temple properties on a large scale since the Huichang Persecution between 840 and 846 AD. This all changed after the Qing state suffered a humiliating defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895.

As this chapter shall illustrate, both the reform and conservative camps opposed the state's proposal for expropriating temple properties, but each with different reasons and arguments. The reform camp tended to argue from the perspective of how Buddhism could politically contribute to the modern state, while the conservative camp presented their case from the ground of morality. In addition, it was these periodicals aiming toward the sangha that spoke loudest regarding this issue, while these for the lay Buddhists were less active.

6.1 Waves of Campaigns for Temple Property in Early Republican China

As aforementioned, Zhang Zhidong and Kang Youwei presented proposals on the confiscation of temple property for the purpose of establishing schools, but none of their proposals was actually put into practice. However, this idea of utilizing temple property for the modernization project, particularly in the name of schools, persisted well into the Republican era. Both Chinese and Western scholars have conducted valuable research on confiscation campaigns of temple properties for schools, and Paul Katz provides a neat summary of them.³⁹¹ The focus

³⁹⁰ See: Shuk-wah Poon, *Negotiating Religion in Modern China: State and Common People in Guangzhou, 1900–1937* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2011); Shao Jiade, “Buddhist Reformation in the Local Community: A Study on Buddhist Temples, Organizations and Believers in Republican Nanjing” (PhD Dissertation, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2015).

³⁹¹ See Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate*, chapter one.

here will be on the argumentations and polemics against these campaigns in Buddhist periodicals, the majority of which appeared between the late 1920s and early 1930s, in the context of three waves of campaigns summarized by Chen Jinlong 陈金龙. The first was the tentative proposal raised in the First National Conference on Education in 1928, which actually remained a proposal rather than action carried out through an executive order. Yet it instigated a fierce reaction from the Buddhist community, with the result that the Interior Minister, Xue Dubi, came forward to clear the “misunderstanding.” The second was the Proclamation of the Association for Advancing Confiscating Temple Property for Education 廟產興學促進會宣言, published in November 1930. This association was formed by Tai Shuangqiu to advocate for the appropriation of temple property for education, due to the state's poor financial condition and the destitution of society. The appearance of this proclamation, which expounded upon the rationale for confiscating temple property, led to vehement reactions among the Buddhist community, and monastics from both reform and conservative camps actively took measures against this association by forming petition delegations, organizing the National Buddhist Representatives Conference, and voicing their dissent in periodicals. The third wave occurred in 1935 when seven provincial departments of education petitioned the Ministry of Education to facilitate the use of temple property for education projects, provoking another wide range of reactions from monastic Buddhists.³⁹²

Therefore, the majority of literature produced by the Buddhist community in periodicals appeared in reaction to the first wave, when the country was largely politically unified by the Nationalist Party. However, reports and writing against some local authorities' actions of forcibly

³⁹² Chen Jinglong 陈金龙, *Nanjing guomin zhengfu shiqi de zhengjiao guanxi: yi fojiao wei zhongxin de kaocha* 南京国民政府时期的政教关系：以佛教为中心的考察 [The Religion and State Relation in Nanjing Nationalist Government Era: Research Centering on Buddhism] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2011), 78-106.

confiscating temple property had already appeared in Buddhist periodicals, as well as in secular newspapers, before 1928. It was in the first few years of the Republican era, around 1911 to 1916, that the Buddhist community began to confront the new regime by arguing for the legal rights of temple property in the effort to form representative organizations, which Welch described as the first line of defense.³⁹³ There was no shortage of coverage in the *Buddhist Miscellany* and the *Buddhist Monthly* regarding general petitions to the central government and specific cases about temple property disputes. The secular press also reported many lawsuits by the Buddhist temples against the local authority.³⁹⁴ It was the Chinese Buddhist General Association 中華佛教總會 that frequently made petitions to authorities and reported in the *Buddhist Miscellany* and in its own official bulletin, the *Buddhist Monthly*, regarding temple property disputes, which was led by Jichan, the renowned monastic figure from the Lower Yangtze area. Around 1911 and 1912, several Buddhist associations appeared claiming to be the sole representative for the Buddhist community. Only the Chinese Buddhist General Association gained state recognition because of its broader monastic base.³⁹⁵ One important figure related to this association was Xiong Xilin, the Buddhist sympathizer whose influence in the Beijing government was greatly valued by the Buddhist community. The main purpose for establishing this association was to protect temple property and to negotiate with the state on behalf of Buddhism, as its statute stated “the Association has the right to manage all the Buddhist affairs and protects the property of the Buddhist community ... All the property of temples or nunneries, if there are local disputes with other

³⁹³ Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 27

³⁹⁴ See Xu Xiaozheng 许效正, *Qingmo minchu miaochan wenti yanjiu, 1895-1916* 清末民初庙产问题研究 1895-1916 [Research on Temple Property Disputes in the Late Qing and Early Republic of China, 1895-1916] (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2016), 194-230. The majority of news coverage came from *Shen bao* 申报 (Shanghai News).

³⁹⁵ Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 33-40.

parties, should be submitted to the management of the local branch. If it is difficult to resolve, then they should be sent to the central committee of the Association.”³⁹⁶ Taixu also participated in the Association and actively petitioned the government to protect the legal rights of Buddhism.³⁹⁷ Generally, the Association had a great impact on the protection of temple property, as it filed twelve cases to be judged by the Ministry of the Interior of the Beijing government.³⁹⁸ Subsequently, two regulations promulgated by the Beijing government further specified the legal ownership of religious property, and provided a certain degree of protection for temple property, though not without disapproval from the Buddhist community.³⁹⁹ These two regulations became the archetype for the Articles for the Oversight of Temples 監督寺廟條例 issued by the Nationalist Government in 1929.

Hence the confrontation between Buddhism and the state on temple property in the early Republican era hinged on legal issues, as the Buddhist community beseeched protections from the state in form of proper legislation. For Taixu, his early involvement in this campaign against confiscating temple property profoundly shaped his later reform proposals. Dixian, who was consulted about the making of Regulations for Temple Management in 1915 and incurred controversy within the Buddhist community for doing so,⁴⁰⁰ refrained from making any public address about the confiscation of temple property but was devoted to the mission of the Guanzong Research Society, a study center to cultivate monastic students for Tiantai Buddhism. These two

³⁹⁶ “Zhonghua fojiao zonghui zhangcheng 中華佛教總會章程 [Statutes of the Chinese Buddhist General Association],” *Foxue congbao*, no. 01 (1912), in MFQ 01: 109-118.

³⁹⁷ See Taixu, “Shang can zhong liangyuan qingyuanshu 上參眾兩院請願書 [Petition to the Congress and the Senate],” *Fojiao yuebao*, no. 03 (1913), in MFQ 06: 68-69.

³⁹⁸ Xu Xiaozheng, *Qingmo minchu miaochan wenti yanjiu, 1895-1916*, 253.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 310-326. The Beijing Government issued “Provisional Statutes for Temples” 寺院管理暫行規則 in 1913, and formal “Regulations for Temple Management” 管理寺廟條例 in 1915.

⁴⁰⁰ Goodell, “Conservative and Progressive Models for Buddhism Under the Republic of China,” 53.

monastic leaders' experiences with the Campaign of Confiscating Temple Property for Schools in the early Republican China era informed their later response on this issue. Moreover, how these two monastic leaders responded to the encroachment on temple property provides us with a glimpse into the different polemics that appeared in the two camps' periodicals.

6.2 Defending Temple Property: Views of the Conservative Camp

Taixu, Dixian and Yinguang were senior monastic leaders, and thus they were on the frontlines of the controversy as they expressed their objections to the campaign against Buddhism. Both Dixian and Yinguang preferred to utilize personal connections within the government to exert pressure on officials in Ministry of the Interior and the provincial Department of Education. Dixian enjoyed great respect from officials in Beijing as well as the Lower Yangtze area. For example, he was invited to Beijing to lecture on Buddhist sutras as a show of strength of the Chinese Sangha, so the Beijing government could deny the request to allow Japanese Buddhism to be preached in China, and local officials in Zhejiang province were frequent visitors to Dixian's Dharma lectures.⁴⁰¹ But Dixian himself did not publicize his interactions with these political luminaries. Yinguang received similar veneration from lay Buddhists with political clout. Through his epistolary correspondence, prefaces for books, events, and artistic works, Yinguang established a wide communication network through which he was able to protect some of the Buddhist

⁴⁰¹ Baojing, "Digong lao fashi nianpu 諦公老法師年譜 (A chronicle of events in Dixian's life)," in *Dixian dashi yiji* 諦閑大師遺集 [Works by Master Dixian] (Taipei: Fotuo jiaoyu jijin hui 佛陀教育基金會, 2003, vol. 5): 698-701.

properties.⁴⁰² Despite the establishment of the Republic of China, the bureaucratic system still functioned in a similar manner as in the previous regime, with interpersonal connections more valued than the rule of law. Therefore, Dixian and Yinguang exerted significant influence to defend Buddhism from temple property confiscation in the early Republican era.

However, Yinguang also realized the old way of exercising interpersonal influence might need to be updated, and he certainly considered the promulgation of government regulation as a more effective way of protecting temple property. In an article published in 1923, Yinguang recounted the incident in Jiangsu province where there was another attempt to confiscate temple property. Firstly, he reflected on the process of making temple regulations by the Beijing government, and commented that the one promulgated in 1915 contained ambivalent words that would easily lead to disputes. Yinguang found the “Presidential Proclamation of the Modification of the Articles of Temple Governance 大總統公佈修正管理寺廟條例” issued in 1921 to be more acceptable. Then he narrated the incident in which the Jiangsu provincial government defied the 1921 regulation by siding with the Jiangsu Education Association, which contended for the expropriation of temple property for a school; Buddhists in Jiangsu swiftly made every effort to influence the Jiangsu Province governor’s successor, finally ending this attempt on Buddhist temples. Yinguang offered praise that “[the governor] resorted to the rule of law, and this persecution of Buddhism thus is ended.”⁴⁰³ Yinguang did not mention any of his own efforts in this matter, yet his correspondence with Wei Meisun 魏梅蓀 (1862–1933) indicated that Yinguang

⁴⁰² Zhang, Zhang, “A critical study on Yinguang and his reconstruction of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism,” 153-157.

⁴⁰³ Yinguang, “Hujiao wenxu 護教文序 [Prolegomenon Essay on Protecting Buddhism],” *Foguang yuekan*, no. 03 (1923), in MFQ 12: 323-326.

had, in fact, asked Wei and his mentor Feng Menghua 馮夢華 (1842–1927) to intercede with the Jiangsu provincial government about the expropriation proposal.⁴⁰⁴ More importantly, Yinguang publicly reflected on the cause that led to the covetous attempt on temple property and stated:

“In the reigns of Xianfeng 咸豐 (1850–1861) and Tongzhi 同治 (1861–1875), because of constant wars, the lack of wise men, negligent supervision from the state, and the improper acceptance of novices by incapable monks, many rogues and scoundrels slipped into the sangha, resulted in the deterioration of the Buddhist monastics. These wicked monks do not read sutra, nor receive proper training. Ordinary people see this kind of monk wandering the world and behaving badly, thus believe they represent the entire sangha. Then the idea that Buddhism is dispensable for the state and not benefiting the world becomes popular. Hence people all believe it is practical to expel monks and appropriate temples for schools. Those who advocate this idea might hold good intentions, but it is because they do not know the true Buddhist teaching. However, their biased speculations result in a group of sanctimonious people pursuing their own gains under this pretense. Such actions spread like fire on the plain.”⁴⁰⁵

Therefore, Yinguang was well aware of the cause and the mentality of the campaign for temple property, and implied that the solution to the conundrum should be the strengthening of the sangha and reshaping of the image of Buddhism. He also attributed the expansion of the movement to the avarice of some initiators, and condemned them on moral grounds. This article by Yinguang was reprinted in *Sound of Sea Tide* in 1925.⁴⁰⁶

The *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society* was the periodical that published the most articles about the Temple Expropriation Movement in the conservative camp. It might be because the journal was based in the Guanzong Temple and the majority of its contributors were clergy members, many of whom also studied in the Dharma Propagation Society, which was organized in the same temple. Thus this journal was more sensitive toward the campaign against

⁴⁰⁴ Yinguang, “Yu Wei Meisun jushi shu shiliu 與魏梅蓀居士書十六 [Sixteen Letters with Lay Buddhist Wei Meisun],” in *Yinguang Fashi Wenchao Vol. 1*, 379-386. See also Kiely, “The Charismatic Monk and the Chanting Masses,” 42.

⁴⁰⁵ Yinguang, “Hujiao wenxu,” 324-325.

⁴⁰⁶ See: *Haochaoyin*, no. 08 (1925), in MFQ 157: 51-52.

temple property, compared with the other two periodicals in the conservative camp, which were both organized by and aimed at lay Buddhists.

An article on the crisis of temple property appeared in the first issue of the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*. Author Juefei 覺非 mounted a critique of the expropriation of temple property movement based on four aspects: the Buddhist karma, the rule of law, the importance of religion, and the moral effect. Juefei argued that the campaign generated negative karma, broke the Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China, destabilized the religious foundation of Buddhism, and disrupted the moral cultivation effect brought about by Buddhist monks. It is noteworthy that the author here referred to the Provisional Constitution, not only the clause on freedom of religion but also the idea of human rights, arguing that “the temple property right is part of human rights.” Moreover, the author lamented the discrimination against Buddhism compared with the foreign religion, implying Christianity, which was protected under foreign treaties. In the end, the author urged these established monasteries to strengthen themselves through reorganizing the sangha and dedicating themselves to research on Buddhist Dharma, so as to fend off external encroachment.⁴⁰⁷ In fact, this article was transcribed from *Buddhist Studies Trimonthly* [Foxue Xunkan 佛學旬刊] under the name Zhengze 正則 in 1922. The article also appeared in *Sound of Sea Tide* with an extended title concerning the temple property expropriation movement in Hunan province.⁴⁰⁸ It is unclear about details of the author, yet the wide circulation of the article across different journals testified to the common interest between the two camps.

⁴⁰⁷ Juefei, “Lun ti sichan banxue zhifei 論提寺產辦學之非 [On the Error of Expropriate Temple Property for Schools],” *Hongfa shekan*, no. 01 (1928), in MFQB 36: 11-13.

⁴⁰⁸ See: *Foxue xunkan*, no. 09 (1922), in MFQB 01: 456-458; *Haichao yin*, no. 07 (1925), in MFQ: 154: 109-110.

In 1931, amid the uproar brought about by the Association for Advancing Confiscating Temple Property for Education, Baojing and Yuanying both spoke out in the journal. Baojing, a trusted acolyte of Dixian, provided a reflection after reading rebuttals from various sources against the Association's proposal. In the article, Baojing also started with the legal argument, contending the illegitimate nature of the proposal, and attacked initiators of the Association as opportunists and potential Communists. Baojing admitted the importance of building a modern education system, yet argued that the state ought to shoulder the responsibility of funding schools and educational projects through proper channels, such as taxation. He also criticized Tai Shuangqiu, a university professor, for his proposal on expropriating temple property, which he contended was equal to a total disregard of morality. Lastly, Baojing admonished the Buddhist community and urged it to re-establish itself through perfecting self-cultivation and discipline as well as performing external acts of compassion.⁴⁰⁹ Yuanying also rebuffed Tai Shuangqiu's proclamation point by point. Tai's proclamation was fully transcribed in the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*, with reasons listed to support the proposition: (1) the campaign would solidify foundations for the party-state; (2) it would equally spread the burden of funding education throughout the society; (3) the campaign would realize the People's Welfare Principle in the Three Principles of the People; (4) there was a long history of expropriating temple property by the state in China; and (5) the education community across China had reached consensus about this campaign.⁴¹⁰ Yuanying's article appeared right after Tai's proclamation as a point-by-point

⁴⁰⁹ Baojing, "Yue gechu bo miaochan xingxue xuanyan zhi ganyan 閱各處駁廟產興學宣言之感言 [Reflections after Reading Rebuttals on the Proclamation of Confiscating Temple Property for Education]," *Hongfa shekan*, no. 18 (1931), in MFQ 144: 365-368.

⁴¹⁰ "Zhonghua minguo miaochan xingxue cujinhui xuanyan 中華民國廟產興學促進會宣言 [Proclamation of the Association for Advancing Confiscating Temple Property for Education]," *Hongfa shekan*, no. 18 (1931), in MFQ 144: 437-440.

rebuttal. Besides the common argument that the sangha should also receive protection from the state and educational funds should come from society rather than merely from Buddhism, Yuanying pinpointed the detrimental effect of suppressing Buddhism, stating that this would alienate frontier regions like Mongolia and Tibet, risking the sovereignty and unity of the state. More interesting, citing a denunciation of Tai's proposal from a group of Buddhist sympathizers in schools at Beijing, Yuanying criticized Tai's assumptive representation of the educational community.⁴¹¹ The denunciatory letter from Beijing was also printed in the same issue of the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*.⁴¹² Moreover, Yuanying pointed out that the historical evidence cited by Tai could not qualify as proof of a pattern of the state expropriating temple property, because only an Emperor of the Song Dynasty had ever explicitly issued a decree to expropriate temples for schools in 1161, which was not enforced.

Another lay Buddhist who opposed Tai's proposition also argued from a historical perspective. Xu Zhijin 許止淨 (1879–1938) wrote to the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society* to express his disagreement by stating that a great many sagacious emperors in Chinese history, along with their capable ministers, were believers in Buddhism. In addition, Xu also echoed the rhetoric of religious freedom, and contended that, at that time, only the Soviet Union banned all religions, thus implying that Tai was a Communist sympathizer. In Tai's writing, there was one proposal to liberate the clergy from the control of “monk lords 僧閥,” a neologism Tai

⁴¹¹ Yuanying, “Miaochan xingxue cujinhui zhuzhang miaochan xingxue zhi liyou wuzhong zhuyi bochi 廟產興學促進會主張廟產興學之理由五種逐一駁斥 [Rebuffing the Five Reasons for Confiscating Temple Property for Education],” *Hongfa shekan*, no. 18 (1931), in MFQ 144: 441-443.

⁴¹² “Miaochan xingxue jiaoyujie de minzhong da bu zantong you buheliyu shisantiao xuanyan 廟產興學教育界的民眾大不贊同有不合理理由十三條宣言 [Proclamations from the Educational Community against the Improper Proposal of Confiscating Temple Property for Education in Thirteen Reasons],” *Hongfa shekan*, no. 18 (1931), in MFQ 144: 434-437.

coined resembling the derogatory term *junfa* 军阀, or warlords who were perceived as obstacles hindering the progress and prosperity of the nation. Xu was dissatisfied with Tai's trope and doubted that Tai, an outsider to the Buddhist community, had done any research about this speculative exploitation and dominance of "monk lords" in the sangha. The majority of the monastics, Xu argued, joined the sangha out of their own volition and were not slaves of their masters.⁴¹³

In general, articles from the conservative camp share several commonalities. First, they tended to focus on the legality and political implications of the proposed temple property expropriation. As Yinguang's writing showed, promulgation of government regulations was crucial for the struggle against temple property encroachment. These Buddhists were also concerned that suppressing Buddhism would affect loyalties in borderlands like Tibet and Mongolia. Second, they all emphasized the beneficial effect Buddhism offered to the state in terms of moral inculcation, in the present era as well as historically. Their frequent references to historical precedence, particularly by concatenating reigns of prosperity with the state's patronage to Buddhism, were a key rationalization for protecting Buddhist temples. Lastly, they all agreed that funding the educational project was vital for China, yet the burden should not fall upon Buddhism alone, but ought to be borne by the state.

⁴¹³ Xu Zhijin, "Miaochan xingxue cujinhui xuanyan boyi 廟產興學促進會宣言駁議 [Rebuttal of the Proclamation of the Association for Advancing Confiscating Temple Property for Education]," *Hongfa shekan*, no. 18 (1931), in MFQ 144: 455-463.

6.3 The Evolving Attitude of the Reform Camp

The reform camp journals demonstrated an evolving attitude that treated the temple property conflict as one of the motivations for their reform project. In 1921 in *Sound of Sea Tide*, a comment following the news about the Temple Property Protection Order at Hunan Province emphasized the articles of the Provisional Constitution regarding property rights and freedom of religion.⁴¹⁴ But when Taixu responded to Tai Shuangqiu's first attempt on temple expropriation in 1928, the Buddhist leader made little reference to the Provisional Constitution or any other government regulation. The only legal argument Taixu made was to distinguish the legal status of temple property, contending that the temple property belonged to the Buddhist community rather than any one particular party, or in Taixu's own words, "the legal person of a nonprofit corporation 財團法人."⁴¹⁵ The noteworthy part in Taixu's response is that, although he denied the existence of a "monk lord," he nevertheless acknowledged the corrosion of the Confucian patriarchy on the sangha and the concomitant appearance of "the faction of ordination and the faction of Dharma [剃派 法派]," the lineage structures resembling the secular family.⁴¹⁶ For Taixu, the existence of these family-like lineages in Chinese Buddhism corrupted the sangha and resulted in the de facto privatization of temple property, thereby leading to campaigns to confiscate these properties. In

⁴¹⁴ "Changsha foxun hunan zongsiling shengzhang baohu miaochan zhi tongling 長沙佛訊 湖南總司令省長保護廟產之通令 [Changsha Buddhism News: The Protective Order for Temple Property from the Provincial General Commander and Governor]," *Haichao yin*, no. 06 (1921), in MFQ 151: 46.

⁴¹⁵ Taixu, "Duiyu Tai Shuangqiu miaochan xingxue yundong de xiuzheng 對於邵爽秋廟產興學運動的修正 [Corrections for Tai Shuangqiu's Expropriation of Temple Property for Schools Movement]," *Haichao yin*, no. 04 (1928), in MFQ 170: 124-126.

⁴¹⁶ For more about 剃派 and 法派, see Zhang Xuesong, *Fojiao fayuan zongzu yanjiu 佛教法緣宗族研究* [The Dharma Lineage of Chinese Buddhism] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chuban she, 2015), 17-23.

fact, one of the proposals in Taixu's "The Reorganization of the Sangha System 整理僧伽制度論" was to transform temple property into public property for the whole sangha.⁴¹⁷ This work by Taixu was the blueprint for the reform camp, and it was conceived against the backdrop of the Beijing government promulgating Regulations for Temple Management in 1915;⁴¹⁸ hence it bore particularly on the temple property issue. The Confiscation of Temple Property campaigns did not originate with Tai Shuangqiu, but his proposals in 1928, as well as 1930, coincided with the modernization ambition of the Nanjing Nationalist government, which had just unified China. His proposals thereby conveniently metamorphosed into a social movement serving the agenda of the authorities. Taixu's response to Tai, as the title itself suggested, was more of a correction than rebuttal, implying that Taixu believed this crisis might potentially be an opportunity to carry out his reform proposal.

Taixu's corrective proposal against the temple expropriation campaign was welcomed and echoed by young monks in the *Modern Sangha* journal. Between 1928 and 1931, articles discussing the campaign frequently appeared in its pages, criticizing the numbness of monks from these established monasteries and urging monastic reform in accordance with what Taixu had mapped out. The overall tone of these articles was to vehemently blame the Buddhist clergies, who were perceived as "conservative and backward," particularly those in control of established monasteries. These monks were criticized for mismanaging the temples and failing to launch any modernization reforms. Before the first wave of the Temple Expropriation Campaign was initiated by Tai Shuangqiu in 1928, during the Nanjing government's reign, sentiment against these

⁴¹⁷ Taixu, "Zhengli sengqie zhidulun xu 整理僧伽制度論續 [Second Part of the Reorganization of the Sangha System]," *Haichao yin*, no. 11 (1920), in MFQ 149: 211.

⁴¹⁸ Taixu, "Zhengli sengqie zhidulun 整理僧伽制度論 [the Reorganization of the Sangha System]," *Haichao yin*, no. 01 (1920), in MFQ 147: 31.

“backward” monks had already been mounting. On the second issue of the *Modern Sangha*, Rensan 仁三 wrote a commentary about a notice printed by some monks in Zhengjiang county which satirized the greed and hypocrisy of monks who claimed they would charge no fee for their religious service. The author argued this was merely a subterfuge to avoid taxation of the religious service, a widely practiced policy by local governments who wished to expand their income, since the notice also insinuated that recipients of the service were free to make donations at their own discretion. In the end, Rensan complained that these monks possessed great wealth but failed to use some of their resources for Buddhist education or other meaningful projects.⁴¹⁹ Editors of the journal also echoed the author’s lament and condemned the monks’ negligence of Buddhist education.⁴²⁰

The fifth issue of *Modern Sangha* was solely dedicated to the discussion of the Temple Expropriation Campaign. Tai Shuangqiu’s article “Campaign of Confiscating Temple for Education: A Proposal for Education Fund Policy 廟產興學運動：一個教育經費政策的建議” was printed in full in the journal, along with news of local authorities’ attempts to take temple property in the Lower Yangtze area. The journal provided three commentaries that took aim at abbots, reform-minded clergies, and lay Buddhists in regard to Tai’s proposal. In “Warnings for Abbots of Chinese Temples,” the author Zhuanlun 轉輪 put the blame for the crisis on the shoulders of most abbots in Buddhist temples. He first argued that the majority of abbots were morally corrupt and incapable of disseminating true Buddhist teachings. Then the author used four specific examples to illustrate the wealth and degenerate practices of temples in Jiangsu province.

