



**University of
Sheffield**

Reinterpreting Foguang Monastery, A Revered Tang Legacy in China

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ABSTRACT

Foguang Monastery in the Chinese province of Shanxi is sited on the western slope of Foguang Hill and about thirty kilometres from the UNESCO World Culture Heritage Site of Mount Wutai. As the high-ranked remain commencing in AD 857, its Buddha Hall has been substantially retained and is one of the oldest surviving buildings in China, with most of the structural components being preserved in their original state. Since the discovery of Foguang Monastery by pioneering Chinese architectural historian Liang Sicheng, it has been subjected to detailed research from both political and architectural perspectives, particularly on its political history, architectural detailing, and typology. However, there remains limited understanding of how monuments with religious significance were transmitted through the Chinese architectural vocabulary and eventually adapted to the monastery; how the monastery was created to respond to the mountainous topography and archive religious symbolism; and the rationale behind the monastery's location in Buddhism geography. To address these research questions, this thesis put the lens of Buddhist philosophy, monastic geography, Buddhist rites into the re-interpretation the religious architecture and landscape of Foguang Monastery. The methods of archival study, historical texturing, photogrammetry, pilgrimage research and iconography, mapping and narrative were employed in the thesis. The thesis argues that Foguang Monastery, with its monastic compound, monuments, landscape, location, were deliberately conceptualized and structured by Esoteric Buddhism *maṇḍala* and *Mañjuśrī* cult of Tang dynasty. Buddhist circumambulation determined devotees' pilgrimage to multiple concentrations, either on a small

scale at Foguang Monastery, or on a large geographical scale, such as from the religious centre of Mount Wutai to its peripheral monasteries. These theoretical approaches drove the monastic practice in arts, architecture, rituals, and monastic geography in mediaeval China.

Keywords: *Foguang Monastery, Mount Wutai, Esoteric Buddhism, maṇḍala, circumambulation, Buddhist architecture and geography, pilgrimage, photogrammetry*

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DECLARATION

I, Xiaolu Wang, confirm that the thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not been previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

I further declare that any publications arising from the thesis are acknowledged and referenced. The PhD thesis contains no material that infringes upon any intellectual property rights, patents, trademarks, or copyrights of any individual or organization. Any conflicts of interest that may arise from the research or the content presented in this thesis have been disclosed.

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CHRONOLOGY

<i>Years</i>	<i>Dynasty</i>	<i>Periods of Coexisting Kingdoms</i>	<i>Capital (Modern City Area)</i>
206 BC - AD 220	Han dynasty	-	Chang'an (Xi'an)
206 BC- AD 9	Western Han (Former Han)	-	Chang'an (Xi'an)
AD 9 - AD 23	Xin dynasty	-	Chang'an (Xi'an)
AD 25 - AD 220	Eastern Han (Later Han)	-	Luoyang
AD 220 - AD 280	Three Kingdoms	Kingdom of Wei	Luoyang
		Kingdom of Shu	Chengdu
		Kingdom of Wu	Jianye (Nanjing)
AD 265 - AD 420	Jin dynasty (Sima Jin)	-	Luoyang
AD 265 - AD 316	-	Western Jin	Luoyang
AD 317 - AD 420	-	Eastern Jin	Jiankang (Nanjing)
AD 304 - AD 439	-	Five Hus and Sixteen States	-
AD 420 - AD 589	Northern and Southern dynasties	Northern dynasties	-
		Northern Wei	Pingcheng (Datong), Luoyang
		Eastern Wei	Yecheng (Handan)
		Western Wei	Chang'an (Xi'an)
		Northern Qi	Yecheng (Handan)

		Northern Zhou	Chang'an (Xi'an)
		Southern dynasties	-
		Song	Jiankang (Nanjing)
		Qi	Jiankang (Nanjing)
		Liang	Jiankang (Nanjing)
		Chen	Jiankang (Nanjing)
<i>AD 581 - AD 618</i>	Sui dynasty	-	Daxing (Xi'an), Luoyang
<i>AD 618 - AD 907</i>	Tang dynasty	-	Chang'an (Xi'an), Luoyang
<i>AD 907 - AD 960</i>	Five dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period	-	-
<i>AD 907 - AD 923</i>	Later Liang	-	Kaifeng
<i>AD 923 - AD 936</i>	Later Tang	-	Luoyang
<i>AD 936 - AD 946</i>	Later Jin	-	Kaifeng
<i>AD 947 - AD 950</i>	later Han	-	Kaifeng
<i>AD 951 - AD 960</i>	Later Zhou	-	Kaifeng
<i>AD 907 - 1125</i>	-	Liao dynasty	Shangjing (Chifeng)
<i>AD 960 - 1279</i>	Song dynasty	Northern Song	Bianjing (Kaifeng)
		Southern Song	Lin'an (Hangzhou)
<i>1038 - 1227</i>	-	Western Xia dynasty	Xingqing (Yinchuan)
<i>1115 - 1234</i>	-	Great Jin dynasty (Jurchen dynasty)	Huining (Harbin), Zhongdu (Beijing), Bianjing (Kaifeng)
<i>1271 - 1368</i>	Yuan dynasty	-	Dadu (Beijing)

1368 - 1644	Ming dynasty	-	Yingtian (Nanjing), Shuntian (Beijing)
1644 - 1912	Qing dynasty	-	Beijing

Chapter 1 - Introduction

For religious architecture, 'there are many ways to God, and one is through architecture.'¹ Buddhist 'Monastery' (*Vihāra* or *Samgharāma*) is such a place associated with seclusion, chastity, serenity, asceticism and austerity, and a residence or dwelling of recreation and pleasure in the Classical Sanskrit.² It not only had cells or abodes for monks or hermits, but also any complete monastic establishment.³ The construction of monastery as other monuments (*stūpa*, *sūtra* pillar, pagoda, rock-cut architecture etc.) fully indicates Buddhist cosmology. 'Buddhist cosmology deals with the contents, structures, and functions of the world, particularly in relation to how they impact the experiences of living beings.'⁴ It is intricately linked with everything, from its most profound intellectual accomplishments to people's lives and activities.⁵ Buddhist architecture is a physical form that can reflect the faith, the thoughts of builders, and the historical society.⁶ Foguang Monastery, the epitome of the architectural heritage of the Tang period in China, was undoubtedly structured by Buddhist cosmology, a full understanding of which is indispensable to fathom its architectural origin, transformation and religious significance.

Foguang Monastery, with its amalgamation of diverse Buddhist monuments tracing back to different historical periods, holds the most dazzling historical value. From the first discovery of Foguang Monastery in 1937 by renowned Chinese architect and scholar Liang Sicheng, to the scholarly dispute between

¹ Adam Hardy, 'Religious Architecture and the Creative Process', *Architecture Plus Design*, 14.6 (1997), 73 - 77.

² Gregory Schopen, 'The Buddhist "Monastery" and the Indian garden: Aesthetics, assimilations, and the siting of monastic establishments,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 126.4 (2006), 487-505 (p. 487).

³ James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern architecture*, Vol. 1 (London: Murray, 1891), p. 170.

⁴ Eric Huntington, 'Buddhist Cosmology', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, (2022), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.1050>>.

⁵ Eric Huntington, (2022).

⁶ Lars Fogelin, *An archaeological history of Indian Buddhism*, (Oxford: Oxford Handbooks, 2015), p. 1.

Chinese and Japanese academics,⁷ Foguang Monastery unwittingly become a place full of legendary stories in the academic world. However, the architecturally sophisticated legend attracted scholarly attention that almost eclipsed its role as an ordinary monastery. Most contemporary literature on the Foguang Monastery, especially by Chinese academics, invariably praises its architectural achievements. In addition, buildings in monastery courtyards have a very typical Chinese appearance, enclosed by an unbreakable wall that encloses some wooden buildings inside, which is actually more difficult to understand in its uniqueness as a non-indigenous religious product. These phenomena eventually formed a domino effect on the understanding of ancient Chinese Buddhist architecture by scholars outside China. However, Wei-Cheng Lin has provided a valuable new insight into Foguang Monastery by trying to understand it in the context of Buddhist cosmology and linking monasticism to the religious centre - Mount Wutai.⁸ This idea of understanding the Buddhist heritage from a religious perspective has a similar theoretical approach to the present thesis. However, instead of focusing on the interpretation of Mount Wutai, this thesis mainly concentrates on the buildings and the non-building monuments as well as the landscape of Foguang Monastery and extends its consideration to Mount Wutai.

As one of the few Tang legends, the Foguang Monastery offers the opportunity to explore Buddhist culture in China, cross-cultural interaction, architectural transformation, and development of Buddhist architecture within and beyond

⁷ The discovery of Foguang Monastery put an end to the claims made by Japanese scholars that there were no surviving architectural structures from the Tang dynasty in China.

⁸ Wei-Cheng Lin, *Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014).

China. By assembling various types of evidence obtained through on-site investigation of Foguang Monastery, comparison of early surviving monuments inside and outside China, Buddhist texts and second sources on Buddhist architecture, this PhD thesis attempts to reconstruct the basic symbolism, characteristics, and role of Foguang Monastery.

1.1 The existing state of Foguang Monastery and Mount Wutai

Foguang Monastery is located in Doucun village (豆村镇), Shanxi Province, China, where there is a small mountain called Foguang Hill. It is halfway up the western slope of the hill and faces west, with the other three sides of the courtyard being surrounded by mountains. A 600-metre-long brick wall built in 1954⁹ delimits the inner courtyard, which is about 34,000 m² in size and 92 metres long from east to west (Fig. 1). The present surroundings of the Foguang Monastery still preserve its natural environment. It is one of the few surviving early Buddhist *vihāras* in China. Since Northern Wei dynasty (AD 386 - AD 534) to Qing dynasty (1644 - 1911), it ever underwent numerous changes (a brief chronology of the building activities of Foguang Monastery can be seen in Appendix A).



Fig. 1. The panoramic view of Foguang Monastery, generated by aerial photographs.

⁹ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, 五台山佛光寺 [Foguang Monastery of Mount Wutai], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010), p. 53.

The present architectural remains of the courtyard can be traced back to various dynasties, mainly from five different dynasties (Fig. 2). The Ancient Patriarch Pagoda (Zushi Tower, 祖师塔), located to the southeast corner and next to the Buddha Hall, is considered the oldest relic of the site and was built in the Northern Wei dynasty between AD 386 and AD 534.¹⁰ The most significant building at the monastery, the Buddha Hall, is the Tang period (AD 618 - AD 907) remains. As the highest-ranking timber building to survive from the Tang dynasty commencing in AD 857, it has been substantially retained and is one of the oldest surviving buildings in China.¹¹ It is also the oldest above-ground palace structure in China, with most of the structural components being preserved in their original state.¹² There are three *sūtra* pillars remain at the monastery and two of them date from the Tang dynasty according to the inscriptions on them. The one is in front of the Buddha Hall and was erected AD 857, the other in the middle of the first courtyard was built in AD 877.¹³ The third one is erected aside to the Ancient Patriarch Pagoda, built in the 1444.¹⁴ Furthermore, on Foguang Hill behind the Buddha Hall, most of the existing tomb towers are relics from the Tang dynasty (Fig. 3).

¹⁰ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, (2010), p. 189.

¹¹ Sicheng Liang, '记五台山佛光寺的建筑 - 荟萃在一寺的魏、齐、唐、宋的四个孤例: 荟萃在一殿的唐代四种艺术' [Recording the Buildings of the Foguang Monastery in Mount Wutai], *Cultural Relics*, Z1 (1953), 76-121 (p. 81).

¹² Cultural Heritage Conservation Centre of Architectural Design & Research Institute of Tsinghua University and Beijing Tsinghua Urban & Design Institute, 佛光寺东大殿建筑勘察报告 [Survey and Research on the Main Hall of Fo Kuang Ssu], (Beijing: China Heritage Press, 2011), p. 34.

¹³ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, (2010), pp. 208 - 10.

¹⁴ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, (2010), p. 212.



Fig. 2. Buildings at Foguang Monastery from different historical periods.

- Northern Wei dynasty (AD 386 - AD 535)
- Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907)
- Jin dynasty (1115 - 1234)
- Ming dynasty (1386 - 1644)
- Qing dynasty (1644 - 1912)
- Contemporary buildings



Fig. 3. Pictures of the current situation of Foguang Monastery in 2021.

a - The Buddha Hall, erected in Tang dynasty (AD 857).

b and **d** - Two *sūtra* pillars, built in AD 857 (top) and AD 877 (down).

c - The Ancient Patriarch Pagoda, erected in the Northern Wei dynasty (AD 386 - AD 534).

Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva Hall, as the second-largest wooden hall at the monastery, was built during the Jin dynasty in 1137,¹⁵ and twice underwent restoration and

¹⁵ Shanxi Institute of Ancient Architecture Conservation, 佛光寺[Foguang Monastery], (Taiyuan: Sanjin Press, 1998), p. 27.

preservation in 1721 during the Qing dynasty, and between 2000 - 2002 (Fig. 4).¹⁶

It is seven bays wide (seven unites space without walls, 七开间), four rafters in depth (进深四间), and has a hanging roof with one eave.



Fig. 4. Photo of *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva Hall* of Foguang Monastery, built in 1137.

On the opposite side of the *Mañjuśrī Hall* is the *Samghārāma Hall* (or Qielan Hall, Chinese: 伽蓝殿). Its founding year is unknown, but it was regarded as initially being built during the Ming dynasty (1368 - 1644) and was restored during the Qing dynasty (1636 - 1912).¹⁷ It has three bays, is four rafters in depth, has a hanging roof, and houses eighteen patron saints inside (Fig. 5). Many buildings were constructed during the Qing dynasty (1636 - 1912) in the Foguang Monastery. For example, the present Heavenly King Hall, which is the gate hall of the monastery, faces east and west and is five bays wide, and was built during the Qing dynasty, although the year of its foundation is unknown (Fig. 6).

¹⁶ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, 五台山佛光寺 [Foguang Monastery of Mount Wutai], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010), pp. 52-3.

¹⁷ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, p. 175.



Fig. 5. The Qielan Hall of Foguang Monastery.



Fig. 6. King of Heaven Hall (gate hall) at Foguang Monastery built in the 20th century AD.

After the founding of the New China, the Foguang Monastery was also expanded a little. This created a small courtyard to the south, which now houses the Foguang Monastery Cultural Relics Office. To the northwest of the courtyard are some temporary buildings (Fig. 2). All these architectural and non-building relics gathered in the Foguang Monastery provide a unique opportunity to trace the history of Chinese Buddhist architecture. However, these Buddhist practices from different historical periods represent variable trends in Buddhist art associated with different Buddhist philosophies, and definitely cannot be analysed with regard to a single historical period. Moreover, the Buddha Hall, as the most important element of Foguang Monastery, is fortunately well preserved and has great historical value to the study of monastic architecture and art, Buddhism, and society in the heyday of the development of Buddhism in China. It therefore provides a valuable opportunity to discuss how early Buddhism and Chinese tradition were integrated into the construction of Foguang Monastery.

To the northeast of Foguang Monastery was Ancient Bamboo Forest Monastery (or called Gu Zhulin si) (Fig. 7), almost 2000 metres away. The current buildings

on the site were erected in modern times as all the historical buildings had been damaged. Only a few historical sources and studies can provide insight into this monastery.¹⁸ Four white marble pieces of image statues from the Tang dynasty were discovered in 2002.¹⁹ This is the closest monastery to Foguang Monastery and can also be dated back to the Tang dynasty.



Fig. 7. Google Earth map of Foguang Monastery and its surroundings in 2023.

There is an about 1834-meter-long road leading to Foguang Monastery, with farmland on both sides of the road. The Yanjiazhai River flows from north to south and the hamlet of Yanjiazhai is on its western bank. The only national road (G239) along the Yanjiazhai, which runs at right angles to the road to Foguang Monastery, passes through Yanjiazhai and connects it with other towns (Fig. 7).

According to the conversations with the villagers, the current roadway was built covering the old path but without changing its direction. Moreover, in the

¹⁸ Yun Ji and others, *四库全书山西通志 古迹 卷一百七十一* [Shanxi Annals in the Siku Quanshu, Vol. 171], (During the reign of Qianlong, 1711-1799). The corresponding Chinese text is: '古竹林寺在县东北六十里莲花山' [the Ancient Bamboo Forest Monastery is located in Lianhua (or Lotus) Mountain, sixty miles northeast of the county].

¹⁹ Yingtang Guo and Peiling Li, '五台县佛光村古竹林寺出土唐代白石佛教造像' [White Marble Buddhist Statues of the Tang dynasty Unearthed from the Ancient Zhulin Monastery in Foguang Village, Wutai County], *Journal of Chinese Antiquity*, 4 (2003), 3-6 (p. 4).

middle of the road, where there is a turnoff (or side road) to the Ancient Bamboo Forest Monastery, where there was a stone archway, called the Wujia Gate, said to have been built in ancient times. There even has an old story about the Wujia Gate: in ancient times, Buddhists had to ride on a horse to close this mountain gate (or called Wujiamen gate) of Foguang Monastery because its monastic courtyard was extremely large. The mountain gate of a monastery generally symbolises the essential meaning for the first access to a Buddhist shrine, which is the starting point of the Buddhists pilgrimage at Foguang Monastery (the sacred process for devotees to circuit around the important shrine).

Besides Yanjiazhai, there are several other villages in the south, such as Peijiagang, Dongying, Doucun and Xinzhuang, of which Doucun is the largest. It is the place where Liang Sicheng and his investigation team stayed when they investigated the Foguang Monastery in 1937. It is also where the author stayed during her field research in 2020 because only in Doucun are there hotels for visitors, although the hotel's conditions were deplorable. The only modern road (G230) crosses the Doucun village and connects other villages and the Foguang Monastery. Doucun is a busy rural village as many large trucks carrying ores travel this road. Doucun and other villages nearby are not too different from other rural villages in northern China, either in terms of architectural style or social culture. It is even hard to find a strong Buddhist atmosphere there. However, the situation is different in the Taihuai village on Mount Wutai, where the Buddhist centre is located (Fig. 8).

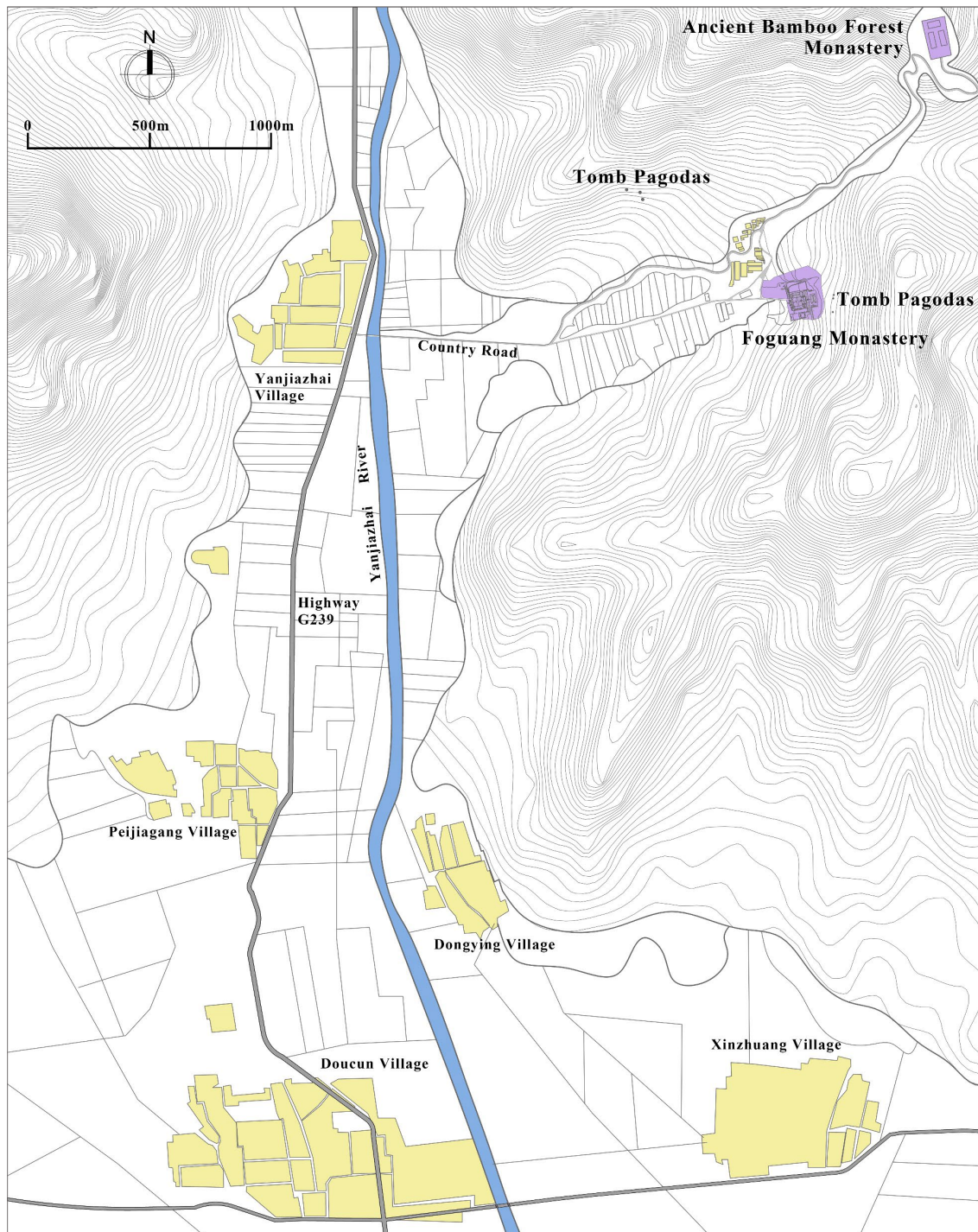


Fig. 8. Villages and transport near the Foguang Monastery.

The Foguang Monastery and the Ancient Bamboo Forest Monastery (or Gu Zhulin si) are not the only Buddhist shrines in this region. About 30 kilometres further east is Mount Wutai, an ancient Buddhist centre and spot that draws numerous visitors from both domestic and international locations each year. Accordingly, its geographical range has been proposed to cover a core zone and

a buffer zone. The core zone of the Wutai Mountain Scenic Area is primarily defined by its five peaks and covers an area of approximately 436 square kilometres²⁰ (Fig. 9).

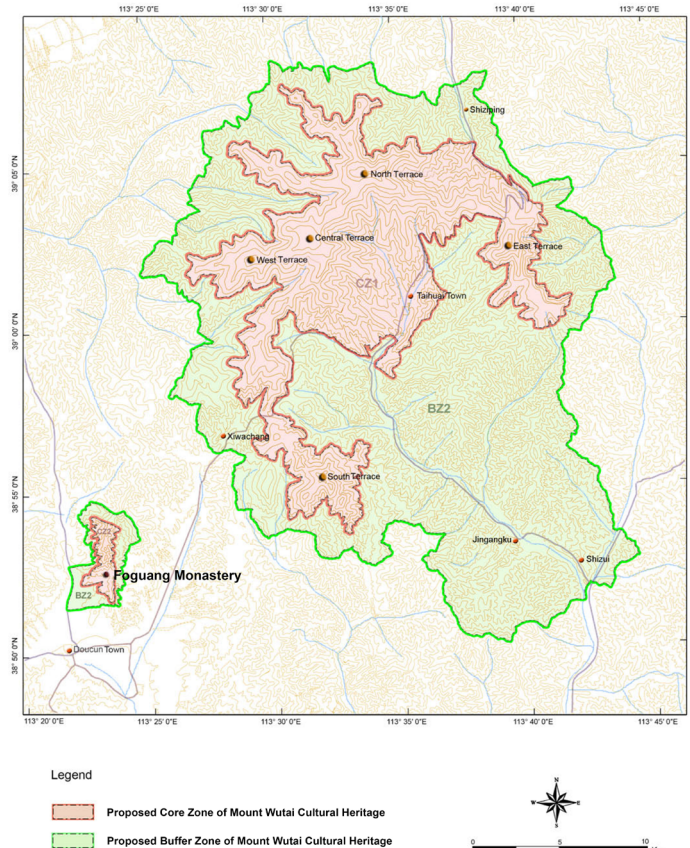


Fig. 9. The geographical relationship between Foguang Monastery and Mount Wutai.

This zone is surrounded by a buffer area that extends to the entrances of the tourist site, and together they comprise the entire Wutai Mountain Scenic Area, which encompasses a total of 607 square kilometres.²¹ From 2009, when Mount Wutai and Foguang Monastery were successfully inscribed in the World Heritage List of Culture Heritage. At the end

of 2012, Mount Wutai had received 29.6842 million domestic and foreign visitors.²² In contrast, the number of visitors to Foguang Monastery was much smaller than that to Mount Wutai. However, in terms of the religious-geographical relationship, the location of Foguang Monastery and the Ancient Bamboo Forest

²⁰ Baidu Baike, '五台山' [Mount Wutai], *Baidu Baike*, < <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%BA%94%E5%8F%B0%E5%B1%B1/2678> > [accessed 10 August 2021].

²¹ Baidu Baike, '五台山' [Mount Wutai], *Baidu Baike*, < <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%BA%94%E5%8F%B0%E5%B1%B1/2678> > [accessed 10 August 2021].

²² Yanqing Jia and others, 'Analysis on the Temporal and Spatial Structure Changes of Domestic Tourist Market Characters in Wutai Mountain', *Journal of Shanxi Normal University (Natural Science Edition)*, 1 (2016), 103-8 (p. 104).

Monastery can be seen as a bridge of religious connection between the purely religious world of Mount Wutai and other secular life.

Mount Wutai has been known by different names throughout history, including Mount Zifu, meaning 'palace of the Taoist immortals', as it used to be a Taoist sanctuary before Buddhism occupied the area;²³ Mount Wufeng, which refers to the five peaks of the mountain, resembling a *dojo* (Chinese: 道场, abode) of Buddhist divinities. In the Chinese language, 'wu' means 'five', while 'tai' describes the topography of the mountain, characterised by rising land and terraced plateaus. The mountain's name reflects its unique physical features, which include high terraces and five flat peaks. Due to its imposing height, Mount Wutai was formerly known as Mount Qingliang and the cool temperatures in the mountain region contributed to its reputation.²⁴

Mount Wutai is the first of the sacred mountains of Buddhism in China.²⁵ It is located in Wutai County, and lies north of the Yellow River,²⁶ in northeast China (currently in Shanxi Province). It is part of a chain of Taihang mountains. Taihang Mountain is a sacred shrine in Chinese culture, dating back to early mountain worship in prehistoric times. It is also considered the most formidable mountain in northern China, stretching four thousand kilometres from north to south, so

²³ Menglei Chen, 钦定古今图书集成·方輿汇编·山川典·五台山部 [Qinding Gujin Tushu Jicheng, Fang Yu Hui Bian, Shan Chuan Dian, Mount Wutai Investigate, Vol. 31], (1726). It also known as the Imperial Encyclopaedia, has 6117 volumes in total.

²⁴ Shi Zhencheng (释镇澄), 清凉山志 [Qingliang Shan Zhi], (1596).

Ennin (释圆仁), 入唐求法巡礼行记 [The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law], (AD 838 - AD 845).

Xiake Xu (徐霞客), 徐霞客游记 - 游五台山日记 [Xu Xiake's Travel Notes - Travel Diary of Mount Wutai], (the 17th century AD, Ming dynasty).

²⁵ Birnbaum Raoul, *Studies on the mysteries of Mañjuśrī - a group of East Asian maṇḍalas and their traditional symbolism*, (Boulder: Society for the Study of Chinese Religions, 1983), p. 10.

²⁶ Yellow River: it is known as the second longest river and mother river of China because it symbolises the origins of Chinese civilisation.

Taihang Mountain is regarded as the backbone of the entire Chinese territory.²⁷ In addition, the south-eastern part of Mount Heng, one of 'Five Sacred Mountains in China',²⁸ is connected to Mount Wutai. The location of Mount Wutai, including Foguang Monastery, sits in between the two sacred mountains of the Chinese, Mount Heng and Mount Taihang. Furthermore, there are also four revered Buddhist pilgrimage sites in China: Mount Wutai, Mount E'mei, Mount Putuo, and Mount Jiuhua. Among these sites, Mount Wutai stands out as one of the oldest and holiest, which is of great historical and cultural significance, with a rich heritage of cultural exchange and religious practise spanning more than 2,000 years as a centre of Buddhist worship.²⁹ To this day, there remain numerous monuments and monasteries and an active site of religious practice and cultural exchange, attracting pilgrims and visitors from all over China and, indeed, the world (Fig. 10).

²⁷ *Classic of Mountains and Rivers*, also named *山海经* [Shan Hai Jing] (finished before the 4th century BC), the description about Taihang Mountain in *Shan Hai Jing* was quoted by Shilin Jueluo (觉罗石麟) and others in 1735, the book is *山西通志 (雍正)* [Shanxi Tongzhi (Yongzheng), Vol.23]. The corresponding Chinese text is: '山海经北次三经之首曰太行山 凡数千里 为天下之脊' [It runs from north to south and is well known as the most formidable mountains in northern China. It stretches for thousands of kilometres and was reputed to be the backbone of the entire Chinese territory].

²⁸ Five Sacred Mountains in China (Wu Yue, Chinese: 五岳), it was created dating back to the period of the Warring States Period (475 BC - 221 BC). Five Sacred Mountains was integrated with the philosophy of the five elements. It is an essential part of ancient Chinese philosophy and culture, which reflects the worldview of Chinese in history and explains how they perceived the natural and social environment. According to this philosophy, the Chinese universe consists of the movements and changes of the five basic elements: Wood, Fire, Earth, Water and Metal. These elements are associated with different directions, colours, and other properties. The concept of the five elements represents the fundamental principles of traditional Chinese thought, which seeks to understand the relationship between human beings and the natural world. Source From: Shangyi Zhou and Weilin Xu, 'Interpreting the Inheritance Mechanism of the Wu Yue Sacred Mountains in China Using Structuralist and Semiotic Approaches', *Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland)*, 10.7 (2018), 21-7 (p. 7).

²⁹ Yuqing Cui, *五台山世界文化景观遗产* [Wutai Mountain - World Cultural Landscape Heritage], (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishing House, 2016), p. 93.

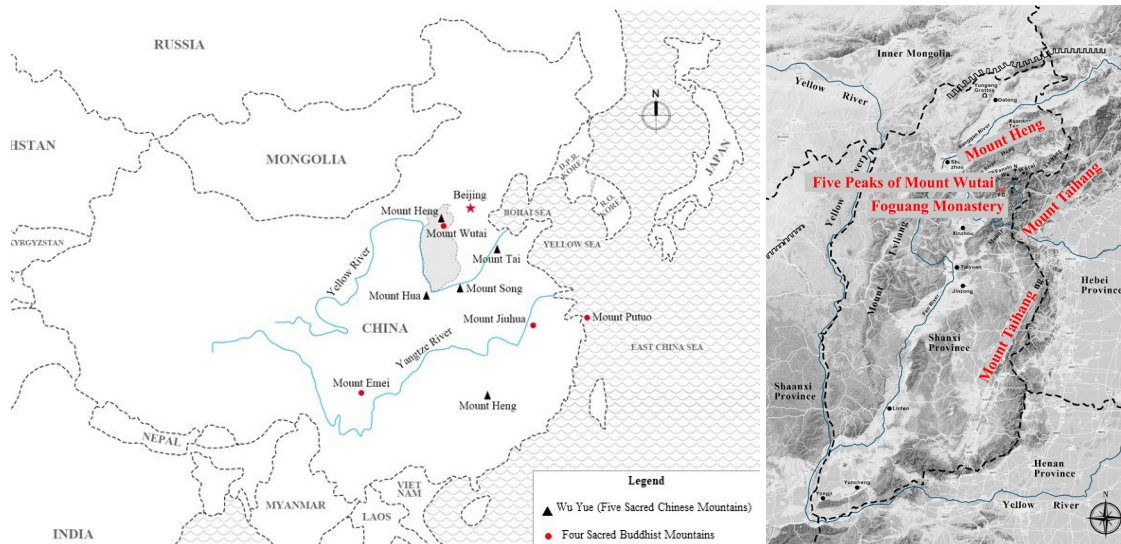


Fig. 10. The location of the five sacred Chinese Mountains, four sacred Buddhist Mountains, Foguang Monastery, Mount Wutai, and Mount Taihang in China.

Mount Wutai is a cluster of mountains, characterised by a unique topography with five high-terraced and barren landscape peaks, namely the west, central, north, south, and east peaks. There are significant differences in altitude and topography between its northern and southern parts. The summit altitudes among the five peaks gradually increase from the south to the western and central peaks and finally to the northern, then goes down to the east peak (as shown in Figure 11).

The north peak is the highest in altitude, around 3,061 metres above sea level, and is the highest point in the entire range as well as the province, resulting in colder weather compared to the south, as the south peak is the lowest peak. This is also the reason why the mountain was once called Qingliang Mountain, which in Chinese means a cool and refreshing feeling. The altitude difference between the five peaks and nearby villages is also notable. For instance, Doucun village has an altitude of around 1,100 metres, while Foguang Monastery is at about 1,250 metres. Taihuai village, located at the foot of Wutai Mountain, is surrounded by

the mountain's five flat peaks, contributing to the village's unique cultural and religious significance, and its altitude (1,700 m) is much higher than the other villages (Fig. 11).

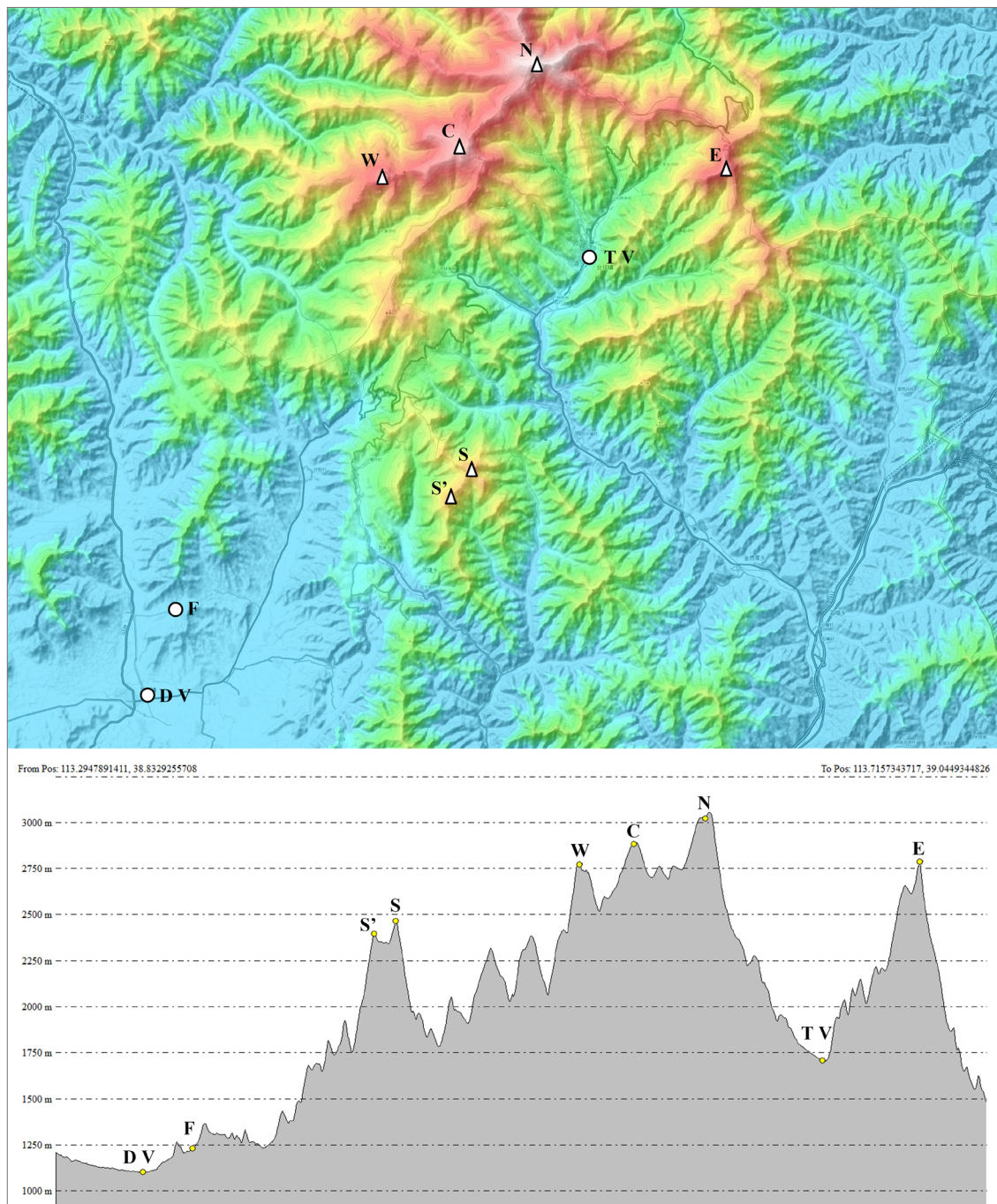


Fig. 11. The specific locations and of Foguang relic, five-terrain peaks, Taihuai village and Doucun village in Mount Wutai. **N** - North Peak (3061 m), **S** - South Peak (2485 m), **S'** - Ancient South Peak (2430m), **W** - West Peak (2773 m), **C** - Centre Peak (2893m), **E** - East Peak (2795 m), **F** - Foguang Monastery (1250 m), **TV** - Taihuai village 台怀镇 (1700 m), **DV** - Doucun village 豆村镇 (1098 m).

The transportation that connects the mountainous range with the outside world is reasonably convenient. There are currently two modern roads (the Taixin and Shashi Lanes) leading to Taihuai village in the Wutai Mountain Scenic Area: Taixin Lane is a narrow dual carriageway that accesses the mountain from the southwest; Shashi Lane is the only main road that crosses the entire region from north to south. The southern entrance of the tourist attraction is on Taixin Lane, while the northern entrance and southern entrance are on Shashi Lane. Shashi Lane is also the only road directly connected to the national roads and highways transport system. Within the Mountain Scenic Area, the roads leading to the five flat peaks of the mountain are closed to private vehicles, as these roads are only about 3 metres wide, winding, and unpaved, and which are not safe for exploration by strangers. The local Protected Landscape Area Management Office³⁰ offers an experienced service with cars to drive around the five flat peaks. Travellers can also visit each peak on foot (Fig. 12).

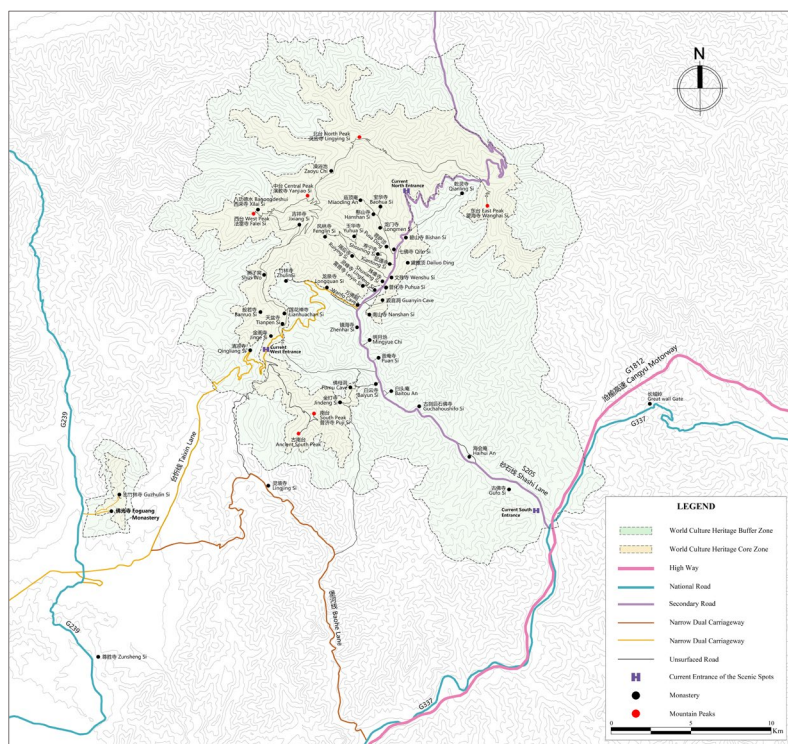


Fig. 12. Road's map of Mount Wutai in 2020. There were three entrances accessing to the scenic spots (North, South and West). (Please refer to Appendix F for a larger-sized map, p. 446).

³⁰ The Protected Landscape Area Management Office oversees the Wutai Mountain Scenic Area.

The monasteries marked on the map in Figure 12 are the more popular with tourists, most of which were built in the vicinity of Taihuai village at the foot of the mountain, where the core area of Mount Wutai is located. When the researcher visited the mountain in October 2020, 57 monasteries were listed on the local map as a reward for being officially confirmed with the Religious Sites Certificate. However, it was said that there could actually be more than 100 Buddhist sites on Mount Wutai. The rest have yet to be marked, as some do not have the Religious Sites Certificate and have not been identified by any authority although they are still in use as Buddhist shrines, whilst some few might be abandoned as ruins. The number of monasteries on Mount Wutai changed dramatically. For example, according to 1996 data, there were only 39 monasteries within the boundaries of Mount Wutai and eight outside the mountain area,³¹ although it is difficult to know their locations and specific names, but currently more 57 monasteries lie in the core area of Mount Wutai. Even historically, due to dynastic changes and Buddhist persecution, the names and numbers of the monasteries recorded in the archives vary.

In summary, Foguang Monastery is a representative and traditional building in China that has a deep connection to Buddhist identity and Chinese culture. It has also become a symbol of Buddhist heritage and national pride. The architecture opens a window for exploration the past. 'Architecture, as a moderator of cross-time communication and as physical elements, helps visualise history, situate

³¹ Jiyu Ren and Guiyuan Yu, *中国著名的寺庙宫观与教堂* [Famous monasteries, Taoist temples and churches in China], (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1996), p. 11.

values and materialise local traditions.³² Foguang Monastery underwent a long chronological evolution, eventually leaving an enclosed courtyard within three types of Buddhist monuments (wooden hall, pagoda, and stone pillars) from different historical periods. The location of Foguang Monastery is also representative, as it is a universal setting, like other monasteries around the world: almost all Buddhist monasteries chose higher ground near water, but separated from human settlements.³³ The inner courtyard of monasteries often faced inwards and was surrounded by a high boundary to demarcate it from the outside world.³⁴ The historical monastery of Foguang enables to explore the meaning of studying the monumental origins, evolution, materiality and monastic setting.

1.2 Research question

How can religious architecture and landscape perspectives contribute to a new understanding of the meaning and signification of Foguang Monastery?

The research question outlines the concern for a reinterpretation of Foguang Monastery, which could extend many levels, including Buddhist literature, architecture, monastic geography, Buddhist rites and political religion. The comprehensive understanding of Foguang Monastery and its relics also requires

³² Mohamed Gamal Abdelmonem and Gehan Selim, 'Architecture, memory and historical continuity in old Cairo', *The Journal of Architecture*, 17.2 (2012), 163-89 (p. 185). In the original article, the statement about architecture was made based on the case study of Old Cairo, while the validity of this architectural argument is so profound that it can be applied to a wide range of historical architectures.

³³ Le Huu Phuoc, *Buddhist architecture*, (Grafikol, 2010), p. 53.

³⁴ Le Huu Phuoc, (2010), p. 53.

tracking the trends of Buddhist art, cultural exchange, and integration throughout different historical periods. Moreover, the monastery cannot be viewed in isolation but should be studied in its broader historical and cultural context. The significance of its landscape and site selection should be analysed in the context of its role in the broader Buddhist network and the influence of Mount Wutai. Furthermore, the study of religious spaces extends beyond their physical and geographical characteristics and cannot be comprehensively investigated without taking into account the social, economic, and political contexts.³⁵ These principal research gaps are also discernible in the analysis of the majority of publications concerning Foguang Monastery. This examination parallels the observable trends in scholarly attention: reinterpretation of architectural identity; limitations in source use and analysis; underutilization of new technologies; narrow architectural focus as detailed in Chapter 2.1, '*A Critical Review of Literature on Foguang Monastery*'. Consequently, it is essential to reinterpret the setting, landscape, and architecture of Foguang Monastery, as well as its meaning and significance. Appreciating both the tangible and intangible heritage value of this cultural and historical artifact is key to understanding its role in the wider context of Buddhism's history in and beyond China.

1.3 Research aims

This study aims to explore how Buddhism integrates Chinese construction tradition to transform its cosmology, sacredness, and evolving religious cult,

³⁵ Kumar Santosh, 'Circumambulation in Indian Pilgrimage: Meaning and Manifestation', *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 12.1 (2021), 232-43 (p. 241).

through a critical reinterpretation of the architecture, non-architectural monuments and courtyard of Foguang Monastery. Meanwhile, the PhD thesis also aims to offer new insights into the meaning of its setting and landscape, as well as the significance of its geographical relationship with Mount Wutai.

1.4 Research objectives

- To analyse Chinese Buddhist monastic compounds, this study will focus on correlating them with historical periods in China, placing special emphasis on the Foguang Monastery and representative monasteries witnessed by Chinese pilgrims. This will be accomplished through a detailed examination of Buddhist texts, literature, historical records, and published archaeological investigations. Additionally, the study will include a comparative analysis of these monasteries, both nationally and internationally.
- To explore the meaning and significance of the Buddhist *sūtra* pillars, the pagoda, the icon halls, and the terraced courtyard of Foguang Monastery through a comparative analysis of related cases within and beyond China, with a focus on investigating their origins, motives, symbolism, transformation and evolution.
- To document the landscape, architecture, and non-architectural monuments at Foguang Monastery through a photogrammetric survey to generate a large-scale 3D model of the entire courtyard.
- To ascertain the significance and role of Foguang Monastery and clarify its geographical connection to Mount Wutai by conducting surveys of other

historical Buddhist sites located between former capitals and Mount Wutai, and by documenting and mapping the evolving pilgrimage routes (large-scale circumambulation) and networks that lead to Mount Wutai.

- To contribute a new practice in analysing the cultural roots and knowledge of Chinese Buddhist architecture, by examining the Foguang Monastery through lenses of Buddhism, architecture, landscape, ritual, pilgrimage, and historical geography.

1.5 Research significance

- The monastery holds great historical value in terms of research into monastic architecture meaning and evolution, cross-cultural interaction, and Buddhism's development in different societies. Foguang Monastery is not only a place where many Chinese historical Buddhist buildings are gathered. It is also an outstanding example of a monastic courtyard where Buddhist tradition and Chinese culture interacted. It is a valuable case enables researchers to transcend the geographical and cultural boundaries between different territories and societies.
- As one of the rare surviving monasteries from the Tang dynasty, the Buddha Hall at Foguang Monastery presents an invaluable opportunity for research. It serves as a crucial link between the social history of medieval China and Buddhism, especially during the zenith of Buddhist development in the country. This unique setting offers a rich context for exploring the interplay between historical events and religious evolution during a pivotal era in Chinese history.

-
- The natural environment of Foguang Monastery and its separation with settlement further help to explore the monastic landscape, Buddhist pilgrimage, and religious geography connection with Mount Wutai which is the earliest Buddhist centre in China.
 - The study of religious architecture promotes a historical understanding of monastic settings, their meanings, transformations, and the dynamic construction theories evident in Buddhist practices (particularly as discussed in Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7). This interdisciplinary research, encompassing fields such as religion, history, architecture, and landscape, can produce novel insights and knowledge that may serve as inspiration for researchers in Chinese Buddhism and scholars in the realm of Chinese historical architecture.

1.6 Outline of thesis

This PhD thesis consists of three main parts. The first (Chapter 3) focuses on the explanation of the Chinese Buddhism and social context. It plays an essential role in providing a general sense and background to facilitate the understanding of Buddhist theories and creation. It also highlights the esoteric Buddhist *maṇḍala*, circumambulation (or pilgrimage), and *Mañjuśrī* cult in order to align the Buddhist context of Foguang Monastery. It also includes a critical review of the literature on the Foguang Monastery since the 1920s, which contains rich information from numerous scholars, especially about the woodwork and material culture. The review reflects the general trend of research on the Foguang Monastery, which mainly focuses on the main hall and architectural

details and overlooks its importance for religion, which also proves the necessity of this thesis.

The second part (Chapters 4 - 7) narrates the remains separately to examine the theoretical philosophy behind each monumental component in relation to the dynamic development of Buddhism and cross-cultural change. It focuses on the Foguang Monastery complex as interpreted from the perspective of religious architecture and landscape. Each component of the monastery, such as the *sūtra* pillars, the pagoda, the twin trees, and the Buddha Hall, has been interpreted by tracing it back to its original symbolism and archetype. The enclosed courtyard, its orientation and religious landscape will be analysed by comparing the monasteries in Kushan-Gandhara³⁶ and the monasteries in China. The conjecture layouts of Foguang Monastery in the different historical periods, based on photogeometric models, offer new insights into the interpretation of the development of its landscape and the possible changes in the court.

The third part (Chapters 8 - 9) deals with the question of the location of Foguang Monastery and the dynamic pilgrimage relationship between Foguang Monastery and Mount Wutai. By contextualising the history of Mount Wutai from the Northern Wei dynasty to the Qing dynasty (the fourth to twelfth centuries AD), exploring the visual evidence and associated archives, and visualising the pilgrims' itineraries and rituals, this part provides a comprehensive picture of Mount Wutai,

³⁶ Kushan-Gandhara was an ancient Indian kingdom that played an important role in the spread of Buddhism in China.