⁴¹⁹ Rensan 仁三, “Zhengjiang heshang de guanggaoyu 鎮江和尚的廣告語 [Advertisement by Zhengjiang Monks],” *Xiandai sengqie*, no. 02 (1928), in MFQ 139: 368-370.

⁴²⁰ “Bian wan yihou 編完以後 [Afterword],” *Xiandai sengqie*, no. 02 (1928), in MFQ 139: 379.

Lastly, citing Tai Shuangqiu's usage of "monk lord," the author suggested the accuracy of such denigration.⁴²¹ Therefore, the author basically accused temple abbot and the managerial class of corrupting Buddhism and incurring persecution of the temples. Subsequently, Fachuang 法幢 wrote another commentary aimed at these reform-minded monks. Fachuang's article resonated with Zhuanlun's comment and put the blame on abbots and conservative monks. But unlike Zhuanlun's exclusive focus on abbots, Fachuang criticized the "JiangZhe Buddhist Alliance Association 江浙佛教聯合會" for its feeble response to the campaign by resorting to seek help from influential lay Buddhists.

This criticism might not be justified. The Jiangzhe Buddhist Alliance Association was founded in 1927, when a group of monks from Zhejiang and Jiangsu gathered together and elected Yuanying as the president of this association.⁴²² It was a regional organization which later turned into the new Chinese Buddhist Association (中國佛教會).⁴²³ The association was founded prior to Tai's temple expropriation proposal, yet it was still under the circumstance of immense external pressure on Buddhist temples. So, naturally, one of its responsibilities was to protect temple property. The association set a division for Buddhist sangha reorganization, but few materials are left to enable scholars to analyze its propositions. What can be determined is that this division was created to deal with the temple expropriation campaign.⁴²⁴ Under Yuanying's leadership, the

⁴²¹ Zhuanlun, "Jinggao quanguo conglin zhuchi 警告全國叢林主持 [Warnings for Abbots of Chinese Temples]," *Xiandai sengqie*, no. 05 (1928), in MFQ 139: 431-434.

⁴²² "Jiangzhe fojiao lianhehui zhi faqi 江浙佛教聯合會之發起 [The Establishment of Jiangzhe Buddhist Alliance Association]," *Dayun*, no. 77 (1927), in MFQ 138: 235.

⁴²³ Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 50-52. In Republican era, many provinces organized their own provincial Buddhist organization, yet due to economic and population advantages, Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces' organizations held more sway.

⁴²⁴ Yu Guang 于光, "Jiangzhe fojiao lianhehui chengli de Beijing 江浙佛教联合会成立的背景 [Background for the Establishment of Jiangzhe Buddhist Alliance Association]," *Zhejiang xuekan* (Zhejiang Academic Journal), no. 01 (2012): 14-20.

association voiced its opposition to Tai's proposal, and actively communicated with government officials and lay Buddhists with political clout to stop Tai's proposal from becoming government decree.⁴²⁵ Thus the association did not sit idle and make futile responses. However, the association's tactic was not favored by Fachuang, who satirized that all he saw were empty words instead of concrete reform actions. The final solution, in Fachuang's view, was an overhaul of the sangha organization.⁴²⁶

The third commentary by Juemi 覺迷 spoke directly to lay Buddhists and tried to win their support. Using the same tone as in his other two commentaries, Juemi argued that the fate of Buddhism was pessimistic and could not rely on these incompetent abbots. Luckily, as the author suggested, the Buddha wisely foresees this kind of scenario, and inculcates his teaching to Buddhist householders, to whom were entrusted the duty of supporting and defending Buddhism. Then Juemi categorized lay Buddhists of the time into two groups: (1) these who did not value the sangha and were only dedicated to Buddhist doctrinal studies, and (2) these who favored monks acting with total reverence to the householder, regardless of their training or religious cultivation. For Juemi, neither of these groups of lay Buddhists was acting in the right way, as the former knows Dharma but not about protecting the sangha while the latter knows about defending the sangha but not Dharma. Thus the author called for the householder to share the reform spirit, discern the proper way to practice the Buddhist faith, and serve as buffers between the sangha and the society.⁴²⁷ Essentially, Juemi urged the lay Buddhist to lend a hand to the reform camp and

⁴²⁵ Chen Yongge, *Fojiao honghua de xiandai zhuanxin*, 48.

⁴²⁶ Fachuang, "Gao quanguo youzhi zhengli fojiao de sengqie tongpaomen 告全國有志整理佛教的僧伽同袍們 [To Fellow Reform-minded Buddhist Clergy Who Wish to Reorganize Buddhism]," *Xiandai sengqie*, no. 05 (1928), in MFQ 139: 435-439.

⁴²⁷ Juemi, "Jingao hufa de jushi 敬告護法的居士 [To the Lay Buddhists who Protect the Dharma with Respect]," *Xiandai sengqie*, no. 05 (1928), in MFQ 139: 439-441.

participate in the reorganization of the Buddhist sangha as the Temple Expropriation Campaign became imminent.

This special issue of *Modern Sangha* exhibited the youth radicalization of student monks in the reform camp. On the one hand, they were against the campaign for temple property because they believed the sangha was indispensable for Buddhism. But on the other hand, they ferociously criticized those in control of temples, represented by abbots, and partially agreed with Tai Shuangqiu's proposal that funding education was crucial for the time, as another article in this issue argued.⁴²⁸ Thus they came forward as a spearhead for the reform camp through their aggressive language, exposing the conflict between the reform Buddhists and the established monasteries. The journal continued to make trenchant comments regarding the temple property issue after Tai's proposal was denied by the Interior Ministry. In the editorial discussing the aftermath of the temple property turmoil, the author, presumably the editor who only signed his piece as "reporter," pointed out that even though the government sided with Buddhism this time, the temple property issue would not go away, and householders who helped to lobby the state seemed to have ignored the fundamental problem within the Buddhist community and the urgency for reform. All in all, the editor hoped that temples could reallocate their resources to establish Buddhist schools and properly train qualified clerics.⁴²⁹ Letters of support from clergy members, mainly in the southern regions, were also printed in this issue so as to demonstrate consensus and pressure for the coming national conference of the Buddhist Association of China, which was an outgrowth of the Jiangzhe Buddhist Alliance Association and the titular representative body of

⁴²⁸ Sairen 賽人, "Sengsi gaiwei xuexiao 僧寺改為學校 [Converting Temples into Schools]," *Xiandai sengqie*, no. 05 (1928), in MFQ 139: 448-451.

⁴²⁹ "Miaochan xingxue tingdun zhihou wenti 廟產興學停頓之後問題," *Xiandai sengqie*, no. 01 (1931), in MFQ 66: 457-458.

Buddhism in China.⁴³⁰ Editors of *Modern Sangha* had suspected that, with the ending of temple expropriation campaigns by the state, the association would eschew mandating reforms of the temple management.⁴³¹ Not surprisingly, the conference became a clash between Taixu's faction and Yuanying's faction, resulting in Taixu's departure from the association.⁴³²

Authors in *Sound of Sea Tide* also publicly called on the Buddhist Association of China to conduct a thorough reorganization of the sangha, thus joining forces with *Modern Sangha* to generate public support for the reform initiative. Citing a commentary from *Zhongyang ribao* (中央日報, Central Daily News) by Jin Shixin 金石心, who supported the Temple Expropriation Proposal, Manzhi argued that there was merit in the comment because it rationalized the campaign as a beneficial act for both the country and Buddhism by expelling degenerate monks out of the monastic order and providing resources for elementary education. Moreover, Manzhi said that a myriad of Buddhist associations had been founded in regions across China, but only to deal with the government with regard to temple property. None of them allocated solid resources to fund education. Thus Manzhi hoped the Buddhist Association of China could make a change in this situation.⁴³³

An article by Wang Xianglu 王驥陸 (1876–1937) immediately followed and went one step further, expressing certain appreciation for Tai Shuangqiu's proposal. Wang Xianglu was a lay

⁴³⁰ Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 50-52.

⁴³¹ “Zhongguo fojiaohui zhaokai quanguo daibiao dahui zhi tuice 中國佛教會召開全國代表大會之推測 [Speculations on the National Representatives Conference of the Buddhist Association of China],” *Xiandai sengqie*, no. 01 (1931), in MFQ 66: 458-460.

⁴³² Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 131-133.

⁴³³ Manzhi, “Miaochan xingxue bucheng wenti hou zhi wenti zhi zhongguo fojiaohui 庙产兴学不成问题后之问题致中国佛教会 [The Question for the Buddhist Association of China after Temple Expropriation Campaign Stops being a Problem],” *Haichao yin*, no. 02 (1931), in MFQ 177: 145-148.

Buddhist and a promoter of the Heart-of-Mind Method, a form of esoteric Buddhism popular in Republican China between the 1920s and 1930s.⁴³⁴ Wang did not possess the same passion for the sangha as did many other householders, thus his approval for the Temple Expropriation Campaign, to some extent, is not surprising. Wang's reasoning did not differ much from Manzhi's and other authors in *Modern Sangha*. By expounding on the proper role of Buddhist clergy and their current inability to fulfill their duty as promoters of Buddhism, Wang urged lay Buddhists to realize that they were protectors of the Dharma, not temple property. Though Wang also expressed his disapproval of putting the burden of education solely on Buddhism, he clearly believed that Buddhism should nevertheless share some of the responsibility to fund schools.⁴³⁵ Besides Wang's article, *Sound of Sea Tide* also printed an interview with Dai Jitao's wife, Niu Youheng 鈕有恆 (1886–1942), transcribed from the *Central Daily News*, in which she expressed her discontent with the general education and religious ability of the Buddhist monastics and hoped the temple property could be put to better use.⁴³⁶

In 1935, *Sound of Sea Tide* published a series of articles reflecting on its fifteen years of achievement since 1920, and Daxing provided two accounts regarding the Temple Expropriation Campaign. The two articles summarized various incidents about confiscating temple property, analyzed causes, and reiterated the reform camp's stand over this issue. In the first article, "Reflection on Persecutions of Buddhism over Past Fifteen Years," Daxing pinpointed the major form of persecution as the seizure of temple property, and he provided a brief chronology of temple

⁴³⁴ Hammerstrom, "The Heart-of-Mind Method: Legitimizing a New Buddhist Movement in 1930s China," *The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2013): 5-23.

⁴³⁵ Wang Xianglu, "Duiyu miaochan xingxue zhi yijian 對於廟產興學之意見 [Opinion on Temple Expropriation Campaign]," *Haichao yin*, no. 02 (1931), in MFQ 177: 148-151.

⁴³⁶ "Liyong miaochan xingban shiye jiaoyu Niu Youheng zhi zhuzhang 利用廟產興辦實業教育 鈕有恆之主張 [Using Temple Property for Industry and Education Opinion from Niu Youheng]," *Haichao yin*, no. 11-12 (1930), in MFQ 176: 413-414.

property expropriation events from 1921 to 1934. According to Daxing, the most rapacious encroachments on Buddhism happened in the four provinces of Guangdong, Hunan, Sichuan, and Henan. Then Daxing commented on the Buddhist Association of China, obliquely ridiculing it as an organization without guiding principles and serving merely as a veneer for Buddhism to communicate and negotiate with authorities. Daxing attributed the reason for the association's weakness to the corrupt clergies it represented, thus leading to his second article on the sangha reorganization movement.⁴³⁷ The article, "Movements for the Reorganization of the Sangha over Past Fifteen Years," continued the author's criticism on the corrupt temple abbots and the loose discipline in temples. Moreover, Daxing lamented the absence of the state in facilitating the reorganization of Buddhism. Despite a series of regulations and guidelines coming from the Nanjing government, these decrees were never forcefully executed within the Buddhist community. In the end, Daxing spoke highly of Taixu's effort to promote Buddhist reform, and contended that only by following Taixu's blueprint could the reorganization of Buddhism be possible.⁴³⁸

Taixu's reform proposal, therefore, was instrumental in the reform camp's engagement with the Temple Expropriation Campaign. The majority of articles that appeared in *Sound of Sea Tide* and *Modern Sangha* were by monastic authors, as both periodicals were managed by Buddhist clergy. The other two reform-camp journals, *Right Faith* and *Young Men's Buddhist Monthly*, did not share the same enthusiasm for this issue due to their focus on the laities, though they also did reprint news and Taixu's addresses on the matter. For the reform camp, their fundamental interest

⁴³⁷ Daxing, "Shiwu nianlai jiaonan zhi huigu 十五年来教难之回顾 [Reflection on Persecutions of Buddhism over the Past Fifteen Years]," *Haichao yin*, no. 01 (1935), in MFQ: 189: 267-272.

⁴³⁸ Daxing, "Shiwunian lai zhi zhengli sengqie zhidu yundong 十五年來之整理僧伽制度運動 [Movements for the Reorganization of the Sangha over Past Fifteen Years]," *Haichao yin*, no. 01 (1935), in MFQ: 189: 273-278.

in the temples was aligned with the conservative camp as neither of them wished to see the secular forces invade the monastic community. However, unlike the conservative camp, which resorted to legality, morality, and national security grounds to defend its argument, the reform camp incorporated the sangha reorganization into their polemics, urging the Buddhist community to reflect on the reason for the persecution and make the proper change. It might have been due to the fact that reform camp Buddhists did not possess much in the way of temple resources, combined with their eagerness for Buddhist reform, that they did not refrain from exposing the repugnant practices and outdated structures within the temple management.

During the Republican era, the temple property issue became a major contesting ground between Buddhism and the state. Through Buddhist periodicals, both the reform and conservative camps managed to have their voices heard by the Buddhist community. The main role played by these journals was to provide a space where Buddhists could share their thoughts, reflections, and criticism over the temple seizures by authorities. Despite the profound differences between the reform and the conservative camps, they shared the common goal of preserving Buddhism and its legitimate position in the modern state. The conservative camp was not blind to the corrupt practices within certain temples, thus there were also calls for discipline in their periodical articles. Similarly, the reform camp also acknowledged the role of Buddhism for the securing of national boundaries and expressed concern about the encroachment on temple property, which would disrupt the goal of national unity with regions like Tibet and Mongolia. This conflict and cooperation between the two camps constituted an important part of Buddhist modernization in China.

After examining the new issues that confronted Chinese Buddhism in the modern era, the following chapters will focus on old concerns that had appeared since medieval China and

continued well into the modern era. The modernization of Chinese Buddhism certainly does not suggest a total breakaway with the past, and examining how certain ideas and practices continued into the modern era reveals another important layer of Buddhism and modernity.

7.0 The Question of Bodies and Self-Harm

In the Buddhist tradition, discourse concerning the body is essential for religious experience and cultivation, and it fundamentally distinguishes Buddhism from other traditions. The view of the body reflects the Buddhist epistemology of the material world and includes a teleological pursuit for ultimate liberation. In the following two chapters, I would like to focus on the ascetic practices and arguments for vegetarianism recorded by periodicals of the two Buddhist camps to illustrate the complexity of religious and cultural modernization as envisioned by the Buddhist community.

Buddhism in China encompasses a long history of practicing bodily asceticism, from monastics taking the tonsure and celibacy vow to the vegetarian diet which extends to lay Buddhists. The central focus here is the view of the body and asceticism from a modern perspective. Asceticism is a common trait shared by religions across the world. Émile Durkheim holds that asceticism is one of the essentials for religious life, and the purpose of practicing and abiding by ascetic precepts is more than a religious reason, also serving social and moral interests by helping humans to transcend natural desires.⁴³⁹ The key takeaway from Durkheim is the function of sublimation and distinction that, through religious asceticism, the individual possesses the power to elevate beyond his or her natural confinements of mere bone and flesh, bringing the individual closer to the divine. The ascetic practices of Chinese Buddhism do not deviate much

⁴³⁹ Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1976), 311, 316-317.

from this observation, as John Kieschnick's study of monastic asceticism in Medieval China demonstrates the importance of making a distinction for the Buddhist ascetics from the mundane.⁴⁴⁰ However, in the modern era when the corpus of Chinese traditions underwent tremendous criticism and transformation, how should we understand cases and polemics recorded in Buddhist periodicals about ascetic practices? More importantly, how did Buddhists in the Republican era view this kind of practice? The exploration of presentations and interpretations of ascetic actions will allow us to better understand the interwoven relationship between religion and modernity.

In modern social theories, scholars have attempted to interpret the fascinating relationship between modernity and asceticism. Max Weber famously made the connection between the worldly turn of asceticism in Calvinism, Methodism, and Puritanism and the rise of modern capitalism. He argues: "When asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order."⁴⁴¹ Nietzsche, however, attributes the "ascetic ideal" in *On the Genealogy of Morality* as a tool of control and suppression by rendering certain "'fixed ideas' free from competition with all other ideas."⁴⁴² He notes that this function of asceticism extended into the modern era in the form of mechanical activity, though he also connotes the positive side of suffering according to the ascetic ideal which supplied human life with meaning. Hence, in spite of their different value assessments, both Nietzsche and Weber realize the influence of asceticism

⁴⁴⁰ John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 16-17.

⁴⁴¹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 123.

⁴⁴² Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 38, 99-100.

over the rise and functioning of a modern world. But the kinds of asceticism they emphasize are not the same as that of Medieval Christendom, and the conceptualization of asceticism by modern thinkers may only be a re-imagination of the tradition, which loses its meaning during the Reformation and early Modernity period because of philosophers like Immanuel Kant.⁴⁴³ For Enlightenment thinkers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, asceticism was considered an obstacle for social development and hampered the growth of wealth, rather than the potential to strengthen social control and material growth.⁴⁴⁴ Thus in general, two ways of appreciating asceticism and modernity are present: one perceiving it as irrational madness, while the other sees it as a source for advancing obedience and discipline. It seems asceticism represents a double-edged sword for the modern era.

The appreciation of asceticism in Buddhism in early twentieth-century China was less positive than Weber's recognition of asceticism in Protestantism. Hu Shi, the leading intellectual advocating for strengthening the nation through Westernization in the New Culture Movement, deemed Buddhist ascetics to be religious fanatics. He argues that "China seems to have gone completely mad in one of her strange periods of religious fanaticism" when Buddhist ascetics were venerated for their self-inflictions.⁴⁴⁵ This led to Hu Shi's assertion that "Buddhism was opposed to all the best traditions of China."⁴⁴⁶ Nan Haijin 南怀瑾 (1918–2012), a Buddhist propagator who received his education in the Republican era, recalls witnessing monks burning off fingers and

⁴⁴³ Patrik Hagman, "The End of Asceticism- Luther, Modernity and How Asceticism Stopped Making Sense," *Political Theology*, 14.2 (2013): 175-177.

⁴⁴⁴ Henk de Smaele, "Asceticism in Modern Social Thought," in *Beyond Pleasure: Cultures of Modern Asceticism*, eds. Evert Peeters, Leen Van Molle, and Kaat Wils (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 112-116.

⁴⁴⁵ Hu Shi, "The Indianization of China: A Case Study in Cultural Borrowing," in *English Writings of Hu Shih Chinese Philosophy and Intellectual History (Volume 2)*, ed. Chih-P'ing Chou (New York: Springer, 2013), 152.

⁴⁴⁶ Hu Shi, "Religion and Philosophy in Chinese History," in *English Writings of Hu Shih Chinese Philosophy and Intellectual History (Volume 2)*, 95.

writing sutras in blood during his youth, and suggested these customs should be viewed as superstition to the modern eyes.⁴⁴⁷ As a young intellectual in the early twentieth century, Jin Kemu 金克木 (1912–2000), who later became a translator and Indologist, also criticized the ascetic practices in Chinese Buddhism, believing these actions were transgressions of the original Buddhist doctrine.⁴⁴⁸ Therefore, many Chinese intellectuals, even Buddhist sympathizers, perceived religious asceticism as unbecoming the modern era.

Moreover, some Buddhist ascetics practicing self-infliction became social spectacles that degraded the public image of the sangha since the late Qing era. *Shen Bao* 申報 (*Shanghai News*) recorded cases of wandering monks burning off their fingers as a way to elicit donations since the 1870s. In one case, finger-burning was not enough: a monk in Tianjing chopped off one hand to demonstrate his sincerity for raising funds to rebuild a temple.⁴⁴⁹ In another report, a beggar monk severely flagellated himself and gained donations from the crowd.⁴⁵⁰ The majority of self-infliction spectacles were performed by itinerant monks for donations, and it resulted in a call to ban and expel these monks on account of their bizarre actions and dubious associations with secret societies.⁴⁵¹ Thus gruesome acts of self-infliction by beggar monks were not perceived as indicative of devotion to Buddhism but merely motivated by greed. Admittedly, wandering monks certainly were not welcomed by the established monastic community either, as one of Taixu's reform proposals was to regulate the ordination of monks and to purge the monastic community

⁴⁴⁷ Nan Huaijin, *Ruhe xiuzheng fofa* 如何修证佛法 [How to Cultivate and Practice Buddhist Dharma] (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2016), 133.

⁴⁴⁸ Jin Kemu, *Rensheng yu xuewen* 人生与学问 [Life and Scholarship] (Beijing: Beijing lianhe chubangongsi, 2012), 37.

⁴⁴⁹ “Kuxing toubuo 苦行頭陀 [The Ascetic Monk],” *Shen bao*, August 03, 1877.

⁴⁵⁰ “Bushu xinfa 佈施新法 [New Method for Donation],” *Shen bao*, June 30, 1883.

⁴⁵¹ “Quzhu youseng yi 驅逐游僧議 [On the Proposal to Dispel Wandering Monks],” *Shen bao*, April 10, 1893.

of corrupted monks without sincere faith in Buddhism. Moreover, Yinguang attributed the disciplinary decline of the sangha to the proliferation of these unqualified monks.

However, the public spectacle of self-infliction by less prominent monks did not raise too much doubt in the overall asceticism tradition in Chinese Buddhism. In his research on the practice of Buddhism, Holmes Welch lists specialized ascetic practices in order of severity. Burning off fingers and self-immolation are the last two most formidable acts in Buddhist asceticism, and many of his informants—who did not witness cases of self-immolation in person—spoke of the act with great respect.⁴⁵² Another case of asceticism practiced by an eminent monastic figure is Master Jichan, who burned off two of his fingers and carved out a piece of his flesh to set on fire for the Buddha at Asoka Temple in Ningbo.⁴⁵³ Referred to as “the Eight Finger Ascetic,” Jichan was greatly respected and was elected as the first president of the Chinese General Buddhist Association in 1912.⁴⁵⁴ There is no doubt that his devotional act of self-infliction is one of the reasons contributing to his prestige in the Buddhist community.

Therefore, in the Republican era when the nation was undergoing a tremendous cultural shift, views on Buddhist asceticism appear to be multi-faceted: secular intellectuals and presses ridicule and condemn the madness of ascetic practice while the religious community respect it as long as it is devotional and not self-serving. However, as modern ideas of health and physical strength became vital to shaping China into a modern and competitive nation, how the reform and conservative camps treated and presented the ascetic practice sheds light on the characteristics of Buddhist modernization. Thus, I shall explore reports of self-immolation, incense burning of the

⁴⁵² Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 321-327.

⁴⁵³ Jichan, *Bazhi tuotou shiwen ji* 八指头陀诗文集 [Poems Collection of the Eight Finger Ascetic] (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1984), 241.

⁴⁵⁴ Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 50.

body, and blood writing in these Buddhist periodicals to see if their narrative, perspective, and attitude on these practices were affected by the modern cultural shift.

7.1 The Public Accounts of Self-immolation

Self-immolation is an extreme form of devotional asceticism and a practice which gradually took root once Buddhism entered China. In his study on the tradition of self-immolation within Chinese Buddhism, James Benn indicates that this ritual suicide derives from the mixture of a particular interpretation of Indian texts and the ritual auto-cremation tradition which existed in China long before Buddhism's arrival, and he argues that "self-immolation can thus be considered part of the larger process of the Sinification of Buddhism."⁴⁵⁵ This practice is legitimized through various Buddhist hagiographical texts, and John Kieschnick has found many cases in biographies of eminent monks which come from more extended sources attesting to widespread veneration for the practice.⁴⁵⁶ The major doctrinal source or paradigm of self-immolation depicted in the Buddhist canon is from the *Lotus Sutra*, in which the Bodhisattva Medicine King (藥王菩薩) burns his body as an offering for the Buddha. The action is interpreted as both "a consequence of attaining the samâdhi [the meditative consciousness]," and a perfection of vigor, though it also includes a repertoire of meanings for practitioners to pick and choose from.⁴⁵⁷ Thus, it should not be surprising to see the use of self-immolation as a mode of passive protest over political and social issues in later years.

⁴⁵⁵ James Benn, *Burning for the Buddha: Self-immolation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 11.

⁴⁵⁶ Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 50.

⁴⁵⁷ Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 60.

The first self-immolation case since 1911 is printed in the *Buddhist Miscellany*. On May 11, 1914, a monk named Changhui 常慧 (literary name Langzhao 朗照) at the Tianning Temple 天寧寺 in Jiangsu Province, dismayed by the moral degeneration of the day and inspired by the *Lotus Sutra*, sat himself atop a pyre of firewood and lit up the stack, thus “transforming himself at the age of sixty nine.”⁴⁵⁸ Witnesses were moved by his determination, and they donated to build a small pagoda on the site of the pyre, inviting Di Chuqing, editor of the *Buddhist Miscellany*, to write an account of the affair. Di also printed a portrait of Changhui, which seems to be a photo, in the *Buddhist Miscellany* along with Di’s text. In 1923, Changhui’s story was collected in the *New Further Biography of Eminent Monks* 新續高僧傳,⁴⁵⁹ and James Benn also finds points of continuity between Changhui’s biography and “those from hundreds of years earlier,”⁴⁶⁰ suggesting the tenacity of the narrative depicting the ascetic action in early Republican China. Besides similarities, Di Chuqing’s comment after the biography suggests a new reception by a lay Buddhist in the modern era, as he wrote “the birth and death, the coming and going of the master are without obstacle and attachment, and this testifies to the efficacy of the Buddhist Dharma. Whether other religions possesses similar effects, I do not know.”⁴⁶¹ Here Di marvels at the devotion, piety, and karmic retribution of Buddhism and perceives it as a unique characteristic of Buddhism over other religions, implying Christianity.

⁴⁵⁸ Di Chuqing, “Langzhao fashi wei fenshen qian wushiyu sui zhishi xiaoxiang 朗照法師未焚身前五十餘歲之時肖像 [Picture of Master Langzhao in his Fifties before Self-immolation],” *Foxue congbao*, no. 12 (1914), in MFQ 04: 351.

⁴⁵⁹ Yu Qian 喻謙, *Xinxu gaosengzhuàn* 新續高僧傳 [the New Further Biography of Eminent Monks], in *Dazangjing bubian* 大藏經補編 [Supplement to the Dazangjing], ed. 藍吉富 (Taipei: Huayu chubanshe, 1985), in Cbeta, B27n0151_040, 0309b08.

⁴⁶⁰ Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 171.

⁴⁶¹ Di Chuqing, “Fenqu gongfo 焚軀供佛 [Burning the Body for Buddha],” *Foxue congbao*, no. 12 (1914), in MFQ 04: 495.

Then, in *Sound of Sea Tide*, there were two published accounts of self-immolation by monks in 1920s. The first one is about a monk named Dizhen 諦真 at the Tiantong Temple 天童寺 in Zhejiang province, written by another monk Xiegeng 解根. As the author writes, the temple invited a prominent monk, Jingquan 靜權, to lecture on *The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* 圓覺經. After hearing the talk, Dizhen told his friend that he had acquired a profound understanding of the Buddhist Dharma and expressed the desire to leave the world. His friend tried to dissuade him by arguing “this world is morally corrupted, and the Dharma is weak while heterodoxy is strong. Correcting people’s minds and overcoming the heterodox teachings are our duty. We should make proper efforts to save the world—how can you make this unwise decision?” Dizhen did not answer. But one day, Dizhen disappeared. After several days passed, he was discovered in a brick kiln with half of his body covered in ashes. Apparently Dizhen had conducted self-immolation without enough firewood for complete incineration. Afterward, the temple cremated his remains. The author admires Dizhen’s devotion and pays him respect by recording the affair for posterity.⁴⁶² Though the author expresses his admiration toward Dizhen’s devotion, he nevertheless implies disapproval by quoting Dizhen’s friend’s exhortation. And the reason for Dizhen’s self-sacrifice seems also to deviate from many of the hagiographies, as his action resembles *ziliao han* 自了漢 (one who seeks for his own benefit).⁴⁶³

⁴⁶² Xiegeng, “Tiantong Dizhen dashi zifen ji 天童諦真大師自焚記 [Record of the Self-immolation of Master Dizhen in Tiantong Temple],” *Haichao yin*, no. 07 (121), in MFQ 151: 211-212.

⁴⁶³ The phrase *ziliao han* came from Chan Master Huangbo Xiyun 黃檗希運, referring to these who only care for themselves. See: Zanning 贊寧, ed, *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 卷 20 [The Biographies of Song Volume 20] (CBETA, T50, no. 2061) 842c7-8.

The second account is the self-immolation by one Zhigang 智剛 in 1926. It is written in a biographical style, including details of Zhigang's early ordination and training. Born in Yushan 玉山 prefecture of Jiangxi province, Zhigang was ordained at Mt. Tiantai in Zhejiang province and later pursued studies in Gaoming Temple, Jingshan Temple, and Yunju Temple 雲居寺. He finally settled down at Doushuai Temple 兜率寺 near Nanjing. He often lamented people's attachment to their bodies and exhorted, "the body is like dew within flowers, vines over the well. It changes with the shifting of time. Clinging to the body is futile." On March 18 of the lunar calendar in 1926, Zhigang prepared a pyre outside the temple, and burned himself, vowing to offer his body to the Buddhas of the past, present, future, throughout the ten directions of space for the sake of salvation for all sentient beings in *samsara*. It is suggested that Zhigang conducted self-immolation alone, without an audience, because he left a note in his alms bowl next to the pyre, indicating that he wished to have his ashes scattered with flour to feed wild animals.

The author, Juezhen 覺真, was in awe with Zhigang's noble sacrifice, commenting, "The action and behavior [of Zhigang] should be recorded with these eminent monks." In fact, it was the abbot of Doushuai Temple who requested that Zhigang's biography be written, and the task fell to Juezhen, who dedicatedly completed it. In the editor's comment printed right after the biography, Manzhi also marvels at Zhigang's cessation of bodily attachment, comparing it with the Medicine King's story in the *Lotus Sutra* and hoping that the biography would admonish those selfish and venal people of the world.⁴⁶⁴ Moreover, Manzhi mentions that the abbot of Doushuai Temple sent this biography to Buddhist periodicals including *Sound of Sea Tide* and the *Journal*

⁴⁶⁴ Juezhen, "Zhigang chanshi ranshen gongfo jia 智剛禅师燃身供佛记 [Account of Master Zhigang's Self-immolation for Buddhas]," *Haichao yin*, no. 07 (1927), in MFQ 168: 186-187.

of the World Buddhist Association, in the hope of preserving Zhigang's story. Compared with the first case of Dizhen, both the author and the editor express a much more positive attitude toward Zhigang's self-immolation. Clearly Zhigang's specific wish for the salvation of all sentient beings through his own sacrifice supported the moral salvation argument of many Buddhists of the time.

In 1937, Zhang Chunyi 張純一 (1871–1955) wrote an open letter aiming to dissuade a monk from committing self-immolation appeared in *Sound of Sea Tide*. As a lay Buddhist well-versed in Buddhist sutra,⁴⁶⁵ Zhang learned that the Chan master Xuecan 學參 planned to commit self-sacrifice in the near future and wished to dissuade Xuecan from carrying his plan forward. In the letter, Zhang acknowledges his admiration for Xuecan's devotion and emulation of the Medicine King, but cites the *Vimalakirti Sutra* and *Diamond Sutra* to argue for staying within this world to propagate the Dharma, which would benefit all sentient beings.

Zhang further expounds his position, contending that despite the fact that conducting self-immolation would edify people as to the impermanence of the body, it was not a model to be followed by the masses. Second, Zhang argues that the propagation of Buddhism is a difficult calling, and only a truly compassionate individual could bear its tremendous severity and persist to spread the teaching as widely as possible. Then, citing the *Lotus Sutra*, in which the glow of the Medicine King's self-immolation illuminates “worlds equal to number to the sands of eighty million Ganges” and “burned for twelve hundred years,”⁴⁶⁶ Zhang questions if Xuecan mastered a similar kind of *shentong* 神通, or thaumaturgical ability. Finally, Zhang tempers his tone and suggests that Xuecan might follow the Buddha Sakyamuni's example to cremate after natural

⁴⁶⁵ For biography details of Zhang Chunyi, see: Zhang Zhizhe 张志哲 ed, *Zhonghua fojiao renwu dacidian* 中华佛教人物大辞典 [Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Figures] (Anhui: Huangshan Shushe, 2006), 1212.

⁴⁶⁶ Burton Watson, tran., *The Lotus Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 282.

death.⁴⁶⁷ However, Xuecan still performed self-immolation two years later, as another biography printed on the *Buddhist Semimonthly* records. Persuasions from Zhang and other lay Buddhists might have had an effect on Xuecan's decision, as he originally planned to conduct the act in 1937 but finally went through with it in 1939. The biography provides an account of Xuecan's death verse, in which he expresses pessimistic feelings for the dire situation of Buddhism in the world and views his own sacrifice as both paying homage to the Buddha and to protest rampaging heterodox teachings.⁴⁶⁸

In the conservative camp's periodicals, there is also one account regarding self-immolation. In the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*, a memorial article records the auto-cremation by a Chan master Gaoshi 高視 in the Qingyuan Mountain, Jiangxi Province. The author, Li Zhengjun 李政鈞, commissioned by the abbot of Jingju Temple in Qingyuan Mountain, wrote the biography. Gaoshi started as a householder in 1909 when he felt the cruelty of butchering livestock, and in 1919 he finally went through the ordination process on Qingyuan Mountain. Later on, he took charge of a small temple near the mountain and practiced strict Buddhist asceticism. Then, he learned about the self-immolation of master Changhui (the biographer refers to Changhui by his literary name, Langzhao), whose biography was published on the *Buddhist Miscellany* in 1914 as discussed above. Gaoshi greatly admired Changhui's deed and wished to follow his path.

In the beginning, Gaoshi asked other people to light the fire for him, but everyone around him refused and tried to dissuade him from going through auto-cremation. After returning to his temple, Gaoshi quietly stacked a pyre and set himself on fire. People only discovered what he had

⁴⁶⁷ Zhang Chunyi, "Ranshen gongfo zhi Xuecan shangren shu 燃身供佛 至學參上人書 [Burning Body for the Buddha --- Letter to Master Xuecan]," *Haichao yin*, no. 11 (1937), in MFQ 197: 510.

⁴⁶⁸ Wenxing 温兴, "Nanjing Xuecan Chuanxin Hande san fashi zhuan 南京學參傳心含德三禪師傳 [Three Biographies of Xuecan, Chuanxin, and Hande in Nanjing]," *Foxue banyuekan*, no. 267 (1942), in MFQB 66: 221.

done on the next day and notified the abbot of Jingju Temple. The abbot and his acolyte came and brought Gaoshi's remains back to the Jingju Temple, temporarily leaving them next to a pagoda. During the night, monks in the temple were surprised to see sparkling lights near the pagoda. The abbot decided to build a new pagoda for Gaoshi and commissioned two literati to compile a biography and epitaph for Gaoshi.⁴⁶⁹

There are two noteworthy points of interest here. One is that the inspiration for Gaoshi's action came from the precedent set by Changhui as communicated in a Buddhist periodical. The biographer does not specify how Gaoshi acquired Changhui's story, but there is no doubt that Di Chuqing's biography was pivotal in spreading the word. Another point is the miraculous element included in Gaoshi's biography, the implied self-combustion of his remains after being relocated. James Benn notes that in cases of Chinese monks' self-immolation, "as autocreators took on the role of the Medicine King, they also took on his body with all its miraculous powers."⁴⁷⁰ In addition, Gaoshi's biography also includes explicit reference to the *Lotus Sutra*. But the aforementioned self-immolation accounts of Changhui, Dizhen, Zhigang, and Xuecan, though also treating the Medicine King as exemplar, do not involve many supernatural elements. One commonality among these biographies is the disapproval of people surrounding these self-immolators. In spite of expressing admiration, none of their immediate acquaintances or close friends supported their ritual suicide.

In the *Buddha's Light Society Journal*, the chief editor Jiang Qian also composes a poem to answer a lay Buddhist's question about the self-cremation of a monk named Muzhen 慕真

⁴⁶⁹ Li Zhengjun, "Jiangxi Qingyuanshan Gaoshi chanshi fenshenji 江西青原山高视禅师焚身记 [The Account of Self-immolation of Master Gaoshi in Qingyuan Mountian, Jiangxi]," *Hongfa shekan*, no. 14 (1930), in MFQB 37: 191-192.

⁴⁷⁰ Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 58.

during the Southern Tang period (937–975). Though no letter was printed, a lay Buddhist Xiaopeng 筱鵬 is supposed to have written to Jiang Qian regarding the self-combustion of the monk Muzhen. A Chan master who lived in the Southern Tang region, Muzhen practiced meditation for forty years. In 1019 during the Northern Song dynasty (960–1279),⁴⁷¹ when visited by a few lay Buddhists, flames suddenly burst from Muzhen’s heart, consuming him entirely and leaving some *sarira*, or relics, behind.⁴⁷² From the title of Jiang Qian’s corresponding poem, it seems the question is that of whether ill will, one of the three poisons in Buddhism, could engender fire in the mind and burn the forest of meritorious karma; in other words, should one understand Muzhen’s self-combustion through the fire of *samadhi*?⁴⁷³ Jiang Qian’s response is that fire is one of the four basic elements in Buddhist cosmology comprising all material,⁴⁷⁴ and its function may be either benign or destructive. Due to his diligent spiritual cultivation, suggests Jiang Qian, Muzhen was able to induce the fire of *samadhi* to destroy his physical form and light up in the realm of infinity.⁴⁷⁵ Here Jiang Qian’s attitude toward this case of self-combustion dating back to the eleventh century is appreciative, treating the incident with awe and attributing its miraculous phenomenon to the monk’s profound cultivation.

⁴⁷¹ The Southern Tang regime was conquered by the Northern Song regime in 976 AD.

⁴⁷² See: *Gujin Tushu Jicheng Xuanji Juan 175* 古今圖書集成選輯 卷 175 [The Selections of Gujin Tushu Jicheng Volume 175], in *Dazangjing bubian* 大藏經補編 [Supplement to the Dazangjing], ed. 藍吉富 (Taipei: Huayu chubanshe, 1985), in Cbeta, B16, no. 88, p. 473b21-27.

⁴⁷³ The fire Samadhi is considered one of the thaumaturgies. See: *Fo Huang Shan Buddhist Electronic Texts* 佛光山電子大藏經, online resource: <http://etext.fgs.org.tw/search02.aspx>, access on August 23, 2018.

⁴⁷⁴ For a discussion on the Four Great Elements in the modern context, see: Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*, 66-67.

⁴⁷⁵ Jiang Qian, “Da Xiaopeng jushi wenyi chen shi xinzhong huo neng shao gongdelin heyi Nantang Muzhen chanshi lingshan zuohua shi yi sanmeihuo zifen qishen 答筱鵬居士問疑瞋是心中火能燒功德林何以南唐慕真禪師靈山坐化時以三昧火自焚其身 [Reply to Householder Xiaopeng on if Ill Will Could Engender Fire in the Mind and Burn the Forest of Meritorious Karma, then How to Understand Muzhen’s Self-combustion through the Fire of *Samadhi*],” *Foguanshe shekan*, no. 02 (1927), in MFQ 16: 263.

In general, Buddhist periodicals from both the reform and the conservative camps printed reports and comments on self-immolation. Due to the extremely ascetic nature and infrequency of self-immolations, both the biographers and editors of the journals treat these cases with admiration and respect. Though in some cases the self-cremation accounts published in the reform periodicals contain less supernatural elements and include direct comments against this kind of sacrifice, this does not constitute a major difference from cases published in periodicals from the conservative camp. Yet the willingness of authors who composed these accounts to publish in Buddhist periodicals suggests that the latter had become a crucial platform for the Buddhist community to memorialize sacred ritual suicides. It also indicates the resilience of the discourse on bodies in Chinese Buddhism from the Medieval to the modern era, as neither camp mounted any serious challenge toward the bodily mortification, at least openly.

Cases of self-immolation in modern Chinese Buddhism are extremely rare, and there are only two more accounts published on other Buddhist periodicals. In 1925, *Voice of Buddha* (Foyin 佛音), a journal edited by the Minnan Society of Buddhist New Youth 閩南佛化青年會 which was influenced by Zhang Zongzai, the organizer of the Society of Buddhist New Youth in Wuhan,⁴⁷⁶ printed a memorial article for master Juxing 具行, a disciple of the prominent Chan Master Xuyun 虛雲.⁴⁷⁷ Written by a lay Buddhist Zhang Chuoxian 張拙仙, the article provides a detailed biographical account of Juxing. However, the biography does not provide or imply a reason for Juxing's decision to commit ritual suicide. It only records that before his self-immolation, Juxing sold all his belongings for the purpose of preparing a vegetarian banquet for

⁴⁷⁶ See: Wang, "Zhang Zongzai, Ning Dayun, yu minguo shiqi de fohua xinqinnianhui," 340.

⁴⁷⁷ For research on Xuyun, see: Daniela Campo, "Chan Master Xuyun: The Embodiment of Ideal, the Transmission of a Model," in *Making Saints in Modern China*, eds. David Ownsby, Vincent Goossaert, and Ji Zhe (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 99-136.

monks and lay Buddhists. Then, after the completion of his *vinaya* training held in the temple, Juxing quietly went to the courtyard and committed auto-cremation. Two sections of the account involve certain supernatural elements. One is that people found Juxing's body remained in a seated posture while burning, without any movement. While all his cloth, shoes, and other personal artifacts were turned to ash, his hand bell 引磬 remained in pristine condition. When falling to the ground, the hand bell made a crisp sound, much louder than ever before. Another interesting aspect is that when Juxing committed self-immolation, both Xuyun and the monks who were wearing clothes woven by Juxing felt a sudden heat around bodies, suggesting the sympathetic resonance about Juxing's action.⁴⁷⁸ This story is collected in Xuyun's chronicle by the compiler, along with the memorial article written by Xuyun.⁴⁷⁹

The second case is the self-immolation by Master Kezhi 可智 in 1945, the memorial article for which was printed in *Bodhisattva* (Jueyouqing 覺有情) in 1947. Kezhi was a monk of the Baita Temple 白塔寺 in Linghai prefecture 臨海, Zhejiang province, which was a small temple dedicated to the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, or Guanyin 觀音 in Chinese. Dismayed by the catastrophe brought about by the Second Sino-Japanese War, the master always spoke of committing auto-cremation for the sake of the masses. And on the birthday of the bodhisattva, April 1st, 1945, Kezhi lit himself on fire with combustibles, paid homage to the Buddha's statue by circumambulation, and then left the Buddha's Hall to avoid desecration. At the time, there were troops stationed in the temple, and one soldier noticed the anomaly and swiftly poured water over

⁴⁷⁸ Zhang Chuoxian, "Juxing dashi xingye ji 具行大事行業記 [Record of the Passing Away of Master Juxing]," *Foyin*, v. 1, no. 10-12 (1925), in MFQ 145: 473-474.

⁴⁷⁹ Cen Xuelü 岑學呂 ed, *Xuyun fashi nianpu* 虛雲法師年譜 [The Chronicle of Master Xuyun] (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 1995), 59-61.

Kezhi. The master was dead, yet it was miraculous that except for his left knee, there were no burn scars on his body. People around the temple found it difficult to explain, and thus erected a shrine on the spot to memorialize Kezhi.⁴⁸⁰

These two accounts also involve elements of sympathetic resonance and supernatural phenomena, testifying to the enduring practice of imbuing the voluntary self-destruction of one's body with sanctity and the sublime. Considering all the self-immolation stories printed in Buddhist periodicals in Republican China, regardless of the journal's affiliation with different camps of Buddhists, they all include the narrative of the "gift-of-the-body subgenre" summarized by Reiko Ohnuma in her research of Indian Buddhist literature.⁴⁸¹ This genre was conceived in China with specific reference to the *Lotus Sutra*, and further developed into *Lotus Miracle Tales*.⁴⁸² Ohnuma defines the "gift-of-the-body" trope, claiming that "they must feature the bodhisattva as the hero; they must conceive of the act of bodily sacrifice as a gift; and they must emphasize the physical body as the item being given away."⁴⁸³ Benn's study finds that devotion to the *Lotus Sutra* cut across both the monastic and lay Buddhists, as auto-cremators in medieval China could be both monks and laymen.⁴⁸⁴ The self-immolation accounts in Republican China clearly carry on this tradition by emphasizing the generosity of the self-sacrificer and their wishes for the greater good of the world and the Dharma. Although the bodhisattvahood did not play much of a part in the narrative, sanctity derived from the action certainly is suggested. The major difference between the medieval and modern Chinese Buddhists' self-sacrifice stories is that all cases printed in

⁴⁸⁰ Jian Ming 劍鳴, "Linghai Kezhi dashi zifen zuiji 臨海可智大師自焚追記 [Memorial of the Self-immolation by Master Kezhi in Linghai]," *Jueyou qing*, no. 199-200 (1947), in MFQ 89: 301.

⁴⁸¹ Reiko Ohnuma, *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), chapter 1.

⁴⁸² Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 72.

⁴⁸³ Ohnuma, *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood*, 50.

⁴⁸⁴ Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 72-77.

Buddhist periodicals exclusively feature monastics, with no laymen involved. Although the veracity of these accounts remains far from certain, stories of self-immolation by monastics printed in Buddhist periodicals definitely facilitate the recovery of public representations of the monastic community. These narratives, disseminated within and without the Buddhist community, present auto-cremators as martyrs who chose death for the sake of the people and the world, a powerful rebuttal of the corruption charges levied against the monastics.

Moreover, both the reform and conservative camp periodicals printed stories of self-immolation, which suggests that both accepted the act as an inalienable part of the Buddhist tradition, though they take slightly different views on the matter. Stories printed in *Sound of Sea Tide* contain few supernatural or miraculous elements, and the journal also printed an open letter to dissuade monks from taking such action. The conservative camp, on the other hand, expressed approval and respect for the tradition, as shown by Jiang Qian's rationalization of auto-cremation by a monk in medieval China for his readers.

However, self-immolation is only one of the bodily sacrifice practices within Buddhism, and it is a particularly extreme and rare one. Incense burning of the body and blood writing are also forms meant to express piety and devotion to one's cause, and they are practiced more commonly in Chinese Buddhism. Hence, I shall next present stories and discussions of blood writing and incense burning of the body in periodicals from the reform and conservative camps.

7.2 Discussing Blood Writing and Bodily Mutilation

On July 17, 1933, two monks from Gaoming Temple 高旻寺 intruded into the Right Faith Society in Wuhan and wished to cut off their hands as an offering to the Buddha after failing to

elicit enough donations for their temple. Members of the society tried to dissuade them from performing self-infliction, yet could not stop the two monks. While the society called for the police, the two monks entered the Skanda Hall and carried out the act. The whole situation was bloody and macabre for the Right Faith society; thus, an editor of the *Right Faith* journal, Huici 慧慈, printed an editorial condemning the backwardness of such acts, in which he comments that although the self-mutilating practice is “admirable in spirit, it is totally foolish.”⁴⁸⁵ In a subsequent comment, another editor Huicheng echoes Taixu’s call for monks to be the forerunners of the new age and criticizes the two monks, lamenting that they “live in the twentieth century with minds still in the sixteenth century.”⁴⁸⁶ Furthermore, another monk initiated a gathering in the lay Buddhist forest 居士林 to copy the *Flower Garland Sutra* (Avatamsaka Sutra, 華嚴經) with individuals’ blood, and the editor of the *Right Faith* also reprimanded this gathering along with the incident of hand-cutting. The journal reprinted a letter from Yinguang to Hongyi discussing the blood writing to admonish the backwardness of the practice.⁴⁸⁷ Although Yinguang’s letter was not a criticism of blood writing in total, but rather toward some of the specific forms of blood writing, the editor certainly meant to use it as a criticism of the monk’s initiative at hand.

Therefore, editors of the *Right Faith* reject the two types of bodily mutilation practices prevalent in Chinese Buddhist asceticism, and raise questions about the acceptance of these forms of asceticism in the modern context. Similar to self-immolation, blood writing, bodily incense

⁴⁸⁵ Huici, “Wei Gaoming Si heshang huayuan bude zai benhui duanshou shi gaozheng zhengxin huiyuan 為高旻寺和尚化緣不得在本會斷手事告正信會員 [To Members of the Right Faith Society for Monks of Gaoming Temple Cutting off Their Hands after Failing to Solicit Donation],” *Zhengxin*, no. 13 (1933), in MFQB 43: 248-249.

⁴⁸⁶ Huisi, “Shishi jiaowo shuo liangjuhua 事實叫我說兩句話 [My Comment for the Incident],” *Zhengxin*, no. 13 (1933), in MFQB 43: 249.

⁴⁸⁷ “Wei cixue xiejing fu Hongyi Lüshi shu 為刺血寫經覆弘一律師書 [Reply to Master Hongyin about Writing Sutra with Blood],” *Zhengxin*, no. 13 (1933), in MFQB 43: 249-251.

burning, and other forms of self-mutilation were parts of a larger tradition of asceticism in Chinese Buddhism. Blood writing, as John Kieschnick's research finds, is "a mixture of foreign and indigenous beliefs and traditions."⁴⁸⁸ Before Buddhism arrived, blood writing had been practiced to emphatically express emotions like sincerity, loyal, and determination. For example, in the *Book of the Later Han* 后汉书, an official named Yang Xuan 楊璇 (around 180 AD) wrote a blood letter on his clothes to protest the wrongful treatment by his superior after he won a battle, an act which successfully defended his reputation.⁴⁸⁹

It was widely practiced by both monastics and lay Buddhists across East Asia, and their motivations include the acquirement of merit—as copying a sutra with one's own blood certainly demonstrates deep sincerity—and the belief that asceticism would improve one's chance of rebirth in the Pure Land while purifying the body.⁴⁹⁰

In the late Ming period, prominent monks such as Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546–1623) and Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599–1655) practiced blood writing. Deqing believed that copying sutras with his own blood would generate merit and defend Buddhism from the moral degeneration of the time.⁴⁹¹ For Zhixu, blood writing conveys several meanings, including the repudiation of Chan Buddhism which was a heterodox teaching in Zhixu's perspective, the repayment of one's "birth debt" for the purpose of filial piety as he conducted bloody writing for his mother, and the

⁴⁸⁸ John Kieschnick, "Blood Writing in Chinese Buddhism," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 23, no. 2 (2000): 177.