Foguang Monastery, capitals, rituals and international and national networks of Buddhists.

Chapter 2 - Research Methodology Development

2.1 A critical review of literature on Foguang Monastery

Through almost a century of research into the Foguang Monastery, we are able to see the development of Chinese architecture within a modern context. This process begins with Liang Sicheng, who confirmed that the Foguang Monastery is a legacy of the Tang period and made significant contributions to Chinese architecture history. This process of Chinese architecture has also evolved endlessly and will continue to do so. This is also true for the Foguang Monastery, which, as a historically existing representation, will certainly be (re)considered by scholars in various ways. These thoughtful details have been systematically categorised through the following literature review. Through a reflection of academic publications related to the Foguang Monastery, the author aims to underscore the level of scholarly interest in this thesis. As the Foguang Monastery is a representative remnant of Buddhist practice, it considers the context of religious architecture, including Buddhist philosophy, art, geographical landscape and rites, in re-examining the monastery. By discussing on the original purpose of the Foguang Monastery, it aims to gain a critical narrative analysis of its history.

Foguang Monastery had been regarded as a nationalist architectural heritage, rather than an ancient Buddhist monument. Reviewing the scholarly literature on the study of Foguang Monastery is a process that can produce a mirror of the development of architectural education and development in China. This mirror reflects not only the individual conceptualising and the various criticisms of Foguang, but also the epistemological bias of cross-cultural assumptions that might be reproduced by Chinese scholars who naturally have the cultural honour;

the (unwittingly) overwhelming nature of academic disclosure by Western theories. All lenses ultimately justify the idea that there is no single good way to tell the history of Foguang Monastery.

2.1.1 Exploring the rich literary of Foguang Monastery

The literature on the Foguang Monastery is rich, but it has generally been evaluated in terms of Chinese architectural heritage rather than a Sino-Buddhist monastic complex with cross-cultural Buddhist influences. The earliest contemporary source on the Foguang Monastery is by Tokiwa Daijo and Sekino Tadashi, who visited China between 1925 and 1929 to research Chinese architectural culture. This is the earliest visual source, although at that time the Foguang Monastery was not yet considered part of the architectural heritage of the Tang dynasty (Fig. 13).³⁷

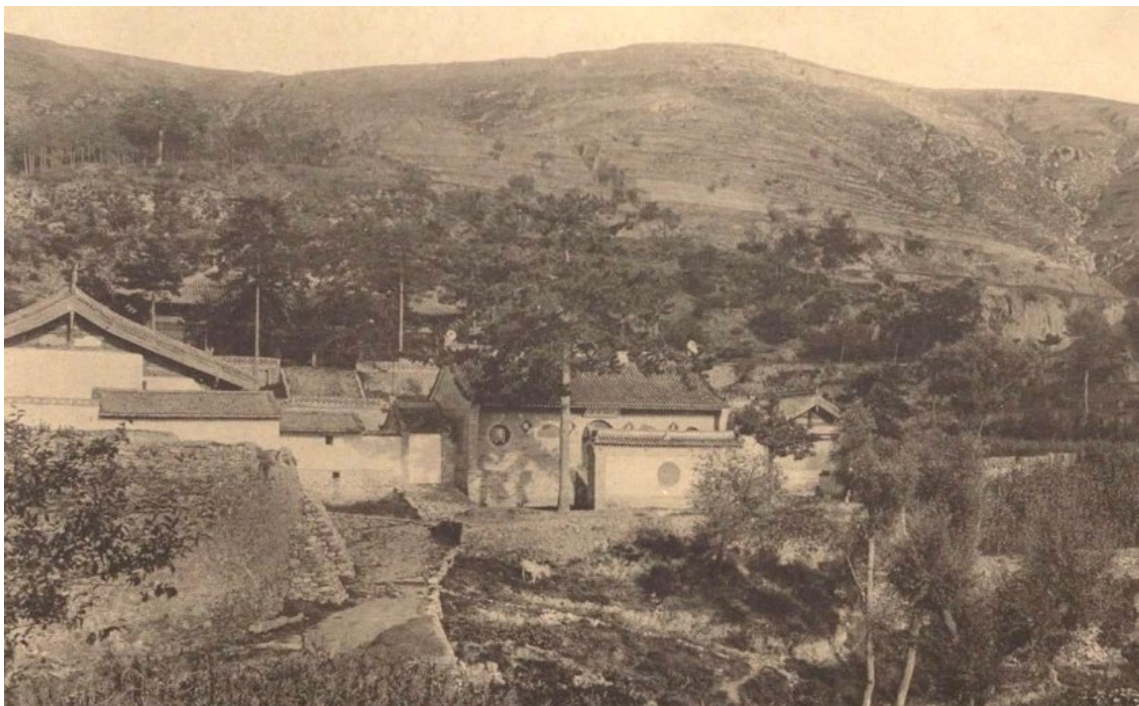


Fig. 13. The earliest photograph of Foguang Monastery.

³⁷ Daijo Tokiwa and Tadashi Sekino, 支那文化史迹[China Cultural Historic Site], Vol. 1 (Kyōto-shi: Hozokan, 1941), p. 102.

In 1937, the Foguang Monastery was investigated by Liang Sicheng and his team.³⁸ They originally confirmed that the Buddha Hall was built in AD 857 during the Tang dynasty. Many other Tang dynasty relics were also discovered in Foguang Monastery, including thirty Buddhist statues, a small mural, and two Tang pagodas.³⁹ In addition, they measured the Buddha Hall of Foguang Monastery in great detail and made various hand drawings (Fig. 14) and took photographs covering the *sūtra* pillars, its halls, the site plan, statues, sculptures and calligraphy.⁴⁰ Later scholars generally consider this research to be essential, because the investigation team of The Society for Research in Chinese Architecture successfully documented a large amount of information on Chinese historical heritage, through 2000 villages or counties between 1930 and 1946,⁴¹ before the subsequent wars destroyed most of the associated architecture.

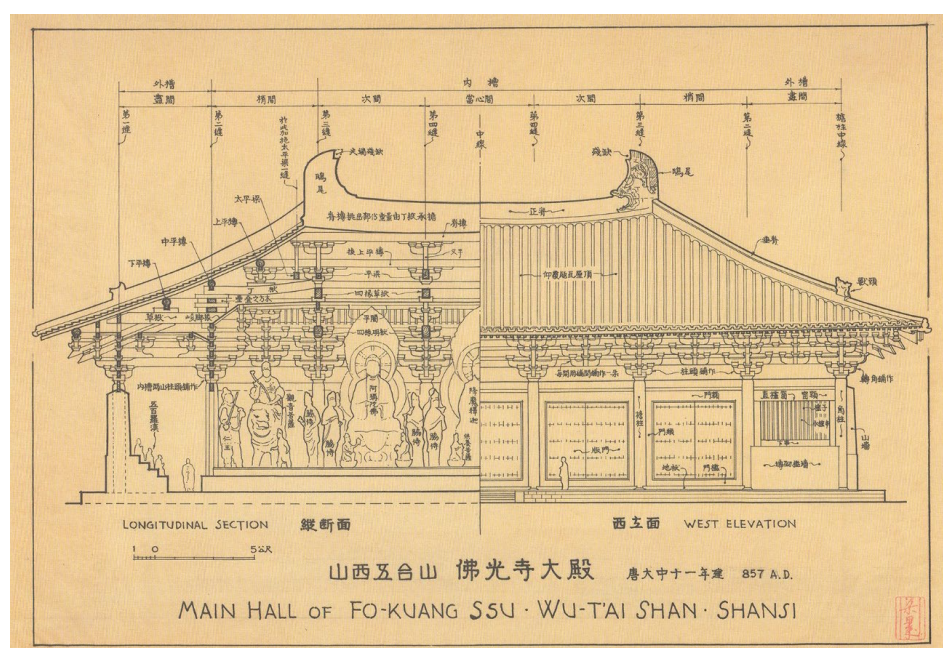


Fig. 14. Infrastructure drawing of Buddha Hall by Liang Sicheng. It is the highest-ranked building of Tang dynasty because it adheres to a modular system and has complete rings of columns.

³⁸ The investigation team were found by Qiqian Zhu (朱启铃) in 1930, called 营造学社 [The society for research in Chinese architecture], but it was disbanded in 1946. Sicheng Liang, Huiyin Lin, Dunzhen Liu and Zongjiang Mo were the members of the organisation.

³⁹ Sicheng Liang, '记五台山佛光寺的建筑 - 荟萃在一寺的魏、齐、唐、宋的四个孤例: 荟萃在一殿的唐代四种艺术' [Recording the Buildings of the Foguang Monastery in Mount Wutai], *Cultural Relics*, Z1 (1953), 76-121 (pp. 76-8).

⁴⁰ Sicheng Liang, *图像中国建筑史* [A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture], (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2011), pp. 43-9.

⁴¹ Xinhua Chen, '沿梁思成夫妻赴晋路线清华大学师生考察山西古建筑' [Along the route of Sicheng Liang and his wife to Shanxi, teachers and students of Tsinghua University inspected the ancient buildings in Shanxi], *Taiyuan News*, 2020 <<http://www.tynews.com.cn/system/2020/05/20/030214911.shtml>> [accessed 5 October 2021].

Furthermore, before Sicheng set out to document architectural heritage across the country, he and his wife (Lin Huiyin) spent three years (between 1928 and 1930) as lecturers at North-eastern University, where China's first school of architecture was founded in 1928.⁴² Since Sicheng and Huiyin had studied in the United States, they had to adopt Western teaching methods and the curriculum of the Department of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania to train the first group of architectural students in China. Their survey and research documentation therefore provides not only the first learning material for Chinese students at architecture school, but also served as the principal archive for later researchers dealing with Chinese architectural history. Besides, one of findings by the Liang team that attracted great subsequent interest might be that they provided the first confirmation of the construction date of the Buddha Hall (the Buddha Hall), as their argument definitely contradicted Japanese claims: China has no Tang dynasty relics. The inference by Liang Sicheng that the Buddha Hall is a Tang relic has been affirmed generally recognised, including Japanese researcher, for instance, Japanese historians Tsunekazu Nishioka and the Shigetaka Miyagami in 1980 agreed Foguang Monastery in China belongs to the typical Tang architecture.⁴³

However, soon after, China became involved in the Sino-Japanese War and civil war, so there was little research on the Foguang Monastery. Until the founding of the People's Republic of China, and more attention was gradually paid to

⁴² Jiaxiang Li and Chunshi Zhao, '创办中国第一个建筑系' [Founded the first architecture department in China], *North-eastern University Party History Special Education Department*, 2021
<http://neunews.neu.edu.cn/dsxx/2021/0507/c298a72583/page.htm> [accessed 12 November 2022].

⁴³ Nishioka Tsunekazu and Shigetaka Miyagami, *日本人はどのように建造物をつくってきたか法隆寺 - 世界最古の木造建築* [The oldest timber architecture in the world], (Tokyo: Soshisha Publishing Co., Ltd. 1980).

architectural history research and architectural education. Research into the Foguang Monastery also increased dramatically after 2000. Researchers worldwide and numerous architecture students from different universities have visited the site and have contributed considerably to the current knowledge of this ancient heritage from various different perspectives and have paid considerable attention on the Buddha Hall (or the Eastern Hall) because of its intricate timber structure and the fact that it has survived the longest in the courtyard, attracted the most targets of scholarly attention.

As the first person to bring the Western conception of 'architecture' to China, his understanding and application certainly affected the first of generation of Chinese architecture researchers. Naturally, researchers also raised critical views about Liang's works. With Zhao Chen firm belief in the great cause of national rejuvenation, based on his deep influence through the classicism of the Paris School of Fine Arts, which he was taught at the University of Pennsylvania, he eventually founded 'Chinese Classics'.⁴⁴ However, Xiao Min believes that Zhao Chen has not sufficiently explained the contradictoriness and tragedy of Liang Sicheng's architectural theory and suggests reconsidering whether Liang's work expresses a historical view of architecture or a historical theory.⁴⁵ As for Liang Sicheng's study on the Foguang Monastery, Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt points out that the meanings of the Buddha Hall have attracted too much attention and,

⁴⁴ Chen Zhao, '民族主义与古典主义 - 梁思成建筑理论体系的矛盾性与悲剧性之分析' [Nationalism and Classicism - An Analysis of the Contradiction and Tragedy of Liang Sicheng's Architectural Theory System], *Taiwan Architecture*. 10 (2000), 1-15

⁴⁵ Min Xiao, '反思梁思成建筑理论体系的矛盾性与悲剧性 - 试评《“民族主义”与“古典主义”》一文兼与赵辰先生商榷' [Reflections on the contradictoriness and tragedy of Liang Sicheng's architectural theory - A preliminary comment on the article 'Nationalism' and 'Classicism' and discussion with Mr. Zhao Chen], *Journal of South China University of Technology (Social Science Edition)*, 4.2 (2002), 89-92

in fact, the Tang dynasty building relics are not only the Foguang Monastery in China, this situation is led by Liang Sicheng who had a strong desire to write the history of Chinese architecture.⁴⁶ Liang Sicheng, regardless of whether his research and theory are perfect enough, made an absolutely indispensable contribution to architectural history as the forefather of contemporary architecture researchers in China. In a way, he could be considered the symbol of Foguang Monastery, and for any study of such it is definitely worth reviewing his works.

The Archaeology of China in Modern Semantics was found in the 1920s; there are few related studies on Foguang Monastery. Su bai could be one of the representative archaeologists. His research was to determine the similarities and differences in the wooden construction systems used in two Tang dynasty Buddha Halls: Nanchan Monastery and Foguang Monastery.⁴⁷ Furthermore, since Foguang Monastery was investigated by the Society for Research in Chinese Architecture in June 1937, different institutions and scholars also surveyed it on various occasions until 2022. More representative investigations were completed by Mo Zongjiang et al. from the Yanbei Cultural Relics Expedition in 1951; the National Cultural Heritage Administration and Shanxi Provincial Cultural Relics Working Committee (Zhu Yingtao, Luo zhewen etc.) in 1973; the Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Ancient Building Protection in 2004; the Cultural Heritage Conservation of Architectural Design and Research Institute of Tsinghua

⁴⁶ Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, 'The Tang architectural icon and the politics of Chinese architectural history', *The Art Bulletin*, 86.2 (2004), 228-54

⁴⁷ Bai Su, *中国古建筑考古* [Archaeology of ancient Chinese architecture], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2009), pp. 61-72.

University and Beijing Tsinghua Urban and Design Institute (or CHCCAD & TU) in 2006; and the Zhejiang University Cultural Relics Digitisation Team between 2019 - 2020.

All these investigations have had different emphases, even though they also contain a lot of common information. The book by Zhang Yingying and Li Yan of the Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Ancient Building Protection systematically introduces the religious chronicle of Foguang Monastery and its architecture (Appendix A) with maps and numerous actual images.⁴⁸ Although the description of religious history relevant in their book is concise, and there is less individual analysis and statement about monastic architecture, this research indeed adds a certain religious context to the study of Foguang Monastery. Likewise, another book called *Great Foguang Si* by Gaoke and Zheng Qingchun is an earlier and much shorter reference to introduce the architectural heritage at Foguang Monastery; written in Chinese and English, it also provides a number of high-definition pictures.⁴⁹ These two books have also helped in this research to achieve a rapid understanding the context of each building's relics.

Another striking insight was gained from the survey and research carried out on the Main Hall of Foguang Monastery by the CHCCAD & TU from 2005 to 2011. This team used 3D laser scanning to probe the wooden frame of the Eastern Hall. In order to efficiently monitor the long-term conservation status of the hall and to analyse the impact of human intervention, this investigation provided a

⁴⁸ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, *五台山佛光寺* [Foguang Monastery of Mount Wutai], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010).

⁴⁹ Ke Gao and Qingchun Zheng, *大佛光寺* [Great Foguang Monastery], (Taiyuan: Sanjin Press, 2008).

composite database of a precise survey on heritage buildings: CHIS (Culture Heritage Information System). Besides, based on the identification of deterioration at Tou-Kung, the team also highlighted the vital structural parts which directly impacted the overall stability of the building that should be addressed immediately (Fig. 15). However, this prestigious report paid particular attention to the real situation of Eastern Hall, with only limited consideration of the entire monastic complex at Foguang. In addition, it provided limited discussion regarding how religious context and social factors affected the construction of Foguang Monastery on Mount Wutai.⁵⁰

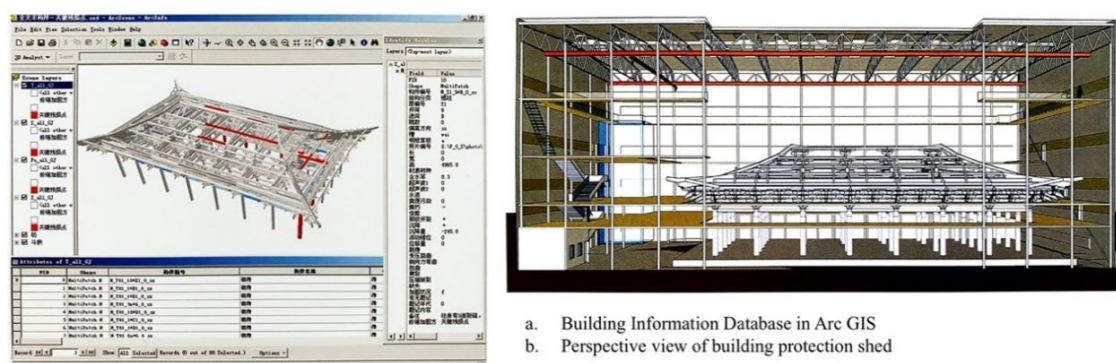


Fig. 15. Survey of the Buddha Hall of Foguang Monastery.

Furthermore, the Zhejiang University Cultural Relics Digitisation Team conducted surveys for two years (2019 - 2020) and created comprehensive 3D digital models of Foguang Monastery using 3D laser scanning and reality capture software. Their survey and mapping results caused a great stir in China. As a result, another project to digitally survey and map the Nanchan Monastery was initiated in 2021. Although this thesis is not the first to create 3D digital models of Foguang Monastery using photogrammetry, it is certainly the first to use the 3D results to

⁵⁰ Cultural Heritage Conservation Centre of Architectural Design & Research Institute of Tsinghua University and Beijing Tsinghua Urban & Design Institute, 佛光寺东大殿建筑勘察报告 [Survey and Research on the Main Hall of Fo Kuang Ssu], (Beijing: China Heritage Press, 2011).

read the entire site, understand the monastery landscape, and simulate hypothesis reconstruction in this most important historical period.

In addition to the surveys, other individual contributions also enrich references from different perspectives. Representatively, in 2001, Fu Xi'nian explicitly investigated each component of the timber structure of the Buddha Hall but also included the *Mañjuśrī* Hall (Fig. 16); moreover, he set out the evolution of the monastic buildings' layout in the early stages in China: at first, the tower, once situated at the centre of the monastic site in a similar fashion to that found in India, was gradually replaced by the Chinese Hall because the rectangular plane of a timber structure is a more suitable platform on which to place the large Kapilavastu Buddha statue.⁵¹ This advanced argument provided a new understanding of monastic development on a longer timeline-scale. Subsequently, Fu also probed the architectural features of ancient China by comparing and analysing the architectural development of Japan during the Asuka and Nara periods.⁵² Similarly, in Tianjin University, Zhang Shiqing compared the construction technologies of ancient timber structures used in Japan and China, revealing that the Tang society influenced architectural development in Japan.⁵³ Although Zhang's book title aims to discuss and compare the ancient wooden architecture of China and Japan, almost all the cases mentioned in Zhang's book are Buddhist icon halls, and religious architecture plays the main role in his study. Religious architecture as a remarkable product, as created using wisdom, time,

⁵¹ Xi'nian Fu, *中国古代城市规划, 建筑群布局及建筑设计方法研究* [Research on urban planning, architectural group layout and architectural design methods in ancient China], (Beijing: Construction Industry Press, 2001), p. 95.

⁵² Xi'nian Fu, (2001), p. 95.

⁵³ Shiqing Zhang, *中日古代建筑大木技术的源流与变迁* [The comparison and evaluation of the timber structure in China and Japan], (Tianjin: Tianjin University Press, 2004).

and money, has to some extent survived to this day and successfully reflects the architectural history of China. Because of the Buddhist network, religious architecture is the strongest evidence of the connection between China and Japan. It seems that Zhang's research shows that religious architecture can be fully narrated as architecture and even somehow replace architecture. However, Buddhism in China is a non-indigenous religion, and Buddhist practice in China has been inventively repeated within the theory of Buddhist doctrine and cosmology.

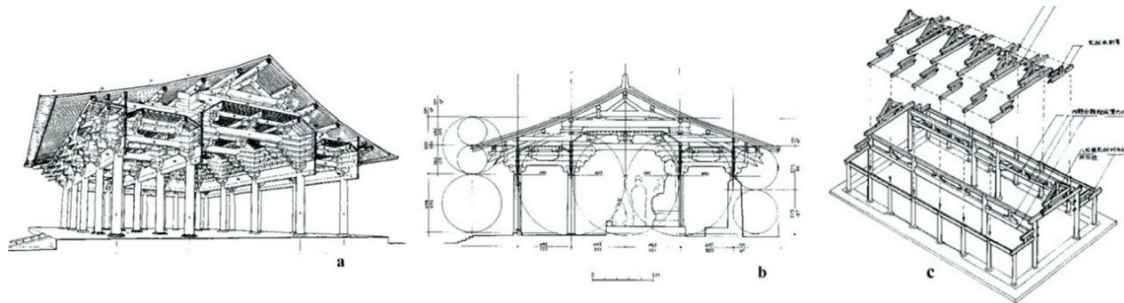


Fig. 16. The timber structure drawings of the Buddha Hall (a & b) and the *Mañjuśrī* Hall (c).

Most Chinese researchers in the field of historical architecture are very interested in the wooden connection system and have contributed a considerable amount of knowledge in this field, and of course, the Foguang Monastery is also worth for research mark from architecture details. Based on the survey report by CHCCAD & TU, Xiao Min reviewed and extrapolated the possible regulatory module (full unit) of Foguang Monastery compared to *Ying Zao Fa Shi*.⁵⁴ By comparing the murals of the Northern Song dynasty with those from the Tang dynasty in the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes, He Dalong pointed out that the scale of timber structures during the Tang period were bigger and more complex than

⁵⁴ 营造法式 [Ying Zao Fa Shi] - The book was compiled by Li Jie (李诫) in 1100 in the Northern Song dynasty, this standard was executed in the second year of Chongning (崇宁二年, 1103). It is the first official book in China history to introduce the construction of timber structure in details.
Source from: Min Xiao, '佛光寺东大殿尺度规律探讨' [Measurement Regulations of the Main Hall of Foguangsi], *Architectural Journal*, 6 (2017), 37-42

those found in the Han dynasty.⁵⁵ He also argued that the Nanchan Monastery could present the general construction technology and architectural style in Shanxi Province; Foguang Monastery is likely to show the high-level standard of royal construction in the Tang dynasty.⁵⁶ However, in the Zu Chi (足尺)⁵⁷ of timber structure still was disputed in academia. Through research into the traditional architectural design method and traditional timber structures in the early period of East Asia, Zhang Yijie et al. stated that the Buddha Hall of Foguang Monastery could be designed and constructed with a carpentry ruler and that the length might be 31.46 cm per unit in the Tang dynasty.⁵⁸

In addition, much of the current literature describes the associations between the spatial designs of the Buddha Hall at Foguang Monastery. For instance, Wang Nan demonstrated that, based on the geometry construction of circles and squares, a series of equal treatments were applied in space design, for example, the $\sqrt{2}$ and $\sqrt{2}/3$ proportion was used multiple times in the plan, elevation, and section design.⁵⁹ In another study by Wang Nan, the similar 'square and circle theory' is analysed not only for the Foguang Monastery but is also applied to the Yingxian Pagoda. He believes that the relationship between Buddhist icons and monastic space fully embodies Chinese cosmology - 'Tian Yuan Di Fang' - and may

⁵⁵ Dalong He, '佛光寺东大殿研究的几个问题' [Several Problems in the Study of the Eastern Hall of Foguang Monastery], *China Heritage News*, 2018 <https://www.sohu.com/a/292855349_688008> [accessed 2 November 2021].

⁵⁶ Dalong He, 2018.

⁵⁷ Zu Chi (足尺, also called Chinese foot) is a traditional Chinese unit of length since the Shang (the 16th century BC - 18th century BC) (Xu Shen, 2nd century of Han dynasty).

⁵⁸ Yijie Zhang and others, '基于整数尺法角度的佛光寺东大殿营造用尺复原研究' [Reconstructive Study on Length of Carpentry Ruler of a Timber Structure of Chinese Tang dynasty Named Main Hall of Fuguangsi Monastery from Perspective of Traditional Architecture Design Method Named Integer Scale Method], *Journal of Human Settlements in West China*, 2 (2018), 85-92.

⁵⁹ Nan Wang, '规矩方圆 佛之居所 - 五台山佛光寺东大殿构图比例探析' [Circles, Squares, and the Place Where Buddha Lives - An Explorative Study on Compositional Proportion of the Main Hall of Fuguangsi], *Architectural Journal*, 6 (2017), 29-36.

correspond to the compositional techniques of the *maṇḍala* (Fig. 17).⁶⁰ Feng Lu argued that, in order to create a special spatial paradigm for people's feelings, a space without a porch was designed.⁶¹ Zhang Rong et al. also proposed the five hypothetical reconstructions of the Buddha Hall in the corresponding historical period. Zhang Bin explains that through the routine leading from the first terrace to the third, people would have a unique spatial experience known in Chinese culture as "immersion in the landscape".⁶² As these discussions of religious space relate to the plan of the Buddha Hall, which is also the focus of this research, this literature has been revisited in detail in the section on the Foguang Monastery - Enclosed Architectural Compound of Buddhist.

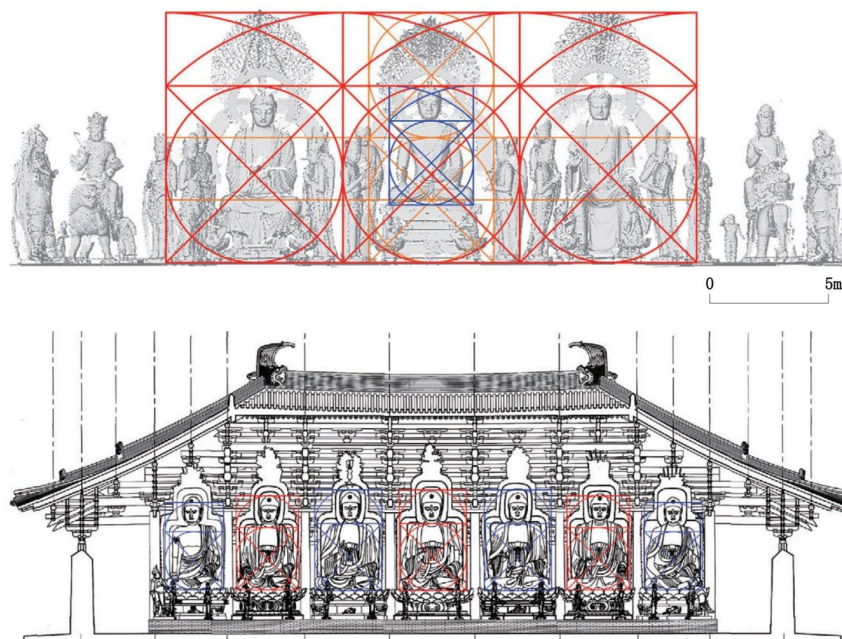


Fig. 17. Chinese cosmology - 'Tian Yuan Di Fang' applied in arrangement of statues, section of Buddha Hall, Foguang Monastery.

However, in mural art, Luo Zhewen argued that Foguang Monastery was likely to have been constructed during the Tang dynasty because the calligraphy, art,

⁶⁰ Nan Wang, Zhuonan Wang and Hongyu Zheng, '天地圆方塔像合一 - 应县木塔室内空间与塑像群构图比例探析' [Round Heaven and Square Earth, Unity of Pagoda and Statuary - A Study on the Geometric Proportions of Space and Statues inside the Timber Pagoda in Ying County], *Journal of Architecture History*, 2 (2021), 71-94.

⁶¹ Lu Feng, '隐匿的前廊 - 佛光寺东大殿的空间性' [A hidden Porch - The Spatiality of the East Hall of Foguangsi], *Architectural Journal*, 9 (2018), 38-42.

⁶² Bin Zhang, '与佛同观 - 佛光寺中佛的空间与人的空间' [Contemplation with the Buddha - Spatial Integration of the Buddha and Humans in Foguangsi], *Architectural Journal*, 9 (2018), 19-27.

and murals on the walls were similar to the style utilised during the Tang dynasty. In addition, the surviving door and the plane of the Main Hall were possibly designed during the Tang dynasty.⁶³ Hou Huiming stated that the murals described the situation where the Western Trinity (Amita Buddha, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Avalokiteśvara) was carrying out missionary work, and with the increasing development of Huayan Buddhism in China, the statues in the Great Hall possibly added the *Mañjuśrī* (on the left of the Avalokiteśvara) and Samantabhadra (on the right of the Mahāsthāmaprāpta).⁶⁴ Due to the existence of 245 Arhats images on the walls of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* Hall, Li Bingjing speculated that the Arhats religion developed to its heyday during the Ming dynasty, and painting five hundred Arhats statues on halls was once very popular.⁶⁵ Besides, Cui Yuanhe and Luo Shiping claimed that the sculpture of Ning Gongyu in the Buddha Hall was possibly made during the Jin dynasty because her raiment is the typical form of the upper class during that dynasty, and the walls (the eastern, the southern, and the northern wall) might have been reconstructed during the Jin dynasty. The statue set in the main hall, as tall as a human, was not that of the monk Yuancheng; possibly it represents the monk Bensui who restored the Eastern Hall and the statues.⁶⁶

⁶³ Zhewen Luo, '山西五台山佛光寺大殿发现唐、五代的题记和唐代壁画' [Calligraphies written in Tang and Wudai dynasty and Murals painted in Tang dynasty were found firstly in the Main Hall of Foguang Monastery], *Cultural Relics*, 4 (1965), 31-5.

⁶⁴ Huiming Hou, '独具特色的五台山佛光寺唐代壁画' [Peculiar Tang Murals of Fo Guang Monastery of Wu Tai Mountain], *Shanxi Archives*, 1 (2012), 35-9.

⁶⁵ Bingjing Li, '五台山佛光寺明代罗汉图的造像分析' [Analysis of the murals of arhats in the Ming dynasty at the Foguang Monastery], *Mt Wutai Researches*, 4 (2017), 53-6.

⁶⁶ Yuanhe Cui and Shiping Luo, '五台山佛光寺东大殿彩塑壁画遗存若干问题稽考' [To research some leftover problems about painted sculpture-Murals in the East Hall of the Buddha-Light monastery on Mount Wutai], *Mt Wutai Researches*, 2 (2019), 34-40.

In a religious context, Lin Wei-Cheng, at the University of Washington, applied insight from topography to heritage sites to narrate the evolutionary process of being a sacred Buddhist Mount in ancient China and interpreted how the architectures were deployed as part of this process. Relying on a comparison of the Dunhuang Grotto (No. 61) drawing of the scene of Mount Wutai with the actual real site, an exploration of the biographies of masters (such as Faxing, Daoshi, Huiyuan, Shenying, Fazhao, Daoan, Jietuo and Ennin etc.) and analysing the political context, Lin stated that Mount Wutai was developed into the first Buddhist sacred mountain in medieval China. Lin also insisted that Foguang Monastery was once one of the ten monasteries of Mount Wutai. While not a single monastery situated on the hill of the mountain site, nor a distant destination in the pilgrimage narrative, it possibly served as the 'mountain gate' (Chinese: 山门, shan men) leading the faithful into the 'Monastery of Mount Wutai'; this argument could be a reasonable explanation for the location myth of Foguang Monastery.⁶⁷

However, regarding the initial Buddhism Mount cult, it is possible that this was not only created by China, as Lin stated, as this religious awareness can be traced back to the rock-cut monasteries period of India around the first century AD. There are a couple of possible reasons for the appeal of rock-cut architecture. First, mountains support the stable chambers in which people can live. Second, from the earliest times, hermits and anchorites chose to live in the mountains;

⁶⁷ Wei-Cheng Lin, *Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014).

hence the use of natural caves and grottoes, and this form of habitation was not only associated with religion but also the sanction of tradition.⁶⁸ The location of these grottoes was always close to convenient transportation routes. For example, over 2,000 years ago, chaityas and *vihāras* were carved into the basalt cliffs of the Western Ghats, positioned in close proximity to trade routes that traversed through mountain passes, connecting ports on the Arabian Sea to cities in the Deccan hinterland.⁶⁹ Furthermore, rock-cut architecture also appeared in the early history of Buddhism in China, for example in the Mogao caves of Dunhuang, which were first excavated in AD 366,⁷⁰ the Yungang Grotto in AD 453⁷¹ and the Longmen Grotto in AD 494.⁷² Regarding the physical context, due to the limited discussion in Lin's dissertation of architectural development, it is unclear how Foguang Monastery was developed and used by the participants.

In addition, Ren Sijie from Pennsylvania University also adequately analysed the religious context but stated a new research angle: that feudal autocracy had manipulated religious development.⁷³ The construction of Foguang Monastery was possibly carried out to fulfil the requirements of Emperor Wu. Besides, Ren's dissertation also speculated an original design of the Buddha Hall with its open front porch, which was a specific embodiment of the 'concentric layouts' illustrated in the Chinese Building Standards. Moreover, both dissertations have

⁶⁸ Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu Period)*, (Redditch: Read Books Limited, 2013).

⁶⁹ Michell George and Gethin Rees, *Buddhist Rock-Cut Monasteries of the Western Ghats*, (Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2017).

⁷⁰ Wenbin Zhang, *Dunhuang: A Centennial Commemoration of the Discovery of the Cave Library*, (Chicago: Art Media Resources Limited, 2000).

⁷¹ Neville Agnew, *Conservation of ancient sites on the Silk Road: Proceedings of an international conference on the conservation of grotto sites*, (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 1997).

⁷² UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 'Longmen Grottoes', *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*, 2000 <<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1003>> [accessed 23 November 2022].

⁷³ Sijie Ren, *Foguang on Mount Wutai: Architecture of Politics and Religion*, (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania, 2016).

the similar theoretical perspective that 'cultural turn' stands at the nexus between social history and regimes.⁷⁴ However, for historical research strategy, the author insists that cultural turn not only relates to political history as the Michel Foucault's work on power, knowledge and politics,⁷⁵ but should also expand a variety of social and culture issues, such as art history and material culture,⁷⁶ and even note the necessary interaction between anthropology and history.⁷⁷

With the development of 3D digital technology, the Foguang Monastery undoubtedly became the most attractive case prioritised for the application of digital multiple surveying. The research team of the Chinese Academy of Sciences applied various technical methods, such as 'ground and aerial image fusion', 'image and LiDAR data fusion', 'architectural scene surface reconstruction', and 'semantic modelling' to collect information about Foguang Monastery and Nanchan Monastery, and discussed the modelling process and characteristics of these methods.⁷⁸ In addition, the Culture Heritage Conservation Centre of Beijing has drawn attention to the timely restoration of the Buddha Hall at Foguang Monastery using monitoring technology.⁷⁹ To make use of the digital documentation of the Buddha Hall of Foguang Monastery and promote interaction between the public and cultural heritage, they proposed to transform

⁷⁴ Sijie Ren, (2016).

⁷⁵ Paul Foss and Meaghan Morris, *Michel Foucault: power, truth, strategy*, (Sydney: Feral Publications, 1979).

⁷⁶ John Tosh, *The pursuit of history: Aims, methods and new directions in the study of history*, (London: Routledge, 2013).

⁷⁷ Geoff Eley, *A crooked line: From cultural history to the history of society*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005). Linda N. Groat and David Wang, *Architectural research methods*, 2nd edn (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2013).

⁷⁸ Xiang Gao and others, 'Multi-source data-based 3D digital preservation of largescale ancient Chinese architecture: A case report', *Virtual Reality & Intelligent Hardware*, 1.5 (2019), 525-41

⁷⁹ Yumin Li and Rong Zhang, 'MONITORING of DEFORMATION of the FOGUANG MONASTERY'S EAST MAIN HALL Under the CONCEPT of PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION', in *International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences - ISPRS Archives*, (Gottingen: Copernicus GmbH, 2019), xlii, 675-78

digital survey data into interpretive content, such as an on-site digital display system, an interactive museum exhibition, and dissemination videos on social media.⁸⁰

2.1.2 Identification of research gaps

In reviewing the literature on Foguang Monastery, this study has considered the most representative literature published between the 1920s to 2021, and finds that Foguang Monastery, especially the Buddha Hall, has been observed from an architectural point of view based on a historical approach. The commonalities and trends in the literature can be summarised as follows:

First, although Foguang Monastery has been discussed for around a hundred years and has gained numerous research perspectives, it will most likely remain a topic of discussion in the future, as has mostly been regarded by architectural researchers to be a symbol of Liang Sicheng rather than a Buddhist site in history. Chinese scholars have spent a lot of time and attention considering the dimensions of the wood, the connecting systems of the wooden structure or the details of the roof truss, but they paid less attention to the fact that this is a Buddhist building. Undoubtedly, this case, especially the Great East Hall, has produced rich documentation on historical wooden architecture, which is a rich source with which to interpret the history of architectural technique. All these contributions are correct; however, Foguang Monastery, with its identified

⁸⁰ Z. Y. Li and others, 'Toward a Wider Audience, Systematic Approach of Reinterpretation and Representation of the East Main Hall of Foguang Monastery Based on Digital Documentation and 3d Visualization Techniques', in *International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences - ISPRS Archives*, (Gottingen: Copernicus GmbH, 2021), xlv, 395-402

architectural shell - Chinese architectural language, has been (re)interpreted as a Chinese historical building but lost its original nature as a religious-based production that went through changing religious meaning and significance. There are many architectural remains in Foguang Monastery dating back over at least four historical dynasties (Northern Wei, Tang, Jin, and Qing dynasties), and most of the buildings have been renovated several times. It is therefore a monastic complex with multiple social contexts and the dynamic development of Buddhist history, the interpretation of which should not be limited to one historical phase and one building – the main hall of Tang dynasty Buddhist practice embodies cultural integration, religious symbolism, and ritual needs, etc. These cannot be interpreted solely on the basis of the application of the wooden structure.

Secondly, the repetition and (re)formulation of information is very common in earlier studies on Foguang Monastery. The reasons for this are probably that the story of Liang, with the Main Hall, has given this Tang relic a new nationalistic meaning, which may lead to the unconscious repetition of certain information about Foguang Monastery. Moreover, the use of the same historical texts, materials for analysis, but with less evaluation and criticism limits the creativity of researchers on religious architecture. For instance, the fresco of Mount Wutai in Cave 61 of Dunhuang is generally considered to be the earliest virtual evidence of the existence of Foguang Monastery. However, it is uncertain whether the Foguang monastery in the painting corresponds to the actual monastery (for details, see the section of Chapter 5 Enclosed Architectural Compound of Buddhist). Furthermore, no new historical evidence has been presented for

almost twenty years, which also leads to the fact that research into Foguang Monastery has been accompanied by redundant interpretations within the framework of modern semantic theories.

Thirdly, if new technologies can be used in historical research, Foguang Monastery is certainly the case that attracts the most interest, but most research on technique applications (3D digitalization either by Lidar or by Drone) contributes little to the study of Foguang Monastery's history. Researchers have created the 3D digital models of the Buddha Hall, documented information about it for future preservation, and have also planned how to make the traditional architectural culture of the Buddha Hall accessible to the public, etc., which is not a problem, and actually this area is in line with the international popularity and enthusiasm for technology. However, these research trends cannot contribute to the study of the history of Buddhist architecture because there is no indication of how the new technologies contribute to a better understanding of the associated history, or indeed how researchers can benefit from this data to better explore the history of Buddhist architecture.

Finally, the architectural lens also limited its broad significance as a mountain monastery close by Mount Wutai pilgrimage centre. The Buddhist landscape is an essential element to forming a Buddhist shrine. Mountain monasteries in particular need to reconstruct and use the features of the mountains to build the Buddha Hall in a suitable place. However, since the monastic landscape has not been completely touched, there are gaps in site selection and interpretation of

the significance of the religious landscape. Moreover, Buddhists cannot survive if their communities are isolated without the support of patrons. The network of pilgrims travelling along the trade routes was recorded in historical texts and depicted in frescoes. Therefore, religious tourism bridged the geographical relationship between the monasteries and the pilgrimage centre. Thus, the locations of the monasteries should be chosen carefully, including that of Foguang Monastery.

Moreover, it is generally agreed that the beginning of Chinese Buddhist architecture began with the White Horse Monastery in the first century AD⁸¹ and that Chinese Buddhist practice in architecture was only related to India in its early historical period; in less than a century, Indian Buddhist architecture had been replaced by Chinese architecture.⁸² However, visiting Buddhists and pilgrimage between China and India were commonplace in mediaeval China in the heyday of Chinese wooden architecture and the development of Buddhism. Since the Buddhist monastery was an essential and solid space that served religious purposes, it is hard to believe that the two countries had no architectural relations except in the early period and limited to a few building types such as *stūpas* and grottos. In fact, in the early days of Buddhist architecture in India, there was also rock architecture. With the development of Buddhist practice, enclosed Buddhist schools and monasteries were increasingly built in the ninth

⁸¹ Ji Yu Ren and Gui Yuan Yu, 中国著名的寺庙宫观与教堂 [Famous monasteries, Taoist temples and churches in China], (Beijing, Commercial Press, 1996), pp. 1-10.

⁸² Dunzhen Liu, 刘敦桢论文集 [Collected Works of Liu Dunzhen], (Beijing: China Construction Industry Press, 1982), pp. 1-7. (The paper originally was published in the *Journal of Science*, in 1928, vol.4)

and tenth centuries AD, when enclosed Buddhist complexes also became popular in China.

Therefore, there are many reasons to restudy the Foguang Monastery through the discussion of literature review. The Foguang Monastery is a rather rare case of relics of Buddhist architecture from the Tang dynasty in China. The reason for researching Foguang Monastery also lies in a strange phenomenon: Chinese scholars look at historical monasteries for the most part from the perspective of architecture, discussing design, space, dimension, materials, technology, etc., which is completely in line with the approaches used to discuss all modern architecture. As far as Buddhist architecture in China is concerned, the interest is mostly limited to the Chinese context. Sometimes the influence of Chinese Buddhist architecture in Japan is discussed. Scholars even generally believe that the possible architectural relation between China and India is the *stūpa*, which only occurred in the early historical period, but disappeared and was later replaced by Chinese architecture. This argument attempts to break the connection between Indian Buddhist monuments and Chinese Buddhist architecture, however, Buddhist interaction between the two countries, even the countries along the Silk Road, was ongoing, especially before and during mediaeval China.

Scholars from the West or from outside China have usually only been able to interpret Buddhist architecture in China by including early Buddhist building categories such as *stūpas* (or pagodas) and grottoes, which are similar in

appearance to Indian Buddhist buildings. However, the total number of *stūpas* and grottoes is only a small part of the Buddhist monuments in China that were in the imitation phase of Indian Buddhist architecture, and they can hardly be said to represent the entirety of Buddhist architecture in China. Wooden structures in Buddhist sites in China, therefore, seem to be a blind spot for non-Chinese academics in terms of their understanding.

Contemporary religious architecture from an anthropological perspective is a community centre in urban daily life, a solid religious space conveying the function, symbolism or even character of the building.⁸³ It is impossible for the monastic heritage from the Middle Ages and prehistory to interact with the ancient communities based only on fragmentary texts, rare architectural remains, and a long-forgotten and difficult-to-trace history. Therefore, Foguang Monastery, as a representative case of religious architecture in China, will not be interpreted from an anthropological perspective, but with the classical methods of historical architectural research. The focus is not only on religious architecture, but also on cross-cultural interaction and transmission.

Foguang Monastery has been studied as a Chinese architectural heritage rather than as religious architectural remains. The former focus on the part of scholars is not wrong, but it ignores the religious architectural theory, the purpose and meaning of a religious building. Religious architecture is a carrier of religious dharma and cosmology, and this carrier has a sense of time and space

⁸³ Oskar Verkaaik, *Religious architecture: anthropological perspectives*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), pp. 7-16.

that enables physical experience and psychological response. Through reviewing the literature on Foguang Monastery, it may also be proven that the research questions raised earlier have not yet been covered. Therefore, this thesis proposes to critically re-narrate Foguang Monastery from a religious architecture perspective to address what religious symptom of the monastic remains of Foguang Monastery actually is, and what the significance of the location of Foguang Monastery is with regard to monasticism.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Epistemological stance and theoretical perspective

This doctoral thesis is interdisciplinary in nature and encompasses multiple disciplines, including religion, architectural history, and landscape and geography studies. It gathers a diverse range of pertinent information primarily from South Asia and China. By examining theoretical perspectives in the field of Buddhist arts and architecture and thoroughly reviewing the literature on Foguang Monastery, this thesis employs religious architectural and landscape perspectives to offer a critical interpretation of the Tang legacy of Foguang Monastery's Buddhist architecture.

2.2.2 Methodological approaches

This evidence-based research is conducted in multiple research approaches: archival studies, site investigation, pilgrimage observation, photogrammetric survey, mapping, and narrative, which combines traditional methods of historical

architectural research with contemporary digital application (Table 1). Meanwhile, in the process of selecting effective archives and appropriate case studies to compare Buddhist practices in different countries, the researcher has found that scholars do not usually address the reasons why they chose a specific case to compare and discuss; they also rarely explain how the case represents this type of monastic component and, indeed, whether it is even worth discussing. This blind area probably leads to a bias in local culture towards subjective research arguments. Nevertheless, this study examined such cases before finally selecting them for discussion.

Specifically, to interpret the chronology evolution of the mountainous Foguang Monastery compound and to critical review how existing research assists in providing the information by which one can understand Foguang Monastery, this study selected appropriate cases of monastery compounds worldwide, located on mountains, worldwide, of which cases in ancient India in particular can provide comparative information: the monasteries in Gandhara, the most appropriate choice in this regard. Because between the second century BC and the sixth century AD the ancient Gandhara region in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent was the heart of a flourishing Buddhist tradition (in habitants of this area, today part of Pakistan).⁸⁴ It was the region whose Buddhist development, which remained uninterrupted from the second century BC to the sixth century AD, allowed the spread of Buddhism within China.⁸⁵ At the time when Buddhism was first introduced to mainland China (around the first century AD), the

⁸⁴ Kurt A. Behrendt, *The Buddhist Architecture of Gandhāra*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 13.

⁸⁵ Kurt A. Behrendt, (2003), p. 13.

Gandhara region, which believed in Buddhism, was an important waypoint along the Silk Road and a major passageway that facilitated the exchange of pilgrims between China and India. At the beginning of the Common Era many great Buddhist buildings were erected,⁸⁶ and the foundations of entire courtyards can still be seen in some monastic complexes when investigated. Thus, although there are many sacred sites in the south or west of India, it is more appropriate to include the Buddhist practices of the Gandhara period.

Moreover, Kushan was located at a similar latitude to northern China, rather than in hot, tropical India, so its Buddhist architecture, especially the monastic complexes with the monks' residences, certainly influenced Buddhist sites in northern China. In addition, Chinese pilgrims, such as the Faxian (or Fa-hsien) and Xuanzang, visited the Kushan and recorded Buddhist practice in texts, which gives the narration archive from a Chinese perspective (the pilgrimages of Faxian and Xuanzang can be found in the First Part - Pilgrimage Routes through Asia). Representative and well-preserved remains of monastic complexes from the Kushan period (the second century BC - third century AD) have been found in Taxila (in present-day Afghanistan). The site used to be on the international trade route that connected Hindustan with Central and Western Asia. It is renowned as the birthplace of 'Greco-Buddhism', which signifies the fusion of Hellenistic culture and early Buddhism dating back to the fourth century BC.⁸⁷ The first group of monks probably came to China from India via Pakistan and Afghanistan

⁸⁶ Kurt A. Behrendt, (2003), p. 13.

⁸⁷ M. E. J. J. Van Aerde, 'Revisiting Taxila: A new approach to the Greco-Buddhist archaeological record', *Ancient West & East*, 17 (2018), 203-29

around the first century AD.⁸⁸ The early twentieth-century archaeological report contains a wealth of maps of monastic sites, which this study will refer to in order to review the design of Chinese monasteries at the time of the first spread of Buddhism within mainland China. However, this does not mean they are all are not free of flaws. For instance, in Marshall's account (more details in the Chapter 5, Mohra Moradu Monastery in Taxila), the indicated date of construction of the ruins is inaccurate;⁸⁹ some of the architectural information does not correspond well with the maps. This study thus critically examines the general trend of monasteries in the attempt to understand how monastic design (or practice) was applied in Taxila during the first and fifth centuries AD, but does not intend to clarify how 'Greco-Buddhist art', or 'Indo-Afghan culture', was applied in Buddhist practice in Taxila. All these discussions help this research to understand the earlier monasteries built in China, to interpret the monastic arrangement at Foguang Monastery in particular, and to discuss the cross-culture transmission and interaction.