⁴⁸⁹ Fan Ye 范晔, "Zheng Fa Teng Du Feng Yang liezhuan 張法滕馮度楊列傳 [List Biographies of Zhang, Fa, Teng, Du, Feng, and Yang]," in *Hou han shu* 后汉书 [the Book of the Later Han], online source: <https://ctext.org/hou-han-shu/zhang-fa-teng-feng-du-yang/zh>.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 181, 186-190. For case study of blood writing in Japanese Buddhism, see: Patricia Fister, "Creating Devotional Art with Body Fragments: The Buddhist Nun Bunchi and Her Father, Emperor Gomizuno-o," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3/4: 213-238.

⁴⁹¹ Jimmy Yu, *Sanctity and Self-Inflicted Violence in Chinese Religions, 1500-1700* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 47-50.

strengthening of the *vinaya*.⁴⁹² Furthermore, blood writing in Chinese history went beyond the confines of Buddhism, and Confucian literati also engaged in this practice for political purposes as well, since the practice of making a blood covenant was not uncommon in China prior to the initial spread of Buddhism.⁴⁹³

Scriptural sources supporting blood writing in Buddhism can be found in the *Brahma's Net Sutra*, the *Flower Garland Sutra*, the *Lotus Sutra*, and the Perfection of Wisdom literatures including the *Diamond Sutra*.⁴⁹⁴ Many of these scriptures are more than doctrinal sources, and are also major texts to be copied with blood by Chinese Buddhists. Yet as the incident with the *Right Faith* society above suggests, modern Chinese Buddhists expressed ambivalent views over blood writing, as well as other forms of bodily mutilation. Thus, it is necessary to examine how Buddhist periodicals of the reform and conservative camps present cases involving blood writing as well as bodily incense burning, which monastics often associated with blood writing.

Holmes Welch observes that the practice of blood writing was “fairly common in Republican China,”⁴⁹⁵ yet he does not delve further, nor does he mention any coverage of the practice by the Buddhist press. In fact, the *Journal of the Awakening Society*, the predecessor of *Sound of Sea Tide*, printed a poem by one Yu Jue 余覺 in 1919 praising the copying of the *Flower Garland Sutra* by the master Shanji 善繼 in the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368), but the poem only expresses the author’s admiration of blood writing and emphasized on the delusional nature of the

⁴⁹² Beverly F. McGuire, *Living Karma: The Religious Practices of Ouyi Zhixu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 103-112; also see: Yu, *Sanctity and Self-Inflicted Violence in Chinese Religions, 1500-1700*, 50-55.

⁴⁹³ Yu, *Sanctity and Self-Inflicted Violence in Chinese Religions, 1500-1700*, 57-60; Kieschnick, “Blood Writing in Chinese Buddhism,” 191-193. Also, see: Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 43-46.

⁴⁹⁴ Yu, *Sanctity and Self-Inflicted Violence in Chinese Religions, 1500-1700*, 41.

⁴⁹⁵ Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 323.

body without further reflection on the modern context.⁴⁹⁶ Interestingly, ten years later, *Sound of Sea Tide* printed another epilogue composed by Wu Yingpei 吳蔭培, a literatus, who toured the place where Shanji's blood writing work was preserved.⁴⁹⁷ Wu's text appreciates Shanji's work as a cultural artifact rather than its specific Buddhist connotation.

In *Sound of Sea Tide*, there are more than ten articles regarding the practice, and most of them are prefaces or epilogues for a blood writing work. In its ninth issue, there appear two epilogues for a blood writing copy of the *Lotus Sutra* made by a monk Hongmo 宏模. The first preface is by Dahe 大壑, who was actually Renshan, a kindred spirit with Taixu who supported monastic reform, as the signature at the end suggests. Renshan's text first appreciates the *Lotus Sutra* as an invaluable treasure for Buddhism, and then praises Hongmo's blood writing of the sutra as an achievement, as according to the *Lotus Sutra*, the Dharma master who produces texts is the most meritorious.⁴⁹⁸ The second epilogue is written by one Guangong 貫公, whose first sentence remarks: "When devout Buddhists make grand wishes and conduct marvelous acts like finger burning, seclusion, and copying scriptures with blood, the ignorant would call them superstitious." However, Guangong argues that when the truth is covered by delusion, only Buddhism is capable of recovering the true nature from defilement. Thus, Hongmo's blood writing is meant to save the masses from morally misguided degeneration.⁴⁹⁹ The author's attempt to fend off the accusations of superstition and backwardness concerning blood writing are noteworthy,

⁴⁹⁶ Yu Jue, "Yu Jue song yuanseng Shanji shangren xuexie huayan jing bashi yi juan 余覺頌元僧善繼血寫華嚴經八十一卷," *Jueshe congshu*, no. 05 (1919), in MFQB 01: 294-296.

⁴⁹⁷ Wu Yingpei, "Xueshu huayan jing ba 血書華嚴經跋 [Epilogue for the Blood Writing of the *Flower Garland Sutra*]," *Haichao yin*, no. 03 (1929), in MFQ 172: 324-325.

⁴⁹⁸ Dahe, "Ba Hongmo heshi xueshu miaofa lianhua jing 跋宏模和尚血書妙法蓮華經 [Epilogue for Hongmo's Blood Writing of the Lotus Sutra]," *Haichao yin*, no. 09 (1922), in MFQ 151: 450-451.

⁴⁹⁹ Guangong, "Ba Hongmo heshang xueshu fahua jing 跋宏模和尚血書法華經 [Epilogue for Hongmo's Blood Writing of the Lotus Sutra]," *Haichao yin*, no. 09 (1922), in MFQ 151: 451.

and his argument also reflects the external pressures and controversy from the secular world on this practice.

Then in 1923, *Sound of Sea Tide* printed another epilogue written by Xianyin 顯蔭 for the blood copying of the *Diamond Sutra* performed by Dihui 諦慧. Xianyin was a disciple and close acolyte of Dixian,⁵⁰⁰ and in the text he refers to Dihui as his classmate, suggesting Dihui was also a student in the Guanzong Studies Society. The entire text is conventional in terms of its stylistic commendation of the author and the sutra itself. Overall, Xianyin interprets Dihui's blood writing as a devotional act for the Dharma.⁵⁰¹

But besides the reason of pure devotion, Buddhists also practiced blood writing out of filial piety. The journal printed two articles in 1923 about a lay Buddhist Xia Qixuan 夏琦璿, who copied Buddhist sutras and drew paintings of the Buddha with the blood of her sister and herself. The first one is a prayer text written by Xia, while the second is an explanatory article by Xia's friend who marvels at the act and recounts the reason behind it.⁵⁰² The exact sutra they copied is not specified, yet the reason for blood writing is clearly stated to be a response to their father's deteriorating health. Therefore, the purpose of the act is purely filial piety, as Xia resorts to the power of Buddhism to assist her father's recovery. It should be noted that it is rather common to observe an element of filial piety in blood writing activities, even for monastics, since Buddhism

⁵⁰⁰ Fang Zuyou, *Tiantaizong Guanzongjiangsi sizhi*, 90-93.

⁵⁰¹ Xianyin, "Xueshu jinggang bore boluomi jing ba 血書金剛般若波羅密經跋 [Epilogue for Blood Copying of the Diamond Sutra]," *Haichao yin*, no. 09 (1923), in MFQ 154: 327.

⁵⁰² Xia Qixuan, "Fo chengdao ri fayuanwen cixueshu 佛成道日發願文刺血書 [Prayer for Blood Writing on the Enlightenment Day of the Buddha]," and Huyang Peiling 胡湯佩琳, "Zhongying laobo danchen qinv wuyou Derong Detong cixue shujing huixiang wei shou yin sui xi yan 仲膺老伯誕辰其女吾友德融德通刺血書經繪像為壽因隨喜焉 [Praising Derong Detong, Daughters of Zhongying, Writing Sutra and Making Painting with Their Blood on Zhongying's Birthday]," *Haichao yin*, no. 4 (1923), in MFQ 156: 115.

in China had long embraced the Confucian ethic of repaying the kindness that parents show to their children.⁵⁰³

One year later, a monk named Daoshen 道申 wrote a votive text for copying the *Lotus Sutra* with his own blood and published it in *Sound of Sea Tide*. Daoshen explains his reason for blood writing: “I thought, since taking convenience of the non-beginning [無始] and reincarnating through the six realms, I was fortunate to be born in China and join the sangha. It was for the blessing of the Dharma. Thus, I vowed to copy the sutra with blood from my tongue.” Then, Daoshen makes four vows upon the completion of the blood writing which took three years to complete. The first is his hope that his action would counteract all the negative karma accumulated in his previous lives; the second is for his parents and teachers, that they would enjoy longevity and be reborn in the Pure Land; the third is for the masses to be enlightened by Buddhism and liberated from *samsara*; the last is that Daoshen wishes for himself to be able to attain rebirth in the Pure Land.⁵⁰⁴ It is clear that for Daoshen, the motivation and purpose for conducting this ascetic practice are to acquire merit for himself, his close relatives and teachers, and the masses. Though not heavily emphasized, filial piety is included within his grand wishes. There is one additional report of blood writing which appears in *Sound of Sea Tide* in the 1940s, but it only provides limited information about a monk named Xiangrui 祥瑞 who copied sutra and painted with his blood.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰³ Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), chapter 4.

⁵⁰⁴ Shi Daoshen 释道申, “Ci shexue xie miaofa lianhua jing fayuanwen 刺舌血寫妙法蓮華經發願文 [The Votive for Extracting Tongue Blood to Copy the Lotus Sutra],” *Haichao yin*, no. 07 (1924), in MFQ 159: 391.

⁵⁰⁵ “Yiyue fojiao 一月佛教 [Buddhism in January],” *Haichao yin*, no. 10 (1943), in MFQ 201: 324.

Therefore, *Sound of Sea Tide* as a periodical managed by the reform-minded Buddhists does not shy away from printing texts concerning the practice of blood writing. In fact, Taixu himself also practiced blood writing, yet in a wholly different context. In 1933, the journal *Modern Buddhism*, the successor of the aggressive *Modern Sangha*, reprinted news from *Reuters's* Shanghai station that Taixu wrote a petition to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission 蒙藏委員會 for a swift solution to the borderland dispute in the Kham area between the Sichuan warlord and the Tibetan regime in Lhasa.⁵⁰⁶ The noteworthy part is the information that Taixu cut his finger and wrote the petition with his blood.⁵⁰⁷ Hence, the blood writing Taixu practiced was devoid of the traditional merit-seeking purpose, since no sutra was copied, and the blood petition was more in line with the instrumentality of blood to demonstrate loyalty, sincerity, determination, and in this case, urgency, as in the Chinese political tradition.⁵⁰⁸ In addition, Zhifeng, a disciple of Taixu, expresses his admiration toward the blood writing of the *Lotus Sutra* by a monk Puqin 普欽, who was also a student in the Minnan Buddhist Seminary, by composing an epilogue and publishing it in *Sichuan Buddhism Monthly* (Sichuan fojiao yuekan 四川佛教月刊). In Zhifeng's text, he mentions that Puqin, after visiting a site where the Buddha's *sarira* was displayed, committed to copying the sutra with his tongue blood, and upon completion, Puqin also burned his finger for the Buddha's *sarira* and the *Lotus Sutra*. Zhifeng, while conveying his appreciation for Puqin's act, also expresses remorse for his own lack of dedicated practice and mere concentration

⁵⁰⁶ For details about the Sino-Tibetan Conflict in Kham, see: Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 221-224.

⁵⁰⁷ "Fojiao yaowen 佛教要聞 [Important News of Buddhism]," *Xiandai fojiao*, no. 08-10 (1933), in MFQ 68: 555.

⁵⁰⁸ Yu, *Sanctity and Self-Inflicted Violence in Chinese Religions, 1500-1700*, 60-61.

on uttering empty words.⁵⁰⁹ Thus, at least for Taixu and many of his disciples, blood writing is not a tradition they oppose.

Buddhist periodicals in the conservative camps also printed texts regarding blood writing, but there are fewer cases recorded compared to *Sound of Sea Tide* and other periodicals in the reform camp. In the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*, I have found only one article in 1935 on the blood writing practice. It is an epilogue written by one Zhongjing 鐘鏡 for the copying of the *Diamond Sutra* in blood by a monk named Chengxin 誠信. Chengxin was a disciple of Master Baojing, the successor of Dixian for the abbotship in the Guanzong Temple and the chief editor of its periodical. Filial piety was the main reason for Chengxin's decision to conduct blood writing, yet the case is peculiar because Chengxin's father also left the family to join the sangha; hence, Chengxin copied the sutra with his blood and sent it to his father in Sichuan province. Chengxin wished that the merit accumulated from blood writing would benefit his father's practice of Buddhism.⁵¹⁰

In the *Spreading the Teaching Monthly*, there appear in 1947 three texts acclaiming the blood writing of the *Flower Garland Sutra* by a lay Buddhist Fu Jinqiu 傅近秋. Fu was a devout lay Buddhist, medical doctor, and follower of Yinguang.⁵¹¹ He copied the entire *Flower Garland Sutra* with his blood in 1944, as one of the epilogues suggested.⁵¹² Three monks provided texts

⁵⁰⁹ Zhifeng, "Ba Puqin xueshu fahua jing hou 跋普欽血書法華經後 [Epilogue for Puqin's Blood Writing of the Lotus Sutra]," *Sichuan fojiao yuekan*, no. 10 (1933), in MFQ 58: 73.

⁵¹⁰ Zhongjing, "Cixue shu jinggang bore jing ba 刺血書金剛般若經跋 [Epilogue for Blood Writing of the Diamond Sutra]," *Hongfa shekan*, no. 27 (1935), in MFQ 24: 311.

⁵¹¹ Yingche 映徹, "Jinian Fu Jinqiu jushi song 紀念傅近秋居士頌 [The Ode for the Memorial of the Lay Buddhist Fu Jinqiu]," *Foxue banyuekan*, no. 262 (1942), in MFQB 66: 177.

⁵¹² Shoupei 守陪, "Xueshu da fangguangfo huayanjing ba 血書大方廣佛華嚴經跋 [Epilogue to the Blood Writing of the Flower Garland Sutra]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 70 (1947), in MFQB 70: 138.

treating Fu's endeavor: Cizhou 慈舟 (1877–1958), Yuanying, and Shoupei 守陪 (1884–1955). Yuanying was a well-respected figure among the Buddhist establishment whose acquaintances included Taixu and some reform-minded monks. Both Cizhou and Shoupei were old-fashion scholarly monks, as the former dedicated himself to studying the *Flower Garland Sutra* and the *vinaya*,⁵¹³ while the latter ventured into the study of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana Buddhism* and Yogācāra philosophy.⁵¹⁴ All three praise Fu's effort, and Shoupei in particular expresses admiration for both Fu's devotion and his calligraphy, which was strong in stroke and clear in shape.⁵¹⁵ Yuanying also connects Fu's blood writing with the Dharma gathering 法會 he organized, at which Yuanying distributed thousands of copies of the *Flower Garland Sutra*. Yuanying believed that besides social philanthropy by directly providing materials to the needed, the distribution of the sutra would fundamentally save the masses, and Fu's blood writing certainly contributed to the accumulation of merit for this cause.

In general, texts on blood writing from the conservative camp's periodicals seem to be more limited in volume as well as in scope. Yet we cannot conclude that the conservative camp uniquely refrained from this practice. Rather, given that few of them could match the reputation and circulation of *Sound of Sea Tide*, there is no doubt that authors of this kind of texts would wish to propagate the act in a more prominent and widely accessible platform. Furthermore, besides the seven Buddhist periodicals of primary research here, texts and reports on blood writing activities

⁵¹³ Yu Lingbo 于凌波, *Zhongguo Jinxindai fojiao renwuzhi* 中国近现代佛教人物志 [Biographies of Buddhist Figures in Modern China] (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 1995), 63-65.

⁵¹⁴ Yinshun, "Daonian Shoupei shangren 悼念守培上人 [Memorial for Master Shoupei]," CBETA, Y23, no. 23, p. 349a1, online resource: http://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/Y0023_001. Access on September 1, 2018.

⁵¹⁵ Yuanying, "Xueshu huayanjing song bing xu 血書華嚴經頌並序 [Ode and Preface to the Blood Copying of the *Flower Garland Sutra*]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 70 (1947), in MFQB 70: 138; Cizhou, "Da fangguangfo huayanjing ba 大方廣佛華嚴經跋 [Epilogue to the *Flower Garland Sutra*]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 70 (1947), in MFQB 70: 137-138.

by both monastics and householders also appear in journals such as the *Bodhisattva*, the *Journal of the World Buddhist Association*, and the *Buddhist Semimonthly*.

Yet, based upon the frequent appearance of articles on blood writing and other acts of bodily mutilation in Buddhist periodicals, it cannot be simply asserted that bodily asceticism was accepted and espoused by the Buddhist community, including both the reform and conservative camps. Dissenting voices have long existed since the medieval period. Yijing 義淨 (635–713), the Buddhist translator who made a pilgrimage to India and a *vinaya* master, criticizes self-immolation by Chinese monks and contends that abandoning one's body is a waste of opportunity since humanity has a better chance to attain Enlightenment.⁵¹⁶ Kieschnick also notes that a monk named Jiaoran 皎然 in the Tang dynasty makes the argument that “writing a holy scripture in one's blood is wrong because the body is a vile, unclean thing.”⁵¹⁷ In Republican China, Opinions partially or totally disavowing bodily mutilation practices also existed in Republican China.

Interestingly, Yinguang was one of the prominent monks to express an ambivalent opinion toward blood writing and incense burning of the body. In 1921, one of his correspondences with Ding Fubao 丁福保 (1874–1952) in regard to the bodily incense burning was published in *Buddhist Studies Monthly* (Foxue yuekan 佛學月刊).⁵¹⁸ In the letter, Yinguang cites Ouyi Zhixu's act of burning incense on his arms to argue that the practice belonged to *dana*, the act of cultivating

⁵¹⁶ Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 115-116.

⁵¹⁷ Kieschnick, “Blood Writing in Chinese Buddhism,” 190.

⁵¹⁸ Ding was an influential lay Buddhist in Republican China, he was also the founder of Shanghai Medical Books 上海医学书局. For researches on Ding, see: Gregory Adam Scott, “Navigating the Sea of Scriptures: The Buddhist Studies Collectanea, 1918–1923,” in *Religious Publishing and Print Culture in Modern China: 1800–2012*, Philip Clart and Gregory Adam Scott eds. (Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2015), chapter three; Bridie Andrews, *The Making of Modern Chinese Medicine, 1850-1960* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014), 122-133.

generosity by severing the attachment to one's body. However, Yinguang further comments: "If one only admires the appearances of the act and aims to acquire prestige by following the example [of bodily incense burning], then it is an ascetic practice in vain, even if one burns his entire body."⁵¹⁹ Thus, Yinguang sets the criterion of assessing ascetic practices by motivation, and if one commits such an act only to create a spectacle instead of out of the profound understanding of Buddhist teachings, then the practice yields no merit or efficacy.

Then, in a letter to Hongyi regarding blood writing, Yinguang also tries to dissuade Hongyi from performing the act. First, Yinguang exhorts that blood writing is not suitable for new learners of Buddhism, as it would weaken the practitioner's spirit and slow their cultivation. Then, Yinguang reiterates the principle of blood writing, which should be sincerity and respect toward the Dharma and sutra, echoing his response to Ding. In the end, Yinguang criticizes some of the recent practitioners of blood writing, directly stating that they "produced negative karma," because some drew too much blood in the beginning without properly blending it with gold or other metal chippings for better preservation, resulting in the strong smell of the blood writing work. In addition, Yinguang also laments that some of them copied the sutra as if they were practicing calligraphy and rendered the text illegible.⁵²⁰ The model recommended by Yinguang is that of the blood writing by Hanshan Deqing, Master Miaofeng 妙峰 (1539–1612), and Ouyi Zhixu, who were known for their profound learning of the Buddhist Dharma. Moreover, both Deqing and Miaofeng received support from the royal family when engaging in copying sutras with their blood, thus enabling their blood text to be preserved longer. Zhixu, according to Yinguang, would

⁵¹⁹ Yinguang, "Fu Ding Fubao jushi lun bixiang shu 覆丁福保居士論臂香書 [Reply to Ding Fubao Regarding Burning Incense on Arms]," *Foxue yuekan*, no. 01 (1921), in MFQ 19: 142-143.

⁵²⁰ Yinguang, "Wei cixue xiejing fu Hongyi Lüshi shu," 249-251.

bow three times, circumambulate the Buddha's statue three times, and recite the Buddha's name twelve times before writing one character with his blood.⁵²¹ Therefore, Yinguang sets the criterion for proper blood writing and bodily mutilation rather high, implicitly dissuading people in the modern period to follow.

If Yinguang's opposition to bodily mutilation is implicit, then the author Changbiao's 長颯 1937 article explicitly calls for cessation of the practice. In "Liberated from Incense Burning," which was printed in the *Light of the Human World* (Renhai deng, 人海燈), the author casts doubt on the incense burning, might it be by head, by chest, by finger, or the whole body, calling it an act of cruelty and a "self-injured trick 苦肉計." Changbiao dismisses the appreciation of bodily burning for the Buddha because he opines that the compassionate Buddha would not accept such a ghastly offering. Even if there is textual support from different sutras, Changbiao argues that bodhisattvas who performed self-immolation were advanced in their cultivation so that they were able to conduct the act with ease and without pain. Then, Changbiao cites an example of a Buddhist nun, Dican 諦參, in Ningbo, who had burned her head, chest, and fingers for the Buddha which resulted in the spread of her reputation. The asceticism of Dican led to the proselytization of many lay Buddhists under her guidance, and some monastics in nearby regions also wished to take advantage of her reputation by joining her lineage. Then Dican asked these monastics to practice bodily mutilation. Changbiao recounts that one of the monastics, after burning their head and chest, could endure the pain of burning off their fingers and was disavowed by Dican. From this case, Changbiao laments the rampancy of belief in bodily asceticism in Chinese Buddhism, and calls for the ending of incense burning practice.

⁵²¹ Ibid., 250.

Changbiao also quotes Yijing's argument against self-immolation and the writings of a monk Wanshi 禪石, who studied in Sri Lanka and found no textual support for the burning of incense scars into the head in the Pali Buddhist canon, to argue for the illegitimacy of incense burning practiced by Chinese Buddhists. In the end, Changbiao contends that Buddhism encourages the free development of individuals. Although the discipline also exists, it should follow rational rules rather than a barbaric form of asceticism. In general, Changbiao deems severe bodily mutilation unsuitable for modern times.⁵²² Moreover, it should be noted that the *Sea Light of Human World* was founded by Jicheng 寄塵 and Tongyi 通一, and later managed by Zhifeng, all of whom were reform-minded monks and close associates of Taixu.⁵²³ Thus, there are voices from both the reform and conservative camps which oppose the practice of bodily mutilation in periodicals.

In general, the voices opposing bodily asceticism were weaker than those expressing admiration in the Buddhist press. There may be several reasons leading to this general acquiescence. First, asceticism has constituted an inalienable part of the Chinese Buddhist tradition, particularly in hagiographical narratives. As Kieschnick, Benn, McGuire, and many other scholars show, ascetic practice became an ingrained custom for Buddhists in China to express their devotion, determination, filial piety, and other votive declarations, and different forms of bodily asceticism, varying in degree of intensity, constituted a repertoire from which the practitioners could choose. Though the conception of the body and health underwent drastic

⁵²² Changbiao, "Cong ranxiang zhong jiefang chulai 從燃香中解放出來 [Liberated from Incense Burning]," *Renhai deng*, no. 07 (1937), in MFQ 70: 497-498.

⁵²³ Huang Xianian, "Renhai deng chongyin qianyan 人海燈重印前言 [Preface for the Reprint of *Sea Light of Human World*]," *Fojiao tushuguan guankan* 佛教圖書館館刊, no. 52 (2011), online resource: <http://www.gaya.org.tw/journal/m52/52-book2.pdf>, accessed on September 3, 2018.

changes in modern China,⁵²⁴ its repercussions did not reach the less perceptible area of bodily ascetic tradition in Buddhism, at least not in the early twentieth century.