Further, to analyse the setting and landscape of Foguang Monastery, a range of visible archives collectively provides a comprehensive landscape context for the study. These archives include early Buddhist sculptures from India, the Yungang Grottoes in China, frescoes at the Dunhuang Caves, as well as relevant Buddhist literature. The relationship between the 'Twin Trees and the Buddha Hall', as discussed in Part Two of the thesis, is examined through the exploration of

⁸⁸ Sicheng Liang, '中国的佛教建筑' [Monasteries in China], *Journal of Tsinghua University (Science and Technology)*, 2 (1961), 51-71.

⁸⁹ M. E. J. J. Van Aerde, (2018), 203-209.

ancient Buddhist texts and the bas-reliefs of sculptures on the *stūpas* in India during the sixth century. This investigation yields substantial and reliable evidence that Buddhists integrated their artistic expressions with legends associated with the Buddha and the trees. This significant correlation establishes a solid foundation from which to delve into the symbolism of plants depicted in the paintings found in the Dunhuang Caves from medieval China. Additionally, it provides a religious context for understand the landscape design in Chinese monasteries, including Foguang Monastery.

Additionally, as the location of Dunhuang Caves was historically an important site for international trade, Buddhist art could certainly embody the cross-cultural interaction among diverse Buddhists, and this represents a possible case of bridging the relationship between ancient India and mainland China, but that foremost gives an indication of changes in Buddhist practice on Chinese soil. Meanwhile as a Buddhist pilgrimage centre for ordinary pilgrims, the Dunhuang Caves have accumulated various works from different historical periods, so although the quality of sculpture is much lower than in the Yungang Grottoes and Longmen Grottoes, both of which served emperors and dignitaries, their murals are highest in quality. These paintings vividly depict the image of Buddha and the trees, which is a visible sign of Buddhist architecture. Through this research approach, the researcher also contributes to the understanding of why no trees are intentionally arranged in monastic sites, with the exception of the twin trees that stand in front of the hall of Images or the Buddha Hall in China, and how *Maitreya-Bodhisattva* faith has influenced the design of trees at Buddhist sites.

In addition, the architectural frescoes in the Dunhuang caves, especially Cave No. 17, which shows aerial views of monasteries, pilgrims, and the architecture of Mount Wutai in the Five Dynasties period (AD 907 - AD 979), the painting of Mount Wutai (1846) and the historical records of the monasteries, are also important sources with regard to this study. However, it has also been critically evaluated as to whether the Great Foguang Monastery drawn on the cave wall is its earliest visual source in Mount Wutai's environs.

Finally, to identify the religious meanings and roles of the fragmental monuments, such as the pillars and pagodas at Foguang Monastery, a literature survey has been conducted of early Buddhist *stūpas* and pillars in India and pagodas in China and effectively compared with the Ancient Pagoda in Foguang Monastery. *Stūpas* in India should be taken into consideration, as these are the basis of the Chinese pagodas and Tibetan *Chortens*. This also represents one possible way in which to understand the symbolism of *stūpa* at Buddhist sites. With the development of *stūpa* in China, this involves various styles. Similarly, the three *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars in Foguang Monastery are usually interpreted in terms of the popularity of the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* in China during the Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907), but without determining the reason why this architectural structure could suddenly be confirmed as a sacred component at Buddhist sites. Indeed, like the legend of the trees and the pagoda in China, Buddhist pillars have gone through a long evolution. After tracing the Aśoka pillars remains in India and the *sūtra* pillars in China, this research contributes to the fact that the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars their basis in

the Aśoka pillars, which are representative of Buddhist merit and help identify Buddhist sites.

In summary, the thesis has taken mixed methods methodology that combines the traditional methods of historical architectural research with contemporary digital applications to explore various issues that include Buddhist cosmology, Buddhist literature, Buddhist architecture, landscape and pilgrimage. The connection between the collected sources utilised in this research and their respective origins interaction on Mount Wutai can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Research methodology

Information collection	Archival studies (First-hand information)	Pre-modern Chinese texts Local gazetteers (China) Elite monks' manuscripts Poems Frescos Drawings Maps Archaeological surveys Stone tablets Buddhist statues Photographs Sculptures	Source from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chinese Text Project of Open-Access Digital Library Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA) The British Museum (UK) National Archive (online) (UK) British Library (UK) Internet Archive (online) (USA) Library of Congress (online) (USA) The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) (online) (USA) Nara National Museum (online) (Japan)
	Site Surveys (First-hand information)	Visiting and photographing of early surviving Buddhist sites in North China	Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yungang Grottoes, Shanxi Province (The capital of the Northern Wei Empire) Hanging Monastery, Shanxi Province (originally constructed during the Northern Wei Dynasty)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pagoda of Fogong Monastery, Shanxi Province (the oldest and tallest wooden pagoda) • Foguang Monastery (Shanxi Province (the Tang Legacy) • Monasteries on Mount Wutai Scope, Shanxi Province (the earliest religious centre close to Foguang Monastery) • Nanchan Monastery, Shanxi Province, (the oldest Tang Legacy) • Tiantai'an Nunnery, Shanxi Province (the Tang Legacy for nunneries) • Big Wild Goose Pagoda, Shaanxi Province (the Capital of Han, Sui and Tang Empires) • Songshan Shaolin Monastery, Henan Province (location with the largest number of tomb pagodas) • Longmen Grottoes (the capital of Northern Wei and Tang emperors)
	Photogrammetric Survey	Foguang Monastery landscape, icon halls, stone pillars, pagoda
	Pilgrimage path survey	Clockwise circumambulation of the five peaks of Munt Wutai, and observation of the worship of the Five Peaks and monasteries at Mount Wutai
Literature Review (Second-hand information)	Studies on Foguang Monastery Buddhist cosmology Buddhist <i>sūtra</i> and doctrine Monastic components and architecture Monastic landscape and community Pilgrimage connection	Time Range of Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publications focus on Foguang Monastery spanning from the 1920s to 2021 • Ancient India Buddhism history (the 5th - 1st century BC) • Central Asia Buddhism history (the 1st - 10th century AD) • North China Buddhism & Tibetan Buddhism history (the 11th - 19th century AD)

Information	Buddhist text translation	• Textual analysis and visual analysis (Iconography)
Analysis	from classic Chinese, iconology and symbolism discussion	• Mapping and photogrammetric reconstruction analysis
	Comparison and Contrast of Religious Architecture and Landscape	• Comparative analysis of religious architecture and landscape across countries
		• Evidence-based ideology (imaginary)
		• Conjecture layouts explanation
		• Critical narrative

2.2.3 Research methods

This doctoral thesis undertakes a critical reinterpretation of the history of Foguang Monastery by utilising mixed methods that integrate traditional historical research approaches with contemporary digital techniques. The traditional historical methods employed include archival studies, a literature survey of Buddhist texts, photography, and mapping. Additionally, digital application of photogrammetry is utilised.

(1) Archival studies

This research has collected a diverse range of sources on Eastern Buddhist art and practices spanning from the first century to the present (as presented in Tables 2 and 3). All archives used in this research can generally be divided into two main groups: textual and visual. This carefully selected textual archive, along with visible Buddhist art practices depicted in drawings and sculptures, provide essential evidence regarding the *Mañjuśrī* cult in Chinese Buddhism, the historical context of Mount Wutai, and pilgrimage paths. These primary sources help effectively shape the related statement using textual analysis and visual analysis. Textual analysis is a research method employed to examine messages

transmitted through diverse mediums, treating the collected data as subjects of study to assess the conveyed meanings, values, and messages within historical contexts.⁹⁰ The collected visual archive was analysed using iconographical method to uncover the original meaning or intent of the visual works within their historical context.

Furthermore, in guaranteeing the integrity of the archives gathered for this study, the credibility and authoritative standing of the institutions supplying the data play a pivotal role. It is noteworthy that all these institutions possess a high level of credibility and wield substantial authority.

Table 2. Textual archive

Type	Title in English	Title in Chinese	Author	Date	Primary Source Contributors
Buddhist scriptures	<i>Mañjuśrī Dharma Treasure Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i>	佛說文殊師利法寶藏陀羅尼經	Bodhiruci	AD 508 - AD 530	CBETA
	<i>Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i>	佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經	Buddha-pāla	AD 683	CBETA
Historical biographies	A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms (or Fo Guo Ji)	法显传 / 佛国记	Faxian	AD 399 - AD 416	Chinese Text Project
	Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-yang	洛阳伽蓝记	Yang Xuanzhi	AD 547	Chinese Text Project
	Great Tang Records on the Western Regions	大唐西域记	Xuanzang	AD 626 - AD 654	Chinese Text Project
	Buddhist Pilgrim Monks of Tang dynasty	大唐西域求法高僧传	Yi Jing	AD 691	Chinese Text Project
	The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law	入唐求法巡礼行记	Ennin	AD 838 - AD 845	CBETA
	The Biography of Eminent Monks of the Song dynasty	宋高僧传	Shi Zanning	AD 988	Chinese Text Project
	Guang Qing Liang Biography	广清凉传	Shi Yanyi	AD 1060	Chinese Text Project
	Qingliang Shan ling zhi	清凉山靈志	Qu Zhen	from the Zhengde Period (1506-	

⁹⁰ Jason A. Smith, 'Textual analysis', in *The international encyclopedia of communication research methods* by Editor Jörg Matthes (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017) pp. 1-7 (p. 1).

Chinese mountainous gazetteer				1521) to the Wanli Period (1573-1620)	Library of Congress
	Classic of Mountains and Rivers (or Shan Hai Jing)	山海经	Unknown author	before the 4 th century BC	Chinese Text Project
	Qingliang Shan Zhi	清凉山志	Shi Zhencheng	AD 1596	Library of Congress
	Hengshan Chronicle	恒山志	Gui Jingshun	AD 1763	Library of Congress
	Qingliang Shan Zhi Ji Yao	清凉山志辑要	Wang Benzhi	AD 1780	Chinese Text Project
	New Mount Wutai Zhi	五台山新志	Xu Jixu	AD 1883	Library of Congress
Chinese rare books	Liji: Book of Rites	礼记	The students of Confucius	202 BC - AD 9	Chinese Text Project
	Mouzi Lihoulun	(牟子) 理惑论	Mouzi and others	The late Eastern Han dynasty (Eastern Han dynasty: AD 25 - AD 220)	Chinese Text Project
	Baopuzi Xialan	(抱朴子) 遐览	Ge Hong	AD 284 - AD 364	Chinese Text Project
	Ancient Record of Mount Qingliang	古清凉传	Shramana Hui Xiang	AD 680	Chinese Text Project
	Tai Ping Guang Ji	太平广记	Li Fang	AD 960 - AD1279	Chinese Text Project
	Ying Zao Fa Shi	营造法式	Li Jie	AD 1100	Chinese Text Project
	Ming Shilu	明實錄	Zhang Juzheng and others	AD 1328 - AD 1627	Chinese Text Project
	Shanxi Tongzhi (Yongzheng)	山西通志 (雍正)	Jue Luo Shilin and Chu Dawen	AD 1664 - AD 1773	Chinese Text Project
	Shanxi Tongzhi (Guangxu)	山西通志 (光绪)	Zeng Guoqua and Zhang Xu	AD 1892	Chinese Text Project
	Dao Xian Li Dai Yan Ge Biao of Shanxi Province	山西省道县历代沿革表	Wang Yuchang	AD 1927	Chinese Text Project
	Qinding Gujin Tushu Jicheng (or The Compendium of Ancient and Modern Works)	(欽定)古今圖書集成 (方輿彙編)	Chen Menglei	AD 1662 - AD 1722	Chinese Text Project
	The History of Tang dynasty (or Quan Tang Wen)	全唐文	Dong Gao and others	AD 1808 - AD 1814	Chinese Text Project
	Foguang Monastery	佛光寺	Tao Wang	Song dynasty	Chinese Text Project
Chinese ancient poetry	Longquan Guan	龙泉关	Shi Deqing	Ming dynasty	Chinese Text Project

Table 3. Visual archive

Type	Name	Date	Primary Source Contributors
Atlas	Jiaqing Emperor Pilgrimage Mount Wutai 嘉慶巡幸五台圖說	AD 1811	Library of Congress
Colour silk fabric	Śākyamuni (Japan)	the 8 th century AD	Nara National Museum
Fresco	Mogao Grottoes: Cave No.217, No. 323, No.322, No.023, No.17, No.61, No. 338	AD 618 - AD 960	Digital Dunhuang
Sculpture	Yungang Grottoes cave No.9	AD 467 - AD 499	Yungang Grottoes
	Miniature stone pillar remains	AD 401 - AD 439	National Museum of China
	Buddha's Nirvana moulded clay plaque	AD 500 - AD 600	British Museum
	Sculptures on the gateway of Sanchi <i>stūpa</i> (India)	the 6 th century AD	British Library Online Gallery
	Pillars in Amaravati Marble	the 3 rd century AD	British Museum
	Stone carving remains (Lower Swat Valley of Pakistan)	AD 100 - AD 300	British Museum
Maps	Mount Wutai Sheng Jing Quan Tu 五台山聖境全圖	AD 1846	Library of Congress
	Wood block print map of Shanxi Province	AD 1864	Library of Congress
	Old Maps about Shanxi, Mount Wutai from ancient texts	the 17 th - 19 th century AD	Library of Congress
	Monastic complex plans from monastery chronicle	the 17 th - 19 th century AD	Library of Congress
Statue	<i>Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva</i> of wisdom	the Mid - 11 th century AD	The Met
Drawings	<i>Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva</i>	the 14 th century AD	Nara National Museum
	<i>Maṇḍala</i> of Vajradhara, <i>Mañjuśrī</i> and Sadakshari -Lokeshvara	AD 1477 and AD 1479	Nara National Museum
	Jingci Monastery	AD 1615	Internet Archive
	Yong Quan Monastery Complex	AD 1736	Library of Congress
	Zhaoqing Monastery	AD 1764	Library of Congress
	Lingu Monastery	AD 1886	Library of Congress
Images	Old imagines about Foguang Monastery from the society for research in Chinese architecture	AD 1927	The society for research in Chinese architecture
	Old images about monastic components of Chinese Buddhist by Japanese scholars	AD 1921 - AD 1941	Digital Dunhuang Grottoes
	Monastic remains of Indian Buddhist practice	the 3 rd BC - 6 th AD	National Archive
	Womb Realm <i>maṇḍala</i>	the 9 th century AD	The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center
	Vajradhatu <i>maṇḍala</i>	the 14 th century AD	The Met
	<i>Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva maṇḍala</i>	the 16 th century AD	The Met
	The Buddha with twin holy trees	the 8 th century AD	Digital Dunhuang

(2) Literature review

Since Foguang Monastery was found by Liang Sicheng's team in 1927, it was, as a remarkable example of Tang dynasty architecture, gradually noticed by scholars. Therefore, the majority of related and academically representative publications have been carefully studied (details are given in the Literature Review section, Chapter 2.1). Through this process, this research has led to a clearer conclusion. Foguang Monastery has always been studied as a historical Chinese building and not purely as a religious site. This also strengthens the significance of the research reported in this study.

In addition, the literature on Indian Buddhism and art, as well as archaeological investigations of early Buddhist sites and practices in India and Pakistan, provide important insights into the understanding of Buddhist cosmology and early Buddhist structure. Scholars like James Fergusson, Robin Coningham, John Irwin, S. L. Huntington S. L. & J. C. Huntington and Debala Mitra, etc, have influenced the authors' arguments in this study. Moreover, the illustrations and survey maps in their publications are important sources for this study in terms of comparing and interpreting Buddhism transmission and cultural interaction between India and China.

(3) Site survey

At the site of Foguang Monastery in Shanxi Province, numerous architectural relics from different historical periods remain. In order to better understand the Buddhist context, the architectural language of Buddhist monasteries and the

interaction between Buddhist architecture and local tradition, this study has expanded the scope of fieldwork. It therefore examines not only the site of Foguang Monastery, but also other provinces in northern China, such as Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Henan, where there is still well-preserved Buddhist architecture from China's early Buddhist history.

The total survey route covered more than 1,995 kilometres and driving extended from the city of Jinan in Shandong Province, through Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Henan, between 7 October 2020 and 17 January 2021. The most relevant sites are the Yungang Grottoes, the Foguang Monastery, three other Tang dynasty relics (the Nanchan Monastery, the Tiantai'an Nunnery, and the oldest Taoist temple - the Five Dragon Monastery), the Hanging Monastery of Buddhism in Shanxi Province; Tang dynasty Buddha statues and stone tablets and the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda in Shaanxi Province; and the Longmen Grottoes, Songshan Mountain and Shaolin Monastery in Henan Province (Fig. 18).

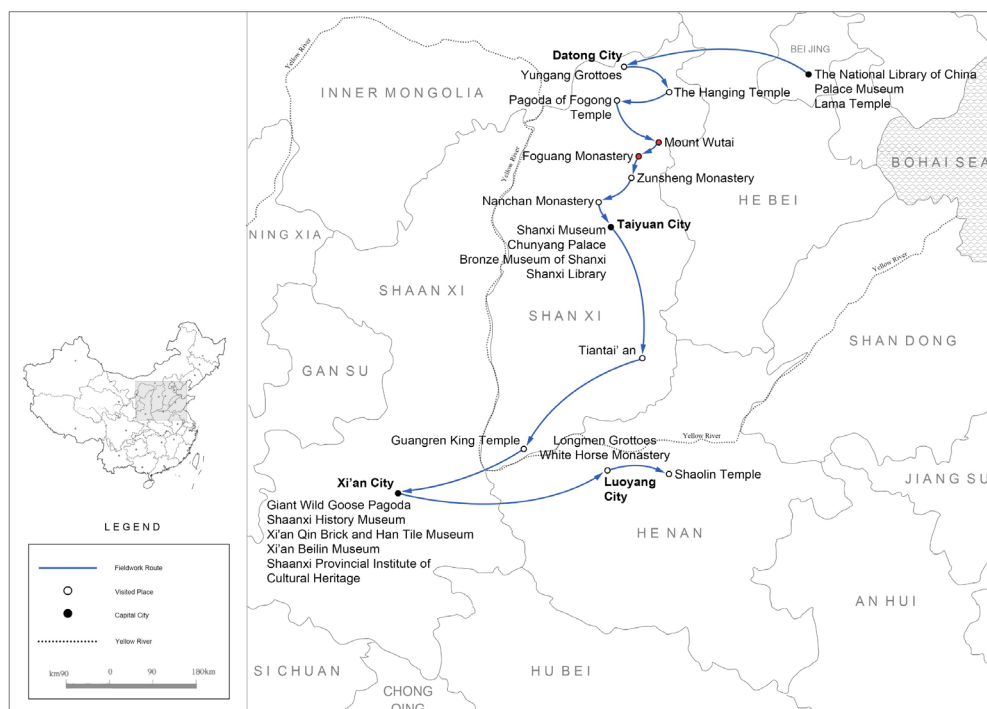


Fig. 18. Investigation route from Beijing to Shanxi province, though Shaanxi province to Henan province.

All these historical Buddhist sites serve as valuable reference points for contextualizing the interpretation of Foguang Monastery. The author visited these sites, collecting aerial photographs, topographical and architecture images. This collected information provides an architectural context for Foguang Monastery. Additionally, throughout history, capitals such as Datong, Chang'an, and Luoyang have supported the construction of massive Buddhist monuments. Furthermore, the continuous pilgrimage centred on Mount Wutai and these historical capitals offers a fundamental understanding of the monastic station settings and the geo-landscape of Mount Wutai on a broader and dynamic chronological scale (table 1).

(4) Pilgrimage path survey

To gather information about Buddhist pilgrimage, three layers of resources were considered. Firstly, the author personally experienced the pilgrimage to the Five Peaks of Mount Wutai, Shanxi Province, in 2020. This involved a meticulous observation of contemporary tourism on Mount Wutai and the author's own participation in the pilgrimage routes from Foguang Monastery to Mount Wutai, as well as the circumambulation route around the Five Peaks on Mount Wutai. Through the course of this process, the author developed a fundamental awareness and understanding of Buddhist pilgrimage, while also identifying the inherent relationship between the nature, geography, and Foguang Monastery's connection to Mount Wutai.

Worship at Mount Wutai is still popular at present. There are mainly three ways to visit the five flat peaks. By car, as provided by the Scenic Area Management Office, is the most popular way for tourists (or visitors with mobility problems), as one can easily and quickly reach the five peaks in a single day. The author utilized a rental car with a local driver for her pilgrimage experience. Tourists arrive at the south entrance and drive up to the south peak, then back to the south entrance and on to the west peak, centre peak, east peak and finally to the north peak and down to Taihuai village. The total distance travelled is about 75 km, which means that it is difficult to visit the Five Peaks on foot in one day (Fig. 19).

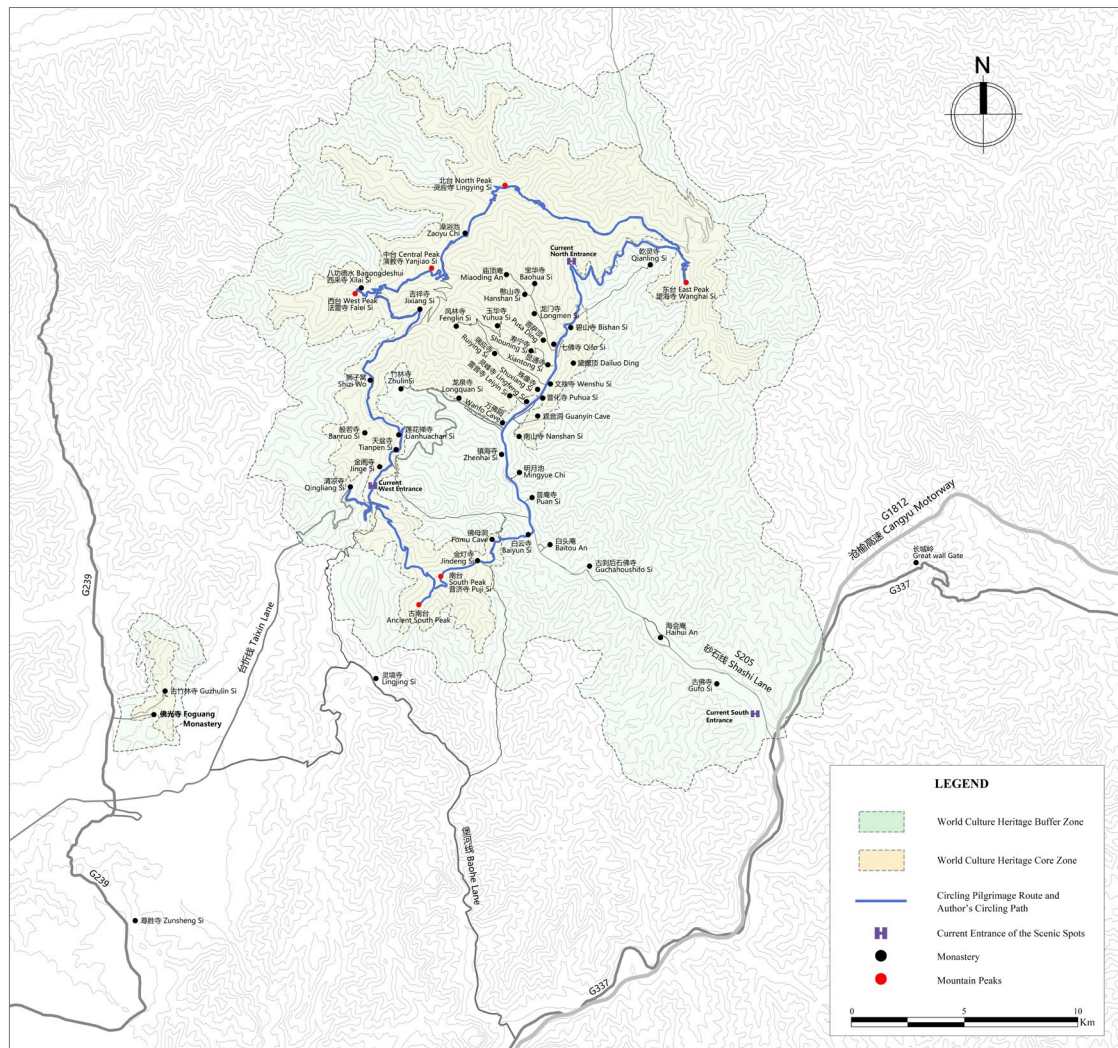


Fig. 19. Circling pilgrimage route and author's survey path on Mount Wutai in 2020.

However, if visitors choose to make the pilgrimage to the mountain on foot, there are usually two options, the circling route or returning route, both of which are a challenge as most of the uphill roads are still unpaved but are still preferred by Buddhists. The no-return journey begins in Taihuai village, go south along the Qingshui River to Baiyun si,⁹¹ and continues to Fomu Cave (or Thousand Buddha Cave), Jindeng si and finally to the first peak along the entire journey - the South Peak (or Puji si). After the pilgrimage to the South Peak and the Old South Peak, pilgrims descend from the south of the mountain, then continue up to Jinge si, Lion's Cave (or Baohua si), across Qingliang Bridge (or Jixiang si), and finally reach the West Peak (or Falei si) and Bagong Deshui. Next, they hike along the ridge to the Central Peak (or Yanjiao si), resupply at the Bodhisattva Bathing Pond and continue to the North Peak (or Lingying si). Finally, they hike up Huanyan Ridge, past Hongmen Rock, to East Peak (or Wanghai si) - the last peak, then down to Bishan si and finally the entire hike back to the starting point - Taihuai village. Visitors need two or three days to complete this hike. However, it is easier to visit each peak separately, then return to Taihuai village after a break, and start another peak travel again (Fig. 19).

The primary sources of information collected include aerial photographs and videos, as well as hand-drawn maps and notes of the five peaks, paths. These resources offer valuable geographic data about the mountains and peaks, facilitating the establishment of geospatial relationships among them. This

⁹¹ si (寺) means temple and monastery in English. However, 'temple' could describe a single icon building, but 'monastery' usually stands for a monastic courtyard, including a monastic courtyard compound. More information about the 'si' can be seen in Part One.

information, in turn, enables a comparative analysis when juxtaposed with historical maps of Mount Wutai. Additionally, aerial photographs and terrestrial photos were taken of Dafu Linjiu Monastery (also known as Xiantong Monastery), Great Stupa Monastery, Pusa Ding Monastery, Jinge Monastery, and Zhulin Monastery. These surveys capture the monasteries' precise locations, their geographic relationships, as well as the current architectural features and courtyards. This visual data serves as a point of reference for discussing the courtyards and the broader monastic network among these monasteries.

Circumambulation the mountain and the five sacred peaks is a traditional practice for Buddhists to pay respect to a sacred site. The clockwise pilgrimage routine is regarded as a tacit and traditional ritual through which to worship Buddha. Buddhists firmly believe that visiting the five peaks is a pious practice of Buddhism that reflects their reverence and veneration for their deity, and this progress can promote 100 years of Buddhist cultivation. In India, walking around a religious structure (or circumambulation) symbolises the Sun's daily journey and is also linked to the trinity in Indian religion and philosophy.⁹² The act of circumambulation of gods is straightforward - 'to observe the truth in its totality'.⁹³ The philosophy behind circumambulation in Indian Buddhism has its roots in the connection between the physical world and the spiritual realm. Circumambulation proceeding in a clockwise direction around architecture, *stūpas* or scared mountains is still the most significant ritual of spiritual

⁹² Kumar Santosh, 'Circumambulation in Indian pilgrimage: Meaning and manifestation', *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 12.1 (2021), 232-43 (p. 233).

⁹³ Kumar Santosh, (2021), 232-43 (p. 233).

perfection in Tibetan Buddhism.⁹⁴ The clockwise Buddhist worship is probably also related to the swastika symbol (卐)⁹⁵, which represents right-wing Buddhist practice. In addition, the altitude progressively increases on the way from the south peak to the north peak, symbolising the ascetic path that brings one close to deities gradually, the goal of enlightenment.

Secondly, historical records of pilgrimages have been collected, including the biographies of renowned traveling Buddhists such as the Chinese Buddhists Faxian and Xuanzang, the Japanese Buddhist Ennin, as well as records related to pilgrimages undertaken by the royal family during the Qing dynasty (see Table 2 and 3). These sources are of particular importance in terms of exploring the historical pilgrimage on the Silk Road across various countries and the evolution of pilgrimage routes on Mount Wutai on the Chinese mainland.

Furthermore, the literature on Buddhist texts related to pilgrimage and scholars' research on pilgrimage serve as essential auxiliary resources for this thesis. They also provide valuable references and contribute to the narrative of the pilgrimage at Foguang Monastery and Mount Wutai.

⁹⁴ Ping Xu, 'The Maṇḍala as a cosmic model used to systematically structure the Tibetan Buddhist Landscape', *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 27.3 (2010), 181-203 (pp. 196-97).

⁹⁵ The swastika (卐) has a long history in Asia, dating back to the Neolithic Age. The earliest find to date was discovered in southwest Iran around 5000 BC and later found in the Indus Valley in 3000 BC. The swastika was commonly used in both Hinduism and Buddhism.

Source from: Kim-Kwong Chan, '中国亚述教会的莲花与卐字符:佛教传统抑或雅利安遗产?' [Lotus and Swastika in Chinese Nestorianism: Buddhist Legacy or Aryan Heritage?], *Journal of Zhejiang University (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, 3 (2010), 21-9 (pp. 23-4).

(5) Photogrammetric survey⁹⁶

In the wake of recent technological advances, historical researchers have increasingly turned their attention to digital applications during the last two decades. The emergence of 'digital' art history gained rapid prominence because computing techniques provide historians with new bases on which they can build their judgments.⁹⁷ It also extends traditional methods of observation and analysis through the use of technological means at micro and macro scales.⁹⁸ Although digital art history is not as advanced as disciplines focused on textual analysis, the introduction of innovative, digital standards for visual and spatial data, along with advancements in computer vision, have the potential to bring about a transformative shift in the field.⁹⁹ Photogrammetry is one such representative application in architectural research. A digital measurement technique, photogrammetry allows one to generate 3D modelling by using 2D images.¹⁰⁰

Photogrammetric method has fascinated cultural heritage in many ways, including documenting tangible heritage, digital tourism of cultural heritage, and conservation and restoration of architectural relics, which mainly focus on current and future needs.¹⁰¹ The photogrammetric survey of historical heritage has also become increasingly popular because it overcomes the weaknesses of

⁹⁶ Most of the content on the photogrammetric survey workflow in this section was published in the *proceedings of the 41st eCAADe Conference 2023 (conference theme: Digital Design Reconsidered)*, Vol.1. The conference paper title is 'Photogrammetry Enables the Critical Reinterpretation and Regeneration of Architectural Heritage - The case study of Foguang Monastery in China' (More details related, please see Appendix E).

⁹⁷ Johanna. Drucker, 'Is there a "digital" art history?.' *Visual Resources*, 29(2013): 1-2, 5-13.

⁹⁸ Johanna. Drucker, (2013), p. 8.

⁹⁹ Alexander Brey, 'Digital art history in 2021', *History compass*, 19.8 (2021): e12678.

¹⁰⁰ Wilfried Linder. *Digital photogrammetry*, vol. 1, (Berlin/Heidelberg, Germany: Springer, 2009), p. 1.

Martorelli Massimo, Claudio Pensa, and Domenico Speranza. 'Digital photogrammetry for documentation of maritime heritage.' *Journal of Maritime Archaeology*, 9 (2014): 81-93.

¹⁰¹ Jon Bedford, *Photogrammetric Applications for Cultural Heritage: Guidance for Good Practice*. (Historic England, 2017), pp. 1-3.

the traditional high-resolution topographic survey, namely the high cost of data acquisition and the fact that specialised third parties dominate.¹⁰² Instead, the photogrammetric technique of structure-from-motion (SFM) for creating high-resolution digital elevation models from extensive photo series taken with a consumer camera, offers a low-cost, user-friendly approach for researchers to collect data themselves.¹⁰³

In the last two decades, many achievements have indeed been made in the field of architectural heritage using photogrammetry. Researchers have never had access to such an abundant digital resource of cultural heritage before, encompassing numerous virtual museums and 3D models of historical sites. However, the process of effectively utilizing this vast database for the analysis of architectural history is just beginning. There is a scarcity of studies in the field of architecture that specifically focus on analysing architectural history based on photogrammetric data. Merely a handful of publications have been able to demonstrate the ways in which the utilization of digital 3D information obtained through photogrammetry yields significant benefits for the reinterpretation of architectural history.

Nonetheless, the utilisation of digital applications represents a promising avenue for further exploration in the realm of architectural history research. Photogrammetry is utilized to observe the site, offering a broader perspective for

¹⁰² Alexander Brey, (2021).

¹⁰³ Matthew J. Westoby and others, 'Structure-from-Motion' photogrammetry: A low-cost, effective tool for geoscience applications.' *Geomorphology* 179 (2012): 300 - 314.

re-reading the historical space and examining its place within the wider religious landscape where historical sites are situated. Therefore, this thesis demonstrates how the technical approach broadens the view of Foguang Monastery and how the 3D model of the site reveals two huge gullies, which is an original finding of this study.

Utilizing hybrid methods such as photogrammetry along with traditional techniques (photography, archiving, and mapping), this thesis offers a critical reinterpretation of the history of religious architecture through the case study of Foguang Monastery. It specifically examines how the extensive gullies; revealed by photogrammetric technology, contribute to understanding Buddhist ideology in the transformation of a secular Chinese landscape into a pure Buddhist shrine. The thesis posits that the motivation for manually excavating two large gullies flanking Foguang Monastery likely holds religious significance, dating back to its construction period. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that these gullies were created to demarcate a boundary between the realms of religious sanctity and non-religious space.

- Reviewing digital applications at Foguang Monastery: highlighting photogrammetry contribution for this thesis:

There are two recent digital applications of Foguang Monastery. First, in 2005 and 2011, the CHCCAD & TU used 3D Laser Scanning to probe the wooden frame of

the Eastern Hall.¹⁰⁴ In order to efficiently monitor the long-term conservation status of the hall and analyse the impact of human intervention, this investigation provided a composite database of a precise survey on heritage buildings: the Culture Heritage Information System (CHIS). Besides, based on the identification of deterioration at Tou-Kung, the team also highlighted the vital structural parts which directly impacted on the overall stability of the building that needed to be addressed immediately. However, this prestigious report, by paying meticulous attention to the actual condition of the Eastern Hall, placed less emphasis on the whole monastic complex of Foguang. In addition, it provided limited discussion regarding how the religious context and social factors affected the construction of Foguang Monastery in Mount Wutai (Cultural Heritage Conservation of Architectural Design & Research Institute of Tsinghua University and Beijing Tsinghua Urban & Design Institute, 2011).

The second recent digital application concerned the investigation of the Foguang Monastery Complex and Nanchan Monastery by researchers from the University of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 2019 to demonstrate their investigative approach of combining data from multiple sources, such as aerial photography, terrain surveys and LiDAR data, to document the models of the two case studies.¹⁰⁵ However, both reports highlighted the limitations of their conventional digital approaches, namely that they could not obtain clean and high-quality models of the main halls because they could not successfully align the

¹⁰⁴ Cultural Heritage Conservation Centre of Architectural Design & Research Institute of Tsinghua University and Beijing Tsinghua Urban & Design Institute, 佛光寺东大殿建筑勘察报告 [Survey and Research on the Main Hall of Fo Kuang Ssu], (Beijing: China Heritage Press, 2011).

¹⁰⁵ Gao, Xiang and others, 'Multi-source data-based 3D digital preservation of largescale ancient Chinese architecture: A case report', *Virtual Reality & Intelligent Hardware*, 1.5 (2019), 525-41.

aerial and camera photos, which can provide an entire courtyard view and delicate architectural texture. Advanced equipment and a competent strategy to capture the raw data are essential; nevertheless, the appropriate software application for processing the raw data is also important to create a 3D model with high accuracy.

- Working flow of photogrammetric survey:

Advanced equipment and an appropriate strategy to capture the raw data are essential; however, the appropriate software application to process the raw data is also important to creating a highly accurate 3D model. The original plan for this research was to use the Agisoft Metashape software to read the captured raw data. Agisoft is developed by Agisoft LLC, located in St. Petersburg, Russia. Metashape is a piece of photogrammetric software, originally written in 2006, that processes digital images and generates 3D spatial data that can be applicable in GIS applications, cultural heritage documentation, visual effects production, and that enables indirect measurement of objects at diverse scales. However, due to the Russian-Ukrainian war, my university was prohibited from purchasing this software, as Swift has a ban on Russia. The researcher finally decided to use the other Reality Capture software instead.

There are various much different pieces of software that can be applied to create 3D models, but most of the images collected in this study are aerial (geo-referenced) and terrestrial (non-geo-referenced) in nature, and the researcher wanted to find software that was not only capable of creating a 3D model of the

entire site, but also of matching the two categories of images to create a 3D model of the signal architecture and render the desired images, so the Reality Capture software¹⁰⁶ was eventually selected for this study. All the 3D models of Foguang Monastery in this study were created using Reality Capture.

There are six core skills that allow for the successful use of photogrammetric techniques in archaeology.¹⁰⁷ Photography - the investigator is able to use the appropriate equipment to obtain the best images; photogrammetry - the investigator is able to create an appropriate survey plan to cover the target area and ensure that the plan can help create models with high accuracy; survey - the investigator needs to know how to adapt survey methods to different sites; software - the investigator is able to use the appropriate software such as CAD or GIS to process the images collected; archaeology / architecture - the investigator is able to interpret the data produced; and data presentation - the investigator is able to present the data in a clear and unambiguous format.¹⁰⁸ The researcher has undergone training and purchased the necessary equipment before undertaking the fieldwork. The relevant skills and the photogrammetric process are described in detail on in following paragraphs, whilst the detailed photogrammetry plans and survey dairy can be seen in Appendix B.

Whole Site Survey: based on intricate landscape features of the terrain site, in order to collect appropriate and clear images to allow for high-quality

¹⁰⁶ On 2 February 2016, the Slovakian company Capturing Reality (founded in 2013), based in Bratislava, and released the public beta version of Reality Capture.

¹⁰⁷ Jon Bedford, *Photogrammetric Applications for Cultural Heritage: Guidance for Good Practice*, (Swindon: Historic England, 2017), pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁸ Jon Bedford, (2017), pp. 1-2.

reconstruction, and to ensure the safety of the cultural relics and survey equipment, this research evaluated various different survey plans, such as the circling configuration (the drone arcing around the site) or grid configuration at different heights (see details in Appendix B). Finally, circling configurations were performed with a drone (DJI Air 2S) to complete image acquisition at heights of 40m, 60m, 80m, 100m and 130m, capturing images at an angle of 45°. A grid was also created at 60m and 80m to ensure there was no gap in information regarding the site. 40m (with the first courtyard of Foguang Monastery as zero altitude) is the minimum height for drone flight because if the drone flies below 40m, two large trees would obscure the image acquisition of the Buddha Hall behind, and the drone would not be able to approach the Hall. The highest flight altitude is 130 m, as the higher the drone flies, the stronger the wind, which affects the stability of the lens and the accuracy of the images (Fig. 20 and 21).

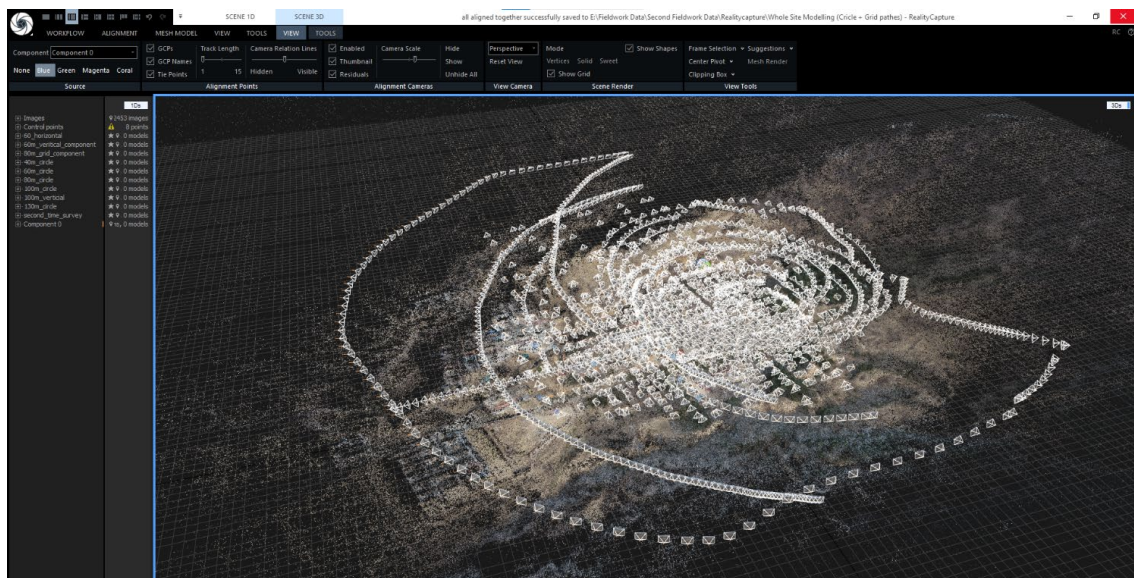


Fig. 20. The alignment points cloud of the entire terrain in Reality Capture. White paths show the locations from which the individual images were taken at different heights.

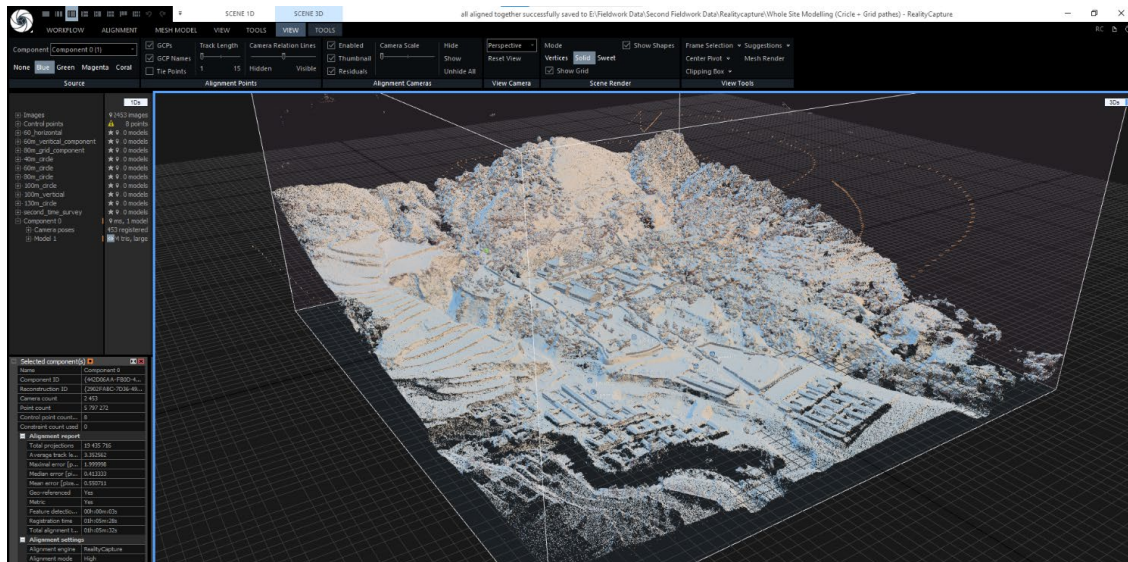


Fig. 21. The 3D model of the entire terrain without texture in Reality Capture.

The Buddha Hall Survey: it is challenging to completely illustrate the architectural information about on the Hall. On the highest terrace of the complex, the hall was blocked on four sides: Foguang Hill to the east; two buildings were erected near the north and south sides; and two huge cypress trees stand in front of the Buddha Hall. Meanwhile, the giant roof covers a large part of Dougong. Therefore, scholars have not published the full information model of the Hall. Most of the documentation consisted of hand-drawn models, photographs, 2D maps created by surveying, and information about the structural elements based on 3D laser scans.

In order to obtain complete information about the Hall, close-range photographs taken using a Canon EOS 70D Digital SLR camera were matched with aerial photographs using Reality Capture to create an accurate 3D model of the Hall (Fig. 22). The 3D model can be created using only aerial photography, but due to the Hall's huge roof and various surrounding such as hill, trees, and buildings around its base, the drone was unable to fly too close to the Hall and cannot take

photos of Dougong under the roof. If the 3D model created by close-range photos can provide high quality information about the details, they cannot reach up to the roof because the range depends purely on the human eye, whilst the space for photographer to move around and adjust the camera angle is very limited. Therefore, close-range photos associated with the aerial photos represents the best way to generate the 3D model of the Hall and provide reliable and precise information about the texture, the roof, the interior space,¹⁰⁹ and the Dougong.

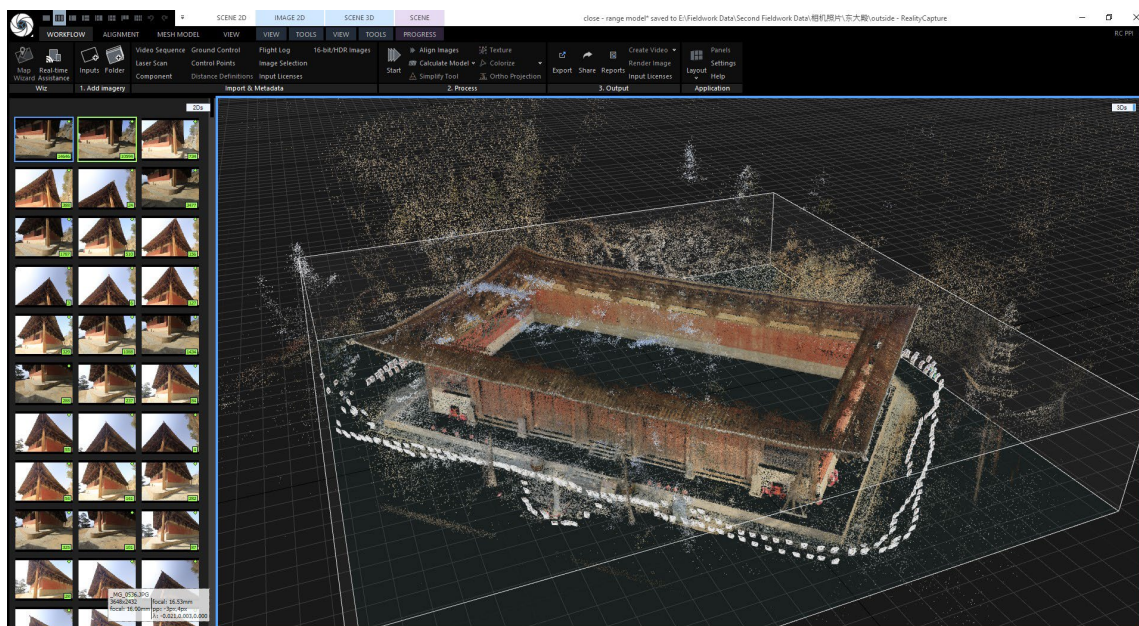


Fig. 22. Close-range photographic reconstruction process and camera locations in Reality Capture. These images are non-georeferencing, which cannot be exported in the 'registration and geo-referencing accuracy report'. In order to reduce the risk of gaps in the information, photography was performed twice.

The position of the terrestrial camera lens can be seen in Figure 23. In order to capture the entire façade from top to bottom, the lens must look up, vertically, and down three times at each point. This can lead to a slight distortion of the building façade as not all images are perpendicular to the lens. However, as the drone could not operate around the trees and other buildings due to limited space at the site, the plan could be improved in the future to obtain highly

¹⁰⁹ Indoor photogrammetry is not allowed; therefore, this study cannot provide 3D information about the indoor space.

accurate dimensional data on each architectural façade. To obtain seamless information, the path of the image capture was circled twice.

The 3D model generated by close-range photos provide clear information about Dougong, but unfortunately could not cover the roof. The missing information about the roof was gained via aerial photographs taken from a height of 40 metres. It is certainly the case that the closer the drone got to the main hall, the more accurate and clearer the image information that it captures, but with due consideration for the safety of the timber heritage and the flight safety of drone, the flight altitude was set at 40 metres, and shot at 45°. The geo-camera's location of terrestrial photos and aerial photos were aligned successfully using control points, and in accordance with the registration and geo-referencing accuracy report exported from Reality Capture (Fig. 23 and Appendix C), all cameras were positioned within the defined prior position accuracy. After reconstruction and texture processes, the 3D model was complete (Fig. 24). With regard to other monastic components of Foguang Monastery, the same methods were successfully used to collect information about the *Mañjuśrī* Hall, the ancient pagoda, and the two *sūtra* pillars in the Foguang Monastery. 3D reconstructions of the individual elements have also been documented. These reconstructions will be displayed and analysed in the following section on Foguang Monastery (the associated publication of the author explaining why the photogrammetry method might be useful in this study can be found in Appendix E).

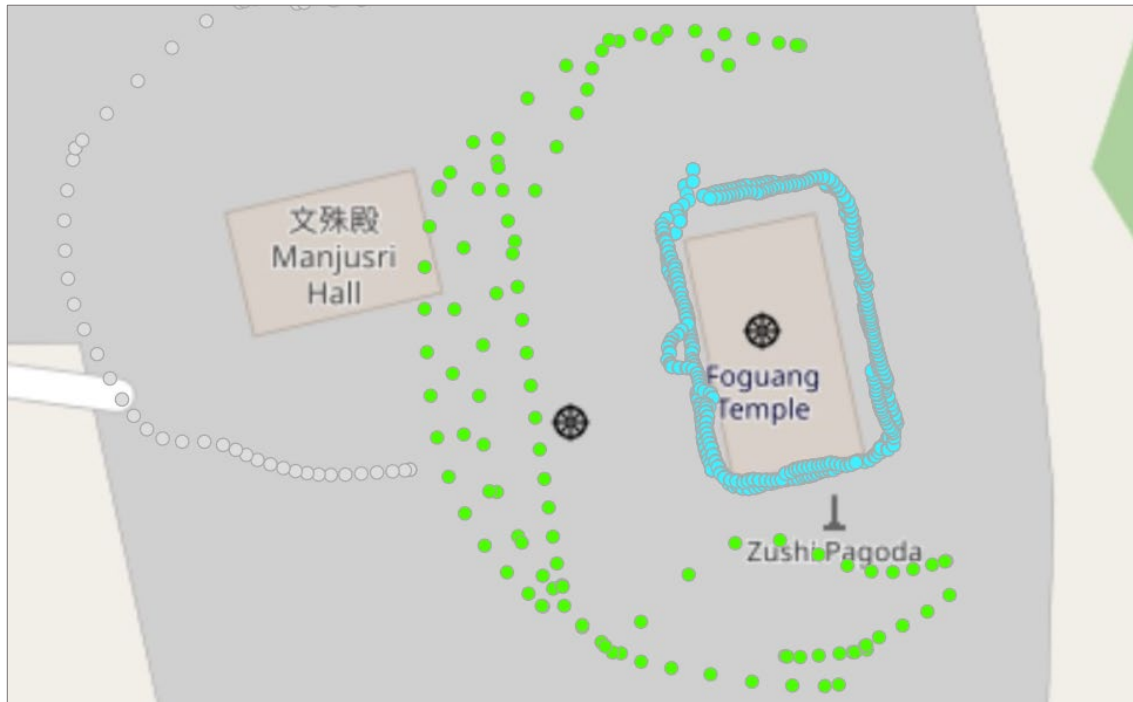


Fig. 23. Camera's location map of drone and terrestrial camera around the Buddha Hall. The aerial photos were aligned with the close-range photos successfully, generated by Reality Capture software. The green colour represents the total deviation is smaller than the expected prior accuracy. The blue ones show the cameras location of terrestrial range.

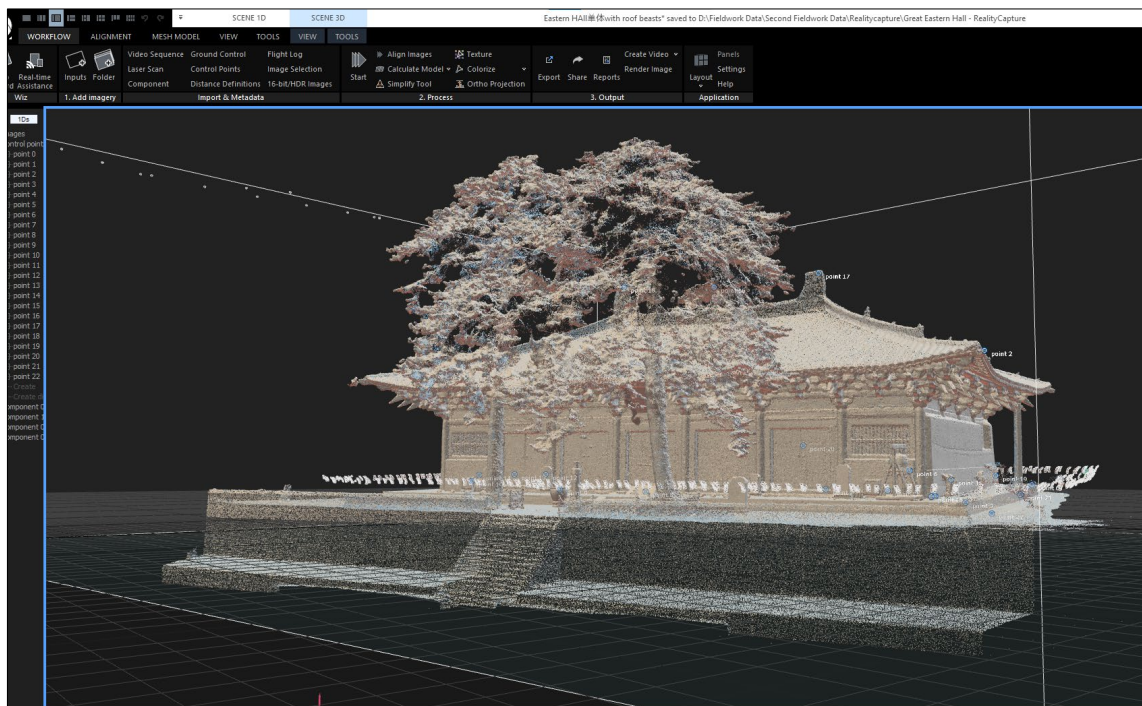


Fig. 24. 3D model of the Buddha Hall without texture.

(6) Mapping method

The mapping method plays a significant role in this study; it includes three - layers mapping information and analysis based on mapping results.

Initially, it is employed to create detailed architectural and landscape maps of Foguang Monastery, through the utilization of first-hand aerial and terrestrial 2D photographs, in conjunction with resources such as Google Maps and digital maps. For visual reference, for example, please see Figures 34 and Figure 40.

In addition, owing to the thesis's analysis of Buddhist ideology in arts and architecture, the mapping method has proven useful in delineating significant diagrams that allude to Buddhist practices within monuments, architecture (3D models), and the surrounding landscape. For illustrative examples, please refer to Figure 64, Figure 66 and Figures 85.

Furthermore, the pilgrimage maps reveal the entrances to the mountain and the paths leading to each peak, and the geographical relationship between Foguang Monastery and Mount Wutai. The shift of the popular pilgrimage routes to Mount Wutai can be shown through mapping for different historical periods. The maps of the international journeys of Buddhists who benefited from the Silk Road enable researchers to understand the interaction between the national and international pilgrimages. For illustrative examples, please refer to Figures 140-145.

(7) Narrative

The thesis has delineated the history of Foguang Monastery through a comprehensive analysis of the evidence collected. In doing so, the author endorses the contention of K. Michael Hays regarding the narrative approach in historiography. Hays argues that narrative is the privileged mode of exposition in writing history, encompassing the depiction of the historical development of a discipline, cultural practice, or medium.¹¹⁰ In light of this perspective, this study has employed a narrative framework to shed light on the history of Foguang Monastery.

When studying history, theory is necessary to narrate it effectively, and architecture plays an important role in this process; the more theory is applied, the better we can understand history through architecture.¹¹¹ The theories of modern scholars on Buddhist architecture generally fall into four groups. First, Buddhist architectural remains have been identified and interpreted from an archaeological perspective based on archaeological investigation and epigraphic material. The most important representatives of such Gregory Schopen,¹¹² Debala Mitra,¹¹³ Robin A. E. Coningham¹¹⁴ and Lars Fogelin.¹¹⁵ This theoretical approach cannot be applied in the case of Foguang Monastery, as no results of archaeological research on the Monastery have been made available to date, but

¹¹⁰ Kenneth Michael Hays, 'Notes on Narrative Method in Historical Interpretation', *Footprint: Delft School of Design Journal*, 1.1 (2007), 23-30 (p. 24).

¹¹¹ Kenneth Michael Hays, (2007), 23-30 (p. 24).

¹¹² Gregory Schopen, 'Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism', *History of Religions*, 31.1 (1991), 1-23

¹¹³ Debala Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1971).

¹¹⁴ Robin Andrew Evelyn Coningham and others, 'The Earliest Buddhist Shrine: Excavating the Birthplace of the Buddha, Lumbini (Nepal)', *Antiquity*, 87.338 (2013), 61-91

Robin Andrew Evelyn Coningham and Ruth Young, *The archaeology of South Asia: from the Indus to Aśoka, c. 6500 BCE - 200 CE*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

¹¹⁵ Lars Fogelin, *An archaeological history of Indian Buddhism*, (Oxford: Oxford Handbooks, 2015).

the reports of these archaeologists on early Hindu Buddhism indeed provide a comparative source for this thesis. As for modern religious architecture, research theory has developed new insights based on anthropological findings, such as the work of Oskar.¹¹⁶ However, Foguang Monastery is currently open as a tourist centre and no monks live there, so no religious activities can be observed in the monastery. The anthropological perspective cannot, therefore, be considered in this thesis.

Most scholars understand Buddhist architecture from a historical perspective, such as James Fergusson,¹¹⁷ Benjamin Rowland,¹¹⁸ Arthur F Wright,¹¹⁹ Liang Sicheng,¹²⁰ Itō Chūta¹²¹, Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington¹²² and Percy Brown¹²³. This is the primary method by which religious architecture has been studied. The study of religious monuments would be analysed in the same manner as other architectural monuments, such as palaces, tombs, and public buildings, that is, in terms of their historical background, architectural form, architectural space and architectural plan. However, a few scholars have related the various architectural forms to Buddhist art and literary texts in order to fathom the religious meanings and philosophies behind monuments, such as Geri H.

¹¹⁶ Oskar Verkaaik, *Religious architecture: anthropological perspectives*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013).

¹¹⁷ James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1899).

¹¹⁸ Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, 2nd edn (Suffolk: Penguin Books, 1953).

¹¹⁹ Arthur F Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese history*, (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1959).

¹²⁰ Sicheng Liang, '中国的佛教建筑' [Monasteries in China], *Journal of Tsinghua University (Science and Technology)*, 2 (1961), 51-71

¹²¹ Chūta Itō, *中国建筑史 [History of Chinese architecture]*, trans. by Qingquan Chen, (Changsha: Hunan University Press, 2016).

¹²² Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient Indian: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publications, 2014).

¹²³ Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu Period)*, (Redditch: Read Books Limited, 2013).

Malandra,¹²⁴ Angela F. Howard,¹²⁵ Adrian Snodgrass,¹²⁶ Michelle C. Wang,¹²⁷ Santosh Kumar.¹²⁸ These theoretical considerations narrating Buddhist practice based on Buddhist ideology, doctrine, and rite, offer a remarkable way of understanding Buddhist cultural heritage.

However, this thesis criticises the use of this theoretical approach to interpret Foguang Monastery because this would lead to repeat knowledge and would contribute less to the study of religious architecture. Religious architecture has an independent constructional ideology and motives, and has heavy symbolism and ritual function, which is different to other historical buildings. Furthermore, the lens of religious landscape and geography has been used for into the consideration of Buddhist architectural research, for example, Alexander Cunningham,¹²⁹ Ping Xu,¹³⁰ Julia Shaw,¹³¹ Weicheng Lin,¹³² etc. Religious geography expands the scale of the study of Buddhist relics and represents the effective way to explore the religious landscape, monasticism, and Buddhist networks.

These theoretical considerations, as based on Buddhist ideology, texts, and rite to explore architectural meaning and tradition, are a basic theoretical approach

¹²⁴ Geri H. Malandra, *Unfolding A Maṇḍala: The Buddhist Cave Temples at Ellora*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993).

¹²⁵ Angela F. Howard, 'The Dhāraṇī Pillar of Kunming, Yunnan. A Legacy of Esoteric Buddhism and Burial Rites of the Bai People in the Kingdom of Dali (937-1253)', *Artibus Asiae*, 57.1/2 (1997), 33-72

¹²⁶ Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stūpa*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 2018).

¹²⁷ Michelle C. Wang, *Maṇḍalas in the Making: The Visual Culture of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang*, (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

¹²⁸ Santosh Kumar, 'Circumambulation in Indian pilgrimage: Meaning and manifestation', *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 12.1 (2021), 232-43

¹²⁹ Alexander Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India: The Buddhist Period, including the campaigns of Alexander, and the travels of Hwen-Thsang*, Vol. 1 (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1963).

¹³⁰ Ping Xu, 'The Maṇḍala as a Cosmic Model Used to Systematically Structure the Tibetan Buddhist Landscape', *Journal of Architectural and planning research*, 27.3 (2010), 181-203

¹³¹ Julia Shaw, *Buddhist Landscapes in Central India: Sanchi Hill and Archaeologies of Religious and Social Change, c. Third Century BC to Fifth Century AD*, (London: Routledge, 2016).

¹³² Wei-Cheng Lin, *Building a Sacred Mountain: the Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014).

used in this thesis to re-understand Foguang Monastery. Specifically, Foguang Monastery, as introduced, contains relics dating back to different historical periods associated with dynamic trends in Buddhist sects, symbols, art, and practice. The reinterpretation of Foguang Monastery, which assumes that each component, such as the pagoda, the stone pillars, the image hall and the enclosed courtyard, goes back to its original model, rite, and construction ideology, with the exploration of contemporary Buddhism is therefore an effective way to explore the monuments left at Foguang Monastery.

Beyond the architectural space and the monastic courtyard, the use and transformation of the natural landscape and mountains by the Buddhist builders represents a structural dimension that was not limited to the architectural sanctuary. This thesis therefore also includes the religious perspective in its reinterpretation. Given the landscape of Foguang Monastery, located in the mountains, and surrounded by ravines, and its immediate geographical proximity to Mount Wutai, this information implies the concept of Buddhist geographical monasticism.

Furthermore, critique is an essential component of the narrative process. For instance, there is a need to pay the most sustained and critical attention to evaluate the relevance and reliability of the primary and the second sources collected. Second, one must use using critical judgement to analyse resources when comparing the topological similarity of Foguang Monastery with monasteries in other countries. Third, to offer an adequate explanation of past

events at Foguang Monastery, this study will give intricate narrative and evocative descriptions as part of a multi-layered analysis, setting the spatial turn of architecture as the centre line, considering Buddhist cosmology, cross-culture interaction, and social context.

Overall, utilising a comprehensive methodology, the thesis delves into the chronological evolution of monasteries in northern China, specifically focusing on the period from the early development of Buddhism to the zenith of Chinese Buddhism (the fourth to tenth centuries AD). It presents a multi-disciplinary narrative that encompasses various aspects of Buddhism, such as Buddhist cosmology, religious landscape, architecture, pilgrimage, and Buddhist rites, all of which encapsulate the essence of Buddhism in medieval China. These explorations accordingly provide a comprehensive context for interpreting the significance of Foguang Monastery and Mount Wutai.

Chapter 3 - Buddhism Development in the Chinese Sociocultural Context

This Chapter mainly provides the historical context of Buddhism in mainland China, focusing on the beginnings of Buddhism, the interactions and conflicts between Buddhism and local spirit beliefs, and the development of Buddhist monuments. It is intended to provide a brief overview of the chronological historical context of Buddhism and the architectural development of Buddhists in China. This consideration allows for a specific interpretation of the Buddhist context in mediaeval China relevant to Foguang Monastery and Mount Wutai. In addition, the section offers a critical review of the literature on Foguang Monastery, which not only presents the various contemporary concerns of the monastery, but also more importantly, highlights the need for its comprehensive study, particularly with regard to examining its location, monumental significance, landscape, dynamic purpose, and historical role in more detail.

3.1 Buddhism's origins and transformation in China

Buddhism was initially founded by Siddhārtha (also known as 'Kapilavastu', an honorific title applied by Buddhists showing their utmost respect for him).¹³³ Siddhārtha also called 'The Buddha' or 'The Enlightened One' rediscovered a very ancient and long-standing, timeless wisdom, in Bihar in India.¹³⁴ It was recorded that he was born in Gautama in 566 BC,¹³⁵ and subsequently dedicated his life to spreading Buddhism to Northern India and the middle of the Ganges Basin.¹³⁶ Buddhism has undergone a long and continuous evolution from the fifth century

¹³³ Anthony Kennedy Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Vol. 6 (Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 2004), p. 44.

¹³⁴ Edward Conze, *A short history of Buddhism*, (London: Oneworld Publications, 1993), p. IV.

¹³⁵ Anthony Kennedy Warder, (2004), p. 44.

¹³⁶ Yongtong Tang, 汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史 [History of Buddhism from the Han to South-North Dynasties] (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2011), p. 28.

BC to the present day in China, generally, the main dominating Buddhist sect in each period can be summarised according to six stages (Table 4).¹³⁷ By the first century BC (around 50 BC), Buddhism had already reached central Asia and China.¹³⁸

Table 4. Stages of Indian Buddhism development

the 6th - 4th century BC	Primitive Indian Buddhism by Kapilavastu.
the 4th century BC - 1st century AD	Different branches of Buddhism coexisted following Siddhartha's death
the 1st - 7th century AD	The development period of Mahayana Buddhism (Madhyamaka and Yogachara).
the 7th - 12th century AD	<i>Vajrayāna</i> (Tantric or Esoteric) Buddhism was dominant during this period.
the 13th - 18th century AD	Buddhism disappeared in India due to the encroachment of Islam.
the 19th AD - Now	Buddhism began being preached again from Sri Lanka.

It was only after the death of the Buddha, a century later, that Buddhist and non-Buddhist textual sources were compiled to give an account of the early historical period.¹³⁹ Considering that the existing versions were written in times of increased political centralisation and stratification, it is very likely that the authorities projected later political and religious attitudes onto earlier times.¹⁴⁰ The lack of facts is particularly pronounced for the historical period (500 BC - 0 BC), only one date is certain, namely the reign of Emperor Aśoka (274 BC - 236

¹³⁷ Jiyu Ren, *中国佛教史* [History of Chinese Buddhism], Vol. 1 (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1981).

¹³⁸ Peter Harvey, *An introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, history and practices*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 210.

¹³⁹ Lars Fogelin, *An archaeological history of Indian Buddhism*, (Oxford: Oxford Handbooks, 2015), p. 72.

¹⁴⁰ Romila Thapar, *Early India: From the origins to AD 1300*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 64.

BC), under whose patronage Buddhism developed from a small sect of ascetics into a religion throughout India.¹⁴¹

It is generally believed that Buddhism initially arrived in mainland China via the Silk Road during the Han dynasty (202 BC - AD 220), then grew considerably in China between AD 420 and AD 589 and reached its peak during the Sui and Tang Dynasties (between AD 581 and AD 907).¹⁴² Buddhism, when it first disseminated to China, was regarded as doing so with 'little fanfare',¹⁴³ as the initial spread of Buddhism across China did not leave any apparent physical evidence, either monumental construction, or historical text. Scholars have to assume its origin through exploring historical fragments, however, they are both universally believed to have first emerged in the Han dynasty when Confucianism had been deeply relied on by the regime for the management of state affairs.¹⁴⁴

Although the Han dynasty (202 BC - AD 220) is generally regarded as witnessing the initial phase of the development of Buddhism, the specific date at which Buddhism was first brought from India to China is disputed, as there is no convincing evidence regarding such. For instance, one view insists that the starting date should begin with the year AD 65 of the Eastern Han dynasty in

¹⁴¹ Edward Conze, (1993), p. 1.

¹⁴² Sicheng Liang, '中国的佛教建筑' [Monasteries in China], *Journal of Tsinghua University (Science and Technology)*, 2(1961), 51-71 (pp. 51-2).

Kenneth Kuan-Sheng Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A historical survey*, 1st edn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 18.

Guoxin Han, *魏晋南北朝史纲* [History of the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties], (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1979), pp. 531-34.

Xi'nian Fu, *傅熹年建筑史论文集* [Collected works of Fu Xi'nian on Architecture History], (Tianjin: Baihua Edition, 1998), p. 136.

¹⁴³ Henri Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese religion, Book I - Chinese Religion in Its Historical Development*, trans. by Frank A. Kierman Jr, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), p. ix.

¹⁴⁴ Xiuping Hong, '隋唐儒佛道三教关系及其学术影响' [Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism of the Sui and Tang: Their Relationships and Academic Influence], *Journal of Nanjing University (Philosophy, Humanities and Social Sciences)*, 40.6 (2003), 137-46 (pp. 137-38).

accordance with *The Rhyme Prose Liang Jing Fu* (Chinese: 西京赋) by Zhang Heng (AD 78 - AD 139), which depicts the prosperity of the city of Chang'an in the Han dynasty and provides incontrovertible evidence for the beginning of Buddhism in China.¹⁴⁵ The book describes 'the earliest giant magic' (Chinese: 鱼龙曼延) in China, which is a combination of illusions from the Western region and indigenous acrobatics from mainland China, and is also considered evidence for establishing when and how Buddhism was first introduced into China.¹⁴⁶ Another point of view considers that Buddhism penetrated into China around the time of Emperor Han Ming (AD 58 - AD 75) who sent ambassadors to the Western regions to consecrate Buddhism.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, according to the *Xi Du Fu* (Chinese: 西都赋) of Ban Gu (班固) (AD 32 - AD 92), Emperor Wu of Western Han continuously expanded the territory (140 BC - 87 BC) and sent his envoy, Zhang Qian (张骞), to the Western regions in 139 BC; the nomadic Da Rou Zhi (大月氏) had been worshipping Buddhism when their diplomatic corps had close contacts with Eastern Han.¹⁴⁸ These two major events might be the main reasons for the introduction of Buddhism, so that Buddhism probably reached mainland China around the end of the Western Han dynasty (206 BC - 8 BC) and before the regime of the Han Ming Emperor (AD 28 - AD 75).¹⁴⁹ Therefore, the most reliable estimate of when Buddhism reached the Chinese mainland is likely to be in the

¹⁴⁵ Arthur F Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese history*, (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 21.

¹⁴⁶ Wenqian Hao, '张衡《西京赋》“鱼龙曼延”发覆 - 兼论佛教幻术的东传及其艺术表现' [Study on the Yu Long Man Yan of Xijing Fu by Zhang Heng - Also research on the Eastern Spread of Buddhist Illusion and Artistic Expression], *Literary Heritage*, 6 (2012), 15-27

¹⁴⁷ Guixiang Wang, 中国汉传佛教建筑史 - 佛寺的建造, 分布与寺院格局, 建筑分类及其变迁 [The history of Chinese Buddhist Architecture - construction of Buddhist temple and building distribution, change on the Buddhist temple planning and building type], Vol. 1 (Beijing, Tsinghua University Press, 2016), p. 2.

¹⁴⁸ Ban Gu (班固), Chinese historian, poet, politician.

¹⁴⁹ Yongtong Tang, 汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史 [History of Buddhism from the Han to South-North Dynasties], (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1997), pp. 3-30.

late Western Han dynasty (202 BC - AD 8) and the early Eastern Han dynasty (AD 25 - AD 220).¹⁵⁰ External Buddhists visited China mainly by land, since Emperor Ming of the Han dynasty opened up the Western regions; historical records show that communication between China and foreign countries was mainly overland in nature.¹⁵¹ Luoyang, as the capital of the Eastern Han dynasty, was connected to the Western regions (Chinese: 西域, including Kashgar, Kucha, and Turfan) and it therefore quickly became an important centre of Buddhism.¹⁵² The Kushan Empire, which in the first centuries AD stretched from northern India to central Asia (including Kashgar, Kucha and Turfan), was an empire in which the kings promoted Buddhism.¹⁵³ It was also the centre of trade relations between the Roman Empire and China.¹⁵⁴ Prior to the arrival of Buddhism, the Western region evidenced a few different co-existing religions, including Shamanism (primitive religion), Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, etc.¹⁵⁵ The Kushan Empire therefore played an important role in the spread of Buddhism within mainland China.

Prior to the introduction of Buddhism in China, various beliefs existed in the Chinese mainland,¹⁵⁶ for example, the Yin Yang theory, created by Zou Yan between 305 BC and 240 BC who proposed the concept of the "Five Elements" or "Five Phases" (Chinese: 阴阳五行).¹⁵⁷ Five elements philosophy was the simplest

¹⁵⁰ Jiyu Ren, *中国佛教史* [History of Chinese Buddhism], Vol. 1 (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1981), p. 67.

¹⁵¹ Yongtong Tang, *汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史* [History of Buddhism from the Han to South-North Dynasties], 2nd edn (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2011), p. 48.

¹⁵² Yongtong Tang, (2011), p. 49.

¹⁵³ Peter Frankopan, *The silk roads: A new history of the world*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), p. 42.

¹⁵⁴ Alain Daniélou, *A brief history of India*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), p. 111.

¹⁵⁵ Xingliang He, '古代西域: "多元交融" 荟萃之地' [The land of "divergent and intermingling culture and religion"], *China Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (CUAES)*, 2014 <Online: <http://www.cuaes.org/content.do?method=specDetail&code=BA0t00&topCode=&id=20140721110417156328>> [accessed 23 July 2022].

¹⁵⁶ Jiyu Ren, *中国佛教史* [History of Chinese Buddhism], Vol. 1 (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1981), pp. 1-42.

¹⁵⁷ The theory of Yin and Yang is one of the important principles in ancient Chinese philosophy. The founders were related to two renowned Chinese philosophers from ancient China, Huang Di (皇帝) and Zou Yan (邹衍).

materialistic philosophies of the Chinese. *Yin and Yang* in Chinese traditional philosophy represent the dual and interconnected forces in all things in the world; the five elements encompass the dynamics and transformations of the five fundamental substances: wood, fire, earth, metal, and water.¹⁵⁸ These theories aim to explain the origin and diversity of all things in the world and the mutual growth and decline of the dialectical relationship between two opposing things.¹⁵⁹ Five Emperor Deity adoration (Chinese: 五帝崇拜): the ancient Five Emperor Deity are the honorary titles given to the five most influential tribal leaders in ancient times (Yellow Emperor, Zhuanxu, Emperor Ku, Yao, Shun).¹⁶⁰ Every emperor in China's history believed that his rule was entrusted and protected by the deity.¹⁶¹ Immortals faith (Chinese: 神仙方术): immortals are also known as alchemists. These people are believed to have mastered an alchemy that can communicate with spirits and ghosts. Alchemy sectarian spend their entire lives searching for mineral plants and other recipes that can make people immortal or even become immortal. Divination (Chinese: 卜筮): Use turtle shells or animal bones (especially cattle shoulder blades) as divining rods for good and bad divination.¹⁶² Astrology (Chinese: 占星术): during the long period practice of animal husbandry and agriculture, and observations of the motion of the sun, moon, and stars, the ancient Chinese created ancient astronomy theory, which formulated the calendar and guided agricultural production.¹⁶³ Qi and Wind epistemology (Chinese: 望气和风角): the ancient Chinese realised that the

¹⁵⁸ Menglei Chen, 古今圖書集成·曆象彙編乾象典·五行部 [The Compendium of Ancient and Modern Works, Comprehensive Collection of Calendrical Systems: Qianxiang Dictionary, Elements Section], (1662 -1722).

¹⁵⁹ Jiyu Ren, 中国佛教史 [History of Chinese Buddhism], Vol. 1 (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1981), p. 1.

¹⁶⁰ Jiyu Ren, (1981), pp. 7-8.

¹⁶¹ Jiyu Ren, (1981), pp. 8-10.

¹⁶² Jiyu Ren, (1981), p. 24.

¹⁶³ Jiyu Ren, (1981), pp. 27-8.

changes in wind and clouds were closely related to the weather and seasons in agriculture and animal husbandry, so they paid great attention to the observation of wind and clouds.¹⁶⁴ Referring to the mountain cult in Confucianism, the Classic of Rites reports that emperors followed the traditional etiquette of making pilgrimages to five sacred mountains in China as far back as the time of the Warring States (475 BC - 221 BC).¹⁶⁵

Furthermore, Taoism has always been respectful of nature, including mountain and river worship, especially mountains. Taoists, for instance, always carry the map of True Forms of the Five Sacred Mountains for long and arduous trips, as they fervently believe this symbolic map drawing of the five great mountains of China can protect them and help them avoid any accidental injury or threat. Since Zhang Lin on Mount Emei created Taoism during the mid- and late Eastern Han dynasty¹⁶⁶, Taoism quickly spread to Mount Wutai as there appeared to be adherents practising in huts and caves, according to the *Qing Liang Shan Zhi*. Mount Wutai, as part of Mount Heng, is one of five divine mountains in Chinese belief (Wu Yue), was initially a hallowed shrine of Taoism, but Buddhists also chose it as their holy land for worshipping Buddha and are convinced that Mount Wutai is 'the earthly abode of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*'¹⁶⁷.

¹⁶⁴ Jiyu Ren, (1981), pp. 39-44.

¹⁶⁵ The students of Confucius (孔子后学), 礼记 [Liji: Book of Rites], (Western Han dynasty, 202 BC - AD 9).

礼记·王制 [Liji, Wangzhi]: '天子祭天下名山大川 五岳视三公 四渎视诸侯 诸侯祭名山大川之在其地者' [Accordingly the imperial etiquette, emperor was required to worship the five mountains, although the book did not accurately define the location of each mountain in the country, it is patently that the nature worship of mountain god appeared firstly before Buddhism arrived at China mainland, because it was widely believed that the consecration closely linked to the rise and fall of political power and national destiny].

¹⁶⁶ Fayi Jia, 2010, '山西道教历史发展特点析论' [Study on the Taoism history of Shanxi], *Religious Studies*, 1 (2010), 1-10 (pp. 1-2).

¹⁶⁷ Karl Debreczeny, 'Wutai Shan: Pilgrimage to Five-Peak Mountain', *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, 6 (2011), 1-133 (p. 1).

The interaction between indigenous and non-indigenous religions also began in the Han dynasty. The earliest Chinese historical treatise discussing religions (mainly focusing on Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism) is the *Mouzi Lihuolun* (Chinese: 牟子理惑论), which brings together the affirmation or denial of Buddhism prevalent in China by various authors.¹⁶⁸ It compares the similarities and differences in essence between Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, and also discusses the philosophical relationship between the three. It is perhaps the oldest surviving book that best reflects the discussion between indigenous religion and philosophy and foreign cultures when Buddhism first came to China. Taoism was in its formative phase during the Han dynasty, and occasionally referred to the concept of Buddhism. In contrast, Buddhism, in order to smoothly transform and spread its principles and teachings in China, also drew on the Taoist philosophy of alchemy. Moreover, Confucianism tried to suppress the development of the other two religions. Not only did it prevent the development of Taoism, but it also excluded Buddhism, claiming that the essence of Buddhism conflicts with the filial piety of Chinese ethics.¹⁶⁹ For example, in Chinese cognition, children are not allowed to shave their heads and stay away from their ageing parents in order to become monks or nuns, because every part of a child's body belongs to their parents, so cutting one's hair or hurting one's body, or not supporting the elderly, are considered rebellious and unforgivable behaviour. Moreover, the body cannot be cremated as Buddhism prescribes, but must be buried in the ground, as cremation would ruin the feng shui of their entire family,

¹⁶⁸ Mouzi, 牟子理惑论 [Mouzi Lihuolun], (Eastern Han dynasty, AD 25 - AD 220).

¹⁶⁹ Xiuping Hong, '隋唐儒佛道三教关系及其学术影响' [Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism of the Sui and Tang: Their Relationships and Academic Influence], *Journal of Nanjing University (Philosophy, Humanities and Social Sciences)*, 40.6 (2003), 137-46 (pp. 137-38).

which would be totally unacceptable. However, although the competition between the three religions was fierce, the long process of integration and contradictions resulted in Buddhism being gradually domesticated and successfully developed in China since the Han dynasty.

Buddhism spreading to the Chinese mainland benefited from the cross-border development of trade on the Silk Road, as 'a community of faith cannot survive without financial support'.¹⁷⁰ The Silk Road has multiple routes;¹⁷¹ an offshoot of the Silk Road crosses Central Asia and follows the Indus River to reach the Indian plains¹⁷². Trade on the Silk Road brought glass, precious metals and cultivated plants (clover, peaches, and almonds) to the East, while the West received silk and gold.¹⁷³ Around the first century AD, along the trade routes used by merchants, monks and travellers, Buddhism spread rapidly from northern India.¹⁷⁴ Buddhist doctrine and culture spread widely along the trade routes, and the first Buddhist groups in Central Asia emerged in trading settlements; thus, Buddhist monasteries sprang up in the oasis towns along the trade routes, teaching the religious doctrines and, especially, the rich artistic symbolism that had emerged in India. Buddhist and Chinese art forms merged in these monasteries.¹⁷⁵ The first group of monks probably arrived in China from India around the first century AD, passing through current Pakistan and Afghanistan.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁰ Johan Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*, (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania press, 2011), p. 11.

¹⁷¹ Valerie Hansen, *The Silk Road - A New History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 21.

¹⁷² Anil de Silva, *The Art of Chinese Landscape Painting: In the Caves of Tun-huang*, (New York: Crown Publishers, 1967), pp. 214-15.

¹⁷³ Anil de Silva, (1967), p. 215.

¹⁷⁴ Peter Frankopan, *The silk roads: A new history of the world*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), p. 44.

¹⁷⁵ Anil de Silva, *The Art of Chinese Landscape Painting: In the Caves of Tun-huang*, (New York: Crown Publishers, 1967), pp. 214-15.

¹⁷⁶ Sicheng Liang, '中国的佛教建筑' [Monasteries in China], *Journal of Tsinghua University (Science and Technology)*, 2 (1961), 51-71 (p. 58).

When Buddhism took root on Chinese soil and seized the development opportunity supported by its official patrons in the Han dynasty, the first reaction in the long-running process of Buddhism's reterritorialization was to ask how the Buddhist community should be defined on Chinese soil. The Chinese word 'si', once used to name governmental buildings, then became the exclusive title of monastic buildings from the Han dynasty. The eminent Indian Buddhist Moteng arrived at the capital city, Luo Yang in AD 67 and received a warm welcome from the local politicians. He was even arranged in a grand local government building, named Baima si (or White Horse Monastery),¹⁷⁷ for rest and preaching *sūtras*. With the popularity of Buddhism, 'si' then became a symbolic name for Buddhists' homes.¹⁷⁸ A new donation trend for patronage Buddhism showed up around this time. It was 'She Zhai Wei Si (Chinese: 舍宅为寺)', donating a private house for Buddha space, or home church, recorded in '*Luo Yang Qie Lan Ji* (or *Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-yang*, Chinese: 洛阳伽蓝记)'. These events symbolise the fact that Buddhism had begun to occupy its own space in Chinese architecture. Meanwhile, this new definition undoubtedly accelerated the Buddhist architecture Sinicization.¹⁷⁹ From some extent, Buddhist architecture originally started on mainland China from 'home church'¹⁸⁰ which also led the following monastic building was deeply attached Chinese residential buildings

¹⁷⁷ Chūta Itō, 中国建筑史 [History of Chinese architecture], trans. by Qingquan Chen, (Changsha: Hunan University Press, 2016), p. 29.

¹⁷⁸ Sicheng Liang, '中国的佛教建筑' [Monasteries in China], *Journal of Tsinghua University (Science and Technology)*, 2 (1961), 51-71 (p. 52).

¹⁷⁹ Xi'nian Fu, 傅熹年建筑史论文集 [Collected works of Fu Xi'nian on Architecture History], (Tianjin: Baihua Edition, 1998), p. 90.

¹⁸⁰ Jan Nattier, 'Buddhism Comes to Main Street', *The Wilson Quarterly*, 21.2 (1997), 72-80 (p. 76).

According to Nattier (1997): 'The 'export' of Buddhism has resulted in American Buddhist communities of a markedly distinct sort. Because the transmission is funded by the home church, the potential convert does not need money, power, or time to get acquainted with this type of Buddhism, simply a desire to listen.' Although Buddhism was formally introduced to mainland China through missionary activity, the prevalence of 'She Zhai Wei Si' also indicates the role of the 'home church'.

style. However, apart from the new exclusive designation for Buddhist communities according to the historical texts, which can justify the influence of the importation of a foreign religion on architecture, there is little tangible evidence or relics to support other notable changes in Chinese Buddhist architecture upon the arrival of Buddhism.

The politically dominant forms of patronage and supervision differed in the various regimes; the details of administration in the Tang dynasty were stricter and more systematic. Before the Tang dynasty, the development of Buddhist sites was a free affair with fewer restrictions, especially with regard to the naming of monasteries by the ruling families. However, the development of monasteries controlled by the Tang regime achieved a multi-dimensional mechanism of intervention. Monasteries were divided into three classes and the number of monks was divided depending on the monastic classes, according to *The History of Tang dynasty* (Chinese: 全唐文). *'Five new monasteries were constructed with official funding in Mount Wutai, and all surviving monasteries would be restored and recorded; every monastery would add fifty monks, and must develop a nunnery there.'*¹⁸¹ In addition, the emperors appointed 5358 monastery plaques (a flat and square piece of wood, usually with a name and dates on it, attached to a door to show the name of the monastery), meaning that a total of 5358

¹⁸¹ Gao Dong and others, 全唐文 [The History of Tang dynasty], (1808 - 1814).

全唐文·受尊号赦文·第八十二卷 [The History of Tang dynasty, Shou Zun Hao She Wen, Vol. 82]. The corresponding Chinese text is: '釋氏之教，清淨為宗，將悟昏迷，實資善誘。上都除先置寺外，每街更各添置寺五所；東都除先置寺外，更添置寺五所。每寺各度五十人，每處置僧寺三所，尼寺二所。西川、荊南、揚州、潤州、汴州、太原、河中、襄州已上八道，除先置寺外，更各添置寺二所。每處置僧寺一所，尼寺一所。諸道節度觀察使府，除先置寺外，更各添置寺一所。其所置僧寺，各度三十人。諸道管內州未置寺處，宜各置寺二所，僧寺一所，尼寺一所，每寺各度三十人。五台山置寺五所，如有見存寺，便令修飾充數，每寺度五十人，數內置尼寺一所，已前添置寺，宜並先度僧尼，漸漸教化。建造寺宇，不得遽有勞役，其僧尼年幾限約，並諸條流，準會昌六年五月五日敕條事例處分'.

monasteries were officially recognised and documented by the state.¹⁸² In addition, Buddhists who visited a monastery in the Tang dynasty were tracked with the 'dudie (Chinese: 度牒)', an official certificate from the government proving that Buddhists had to obtain permission before embarking on a pilgrimage.¹⁸³ This system was also proven by the Japanese Buddhist Ennin when he visited various Pilgrimage centres and Buddhist shrines in Tang-era China.

3.2 The evolution of Buddhist monuments

There are many ways to define the typology of Buddhist architecture, as tangible monuments have long held symbolic significance for Buddhists. Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (the pioneering historian and philosopher of Indian art) classifies the various Buddhist monuments into five groups: *stambhas* (pillars), *stūpas*, *rails*, *chaityas*, and *vihāras*.¹⁸⁴ While, from an archaeologist's perspective, to identify a Buddhist site, architecturally, 'one of all the following three elements should be present, such as *stūpa*, *chaitya-griha* and *vihāra* (or monastery)'.¹⁸⁵ In Stuart Piggott's review of Buddhist monuments, he also agrees this tripartite division, but also highlighted the limitation of excavation and pointed out that the three categories of corporeal relics cannot present all Buddhist practice.¹⁸⁶ However, depending on the resemblance and relevance of architectural forms at

¹⁸² Gong Zhang, 汉唐佛寺文化史 [The Buddhism Cultural History from the Han dynasty to the Tang dynasty], (Beijing: China Social Sciences Publishing House, 1997), pp. 221-33.

¹⁸³ Dudie (度牒), which is roughly equivalent to today's passport. Dudie is a declaration of consent in ancient China to administer, which allows laities to become monks or Taoist. "Die" mentioned in Ennin's diary many times, is likely a passport for travelling. Before Ennin could travel to another area of China as an international Buddhist, he first had to apply for the Dudie from an official. Therefore, every time he travelled, he had to wait for getting the Die.

¹⁸⁴ James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1899), pp. 54-5.

¹⁸⁵ Dilip Kumar Chakrabarti, 'Buddhist Sites Across South Asia as Influenced by Political and Economic Forces', *World Archaeology*, 27.2 (1995), 185-202 (p. 192).

¹⁸⁶ Stuart Piggott, 'The Earliest Buddhist Shrines', *Antiquity*, 17.65 (1943), 1-10

Foguang Monastery, this thesis mainly reviews and discusses the Buddhist art and architecture from the three classifications, polished sandstone *Aśoka* pillars, *stūpa* mounds, and *vihāra*.

In terms of the earliest architecture of Buddhism, since no actual remains have survived, scholars generally infer that the earliest Buddhist building was likely to be leaf thatched huts or trees in forest clearings, where replicas of Siddhārtha were gathered to spread his doctrine. ‘Gods live in the trees’, which could track back to the remotest and traditional tree cult in ancient India; if Buddhism wants to enlarge and grow, it has to embody this universal tradition in its culture and to venerate trees.¹⁸⁷ Trees, therefore, not only symbolise the sanctuary for Buddha’s enlightenment, but also became a spatial and sacred location for Buddhist to express their veneration, meanwhile, tree as a hut also matches the *Siddhārtha*’s creed of ascetic practice.¹⁸⁸

Vihāra came from Ceylon, and its definition varies. For instance, *vihāra* is regarded as ‘a residence or dwelling, whether for a monk or an image’, but a group of cells in small size as monks’ department should be called a ‘*Samgharāma* or monastery’.¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, from an archaeologist perspective, the *vihāra* seems to be considered to be a Buddhist monastery.¹⁹⁰ It is evident that the initial monasteries were surrounded by clusters of ascetics’ huts arranged around an

¹⁸⁷ Heinrich Zimmer, ‘Trees, Huts and Temples’, *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, 5 (1937), 111-21 (p. 119).

¹⁸⁸ Ashraf, Kazi K., ‘The Buddha’s House’, *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 53/54 (2008), 225-43 (pp. 225-28).

¹⁸⁹ James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1899), p. 170.

¹⁹⁰ Robin Coningham, ‘The archaeology of Buddhism’, in *Archaeology and world religion*, ed. by Timothy Insoll, (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 61-95 (p. 78).

open space, which gradually saw an influx of donated dwellings.¹⁹¹ These gathered huts eventually evolved into the conventional layout of a hostel, comprising a series of cells surrounding three sides of a square court, while the remaining side was left open to act as the entrance.¹⁹² However, Buddhist 'Monastery' (*Vihāra* or *Samgharāma*) is such a place associated with seclusion, chastity, serenity, asceticism and austerity, and a residence or dwelling of recreation and pleasure in the Classical Sanskrit.¹⁹³ It is, therefore, not simply a place for a Buddhist dormitory but encompasses a broad definition that includes multiple functions such as communication, learning, performing rituals, and practicing Buddhism.

For the construction material of *vihāras* or monasteries, undoubtedly, some were initially built using perishable materials that were prone to deterioration, however, there are still some well-preserved rock-cut monasteries that have survived.¹⁹⁴ One notable example is the Deccan monastic complex, which has experienced evolution since the third to the second century BC, making it a typical representation.¹⁹⁵ Additionally, the general trend of material usage can be categorised into three distinct groups. Indian Buddhists predominantly employed durable materials like brick and stone in their constructions; the Chinese group often opted for perishable materials such as timber; meanwhile, the Tibetan group typically favoured a combination of adobe construction with rubble and

¹⁹¹ Robin Coningham, (2001), p. 78.

¹⁹² Robin Coningham, (2001), p. 78.

Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu Period)*, (Redditch: Read Books Limited, 2013), p. 16.

Himansu Bhusan Sarkar, *Studies in Early Buddhist Architecture of India*, (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1966).

¹⁹³ Gregory Schopen, "The Buddhist "Monastery" and the Indian garden: Aesthetics, assimilations, and the siting of monastic establishments', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 126.4 (2006), 487-505 (p. 487).

¹⁹⁴ Mitra Debala, *Buddhist Monuments*, (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1971), p. 32.

¹⁹⁵ Mitra Debala, (1971), p. 32.

wood, whenever feasible.¹⁹⁶ These material preferences were influenced by a variety of cultural and environmental factors.¹⁹⁷ Although surviving Chinese Buddhist architecture includes pagodas made of stone, brick, or wood and numerous grottoes carved into rocks, most monastic buildings were still constructed of wood, including the Foguang Monastery.

3.3 Esoteric Buddhism, *maṇḍala*, and circumambulation

During the long process of Buddhism development, it also spawned many different Buddhist sects. For instance, after the Mahayana (Great Vehicle, Chinese: 大乘佛教) had divided into a multifaceted development and since the fall of the Gupta Empire, esoteric Buddhism (Chinese: 密宗) emerged on a broad front in the second half of the seventh century AD.¹⁹⁸ This period was marked by a flourishing of Buddhist achievements, including the prominence of esoteric Buddhism, during the Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907) in China.¹⁹⁹

Esoteric Buddhism, during the medieval period, internalised, assimilated, confirmed, and reorganized the structures closely linked with power dynamics, ritual validation, aesthetics, gift-giving, clan affiliations, and the sense of authority that characterized the Indian polities after the Gupta era.²⁰⁰ Esoteric Buddhism places a significant emphasis on the importance of rituals, ceremonies, and the

¹⁹⁶ Le Huu Phuoc, *Buddhist architecture*, (Grafikol, 2010), p. 53.

¹⁹⁷ Le Huu Phuoc, (2010), p. 53.

¹⁹⁸ Ronald M. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 116.

¹⁹⁹ Guixiang Wang, *中国汉传佛教建筑史 - 佛寺的建造, 分布与寺院格局, 建筑分类及其变迁* [The history of Chinese Buddhist Architecture - construction of Buddhist temple and building distribution, change on the Buddhist temple planning and building type], Vol. 1 (Beijing, Tsinghua University Press, 2016), p. 494.

²⁰⁰ Ronald M. Davidson, p. 115.

recitation of mantras.²⁰¹ It emphasises the use of prayer as a means to fulfil personal wishes, and it places great importance on the acts of worship and offering to deities; many deities are worshipped in esoteric Buddhism, with *Mahāvairocana* (Chinese: 大日如来, a cosmic Buddha from Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism) at the centre, surrounded by a multitude of *bodhisattvas* and other deities.²⁰² The translations of eminent monks Xuanzang (also known as Hsüan-Tsang) and Yi Jing during the Tang dynasty, contain detailed records of the teachings of esoteric Buddhism.²⁰³

The emergence of esoteric Buddhism also symbolises the birth of a new formulation: it continues to use complicated *maṇḍalas* and consists of royal consecrations, in which the practitioner is instructed to imagine themselves in a sacred field of the Buddha.²⁰⁴ The most important type of image used in esoteric Buddhism is *maṇḍala*.²⁰⁵ The term '*maṇḍala*', from the Sanskrit, is a circular symbol used in spiritual practices in Hinduism and Buddhism, and it is used in sacred rituals and as an aid to meditation.²⁰⁶ The *maṇḍala* is considered a Buddhist cosmic model and emphasises that the Buddha's abode is in the centre of the universe.²⁰⁷ The two main types of esoteric Buddhist patterns that originated in China are the Diamond Realm *maṇḍala* (Chinese: 金刚界曼荼罗) (Fig.

²⁰¹ Yongtong Tang, 隋唐佛教史稿 [Sui and Tang Buddhist History], (Wuhan: Wuhan University Press, 2008), p. 183.

²⁰² Yongtong Tang, (2008), p. 183.

²⁰³ Yongtong Tang, (2008), pp. 183-84.

²⁰⁴ Ronald M. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 117.

²⁰⁵ Raoul Birnbaum, *Studies on the Mysteries of Mañjuśrī: A Group of East Asian Maṇḍalas and Their Traditional Symbolism*, (Society for the Study of Chinese Religions, Monography No. 2, 1983), p. 3.

²⁰⁶ The Britannica, 'Maṇḍala', *The Britannica*, 2023 <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/maṇḍala-diagram>> [accessed 20 Feb 2023].

²⁰⁷ Ping Xu, 'The Maṇḍala as a cosmic model used to systematically structure the Tibetan Buddhist Landscape', *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 27.3 (2010), 181-203 (p. 184).