The second reason may be the infrequency of severe self-mutilation practiced in Republican China. As cases of auto-cremation show, ritual suicides committed by Buddhists, primarily monastics, were rare. The relatively less extreme forms of bodily mutilation, such as chopping off one's hand or incense burning parts of the body, were practiced by some but received little recognition within the Buddhist community. The news coverage by the secular press on incidents of monks committing self-mutilation generally do not treat them as part of the established Buddhist community, but rather as mendicant monks who were disdained by institutional Buddhism as well. Blood writing was the most frequent form of bodily asceticism in Republican China, yet its meaning transcended Buddhism and became a popular practice to emphasize one's determination and dedication, as many revolutionaries and social activists in the late Qing and Republican eras resorted to blood writing.⁵²⁵ Hence, blood writing by Buddhists was not repulsive for the secular masses and Buddhist periodicals did not shy away from reporting it.

The third reason relates to the perceived decline of monastic Buddhism in general. Bodily asceticism, regardless of motivation, tended to morally sanctify the practitioner, demonstrating their resolution to abandon material and physical enjoyment for spiritual pursuits. Their bodily mutilation practices defied and counteracted the corruption charge of Buddhist monastics, so that the majority of reports in Buddhist periodicals concentrate on the religious and moral pursuit of the practitioner. Although some reports from the reform camp's periodicals may demonstrate

⁵²⁴ See Liping Bu, *Public Health and the Modernization of China, 1865–2015* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

⁵²⁵ For example, a Chinese student in Paris broke his finger and wrote the blood slogan protesting the Versailles Treaty in 1919. See: "Japan's War in China," *The Chinese Students' Monthly*, Volume 23, Issue 8 (1928): 7.

concern for the accusation of backwardness and superstition, they generally take bodily asceticism as an accepted tradition.

The discourse of the body in Buddhism includes much more than asceticism, and the majority of Buddhists, be they householders or clerics, do not practice bodily asceticism. However, another practice that is crucial and distinctive to Chinese Buddhism, or East Asian Buddhism as a whole, is vegetarianism. The dietetic practice was not part of the Indian Buddhism tradition, yet it became one of the most discernable practices of Chinese Buddhists. How is vegetarianism understood by Buddhists in a modern Chinese context? Did the perception of vegetarianism undergo any significant changes? The next chapter explores the representation of vegetarianism in Buddhist periodicals in Republican China.

8.0 Vegetarianism with Renewed Meaning for Modern Chinese Buddhism

The monastic vegetarian diet is one of the most visible characteristics of the Sinification and indigenization of Buddhism in China. This dietary regulation was not mandatory during the Sakyamuni Buddha’s lifetime around the fifth century BCE, and forms of “pure meat” or “blameless meat” are permitted for consumption by the sangha, as the Buddha’s main concern was the act of killing, not of consumption.⁵²⁶ After Buddhism entered China, there was confusion over the Buddha’s teaching about meat-eating due to the translation of different *vinaya* texts. As three Mahayana scriptures—the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, and the *Brahma’s Net Sūtra*—became widely read by the end of fifth century AD, Chinese Buddhists were provided with ample scriptural support in favor of vegetarianism.⁵²⁷

Besides scripture, the promotion of vegetarianism for Chinese Buddhists, particular monastic clerics, was furthered by Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty (梁武帝, 464–549), who, as a devout lay Buddhist, deemed it was inappropriate for clergy to consume meat regardless of its source.⁵²⁸ Although Emperor Wu might not have been the sole deciding factor, his article “On the Abstinence from Alcohol and Meat 斷酒肉文”⁵²⁹ is frequently cited as a pivotal source for the institutionalization of vegetarianism in Chinese Buddhism. As Kieschnick’s study shows, “while,

⁵²⁶ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 157-165.

⁵²⁷ John Kieschnick, “Buddhist Vegetarianism in China,” in *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China*, ed. Roel Sterckx (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 187-191.

⁵²⁸ Tang Yongtong 汤用彤, *Han wei liangjin nanbeichao fojiao shi* 汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史 [History of Buddhism in Han Wei Liangjin Nanbei Dynasties] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2011), 265.

⁵²⁹ See: CBETA, T52, no. 2103, p. 294b16.

in the sixth century, for a monk to renounce meat was considered a sign of eminence, by the tenth it was considered a minimum requirement of any monk or nun.”⁵³⁰

Vegetarianism was also promoted by the medieval Chinese state. The first emperor of the Tang Dynasty, Li Yuan 李淵 (566–635), issued an edict in 619 which banned butchering and execution in three different months within a year under the influence of Buddhism, and the proscription was carried out for over two hundred years.⁵³¹ The edict resulted in the close association between Buddhism and vegetarianism. Many lay Buddhists in China also voluntarily engaged in vegetarianism, making the practice an integral part of their Buddhist practice.⁵³² Generally speaking, motivation for vegetarianism mainly arises from the concept of karmic retribution, according to which Chinese Buddhists perceive meat-eating as tantamount to the act of killing. Moreover, the vegetarian diet is also considered to be beneficial for personal cultivation, as meat is thought to disturb one’s mind.⁵³³

However, vegetarianism, though strongly related to Buddhism, is not practiced exclusively by Chinese Buddhism. As Barend ter Haar’s study illustrates, the integration between the vegetarian diet and popular cults is apparent in the Chinese local community since the Song dynasty. Popular cults, such as those of the White Lotus movement, absorbed vegetarian practice from Buddhism, yet refused to acknowledge the authority of the monastic community. They instead relied on their own interpretation of the practice, hence presenting a challenge to the established socio-religious system. Therefore, ter Haar contends that “vegetarian practice was now

⁵³⁰ Kieschnick, “Buddhist Vegetarianism in China,” 201.

⁵³¹ Liu Shufen, *Zhonggu de fojiao yu shehui* 中古的佛教与社会 [Buddhism and Society in Medieval China] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), 75-112.

⁵³² Kieschnick, “Buddhist Vegetarianism in China,” 203-205.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 202, 208.

stigmatized as potentially dangerous.”⁵³⁴ In the Qing dynasty, officials remained vigilant about the practice of vegetarianism, and those in charge of suppressing “heretic cults” emphasized the vegetarian diet of the religious rebellious group, though distinctions were also drawn.⁵³⁵ In addition, vegetarian feasts were also deemed to be corrupting by eminent monks like Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲祿宏 (1535–1615), who refused to hold the vegetarian feast on the grounds of distraction for religious cultivation and endangering the life of small creatures.⁵³⁶ Thus, vegetarianism for Buddhism before the modern era was a delicate issue that, though largely originating and associated with Buddhism, was not a tradition monopolized by Buddhism and was potentially stigmatized by other millennial cults and redemptive societies. Yet Buddhists cannot afford to abandon the practice, and it remains a crucial part of Chinese Buddhists’ religious cultivation.

8.1 Social Perception of Vegetarianism in Early Twentieth-Century China

The modern conception of vegetarianism made its way to China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with prominent social elites such as Wu Tingfang 伍廷芳 (1842–1922), Li Shizeng 李石曾 (1881–1973), and political elite like Sun Yat-sen advocating vegetarianism. During a long career in Chinese politics before and after the 1911 Revolution, Wu was a diplomat

⁵³⁴ Barend ter Haar, “Buddhist-inspired Options: Aspects of lay religious life in the lower Yangzi from 1100 until 1340,” *T’oung Pao*, 87 (2001): 137.

⁵³⁵ Junqing Wu, *Mandarins and Heretics: The Construction of “Heresy” in Chinese State Discourse* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016), 124-127.

⁵³⁶ Chun-fang Yu, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 208.

who had been stationed in countries including the US, Mexico, Peru, and Spain. Witnessing the material abundance in the US, Wu observes the potential pitfalls of rapid industrialization and accumulation of wealth. Under the influence of J. H. Kellogg (1852–1945) and other social purity reformers, he “became an advocate of vegetarianism and other modern ‘hygienic’ practices as a way of cultivating superior morality in individuals, and ultimately, in nations.”⁵³⁷ In 1910, Wu and Li Shizeng organized the Rational Diet Society (慎食衛生會) to promote abstinence from meat, alcohol, and smoking.⁵³⁸

Li was also a new convert to vegetarianism. During his sojourn in France in the 1910s, he opened a soybean processing plant near Paris in 1908 to promote the consumption of bean curd as a substitute for meat.⁵³⁹ He also wrote “On Meat Consumption 肉食論” to argue that the meat-eating lifestyle belongs to barbaric civilization while vegetarianism distinguishes the modern civilized society.⁵⁴⁰ Clearly, Li was also under the influence of the renewed vegetarian movement originating in European urban centers, which began to emphasize animal welfare and present scientific support for replacing meat with plant-based proteins.⁵⁴¹ Sun Yat-sen also spoke highly of bean curd as a meat substitute, a food which he perceived as one of the few advantages of China

⁵³⁷ Linda Pomerantz-Zhang, *Wu Tingfang (1842-1922): Reform and Modernization in Modern Chinese History* (Hongkong: Hong Kong University Press, 1992), 128.

⁵³⁸ “Yishi xinwen: Shenshi weishen hui 醫事新聞 慎食衛生會 [Medical News: the Rational Diet Society],” *Zhongxiyi xuebao* 中西醫學報, no. 06 (1910): 1-3; also see: Pomerantz-Zhang, *Wu Tingfang (1842-1922)*, 188-189.

⁵³⁹ Paul J. Bailey, “Cultural Connections in a New Global Space: Li Shizeng and the Chinese Francophile Project in the Early Twentieth Century,” in *Print, Profit, and Perception: Ideas, Information and Knowledge in Chinese Societies, 1895-1949*, edited by Pei-Yin Lin and Weipin Tsai (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 25.

⁵⁴⁰ Liu Xiao 刘晓, “Li Shizeng yu jindai xueshujie liufapa de xingcheng 李石曾与近代学术界留法派的形成 [Li Shizeng and the Formation of France Study Group in Modern Chinese Academia],” *Kexue wenhua pinglun* 科学文化评论, no. 03, vol. 04 (2007): 51-73.

⁵⁴¹ Colin Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast: A History of Vegetarianism* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1995), chapter 11.

over the West. Although Sun himself was not a vegetarian like Wu and Li, nor did he promote a strict vegetarianism, he nevertheless spoke highly about the Chinese vegetarian diet:

Western promoters of vegetarianism were pursuing a way to extend life based on scientific knowledge of health and hygiene. Their vegetarian food, however, lacks the deliciousness of Chinese cuisine, nor could they match the latter's delicacy. Thus avid [Western] vegetarians consume too much greens resulting in a weakened body, and this lifestyle is difficult to promote widely. Chinese vegetarians like to eat bean curd, which is the 'meat' in vegetables with the effect of meat yet without meat's poison.⁵⁴²

Sun also considered meat potentially detrimental to health. He used his own experience of disease as example to illustrate that his stomachache was greatly alleviated by keeping a vegetarian diet. However, Sun acknowledged the necessity of consuming meat for young people and suggested that the amount one consumes ought to decrease as one ages.⁵⁴³

For Chinese Buddhists, Sun's appreciation of the vegetarian tradition in China was most welcome, as it is frequently cited by these authors in periodicals. In Sun's text, the connection between vegetarianism and science, personal health, and hygiene stands out. Like that of Wu and Li, it is a modern perception of vegetarianism from the West and not part of the traditional Chinese—particularly Buddhist—understanding of the vegetarian practice. Hence examining how Chinese Buddhists understood vegetarianism in the modern context will further shed light on the renewal of traditions in modern Chinese Buddhism.

Discussions of vegetarianism do not appear in the periodicals of the 1920s after the rapid growth of the Buddhist print industry, yet Chinese Buddhists had engaged in activities like opening vegetarian restaurants since 1911. Though vegetarian restaurants had appeared since the Song

⁵⁴² Sun Yat-sen, *Jianguo fanglüe* 建國方略 [The Proposal for Reconstructing China], ed. Zhang Dainian 張岱年 (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1994), 8.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, 12 – 13.

dynasty and Buddhist and Taoist temples also offered vegetarian meal services,⁵⁴⁴ the first modern vegetarian restaurant was established in Shanghai by lay Buddhists like Di Chuqing, Ding Fubao, and a few others in August of 1911. They were cooperating with the Rational Diet Society, yet it seems the restaurant did not achieve success due to the chaotic revolution later in the same year.⁵⁴⁵

The most famous example is the Hygienic Vegetarian Restaurant of the Shanghai Karma Grove Society 上海功德林衛生蔬食館, which opened in 1922 with Wang Yiting, Zhao Yunshao 趙雲韶 (1884–1964), Di Chuqing, Jian Yujie 簡玉階(1875–1957), and other influential lay Buddhists as stockholders.⁵⁴⁶ Soon after, a great many modern vegetarian restaurants with the name “Karma Grove” began to appear in other urban cities like Hangzhou, Wuhan, and Fuzhou. One noticeable characteristic of these new vegetarian restaurants is that they were all founded and operated by lay Buddhists, independent from the monastic community which also managed vegetarian food businesses on its property. Hence, the operation and management of these new restaurants were much more commercialized, with their advertisements appearing in both Buddhist periodicals and secular presses.

In the case of the Hygienic Vegetarian Restaurant of the Shanghai Karma Grove Society, the establishment served not only traditional Chinese style dishes, but also Western vegetarian cuisine.⁵⁴⁷ The price was not accessible to the general population, as a newspaper commentary in

⁵⁴⁴ Qiu Pengtong 邱庞同, *Zhongguo caiyao shi* 中国菜肴史 [History of Chinese Cuisine] (Qingdao: Qingdao chubanshe, 2001), 350. Also see: Wu Zimu 吴自牧, *Meng liang lu* 梦梁录 [A Record of the Millet Dream], Volume 16, online source: <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=863405&remap=gb>, accessed April 16, 2019.

⁵⁴⁵ Zhang Jia, “The Religious Lives of Shanghai’s Lay Buddhist Business Elites and the Modernization of Chinese Buddhism- A Case Study of Wang Yiting (1867~1938)” (PhD diss., Chinese University of Hongkong, 2014), 91-92.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁵⁴⁷ “Gongdelin sushichu zhengshi kaiye guanggao 功德林蔬食處正式開幕廣告 [Advertisement for the Formal Opening of the Vegetarian Restaurant of the Karma Grove],” *Shen bao*, September 08, 1922.

1935 points out that it had no price advantage compared with other famous restaurants in Shanghai.⁵⁴⁸ However, the restaurant was still well-received as another article in *Shen Bao* praises: “Since the [restaurant of] the Karma Grove thrived in business, it launched a revolution for Chinese vegetarian cuisine as others which only serve bean curd and wheat gluten soon fell out of customers’ favor.”⁵⁴⁹ These vegetarian restaurants became an important social avenue for lay Buddhists and prominent monks where many receptions and Dharma lectures were held,⁵⁵⁰ and these restaurants also displayed Buddhist texts for their customers to read.⁵⁵¹ Thus, vegetarian restaurants founded by wealthy lay Buddhists became both a religious and a social space with exclusive social-economic barriers.

However, restaurants for wealthy householders were not the main avenue for Chinese Buddhists to practice vegetarianism. It should also be noted that meat actually made up a relatively small proportion of protein intake for ordinary Chinese in the early twentieth century, as surveys conducted by the Shanghai Bureau of Social Affairs indicate that insufficient amounts of fat and protein calories were consumed by local working families.⁵⁵² Dietary conditions in other parts of China are not much better than those in Shanghai, if not worse. Therefore, we should not rule out the possibility that people in modern China practiced vegetarianism for economic reasons. But for Buddhists, especially those in the reform and conservative camps, their perceptions of the meaning

⁵⁴⁸ Chen Zizhan 陳子展, “Ziyoutan sushi 自由談 素食 [Free Talks: Vegetarianism],” *Shen bao*, August 06, 1935.

⁵⁴⁹ “Shanghai caiguan zhi lingzhua 上海菜館之鱗爪 [A General Survey of Restaurants in Shanghai],” *Shen bao*, December 21, 1924.

⁵⁵⁰ Qingan 輕安, “Xinsi yuanye zai gongdelin sushihui xishang ting Yuanying fashi shuo nianfo famen guitu kouzhan 辛巳元夜在功德林素食會席上聽圓瑛法師說念佛法門歸途口占 [Poem on the Way Back from Hearing Dharma Master Yuanying’s Talk on Reciting Buddha’s Name at the Vegetarian Reception Held in the Karma Groove, 1941],” *Jueyouqing banyuekan*, no. 35 (1941), in MFQB 61: 180.

⁵⁵¹ “Nanjing chuangan sushilin caishe jinxun 南京創辦蔬食林菜社近訊 [Recent News on the Founding of the Vegetarian Restaurant in Nanjing Karma Groove],” *Honghua yuekan*, no. 74-75 (1947), in MFQB 70: 195.

⁵⁵² Mark S. Swislocki, “Feast and Famine in Republican Shanghai: Urban Food Culture, Nutrition and the State” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2001), 95.

of the voluntary practice of vegetarianism constitute a distinctive characteristic for the religion. Therefore, I shall explore the discussion of vegetarianism in Buddhist periodicals next.

8.2 Discussions of Vegetarianism in Buddhist Periodicals

Articles regarding vegetarianism did not appear in Buddhist periodicals until 1921, when a notice for the founding of a vegetarian restaurant named “Jing Xiangyuan 淨香園 [Garden of Purified Fragrance]” appeared in *Sound of Sea Tide*. Though lacking further information about this restaurant, the notice nevertheless makes an argument for practicing vegetarianism in modern China. It states that the notion of “the strong feeding on the weak,” a popular expression of Social Darwinism at the time, had been discarded by recent scholarship, thus the reasoning for meat-eating according to human’s superiority over animals could no longer stand. In addition, the notice points out that the non-killing principle in Buddhism coincided with the trend of hygiene in modern society. Hence, it is reasonable to open a restaurant to promote vegetarianism according to Buddhist doctrine.⁵⁵³

In 1922, an article specifically addressing the benefit of vegetarianism was printed. The author, Jinru 靖如, proposes three benefits of abstaining from meat, which were “following the non-killing *vinaya*,” “promoting hygiene,” and “frugality.” There is nothing surprising about Jinru’s first benefit, but the author’s reasoning for the second is unconventional. According to Jinru, meat consumption leads to disease, because by exposing meat and vegetables to the open

⁵⁵³ “Faqi jingxiangyuan sushiguan yuanqi 發起淨香園素食館緣起 [The Origin for Founding the Jingxiangyuan Vegetarian Restaurant],” *Haichao yin*, no.10 (1921), in MFQ 151: 573.

air, meat will decay with a malodorous smell while vegetables will only wither. In addition, the author also cites classical Chinese medicine's prescription to lower meat intake as part of the treatment of disease, and he also uses the chemical composition of meat, which includes toxic ingredients analyzed by Western scientists, to prove his point.⁵⁵⁴ This article was later reprinted under the name of Shi Yiru,⁵⁵⁵ one of the editors of *Sound of Sea Tide* between 1921 and 1924. Shi Yiru also went by the name Jinhe 靖和, so it is reasonable to presume that Jinru was a misprint of the name of the 1922 article's author.⁵⁵⁶ Following Shi's argument, it is clear that hygienic concerns became central for the polemics of Buddhist vegetarianism.

In 1924, a lay Buddhist Yu Jiulin 郁九齡 published an article discussing explicitly the relation between hygiene and vegetarianism. The article, "The Close Relationship between Vegetarianism and Hygiene," argues that although the concept of cleanliness had saturated much of society, the majority of considerations only focused on exterior aspects such as street cleaning or personal appearance. It was necessary, therefore, to draw attention to the interior aspects of hygiene, which concerns food safety. Yu proposes two key criteria for food: 1) it should be clean; and 2) it needs to be easily digestible. Animal meat, according to the author, does not fit these two criteria because animals could potentially infect human with their own diseases, and it was an extra burden for the human stomach to digest meat.

Yu adopts the idea of contagion, or *chuanran* 傳染, to describe the risks of meat consumption, reflecting the impact of modern medical ideas of infection and hygiene on Chinese

⁵⁵⁴ Jinru, "Lun sushi zhi liyi 論素食之利益 [On Benefits of Vegetarianism]," *Haichao yin*, no. 08 (1922), in MFQ 154: 130-132.

⁵⁵⁵ See: *Haichao yin*, no. 11(1926), in MFQ 163: 453-455.

⁵⁵⁶ Yu, *Zhongguo Jinxiandai fojiao renwuzhi*, 447-449.

Buddhists. Though the concept of infection has existed in China since as early as the seventh century, it was imbued with new meaning with the spread of modern Western medicine.⁵⁵⁷ In his conclusion, Yu also calls for the compilation of a vegetarian recipe book to allow Buddhists to more easily abstain from meat.⁵⁵⁸ Yu's proposal certainly resonated with other Buddhists, as one Niansheng 念生 wrote *Sound of Sea Tide* to express his support, adding his wish to exclude the use of alcohol and the "five pungent flavors" in the proposed recipe book.⁵⁵⁹ I have found no information about whether the recipe book proposed by Yu was eventually compiled, but in other Buddhist periodicals there were discussions and printing of vegetarian recipes. For example, in one issue of the *Journal of the World Buddhist Association*, a lay Buddhist Ouyang Shizhi 歐陽石芝 wrote to the editor Fan Gunong regarding a vegetarian recipe, and the letter contents suggest that the two of them had edited a recipe book at the same time.⁵⁶⁰ A vegetarian recipe was printed in another Buddhist periodical, the *Great Cloud*, in 1930, which was compiled by a Ma Jingsheng 馬淨聖.⁵⁶¹ In 1943, one *Sushi tekan* 素食特刊 (Special Issue on Vegetarianism) was published by the World Vegetarianism Promoting Society 世界提倡素食會, an organization established by the Shanghai Karma Grove Society in 1935 with Ding Fubao as its president.⁵⁶² The society printed many detailed vegetarian recipes as well.

⁵⁵⁷ See: Angela Ki Che Leung, "The Evolution of the Idea of *Chuanran* Contagion in Imperial China," in *Health and Hygiene in Chinese East Asia: Policies and Publics in the Long Twentieth Century*, edited by Qizi Liang, Angela Ki Che Leung, and Charlotte Furth (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2010): 25-50.

⁵⁵⁸ Yu Jiulin, "Sushi yu weisheng de miqie guanxi 素食與衛生的密切關係 [the Close Relationship between Vegetarianism and Hygiene]," *Haichao yin*, no. 02 (1924), in MFQ 158: 352-353.

⁵⁵⁹ Niansheng 念生, "Yu Yu Jiulin jushi lun sushipu shu 與郁九齡居士論素食譜書 [Discussing the Vegetarian Recipe Book with Yu Jiulin]," *Haichao yin*, no. 08 (1924), in MFQ 160: 81.

⁵⁶⁰ "Ouyang Shizhi zhi Gunong lun sushipu shu 歐陽石芝致古農論素食譜書 [Letter from Ouyang Shizhi to Fan Gunong regarding Vegetarian Recipe Book]," *Shijie fojiao jushilin linkan*, no. 26 (1930), in MFQB 11: 96.

⁵⁶¹ "Sushi pu 素食譜 [the Vegetarian Recipe]," *Dayun*, no. 98 (1930), in MFQB 21: 281-282.

⁵⁶² Ruan Renze 阮仁澤, Gao Zhenong 高振農, *Shanghai zongjiao shi* 上海宗教史 [History of Religion in Shanghai] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1992), 288.

Linking hygiene and health with vegetarianism became part of the vegetarian discourse for Chinese Buddhists, particularly those in the reform camp. In 1935, *Right Faith* printed an article by Taixu discussing vegetarian restrictions. Taixu first argues that only Chinese Buddhists explicitly renounce meat-eating and abide by a strict vegetarian diet, unlike their counterparts in South Asian countries or Tibet, so that Chinese Buddhists were particularly meritorious in this regard. Then Taixu lists three scientific reasons for vegetarianism. The first one argues against the social evolution theory, contending that because humans evolved from lower species and essentially belong to the same class as animals, consuming meat would be against the principle of humaneness. Another reason is the principle of hygiene, as Taixu echoes the argument that meat contains toxic ingredients. Finally, the third takes an economic perspective that, because of frugality, a vegetarian diet would contribute to the growth of the national economy. Certainly, Taixu also refers to Buddhist doctrines condemning meat-eating, yet the core of his argument relies on scientific evidence. In the end, Taixu links vegetarianism with the morals involved, suggesting that the practice could potentially lead to the end of violence in the world.⁵⁶³ It seems that Taixu's argument for vegetarianism was influenced by Li Shizen as well, since one of Li's speeches printed in *Sound of Sea Tide* discussed similar benefits of a vegetarian diet.⁵⁶⁴ Yet Taixu's article was more well-received among Buddhists, as it was later reprinted by three other Buddhist periodicals.

The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly also started to promote vegetarianism based on the concept of hygiene in the early 1920s. In its first issue,⁵⁶⁵ a Cai Xinjue 蔡心覺 from Guangdong

⁵⁶³ Taixu, "Fojiao yu sushi 佛教与素食 [Buddhism and Vegetarianism]," *Zhengxin*, no. 14 (1935), in MFQB 44: 1-2.

⁵⁶⁴ "Li Shizen zhi sushi zhuyi 李石曾之素食主義 [The Vegetarianism of Li Shizen]," *Haichao yin*, no. 05 (1930), in MFQ 175: 287.