25) and the Womb Realm *maṇḍala* (Chinese: 胎藏界曼荼罗) (Fig. 26).²⁰⁸ In traditional half of Shingon Buddhism (Chinese: 真言宗, one of esoteric Buddhism), the Womb Realm *maṇḍala* is typically hung on the east wall, representing the early stage of *Mahāvairocana* Buddha.²⁰⁹ In contrast, the Diamond Realm *maṇḍala* is displayed on the west wall, representing the ultimate realisation of *Mahāvairocana* Buddha.²¹⁰

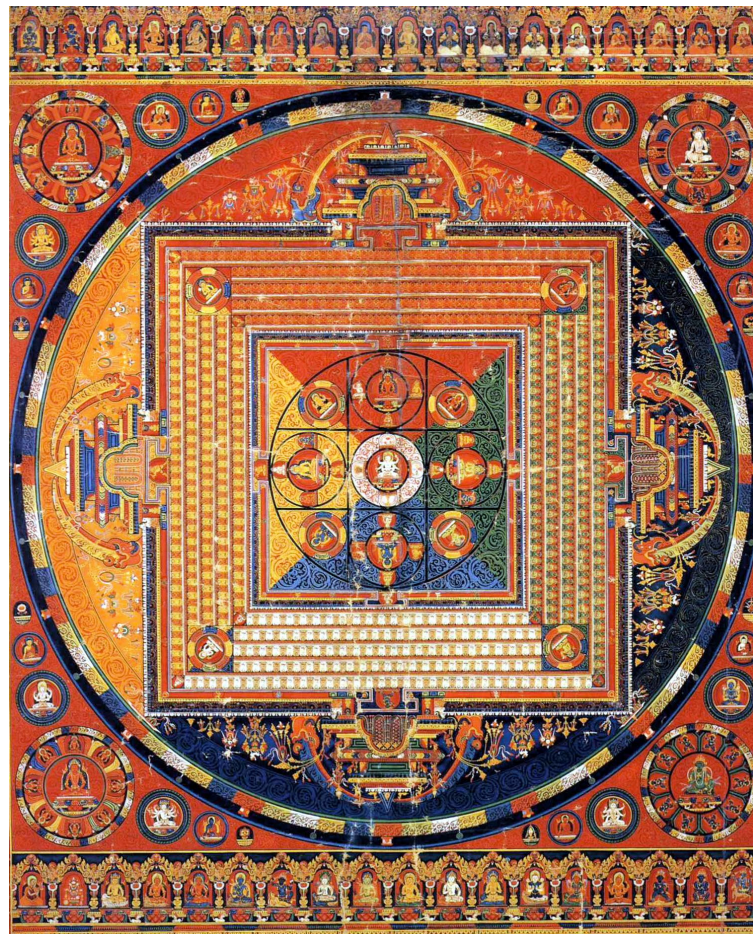


Fig. 25. This symbolic diagram describes a *Vajradhatu maṇḍala* (the fourteenth century AD) for meditation and ritual purposes. The *maṇḍala* is centred on the figure of *Vairocana*, the Buddha surrounded by four other Buddhas, each associated with a particular direction and colour. At the top of the *maṇḍala* is the Western Pure Land, ruled by the Buddha *Amitabha*, where devout followers hope to be reborn. The central square of the *maṇḍala* is a multi-tiered palace housing a thousand *bodhisattvas* with five Buddhas positioned within concentric circles. The four directions are marked by gateways shaped like pronged *vajras*, and these gateways cross under the image of *Vairocana*, signifying a point of perfect stability. The top register of the *maṇḍala* features Buddhist deities, enlightened tantric practitioners, and monastic patriarchs, while the base has a row of powerful protectors and auspicious gods. In the bottom left corner, a monk perpetually consecrates the *maṇḍala* at an altar.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Qianhua Huang, *中国佛教史* [Chinese Buddhism History], (Beijing: Oriental publishing house, 2008), pp. 244-45.

²⁰⁹ Religion viki, 'Womb Realm', *Religion viki*, <https://religion.fandom.com/wiki/Womb_Realm> [accessed 12 Jan 2023].

²¹⁰ Religion viki, [accessed 12 Jan 2023].

²¹¹ The Met, 'Vajradhatu (Diamond Realm) Maṇḍala, Digital image, 74.9 × 91.4 cm', *The Met*, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/42605>> [accessed 12 March 2023].



Fig. 26. The diagram describes a *Womb Realm maṇḍala* (the ninth century AD) featuring an eight-petaled lotus at its centre, with *Mahāvairocana* Buddha positioned in the center and four Buddhas and four *Bodhisattvas* seating on the surrounding petals. The four Buddhas are associated with the four cardinal directions, while the four *bodhisattvas* are situated in the midway directions. These eight figures symbolise the virtues of *Mahāvairocana* Buddha, and together with *Mahāvairocana*, they are known as the 'nine honoured ones on the eight-petaled lotus.'²¹²

The Diamond Realm *maṇḍala* is depicted according to the text of *Diamond Sūtra* (Chinese: 金剛頂經); the Womb Realm *maṇḍala* is based on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (Chinese: 大日經).²¹³ Indian Buddhists Vajrabodhi (Chinese: 金剛智) and Amoghavajra (Chinese: 不空金剛) were highly capable and persuasive instructors of esoteric Buddhism in China. Vajrabodhi is the patriarch of Chinese esoteric Buddhism who spent many lifetimes translating esoteric texts from Sanskrit into Chinese and performing ritual activities in the Tang dynasty. He is also the teacher of Amoghavajra.

The concept of the '*maṇḍalisation*' of geographical space has received considerable scholarly attention. Looking at the entire Asian region, the *maṇḍala*

²¹² Soka Gakkai Nichiren Buddhism Library, 'Womb Realm *Maṇḍala*', *Soka Gakkai Nichiren Buddhism Library*, 2014 <<https://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/dic/Content/W/29>> [accessed 11 March 2023].

²¹³ Qianhua Huang, 中国佛教史 [Chinese Buddhism History], (Beijing: Oriental publishing house, 2008), pp. 244-45.

and *stūpa*, the symbols of Buddhist teachings have profoundly influenced Buddhists' thought processes from Benares to Java and from the Kathmandu Valley to Japan, and in this context, Tibet could be seen as occupying a central position as the centrepiece of the Asian *maṇḍala*.²¹⁴ In tracing the relationship between *maṇḍala* diagrams and the latest caves of the early eighth century, the researcher finds that two-dimensional *maṇḍala* diagrams (both horizontally and vertically) expanded into three-dimensional sculptural and also were fully employed in concrete architectural space, influencing even the evolving levels of ritual understanding.²¹⁵ Moreover, the *maṇḍala* paradigm is thought to offer a metaphor associated with the construction of *stūpas* for earthly kingship that reflect a celestial order and also contribute a sacred model for the realisation of political ideology.²¹⁶ In addition, the *maṇḍala* paradigm is thought of as being a cosmic model that is used to systematise the Tibetan Buddhist landscape.²¹⁷ Furthermore, the *maṇḍala* diagram has also influenced the structure of the Chinese *sūtra* pillars, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

Therefore, the popularity of esoteric Buddhism during the Tang dynasty in China would strengthen the concept of the *maṇḍala* paradigm; the visualisation of the *Mahāvairochana* Buddha *maṇḍala* was also highly likely to provide a

²¹⁴ Heather Stoddard, 'Dynamic Structures in Buddhist Maṇḍalas: Apradākṣina and Mystic Heat in the Mother Tantra Section of the Anuttarayoga Tantras', *Artibus Asiae*, 58.3/4 (1999), 169-213

²¹⁵ Geri H. Malandra, *Unfolding A Maṇḍala: The Buddhist Cave Temples at Ellora*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), p. 18.

²¹⁶ Swati Chemburkar, 'Stūpa to Maṇḍala: Tracing a Buddhist Architectural Development from Kesariya to Borobudur to Tabo', *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 48 (1990), 15-7 (p. 16).

Swati Chemburkar, 'Stūpa to Maṇḍala: Tracing a Buddhist Architectural Development from Kesariya to Borobudur to Tabo', *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (Third Series)*, 20 (2018), 169-221(p. 220).

Rosita Dellios, 'Maṇḍala: from sacred origins to sovereign affairs in traditional Southeast Asia', *Culture Maṇḍala*, 13.3 (2019), 1-17 (pp. 1-2).

²¹⁷ Ping Xu, 'The Maṇḍala as a cosmic model used to systematically structure the Tibetan Buddhist Landscape', *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 27.3 (2010), 181-203 (p. 184).

fundamental theory for Buddhist practice, whether in cave sculptures, monuments, architecture, or even in the early religious-political relations of kingship. The *maṇḍala* of esoteric Buddhism was also used in the *Mañjuśrī* cult.

3.4 The *Mañjuśrī* cult and *Mañjuśrī maṇḍala*

Mañjuśrī, known as the personification of wisdom and kindness in *Mahāyāna* (Greater Vehicle, Chinese: 大乘佛教) *sūtra* text, represents sacred wisdom and assumes multiple roles. According to the '*Mahamayuri Vidyarajni Sūtra*' translated by the monk Bukong of the Daxingshan Monastery, *Mañjuśrī* is the teacher of the Vairocana Tathagata and the five Tathagatas of the Diamond Realm, as well as the teacher of Shakyamuni Buddha. He imparted extremely profound secret teachings and is therefore considered the source of all esoteric teachings. *Mañjuśrī*, is also regarded as an entirely Buddhist figure who teaches and converts living beings to Buddhism. In addition, he is recognised as the Buddha's spokesman and a perfect spiritual friend.²¹⁸

The elite monk Amoghavajra was not only an effective and charismatic teacher of esoteric Buddhism, but also the key figure who helped the popularity of the *Mañjuśrī* cult to flourish in China. In addition, Amoghavajra's mission in China can generally be considered to have two aspects: first, he spread esoteric Buddhism

²¹⁸ Zhiguang Acharya (智广阿闍梨), '五台山文殊信仰对唐密重兴之重要意义' [The significance of Mount Wutai's *Mañjuśrī* faith to the revival of Tang Esoteric Buddhism], *Words of Wisdom*, 3 (2016), 22-31 (p. 24).

《大乘瑜伽金剛性海曼殊室利千臂千鉢大教王經》云：「是時毘盧遮那如來 則告牟尼世尊及千釋迦 千百億化釋迦言 吾從往昔修持金剛秘密菩提法教者 是大聖曼殊室利菩薩摩訶薩是吾先師」[In the '*Mahamayuri Vidyarajni Sūtra*', it is said, 'At that time, the Vairocana Tathagata told the Shakyamuni Tathagata and the thousand Shakyamuni Buddhas and countless transformed Buddhas, I have practiced the Vajra Secret Bodhi teachings since ancient times. The great and holy *Mañjuśrī* Bodhisattva is my former teacher'].

through the translation of texts, and he also skilfully used the legend that Mount Wutai was the abode of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*, thus gaining the trust and support of the royal family of the Tang dynasty.²¹⁹ According to the *Biography of Eminent Monks of The Song dynasty* (Chinese: 宋高僧传 - 唐京兆大兴善寺不空传):

五年夏有诏 请空往五台山修功德 于时彗星出焉 法事告终星亦随没 秋
空至自五台 帝以师子驄并御鞍轡遣中使出城迎入 賜沿道供帳

In the summer of the fifth year (AD 770), an imperial decree requested Amoghavajra go to Mount Wutai to perform Buddhist practices. At the same time, a comet appeared. After the completion of the Buddhist ceremony, the comet disappeared. In autumn, Amoghavajra returned from Mount Wutai. The emperor sent a royal steed, saddle, and reins and dispatched officials to welcome his return (to the capital Chang 'an). Along the side of the street, he was given decorated tents and crowded with mountainous people to express high respect.

With the widespread distribution of the *Mañjuśrī* cult in Tang China and on Mount Wutai through Amoghavajra, the *Mañjuśrī bodhisattva maṇḍala* certainly also influenced Chinese Buddhist practice in art, architecture, and landscape, as did the visualisation of the *Mahāvairocana Buddha maṇḍala* from two-

²¹⁹ Raoul Birnbaum, *Studies on the Mysteries of Mañjuśrī: A Group of East Asian Maṇḍalas and Their Traditional Symbolism*, (Society for the Study of Chinese Religions, Monography No. 2, 1983), pp. 36-7.

dimensional painting to three-dimensional practice. In *Mañjuśrī maṇḍala*, the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* of Transcendent Wisdom is the core item that the *maṇḍala* diagram emphasises (Fig. 27). This visible arrangement about the *Mañjuśrī* was also deployed in Buddhist practice. Mount Wutai, for instance, as the dwelling of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*, its five terraces, were tied into five forms of *Mañjuśrī* (east terrace - Green *Tikshna Mañjuśrī*; south terrace - white *Jnanasattva Mañjuśrī*; central Terrace - yellow *Vimala Mañjuśrī*; west Terrace - red *Simhanada Mañjuśrī*; north Terrace - Blue *Vimala Mañjuśrī*).



Fig. 27. Maṇḍala of the forms of Mañjuśrī (the sixteenth century AD), the Bodhisattva of Transcendent Wisdom. This diagram describes a depiction of Mañjuśrī sitting at the maṇḍala's centre. The maṇḍala is adorned with floral motifs, rings of lotus petals, vajras, and fire, which mark the sacred space around Mañjuśrī. In the four directions surrounding Mañjuśrī are towers with makaras crossed vajras, symbolising the stable axis on which Mañjuśrī sits.²²⁰

²²⁰ Rogers Fund, 'Maṇḍala of the Forms of Mañjuśrī, Digital image, 83.9 x 74 cm', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 1997 <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/37804>> [accessed 11 March 2023].

However, esoteric Buddhism and the *Mañjuśrī* cult were not the only Buddhism sects ever popularised in Mount Wutai, even in the same historical period. For example, Zhiyan, as the first patriarch of the Chinese Buddhist Huayan School (Chinese: 华严宗 Flower Garland School of Buddhism), incepted the Chinese Huanyan sect during the early Tang dynasty²²¹ and made Mount Wutai a Buddhist shrine where Huayanzong performed, taught and preached scriptures²²². Besides Huayan, Pure Land Buddhism (Chinese: 净土宗), Risshū (Chinese: 律宗), and Zen (Chinese: 禅宗), etc., were also preached on Mount Wutai by elite monks of the respective Buddhist sects. This thesis emphasises the significance of esoteric Buddhism because esoteric Buddhist *maṇḍala* and *Mañjuśrī maṇḍala* give an ideological reference and visible diagram that define the orientation sacredness of Buddhist shrines, and also influence the constructional ideology of Buddhist buildings. This uniqueness is hard to find in other Buddhist sects.

3.5 Buddhist pilgrimage and circumambulation

‘A pilgrimage is a journey to a sacred place as an act of faith and devotion.’²²³ The establishment of Buddhist holy places always drives travellers because ‘most Buddhists would consider visiting the holy places listed by the Buddha to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.’²²⁴ This travelling process was given its meaning by the Buddha. Because the Buddha valued shrines and when he discussed the difficult life of a wanderer in the forest, such as his own prior to enlightenment,

²²¹ Xuemei Wang and Zhenming Cao, ‘唐代华严宗道统构建省思’ [Reflection on the Construction of Orthodoxy of Huayan Zong in Tang dynasty], *Zhejiang Social Sciences*, 12 (2022), 113-22 (pp. 114-15).

²²² Huanzhong Han, ‘华严宗与五台山文殊信仰’ [The School of Huayan and Its Connection to the *Mañjuśrī* belief in Mt. Wutai], *Mt Wutai Researches*, 3 (2020), 50-57 (p. 51).

²²³ Chan Khoon San, *Buddhist pilgrimage*, (Malaysia, Subdng Jaya Buddhist Association, 2001), p. 2.

²²⁴ Chan Khoon San, (2001), p. 2.

he pointed out that during the Poṣadha nights of the wanderers, it was his practise to visit the forest shrines and meditate there.²²⁵ Pilgrimage and circumambulation as an essential Buddhist rite are closely connected.²²⁶ The primary objective of going on a pilgrimage is centred on engaging in meditation and performing circumambulation around the final destination (the holy sites or spaces) of the journey.²²⁷ Circumambulation (also called *pradakshina*) has been practised in Indian tradition at many scales, ranging from a god or tree to a sacred hill, river, and city.²²⁸ Depending on the central symbolism, the spatial character of the path transforms from an indoor religious space to outdoors in nature or city, and the experience of travelling through a sacred place changes people's mental and physical characteristics.²²⁹

If the Buddhist pilgrimage route is a closed circuit from a geographical point of view, it could also be seen as a large-scale circumambulation. In large-scale circumambulatory, which is practised extensively around the sacred city, hill forest, and river in India, one of the highly active circumambulatory is Panchakroshi circumambulation in Varanasi, which has a length of around 80.5 km and is practised throughout the year, though it tends to be most crowded in November-December and February-March. The trace of this circumambulation can be found in the ancient book of Ramayana and Mahabharata.²³⁰

²²⁵ Anthony Kennedy Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Vol. 6 (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publications, 2004), pp. 219-21.

²²⁶ Anthony Kennedy Warder, (2004), pp. 219-21.

²²⁷ Santosh Kumar, 'Circumambulation in Indian pilgrimage: Meaning and Manifestation', *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 12.1 (2021), 232-43 (p. 237).

²²⁸ Santosh Kumar, (2021), 232-43 (p. 232).

²²⁹ Santosh Kumar, (2021), 232-43 (p. 232).

²³⁰ Santosh Kumar, (2021), 232-43 (p. 238).

The global trade network in ancient times enabled the international pilgrimage (or large-scale circumambulation) of Buddhists. Geographically, the Silk Road traverses a remarkably varied landscape, much of it treacherous.²³¹ On the way west from Xi'an, the travellers first passed through the Gansu Corridor. This is a 600 miles (about 1,000 kilometres) east-west road that runs between the Qinghai Mountains in the south and the Gobi Desert in Mongolia in the north. After arriving in the oasis city of Dunhuang in Gansu province, they had to choose between the northern and southern routes through the Taklamakan Desert, which converged in Kashgar. Those undertaking the journey could choose a centre path through one of the most hostile deserts in the world if both routes were impassable (Fig. 28).²³² Trade on the Silk Road brought glass, precious metals, and cultivated plants (clover, peaches, and almonds) to the East, while the West received silk and gold. Silk production was vital in the pre-Han period, possibly even in the Shang period (AD 1600 - AD 1046).²³³ The early Indian Buddhists followed the paths of the traders and successfully introduced Buddhist scriptures, Buddhist utensils and Buddhist architecture in architecture to Central Asia.

²³¹ Valerie Hansen, *The Silk Road - A New History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 21.

²³² Valerie Hansen, (2012), p. 21.

²³³ Anil de Silva, *The Art of Chinese Landscape Painting: In the Caves of Tun-huang*, (New York: Crown Publishers, 1967), pp. 214-15.

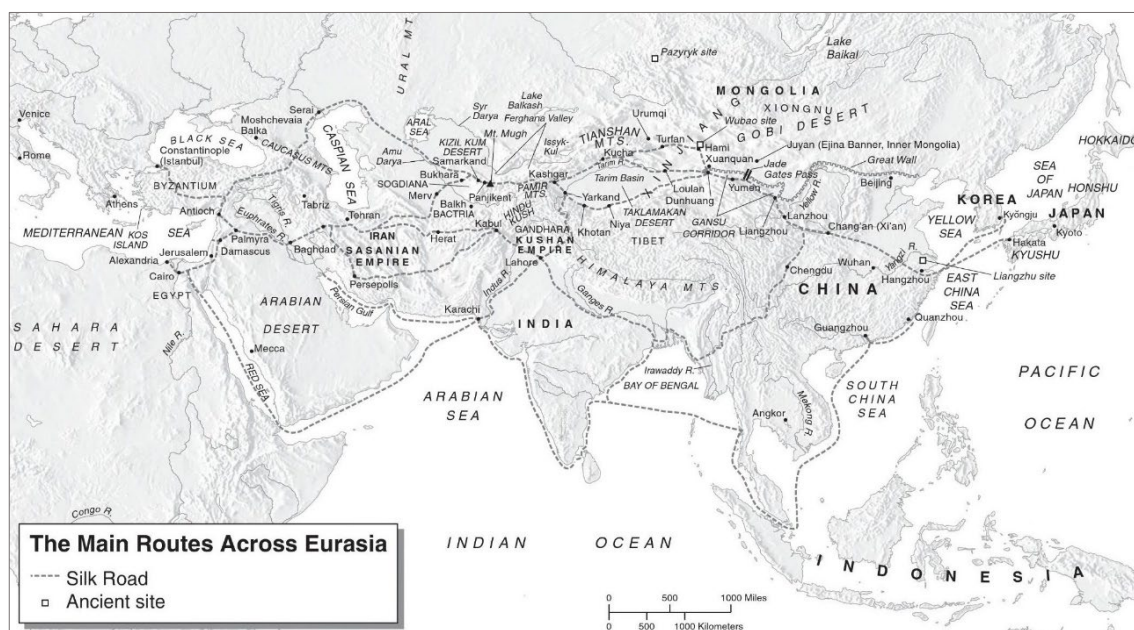


Fig. 28. The Silk Road in China.

Buddhism's spread benefited from the cross-border development of trade on the Silk Road in China, covering an area from the Mediterranean, through the Western Region and the Chinese mainland to Japan.²³⁴ An offshoot of the Silk Road crosses Central Asia and follows the Indus River to reach the Indian plains.²³⁵ Buddhist doctrine and culture became widespread along the trade routes, and the first Buddhist groups in Central Asia emerged in trading settlements, thus, Buddhist monasteries sprang up in the oasis towns along the trade routes, teaching the religious doctrines and especially the rich artistic symbolism that had emerged in India. Buddhist and Chinese art forms merged in these monasteries.²³⁶ Not only the Buddhism spread used to rely on the trade roads, Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism have been identified all profited by trade network, especially before the 6th century.²³⁷ Even since the seventh

²³⁴ Chūta Itō, *中国建筑史* [History of Chinese architecture], trans. by Qingquan Chen, (Changsha: Hunan University Press, 2016).

Jiyu Ren, *中国佛教史* [History of Chinese Buddhism], Vol. 1 (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1981).

Valerie Hansen, *The Silk Road - A New History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

²³⁵ Anil de Silva, (1967), pp. 214-15.

²³⁶ Anil de Silva, (1967), p. 215.

²³⁷ Peter Frankopan, *The silk roads: A new history of the world*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015).

century when Islamic expansion started initially, the long-lasting interaction between the Buddhism and Muslim in East also fostered by trade routes (Fig. 29).²³⁸

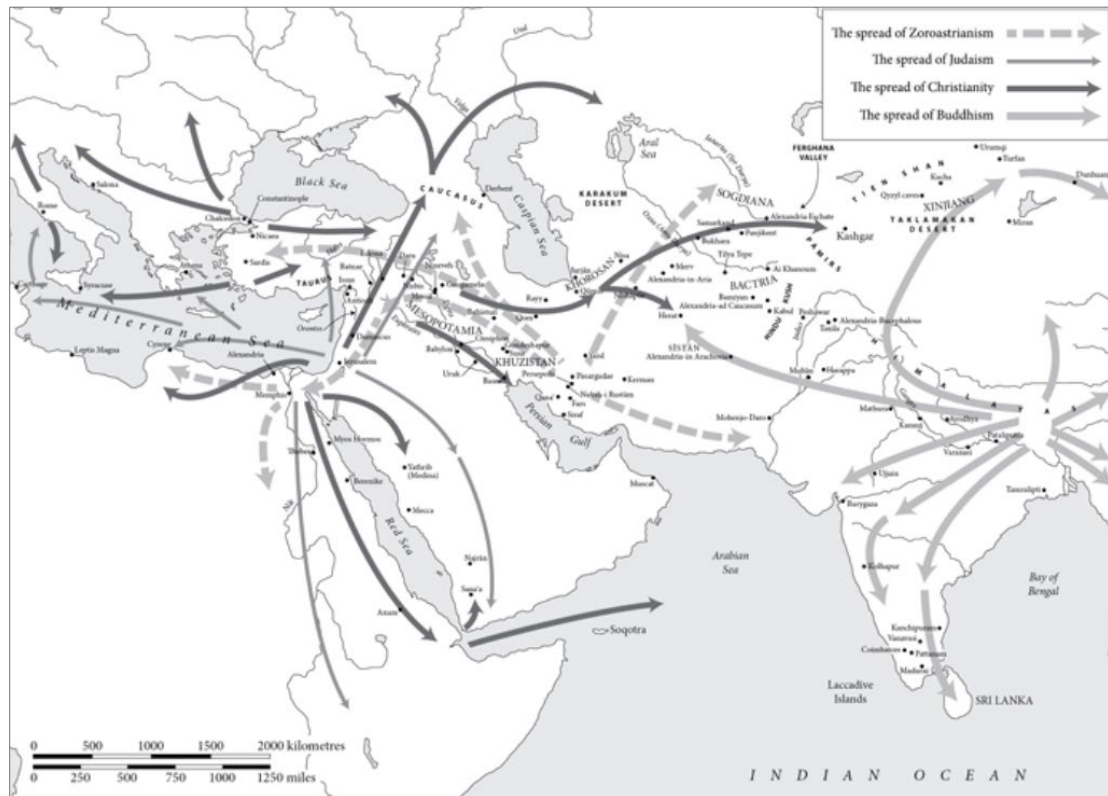


Fig. 29. Spread of religion across the Silk Road.

Walking Buddhists on the Silk Road fostered cross-cultural perceptions and interactions. The early monks who came from India during the Han dynasty (202 BC - AD 220) played an exemplary role for subsequent Chinese Buddhists visiting India. Faxian, Hsuan-Tsang and Ennin for instance are known to posterity for their detailed travel texts, which make them representatives of numerous travellers of Chinese Buddhists²³⁹. The book '*A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms*' (Chinese: 佛国记) describes what Faxian saw and experienced on the journey from Chang'an in China to ancient India between AD 399 and AD 412. He started his trek

²³⁸ Johan Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*, (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania press, 2011).

²³⁹ Tansen Sen, 'The travel records of Chinese pilgrims Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing', *Education about Asia*, 11.3 (2006), p. 24.

when he was sixty-five years old. His travelling diary is considered "the first eyewitness account of Buddhist practices and pilgrimage sites in Central and South Asia in Chinese"²⁴⁰. The trade routes, including the land and sea routes, favoured Faxian's long trek and his return journey by sea (Fig. 30).

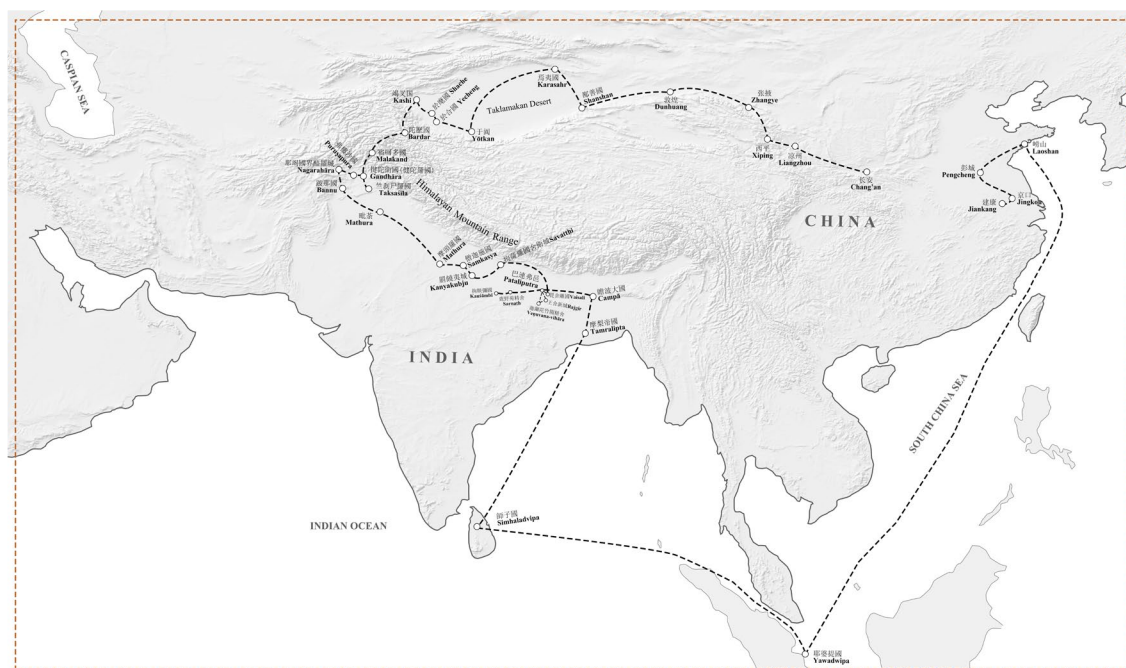


Fig. 30. Faxian's pilgrimage from Chang'an (the capital city of Tang dynasty) across East Asia to early India (fourteen years). (Please refer to Appendix E for a larger-sized map, p. 447).

Since the political centre was built in the Chang'an during the Sui and Tang periods after many years of regime-related turmoil, divisions, and alliances, the capital city also became a new Buddhist centre and attracted Buddhists worldwide. The book '*Buddhist Pilgrim Monks of Tang dynasty*' (Chinese: 大唐西域求法高僧传), written by Buddhist Yijing in AD 691, records the 57 Chinese monks from the Sui and Tang dynasties who visited India and the South China Sea between AD 641 and AD 691 seeking Dharma.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Tansen Sen, (2006), p. 26.

²⁴¹ Yi Jing, 大唐西域求法高僧传 [Buddhist Pilgrim Monks of Tang dynasty], (AD 691).

Furthermore, the book '*Great Tang Records on the Western Regions*' (Chinese: 大唐西域记),²⁴² dictated by Xuanzang and edited by his disciple Bianji, was completed in AD 646. It describes the nineteen-year-round trip of the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang from Tang Chang'an in China to ancient India between AD 626 and AD 654. Meanwhile, this trustworthy literature also gives 'testimony of independent eyewitnesses'²⁴³ about the Buddhist achievements, political history, geography, and culture of the countries along his long journey in the seventh century. Xuanzang was even regarded not only for having brought AD 567 Buddhist canons from ancient India, but also for translating the best Buddhist contexts into Chinese among the three translators.²⁴⁴ *Great Tang Records on the Western Regions* has been translated into modern Chinese, English, Japanese, French, and Russian. The earliest English version was most likely translated by Samuel Beal in 1884 under the title '*Si-yu-ki, Buddhist Records of The Western World*'²⁴⁵. Chinese Indologist, linguist, palaeographer, and historian Ji Xianlin annotated the '*Great Tang Records of the Western Regions*' and published it in 1985.²⁴⁶ These two commentaries help this research to map Xuangzang's travels (Fig. 31).

²⁴² Xuanzang, 大唐西域记 [Great Tang Records on the Western Regions], (AD 646).

²⁴³ Samuel Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World: Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (AD 629)*, (London: Routledge, 2014).

²⁴⁴ Tansen Sen, 'The travel records of Chinese pilgrims Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing', *Education about Asia*, 11.3 (2006), p. 29.

²⁴⁵ Samuel Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World: Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (AD 629)*, (London: Routledge, 2014).

²⁴⁶ Xianlin Ji, 大唐西域記校注 [The Collation and Annotation of the Records on the Western Regions of the Great Tang dynasty], (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1985).

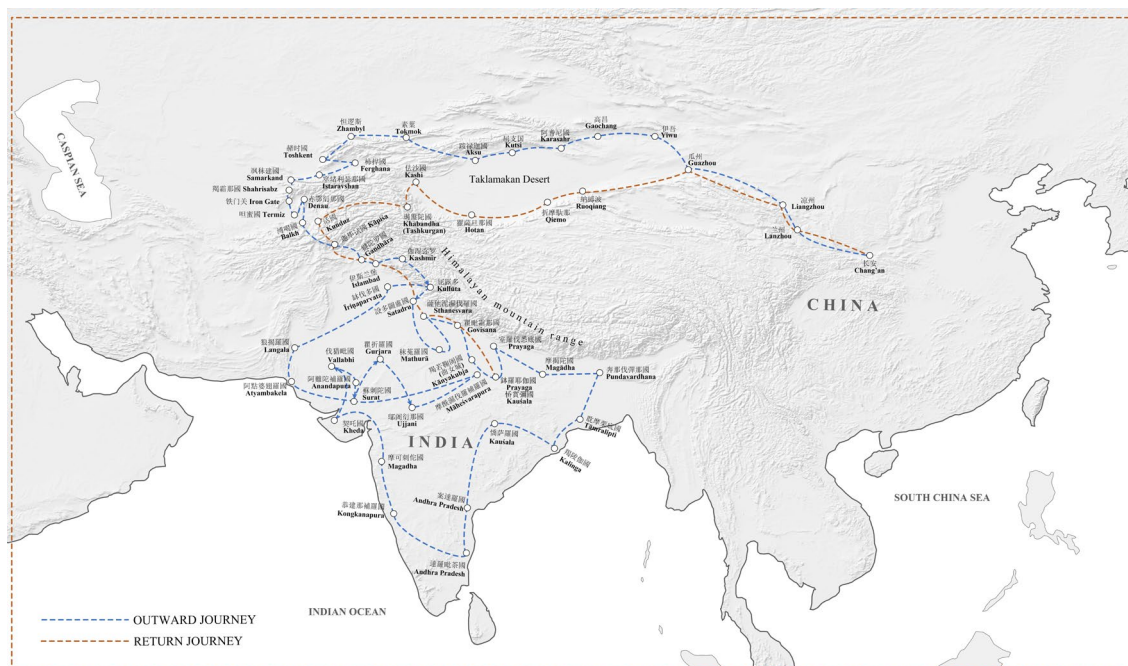


Fig. 31. Xuanzang's pilgrimage from Chang'an (the capital city of Tang dynasty) to Ancient India (nineteen years). (Please refer to Appendix E for a larger-sized map, p. 448).

Compared to the routes of Faxian and Xuanzang, their pilgrimage can be considered a large-scale geographical circumambulation of great shrines. Faxian took more than a month to cross the Taklamakan Desert from Karasahr to Yōtkañ and then, via the Maritime Silk Road, returned to China, but Xuanzang chose to go a roundabout route through the Taklamakan Desert from north to south. The possible reason for the different pilgrimage route was deduced the disruption of sea traffic. Because Buddhists and Hindus were among the first religious pilgrims, and majority of pilgrims travelled by sea between India, Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia and China up to 1000 years.²⁴⁷ However, with the decline of Buddhism in India and the rise of the Muslim, the sea traffic became dwindled, only a few Buddhist pilgrims from East and Southeast Asia visited the ruined Buddhist sites in northern India in the fifteenth century.²⁴⁸ Therefore the Silk Road was probably

²⁴⁷ Kenneth McPherson, 'Maritime passenger traffic in the Indian Ocean region before the nineteenth century', *The Great Circle*, 10.1 (1988), 49-61 (p. 50).

The time of these earliest Indian pilgrims travelling by sea may be earlier, 1500 years ago at least, for Faxian travelled by sea in the fourth century AD.

²⁴⁸ Kenneth McPherson, (1988), p. 50.

more popular and safer for pilgrimage when Xuanzang was travelling in the seventh century AD.

The discrepancy between the pilgrimages of Faxian and Xuanzang also indicates that a large-scale circumambulation (pilgrimage) could be performed both clockwise and counterclockwise. While circumambulation is traditionally associated with following the course of the sun, Buddhist practitioners specifically walk with their right side facing the object of reverence, be it the Buddha or a deity.²⁴⁹ Based on the maps of their route, Faxian chose a (anticlockwise) circumambulation that was a mixture of the maritime Silk Road and the overland Silk Road. In contrast, Xuanzang undertook two pilgrimages: one (clockwise) circumambulation of ancient India, starting from the sacred shrines in the northeast and then heading southwest, whilst the other was a (anticlockwise) circumambulatory pass of the western region of China. Their pilgrimage benefited the spread of Buddhism within mainland China and created links between Buddhists worldwide.

In addition, Faxian and Xuanzang both visited the eight sacred shrines of the Buddhists as pious pilgrims, from the Northern Wei to the Tang dynasty (the fourth - the eighth centuries AD), during the two great periods of development of Buddhism in China. There were eight great pilgrimage sites (see Table 5),²⁵⁰ and four significant places in the life of Gautama Buddha, Lumbinī, Bodhgayā, Sārnāth,

²⁴⁹ Kumar Santosh, 'Circumambulation in Indian pilgrimage: Meaning and manifestation.' *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research* 12.1 (2021), 232-243 (p. 233).

²⁵⁰ The eight shrines were not marked on the pilgrimage maps of Faxian (法显) and Xuanzang (玄奘), but by a table to convey the information whether Faxian and Xuanzang visited them, as the locations of the eight shrines are quite close to each other and difficult to see on a large geographical scale.

and Kuśinagara²⁵¹ (Fig. 32). The places chosen as pilgrimage sites all had some form of connection with Buddha, most of them located in the plains, with the exception of Buddha's birthplace Lumbinī, in the foothills of the Himalayas and the site of Rājagṛha, which was surrounded by many hills. In the earlier period of Buddhism, the concept of monasticism in the mountains had not yet developed, as each holy shrine could be regarded as a Buddhist sacred space, the crucial condition being that it must have a direct relationship with the Buddha. These early shrines would be visited by more Chinese monks in history than only Faxian and Xuanzang. The long, arduous journey on foot across the continents not only defined the value and meaning of this physical and spiritual experience, but also created a link between cultures and allowed Buddhism to spread on the basis of indigenous and non-indigenous Buddhists.

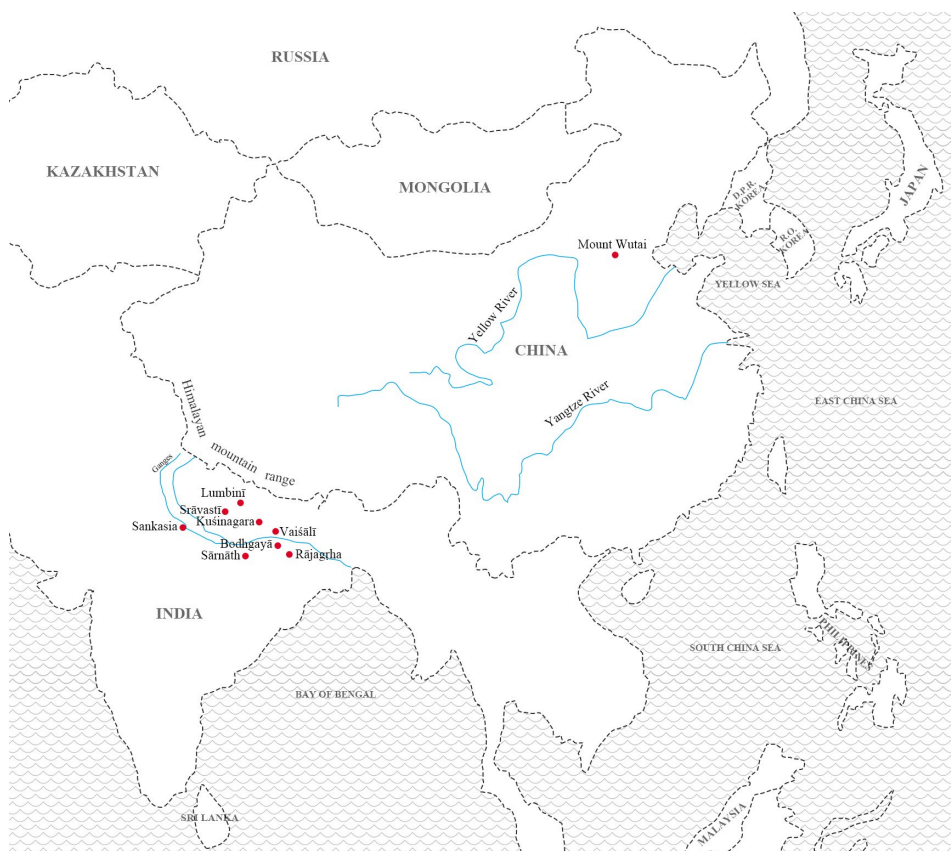


Fig. 32. The locations of the eight early shrines of Buddhism in current South Asia.

²⁵¹ William Edelglass, 'Buddhism and the Environment', In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. by John Barton and others, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 2.

Table 5. Eight sacred shrines of Buddhists

<i>Place Name</i>	<i>Scared location and geographic features</i>	<i>Related date</i>	<i>Oldest Buddhist ruins (or relics)</i>	<i>Did Xuanzang and Faxian make pilgrimages there?</i>
Lumbinī	Buddha's birthplace in the Himalayan foothills.	Siddhartha Gautama was in 563 BC or in 480 BC	Rummindei pillar with an inscription of Aśoka (the third century AD)	Yes
Bodhgayā	Currently, it is named Buddha-gayā, the place of Buddha's bodhimaṇḍa (enlightenment), as well as the location of the Bodhi Tree.	The pre-Buddha attained enlightenment around the age of 35 in 658 BC	Bodhi Tree, Mahabodhi Pagoda (the sixth - fifth century BC)	Yes
Sārnāth	The Buddha's first discourse site after his enlightenment. The site is close to Deer Park.	After 658 BC	Aśoka pillar capital of Sarnath (the third century AD), Dhamekh Stūpa	Yes
Rājagṛha	Located in a valley of the capital of Magadha during the period of the seventh century BC to 413 BC, surrounded by seven hills, the most famous of which is Vulture Peak (Gṛdhrakūṭa). It was the place the Buddha recruited a number of his foremost disciples.	After 658 BC (More references)	Vulture Peak (Holy Eagle Peak) (the sixth - fifth century BC)	Yes
Srāvastī	The place where the Buddha spent much of his later life, near the south bank of the Rapti river.	After 658 BC	The Buddha's hut in Jetavana Monastery (the sixth - fifth century BC)	Yes
Sankasia	The place the Buddha visited, also famed by Emperor Aśoka after Gautama Buddha's Mahaparinirvana (passing away) as Aśoka developed this site and erected Aśoka pillars there.	268 BC - 232 BC	Aśoka pillar capital of elephant (the third century AD)	Yes
Vaiśālī	The place where the Buddha frequently visited and lectured, the site of the Second Council held to ceremony 100 years after the Buddha's passing.	— —	Buddha's ashes Stūpa (the fifth century BC) covered by Ānanda Stūpa (the third century AD), Aśoka pillar	Yes
Kuśinagara	The place where the Buddha passed away.	Siddhartha Gautama was dead in 480 BC	Ramabhar Stūpa (housing a portion of the Buddha's ashes)	Yes

Each of the pilgrimage centres, consisting of monastic monuments and sacred landscapes, embodied symbolism, sanctity, orders, and teachings. The arrangement of elements in monastery would also reflect Buddhist philosophy and needs. Its design and use would be guided by the dynamic development of Buddhist theories. The cross-countries pilgrimage also manifests Buddhist practices in art and architecture on different continents, which may have the same theoretical basis. Moreover, Mount Wutai has been known since the Han dynasty (202 BC - AD 220) as an early Buddhist centre in China and as the abode of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* and would certainly trigger the geographical circumambulation (pilgrimage).

3.6 Summary

Since Buddhism arrived in mainland China in the first century AD, Chinese Buddhist monastery (*Vihāra* or *Samgharāma*) had rapidly evolved from a 'donated home church' to such an exclusive place for Buddhist learning, communication, practise, worship, and accommodation. The wide spread of esoteric Buddhism in mediaeval China also strongly influenced Buddhist practise and monastic symbolism in both Buddhist art and rites. The esoteric *maṇḍala* mainly defined the meaning, merits and rules of pilgrimage and circumambulation. It also provided the theoretical framework for monasticism in the Buddhist world. Mount Wutai, as the earliest Buddhist centre in China, would be morphologically structured of *Mañjuśrī maṇḍala* since it was confirmed as *Mañjuśrī* abode during the Tang dynasty. Foguang Monastery maintained a close geographical

relationship with Mount Wutai, suggesting that it played an important role in the success of the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai.

Chapter 4 - The Maitreya Belief and Pilgrimage Amidst the Landscape of Foguang Monastery

The remains that have accumulated at Foguang Monastery, dating back over several historical periods, make it apparent that the court cannot be understood solely on the basis of a particular historical period or single social context. The dynamic Buddhist practice and the constant interaction between cultures over the centuries also requires architectural interpretation to trace the original symbolism, theories and consequences of Buddhism. This is the thought framework for disclosure in the following chapters. Applied retrospective exploration can provide new insights into understanding the monastic remains at Foguang Monastery.

The reinterpretation of Foguang Monastery begins with the narrative of its landscape. Because in order to make the monastery on Foguang Mountain suitable for the accommodation of monuments, the alteration of the terrain would be the first issue to consider. Using the results of the photogrammetric survey, this study, which combines traditional methods of investigating historical subjects and the digital application, shows the possibility of expanding the inner courtyard and pilgrimage route. The Buddha Hall on the highest platform with the two standing twin trees refers to the Buddhist legend and the Maitreya belief that shapes Buddhist practise in architecture and planting.

佛光寺 *Foguang Monastery*

王 陶 (宋) *Wang Tao (Song dynasty)*

五台山上白云浮

White clouds are fluttering over the Wutai Mountain,

云散台高境自幽

*Clouds pass and disperse, secluded and sacred landscape of the mountain
reveals,*

歷代珠幡悬法界

Regimes of every past dynasty hanged flags in monasteries of Mount Wutai,

累朝金刹列峰头

*Glorious and sumptuousness temples have occupied all holy land of the
mountain,*

风雷激烈龙池夜

Experienced a long and violent thunderstorm night (at Foguang Monastery),

草木凄凉雁塞秋

*The grass and wood gradually withered, wild geese flew south over Yunmen
Mountain, implying winter is around the corner,*

世路忙忙名利客

People chasing fame and fortune are busying on roads,

尘机到此尽应休

*All their ambitions and intentions should be stopped from here (at Foguang
Monastery).*

This is a poem about the Foguang Monastery in the Song dynasty (960 - 1279). It describes the scenario of the Buddhist holy shrine - Mount Wutai - that was highly regarded and supported by the authorities over a number of dynasties. It also illustrates the religious relationship between Foguang Monastery and Mount Wutai, pointing out that although the Monastery is geographically distal from the holy land of the religious centre - Mount Wutai - it is nevertheless a monastery that is in no way inferior to Mount Wutai: people came to go on pilgrimage and follow Buddhist rituals because they were more concerned with the realisation of individual goals than with the practise of pure Buddhism. Therefore, Foguang Monastery is not a destination for people seeking fame, power, or wealth, but a solitary and secluded monastery.

When it comes to Buddhist architecture history, there is no doubt that 'political significantly influenced the rise, progression, and eventual decline of Buddhist sacred sites.'⁶⁶⁰ However, Buddhist legend and literature define the meanings of Buddhist practices. Over the course of 2500 years of Buddhist development, the imperial clans in various Buddhist nations have experienced significant turmoil and transformations. However, the essence of Buddhist legend, as reflected in architectural practices with its profound yet straightforward symbolism, has remained consistently and progressively represented in these countries for centuries. Consequently, it becomes challenging to precisely determine which

⁶⁶⁰ Jinhua Chen, 'Images, legends, politics, and the origin of the Great Xiangguo monastery in Kaifeng: a case-study of the formation and transformation of Buddhist sacred sites in medieval China', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 125.3 (2005), 353-78 (pp. 377-78).

fundamental aspects of Buddhist architectural evolution have dominantly been influenced by political power throughout this extensive historical journey.

The origin of Foguang Monastery was first indicated by King Tanchang of the Xiaowen regime (AD 471 - AD 499), according to *Guang Qing Liang Biography*:⁶⁶¹

The Foguang Monastery was built by the Tanchang King. The geographical surroundings of the monastery consisted of mountains and forests in four directions, with a flat area in the middle. When the Tanchang Emperor arrived at the mountain gate of Foguang Monastery after his royal pilgrimage proceeding to Mount Wutai, he saw the light of the Buddha shining on the monastery and thereupon named it Foguang Monastery (Foguang means the light of the Buddha in Chinese).

This is one of the few historical records of Foguang Monastery that suggest that its foundation was linked to imperial power from the fifth century AD and that it formerly had a mountain gate. Although it is difficult to determine its exact location at present, it could be associated with the Wujia Gate, which locals said was the first gate of Foguang Monastery, either on the opposite side of the Yanjiazhai River or at the present site of the Wujia Gate. The role of the gate for a monastery was to potentially serve as a land marker, similar to the present-day signposts used to identify monastic land and guide visitors to the monastery itself.

⁶⁶¹ Yanyi Shi, *广清凉传* [Guang Qing Liang Biography], (AD 1060). The corresponding Chinese text is: '佛光寺 燕宕昌王所立 四面林峦 中心平坦 宕昌王 巡游礼谒 至此山门 遇佛神光 山林遍照 因置额 名佛光寺'.

It could also be seen as the start point of a pilgrimage from Foguang Monastery for devotees (Fig. 33).

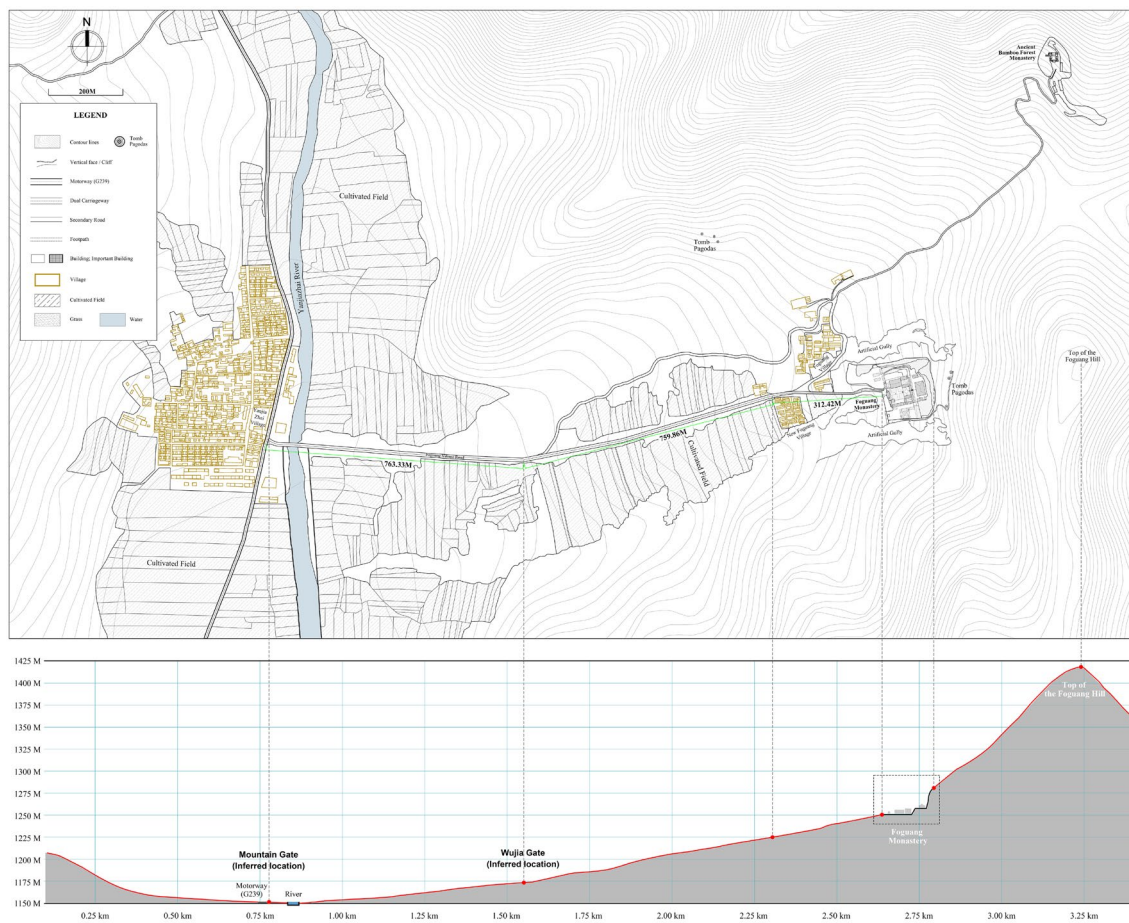


Fig. 33. Topographic survey plan of Foguang Monastery and its surrounding environment. (Please refer to Appendix E for a larger-sized map, p. 449).