⁵⁶⁵ It is actually the second issue because there is one inaugural issue.

province wrote a commentary on vegetarianism. The article carries a satirical tone for the capitalist class in the start, and it invokes the famous phrase “those who eat meat are base” from the *Zhuo Tradition Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋左傳 to criticize the luxurious lifestyle of capitalists.⁵⁶⁶ Cai observes that meat-eaters were always in poor health, yet laborers who consume more vegetables were in better shape. Combining this class observation with the research on meat toxicity from Western science, Cai concludes that vegetarianism is healthy, with the additional advantages of being economic and morally good.⁵⁶⁷ Following Cai’s article, another article by Tang Dayuan discussing food consumption also touches on vegetarianism. Tang, writing in a classic Chinese style, similarly relates hygiene concerns with vegetarian practice.⁵⁶⁸

The vegetarian diet was particularly attractive to lay Buddhists, as *Right Faith* printed far more articles on this issue than other periodicals in the reform camp. For lay Buddhists, the idea of vegetarianism fitting a healthy and hygiene lifestyle was welcome. In the first issue, the journal printed a news report on a German medical study which suggests that keeping a vegetarian diet could regulate high blood pressure.⁵⁶⁹ An open letter from a lay Buddhist urging his father to adopt a vegetarian diet was also printed in the journal, and the author assures that since taking up the food restriction, his health did not deteriorate but evidently improved by helping him gain some

⁵⁶⁶ See Stephen Durrant, Wai-ye Li, and David Schaberg, tran. *Zuo Tradition / Zuozhuan: Commentary on the "Spring and Autumn Annals"* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017), 160-161.

⁵⁶⁷ Cai Xinjue, “Sushi zhuyi 素食主義 [Vegetarianism],” *Fohua xinqinnian*, no. 01 (1923), in MFQ 13: 127-129.

⁵⁶⁸ Tang Dayuan, “Yinshi lun 饮食论 [On Food Consumption],” *Fohua xinqinnian*, no. 01 (1923), in MFQ 13: 129.

⁵⁶⁹ “Sushi shi xueya chixu de diluo 素食使血壓持續的低落 [Vegetarian Diet Keeps Blood Pressure Low],” *Zhengxin*, no. 01 (1932), in MFQB 43: 7.

weight.⁵⁷⁰ Similar personal testimonies on the health benefits of vegetarianism abound in the journal. In 1934, *Right Faith* printed a special issue on vegetarianism in which authors share their experience and opinions on practicing a vegetarian diet. One author named Yan Ran 儼然 writes about his years of vegetarian practice and also mentions that his weight had increased since taking it up. He also uses anecdotes from his friends who recovered from serious diseases by turning to the vegetarian diet. In addition, Yan Ran further comments on the nauseating smell meat exudes and the short temper of meat-eaters, all to support the necessity of adopting vegetarianism.⁵⁷¹

The majority of authors in this special issue were students of the Wuchang Buddhist seminary, thus their experience with vegetarianism often included confrontations with other people. Besides the health aspects, they also invoke Western epistemes to defend vegetarianism. Yang Bo 養波 wrote an article titled “Why Don’t You Eat Meat?” recalling a personal encounter with people who deemed the practice was merely a means for rebirth in the Western paradise. Yang Bo refutes the claim and cites Leo Tolstoy’s idea of animal protection and vegetarianism to demonstrate the progressiveness of Buddhist compassion.⁵⁷²

Besides turning to the West, these authors also turned to the history of Chinese Buddhism and employed textual support. It is no surprise that the *Surangama Sutra* 楞嚴經, the *Nirvana Sutra*, and other Pure Land sutras were cited for scriptural support of Buddhist vegetarianism. Yet it is interesting to see that works by Yunqi Zhuhong, Ouyi Zhixu, Yinguang, and Yuanying on

⁵⁷⁰ Jin Bingjie 金冰洁, “Jin Bingjie jushi zhi qifu lun jiesha shisu shu 金冰潔居士致其父論戒殺食素書 [Lay Buddhist Jin Bingjie’s Letter to his Father on Abstaining from Killing and Taking up Vegetarianism],” *Zhengxin*, no. 10 (1935), in MFQB 43: 466-467.

⁵⁷¹ Yan Ran, “Wo de sushi hou 我的素食後 [My Vegetarianism Experience],” *Zhengxin*, no. 13 (1934), in MFQ 62: 41-42.

⁵⁷² Yang Bo, “Ni weishenme buchi rou ne? H jun wen 你為什麼不吃肉呢? H 君問 [Why Don’t You Eat Meat? Asked by Mr. H],” *Zhengxin*, no. 13 (1934), in MFQ 62: 47.

promoting vegetarian practice were also cited as authoritative texts, as an article written by Zhiding 智定 shows.⁵⁷³ Zhiding's purpose for quoting these texts by prominent Buddhists is to illustrate the consensus on vegetarian practice as a tradition for Chinese Buddhism; yet, the inclusion of Yinguang and Yuanying, who were deemed representatives of the conservative camp, suggests that although those in the reform camp were in disagreement with the conservative figures in some regards, they did acknowledge the influence of figures like Yinguang on the masses. Thus, when the need arises, their writings are incorporated.

Proving the healthfulness of vegetarian practice was still vital for Chinese Buddhists, and in 1947 an author provided a comprehensive assessment on nutrition in *Right Faith*. Cheng Yi 成 — serialized an article “The Nutrition Issue for Vegetarians,” in which he discusses the misunderstanding that vegetarianism would lead to malnutrition and the blind faith in an omnivorous diet as a better option. Using concepts including carbohydrates, protein, fat, water, and salt content, as well as the daily calorie intake, Cheng Yi tries to demonstrate that a vegetarian diet could provide sufficient energy to substitute for meat. The argument made here is of particular interest since vegetarianism practiced involuntarily by many Chinese due to poverty was considered one of the reasons that led to national weakness. Mark Swislocki illustrates that with the introduction of biomedicine, Chinese scientists began to assess the nutritional value of the Chinese diet and arrived at the conclusion that Chinese vegetarianism was inferior to the Western meat-eating diet.⁵⁷⁴ Cheng Yi seems to be well-aware of modern nutrition theory as to the

⁵⁷³ Zhi Ding, “Nianfo yu sushi 念佛与素食 [Studying Buddhism and Vegetarianism],” *Zhengxin*, no. 13 (1934), in MFQ 62: 43-45.

⁵⁷⁴ Mark S. Swislocki, “Nutritional Governmentality: Food and the Politics of Health in Late Imperial and Republican China,” *Radical History Review*, 2011(110): 20-21.

suggested daily calorie intake, as well as the three key sources of calories: carbohydrate, protein, fat. In the article, Cheng Yi argues that although protein and fat are typically attained from animal products, it is possible to substitute them with beans, nuts, and vegetable oil.⁵⁷⁵ Cheng Yi's article completely emphasizes scientific reasons for vegetarianism and struck a different tone from Chinese scientists in the 1920s; it implies the importance to Buddhist householders of a scientific rationality for the vegetarian diet, and further reflects the different concerns held by Buddhist laities as compared to the clergy.

For the conservative camp, the vegetarian practice was one of the Buddhist traditions to be preserved and promoted, and leading figures like Yinguang, Dixian, and Yuanying made every effort to propagate vegetarianism. One noticeable characteristic is that the conservative camp tended to link the non-killing principle with vegetarianism. This style of argument continued the traditional polemics for vegetarianism since it became part of the Buddhist tradition in China. One of Yinguang's earliest works exhorting Buddhists to abide by the vegetarian diet actually appears in the reform-oriented journal, *Sound of Sea Tide*. Yinguang wrote a preface for the restoration of a life-releasing pond at Jile Temple 極樂寺 in the town of Nanxun 南潯. Yinguang cites textual support from various traditional sources, including the Confucian classic the *Book of Documents* 尚書, imperial edicts ordering the construction of life-releasing ponds during the Tang and Song dynasties, and writings by influential monks like Yunqi Zhuhong who also propagated vegetarianism and animal release in the late Ming. By listing these arguments and examples, Yinguang urges his reader to recognize the long tradition of vegetarian practice and its legitimacy

⁵⁷⁵ Cheng Yi, "Guanyu sushizhe de yingyang wenti 關於素食者的營養問題 [The Nutrition Issue for Vegetarians]," *Zheng xin*, no.2 and no. 5-6 (1947), in MFQB 45: 337-338, 399.

across different Chinese traditions. In the end, Yinguang connects the act of protecting life with a vegetarian diet, as the latter would contribute to the former.⁵⁷⁶ This article was compiled into the *Collected Writings*, and Yinguang sometimes directed his disciples to distribute the text so as to promote vegetarianism.

A case recounted by Yinguang gives us a glimpse into the transformative power of this article. In the speech Yinguang gave at the “Protect the Nation and Stop Calamities Buddhist Assembly in Shanghai” at 1936, he tells the story of meeting Wei Meisun in 1921, on which occasion Wei confided to Yinguang that though he had read about and developed faith in Buddhism, he failed to abstain from meat. Then Yinguang asked him to read the Preface several dozen times, and two months later, Wei successfully became a vegetarian.⁵⁷⁷ Hence, Yinguang firmly believed in the power of resorting to traditions and Buddhist scriptures for spreading vegetarianism and generating positive karma.

However, Yinguang was not ignorant of arguments from a health perspective. In his article “Urge to Refrain from Killing and Practice Vegetarianism to Avoid Apocalyptic Calamities,” in addition to relying on Buddhist scriptural authorities, Yinguang cites the proverbial argument that consuming certain kinds of meat would incur catastrophic consequences, such as “if pregnant women eat rabbits then the children would likely have harelip, eating sparrow would result in night blindness, eating crab results in obstructed labor, and eating softshell turtle results in neck

⁵⁷⁶ Yinguang, “Nanxun Jile si chongxiu fangsheng chi su 南潯極樂寺重修放生池疏 [Preface for the Restoration of the Life-Releasing Pond in Jile Temple],” *Haichao yin*, no. 01 (1921), in MFQ 149: 489-492.

⁵⁷⁷ Yinguang, “Shanghai huguo xizai fahui yanjiang ci 上海護國息災法會演講詞 [Speech in the Shanghai Protect the Nation and Stop Calamities Buddhist Assembly],” *Fojiao jushilin tekan* 佛教居士林特刊, no.39 (1937), in MFQ 65: 461-463.

disability.”⁵⁷⁸ Furthermore, Yinguang argues that “meat tends to be toxic, generating from the resentment of animals that were killed, thereby meat eaters would easily contract skin disease and be contagious, while vegetarians seldom catch these diseases.”⁵⁷⁹ Therefore, Yinguang also analyzed the benefit of vegetarianism from the perspective of physical health and invoked the idea of meat being toxic. Yet Yinguang’s reasoning appears to differ from that of the reform camp, as he relies on the traditional perception of the toxicity and pollution of meat, an understanding which had been well established since at least the medieval period as medical canons and dietary manuals written around the Tang Dynasty also caution readers about the poisonous aspect of certain meats.⁵⁸⁰

In another article, Yinguang clearly conceptualizes the phrase “hygiene” in a different, more traditional, way. In “On Alleviating Disaster and Protecting Life,” which he wrote against the backdrop of the Nationalist party’s Northern Expedition, Yinguang reiterates the existence of toxins within meat and urges that by adopting a vegetarian diet one would contribute to the cause of protecting life, a traditional way of understanding the term *weisheng* 衛生 before it was appropriated for the modern concept of hygiene and health.⁵⁸¹ In general, for Yinguang, the concept of *weisheng* refers to life-protection without the newer influence of the biomedical interpretation, unlike Taixu who would appropriate scientific reasoning to support Buddhist vegetarianism. Yinguang edited and reprinted the *Collection of Protecting Lives* 衛生集, a book

⁵⁷⁸ Yinguang, “Puquan jiesha chisu wanhui jieyun shuo 普勸戒殺吃素挽回劫運說 [Urge to Refrain from Killing and Practice Vegetarianism to Avoid Apocalyptic Calamities],” *Shijie fojiao jushilin linkan*, no.14(1927), in MFQB 09: 341-345.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.,

⁵⁸⁰ Charles D. Benn, *Daily Life in Traditional China: The Tang Dynasty* (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 125.

⁵⁸¹ Yinguang, “Xizai weisheng yushuo 息災衛生豫說 [On the Alleviating Disaster and Protecting Life],” *Foguangshe shekan*, no.02 (1926), in MFQ 16: 210-213.

edited by Hua Xiwu 華梧棲 during the Qianlong reign (1735–1796), providing a preface which contends, “If people want to protect their own lives, they need to protect other lives first.”⁵⁸²

For Yinguang, Buddhism and medicine protected lives in different ways. In a speech for the opening of a vegetarian restaurant in Nanjing, Yinguang concludes:

All these diseases from karmic retribution cannot be healed by doctors. Only through reciting the Buddha’s name with utmost sincerity could they be cured. It is because doctors can only treat physical illness, but not negative karma. The recitation of Buddha’s name, however, could cure both physiological and mental diseases.⁵⁸³

The delimitation between the physiological and karmic diseases informs Yinguang’s perception of health, which incorporates more than the biomedical perspective and is closer to the holistic view prevalent in traditional Chinese medicine. In other words, Yinguang’s view of the body does not deviate much from the Buddhist view of bodies as “products of past karma, as sources of suffering, or as vehicles or karmic transformation,”⁵⁸⁴ and the medicine he prescribes—the recitation of the Buddha’s name—was one of the most recognizable practices of Pure Land Buddhism. The biomedical view on the body was not part of Yinguang’s argumentation for vegetarianism.

Another important figure in the conservative camp, Dixian, made sporadic comments on vegetarianism. First, Dixian’s view of corporeal illness resembles Yinguang’s in terms of recognizing the limitations of medical treatment and holding Buddhism as the ultimate cure for all

⁵⁸² Yinguang, “Husheng ji xu 衛生集序 [Preface for the Protecting Lives],” in *Yinguang Fashi Wenchao Vol. 3*, 1292.

⁵⁸³ Yinguang, “Yinguang fashi zai Nanjing sushi tongyuanshe kaishi fayu 印光法師在南京素食同緣社開示法語 [Dharma Lecture by Master Yinguang at the Nanjing Vegetarian Compassion Society],” *Haichao yin*, no.04-05 (1927), in MFQ 167: 486-490.

⁵⁸⁴ McGuire, *Living Karma*, 112.

diseases. In Dixian's autobiography, he recounts the reason for his initial faith in Buddhism. Dixian originally hoped to become a doctor like his uncle, but after witnessing how a minor disease took the life of a rather healthy patient, Dixian realized the impermanence of life; as a result, he abandoned his medical training and started to study Buddhism.⁵⁸⁵ Such a conversion story is not uncommon in Buddhism, yet it reflects Dixian's view on the curative effect of Buddhism, and it corresponds with his understanding of Buddhist vegetarianism.

Dixian only produced one article explicitly engaging with Buddhist vegetarianism, a preface for a vegetarian restaurant in Ningbo. Dixian makes his argument by first referencing the Confucian classic, *the Book of Changes*, and emphasizes that the foundation for establishing personhood is humaneness. Dixian further interprets humaneness as universal love and extends it to animals, arguing that the gentleman should be contented with a life of simplicity without extravagant enjoyment, meaning without consuming meat. After providing this Confucian reasoning, Dixian presents the Buddhist argument for vegetarianism by citing the *Surangama Sutra*, which states: "A person eats a sheep. The sheep dies and becomes a person. The person dies and becomes a sheep, and it goes on that way through ten births and more."⁵⁸⁶ Hence Dixian also relies on the rhetoric of karmic retribution to support vegetarianism. Moreover, Dixian argues that the benefit of maintaining a vegetarian diet would directly benefit this life in the form of enhanced longevity and disaster prevention.⁵⁸⁷ Therefore, Dixian's argument for vegetarianism is similar to Yinguang's and follows the same vein with the traditional Buddhist reasoning against killing. The

⁵⁸⁵ Dixian, Huang Xingche 黃性澈, "Dixian dashi wushinian hongfa gaikuang 諦閑大師五十年弘法概況," *Shijie fojiao jushilin linkan*, no.07-10 (1933), in MFQ 143: 327-330.

⁵⁸⁶ CBETA, T19, no. 945, p. 120b8-9. Online resource, link: http://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/T0945_004. Accessed on Oct 14 2018.

⁵⁸⁷ Dixian, "Zeng Ningbo gongdelin sushichu xu 贈寧波功德林蔬食處序 [Preface for the Ningbo Karma Grove Vegetarian Restaurant]," *Jingye yuekan* 淨業月刊, no.13 (1927): 538-540.

article was printed in several Buddhist periodicals, including the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*, *Sound of Sea Tide*, *Fragrant Ocean Buddhist Periodical* 香海佛化刊, and *Pure Karma Monthly* 淨業月刊. *Fragrant Ocean Buddhist Periodical* was founded by Dixian's disciple Baojing during his visit to Hongkong in 1932, and *Pure Karma Monthly* was published by the Shanghai Pure Karma Society 上海淨業社, a group of lay Buddhists that split from the World Buddhist Householder Grove dedicated to the practice of Pure Land Buddhism.⁵⁸⁸ Hence Dixian's message was well received within the conservative Buddhist camps.

Though Dixian produced few texts on vegetarianism, the topic was frequently discussed in the *Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society*. In 1930, the periodical printed an article by Tu Kaixing 涂開興, which was in the form of questions and answers on the benefits of vegetarianism. Tu himself was not a Buddhist, and he was part of a small group of intellectual vegetarians including Li Shizeng, Huang Yanpei 黃炎培 (1878–1965), Xu Kecheng 許克誠, and Zhang Guoren 張國仁. According to Tu, only Xu Kecheng was practicing vegetarianism out of Buddhist faith, whereas the rest were either vegetarians for reasons of hygiene or moral cultivation. Despite the question and answer format, the article presents support for vegetarianism considering three fundamental aspects: health, economic, and philosophical concerns. The health and economic arguments are similar to those found in the reform camp's periodicals, which emphasize the extension of one's lifespan and the saving of economic resources for the nation by promoting a vegetarian diet. The philosophical argument, on the other hand, concentrates on the cruelty of killing and the unnecessary consumption of meat. One of the questions focusing on nationalism

⁵⁸⁸ James Brooks Jessup, "The Householder Elite: Buddhist Activism in Shanghai, 1920-1956" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2010) 18-19.

argues that if vegetarianism was widely practiced, it might affect the morale and spirit of the nation. Tu answers by acknowledging the necessity of keeping a spirit of aggression for nationalism, and then asserts that as human society evolves, violence and nationalism will eventually fade away.⁵⁸⁹ This pacifistic argument for vegetarianism from an evolutionary perspective is seldom seen in the conservative camp, but not uncommon in the reform camp.

In 1931, the periodical printed another article exhorting Buddhists to conform to the vegetarian diet by recounting several vivid stories. The article is written by Zhou Qunzheng 周群錚, a lay Buddhist and follower of Yinguang, and tells several stories of Buddhists who insisted on the vegetarian diet during illness, disobeyed their doctor's advice to consume meat as part of the treatment, and eventually recovered. Zhou also provides examples of lay Buddhists who quit vegetarianism and suffered almost immediate death from diseases.⁵⁹⁰ This form of story centering on sympathetic resonance is more popular in the conservative camp than the reform camp, being geared more toward the general populace or less educated masses than to monastics and intellectuals.

In a similar vein, another article by a Zhang Xuezhi 張學智 in 1932 who favors the vegetarian banquet took his daughter's wedding as an example. The purpose of Zhang's article was to rationalize his decision to hold a vegetarian banquet, which was perceived as unconventional. Zhang reasons, "I cannot bear the fact that my family's celebration would lead to the suffering of other [animals]." Then he quotes the same line from the *Surangama Sutra*

⁵⁸⁹ Tu Kaixing, "Sushi zhi wenda 素食之問答 [Questions and Answers about Vegetarianism]," *Hongfa shekan*, no. 11 (1930), in MFQB 36: 413-415.

⁵⁹⁰ Zhou Qunzheng, "Changsu chipo zhi gujian 長素持破之龜鑑 [Reflections on the Transgression after Keeping Vegetarian Diet]," *Hongfa shekan*, no. 18 (1931), in MFQ 144: 510-511.

concerning the reincarnation between men and sheep as support. In addition, Zhang also cites the argument on the toxicity and unhealthy aspect of meat, stating “through recent anatomy by Western medical doctors, there are many small bugs within flesh,” hence, “I notice that after a grand feast, the host and guests would always fall ill.”⁵⁹¹ By assessing the personal health perspective, Zhang contends that it is reasonable for even non-Buddhists to practice the vegetarian diet. In 1935, the periodical printed the report about another vegetarian banquet. It mentions the wedding of Wang Yiting’s grandson, and the report also praises the virtue of vegetarian feasts from the perspectives of karma and health.⁵⁹²

In the same issue, a polemical poem by Jiang Qian reprimanding meat consumption was also printed. The poem presents a similar reasoning and structure to Zhang’s article. Jiang first invokes the reincarnation perspective, and then argues from the health perspective by stating that “meat is the reason for illness while vegetables quell diseases.”⁵⁹³ Despite the poetic format, Jiang’s writing is plain and accessible, without artistic refinement and literary allusions, which might not be favored by educated literati but could be easily comprehended by the Buddhist masses. This poem was also printed in the *Buddha’s Light Society Journal* in the same year.⁵⁹⁴ The *Buddha’s Light Society Journal* reprinted many of the aforementioned articles by Yinguang on the merit of vegetarianism. But in general, few articles regarding this issue were produced exclusively for the journal.

⁵⁹¹ Zhang Xuezhi, “Xiqing jiesha bushi xuerou shuo 喜慶戒殺不食血肉說 [On the Abstaining from Killing and Meat for Banquet],” *Hongfa shekan*, no. 19 (1932), in MFQ 22: 109-110.

⁵⁹² “Wang Yiting sun jiehun sushi yanke 王—亭文孫結婚蔬食宴客 [The Vegetarian Banquet for the Wedding of Wang Yiting’s Grandson],” *Hongfa shekan*, no. 27 (1935), in MFQ 24: 351-352.

⁵⁹³ Jiang Qian, Ren Feishi 稔非氏 transcribed, “Lu Jiang Yiyuan jushi jinzuo quanduan roushi 錄江易園居士近作：勸斷肉食 [The Recent Work by Buddhist Householder Jiang Yiyuan: On Abstaining from Meat],” *Hongfa shekan*, no. 19 (1932), in MFQ 22: 139-140.

⁵⁹⁴ See: Foguangshe shekan, no. 04 (1932), in MFQ 17: 111-113.

In *Spreading the Teaching Monthly*, vegetarianism was also widely discussed and promoted, as the journal aimed to propagate Yinguang's teachings. Articles discussing vegetarianism from multiple perspectives appear in the journal, including reports on the international vegetarianism movement,⁵⁹⁵ but one conspicuous aspect is how the journal resonates with Yinguang's particular proposal. Taking vegetarian soap for example, Yinguang urged Buddhists to use a kind of vegetarian soap made with coconut oil instead of lard,⁵⁹⁶ and then asked his lay Buddhist disciples to assist in the production due to the high cost.⁵⁹⁷ Hence, Yinguang put great effort into the promotion of vegetarian soap. In *Spreading the Teaching Monthly*, many articles promote the use of vegetarian soap, which sometimes were actually advertisements. In 1941, a short text advocating for vegetarian soap promoted the product made by the Nanyang Soap Factory 南洋皂廠, which was sold for a cheaper price than the local soap.⁵⁹⁸ Desen, the chief editor, personally wrote two articles describing the motives and efforts of the Association for the Perpetual Commemoration of Master Yinguang to promote the use of vegetarian soap. In the first article, Desen recounts the history of Yinguang's engagement with the production and the difficulty of enabling mass distribution of the soap, and then narrates how the new supplier, the Nanyang Soap factory, was founded and took up the production. The most important message in the article is that the association was selling the vegetarian soap at cost without any profit.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁵ See: Lian Dayin 廉達因, "Jilu jindai xiyang sushi gaikuang 紀錄近代西洋素食概況 [Record of Vegetarianism in the Modern West]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 05 (1941), in MFQB 68: 162.

⁵⁹⁶ Yinguang, "Puquan aixi wuming tongyong Qingming suzao yi jian shaye shuo 普劝爱惜物命同用清明素皂以减杀业说 [On the Use of Clean and Vegetarian Soap to Protect Life and Reduce Negative Karma]," in *Yinguang Fashi Wenchao Vol. 3*, 1752-1753.

⁵⁹⁷ Yinguang, "Yinguang fashi jieshao yong sanxin suzao shu 印光法師介紹用三星素皂書 [Master Yinguang's Introduction for the Three-Star Vegetarian Soap]," *Hongfa shekan*, no. 14 (1930), in MFQB 37: 225-226.

⁵⁹⁸ "Qing fo dizi ji weishengjia yong jingsu feizao 請佛弟子及衛生家用淨素肥皂 [Clean and Vegetarian Soap for Buddhists and Health-concerned Householders]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 03 (1941), in MFQB 68: 82.

⁵⁹⁹ Desen, "Fu tichang yong jingsu zao zhi yuanyin 附提倡用淨素皂之原因 [On the Reason of Advocating the Vegetarian Soap]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 07 (1942), in MFQB 68: 261.