The location of Buddhist sites, basically, Buddhist communities were created at places related to important events in the life of Siddhārtha Gautama, but areas close to state capitals or trade routes were commonly chosen.⁶⁶² In addition, depending on the Cullavagga text,⁶⁶³ dwelling places offered by donors as monastic abodes should be neither too far from and nor too close to villages or towns for pilgrims to access them conveniently, whilst still offering an

⁶⁶² Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publications, 2014), p. 61.

⁶⁶³ Cullavagga text is a compilation of books on Buddhist precepts (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khandhaka>).

appropriate atmosphere for meditation, for example, being 'secluded from people' with a quiet environment.⁶⁶⁴

However, the research analysis towards the Buddhist sites from wider landscape archaeology aspects, and according to the investigation of 35 hilltop Buddhist sites and the four 'Bhilsa Tope' sites' redetection in central India by the Sanchi Survey Project (SSP), Julia Shaw reveals the possible reasons why the majority of the investigation sites are on hilltops rather than on 'lower slopes', wherein crops can survive due to appropriate water supplies.⁶⁶⁵ At first, the non-agricultural land is suitable for ascetic monks' meditational retreat as the crowded residential areas may be too 'susceptible to siege'; meanwhile, from an economic perspective, it would be impossible for Buddhists, as a 'non-producing group', to occupy agricultural or other valuable land; furthermore, a hilltop would help to see *stūpa* or the Buddha to fulfil the required symbolic and mythological needs; finally, hilltop monasteries would have implications for society and the economy – hilltop sites, for instance, would have valuable libraries as they functioned as educational and study centres, whilst some larger sites would accumulate considerable wealth due to donations by numerous pilgrims, which would promote the inter-regional trade, including the 'ritual gift-giving' needs.⁶⁶⁶ By contrast, based on forty-three rock-cut caves observation in China, Francesca Monteith argues that locations' visibility, 'as the presence or prominence of a

⁶⁶⁴ Debala Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1971), p. 31.

⁶⁶⁵ Julia Shaw, *Buddhist landscapes in central India: Sanchi Hill and archaeologies of religious and social change, c. third century BC to fifth century AD*, (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 141-44.

⁶⁶⁶ Julia Shaw, (2016), pp. 141-44.

Buddhist temple' is an essential requirement.⁶⁶⁷ The location choice of Foguang Monastery aligns with several essential conventions. Situated on a middle hillside, the monastery is separated from nearby settlements, providing Buddhist practitioners with ample opportunities for peaceful contemplation and meditation. The presence of a river in front of it, at the foot of the hill, and the surrounding extensive farmland also cater to the basic survival needs of the monastery's residents.

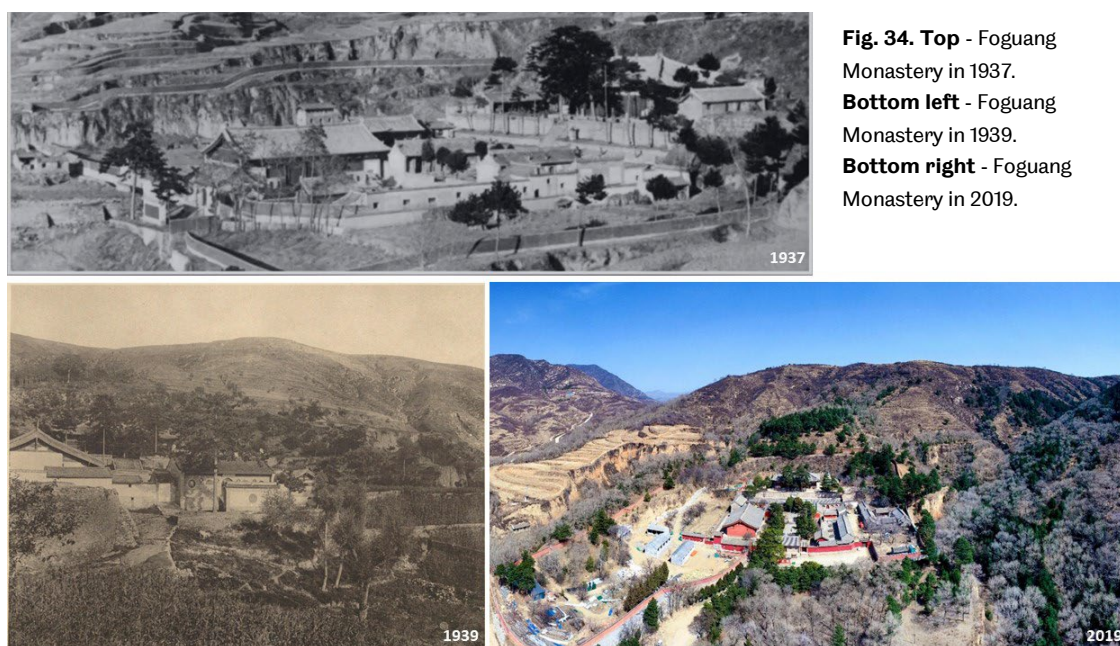
Furthermore, the strategic positioning of Foguang Monastery holds significance as it serves as a crucial stop over on the way to Datong from the north, which is the place of Yungang Grottoes and was the capital of the Northern Wei empire; and to Mount Wutai from the east, a prominent religious centre. This location establishes vital connections within the network of spiritual and cultural destinations. These pieces of evidence strongly support the notion that the selection of Foguang Monastery's site was meticulously considered.

4.1 Land artificial transformation of Foguang Monastery

Once the site location is confirmed, the next critical consideration would be land transformation. The land is covered with traces of human changes which could be clearly seen through a photogrammetric survey. The photogrammetric method provides a much broader view about the entire site, which cannot be obtained by traditional photography methods.

⁶⁶⁷ Francesca Monteith, 'Towards a Landscape Archaeology of Buddhist Cave-Temples in China', *Antiquity*, 91.359 (2017), 1-8

The following pictures are among the earliest photos taken by scholars in the early nineteenth century AD, providing the widest possible perspective offered by camera technology at that time. Even the use of drones to take aerial photos in the 2019 study by the University of the Chinese Academy of Science, from a height of 120m, and merging multiple photos together could not reveal the typology of the entire site. The past practice of using photos limited by contemporary technology also affected scholars' focus of attention. When examining the literature on Foguang Monastery from 1937 to 2023, no publications dealt with its landscape (Fig. 34).



There are two large ravines that the author first found using the photogrammetric method, which provides a broad aerial view of the monastic landscape. According to the 3D model, the two gullies extend from the summit to the foot of the hill, south and north of the sites (Fig. 35). There is no textual evidence to confirm the original construction date of the gullies; even the locals did not know when and why the gullies were formed when the researcher

interviewed them. However, they were probably built a long time ago because the 1937 photo examined by Liang Sicheng and his team, which first confirmed Foguang Monastery as an architectural relic from the Tang period, faintly shows the vertical surface of the northern gully (Fig. 36). The southern and northern gorges visible in the author's aerial photographs (Figs. 37 and 38) could therefore have been built in the past, rather than the present.⁶⁶⁸

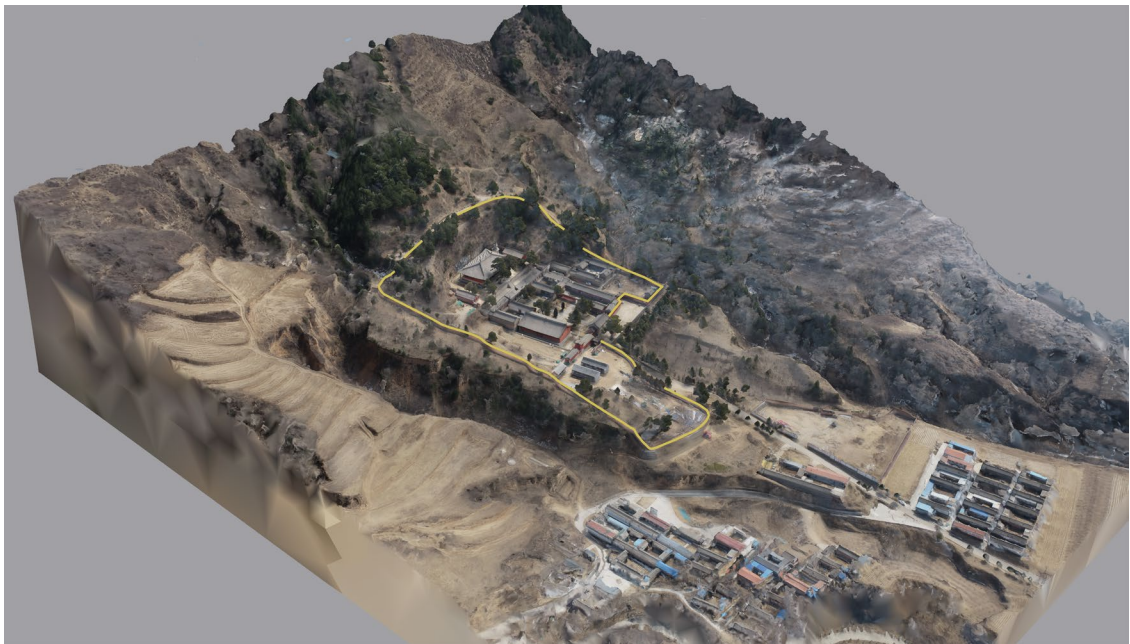


Fig. 35. 3D model of Foguang Monastery in 2022. Generated by Reality Capture software with license, using photogrammetry tech, inputting 2450 aerial photos.

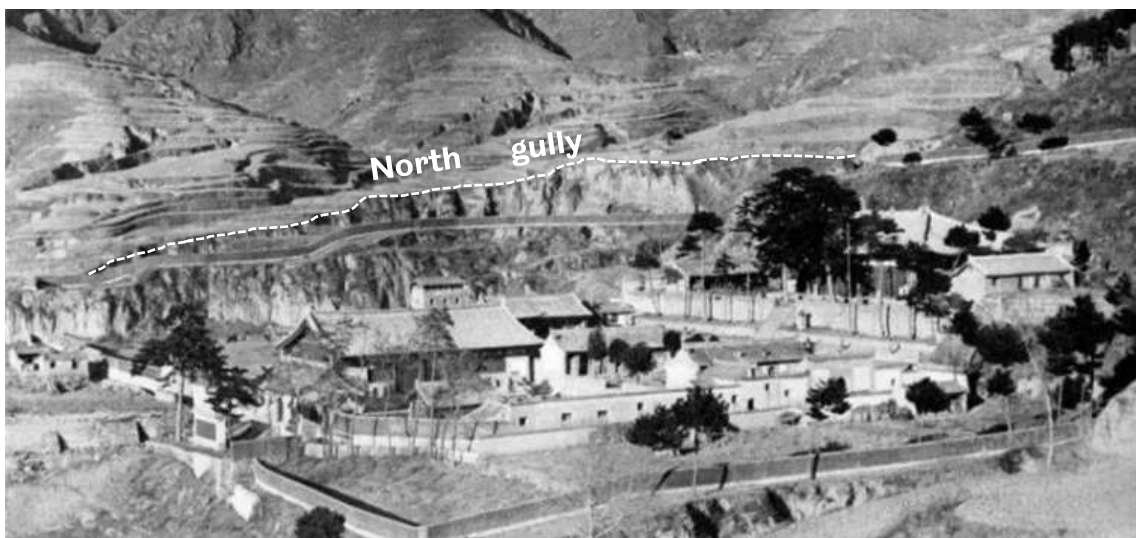


Fig. 36. A bird's eye view of the vertical surface of the northern gully from the photography of Foguang Monastery in 1937.

⁶⁶⁸ Xiaolu Wang, *eCCADe Conference*, 2023



Fig. 37. Aerial view from a height of 130m showing the huge gully surrounding the Foguang Monastery from the north side. No passable road leads to this area so the ravine has been neglected by explorers.



Fig. 38. Huge ravine surrounding the Foguang Monastery from the south side. The photo shows the author and her team members climbing up from the east gate to the back (west side) of the Foguang Monastery, where a narrow gravel road leads to the tomb towers and is not accessible to tourists (the plan map of the courtyard map, see Fig. 40). As the difference in altitude between the small gate and the summit is large, the route up was correspondingly difficult to traverse. The huge ravine on the south side is full of weeds and trees. From the author's viewpoint, it is difficult to see the direction and width of this ravine.

Building sacred land begins with the transformation of the landscape; the natural and man-made topography and landscape represent this thinking. The edges of the two cliffs are vertical and sharp, especially on the sides of the monastery grounds, their width and depth suddenly increasing, especially near to the monastic site. It is therefore certain that the gullies were not naturally occurring but were artificially excavated.⁶⁶⁹

There is another clue that may also indicate that the two gullies were built in early times. At the foot of Foguang Hill and downstream from the northern gully is a hamlet called Foguang village. While there is no historical record of the original foundation date of the old Foguang hamlet, nearby is another small group of residential areas (less than 50 households in total), the new Foguang hamlet, that was established contemporarily, as told by the locals (Fig. 33). In fact, the location of the two hamlets at the foot of Foguang Hill is literally at risk of flooding from above, and the choice of location therefore nominally jeopardises their safety. However, the continued existence of the Foguang hamlets shows that this area is low in rainfall and does not flood, so residents can be safely housed there. The motivation for manually digging two huge gullies along the two sides of Foguang Monastery is likely to have had some form of religious significance, dating back to the construction period in history. It can also be deduced that the gullies were dug to separate the land between religious sanctity and 'irreligion' (Fig. 39).⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁹ Xiaolu Wang, *eCCADe Conference*, 2023

⁶⁷⁰ Xiaolu Wang, *eCCADe Conference*, 2023

907).⁶⁷¹ The herringbone ditches were dug into the surface of a rocky hill from top to bottom and the Great Vairocana Statue was buried under the ditches so that any rainwater flowing towards it was successfully diverted away through them. However, the sizes of ditches in the Longmen grottoes are much smaller than those at Foguang Monastery, so it is likely that the construction of those at Foguang Monastery was mainly for religious purposes. Later chapters will discuss the transformation of the landscape around Foguang Monastery into a sacred environment in more detail.⁶⁷²

Moreover, the two ravines are not the only terrain changes at Foguang Monastery. The hill behind the Buddha Hall was also cut by human hands, creating a vertical cliff. The location of the man-made cliff can be seen in Figure 15, and its current state can be seen in this photo in Figure 40. The exposed rock surface is mainly gneiss (a type of rock), which provides a relatively stable support for the Buddha Hall, even though their locations are close to each other.



Fig. 40. Vertical surface of the cliff at the back of the Buddha Hall.

⁶⁷¹ Dazhong Gong, '龙门奉先寺大卢舍那佛像龕崖顶发现人字形排水防护沟遗址' [The herringbone-shaped drainage protection ditch was found on the top of the cliff of the Dalushena Buddha statue in Fengxian Monastery, Longmen], *Cultural Relics*, 4 (1979), 93

⁶⁷² Xiaolu Wang, *eCCADe Conference*, 2023

There is no indication of the first date of the artificial transformation of the hill behind the Buddha Hall. However, this area was certainly altered in 1950. Comparing Liang Sicheng's site plan (Fig. 41) with the author's aerial photograph (Fig. 42), it is clear that to protect the hall, the vertical rock surface behind the Buddha Hall had been moved back by about 2 metres, and recent aerial photographs can attest to this recent change. In addition, the area to the northwest and south, which were not marked in Liang Sicheng's drawing, have been expanded, some contemporary buildings are standing to the north, and a new courtyard was erected to the south.

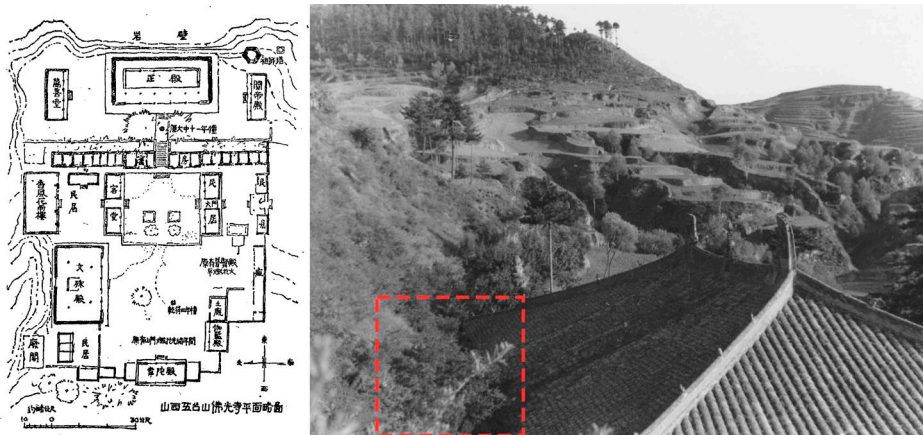


Fig. 41. Left - Site plan of Foguang Monastery in 1937.⁶⁷³ Right - Aerial view photograph of Foguang Monastery.



Fig. 42. The aerial view of the area behind the Buddha Hall, taken from a height of 100m.

⁶⁷³ Sicheng Liang, '记五台山佛光寺的建筑 - 荟萃在一寺的魏、齐、唐、宋的四个孤例: 荟萃在一殿的唐代四种艺术' [Recording the Buildings of the Foguang Monastery in Mount Wutai], *Cultural Relics*, Z1 (1953), 76-121 (p. 81).

In addition, the entrance to the courtyard had two gates in Liang's map. The western entrance was at the start of the east-west axis of the courtyard, the other on the south side, where four-rowed dwellings formed three courtyards, and a path was present that connected the two entrances from the south side, although the path was not mapped in his work. At this time, the residential courtyard in the middle spatially separated the Buddha Hall court and the *Mañjuśrī* Hall court (Fig. 41). Later, however, a hard cement pavement was laid in the middle of the courtyard, extending from the gate hall to the Buddha Hall (Fig. 42). The former living area was divided across its centre and a central path was created for the entire courtyard, which is a contemporary change.

With the two ravines to the north and south and the cliff to the east, the entire courtyard of Foguang Monastery is divided into three levels. The top terrace (40.31 m long and 23.48 m wide) is 15 m higher than the second platform with 37 steps in between; the second platform is about 1 m higher than the lowest level, on which the *Mañjuśrī* Hall stands (Fig. 43).⁶⁷⁴

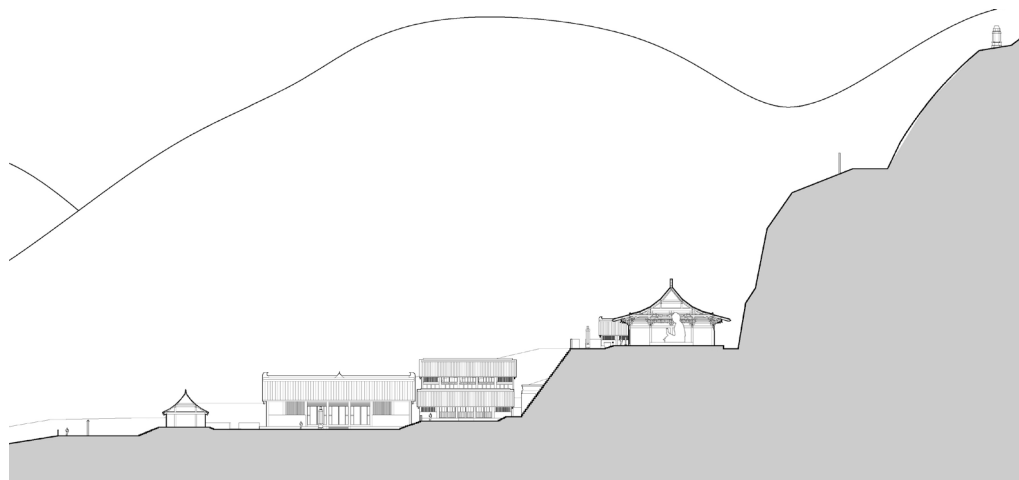
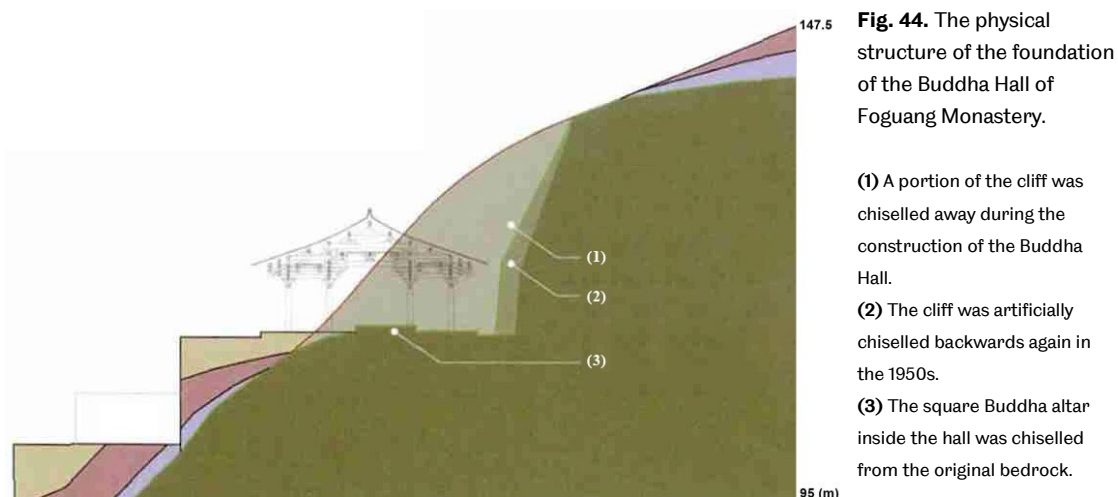


Fig. 43. Section of Foguang Monastery in 2020.

⁶⁷⁴ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, 五台山佛光寺 [Foguang Monastery of Mount Wutai], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010), p. 69.

As the Buddha Hall platform is the key concentration for a monastery, clarifying the contemporary changes is a rational way to conject the original landscape strategy, and is also a possible way through which to understand the Buddhist cosmology of transforming land into sacredness. Although for the possible backward displacement of the rock surface behind the Buddha Hall has been deduced (Fig. 44),⁶⁷⁵ this study argues that the design of the Buddhist landscape of the mountain was planned together with the two ravines on the north and south sides and the vertical cliff behind the Buddha Hall. Therefore, it is worth attempting to reinterpret the transformation of the landscape around Foguang Monastery and exploring the possible reasons for such.⁶⁷⁶



Based on the modelling results, the two gullies extend from the top to the bottom of the hill to the south and north of the site, and it is certain that they are not naturally formed. As the surface of the two edges are vertical and sharp, and the width and depth in each side have small changes, especially the part near the monastic courtyard, it is clear that they were artificially constructed (Fig. 45).

⁶⁷⁵ Sijie Ren, 'Architecture of Politics and Religion: Mount Wutai and Foguangsi in the Early Tang', *China Architecture Journal*, 6 (2017), 22-8 (pp. 25-6).

⁶⁷⁶ Xiaolu Wang, *eCCADe Conference*, 2023

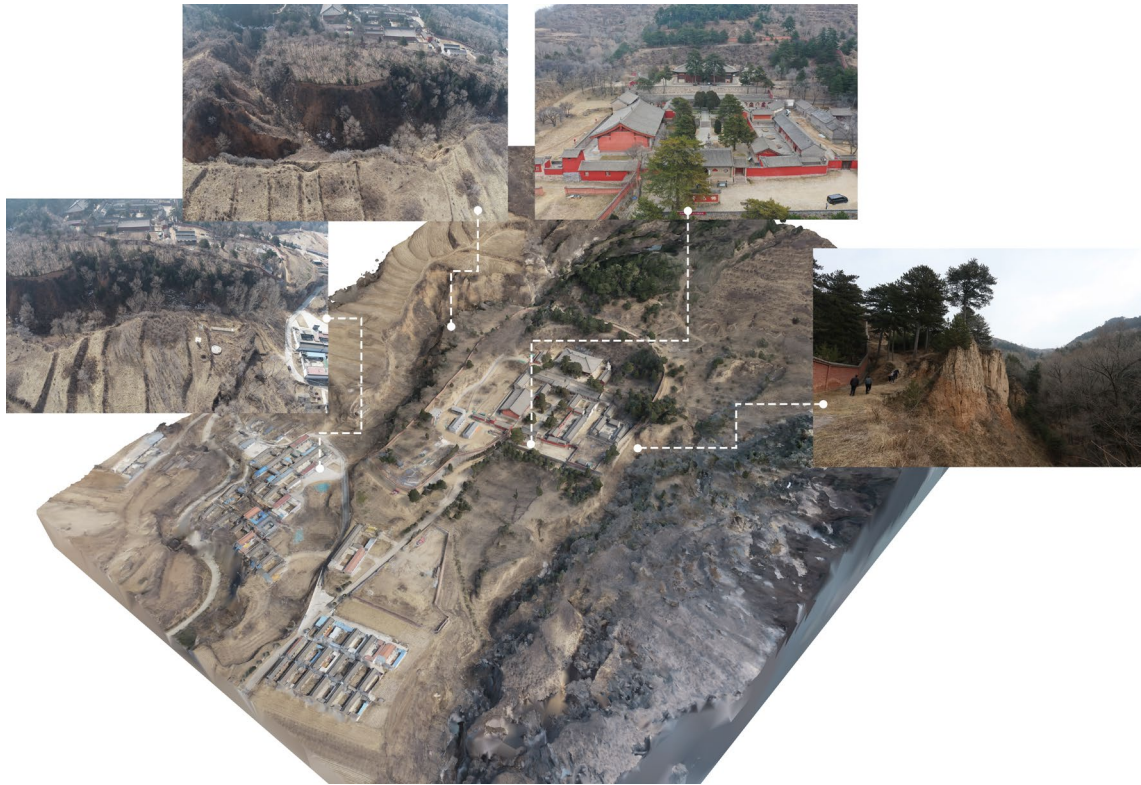


Fig. 45. 3D model of the entire site with aerial photographs illustrating the two gullies.

Although there is no evidence to confirm the original date and motive for the construction of the gullies, the ancient Foguang villages located downstream from the two gullies would have been destroyed if they had originally been dug for drainage purposes. Therefore, the two deep gullies were probably constructed before the Foguang settlement was built. According to *The Biography of Eminent Monks of the Song dynasty*, the greatest construction phase of the Foguang Monastery took place during the Tang dynasty: 'A large pavilion hall with seven units was built on a three-layer foundation at Foguang Monastery'. Although there is no evidence of the location of the pavilion hall, this was the most likely reason for levelling the base of the site and digging the trenches on such a large scale. It would be disingenuous to ignore a possible reason for digging such ravines due to safety needs, e.g., drainage or site defence. Most importantly, the gorges were built for the conversion of common land into a religious site.

The two gullies define the position of the platform of the Buddha Hall and limit its direction of expansion. The platform of the Buddha Hall is not the central point of the monastery, but at the highest level of the courtyard, the monastery was built on the hillside and along the river, which is a common strategy employed by Buddhists when building a monastery in the mountains (see Fig. 45). The general character of the landscape for Tibetan temples is that the site has been deliberately chosen with a river flowing in front of it and a road running opposite so that visitors could reach the site after crossing the river.⁶⁷⁷ The courtyard has undergone many reconstructions and extensions from AD 478 - AD 532 (Northern Wei dynasty), when the oldest part - the Patriarchal Pagoda - was built, to 1875 - 1908 (Qing dynasty), when the Hall of the Heavenly King was burnt down. Nonetheless, it can be assumed that the platform of the Buddha Hall has not changed its location in more than a thousand years, due to the existence of the two gullies.⁶⁷⁸

The patriarch pagoda proves that the highest terrain was built in the early period. The brick tomb is the oldest relic of the site and dates from the fifth century AD. It stands on the same terrace as the Buddha Hall, a high foundation of 34 brick steps (17.66 m high).⁶⁷⁹ The foundation would be first levelled by the builders, before the pagoda was built. No remaining records show the existence of any changes since the pagoda was initially erected. It can therefore help to identify the earliest terrain of the Buddha Hall was at least built in the same period

⁶⁷⁷ Ping Xu, 'The Maṇḍala as a cosmic model used to systematically structure the Tibetan Buddhist Landscape', *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 27.3 (2010), 181-203 (pp. 193-94).

⁶⁷⁸ Xiaolu Wang, *eCCADe Conference*, 2023

⁶⁷⁹ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, *五台山佛光寺* [Foguang Monastery of Mount Wutai], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010), p. 52.

as the pagoda. In addition, with the limitation of the extension by the two gullies from north to south, the monastery can therefore only extend towards the west, and the highest location in the east would be defined as the location of the Buddha since the initial construction period, and foremost, the location of the platform would not be changed once it was regarded as the place of the Buddha. Because of the two gullies and the mountainous topography, the platform identified as the location of the Buddha would therefore never be changed, although the monastery itself had undergone many changes and even suffered religious persecution on several occasions.⁶⁸⁰

The scene of Buddhist temples with the mountains in the background forms a (large-scale) maṇḍala image in the minds of Buddhists, which can evoke their worship and encourage them to enter, and further that the maṇḍala as a spiritual theory with which to shape the Tibetan Buddhist architecture and landscape.⁶⁸¹ This is the type of landscaping found at the Budala Palace in Tibet, and which is also found at Foguang Monastery. Specifically, because the ravines on the north and south sides would restrict the development of the courtyard, the enclosed courtyard could only extend from east to west. In addition, symbolically, the best sacred platform must be used to place the Buddha monument, and others (image halls) can only remain lower or on the side. The highest terrain at Foguang Monastery was defined as the sacred platform for the Buddha since its initial construction period and this arrangement was probably last until now. The Northern Wei dynasty may be the first period in which the level of the Buddha

⁶⁸⁰ Xiaolu Wang, *eCCADe Conference*, 2023

⁶⁸¹ Ping Xu, (2010), 181-203 (p. 194).

was established, which was continuously adopted in the following period.⁶⁸² Clarification of the initial Buddha platform is crucial, as it rationally determines the development of the monastic courtyard in the different historical periods and allows researchers to understand the Buddhist cosmology of the transformation of land into sanctity.⁶⁸³ The landscape of Foguang Monastery shows how Buddhists transformed the site into a sacred shrine (see Fig. 34).⁶⁸⁴

The land change also includes a large area of man-made terraced land. On the three hills surrounding Foguang Monastery, a large amount of unnatural terraced land was created, but which is now no longer in use. Especially on the northern slope of Foguang Monastery, a large number of trees have been planted, evenly distributed (Fig. 46). According to the Wutai Mountain County Annals, the Buddhist communities on Mount Wutai had a well-developed economic management system. There were essentially six positions for Buddhists who performed various tasks in the administration of economic affairs (Fig. 47).⁶⁸⁵ Agriculture and afforestation were two major events for Buddhists, and the land surrounding monasteries were typically owned or managed by local monks. Exemption from land taxes was a common privilege granted to ancient Chinese monks. In addition, according to statistics, in the Mount Wutai region, the monks cultivated 1237 mu (approximately 82.5 hectares) of land and produced 76,000 kg of grain, accounting for 90% percent of monasteries' food income in 1947.⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸² Xiaolu Wang, *eCCADe Conference*, 2023

⁶⁸³ Xiaolu Wang, *eCCADe Conference*, 2023

⁶⁸⁴ Xiaolu Wang, 'Photogrammetry Enables the Critical Reinterpretation and Regeneration of Architectural Heritage - The case study of Foguang Monastery in China', *Digital Design Reconsidered (eCAADe Conference)*, 2023.

⁶⁸⁵ Compilation Committee of Shanxi County Annals (山西县志编纂委员会), *五台山县志* [Wutai Mountain County Annals], (Taiyuan: Shanxi People's Publishing House, 1988), pp. 581-87.

⁶⁸⁶ Compilation Committee of Shanxi County Annals (山西县志编纂委员会), (1988), p. 587.

In addition to farming, monks also had the habit of tree planting, and indeed the majority of the trees surrounding monasteries were tended to by the monks. The three-terraced hill land, which has now been given up, was once an essential source of economic income and food.



Fig. 46. Old man-made terraced land on three sides of Foguang Monastery, as shown in the Google Earth map of 2008.

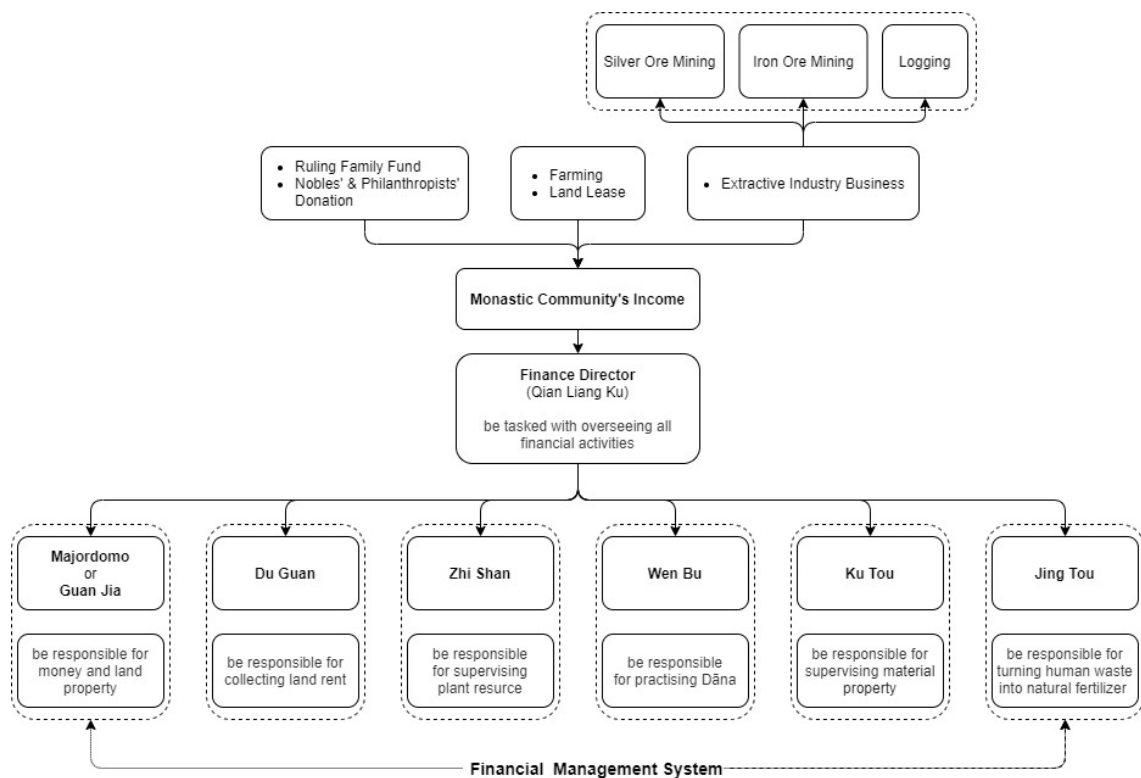


Fig. 47. The financial management framework of the monastic community in Wutai County.

4.2 Circumambulation passages at Foguang Monastery

Buddhist pilgrimages are basically different scales of circumambulation, e.g., to walk around a *stūpa* or a pillar, which is a small scale of circumambulation, to a long-distance pilgrimage progressing to a sacred Buddhist centre and passing sacred monasteries on the way, which is circumambulation on a geographical scale. Circumambulation is therefore an essential rite for Buddhists to visit the Buddha (or Buddhist deities) and thereby gain merit. According to Indian Buddhist literature (Puranas, epic literature and Katharudropanisad), worshippers had to show respect by circumambulating the temples or image panels from left to right.⁶⁸⁷

Foguang Monastery has several levels of circumambulatory path, which can generally be divided into external and internal paths. The external circuit path starts from the main road (now called G239) in front of Foguang Monastery, facing the Yanjiazhai River. When devotees arrived at the starting point, they could see the Foguang Monastery siting on the hillside and even the Buddha Hall in the distance before approaching the site. This first look provided orientation for the visitor to trace. After a slow climb upward, they reached the gate hall of Foguang Monastery; however, the courtyard was enclosed by a wall and all the sacred monuments were hidden inside, unable to be seen if one were standing near the entrance. This scenario was shaped to indicate that the pilgrimage route's transformation from the outside to the inside. Once the faithful have

⁶⁸⁷ Sudhi Padma, 'An Encyclopaedic Study on Circumambulation', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 65.1/4 (1984), 205-26 (pp. 209-10).

entered the inner courtyard, it would be necessary to circle the individual icon halls, beginning from the left - the *Mañjuśrī* Hall in the highest centre - the Buddha Hall, then the Samantabhadra Hall (which has been destroyed) (Fig. 48).

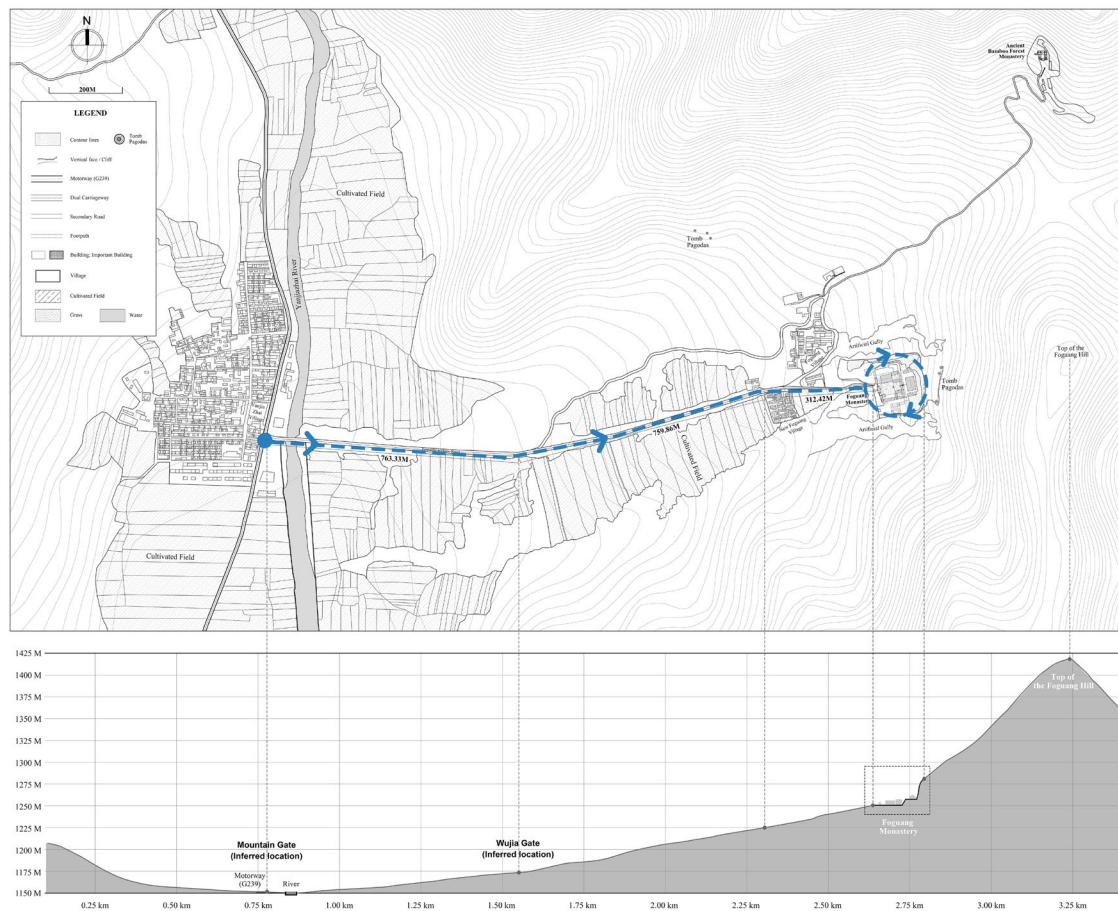


Fig. 48. The external circumambulation proceeding to Foguang Monastery.

The circumambulations within the courtyard became more diverse (Fig. 49). The courtyard is divided along an east-west axis from the centre of the monastic gate. Apart from the classical circuit around each image hall from the left, circling pillars whilst chanting *sūtra* was also prescribed during the Tang dynasty (as discussed in the first chapter). The most important pilgrimage route might be the one leading up to the highest platform, the site of the Buddha Hall, which symbolises the existence of the Buddha. Before visitors entered and walked around the internal hall, they would probably also walk around the Buddha Hall building first. Through the long journey beginning from the starting point opposite

the river, as soon as visitors entered the hall and approach the Buddha, they would experience the excitement of seeing the Buddha and feeling his holiness. This is the basis of the functional path and how the path influences Buddhist practice and helps the visitor to feel the sacredness of the monastic site. Circumambulatory passage is a powerful projection of a temple from where we can view the totality of outer and inner and the residence of the god, which is beautifully carved by sculptors who are not less than yogis (practitioner of Yoga meditation) in the real sense of the term.⁶⁸⁸ Circumambulation, as an ancient rite since the early period of Buddhism, had been carrying on across countries, which determined the arrangement of the monastic layout, either microscopically or macroscopically. The discovery of the two gullies benefits the discussion of the circumambulations in Foguang Monastery, because the gullies confirm the location of the Buddha, which leads to the following considerations about the development of the entire courtyard and conjecture about possible pilgrimage routes.

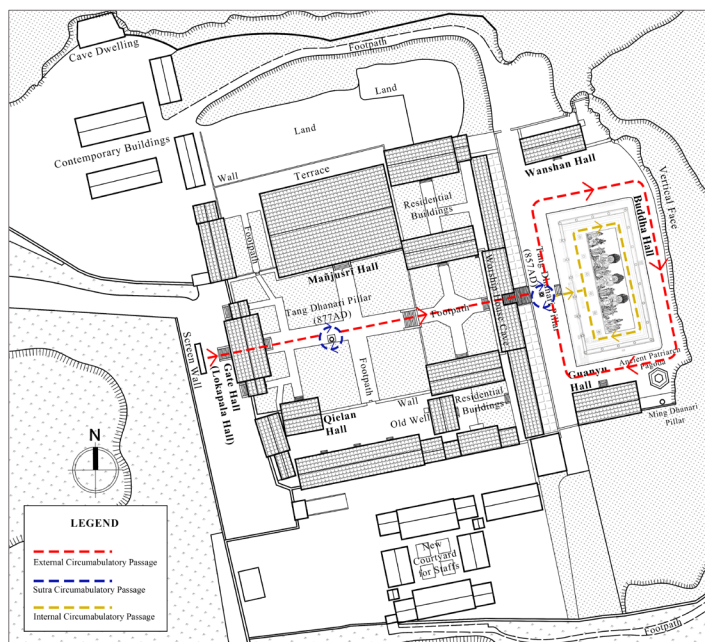


Fig. 49. The circumambulation passages in the courtyard of Foguang Monastery.

⁶⁸⁸ Sudhi Padma, 'An Encyclopaedic Study on Circumambulation', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 65.1/4 (1984), 205-26 (p. 226).

4.3 The symbolic arrangement of the Buddha Hall with the twin trees

Numerous works of literature, sculpture, fresco, and paintings mention that Lord Buddha was born, attained enlightenment, and died beneath the tree. More than sixty names for forests are mentioned in various Buddhist teachings, and the Lord Buddha frequently spent the night by a pond or in the Amravana (mango grove)/Amalakavanat (emblic myrobalan)/Arandiyavana when he was on the road.⁶⁸⁹ Some trees were also planted at the Foguang Monastery. A few trees (pine or cypress) stand in pairs along both sides of the main walkway progressing up to the Buddha Hall (Fig. 50). The trees were doubtless planted or were replaced contemporarily as the Buddha Hall was built in AD857⁶⁹⁰ and the *Mañjuśrī* Hall was erected in 1137;⁶⁹¹ basically, pine trees or cypress trees cannot survive as long as the two halls. Furthermore, trees designed together with main halls could threaten the safety of wooden buildings, and this type of construction was rare in Chinese history when constructing wood palaces or other large wood buildings. However, these trees cannot be defined as religious gardening, as Buddhists have no motives based on gardens. The cultivation of gardens clearly contradicts the ideology of Buddhist asceticism. No Buddhist ritual is based on gardens. This is also why it is unusual to see systematic and deliberate gardening at Buddhist sites in China or abroad for the mere beautification or enjoyment of the landscape. However, trees planted in front of the Buddha Hall in a monastery

⁶⁸⁹ Basanta Bidari, 'Forests and Trees Associated with Lord Buddha', *Ancient Nepal. Kathmandu: Department of Archaeology*, 139 (1996), 11-24 (p. 13).

⁶⁹⁰ Cultural Heritage Conservation Centre of Architectural Design & Research Institute of Tsinghua University and Beijing Tsinghua Urban & Design Institute, *佛光寺东大殿建筑勘察报告* [Survey and Research on the Main Hall of Fo Kuang Ssu], (Beijing: China Heritage Press, 2011), p. 10.

⁶⁹¹ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, *五台山佛光寺* [Foguang Monastery of Mount Wutai], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010), p. 140.

are meaningful to Buddhists because trees not only symbolise the enlightenment of Buddha, but also indicate the great fertility of the land that was used as the essential element in choosing Buddhist sites during the period of the Agricultural Revolution. Therefore, the following content on trees in Foguang Monastery focuses mainly on the twin in trees in front of the Buddha Hall.

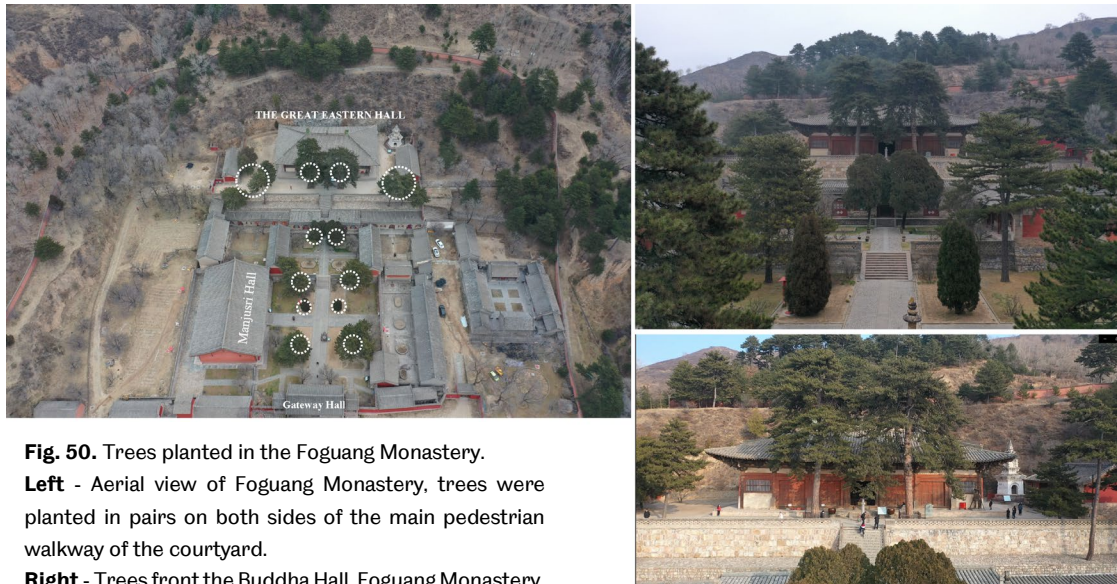


Fig. 50. Trees planted in the Foguang Monastery.

Left - Aerial view of Foguang Monastery, trees were planted in pairs on both sides of the main pedestrian walkway of the courtyard.

Right - Trees front the Buddha Hall, Foguang Monastery.

This early religious symbol of planting trees can be traced to early Buddhism in India; in the centuries thereafter, this practice gradually became widely employed across the world. In the Buddhist context, 'the earliest dwelling of Siddhārtha Gautama' was in the forest, and in the Buddhist text of Pali Theravāda, The Buddha was constantly represented sitting under a tree or in a cave during the rainy season.⁶⁹² Trees were the hut of the Buddha in early Buddhism and are 'the archetypal site of ascetic practice'.⁶⁹³ There are two well-known and essential legends about the Buddha and the trees. Siddhārtha Gautama attained complete enlightenment (or nirvana) while sitting under a peepal tree at the age

⁶⁹² Kazi K. Ashraf, 'The Buddha's House', *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 53/54 (2008), 225-43 (pp. 227-28).

⁶⁹³ Kazi K. Ashraf, (2008), 225-43 (pp. 227-28).

of thirty-five (525 BC).⁶⁹⁴ When he died (or attained *mahāparinirvāṇa*), the peepal tree was then called the Bodhi tree (or sacred Bo tree). Based on these mythologies, trees have acquired a vast significance in Buddhist art practice. 'Gods live in the trees' can track back to the remotest and traditional tree-cult in ancient India; if Buddhism wants to enlarge and grow, it has to embody this universal tradition in its culture and venerate trees.⁶⁹⁵

The Bodhi tree has apparently been created as the symbol of Buddha's enlightenment in Bodh Gaya of India. Thus, the story of the Buddha under the Bodhi tree has been retold and reproduced in various Buddhist practices around the world, which not only cause 'Buddhist ideology and ritual to be endowed with the richest visual resources,'⁶⁹⁶ but also provide roots and inspiration for recreating Buddhist arts in other monastic sites around the world. The earliest example of trees used in Indian Buddhist sites is the Bodh Gaya Monastery. A Bodhi tree stands next to a small size *stūpa* and closes on a giant temple (or sculpture) erected in the sixth century AD (Fig. 51).⁶⁹⁷ This narrative relationship between Buddha and trees is also inscribed in early Buddhist art; for instance, the sculptures of Torana (or gateway) in the Great *stūpa*⁶⁹⁸ in India (Fig. 52). Similarly, stone carving remains (AD 100 - AD 300) found in the Lower Swat Valley of Pakistan, exhibited in the British Museum, depict Siddhartha seated under trees

⁶⁹⁴ James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1899), p. 76-8.

⁶⁹⁵ Heinrich Zimmer, 'Trees, Huts and Temples,' *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, 5 (1937), 111-21 (p. 119).

⁶⁹⁶ Mohebbi Absalan and Ramin Keshavarz, 'Buddhist art and the symbols of the great *stūpa* at Sanchi', *Journal of language and literature*, 7 (2016), 96-104 (p. 101).

⁶⁹⁷ James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1899), p. 76-8.

⁶⁹⁸ Great *stūpa* has four cardinal entries, 'The four gateways are all very similar to one another, but the northern is the finest and larger than others' (Fergusson, 1899, p. 114).

with his disciples (Fig. 53). He gives his first sermon at the deer park in Sarnath, indicated by the deer on the base of the throne.⁶⁹⁹

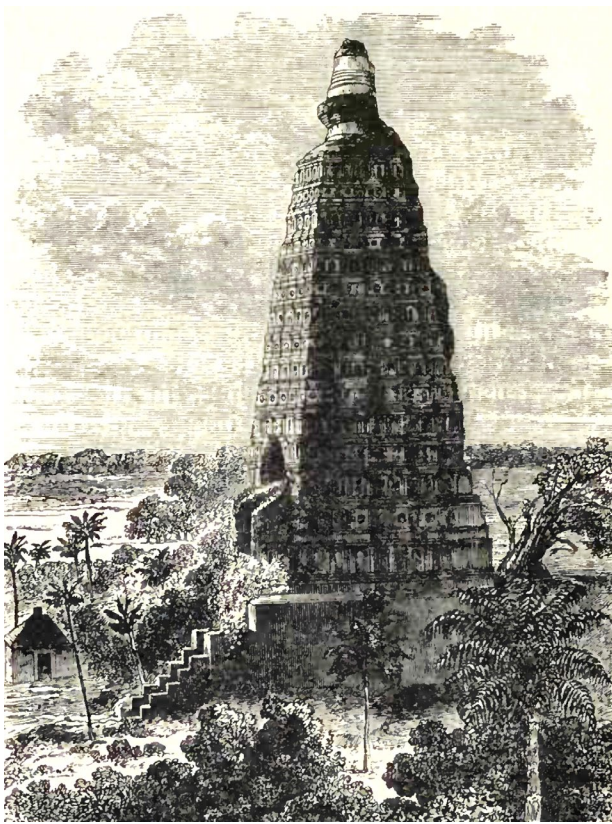


Fig. 51. Bodh-Gaya Monastery (Great Awakening Monastery, built under the Gupta Empire, sixth century AD) and a small stūpa (built in the second century BC) standing close to the Bhodi tree.

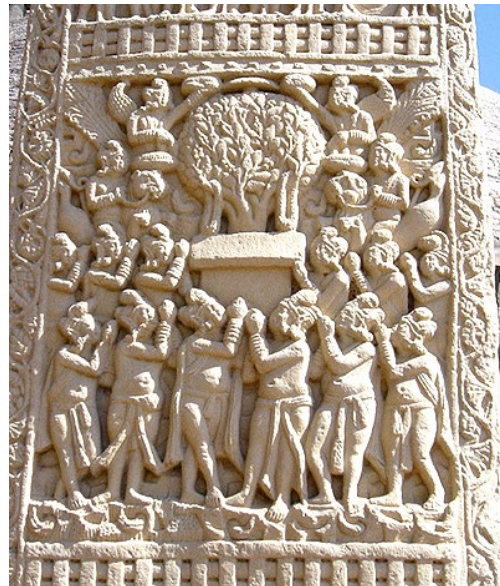
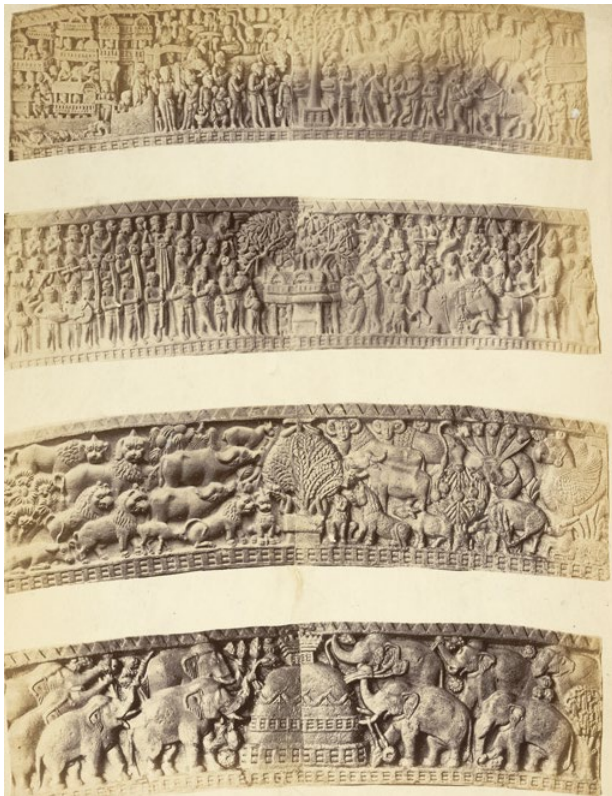


Fig. 52. Bhodi tree carved in the toranas of great stūpa at Sanchi, India.

Left - Sculpture on the Eastern torana (or gateway), Sanchi tope.

Right - Sculpture on the South pillar of the Western torana (or gateway), Sanchi.

⁶⁹⁹ James Waterhouse, 'Sculptures on eastern torana or gateway, Sanchi Tope', *British Library Online Gallery*, <<https://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photocoll/s/largeimage64477.html>> [accessed 5 July 2020].

The divine story regarding the Buddha and trees in Buddhist texts is the Shakyamuni's Nirvana, as recorded in the *Nirvana Sūtra*, Shakyamuni entered nirvana by lying down on a couch between twin Sal trees after dying in a Sal grove in Kushinagar.⁷⁰⁰ However, the same legend can also be morphologically visualized differently in Buddhist arts. A moulded clay plaque (AD 500 - AD 600) found in China, as collected by the British Museum, depicts the scene of the Buddha's Nirvana statue seated in meditation (Fig. 54). Twin Sal trees half enclose an arch depicting the Buddha in meditation posture instead of as a reclining figure. Tree worship therefore became an antique ritual for Buddhists. Early representative may be the sculptures at the Bodh-Gaya in early period, showing much purpose as the art as the example in Sanchi, and delivers the Buddha manners and customs, involving tree worship.⁷⁰¹



Fig. 53. Stone carving remains (AD 100 - AD 300) found in the Lower Swat Valley of Pakistan, exhibited at the British Museum.



Fig. 54. A Chinese moulded clay plaque (AD 500 - AD 600) depicting the Buddha's Nirvana, exhibited at the British Museum.

⁷⁰⁰ Soka Gakkai, 'sal tree', *Nichiren Buddhism Library*, <<https://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/dic/Content/S/16>> [accessed 20 July 2022].

⁷⁰¹ James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1899), pp. 104-10.

In ancient China, worship trees are rarely found in the ruins discovered by archaeologists, but the worship of *stūpa* is evidenced in the rich Buddhist practice in China (for more details, see the section on the Ancient Pagoda at Foguang Monastery). Tree mythologies about the Buddha were widespread among Chinese Buddhists through sermons or translated texts. The sacred and inseparable relationship between Buddha and trees was translated into Chinese Buddhist art in many different ways.

With the popularity of the *Maitreya* faith in mainland China since the fourth century, spreading along the Silk Road from India, the *Maitreya Bodhisattva* is believed to live in the 'Tushita Heaven where he practises virtues and preaches devas (heavenly beings) while waiting to be reborn to the earth'.⁷⁰² As *Maitreya Bodhisattva* was created in an abstract manner from a theological perspective, his palace in the Tushita Heaven is also imagined by Buddhists. The mural painting from the Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 906) in cave 338 of Dunhuang Grottoes shows an idealised image of the combination of trees and building. Twin trees are standing in front of the *Maitreya Bodhisattva*, who is sitting inside his residence, as twin trees symbolise the Buddha's *nirvana*, and the *Maitreya Bodhisattva* is the future age of the Buddha. Since *Maitreya Bodhisattva* was created theologically, his palace in Tushita Heaven where all Bodhisattvas destined to attain full enlightenment in their future incarnation dwell here for a time (Fig. 55).⁷⁰³

⁷⁰² Dorothy C. Wong, 'Maitreya Buddha Statues at the University of Pennsylvania Museum', *ORIENTATIONS - HONG KONG*, 32.2 (2001), 24-31

⁷⁰³ Dorothy C. Wong, (2001), 24-31 (p. 24).

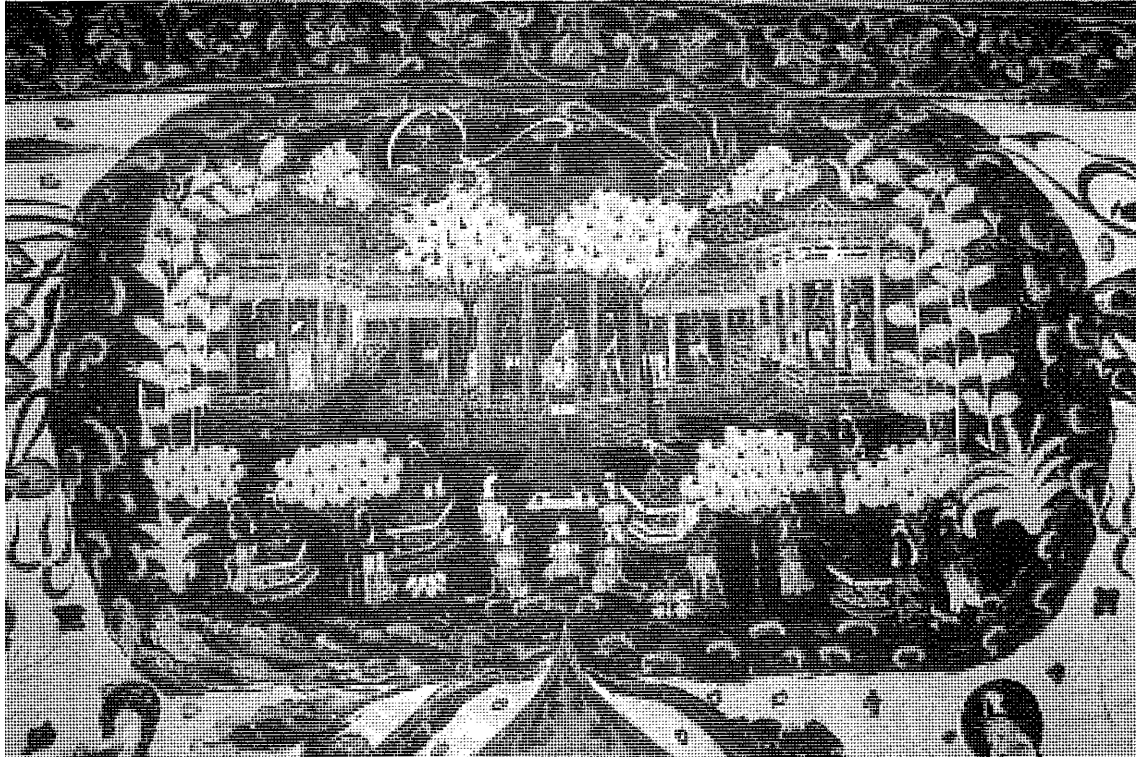


Fig. 55. Mural painting of *Maitreya Bodhisattva* in Tushita Heaven, on the west wall ceiling of Cave 338, Dunhuang Grottoes.

The Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 906) mural in cave 338 of the Dunhuang Grottoes shows an idealised image of the combination of trees and the deity's abode. Twin trees stand in front of the *Maitreya Bodhisattva* sitting in his dwelling house. The twin trees symbolise the *nirvana* of the Buddha, and the *Maitreya* is the future age of the Buddha. This intentional arrangement could reflect the real monastic practice of *Maitreya* Hall in Buddhist sites, or it could just be the Buddhist conception of the Celestial House in Buddhist frescoes or paintings, but both offer the possibility of such an outcome, which should be monastic design during the period when the *Maitreya* Faith was popular.

Furthermore, another case in China emphasises the importance and function of trees for Buddhist deities rather than showing the custom of worshipping trees, since in Buddhist practice ordinary monks or nuns were rarely carved into

sculptures in China. For example, in Cave No. 9 of the Yungang Grottoes (Fig. 56), one of the royal caves in China, a master deity in the middle sits in a yogic posture, with his right hand in *abhaya mudra* (a gesture symbolizing approachability). These sculptures on the entrance hall's west wall pictured twin sal trees with Buddhist deities from a Chinese perspective. This cave was initially partially excavated in AD 484, and completely in AD 486 during the Northern Wei dynasty,⁷⁰⁴ the first period during which Buddhism flourished. The sculpture depicts two *Thinking Bodhisattvas* sitting under trees with a one-legged cross gesture on either side of *Maitreya Buddha*,⁷⁰⁵ seated in the centre, under a Chinese hut - a wooden building. Although this picture was carved in a grotto, it also conveys the ideal arrangement of the monastic site: trees standing with Buddhist deities or with the hall housing Buddhist figures inside.



Fig. 56. The sculpture on the west wall of the entrance hall of Cave No. 9 at Yungang Grottoes, depicts the twin sal trees with two *Thinking Bodhisattvas* sitting under trees with a one-legged cross gesture on either side of *Maitreya Buddha*.

Besides, many frescos in Dunhuang Grottoes depicts the legend of the Buddha and trees from a Chinese Buddhist perspective. Many Tang emperors (AD 618 - AD 907) were Buddhists or nominally supportive of Buddhism, although

⁷⁰⁴ Xueqin Li, 云岗石窟 - 刻在石头上的北魏王朝 [Yungang Grottoes - The history of Northern Wei Dynasty carved on stone], 3rd edn (Taiyuan: Shanxi Science and Technology Press, 2020), p. 109.

⁷⁰⁵ Kunyu Zhao, 云岗石窟 - 佛教故事雕刻艺术 [Yungang Grottoes - Sculpture Art of Buddhist Story], (Jiangsu: Fine Arts Publishing House, 2010), p. 56.

Buddhism did suffer a period of anti-Buddhist persecution between AD 841 and AD 846. The Sui and Tang Dynasties represented the heyday of Buddhism's development in medieval China. Accordingly, 52 caves of Dunhuang Grottoes were excavated during the Tang dynasty,⁷⁰⁶ which involved creating fifty-six frescoes of *Mañjuśrī Jingtu Bian*.⁷⁰⁷ *Jingtu Bian* (Chinese: 净土变) is 'the counterparts of what transformation tableaux of the pure land' or 'transformation paintings', through drawing diagrams and dramatic visual helps for the dissemination of pure land ideas.⁷⁰⁸ The Buddha mural, painted during the Tang dynasty on the north wall of cave No. 217 of the Dunhuang grottoes (Fig. 57), shows the Buddha sitting in a yogic posture holding an *Abhayamudrā* (gesture of fearlessness) hand gesture, with four canopied trees behind the Buddha who is sitting in their shade, and with other trees drawn separately to his left and right. The noticeable evolution of Bhodi trees in this Chinese fresco reveals the special emphasis placed on figs rather than on the crowns of trees. Fig shapes were widely used in other Chinese Buddhist artistic practice, such as the stone pillars carved at *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* during the Tang dynasty, with capitals shaped like figs or water droplets. Furthermore, the trees in this mural were created as a background to the whole image or could just be regarded as one of the symbolic elements of the marvellous and monumental architectural styles. Buddha was drawn upon a lotus throne with his back to the trees, rather than within any magnificent buildings. The aim of this compositional technique appears

⁷⁰⁶ Ji Hu and Mei Fu, *敦煌史话* [Dunhuang History], (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1997).

⁷⁰⁷ Robert E. Buswell and Donald S. Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 390.

⁷⁰⁸ Robert E. Buswell and Donald S. Lopez, (2013), p. 390.

to be to accentuate the Buddha and other deities rather than let them be confined by buildings.



Fig. 57. Screenshot of the mural on the north wall of No. 217 cave at Mogao Grottoes, during the heyday of the Tang dynasty, China.

Within the aforementioned early Tang dynasty murals, the relationship between trees and the Buddha is more direct. For example, the fresco on the north wall of Cave No.323 mainly shows the story of the initial propagation of Buddhism in China: Zhang Qian exploring the Western Regions for Emperor Wu during the Western Han period. On the upper right side, a mural depicts an image hall with two icons, and two trees in front of the image hall stand on either side of the Buddha. Some devotees and a monk are praying in front of the building with the twin trees (Fig. 58).



Fig. 58. The fresco depicting the combination that image hall with twin trees, on the north wall of Cave No. 323, Mogao Grottoes.

Furthermore, the south and north wall frescos of cave No. 322 (Fig. 59) lacks magnificent halls as an element to enrich the painting, merely depicting the Buddha sitting under the canopy of two trees. Over time, tree symbolism also became widely employed in relation to other Buddhist deities, such as can be seen in the mural of Cave No. 23 (Fig. 60) at the Dunhuang Grottoes. However, due to Caves No. 23 and No. 217 being created during the same historical period, the form of the Bhodi trees in these two murals do not show any noticeable differences. Even in the late Tang dynasty, the divine symbolism of trees was also evidenced in the Dunhuang Grottoes, and most importantly this reveals the use of a greater diversity of tree species. Cave No. 17 (Fig. 61), for instance, is a commemorative hall for monk Hongbian. His cross-legged statue is housed in a terrace at the back of the chamber's north wall, accompanied by a painting of two trees. This arrangement is similar to a scene painted in the Mogao grottoes showing the Buddha with trees. However, the tree species behind the Buddha are different, with the right-hand tree likely being a Bhodi tree, as identified by its heart-shaped leaves which are often prominently displayed. Plant diversity within Chinese Buddhist communities was investigated by conducting research on 191 monasteries, resulting in the identification of 1059 species of trees planted throughout different Chinese climatic zones.⁷⁰⁹ Coincidentally, the three murals were all drawn on the north wall of the caves, though it is hard to deduce whether there is any special significance to this with regard to Buddhism in caves due to a lack of available and relevant references.

⁷⁰⁹ Xinyang Wang and others, 'Plant diversity and species replacement in Chinese Buddhist temples', *Biodiversity Science*, 28.6 (2020), 668-77.



Fig. 59. Screenshot of the mural on the south wall (left) and north wall (right) of Cave No. 322 at Mogao Grottoes, constructed in the Early Tang and renovated in the Five Dynasties, China.



Fig. 60. Screenshot of the mural on the north wall of Cave No. 023 at the Mogao Grottoes, during the heyday of the Tang dynasty, China.

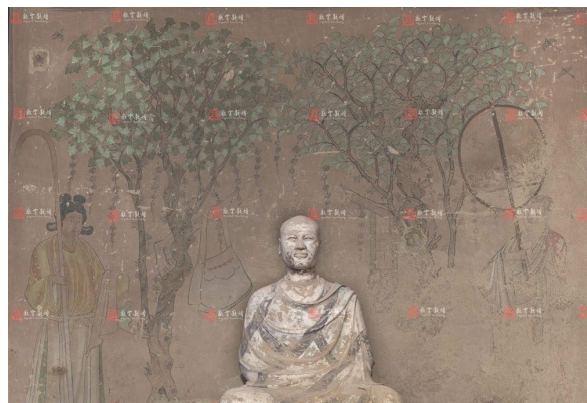
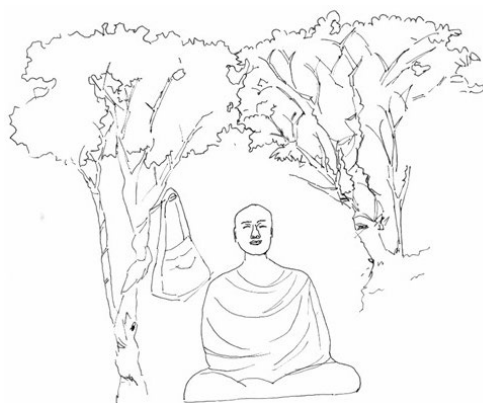


Fig. 61. Screenshot of the mural on the north wall of Cave No. 017 at the Mogao Grottoes, during the late Tang dynasty, China.

Furthermore, through communication between Japanese and Chinese monks, the idea of twin trees with the Buddha spread to Japanese Buddhist practice as well. The embroideries collected in the Nara National Museum in Japan show the Shaka-nyorai (Śākyamuni, or Buddha) who is seating on a lotus throne and is surrounded by bodhisattvas, his disciples, and devotees. The special patterns, such as the 'Apsara' and the phoenix, originating from the Yulin Cave and the Mogao Caves in China, representing the Buddhism fusion and Chinese culture, were also transferred to solid colour silk fabric. In particular, the two trees standing on the back of the Buddha were repeated (Fig. 62). These frescoes, taken from codified Buddhist texts (or Jingbian, Chinese: 经变), spread Buddhist legend and practice in a visible way.



Fig. 62. The Buddha with twin holy trees, the eighth century AD.

The popularity of esoteric Buddhism (or Vajrayana or Tantra Buddhism) also boosts the powerful visualising of Buddhist practice. There were eight sects of Buddhism popularised during Tang dynasty, Vajrayana Buddhism being one of them.⁷¹⁰ The Vajrayana claimed that by performing rituals correctly and imagining strong deities, one could attain enlightenment within one's lifetime.⁷¹¹ Powerful Vajrayana deities were invoked by highly skilled monks (or, occasionally, ascetics) for the benefit of a king or the people of a kingdom.⁷¹² The visualisation of Buddhist artworks and rituals is codified in texts called tantras.⁷¹³ Buddhist works of art contain not only portraits, sculptures, and statues, but also monastic monuments and architecture. Religious sites and architectural space provide a visible stage for Buddhist rituals. This reasoning leads to the fact that building a monastic complex would codify Buddhist doctrine and philosophy, for that is the purpose of architecture.

Architecturally, the trees depicted in the Dunhuang cave frescos convey the same ambitious architectural composition as Foguang Monastery's monastic design, with the trees planted in front of Buddha Hall wherein the holy Tang dynasty timber structure houses three statues of the Buddha (or *trikaya* in Sanskrit) (Fig. 63), conveying the same ambition. The trees, probably because of local climatic conditions, were replaced by two *Pinus tabuliformis*, but otherwise

⁷¹⁰ Shan Xie, 唐代佛教兴衰研究 - 以佛教发展与政治社会关系为视角 [Research on the Rise and Decline of Buddhism in Tang Dynasty - From the perspective of Relationship between the Buddhism Development and Political Society], (doctoral thesis, Henan University, 2014), pp. 141-200.

The eight sects of Buddhism are 净土宗 [Pure Land Buddhism], 唯识宗 [East Asian Yogācāra Buddhism], 禅宗 [Zen Buddhism], 密宗 [Tantra Buddhism], 律宗 [Rishū Buddhism], 华严宗 [Huayan or Flower Garland Buddhism], 天台宗 [Tiantai Buddhism].

⁷¹¹ Kurt A. Behrendt, *How to Read Buddhist Art*, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019), pp. 19-20.

⁷¹² Kurt A. Behrendt, (2019), pp. 19-20.

⁷¹³ Kurt A. Behrendt, (2019), pp. 19-20.

express the same holy function of Bodhi trees in India, symbolising the enlightenment of Buddha. Therefore, the spiritual relationship between Bodhi trees and Buddha has never changed and can be recreated through the landscape connections between architecture and plants.



Fig. 63. The Buddhist legend about the Buddha and the tree roots the conscious relationship between the twin trees and the Buddha Hall in Foguang Monastery.

In addition, other examples of such trees can be found in Guangxiao Monastery (Fig. 64, left and middle). The oldest and largest classical garden monastery in the Lingnan Territory of China,⁷¹⁴ it was said to have initially been built during the Dongjin dynasty (AD 266 - AD 420) and has experienced successive reconstructions and restorations. The current Mahavira hall was repaired and expanded from five to seven *puzuo* (or seven *kaijian*) in AD 1654.⁷¹⁵ Similarly, two giant tree crowns (*Ficus microcarpa* and *Ficus religiosa*) stand in front of the Buddha Hall (or Mahavira Hall). The *Ficus religiosa* tree located northeast of the Mahavira Hall grows alongside the Yifa pagoda that was initially built in AD 676 and subsequently renovated several times during later dynasties. This tree is said to have been brought by the Indian monk Zhi Yue San Zang in AD 502.⁷¹⁶ Japanese scholars Tokiwa Daijo and Sekino Tadashi observed these surviving trees in the two monasteries in 1941. These provide clear evidence that the reason for the deliberate arrangement of trees close to the Buddha Hall or the essential construction in Buddhist sites was the construction of an ideological connection and the relay of a deep reverence for trees as they symbolised the Buddha during the early stage of Buddhism in India.

⁷¹⁴ Weichu Zou, '广东古代造园史概述' [The History of Ancient Gardens in Guangdong], *Guangdong History*, 3 (2003), 12-7 (p. 13).

⁷¹⁵ Bo Yue, '广州光孝寺' [Guangxiao Monastery in Guangzhou], *Cultural Relics*, 4 (1982), 83-5 (p. 83).

⁷¹⁶ Wen Shi, '广州光孝寺的菩提树' [Ficus religiosa tree in Guangxiao Monastery of Guangzhou], *The Voice of Dharma*, 12 (1988), 37



Fig. 64. Trees in Guangxiao Monastery and Ancestor Nunnery in China.

Left - Guangxiao Monastery (光孝寺), Guangzhou Province, China.

Middle - *Ficus religiosa* tree in Guangxiao Monastery (光孝寺), Guangzhou Province, China.

Right - Ancestor Nunnery (初祖庵) in Shaolin Monastery (少林寺), Henan Province, China.

Likewise, the Ancestor Nunnery in Shaolin Monastery (Fig. 64, right) in Henan also reflects the same monastic tree design. A tree was planted in front of the Buddha Hall built in AD 1125 to commemorate the *Zen* master Bodhidharma (or Dámó, in China).⁷¹⁷ It is extremely likely that pairs of trees used to stand before the image hall. However, there is no available photographic evidence showing the Ancestor Nunnery, and few treatises mention trees fronting the main hall there. This general landscape practice is likely to not only express the religious connection between the inner space of the image hall and the outside courtyard, but to also continue the archaic tradition that the tree is a divine component in ancient Indian Buddhist sites because of its special relationship with the Buddha.

In general, in the early Buddhist faith, trees were initially the hut of the Buddha, also 'the archetypal site of ascetic practice.'⁷¹⁸ The possible reason for choosing the Bodhi tree as a divine element in Buddhism was likely impacted by India's ancient civilisation and the earlier local beliefs prior to Buddhism. Since the Buddha's Nirvana legend endowed the picture drawing the Buddha under twin sal

⁷¹⁷ Shiqing Zhang, '北构南相 - 初祖庵大殿现象探析' [Analysis of the Phenomenon of the Main Temple Hall of the Chuzu An Nunnery], *History of Architecture*, 00 (2006), 84-9 (p. 84).

⁷¹⁸ Kazi K. Ashraf, 'The Buddha's House', *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 53/54 (2008), 225-43 (pp. 227-28).

trees with sacred religious meaning, this archaic ideology was widely employed in Buddhist practice, from sculpture, fresco, and paintings to the architectural landscape at Buddhist sites.

In Chinese Buddhist communities, the symbolic tree in Buddhist courtyard was adopted and evolved a distinct style, such as being planted in pairs rather than singularly, while at the same time incorporating other species depending on local climate, rather than specifically planting Bodhi trees or twin sal trees. Further, in Foguang Monastery, because the image hall housing the Buddha was a priority it had to be placed on an essential platform, traditional ideology of Buddhism dominates the whole arrangement of the monastic layout. The twin pine (or cypress) trees on both sides of the ceremonial passage bridge the outset of ritual passage to the destination – worshipping the Buddha; the trees standing on each side of the Buddha Hall are the re-creation in architecture about the Buddhist legend of the Buddha and the divine trees. With the decline of the *Maitreya faith* and the rise of Tibetan Buddhism in mainland China, the Buddhist practice of depicting twin trees with deities' hall gradually disappeared from sculpture, murals, and architecture. In addition, trees, as a life-limited component, certainly pose a fire risk to wooden structures in Chinese monasteries. Therefore, twin trees standing close to the Buddha (Hall) gradually disappeared, and the Buddha Hall of Foguang Monastery was probably one of the few remaining cases. Beyond this, there is no other historical evidence or surviving examples of the consideration of trees in the design of monastic landscapes.

In summary, the Buddhist literature rooted in the creation of Buddhist practice and the twin trees of the Buddha Hall visualise the fresco paintings and sculptures in three-dimensional space. Buddhist texts and visible paintings provide a rich architectural resource for the builders of monastic landscapes. Contemporary research also only provides an uncertain picture of tree design in the monastic landscape. Thus, trees are probably not considered a design element of an entire Buddhist complex, but rather a link to Buddhist legends to convey sacred religious meanings. The traditional Chinese garden theory was also not applied to the design of monastic landscapes as it does not correspond to any religious motivation. However, the depiction of twin trees with the Buddha (or deities), either in the frescoes of the Dunhuang Grottoes or in monastic landscapes, may have been originally developed by the Chinese based on Buddhist legend and the early sculptures of single tree worship in India. As the image hall represents the pairing of the existing Buddha and the building, the twin trees that stand next to the Buddha can take on religious meanings. This is the monastic practice regarding trees and the Buddha Hall at Foguang Monastery.

4.4 Summary

Based on the initial finding of the two gullies by the research through using photogrammetric survey, this chapter concentrates on the landscape of Foguang Monastery. The static, symbolic, solid construction interoperates with dynamic religious movements to accomplish the transformation of the land from the ordinary to the sacred. In addition, the two gullies define the position of the platform of the Buddha Hall and limit its direction of expansion. Not only can the

possible pilgrimage route of the monastery be deduced from this find, but can be assumed that the platform of the Buddha Hall has not changed its location in more than a thousand years. In particular, the plants design of the site, such as the choice of site and the Buddha platform locations, the shifting of the natural landscape (separation and levelling of the terrain), the enclosed and rising courtyard layout, the symbolic relationship between the Nirvana Buddha and the trees, interwoven with the pilgrimage routes and the rite of circumambulation, formed the basic approach to the final landscape of Foguang Monastery. Most importantly, pure and visible Buddhist texts gave all these practices a theoretical origin, but Chinese culture led the inevitable evolution of non-indigenous practice.

Chapter 5 - Enclosed Courtyard of Foguang Monastery

To interpret the monastic courtyard of Foguang Monastery, the thesis draws upon early examples from both within and outside China. This approach aims not only to determine the appropriate architectural context and meaning of the courtyard but also to demonstrate that the design of a rectangular and enclosed courtyard could serve as a universal principle for Buddhist architecture throughout history.

In the early period of Buddhism in India (the third century BC), *Vedikā*, meaning ‘a square railing’, had been applied at Buddhist sites, for example, in Indian shrines such as Bharhut, Sanchi, Mathura, and Amravati, ‘a small square altar often enclosed by a *Vedikā*’.⁷¹⁹ The establishment of Buddhist monasteries in different historical societies was never easy to copy. The diversity and complexity of Buddhist monasteries can be easily identified in different countries in the same historical period. Identifying the distribution and cultural roots of monasteries is a common trend for most research in religious architecture, as these surviving or ruined architectural monuments enable us to illustrate not only Buddhism, Buddhist culture or rites, but also human history and society. This chapter addresses the reinterpretation of the monastic courtyard of Foguang Monastery by drawing on early examples in China and other countries. The goal is not only to determine the appropriate architectural context for interpreting the courtyard of Foguang Monastery but also to demonstrate that Buddhist architecture is a carrier representing the collective wisdom of Buddhists, craftsmen and workers in different territories with different local traditions to

⁷¹⁹ Wisdom Library, ‘Vedikā: 21 definitions’, *Wisdom Library*, <<https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/vedika>> [accessed 17 October 2022].

understand and express their various thoughts and perceptions of the same religion - Buddhism.

The square courtyards of the Buddhists in China were modest and indistinguishable from the rectangular courtyards of the Chinese, such as the 'Siheyuan' (a historical form of Chinese vernacular dwelling that was common throughout China).⁷²⁰ Apart from the Buddhist monuments or statues enshrined in the buildings, it is hard to identify the distinct difference between the monks' courtyards and Chinese residential ones. Furthermore, Chinese monastic buildings were typically made by timber following the *Ying Zao Fa Shi*,⁷²¹ which had no difference for other Chinese ordinary buildings. Therefore, Chinese monastery either from layout or from material, because of the strong Chinese building culture, scholars, especially Chinese academics, firmly believe that the square Buddhist courtyard originated exclusively in China; yet researchers have hardly noticed that the rectangular courtyards of the Buddhists have spread throughout different historical periods.

There were various ways of constructing an enclosure court to house Buddhist deities. By contextualising Buddhist historical case studies in various Asian countries between the sixth century AD and the fifteenth century AD, this monastic courtyard trend can be traced. As mentioned earlier, the term

⁷²⁰ Daniel Abramson, 'Beijing's Preservation Policy and the Fate of the Siheyuan,' *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, 13.1 (2001), 7-22 (p. 7).

⁷²¹ Qinghua Guo, 'Yingzao Fashi: Twelfth-Century Chinese Building Manual', *Architectural History*, 41 (1998), 1-13 (pp. 1-2). The *Ying Zao Fa Shi* (Chinese: 营造法式), also known as the *Sate Building Standards*, is the oldest surviving technical manual on buildings in China. It was created by Li Jie (李诫), who held the position of Superintendent of State sovereign in AD 1103. Building codes enforced by the court have been known since ancient times in China, including during the Tang dynasty. However, all the volumes of these laws, except for a few fragments, were lost over time.

monastery encompasses all monastic establishments in a Buddhist place,⁷²² including pagodas, icon halls, the Buddha court, brick towers, sculptures, and Buddhist *Vihāra*. In some places, the most impressive structures are called temples, which are used for worship and the performance of rites without monks or hermits residing there.

Chinese Monasteries in the Tang dynasty was believed to be shaped by Buddhist *Sūtra* and *Mañjuśrī* Faith. From fragmented historical records, it can be discovered that two *Sūtras*, such as the *Illustrated Sūtra of Jianhuan Temple in Shewei State of Central Tianzhu* (Chinese: 中天竺舍卫国祇恒寺图经) and the *Guanzhong founded the Jietan Illustrated Sūtra* (Chinese: 关中创立戒坛图经) influenced the planning and construction of numerous temples.⁷²³ Furthermore, in Xingshan Monastery, the According to Tang dynasty's historical records, it was a sprawling grand temple occupying a 'Fang' (a square or block of city area, functioning as an urban grass-roots community unit within Chang'an City)⁷²⁴ and had a *Mañjuśrī* Pavilion established by the eminent Esoteric Buddhist monk Amoghavajra.⁷²⁵ Likewise, the *Mañjuśrī* Hall was also constructed in Foguang Monastery, though it was rebuilt during the Jin dynasty in AD 1137.

⁷²² Guixiang Wang, 中国汉传佛教建筑史 - 佛寺的建造, 分布与寺院格局, 建筑分类及其变迁 [The history of Chinese Buddhist Architecture - construction of Buddhist temple and building distribution, change on the Buddhist temple planning and building type], Vol. 1 (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2016), p. 487.

⁷²³ Guixiang Wang, (2016), p. 196.

⁷²³ Guixiang Wang, (2016), p. 584.

⁷²⁴ Liran Yin, Tao Wang and Kemi Adeyeye, 'A Comparative Study of Urban Spatial Characteristics of the Capitals of Tang and Song Dynasties Based on Space Syntax', *Urban Science*, 5.34 (2021), 1-24 (p. 2).

⁷²⁵ Guixiang Wang, (2016), p. 584.

Another impressive feature of the Tang Monastery was the construction of a huge pagoda (or *sūtra*) as the central element of the entire temple complex in large-scale temple architecture. The destroyed Yongning Monastery, built in AD 516 Northern Wei dynasty by Empress Dowager Hu had a square layout for the entire temple complex. Based on modern archaeological excavations, the length from north to south was approximately 305 meters, and the width from east to west was 260 meters.⁷²⁶ At the central position of the temple, there was a massive wooden pagoda. The remains of the pagoda consist of two layers of foundations: the lower foundation measures 101 meters in length from east to west, 98 meters in length from north to south, and has a height of approximately 2.5 meters; the upper foundation, also in a square, has a remaining height of 2.5 meters.⁷²⁷ According to the description of *Luoyang Qielan Ji* (Chinese: 洛阳伽蓝记), it was a nine-story *stūpa* with a Buddhist hall north of the pagoda.⁷²⁸ However, the Buddha Hall then replaced the pagoda that formed the centre of the monastery courtyard, such as the Nanchan Monastery, and Tiantai An (or Nunnery). The most noticeable findings of the Buddhist architecture research in China since the nineteenth century AD are regarded to be the fact that the image halls gradually became the centre of the monastery enclosure rather than the pagoda (or *stūpa*).⁷²⁹ It is thought that the reason for this great change is that the widespread tendency to endow private property with the status of monasteries accelerated the process of Sinicisation of Buddhist monasteries in China; at the same time,

⁷²⁶ Guixiang Wang, (2016), p. 196.

⁷²⁷ Guixiang Wang, (2016), p. 196.

⁷²⁸ Xuanzhi Yang (杨衒之), 洛阳伽蓝记 [Luoyang Qielan Ji or The Monasteries of Luoyang], (AD 547).

⁷²⁹ Xi'nian Fu, 傅熹年建筑史论文集 [Collected works of Fu Xinian on Architecture History], (Tianjin: Baihua Edition, 1998), pp. 136-37.

the rectangular space of a wooden structure is felt to be more suitable for the placement of the huge icons inside the hall than the round space of a pagoda (Fig. 65).⁷³⁰

However, it is generally believed that the finding about Buddhist architecture in China has led to too many research efforts focusing on the 'principle hall' (or image hall) on Buddhist sites; this research trend prevents scholars from forming a more appropriate understanding of the process of cross-culture transformation.⁷³¹ Therefore, researcher Zhu xu provides new insight into the courtyard boundaries of Buddhist sites, which evolved from free-standing walls prior to the fourth century into dormitory cells that formed an enclosing Buddhist shrine, and that these enclosed monastic courtyards became extremely popular during the Tang dynasty.⁷³² Zhu Xu's argument inspires this research to consider Foguang Monastery as a whole. Moreover, this research has expanded the scope of investigation from mainland China to foreign countries in order to compare and understand the significance of, and Buddhist practises in the design of monasteries. However, this impressive development not only occurred for the Buddhist architecture of China, but also in the Buddhist sites beyond China. The most significant development in Buddhist monasticism may be the gradual abandonment of *stūpa* and *chaityas*, but separate and distinct monastic spaces were created in pilgrimage centres and interest in worship shifted from *stūpa* to

⁷³⁰ Xi'nian Fu, (1998), pp. 136-37.

⁷³¹ Zhu Xu, 'Buddhist Architectural Transformation in Medieval China, 300 - 700CE: Emperor Wu's Great Assemblies and the Rise of the Corridor-Enclosed, Multicloister Monastery Plan', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 79.4 (2020), 393-413

⁷³² Zhu Xu, (2020), 393-413

Buddha images in monasteries.⁷³³ Nevertheless, these similar changes inside and outside China are rarely considered together.

Moreover, it is hardly to find the standardized arrangement of monuments within a Chinese monastery. Chinese monasteries underwent a transformation from 'house churches,' where residential buildings were repurposed as image halls. Some might receive financial support from royal families, frequently leading to the construction of large-scale monuments, such as the vanished Yongning Pagoda, the Great Wild Goose Pagoda, and the Wooden Pagoda of the Ying District; Some monasteries, like Nanchan Monastery or Tiantai An, were simply erected the Buddha Hall by locals or exclusively by females, with much smaller dimensions compared to others. As a result, placing pagodas (or *stūpas*) and Buddha halls within monastic complexes exhibited diversity or even chaos, with variations in whether they were positioned at the center or housed within the same monastery. The monastery layout emerged for multiple configurations and presentations not only in Tang China but also in Japan. The possible reason for the dynamic relationship between the Golden Hall and the pagodas in early Japanese monasteries can be attributed to their ritual functions and design aesthetics (Fig. 65).⁷³⁴

The material of Chinese and Japanese monastic buildings was mainly wood, the perishable material, unlike in India, Cambodia, Indonesia etc., where some early

⁷³³ Lars Fogelin, *An archaeological history of Indian Buddhism*, (Oxford: Oxford Handbooks, 2015), p. 164.

⁷³⁴ Donald F McCallum. *The four great temples: Buddhist archaeology, architecture, and icons of seventh-century Japan*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), p. 243.

monasteries (or temples, or *Vihāras*) made of brick or rock are still well preserved. According to archaeologists, the earliest Buddhist monasteries in India date only to the first century BC, the most well-preserved monasteries among these are found in the Western Ghats of peninsular India, although some monasteries would exist during the Aśoka Period from the third century BC.⁷³⁵ In earlier times, Buddhist monastery consisted of a pilgrimage centre - a *stūpa* or Chaityas or apsidal halls, or other ritual focal point - and some secondary structures around the centre.⁷³⁶ The outbuildings were detached freestyle in order to welcome lay Buddhists.⁷³⁷ In later times, however, the subsidiary structures were mainly used by the Sangha, who then restricted access to the *stūpa* or Buddha.⁷³⁸ The monastery courtyard gradually became a fenced area with limited access. In the first century AD, Buddhist monasteries in India had a fairly homogeneous structure and ground plan - a huge square enclosed courtyard, with monk cells opening into a central enclosure, which frequently housed a central shrine.⁷³⁹ Finally, Buddha pictures were frequently put in a monk cell facing the *Vihāra*'s main entrance (Figure 65).⁷⁴⁰

The Indian Buddhist rectangular monasteries have a close relationship with the Hindu temple. For instance, the Rajasimhesvara temple consists of a large rectangular complex with more than fifty chapels surrounding the main

⁷³⁵ Lars Fogelin, *An archaeological history of Indian Buddhism*. (Oxford: Oxford Handbooks, 2015), p. 26.

⁷³⁶ Lars Fogelin, (2015), pp. 25-6.

⁷³⁷ Lars Fogelin, (2015), p. 26.

⁷³⁸ Lars Fogelin, (2015), p. 26.

⁷³⁹ Lars Fogelin, (2015), p. 158.

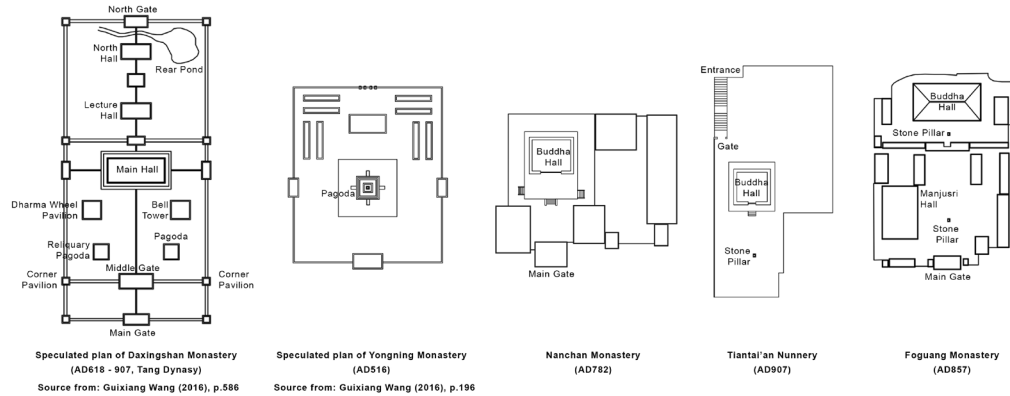
⁷⁴⁰ Lars Fogelin, (2015), p. 158.

building.⁷⁴¹ The main building consists of a central main shrine and an enclosed circumambulatory passage, surrounded by nine smaller shrines.⁷⁴² The resemblance in architectural design can also be observed in other Hindu temples constructed during the same historical era either in Indian or Cambodia. Furthermore, Buddhist monasteries in Nepal also have a rectangular and enclosed layout, although it is difficult to find available and surviving resources from before the tenth century AD. The monasteries in Nepal during the fifteenth - sixteenth centuries AD is regarded as having been formed by three-dimensional *maṇḍala* (Fig. 65).

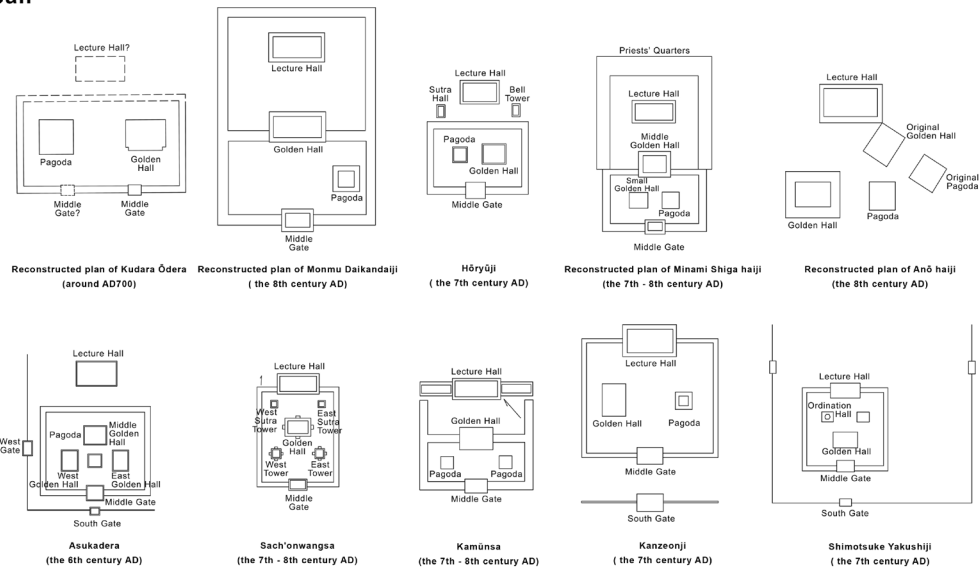
⁷⁴¹ Huntington, Susan L. and John C. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publications, 2014), p. 314.

⁷⁴² Huntington, Susan L. and John C. Huntington, (2014), p. 314.

China

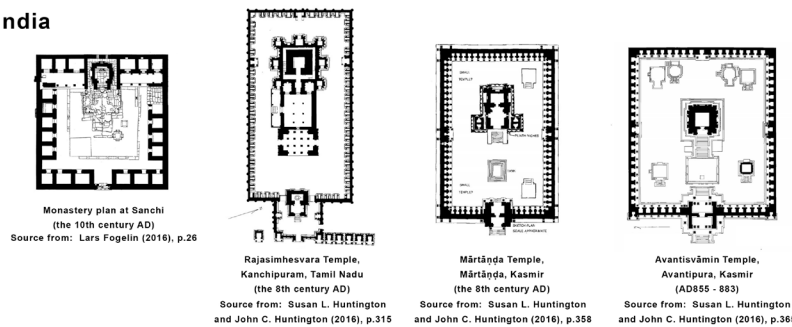


Japan

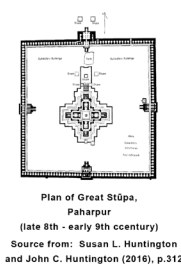


Source from: Donald F. McCallum (2009), p.31, p.124, p.145, p.193, p.212

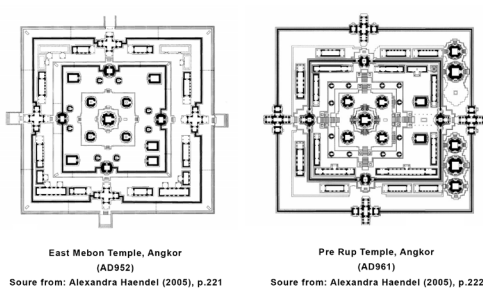
India



Bangladesh



Cambodia



Nepal

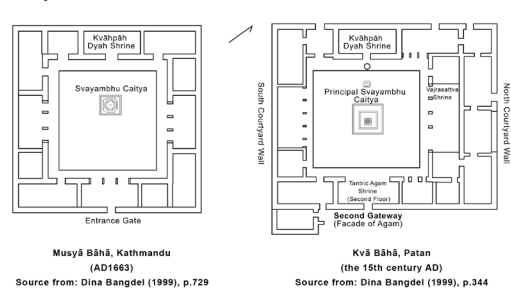


Fig. 65. Ground plans of (Buddhism and Hinduism) monasteries in China, Japan, India, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Nepal.