The second article was written in 1947, after the end of the Second World War, in which Desen depicts a comprehensive picture of the vegetarian soap initiative pushed by Yinguang and its tortuous proceedings. Before Yinguang's campaign, Chinese Buddhists had no alternative but to use soap made from lard for cleanliness and hygiene, but it was venial. Since vegetarian soap became available, according to Desen, Buddhists ought to choose it whenever possible. However, because it was difficult to maintain a reliable manufacturer, the production was inconsistent over the years, and during the Japanese occupation, soap became a restricted commodity, thereby prohibiting for private production. Hence Desen published the ingredients and production process for vegetarian soap in the journal, in the hope that Buddhists might make it at home.⁶⁰⁰ After the war, the manager of Nanyang Soap Factory, Zhang Ruchuan 張汝傳, reached out again to Desen and expressed willingness to resume vegetarian soap production.⁶⁰¹ Thus, Desen wrote his second article to help promote the product, demonstrating the tenacious endeavors of various Buddhists for the project, and hoping to persuade more Buddhists to realize the necessity and karmic merit of adopting vegetarian soap.⁶⁰²

The campaign for vegetarian soap reflects the Buddhist response to the emphasis on hygiene and personal cleanliness brought about by the discourse of modernity, and also a modern expansion for the idea of vegetarianism. As Frank Dikötter argues, the use of soap indicates the modern idea of a disciplined body and public health advocated by the modern state as well as

⁶⁰⁰ See: "Su feizao yuanliao yu zhifa 素肥皂原料與製法 [Ingredients and Production Procedure for Vegetarian Soap]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 40 (1944), in MFQB 69: 315.

⁶⁰¹ For more information about Zhang and Nanyang Soap Factory, see: Zuo Xuchu 左旭初, *Bainian Shanghai minzu gongye pingpai 百年上海民族工业品牌* [Chinese National Industrial Brands in a Hundred Years] (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2013), 21-24.

⁶⁰² Desen, "Quanyong jingsu feizao 勸用淨素肥皂 [Please Use Vegetarian Soap]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 71 (1947), in MFBQ 70: 152-154.

health product manufacturers, but it also closely connects with the initiative of these consumers who perceived *weisheng* (hygiene) as a positive pursuit.⁶⁰³ Chinese Buddhists, especially lay Buddhists, were subject to the same shift in social mores and began to adapt. But for Yinguang, whose following mainly consisted of laypersons, the prevalence of soap posed a challenge to the Buddhist code against killing and consumption of animal products. The initiative to produce and promote vegetarian soaps illustrates that even for the conservative camp of Buddhists who did not approve of every reform proposed by other groups, they needed to respond to modern challenges in their own way. Instead of total rejection, such as the discourse of health and personal cleanliness, Yinguang and his followers strove to offer an alternative choice for Buddhists to live both ethically and comfortably. Furthermore, the campaign for vegetarian soap also illustrates the modern transformation of the notion of vegetarianism in Chinese Buddhism, as it no longer remained within the confines of dietary restriction but also came to include daily bodily practices.

Besides this specific campaign, *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* was filled with articles, poems, and letters arguing for vegetarianism from both the perspectives of karmic retribution and a healthy lifestyle. Though Yinguang was not an apologist specializing in eschatology like Lushan Huiyuan 廬山慧遠 (334–416), he played a pivotal role in terms of spreading and reinforcing this concept to his massive followers in modern China.⁶⁰⁴

Articles printed in *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* on vegetarianism reflect the enormous impact of Yinguang's teaching. One of Yinguang's lay disciples, Shi Zongdao 施宗導, wrote in a

⁶⁰³ Frank Dikötter, *Exotic Commodities: Modern Objects and Everyday Life in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 205-209.

⁶⁰⁴ For a comprehensive discussion of Huiyuan's influential role on karmic retribution, see: Guo Hong Yue, "Rebirth and Karmic Retribution in Fifth-century China: A Study of the Teachings of the Buddhist Monk Lu Shan Huiyuan" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2007).

piece for the journal in 1942 arguing for the benefit of keeping a vegetarian diet for karmic reasons. In the *Collected Work*, there is one letter from Yinguang to Shi, urging him to spread Buddhism and the practice of vegetarianism for his and others' rebirth into the Pure Land.⁶⁰⁵ Thus Shi's article demonstrates his effort to follow Yinguang's instruction. In the article, Shi refers to the repertoire of Chinese classics in which vegetarianism and non-killing are advocated by various authorities, including Confucian scholars and Buddhist leaders. The rhetoric of Shi's article naturally focuses on the karmic repercussions of meat consumption. Moreover, it seems Shi's article also targeted another group of Buddhists: members of the China Rescuing Life Association 中國濟生會. The association worships Ji Gong 济公 (1130–1207), an unorthodox Buddhist monk from the Song dynasty known for his supernatural power and eccentric behavior.⁶⁰⁶ The association is known for communicating with Ji Gong through planchette writing, and Yinguang generally did not approve the practice. Yet in his article, Shi argues that followers of Ji Gong should also be followers of the Buddhist Dharma, as “taking refuge with Master Ji Gong without conversion to the Three Jewels would render the effort imperfect.”⁶⁰⁷ Hence the article has a two-folded purpose: one is to discuss the benefit of practicing vegetarianism from a karmic perspective; the second is the effort to convince a group of unorthodox Buddhists to return to the proper teachings of Buddhism. According to Zhang Jia's research, the China Rescuing Life Association

⁶⁰⁵ Yinguang, “Fu Shi Zongdao jushi han 复施宗导居士函 [Reply to Shi Zongdao],” in *Yinguang fashi wenchao quanji* 印光法师文钞全集 [the Complete Collection of Master Yinguang's Work] (Beijing: tuanjie chubanshe, 2013), 1986-1987.

⁶⁰⁶ For study on Ji Gong, see: Meir Shahaar, *Crazy Ji: Chinese religion and popular literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998). For study on the China Rescuing Life Association, see: Zhang, “The Religious Lives of Shanghai's Lay Buddhist Business Elites and the Modernization of Chinese Buddhism- A Case Study of Wang Yiting (1867~1938),” 179-195.

⁶⁰⁷ Shi Zongdao, “Quan shiren jiedang chisu nianfo 劝世人皆當吃素念佛 [Urging All the People to Practice Vegetarianism and Recite the Buddha's Name],” *Honghua yuekan*, no. 12 (1942), in MFQB 68: 444.

formed a Buddhist sect in 1921, called the “Nanping Sect 南屏宗派,” and it gained some recognition and support from the established Buddhist community. However, it was not particularly restrictive in terms of keeping a vegetarian diet for its followers, and its rule of purity included only four out of the typical five precepts for lay Buddhists, leaving out the restriction of alcohol.⁶⁰⁸ Thus Shi’s article was also a response aiming to present the correct way of being a Buddhist.

From the karmic perspective, *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* also printed articles arguing for vegetarian practice during celebratory occasions. Articles with similar tones also appear in other aforementioned Buddhist periodicals of the conservative camp. An article by Chen Decheng 陳德誠 promotes the total adaptation of vegetarian banquets for both celebratory and memorial services, solely for the benefit of karmic retribution.⁶⁰⁹ A certain Duo Ji 多吉 advocates the vegetarian feast for the Spring Festival, and he connects the vegetarian practice to the act of releasing-life, urging people to make a contribution to facilitate animal-releasing events.⁶¹⁰ During traditional Chinese festivals and grand banquets, meals were typically extravagant; thus if vegetarianism was adopted for these events, the ramifications would be profound.

There were also more general discussions from the karmic perspective on vegetarianism in the journal. One Longcan 龍燦 wrote in 1943 arguing against the consumption of meat and the

⁶⁰⁸ Zhang Jia, “Zhongguo Jisheng Hui suojian jindai shenshang jushi zhi Jigong Xinyang 中国济生会所见近代绅商居士之济公信仰 [The Worship of Ji Gong among Merchants and Lay Buddhists from Perspective of the China Rescuing Life Association],” *Zongjiaoxue yanjiu* 宗教学研究, no. 01 (2015): 109-110.

⁶⁰⁹ Chen Decheng, “Quan qingdiao dengshi zhuanrong jingsu 勸慶弔等事專用淨素 [Urge the Use of Vegetarian Dishes for Weddings and Funerals],” *Honghua yuekan*, no. 10 (1942), in MFQB 68: 392-393.

⁶¹⁰ Duo Ji, “Fengquan guonian dajia chisu fangsheng 奉勸過年大家吃素放生 [Urge for Vegetarian Diet and Animal-releasing during Spring Festival],” *Honghua yuekan*, no. 20 (1943), in MFQB 69: 94-95.

karmic benefit accumulated from the compassionate act. In addition to extensive references to a variety of Buddhist scriptures condemning meat-eating, Longcan uses his mother's case as the example, who vowed to abstain from meat so as to help dispel his father's illness. In this transfer of merit anecdote, Longcan's father eventually recuperated from the disease and enjoyed a peaceful life until his natural death.⁶¹¹

Desen also wrote an article in 1945 to memorialize the ten-year anniversary of the founding of the Vegetarianism Promoting Society. He reflects on the ending of World War II, attributing military aggression to the personal aggression engendered by meat consumption. One example Desen uses is that "the most unyielding among Chinese people are those in the Hunan, Guangdong, and Guangxi provinces, and the habit of consuming meat on a large scale was also most evident in these three regions. During the war, people in these three regions also suffered most from various calamities." Thus, Desen connects the consumption of meat to the fundamental cause of human devastation. The major sources of authority cited by Desen are Yunqi Zhuhong, Yinguang, and other significant Buddhist figures in Chinese history.⁶¹² In the same year, a Gao Juezhen 高覺真 wrote the article "Stop Killing and Adopt Vegetarianism to Avoid Apocalyptic Calamities," whose title is similar to Yinguang's "Urge to Refrain from Killing and Practice Vegetarianism to Avoid Apocalyptic Calamities." Though Gao did not make any direct references to Yinguang, his article largely follows the rhetoric of transmigration between human and animals, which is a typical argument against eating meat.⁶¹³

⁶¹¹ Longcan, "Quan ren suduan roushi mianli zainan wen 勸人速斷肉食免罹災難文 [Urge People to Quite Meat-eating in Order to Avoid Disasters]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 22 (1943), in MFQB 69: 125-126.

⁶¹² Desen, "Lun jiesha chisu zhi yaoyi 論戒殺吃素之要義 [On the Gist of Non-killing and Vegetarianism]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 44 (1945), in MFQB 69: 368-369.

⁶¹³ Gao Juezhen, "Jiesha rusu wanhui jieyun shuo 戒殺茹素挽回劫運說 [Stop Killing and Adopt Vegetarianism to Avoid Apocalyptic Calamities]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 48 (1945), in MFQB 69: 436.

Besides the typical karmic argument, *Spreading the Teaching Monthly* also printed articles testifying through personal experiences to the benefits of vegetarianism. In 1943, a Qian Huijing 錢慧淨 wrote about the necessity to keep a vegetarian diet, even for women going through pregnancy and postpartum recovery. Although heavy meat consumption was never recommended in traditional Chinese obstetrics, restrictions typically focused on particular kinds of meat, such as chicken or those meats mentioned by Yinguang treated above.⁶¹⁴ With the coming of modern Western biomedicine, the pregnancy food taboo was greatly challenged.⁶¹⁵ Hence Qian's article advocating a vegetarian diet for women in childbirth would have certainly stood against the conventional practice. Qian understood this concern and admitted that she was not much of a believer in the beginning. However, since her whole family took up a vegetarian diet in 1937, Qian believed their experiences proved otherwise. The majority of Qian's text draws a comparison between her first daughter-in-law and third daughter-in-law, the former giving birth at a modern hospital, cared for by medical professionals, while the latter is implied to have had a home birth, yet the mother's diet was not different from the rest of the family—strictly vegetarian. Qian's first daughter-in-law ended up staying in the hospital for several months, consuming meat products under doctor's advice, but she developed some minor illnesses in the process. The child was not in good health either until they both returned home and followed a vegetarian diet. In contrast, the third daughter-in-law and her child were in good health. Thereby Qian concluded that vegetarianism posed no threat to women with child.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁴ Wu Yi-lin, *Reproducing Women: Medicine, Metaphor and Childbirth in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 203-204.

⁶¹⁵ Tina Johnson, *Childbirth in Republican China: Delivering Modernity* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2011), 12

⁶¹⁶ Qian Huijing, "Rusu piyi shuo 茹素闢疑說 [Dispelling Doubt about Vegetarianism]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 28 (1943), in MFQB 69: 182-183.

Although Qian's article came from personal experience, it was echoed by another lay Buddhist with the Dharma name Jingru 淨如, who provides her own experience to support Qian's account. Jingru wrote that after reading Qian's piece in the journal, she was in total agreement and decided to supply her own story about adopting a vegetarian diet. Jingru recounts that she took up vegetarianism in 1939, after she began to suffer from a serious skin disease on her neck in 1936. Despite her efforts to seek treatment and pray to the Buddha, the disease did not go away. Jingru reflected in the article that it might be due to her lack of consistency in keeping the vegetarian diet. After consulting with a doctor who suggested that the disease might be caused by over-consumption of meat, particularly eggs, Jingru realized the harm of meat. After becoming a vegetarian, Jingru stayed in good health, even into her sixties.⁶¹⁷ Both Qian and Jingru emphasize the personal health aspects of vegetarianism, but they both subtly imply the idea of the karmic transmigration.

For Zhou Yuanhe 周圓和, however, his journey to vegetarianism originated with a medical condition, but was facilitated by his conversion to Buddhism. Zhou recounts that he was constantly in poor health with a variety of minor illnesses. Then a doctor suggested that consuming less animal products might alleviate the symptoms because medical research had uncovered the potential of transmitting diseases from animals to humans through meat consumption. However, Zhou failed to maintain a strict vegetarian diet until he was convinced by the Buddhist teaching of the moral implications of meat-eating. After becoming a lay Buddhist and adhering to a vegetarian diet, his health greatly improved. At the end of his article, Zhou repudiates the common accusations made by Chinese intellectuals that vegetarianism is either a form of superstition or a practice

⁶¹⁷ Jingru, "Du rusu piyi shuo shu hou 讀茹素闢疑說書後 [After Reading the 'Dispelling Doubt about Vegetarianism']," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 31 (1944), in MFQB 69: 237.

leading to malnutrition by coupling his personal experience with Sun Yat-sen's writing on the benefits of vegetarianism. Another noticeable part of Zhou's writing is the incorporation of a paragraph arguing for the toxicity aspect of meat by resorting to Western biomedicine, invoking concepts such as leukocytes and the alkalinity of blood.⁶¹⁸ Compared with other articles printed in the conservative camp's periodicals, Zhou's work is particularly unique in terms of bringing together scientific rationality and Buddhist arguments to support vegetarianism.

In general, the conservative camp emphasizes the moral implications and karmic benefit of vegetarianism. There are fewer authors who tackle the issue from a purely scientific perspective, and the majority of authors repeat the rhetoric popularized by leading figures like Yinguang. However, articles from the conservative camp did realize the necessity of employing new concepts such as *weisheng* to buttress their reasoning. For these authors, *weisheng* stands for the personal health benefits resulting from a benign karmic deed. Hence the underlining mentality for the conservative camp of Buddhists in discussing vegetarianism did not stray far from the Buddhist tradition of "guarding lives."

8.3 Lü Bicheng and the Modern Buddhist Vegetarianism Movement

For both the reform and conservative camps, defending and promoting vegetarianism in modern China was about survival and adaptation to the modern society, particularly the latter which presented Buddhism as being capable of contributing to the national modernization project.

⁶¹⁸ Zhou Yuanhe, "Sushi sannian de liyi 素食三年的利益 [Benefits of Being a Vegetarian for Three Years]," *Honghua yuekan*, no. 36 (1944), in MFQB 69: 249.

By emphasizing the health benefits, Buddhist authors contributing to these periodicals aimed to convince their readers of the congruence of this somewhat defamed practice with science. Moreover, Chinese Buddhists were aware of vegetarian movements unfolding in the West and cited them as further support of the Buddhist practice. Some of the articles presented above touch upon these international vegetarian movements briefly, yet the most engaged Buddhist who wrote extensively about these movements was Lü Bicheng 吕碧城 (1883 – 1943), a lay Buddhist woman who is also known as a pioneer of feminism in China, as well as a member of the Southern Society 南社.

Lü developed an interest in Buddhism during her sojourn in London around 1918, when she came across a copy of *The Wise Words of Master Yinguang* (*Yinguang fashi jiayan lu* 印光法師嘉言錄).⁶¹⁹ Moreover, according to Fan Chunwu's study, Lü paid a visit to Dixian in Beijing before her journey overseas.⁶²⁰ Hence for Lü, her conversion to Buddhism was facilitated by Yinguang and Dixian. Furthermore, she continued to write in classical Chinese, a feature widely shared by many Buddhists in the conservative camp. However, Lü was also welcomed by the reform camp because she witnessed the extravagant dietary norms in the West and also observed the trending vegetarianism movement in Europe and America, resulting in her belief that it was imperative to introduce these trends to China. Lü's introduction of vegetarianism in the West culminated in her book *Oumei zhiguang* 歐美之光 (*The Light of Europe and the Americas*)

⁶¹⁹ Cheng Che 澄徹, "Lü Bicheng jushi zhuanlüe 吕碧城居士傳略 [A Brief Biography of Lü Bicheng]," *Jueyouqing banyuekan*, no.87-88 (1943), in MFBQ 62: 5.

⁶²⁰ Fan Chunwu, "Qingmo minchu nvciren Lü Bicheng yu guoji sushi yundong 清末民初女词人吕碧城与国际蔬食运动 [The Female Literatus Lü Bicheng in Early Twentieth Century China and the International Vegetarian Movement]," *Qingshi yanjiu* 清史研究, no. 02 (2010): 107.

published in 1931 by the Shanghai Buddhist Book Company 上海佛學書局. The book's content mainly consists of translated reports, articles, and speeches on the promotion of vegetarianism and animal rights, with some reflection on the dooming and inhumane effects of scientism.⁶²¹ According to the preface, two versions of the *Light of Europe and the Americas* existed, one called the "complete version" which contained all the pictures and original English articles, while another "abridged version" is without pictures and lengthy English texts but still contains short English texts such as names, addresses, and lists intact. The version I have access to is the abridged version.

The book can be split into two parts; one half considers the animal-protection movements and derived organizations in Western countries, and the second covers Lü's speeches and personal witness to the practice of vegetarianism. The book's content was frequently reprinted in Buddhist periodicals. Before the book was formally published by the Shanghai Buddhist Book Company, it featured two prefaces: one written by Ling Jimin 凌楫民 (dates unknown), a friend of Lü at Columbia University, and another written by Lü herself. In Lü's preface, she writes that "ever since China made frequent contact with the West, the social ethos changed rapidly, and people cherish whatever comes from overseas and jettison the national essence. Ideas like vegetarianism and non-killing were deemed pedantic and worthless. However, these ideas begin to be valued by Westerners and put into practices." In the end, Lü states that the purpose of the book is to "let Chinese people know the new trend in the world, and dispel the misunderstanding that Westerners do not know about non-killing."⁶²²

⁶²¹ Tarocco, *The Cultural Practice of Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 64-65.

⁶²² Lü Bicheng, "Zixu 自序 [Self-preface]," in *Haichao yin*, no. 03 (1931), in MFQ 177: 384-385.

Before Lü decided to publish her book, she engaged in a debate about the construction of a slaughterhouse in Tianjing with a Tan Nianzeng 談念曾 (dates unknown) between 1929 and 1930.⁶²³ Lü was against the expansion and upgrade of the slaughterhouse by the Tianjing municipal government and its plan to urge citizens to cultivate the habit of consuming more meat. Tan was in charge of the slaughterhouse and returned several open letters to Lü in defense of the proposal. The majority of their correspondence took place in *Ta Kung Pao* 大公报, a national newspaper based in Tianjing, and Lü served as its special reporter during her visit to the West. But *Sound of Sea Tide* transcribed some of the letters, including one of Tan's responses. In this letter, Tan acknowledges and praises Lü's compassion for animals, but contends that he had "not heard of any Western governments forbidding the slaughter and consumption of animal meat." Tan believed as long as the slaughter mechanical design was merciful and scientific, then it should be acceptable. Moreover, Tan argues that the relationship between humans and animals throughout history was not in harmony at all, as there is no lack of incidents where animals have preyed on humans. Moreover, several types of livestock were tamed by people and raised for the sole purpose of meat consumption.⁶²⁴

Lü's response to Tan's letter was printed in *Ta Kung Pao*, in which she replies that the ban on animal slaughter was based on normative reasoning rather than on reality, and Tan's warning about predatory animals was an exaggeration since humankind did more harm to itself than wild

⁶²³ Shu-ching Lai, "Lü Bicheng dui xifang baohu dongwu yundong de chuanjie yi Oumei Zhiguang wei zhongxin de tantao 呂碧城對西方保護動物運動的傳介 —以《歐美之光》為中心的探討 The Introduction of the Western Animal Protection Movement by Miss Alice Pichen Lee — A Discussion Focusing on 'the Light of the West'," *Guoshiguan guankan* 國史館館刊, no. 23 (2010): 91-94.

⁶²⁴ Tan Nianzeng, "Tan Nianzeng zhi Lü Bicheng nvshi shu 談念曾致呂碧城女士書 [Letter from Tan Nianzeng to Madam Lü Bicheng]," *Haichao yin*, no. 04 (1930), in MFQ 175: 224-225.

animals did. Using the advantage of her close observation of the Western animal rights protection movement, Lü frequently cites examples, experiments, and petitions made in Britain, Germany, and other European countries on the importance of protecting animal lives, emphasizing the popular idea that consuming butchered meat was toxic to humans.⁶²⁵ One of the characteristics of Lü's articles is the detailed citations from foreign sources, as she always references the original source, including names of people, newspapers, magazines, and books, as well as key terms, within her articles, thus convincingly presenting support for her arguments. Though Lü's reply to Tan was not reprinted by Buddhist presses, a great many of her other works about the practice of vegetarianism and animal protection appear in *Sound of Sea Tide*, the *Buddhist Semimonthly*, the *Journal of the World Buddhist Association*, the *Bodhisattva*, and others.

Interestingly, though Lü was closely associated with Yinguang and Dixian, very few of her texts appear in the conservative camp's periodicals. The majority of her texts appear in *Sound of Sea Tide*, the *Buddhist Semimonthly*, and the *Journal of the World Buddhist Association*. This phenomenon is likely related to the reform camp periodicals' targeted audiences, as these three included a larger audience of lay Buddhist readers, and Lü's writings on the status of vegetarianism and non-killing idea in the West were particularly welcomed by metropolitan Buddhist householders excited to learn about how the trends in their own practice were emerging in Europe and America.

Lü's introduction to the Western practice of vegetarianism was welcomed and echoed by other Buddhists. For example, in the *Special Issue on Vegetarianism*, several authors used Lü's

⁶²⁵ Lü Bicheng, "Gailiang tuzai wenti bao tan Zeng jun shu 改良屠宰問題—報談念曾君書 [On Issue of Improving Slaughter Process --- Reply to Mr. Zeng]," *Ta Kung Pao Tianjing* 大公報天津版, August 25, 1929.

writing to illustrate the popularity of vegetarianism in the West. The author An Gui 安歸 cites Lü Bicheng's lament of the incessant massacre of animals,⁶²⁶ while another Huang Zhilong 黃志隆 printed an excerpt from Lü's the *Light of Europe and the Americas*, focusing on the translated news reports on animal protection incidents.⁶²⁷ Another author Zhu Ying 茱英, though he did not quote Lü's writing, followed her path and wrote a report about the vegetarianism movement in Europe in *Sound of Sea Tide* in 1936.⁶²⁸

After Lü passed away in 1943, the *Bodhisattva* journal published a special issue on animal rights protection and vegetarian practice, in which the editorial identifies Lü as a pioneer in advocating animal protection through her writings in modern China.⁶²⁹ The special issue printed reports on the animal protection movement in Europe and America, as well as reflections on past efforts. One author, Huang Weishi 黃維時, highly praises Lü's role in the movement, commenting that it was because of Lü's introduction of Western ideas, organizations, incidents, and social elite support on the matter, based on pure humanitarian grounds rather than religious doctrine, that the animal protection and vegetarian movements in modern China started to be viewed as part of a universal campaign to build a civilized society, and not simply a religious practice narrowly built on Buddhist precepts.⁶³⁰

⁶²⁶ An Gui, "Tichang sushi wei beizhi shuangxiu zhi shi 提倡蔬食為悲智雙修之始 [The Dual Cultivation of Compassion and Wisdom Starts with the Promotion of Vegetarianism]," *Sushi tekan*, 1943, in MFQB 59: 388-389.

⁶²⁷ Huang Zhilong, "Oumei hushing suotan 歐美護生瑣談 [Talking about Life-Protection in Europe and America]," *Sushi tekan*, 1943, in MFQB 59: 392-393.

⁶²⁸ Zhu Ying, "Ouzhou de sushi yundong 歐洲的素食運動 [The Vegetarianism Movement in Europe]," *Haichaoyin*, no.10(1936), in MFQ 195: 19.

⁶²⁹ "Dai buneng fayanzhe fayan 代不能發言者發言 [Speak on Behalf of These who Cannot Speak]," *Jueyou qing*, no. 99-100 (1943), in MFQB 62: 97.

⁶³⁰ Huang Weishi, "Husheng yundong ying zaijie zaili 護生運動應再接再厲 [The Animal Protection Movement Should Continue]," *Jueyou qing*, no. 99-100 (1943), in MFQB 62: 101.

The case of Lü Bicheng and her efforts in vegetarianism campaign reveals the feature of hybrid modernity resulting from the joint efforts of the conservative and reform camps of Buddhists. For Lü, her Buddhist belief and conversion were influenced and initiated by Yinguang and Dixian, yet her overseas sojourn and experience were valued by the reform camp. Furthermore, Lü's rejection of scientism and admiration of the nascent humanitarian ethos of the West fit particularly well with the reform camp's stance on appropriating science through the lens of Buddhism. Her introduction of the Western development of vegetarian practice and animal protection certainly elevated the claims of Chinese Buddhists in their own campaign to promote the Buddhist practice. Chinese historian Ge Zhaoguang asserts that Chinese Buddhists in the Republican period, represented by Taixu, strove for "greater room for the survival of Buddhism."⁶³¹ Lü's vegetarianism and animal protection campaign significantly enlarged Buddhism's room for survival. In addition, Lü exerted a cohesive force on different Buddhist factions, particularly between the conservative and reform camps. Though these two camps supported the vegetarianism movement with varying visions, they both supported Lü's effort to expand the influence of vegetarianism in the realm of public opinion, thus forging a united front within the Chinese Buddhist community on this issue.

⁶³¹ Ge, *Xichao you Dongfeng*, 131.

9.0 Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have argued that Buddhist periodicals played a pivotal role in the formation of modern Chinese Buddhism by allowing Buddhists with diverse visions to debate and negotiate over specific issues, resulting in the construction of a particular Chinese Buddhist modernity discourse. Through this modern medium, the two camps of Buddhists came together to debate the course of a modern Buddhist renewal, and in doing so created a “subaltern counterpublics” that empowered the Buddhist community to engage with the larger social context of the Republican era. In this way, Buddhist periodicals became a crucial component for the renewal of Buddhism in modern China.

My reason for labeling modern Chinese Buddhism as a “renewal” rather than a “revival” is, as I have previously illustrated, that even though Buddhists were confronted with new challenges, they proffered answers through Buddhist perspectives that were either innovative and progressive, or restorationist and conservative. Holmes Welch, in spite of using the term “revival” in the title of his monograph *The Buddhist Revival in China*, casts doubt on the meaning of the so-called “Buddhist revival in China,” which he suggests might be “simply a reduction in the distorting effect of Christian bias” due to missionaries’ reports.⁶³² The disproportionate exposure of the reform camp led by Taixu contributed to the impression that Chinese Buddhism was undergoing a profound secular transformation. Yet, Welch argues that Taixu “misread the situation” and the trend of reform “would have meant not a growing validity for Buddhism but its

⁶³² Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 254-255.

eventual demise as a living religion.”⁶³³ This view certainly holds merit in terms of the imbalanced scholarly emphasis on the reform camp, but it also ought to be revised for the overall assessment of the situation. As I have shown in Chapter Three, the reform-minded Buddhists indeed felt the challenge posed by the new age, particularly the growing cultural and ideological ethos hostile toward Chinese tradition. However, they were unlike the May Fourth radicals who espoused Westernization and a total break with the past.

Buddhist reformers developed a tactic to cope with challenges by acknowledging and accepting the external crisis yet still insisting that part of the solution lay within the Buddhist tradition. Although the reform camp presented a progressive-looking agenda to overhaul the sangha and Buddhist doctrine, this tactic does not differ much from the syncretistic approach used by Buddhists in the late Ming period, as shown by Chun-fang Yu. Although this syncretism took place between the Chan and Pure Land traditions within Buddhism, the late Ming case provides an example of the “openness” that revigorated the religion.⁶³⁴ The reform Buddhists of the Republican era illustrate their receptivity toward new intellectual discourses, and by appropriating them in a Buddhist context, they were able to generate momentum for Buddhism to adapt to, rather than stand against, the iconoclastic ethos.

The reform camp, however, does not represent the whole of the modern Chinese Buddhist community. Their qualified alignment with the contemporaneous progressive intellectual culture provided one choice for Buddhists who were passionate about change. Yet, there was also a group of Buddhists in the Republican era who did not concur with the May Fourth movement, and the conservative camp thus provides another option for responding to the challenges of modernization.

⁶³³ Ibid., 261-264.

⁶³⁴ Yu, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China*, 229.

Faced with the triumphant discourse of anti-traditionalism and all the concomitant cultural renovation, supporters of the conservative camp rallied behind several key figures—most notably, Yinguang, Dixian, and Yuanying—who responded to the situation with a well-versed message within the traditional Buddhist discourse. Although these key figures largely shunned direct engagement with the theoretical crisis of the new era and specifically the discourse of science, they nevertheless alluded to their positions through writings such as exegetical texts on Buddhist traditions, which were picked up by their followers. These followers were on the frontlines, producing scores of articles with far-reaching influence on issues widely discussed by the reform camp, thereby providing nostalgic Buddhists who were uncomfortable with the reform camp’s radicalism another option and instigating heated discussions within the Buddhist community.

These Buddhist periodicals form the “subaltern counterpublics,” which not only served as a catalyst for pushing Buddhist modernization but also structured the contours of Chinese Buddhist modernity. “Medium is the message,” as McLuhan famously proclaims, accurately captures the role Buddhist periodicals played because as a medium they “[shaped and controlled] the scale and form of human association and action.”⁶³⁵ In this dissertation, I have demonstrated that even though prominent leaders like Taixu and Yinguang held greater sway in terms of producing intellectual discourse, these periodical authors retained a certain degree of agency for themselves and actively appropriated the periodical platform to voice their own reflections. They did not necessarily need to concur with their masters in all aspects and were able to construct their own interpretations when echoing the leading discourse, thus rendering a more flexible stance. Thereby,

⁶³⁵ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994), 9.

Buddhist periodicals contributed to the expansion of visions that were initiated by the leading Buddhist figures, but who were no longer wholly in control of their trajectories.

Moreover, Buddhist periodicals as a new medium cultivated a sense of cohesion and solidarity among Buddhists in a divisive age. Although this dissertation takes a comparative approach to narrate the divergent visions between the two camps for the meaning and practice of Buddhism in the modern age, I illustrate that as external hostility intensified, the Buddhist community regrouped and uniformly resisted. When the state escalated its assault on Buddhist properties, both the reform and conservative camps fiercely opposed the encroachment and resorted to different means to thwart the state oppression. Regarding traditional practices, both camps were dedicated to promoting practices they deemed inalienable to Buddhist identity, including ascetic self-mutilation and vegetarianism. Nancy Frazer argues that subaltern counterpublics “on the one hand, ... function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment; on the other hand, they function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics.”⁶³⁶ And Michael Warner further identifies the indispensable role of the medium, including that “print, theater, diffused networks of talk, commerce and the like,” have a part to play in the constitution of a counterpublic.⁶³⁷ As a new print medium in early twentieth-century China, Buddhist periodicals facilitated such mobilization and allowed both camps to openly defend Buddhist interests, hence resulting in the strengthening of the Buddhist identity and community within the modern context.

Besides discussions of new issues instigated by political and cultural modernization, Chinese Buddhists also reinterpreted certain practices against the backdrop of the anti-traditional

⁶³⁶ Frazer, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” 68.

⁶³⁷ Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books; Cambridge, Mass.: Distributed by MIT Press, 2002), 56-57.

ethos. As Chapter Seven and Eight illustrated, texts regarding Buddhist asceticism and vegetarian diet represent the endeavor by Buddhist authors to assert a positive role for these traditions. Facing charges of superstition, Buddhists nevertheless continued to express traditional veneration for self-immolation practices and proudly presented these cases for their readers in periodicals of both the reform and conservative camps. They believed the noble sacrifice of auto-cremators testified to the spirit of compassion and the promise of salvation by Buddhism for the masses. Other forms of self-harm, as long as they were performed out of genuine intention and profound understanding of the Buddhist Dharma, were also recognized and appreciated by these authors. The discourse of the body served to repudiate the accusations of the corruption of Chinese Buddhism, and the public presentation of these cases not only created moral exemplars for Buddhist practitioners but also made a claim for the legitimacy of Buddhism in modern China.

In terms of vegetarianism, reform camp Buddhists acutely perceived the advantage of introducing concepts of modern hygiene and medical health to this Buddhist tradition, and they made an effort to connect Buddhist vegetarian precepts with the modern Western vegetarian movement introduced by overseas Chinese intellectuals. The conservative camp, while insisting on the traditional moral benefit derived from the non-killing principle, observed the necessity of catering to the modern lay Buddhist's daily needs, thus advocating practices such as the vegetarian banquet for celebratory occasions and the use of vegetarian soap. They offered an updated form of Buddhist vegetarian practice for the modern age, yet they did so out of the traditional concern for and rhetoric of moral elevation. Thereby, through their promotion of the renewed vegetarianism toward the Buddhist community, both camps reshaped the tradition and exemplified how Buddhism could be modernized for on-the-ground practices.

In the first half of the twentieth century, China was in constant tension between the push for modernization and the resilience of tradition. The leading intellectual of the May Fourth Movement, Hu Shih, citing Nietzsche's idea of the "Transvaluation of All Values," proclaimed that the meaning of the New Intellectual Tide (新思潮) for the movement was to re-evaluate all Chinese traditions, since the values and norms of Chinese society were "shaking fundamentally" and were unfit for modern society.⁶³⁸ Thus, scholars have emphasized the iconoclastic effects of the movement and analyzed the era from the perspective of intellectual history. Wang Hui, for example, on the basis of in-depth research, discusses extensively the ethos of science and the May Fourth iconoclastic ideology.⁶³⁹ When studying those who opposed May Fourth radicalism and advocated for the preservation of tradition, scholars tend to look into elite intellectual discourse represented by journals like *Xue Heng* 学衡 (Critical Review);⁶⁴⁰ yet periodicals published by religious groups have received insufficient attention. In comparison with figures like Hu Shih and influential journals like *Xin qinnian* 新青年 (The New Youth), Buddhist periodicals did not exert a similarly extensive influence over Chinese intellectual discourse. However, Buddhism was implicated in the social revolution fanaticism engendered by the May Fourth ethos and was forced to make a public stand for itself. Hence, there appeared over two hundred Buddhist periodicals forming an extensive readership in the early twentieth century China.

Admittedly, the motive behind the production and operation of Buddhist periodicals is a sense of crisis, but the social foundation of Buddhism in the early twentieth century was not exactly

⁶³⁸ Hu Shih, "Xin sichao de yiyi 新思潮的意義 [The Meaning of New Intellectual Tide]," *Xin qinnian* 新青年 (The New Youth), vol. 07, no. 01 (1919): 5-12.

⁶³⁹ Wang Hui, *Xiandai Zhongguo sixiang de xingqi* 现代中国思想的兴起 [The Rise of Modern Chinese Thoughts] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2004), chapter 12.

⁶⁴⁰ Lydia He Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity--China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 246-256.

crippling. As I have demonstrated in Chapter Six, Buddhists successfully thwarted the central government's proposal advocating for the systematic expropriation of temple property. The appearance of Buddhist periodicals galvanized the monastic and lay communities to engage with the push for modernization and stimulated the Buddhist masses to reflect on the modern fate of their faith and practice.

Naturally, there appeared persons espousing thorough reform, as has been well documented in scholarship, but Buddhists leaning toward preserving tradition also had a voice. The conservative stance was formulated in opposition to the reform camp as well as within the context of the overall May Fourth anti-traditionalism. Hence, the conservative camp participated in the shaping of Buddhism in modern China through their polemics and publication practices, making them part and parcel of the Buddhist modernity discourse that emerged in Republican China era.

This dissertation has examined arguments as well as propositions. It has uncovered discussions and disputes between the reform and conservative camps in order to demonstrate the complex characteristics of a Chinese Buddhist modernity emerging from the messy confrontation among various participants, including but not limited to monastics, lay Buddhists, secular intellectuals, and politicians. Both the reform and conservative camps contributed to a modern Buddhist discourse that embraces dualistic positions on unprecedented social and cultural transformations. Doctrinally, the reform camp focused on updating the Buddhist philosophy in dialogue with the modernization discourse, while the conservative camp strove to draw a boundary between orthodox beliefs and heretical understandings by emphasizing the scriptures and traditional exegetical texts. In practice, both camps realized the necessity to maintain and propagate practices essential to Buddhist identity.

Through the medium of Buddhist periodicals, the two Buddhist camps shaped a Buddhist modernity with internal tensions. On the one hand, they jointly proposed a Buddhism capable of responding to modernization discourses including scientism, rationalism, individualism, and disenchantment. On the other, they offered different responses catering to the diverse needs of modern Chinese Buddhists, hence allowing Buddhism to survive under heterogenous social contexts. Thereby, together they constructed a Buddhist modernity discourse with flexibility and adaptability for their contemporaries and coming generations, enabling a “process of autopoietic reproduction,” to borrow Niklas Luhmann’s concept, which is always prepared for the “possibilities for forming within the system a new system having its own system/environment difference — perhaps a system that will last longer than the initial one.”⁶⁴¹ The later generation of Buddhists in both Taiwan and Mainland China testifies to the tenacity and pliability of this discourse.

The reform camp’s vision of “humanistic Buddhism” proposed by Taixu has been embraced by Buddhists in Taiwan since 1949. Two Buddhist organizations rooted in Taiwan have grown into influential religious entities with international impact: the Tzu Chi Foundation 慈濟基金會 and the Buddha’s Light Mountain 佛光山. These organizations were established in the 1960s by Master Chengyen 證嚴 (1937 -) and Master Hsingyun 星云 (1927 -) respectively, who claimed spiritual affiliation with Taixu and his disciple Yinshun.⁶⁴² The Tzu Chi Foundation focuses on charity work and attracts a large group of female lay Buddhists. In fact, the Right Faith society

⁶⁴¹ Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems: Writing Science*, translated by John Bednarz, Jr, with Dirk Baecker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 189.

⁶⁴² André Laliberté, *The Politics of Buddhist Organizations in Taiwan 1989-2003: Safeguarding the Faith, Building a Pure Land, Helping the Poor* (London and New York, RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 40.

also operated a charity branch with the name “Tzu Chi 慈濟” in the 1930s. Thus, the Tzu Chi Foundation efforts follow the reform camp in terms of extensive social engagement, while it expands the female presence in the cause, an innovation beyond what Taixu and his followers had imagined. As Julia Huang argues, the Tzu Chi Foundation is essentially a lay Buddhist movement with a particular presence of female activism and a mission to build a “pure land” in this world through secular action.⁶⁴³

The Buddha’s Light Mountain monastic order, compared to Tzu Chi’s apolitical stance, maintains a pronounced presence in political affairs, especially after the democratization of Taiwan in the 1990s. Its founder, Hsingyun, is known as a “political monk,” similar to Taixu.⁶⁴⁴ It is worth noting that Taixu advocated for the political rights of monastics in 1936, which stirred heated debates on whether the sangha should be deeply involved with worldly politics.⁶⁴⁵ Later Taixu expressed his support for the sangha’s suffrage but not for forming a political party.⁶⁴⁶ For spiritual cultivation, both Tzu Chi and The Buddha’s Light Mountain emphasize practices and cultivation techniques suitable for their social surroundings rather than following the scriptures verbatim. By doing this, they aim to avoid asceticism and attract more practitioners.⁶⁴⁷ Therefore, it is obvious that the reform camp in early Republican China inspired Buddhists of later generations in Taiwan, and both Tzu Chi and the Buddha’s Light Mountain further developed Taixu’s vision for the modernization of Chinese Buddhism.

⁶⁴³ C. Julia Huang, *Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 212-218.

⁶⁴⁴ Laliberté, *The Politics of Buddhist Organizations in Taiwan 1989-2003*, chapter 4.

⁶⁴⁵ Taixu, “Sengni ying canjia guomin dahui daibiao xuanju 僧尼應參加國民大會代表選舉 [The Sangha Should Participate into the Election of National Representatives],” *Haichao yin*, no. 08 (1936), in MFQ: 194: 280.

⁶⁴⁶ Taixu, “Fojiao buyao zu zhengdang 佛教不要組政黨 [Buddhists Should not Form Political Party],” *Juequn zhoubao 覺群週報*, no. 30 (1947), in MFQ 101: 438.

⁶⁴⁷ Stuart Chandler, *Establishing a Pure Land on Earth: The Foguang Buddhist Perspective on Modernization and Globalization* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004), 44.

In the post-Mao era, there has been an ongoing religious revival in Mainland China. The government has been allowing religions to recuperate following the destructive aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. Buddhism is currently in a period of rapid development, with temples being restored and the sangha population growing. Although no religious orders similar to Tzu Chi and the Buddha's Light Mountain have emerged, lay Buddhist activism continues. This is demonstrated in Gareth Fisher's ethnographic work, which shows that various textual communities are being formed through the use of traditional printed texts in conjunction with modern mediums such as DVDs and the Internet.⁶⁴⁸ Moreover, Fisher also discovers that this lay Buddhist activism is closely related to the reprinting and circulation of morality books, a phenomenon similar to the project of Yingguang and his followers.⁶⁴⁹ Francesca Tarocco explores the utilization of new media, including social network apps, by monastic Buddhists in contemporary China to construct a "cyber-Buddhism" where digital Buddhist objects, like electronic scriptures and sermon messages, are created and maintained by a vast network of followers.⁶⁵⁰ Hence, both the monastic and lay Buddhists in Mainland China recognize the importance of appropriating new media for the purposes of communication and propagation, and many traditional Buddhist texts are part of the ongoing Buddhist revival in some form.

Buddhist periodicals produced in the first half of the twentieth century can be viewed as a prism of the time. On the one hand, they bring texts, doctrines, and practices from the past into focus in a way that reveals a wide range of Buddhist responses to the chaotic new age of the early

⁶⁴⁸ Gareth Fisher, "Mapping Religious Difference: Lay Buddhist Textual Communities in the Post-Mao Period," in *Recovering Buddhism in Modern China*, eds. Jan Kiely, and J. Brooks Jessup (New York: Columbia University Press): 257-290.

⁶⁴⁹ Gareth Fisher, "Morality books and the regrowth of lay Buddhism in China," in *Religion in Contemporary China: Revitalization and Innovation*, ed. Adam Yuet Chau (London; New York: Routledge, 2011), 53-80.

⁶⁵⁰ Francesca Tarocco, "Technologies of Salvation: (Re)locating Chinese Buddhism in the Digital Age," *Journal of Global Buddhism*, vol. 18 (2017): 155-175.

20th century. On the other hand, they project several beams of light into the future that may help guide reformers in renewing Buddhist traditions for China today.

Glossary

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Baojing | 寶靜 |
| Cai Yuanpei | 蔡元培 |
| Chen Hailiang | 陳海量 |
| Chen Yuanbai | 陳白元 |
| Chiang Kai-shek | 蔣介石 |
| Dai Jitao | 戴季陶 |
| Daxing | 大醒 |
| Desen | 德森 |
| Di Chuqing | 狄楚青 |
| Dixian | 諦閒 |
| <i>Dongfang zazhi</i> | The Eastern Miscellany 東方雜誌 |

| | | |
|------------------------------|--|---------|
| Fafang | | 法舫 |
| Fan Gunong | | 範古農 |
| Foci yaochang | The Buddha's Compassion Pharmaceuticals Factory | 佛慈藥廠 |
| Foguang she | the Buddha's Light Society | 佛光社 |
| <i>Foguangshe shekai</i> | The Buddha's Light Society Journal | 佛光社社刊 |
| <i>Fohua cejinhui huikan</i> | The Journal of Society of Buddhization Advancement | 佛化策進會會刊 |
| <i>Fohua xinqinnian</i> | The Young Men's Buddhist Monthly | 佛化新青年 |
| <i>Fojiao yuebao</i> | Buddhism Monthly | 佛教月報 |
| <i>Foxu congbao</i> | Buddhist Miscellanies | 佛學叢報 |
| <i>Foxue banyuekan</i> | Buddhist Semimonthly | 佛學半月刊 |
| <i>Foxue Xunkan</i> | Buddhist Studies Trimonthly | 佛學旬刊 |
| <i>Foxue yuekan</i> | Buddhist Studies Monthly | 佛學月刊 |

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| Gao Henian | | 高鶴年 |
| Guanzong Temple | | 觀宗寺 |
| <i>Guowen huibian</i> | Trimonthly of National News | 國聞匯編 |
| <i>Haichao yin</i> | Sound of Sea Tide | 海潮音 |
| Hongfa she | The Dharma Propagation Society | 弘法社 |
| <i>Hongfa xunkan</i> | Dharma Propagation Thrice-monthly | 弘法旬刊 |
| Honghua hui | Society for Spreading the Teaching | 弘化會 |
| Honghua she | The Society of Spreading the Teaching | 弘化社 |
| <i>Honghua yuekan</i> | Spreading the Teaching Monthly | 弘化月刊 |
| Hongyi | | 弘一 |
| Hu Huiche | | 胡慧徹 |
| Huang Baocang | | 黃葆蒼 |

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|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Jiang Qian | | 江謙 |
| Jiang Zuobin | | 蔣作賓 |
| Jichan | | 寄禪 |
| Jinling kejing chu | The Jinling Scripture Carving House | 金陵刻经处 |
| Jinye yuekan | Pure Karma Monthly | 淨業月刊 |
| <i>Jueshe congshu</i> | The Journal of the Awakening Society | 覺社叢書 |
| <i>Jueyouqing</i> | Bodhisattva | 覺有情 |
| Li Hongzhang | | 李鴻章 |
| Li Shizeng | | 李石曾 |
| Li Yincheng | | 李隱塵 |
| Li Yuanhong | | 黎元洪 |
| Liang Qichao | | 梁啟超 |

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Liang Shuming | | 梁漱溟 |
| <i>Liangyou huabao</i> | The Young Companion | 良友畫報 |
| Lin Sen | | 林森 |
| Lü Bicheng | | 呂碧城 |
| Manzhi | | 滿智 |
| Miaochan xingxue | Build Schools with Temple Properties | 廟產興學 |
| Minnan Foxueyuan | Minnan Seminary | 閩南佛學院 |
| mixin | superstition | 迷信 |
| <i>Nanhua xunkan</i> | South China Thrice-monthly | 南華旬刊 |
| Ning Dayun | | 寧達蘊 |
| Ogurusu Kōchō | | 小栗栖香頂 |
| <i>Oumei zhiguang</i> | The Light of Europe and the Americas | 歐美之光 |

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| Ouyang Jingwu | | 歐陽竟無 |
| Pu Yicheng | | 濮一乘 |
| Qinghai | | 青海 |
| <i>Renhai deng</i> | The Light of the Human World | 人海燈 |
| Shanyin | | 善因 |
| <i>Shen bao</i> | Shanghai News | 申報 |
| Shi Yiru | | 史一如 |
| <i>Sichuan fojiao yuekan</i> | Sichuan Buddhism Monthly | 四川佛教月刊 |
| Sun Yat-sen | | 孫中山 |
| <i>Sushi tekan</i> | Special Issue on Vegetarianism | 素食特刊 |
| <i>Ta Kung Pao</i> | | 大公报 |
| Tai Shuangqiu | | 邵爽秋 |

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| Taixu | | 太虛 |
| Tan Sitong | | 譚嗣同 |
| Tang Dayuan | | 唐大圓 |
| Tang Jiyao | | 唐繼堯 |
| Wang Enyang | | 王恩洋 |
| Wang Sengpu | | 王森普 |
| Wang Xiaoxu | | 王小徐 |
| Wang Yiting | | 王一亭 |
| Wu Tingfang | | 伍廷芳 |
| Wuchang Foxueyuan | Wuchang Seminary | 武昌佛學院 |
| Xia Mianzun | | 夏丐尊 |
| <i>Xiandai sengqie</i> | Modern Sangha | 現代僧伽 |

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| Xianghai fohuakan | Fragrant Ocean Buddhist Periodical | 香海佛化刊 |
| <i>Xin fohua xunkan</i> | New Buddhist Thrice- monthly | 新佛化旬刊 |
| Xin qingnian | New Youth | 新青年 |
| Xiong Xiling | | 熊希齡 |
| Xu Guangqi | | 徐光啓 |
| Xu Weiru | | 徐蔚如 |
| Xue Dubi | | 薛篤弼 |
| Xuyun | | 虛雲 |
| Yan Xishan | | 閻錫山 |
| Yang Wenhui | | 楊文會 |
| Yinguang | | 印光 |
| Yinguang fashi wenchao | Collective Writings of Dharma Master Yinguang | 印光法師文鈔 |

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| You Zhibiao | | 尤智表 |
| Yu Huiguan | | 玉慧觀 |
| Yuanying | | 圓瑛 |
| Yunqi Zhuhong | | 雲棲株宏 |
| Zhang Heng | | 張衡 |
| Zhang Junmai | | 張君勱 |
| Zhang Zhidong | | 張之洞 |
| Zhang Zongzai | | 張宗載 |
| Zhao Puchu | | 趙朴初 |
| Zheng xin | Right Faith | 正信 |
| Zhonghua Fojiao zonghui | The Chinese Buddhist General Association | 中華佛教總會 |

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