Therefore, the design of a monastery with an enclosed courtyard and limited access is a traditional legacy of Buddhist and Hindu practice in early history, whether made of stone, brick, or timber. The enclosed monastery layout was prevalent in various Buddhist monastic complexes, and Foguang Monastery is an example of this design. It is characterized by its occupation of a tangible enclosed courtyard or connecting square units in a series, resulting in stretched layouts that are often accessed by steps. The Chinese Buddhist monastery would interweave the Buddhism culture with Chinese arts, traditional material usage, and building technologies.

The existing wood monasteries in China are too fragmentary and some of them have been reconstructed and rebuilt several times over the centuries. Researchers relying only on certain historical texts and some inadequate remains have brought little progress in the study of Chinese Buddhist architecture. Furthermore, focusing too much on the image hall instead of looking at the Buddhist monastery as a whole can also misunderstand the cultural interaction and history of Buddhist architecture in China. The construction of enclosed monasteries with different details and different martial application in different countries during the same historical period shows how complicated and flexible the design of monasteries was.

The interaction of international pilgrims on trade routes did not cease during the developmental period of Buddhism, which makes the comparison of case studies in the same historical period but from different countries meaningful, also

provides a general developmental background for interpreting the courtyard of Foguang Monastery. The potential connection between early Chinese monasteries and other Asian monasteries opens a promising avenue for exploring the Buddhist practice at Foguang Monastery.

5.1 Early Buddhist monasteries beyond China

The majority of sacred monasteries in the world have undergone continuous and dynamic development, ultimately manifesting in diverse ways, both historically and in the present. The monasteries at Taxila (present-day Pakistan), Peshawar (present-day Pakistan) and Haḍḍa (present-day Afghanistan) provide the necessary comparability for the study of early Buddhist monastic enclosure in China because of the interaction along the Silk Road, the visits of Chinese pilgrims recorded in historical texts and the available investigative reports of archaeologists. This process enables a deeper exploration of the narrative surrounding Foguang Monastery.

5.1.1 Mohra Moradu Monastery in Taxila

The remains of monastic quarters in Taxila built during the Kanishka shows the general ideology of the monastic design during the second century AD to the fifth century AD in Gandhara: the *stūpa* court connects with enclosed Buddhist cells court. In the records of Faxian (AD 399 and AD 412), this state was under the control of Emperor Aśoka's son Punala, and most Buddhists in the area followed Theravada Buddhism. It was also the site of the famous Buddhist story that a

Bodhisattva, in order to cure a blind man, gave the blind man his eyes, and he eventually attained Nirvana. As a result, a *stūpa* adorned with gold and silver was erected on this spot. This *stūpa* was still there when Xuanzang visited (AD 626 - AD 654), and the legend of why the *stūpa* was erected was repeated in Xuanzang's records.

From here, Faxian wandered for seven days and came to Takhasila (also called Taxila), where there were two great *stūpas*. One was erected on the spot where a Bodhisattva cut off his head and dedicated it to an evil Brahmin⁷⁴³; the other stood on the place where a Bodhisattva surrendered himself to feed a hungry tiger. The two *stūpas* with other great *stūpas* nearby were regarded as 'Four Famous *stūpas*' and were well known to Buddhists. There were Mahayana Buddhists and Theravada Buddhists, but mainly were Theravada Buddhists. Unfortunately, he did not give too much information about the monastic architecture, but in Xuanzang's records (AD 626 - AD 654), in addition to numerous impressive *stūpas*, colossal sculptures, and Buddhist settlements, he also noted the general monastic arrangement: the Buddhist residential quarter (or *Samgharāma*) was usually situated next to the *stūpa*. This arrangement can be confirmed in the archaeological report by Marshall and Fergusson. In

⁷⁴³ This place was considered to be the Dharmarajika of Taxila and was mentioned by the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang (or Hsuan Tsang) in Marshall's account. Marshall also claimed that this *stūpa* was built here only in the third or fourth century and not, as Xuanzang said, in the Aśoka period (304 BC - 232 BC). However, the Buddhist story of one *bodhisattva* offering his head to another comes from Faxian's diary (AD 399 and AD 412) and not from Xuanzang. Moreover, Faxian does not claim that the *stūpa* was built by Aśoka, but only says that this *stūpa* was built on the basis of the sacrificial legend. The travelogues of Faxian and Xuanzang have been quoted extensively by international scholars, but to this day there are still many misunderstandings.

Marshall's documentation, many Buddhist settlements in Taxila were built next to *stūpas*, and most of monuments were built by Emperor Kushanas.⁷⁴⁴

Buddhist structures in Mohra Moradu, and Jaulian are North-West India's best-preserved and most impressive monuments.⁷⁴⁵ The two sites are quite close to each other; indeed, there is a footpath connecting the two monasteries (25 mins walk).⁷⁴⁶ In the case of Mohra Moradu of Taxila this monastic compound by a *stūpa* area and a monastery rectangle were built side by side on an elongated terrace (Fig. 66). The flat terrace was levelled by construction workers rather than forming naturally. The entrance to the monastery courtyard faces east, as do the steps of the *stūpa*. The monastery rectangle, comprising 27 cells, had several foundations.⁷⁴⁷ Via a staircase at the entrance, one could reach an entrance platform, cross a portico and then enter the interior of the monastic quarter. In the centre of the courtyard, a rectangular enclosure was excavated, surrounded by short pilasters (or stone slabs). The sunken square was considered a shaded area for Buddhist communication and could allow for the drainage of rainwater.⁷⁴⁸ In the southeast corner of the recess is a chamber with walls that could be a bathroom.⁷⁴⁹ In the corridor between the Buddhist cells and the rectangular recess, many superhumanly large figures were placed in front of the cells, or groups of smaller figures were set in small niches in the walls of the cells. Most of the cells have a small window.⁷⁵⁰ Apart from the Cells Court, on its

⁷⁴⁴ John Marshall, *A guide to Taxila*, 3rd edn (Delhi: Manager of publications, 1936).

John Marshall, *Taxila: An Illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavation 1913 - 1934*, (Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 2011).

⁷⁴⁵ John Marshall, *A guide to Taxila*, 3rd edn (Delhi: Manager of publications, 1936), p. 106.

⁷⁴⁶ John Marshall, (1936), pp. 106 - 7.

⁷⁴⁷ John Marshall, (1936), p. 108.

⁷⁴⁸ John Marshall, (1936), p. 109.

⁷⁴⁹ John Marshall, (1936), p. 111.

⁷⁵⁰ John Marshall, (1936), p. 111.

east side, a number of 'latter apartments', such as the Buddhist assembly, the refectory, the storage room and the latrine, were connected by a door-cell.⁷⁵¹ The *stūpa* block connects the monastery rectangle. There are two *stūpas* of different sizes. Many well-preserved stucco reliefs remain on the larger *stūpa*, and the entire structure was decorated with figures from bottom to top. The smaller *stūpa* is on the south side of the bigger *stūpa* and was built during the same period as the larger one, inferred from the fact that their sunken square and the stucco reliefs are very similar.⁷⁵²

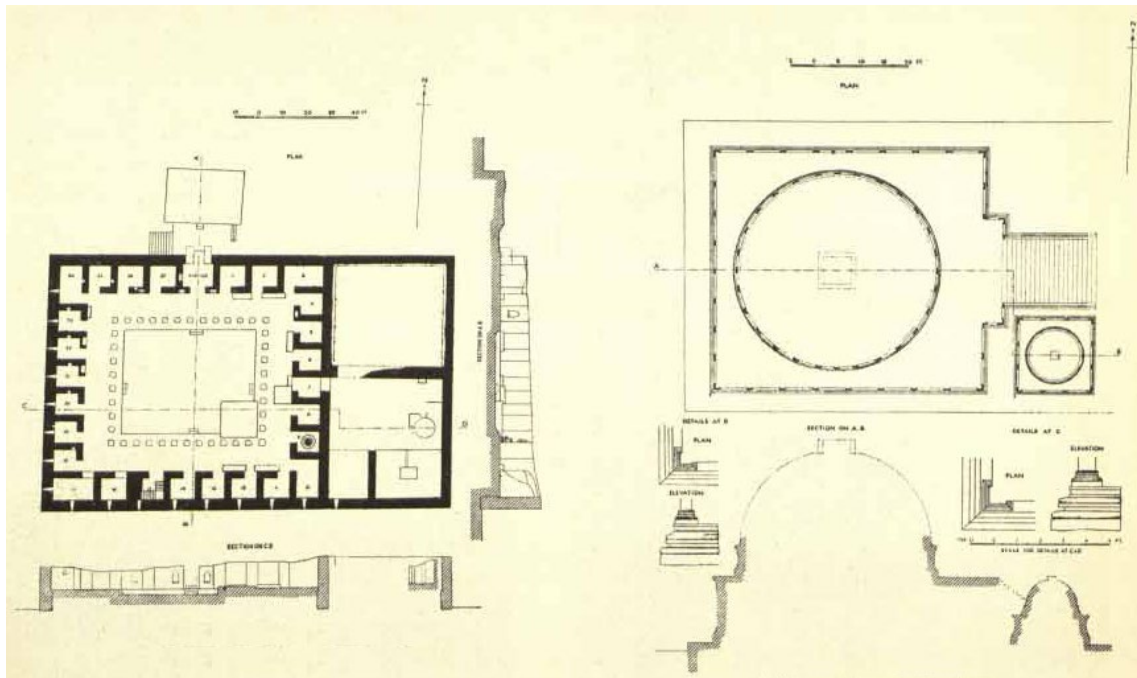


Fig. 66. Monastery compound plan in Mohra Moradu, Taxila.

Left - Plan and sections of monastery.

Right - Plan, section and details of *stūpas*.

5.1.2 Jaulian Monastery in Taxila

In addition, Jaulian Monastery compound (Fig. 67) was perched on the top of a hill (300 feet in height) with a wide expansive view.⁷⁵³ The original foundation of

⁷⁵¹ John Marshall, (1936), p. 111.

⁷⁵² John Marshall, (1936), p. 112.

⁷⁵³ John Marshall, (1936), p. 112.

these monuments is believed to have been built during the Kushan period (at the beginning of the third century AD) and was destroyed after two and a half centuries.⁷⁵⁴ These monuments are divided into two groups that can be further divided into two courts, *stūpas* court and monastery court, and the two parts connect closer than the complex in Mohra Moradu. *Stūpas* court is a large open quadrangle that has three entrances.⁷⁵⁵ The whole court consists of two groups monuments on different levels. The main *stūpa* in the upper court was rounded by ranged of small cells, which carved or placed images along its sides. The lower *stūpa* court is decorated with various figures and reliefs, however, all of the *stūpas* there are missing their domes and cylindrical drums, but their square bases are still decorated with stucco reliefs carved in horizontal rows along the walls.⁷⁵⁶ Some of the monuments are donated, with the donor's name so inscribed, an action related to Buddhist merits.⁷⁵⁷

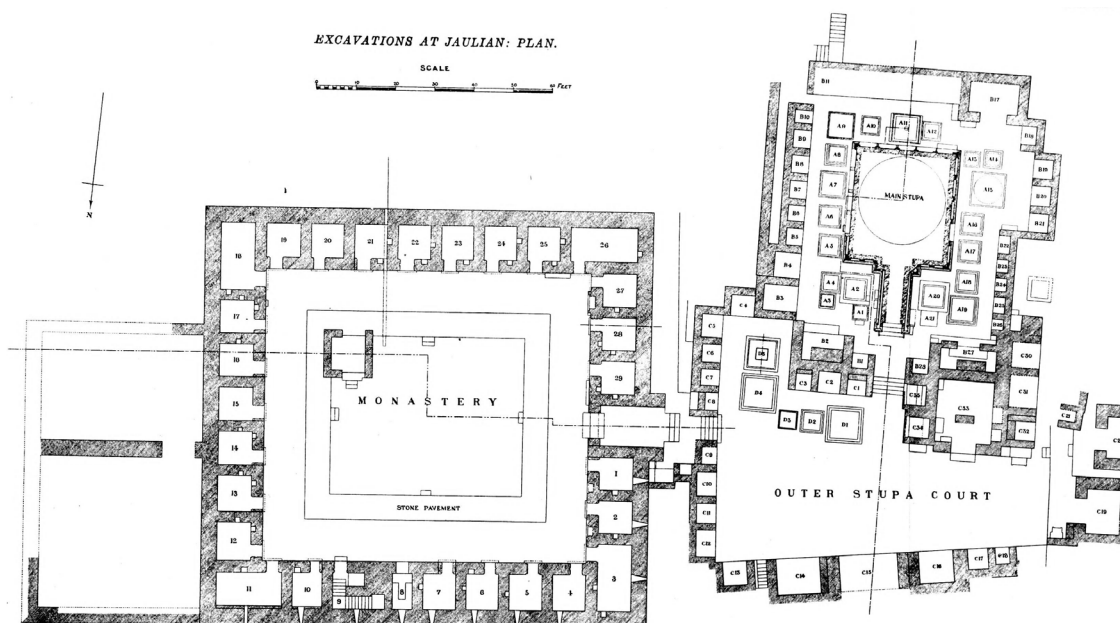


Fig. 67. Monastery compound plan in Jaulian, Taxila.

⁷⁵⁴ John Marshall, (1936), p. 113.

⁷⁵⁵ John Marshall, (1936), p. 114.

⁷⁵⁶ John Marshall, (1936), p. 115.

⁷⁵⁷ John Marshall, (1936), p. 115.

On the eastern side of the *stūpas* court is the monastery court, built on a lower terrace.⁷⁵⁸ In the small chapel at the entrance, there is a group of well-preserved figures comprising three Buddha and his attendants.⁷⁵⁹ The entire rectangular court has a similar arrangement to the Mohra Moradu Monastery, with ranges of small cells with windows on the court's four sides, a square depression in the middle, and a small bathroom in the corner of the depression.⁷⁶⁰ In front of the cells are the same niches for the placement of images as found in Mohra Moradu. Other functional rooms such as the assembly, kitchen, refectory and storeroom, etc., are located on the east side.⁷⁶¹

The layout of the two monastic complexes has one common feature, that is, two separate blocks: the *stūpa* court and the monastery court. The *stūpa* court, symbolising the sacred space of the Buddha and other deities, is separate from the Buddhist residential rectangle, but the two blocks are otherwise very close in location. The Buddha courtyard is much more open to the public, as it either has more entrances or is not bounded by a courtyard, and can have donations associated with Buddhist merit. The monastery block, on the other hand, is controlled by a few gates (usually a single entrance) and is therefore most likely not open to the public. The Buddhist cells are modelled on the hut of the pre-Buddha and his spiritual discipline of asceticism. Moreover, there seem to be no rules for the orientations of the buildings, and it is difficult to determine landscaping with regard to plants. Furthermore, the two Buddhist sites have

⁷⁵⁸ John Marshall, (1936), p. 116.

⁷⁵⁹ John Marshall, (1936), p. 117.

⁷⁶⁰ John Marshall, (1936), p. 117.

⁷⁶¹ John Marshall, (1936), p. 118.

proved that the Buddhist single pillar was not a necessary part of monastery design.

Because of both were mountainous monasteries, not close to public gathering areas. Therefore, their water and food supplies might rely entirely on donations by pilgrims or their Buddhists. Once this model of a single supply chain encountered the problem of insufficient supply, the monastery would probably have been abandoned by the Buddhists.

The statues placed at the front of the Buddhist rest cells or in the niches in the wall of the cells served to enable Buddhists to practise Buddhism immediately after rest. However, this type of placement could cause the Buddha court to be shifted from a separate courtyard adjoining the Buddhist residential quadrangle, especially in places where *stūpas* were erected.

5.1.3 Jamalgarhi Monastery at Peshawar Valley

Peshawar is also a place where Faxian and Xuanzang both visited. Jamalgarhi Monastery is located about 36 miles northeast of Peshawar and is eight miles from Takht-i-Bahai Monastery.⁷⁶² Jamalgarhi Monastery and Takht-i-Bahi Monastery, which were excavated in the vicinity of Peshawar during the nineteenth century AD, have similar layouts to their monastery compounds (Fig. 68). In the Buddha court (AA sections), a circular or a square platform approached by steps, on which was placed a giant image of the Buddha, was built

⁷⁶² James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1899), pp. 209-10.

in the centre of the enclosed court, with diameters of 22 ft. and 15 ft., respectively.

⁷⁶³ 'All the *stūpas* of the Panjab and Gandhara had steps up to the level of the basement, and were usually on the side facing the monastery.'⁷⁶⁴ The cells surrounded the central platform 'were found evidently intended to contain images'.⁷⁶⁵ Apparently, the roles of the court are highly likely to be related to the worship of the Buddha or pure religious utilisation, for example, as all the space was occupied by images. The next section connecting the Buddha court (BB sections) called 'pantheon', were used for placing smaller sized images, topes models, or other votive offerings.⁷⁶⁶ Section C is regarded as the Buddhist dwelling cells, called *Samgharāma*, and which was also enclosed with only one entrance to the outside.⁷⁶⁷ Jamalgarhl Monastery does not have a section D, but in Takht-i-Bahi monastery, this section with a high wall was probably used for holding Buddhist activities, such as ordination ceremonies, excommunication, as a meeting hall, and often as a refectory.⁷⁶⁸ A 'refectory' is an essential space for Buddhists, as they have a ritual where food is offered; on that day, many Buddhists or laymen gathered together to eat the offered food at the same time, a ritual which has been evidenced by Buddhists all across Asia, such as Faxian between AD 337 and AD 422 in Yōtkaṇ, and Ennin in Zhulin Monastery at Mount Wutai in AD 840. As it is a big square without any structure within, it was supposed to be roofed with wood.⁷⁶⁹ It is very likely that stucco was mixed with wood to make the roof of the refectory because, as with the refectories in the two cases discussed

⁷⁶³ James Fergusson, (1899), p. 211.

⁷⁶⁴ James Fergusson, (1899), p. 211.

⁷⁶⁵ James Fergusson, (1899), pp. 211-13.

⁷⁶⁶ James Fergusson, (1899), pp. 211-13.

⁷⁶⁷ James Fergusson, (1899), pp. 211-13.

⁷⁶⁸ James Fergusson, (1899), pp. 211-13.

⁷⁶⁹ James Fergusson, (1899), p. 213.

previously, no information about the roofs was examined and no beam remains were examined in the assembly rooms. Therefore, if this room needed a roof to cover it, it was most likely made of a perishable material.

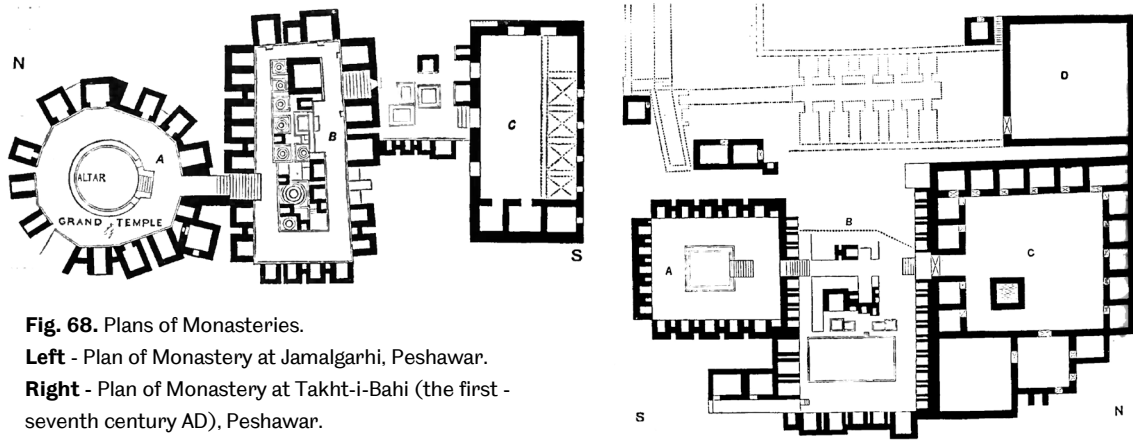


Fig. 68. Plans of Monasteries.

Left - Plan of Monastery at Jamalgarhi, Peshawar.

Right - Plan of Monastery at Takht-i-Bahi (the first - seventh century AD), Peshawar.

5.1.4 Tape Top Kalan Monastery of Haḍḍa

Another monastery is Tapa-e-Top-E-Kalan (TTK) in Gandhara in ancient India, known as one of the sixteen Mahajanapada of the ancient Indian subcontinent (or now called Haḍḍa in Afghanistan), which was flourishing when Fa-hsien arrived in AD 402 but had been destroyed when Xuanzang reached it in AD 632.⁷⁷⁰ According to their records, there used to be a colossal *stūpa* in which the remains of the Buddha's head bone were supposedly kept and which was guarded day and night. Although it is difficult to confirm the location of the large *stūpa* mentioned by Faxian and Xuanzang, this area was, at the very least, an ancient Buddhist site, and many Buddhist shrines were reported to have been built there. The Tape Top Kalan (TTK) Monastery, for instance, three units (P1, P2, and P3) were excavated at the site (Fig. 69). The Great *stūpa* court, whose ornamentation evoked the

⁷⁷⁰ Marylin Martin Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia, Volume 3: The Western Ch'in in Kansu in the Sixteen Kingdoms Period and Inter-relationships with the Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 433-34.
Lengyel Alfonz, 'Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia. Volume 1', *China Review International*, 7.2 (2000), 533-35

Buddhist heavens, stood in the centre of a courtyard (P1) bounded by seven square structures connected by an enclosure wall, each structure housing a *stūpa*.⁷⁷¹ The square *stūpa* court (P1) was enclosed on three sides by seven chapels believed to symbolise the seven Buddha, where this layout is regarded as meeting any circumambulatory needs.⁷⁷² Next to the *stūpa* courtyard (P1) are the *Samgharāma* (P2) (or *Vihāra*, dormitory cells) and the damaged cells (P3) that have not been excavated completely.⁷⁷³

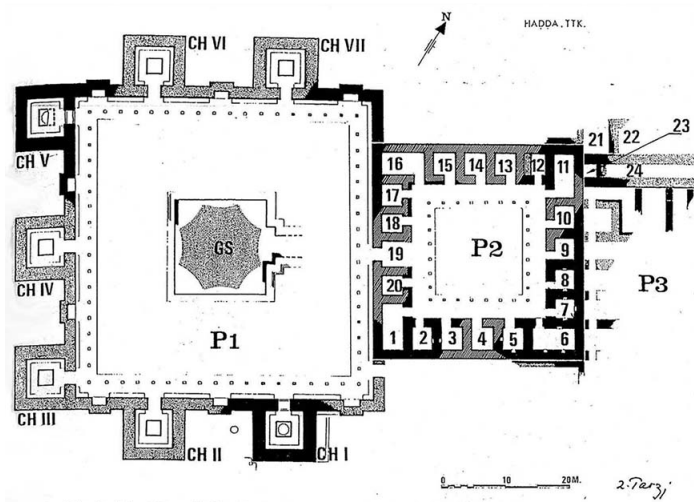


Fig. 69. Plan of Tapa Tope Kalān (TTK), Haḍḍa, Afghanistan.

In general, it seems that in the Gandhara period between the first century AD, when Buddhism first spread to mainland China, and the fifth century AD, when Buddhism reached its first flourishing phase of development in China, the Buddhist sites at Gandhara consisted of two courts: the Buddhists' dormitory court (or *Samgharāma*) and the *stūpa* court (or Buddha court). The two courtyards could also be attached by other functional courtyards, for example, the Buddhist cells court could be adjoined with other enclosed squares with the

⁷⁷¹ Haḍḍa Archeo Database, 'Tapa Tope Kalān', *Haḍḍa Archeo Database*, <<https://haddaarcheodb.alexandranleene.com/en/site/tapa-tope-kalan>> [accessed 17 July 2022].

⁷⁷² Marilyn Martin Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia, Volume 3: The Western Ch'in in Kansu in the Sixteen Kingdoms Period and Inter-relationships with the Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

⁷⁷³ Haḍḍa Archeo Database, 'Tapa Tope Kalān', *Haḍḍa Archeo Database*, <<https://haddaarcheodb.alexandranleene.com/en/site/tapa-tope-kalan>> [accessed 17 July 2022].

assembly room (or meeting room), refectory (or kitchen), storage room and latrine; the Buddha courtyard could also be connected to the block of donated images (or pantheon).

In the monastic courtyard, the *Samgharāma* court was the possible arrangement copied on non-native land. Firstly, the cells courtyard could fulfil the daily prayers or practices of the Buddhists as bas-reliefs and statues were made and placed near their resting area. The *Samgharāma* court thus allowed the Buddhists to perform their practices very conveniently. Moreover, the reasons for building *stūpas* are usually related to the legends of the pre-Buddha and his relics, or to King Aśoka's interaction with Buddhism, so it is difficult to replicate this type of monument on other ground when Buddhism spreads there. However, the *Samgharāma* courtyard, which has several foundations without a *stūpa* courtyard, can be more easily copied and built on other new land. A similar observation is that Buddhist monasteries across India in the first millennium AD follow a general format, namely 'square courtyards enclosed by monastic cells with a Buddha statue installed in a large cell facing the entrance.'⁷⁷⁴ Therefore, this general trend of Buddhist architecture in India since the first century AD could certainly be the monastic archetype of the Chinese monastic courtyard and have influenced the initial phase of the development of Buddhist monasteries in China.

⁷⁷⁴ Lars Fogelin, *An archaeological history of Indian Buddhism*, (Oxford: Oxford Handbooks, 2015), p. 163-64.

Moreover, the orientation of monuments and plants in the monastic landscape does not seem to have been consciously considered in Buddhist sites in the early period. In Gandhara, for example, all monuments were built on mountainous terrain, either on the slope or on the summit. The *Samgharāma* court and the *stūpa* court were built on the same terrace which was levelled by monks. However, the *Samgharāma* court has a different orientation to the *stūpa* court, even though both squares are very close to each other.

In addition, *stūpa* courts in different monasteries may also have different orientations, no matter how close the Buddhist sites are. The possible reason for this vague pursuit of architectural direction could be related to the dome shape of the *stūpa*; its smooth surface is even and has no ends. Therefore, it is hardly to define which direction of the point is more significant and how it can make sense at other Buddhist sites as well. Even though some *stūpas* were enveloped by axisymmetric geometry from below, it is also difficult to decide on which side the religious symbolism should be placed. Usually, the orientation of the *stūpa* was determined by its geographical features, such as the path down the hill and towards the main road or the village. As the most significant monument of the Buddhist site, the *stūpa* courtyard is therefore the most likely to not have a uniform orientation according to religious aspects.

Besides, plants in Buddhist sites are difficult to trace in these cases, and none of the survey reports mentioned trees, so it may not have been taken into account at these Buddhist sites. Some attached places, such as the dining hall and the

lecture hall, may not be components that constitute a pure ceremonial court, but these buildings could also host certain rituals and were certainly used on a daily basis by the Buddhists.

5.2 Early Chinese Buddhist monasteries in visible archives

There are few archaeological reports of early Buddhist sites in China. Instead, monuments made of stone or brick have survived, such as pagodas (or *stūpas*), rock-cut architecture, and pillars. The reason could be that most Buddha halls or multi-storey pagodas were built of wood, and this perishable material is not able to last for long historical periods, especially after the Buddhist persecutions. In addition, fragments of structures made of durable material can still be found at some sites, but it is hard to trace the complete layout of the associated monastery. The lack of investigation of the complete monastic plan makes it difficult to understand early monastic courtyards in China. However, based on the findings about the monastic courtyard in the early period in Gandhara, and in conjunction with historical paintings and historical texts depicting the scenario of a Buddhist monastery in China, the plan of the monasteries in China could be traced and the monastic courtyard of Foguang can be well understood.

5.2.1 Monasteries on Mount Wutai

On the north wall of Cave No. 323 in the Mogao Caves, probably built in the early Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 649), the mural shows two scenarios. The first shows a closed city in which a *stūpa* has been erected and two Buddhists are standing

in front of the city wall. As a landmark, the *stūpa* is the only highlighted element in this closed city (Fig. 70, left). Certainly, the *stūpa* symbolises that this area is a Buddhist sanctuary, and the *stūpa* monument is regarded as an essential element. By contrast, in the painting on the right, which describes a Chinese Buddhist site that is still under construction, a smaller pagoda with double eaves was erected on the side of a hall, and the hall is probably a Buddha Hall. The two monumental structures highlighted in this composition were surrounded on the sides by Buddhist cells from sides (Fig. 70, right). Although this pagoda was built as a deformation of the Indian *stūpa* at this Buddhist site, it was not placed in the centre which the Buddha Hall had occupied. The Buddhist cells seem to copy the arrangement discussed in the Gandhara cases. In addition, the rectangular depression in the centre of the courtyards in the Gandhara seems to have been replaced by the image hall at the Chinese site, and the element of the pagoda (or *stūpa*) was combined in the same enclosed court. This arrangement is similar to Foguang Monastery, where the ancient pagoda is next to the Buddha Hall, which was placed on an essential level (in the middle of a courtyard or on the highest level of a courtyard).



Fig. 70. Fresco on the north wall of Cave No. 323 at Mogao Caves.

Another well-known piece of evidence regarding the monasteries in the Mogao Caves is Cave 61, built during the Five Dynasties (AD 907 - AD 960), which vividly depicts the monasteries, worshipping adherents, nearby villages, and Five Peaks in the Buddhist pilgrimage centre - Mount Wutai. This fresco is probably the earliest painting mapped from the axonometric view and that recorded so many Buddhist monasteries in China around the mediaeval period. It is therefore worth rereading it to fathom the performance of the monasteries after the first flowering of Buddhism during the Northern Wei dynasty (AD 386 - AD 535). Meanwhile, to better understand the evolution and changes of monasteries at Mount Wutai, the archive of *'Mount Wutai Sheng Jing Quan Tu'* (around AD 1846) will be compared with the fresco in Cave 61, as the painting also draws Buddhist churches, the Five Peaks, Mountain streams on Mount Wutai and in Taihuai Tower from bird's-eye view but during the Qing dynasty.

Cave 61 is also known as the merit-making cave of Cao Yanlu and his Khotan wife (the third daughter of Saṃbhava). The pictorial representation of Mount Wutai painted on the west wall of Cave 61 reproduces the mountain scenery and pilgrimage spectacle from Zhengding in Hebei to Taiyuan in Shanxi.⁷⁷⁵ Since the architectural historian Liang Sicheng discovered the surviving Foguang Monastery in Shanxi Province in 1937, as a result of his great discovery in the mural of Mount Wutai in the Mogao Caves (Fig. 71 and Fig. 72), some works linked the Foguang Monastery in the Mogao Caves mural No.61 to the extant and tangible Foguang Monastery. Wei-Cheng Lin, for example, claimed that the courtyard of

⁷⁷⁵ Ji Hu and Mei Fu, 敦煌史话 [Dunhuang History], (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1997), p. 69.

Foguang Monastery is actually depicted in this magnificent painting.⁷⁷⁶ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li also believe that this mural is the only remaining visual information about the relic of Foguang Monastery found in history to date, and that the monastery drawn on the west wall of Cave No.61 is the same as in the real world, as they have the same orientation (from east to west) as the enclosure.⁷⁷⁷ Moreover, in Mo Xiao's critique of the mural of Mount Wutai in Cave 61, it is held that this drawing depicts the scenario of Foguang Monastery prior to the persecution of Buddhism by Huichang (AD 841 - AD 845); it was thus a schematic representation of the actual station.⁷⁷⁸ However, all these tacit understandings are flawed, even though the two monasteries actually bear the same name.



Fig. 71. Mogao Cave No.61 mural painting.



Fig. 72. Partially enlarged picture of the Great Foguang Monastery in Mount Wutai mural. The Mount Wutai mural (13 metres in length and 3.6 metres in width) painted on the west wall of Mogao Cave No.61. Due to respect for *Mañjuśrī* Buddhism, this picture depicts the Buddhists pilgrimage scenario in Mount Wutai known as the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* (Wenshu Daochang). There are five immense peak mountains aligned from left to right, and the Great Foguang Monastery sites with East Peak of Mount Wutai.

⁷⁷⁶ Wei-Cheng Lin, *Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), p. 51.

⁷⁷⁷ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, *五台山佛光寺* [Foguang Monastery of Mount Wutai], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010), p. 286.

Cultural Heritage Conservation Centre of Architectural Design & Research Institute of Tsinghua University and Beijing Tsinghua Urban & Design Institute, *佛光寺东大殿建筑勘察报告* [Survey and Research on the Main Hall of Fo Kuang Ssu], (Beijing: China Heritage Press, 2011), pp. 26-7.

⁷⁷⁸ Min Xiao, '佛光寺东大殿尺度规律探讨' [Measurement Regulation of the Main Hall of Foguangsi], *Architectural Journal*, 6 (2017), 37-42

The reasons for this are, firstly, that it is impossible to discern the exact orientation of a monastery from this artwork, as the locations of the five flat peaks of Mount Wutai do not correspond to their cardinal directions. Furthermore, the Great Foguang Monastery on the mural of Cave 61 of Mount Wutai is located near the eastern peak, while the real monastery is outside the range of the five peaks but adjacent to the southern peak. Therefore, it is difficult to say whether the Great Foguang Monastery drawn on this mural directly represents the historical remains in Dou village.

However, as this mural contains a large number of monasteries, it can still be used to explore the arrangement and ideology of monasteries in tenth-century China. By comparing it with the monasteries of Mount Wutai painted in the nineteenth century, the general changes in Buddhist art in relation to monuments in Buddhist sites can be determined. Since visual paintings do not usually reflect every detail of the monastery, they naturally reflect the monumental element that is most important in the monastery.

All monasteries in the fresco of Cave No.61 have only one court, the image hall court, which are also direct-access courts; other functional spaces such as Buddhist cells, kitchens, etc., are not included in the composition. In addition, all image halls are types of Chinese pavilion and placed in the middle of the courtyard. The lower floor space of these pavilions is the larger of the two floors. There are two main possibilities for this arrangement. It could be that there were Buddhist resting rooms and that they were indeed distributed along the sides of the

courtyards, but in order to simplify the theme of the drawing and to emphasise the main hall of the monastery, they were replaced by courtyard walls; it could be that there were no Buddhist resting at court or that they were in poor condition and not worthwhile depicting in the drawing. Nevertheless, whichever assumption is correct, at least the sacred image hall, like the *stūpa* court in Gandhara, is also surrounded by walls. Meanwhile, the image hall is certainly the only space for Chinese Buddhist practice, unlike the monasteries in Gandhara, the *Samgharāma* courtyard could accommodate multiple functions.

Moreover, the Indian *stūpas*, which were made of durable material, are not completely abandoned in this painting, but were rather shrunk to a much smaller size after various changes in their appearance and were not suitable for placement in the middle of a square courtyard. Accordingly, most of them were separated from the monastery court and were not part of the monastery's annexe. Instead, multi-storey wooden (or brick) pavilions with icons were erected in the centre of the courtyard. Alternatively, the disappearance of the *stūpa* court can be explained by the fact that there were numerous developments, and the multi-storey pavilions were the best architectural form for copies at various Buddhist sites compared to the rock-cut monuments and the free-standing stone or brick *stūpas*.

In addition, the multi-storey pavilion may have various functions for Buddhist use. For example, it not only served as a repository for Buddhist relics, but also allowed devotees to enter the interior. Moreover, this type of building has no

geographical restrictions such as rock-cut architecture. Therefore, it would be easier to copy it in different areas. To some extent, this separated icon hall, as the most important monument of a monastic court, also resembles an 'opening *stūpa*', which is made of wood and houses a statue inside.

This icon hall reformed on Chinese soil, whereby the Buddha *Stūpa* was moved into the Buddha Hall, certainly could not be completed in a very short time. The fresco depicting Mount Wutai also reflects this monumental reform. The Great Qingliang Monastery, for example (Fig. 73), is different from most other monasteries that have only one icon hall in their court; it has three multi-storey pavilion buildings in its enclosed court. Qingliang Monastery, as one of the most important former monasteries on Mount Wutai, was an important stopover on the south pilgrimage route connecting the capital with Mount Wutai in the Middle Ages (for more information on the south pilgrimage route, see the section on Mount Wutai).



Fig. 73. The fresco of Great Qingliang Monastery in Cave No. 61, Mogao Caves.

The cultural fusion between Buddhism and the Chinese tradition, which affected the design of the monasteries, becomes clearer when comparing the drawings of Mount Wutai across different historical periods. The *Mañjuśrī* Bodhisattva Monastery (also called The Real Body of the Great Sage *Mañjuśrī* Monastery) is located at the centre of the Cave 61 fresco, and which dominates all the monasteries facing it. In contrast, the same monastery (renamed Pusading - Bodhisattva Peak Monastery) was drawn into 'Mount Wutai Sheng Jing Quan' and integrated with many more Chinese elements. The progressive staircase from the Gate Hall (or portico) of the courtyard extending to the Screen Wall, compared to the performance in the fresco of No.61, intensifies the sacred experience on the way to the icon halls. The traditional Chinese architectural pieces, such as the Screen Wall and Memorial Archway, which were frequently used in the monasteries painted in Sheng Jing Quan Tu, are not found in the mural painting on Mount Wutai. A screen wall is a classic element in Chinese residential architecture, dating back to prehistoric times and usually placed in front of a Chinese residence or memorial building courtyard. It played a role in identifying the ownership of the courtyard and clarifying the function of the site. It can also give an indication of the reputation of the owner through the intricacy and detail of its carvings. From a feng shui perspective, the screen wall was also meant to ward off any bad luck from the family home. The memorial archway (or *Pai Fang*) placed on the second level of the Pusading Monastery usually has a similar function to the screen wall. The two elements used together in Buddhist monasteries not only strengthen the indigenisation of Buddhism, but also extend Buddhist pilgrimage routes starting from the screen wall rather than the Gate Hall

of a courtyard. However, the landscape combination, twin trees with the image hall, does not appear in either archive (Fig. 74).

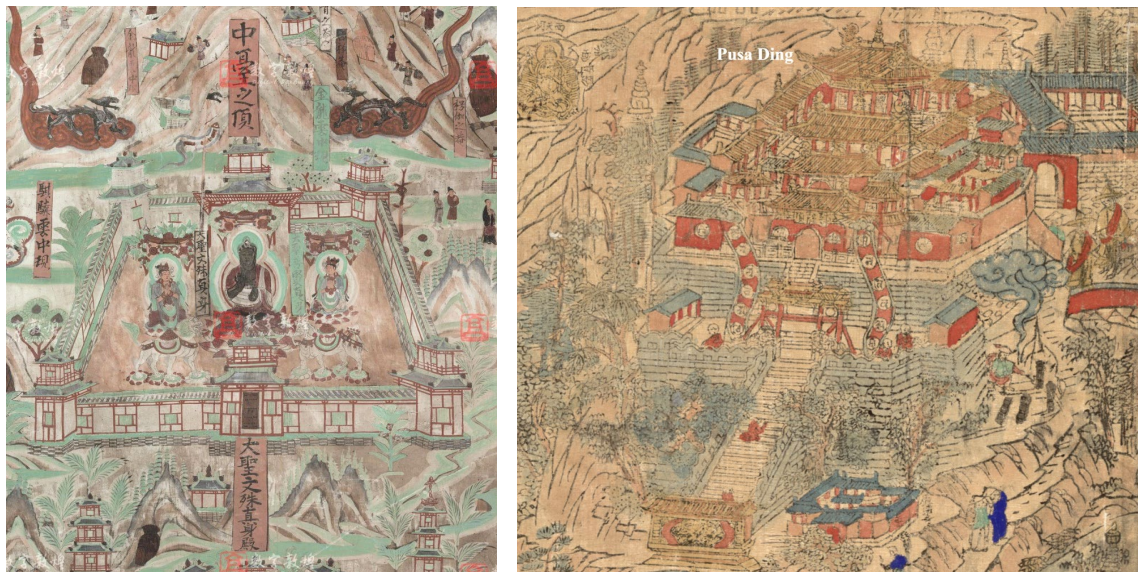


Fig. 74. The Real Body of the Great Sage *Mañjuśrī* Monastery (or Pusading Monastery).

Left - *Mañjuśrī* Bodhisattva Hall closing to the Central Peak in Mogao Cave No.61 mural painting.

Right - Pusading Monastery closing to the Central Peak in Mount Wutai Sheng Jing Quan Tu.

In addition, divisions of Buddhism differed with regard to the architectural performance in the painting. However, in Faxian and Xuanzang's texts, they both witnessed the divisions of Buddhism on the ways to India, but it is hard to find any differences in the associated monastic constructions. However, Buddhism's divisions indeed influenced the architectural performance in the nineteenth century's painting. The scene of the Vajrayāna Buddhism and the Zen Buddhism living in coexistence within one mountain was depicted graphically. Tibetan Buddhism of Vajrayāna monasteries (also called Huang Miao in Chinese) in this map have main halls that have been built with golden roofs; by contrast, the colour of the Zen Buddhism church (called Qing Miao in Chinese) is ultramarine. Based on the architectural decoration and the scale of buildings in the two types of Buddhist churches, it is apparently that Tibetan Buddhism was vigorously backed by imperial sponsorship, the Manchu rulers of Qing. The orientation of these

mountain monasteries also varies according to geographical distribution, and Pusading in the centre of the painting does not dominate the orientation of the other monasteries in the same way as in the fresco in Cave No. 61.

The Buddhist residential courtyard (or *Samgharāma* courtyard), which usually adjoins the courtyard to the image halls at the side, such as in the monasteries in Gandhara, also appears in Sheng Jing Quan Tu. Some larger monasteries have more than one court, such as Pusading, Xiantongsi, Luohousi, etc., which is an impressive difference from Cave No.61. These monasteries, which include the Buddha Hall, Buddhist living quarters, and other functional rooms, result in the diversity of monastery design we see.

The main structure of a monastery may be a *stūpa*, like the Tangyuansi; it may be a multi-storey tower (or pagoda), like the Lion Den Monastery; or it may be a small image hall, like most of the smaller monasteries in the drawing. The appearance of female Buddhist monasteries (or 'An' in Chinese) in the archive reinforces concerns about women's involvement on Mount Wutai and also confirms the exclusive monastery of female Buddhists. At the bottom of the painting there are a number of nunneries, such as Haihui An and Baitou An (for the difference between female and male sites, see the case study for Tiantai An). They were built at the foot of Mount Wutai from the viewpoint of the painting. However, 'An' was not included in fresco No. 61, although women played a major role in the construction of this cave. Therefore, monasteries certainly do not always adhere to the axial layout in a single courtyard, although this type of

arrangement attracts a lot of attention from many researchers. The monastic diversity and the monastic compound concept can be demonstrated through the historical texts of the monastic records, which are discussed in the following section.

5.2.2 Monasteries in South China

Accordingly, the preface to the historical records of Jingci Monastery⁷⁷⁹ (Fig. 75) was completed on 8 December 1615 (Chinese lunar calendar 万历乙卯佛成道日). The map probably shows the monastic layout in the seventeenth century at least. The highlighted part is the progressive route of the religious ceremonies court. The Mahavira Hall (main hall or the Buddha Hall), as the most important building in this courtyard, was erected in the front of the ceremonial yard, while the tomb pagoda square was placed at the end of the progressive routes (the back of the Buddha Hall). Some closed square courtyards adjoined on its right side (towards the east), and these units were arranged in such a way that they were connected without an apparently unified building axis. The priest's residential courtyard has direct access to the ceremonial site.

⁷⁷⁹ Jingci Monastery is located in the city of Hangzhou in Zhejiang province. It is one of the most famous monasteries in China and is on the southern shore of West Lake, opposite the Leifeng Pagoda. It was first built in AD 954 (during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period). The present buildings date mainly from the Ming and Qing dynasties (the 14th to 20th centuries AD).

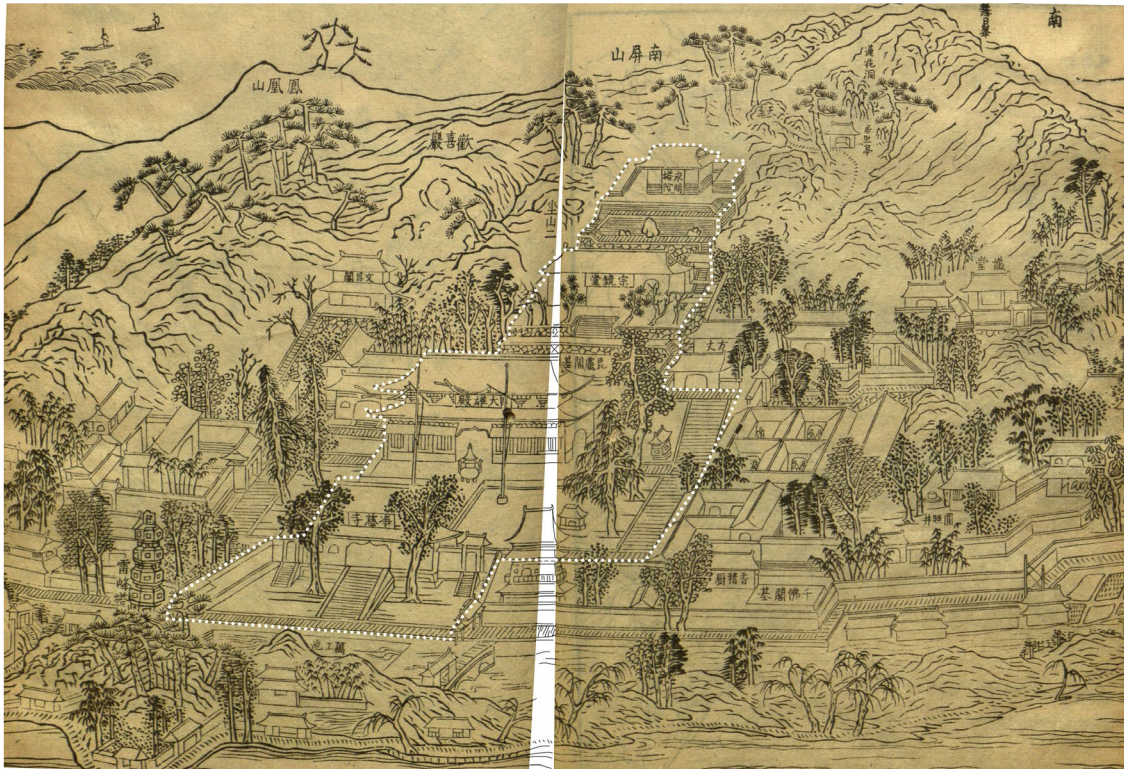


Fig. 75. Mountainous monastery map of Jingci in Nanshan.

The Buddha court, separated from the other courts, was stretched into a series of image halls leading upwards through successive steps. The earlier practice of the enclosed Buddha Court at Gandhara only being accessible via a circuitous route has been completely abandoned. Meanwhile, the Buddha Court at Jingci Monastery faces north, and other connected courts do not follow this directional pattern either. The entire courtyard follows the Chinese tradition of Xingsheng to choose a site surrounded by mountains on the sides and back but facing a river.

The monastic courtyard at Zhaoqing, built in AD 1764⁷⁸⁰ (Fig. 76) also shows a similar monastic arrangement to Jingci Monastery. The highlighted ceremonial

⁷⁸⁰ 大昭慶律寺志 [Historical Chronicle of Zhaoqing Monastery], wrote by Shuxu Wu (吳樹虛) in Qianlong twenty-ninth year (1764). Zhaoqing Monastery, opposite of Jingci Monastery, is located on the north bank of West Lake in Hangzhou. It was built in the first year of Shijin Tianfu (in AD 936) and rebuilt in succession.

court is the Buddha court, with three halls lined up on its axis. Zhaoqing Monastery is also a Vinaya monastery, so in its Buddha court, a Jietan⁷⁸¹ Hall was set at the back. The Mahavira Hall at Zhaoqing Monastery was placed at the centre between the Gate Hall and Jietan Hall. The Buddha court is isolated from the other enclosed squares from its side, such as residential cells, visitor room, storeroom, refectory, and water storage place, scripture room, etc. However, these rooms are compactly crowded together and not arranged on an axis like at the Buddha Court. The monastery even has two pagoda courtyards where the architectural remains are preserved. Due to a lack of information, it is difficult to confirm the orientation of the monastery, but it is located on a river course in a mountainous landscape.

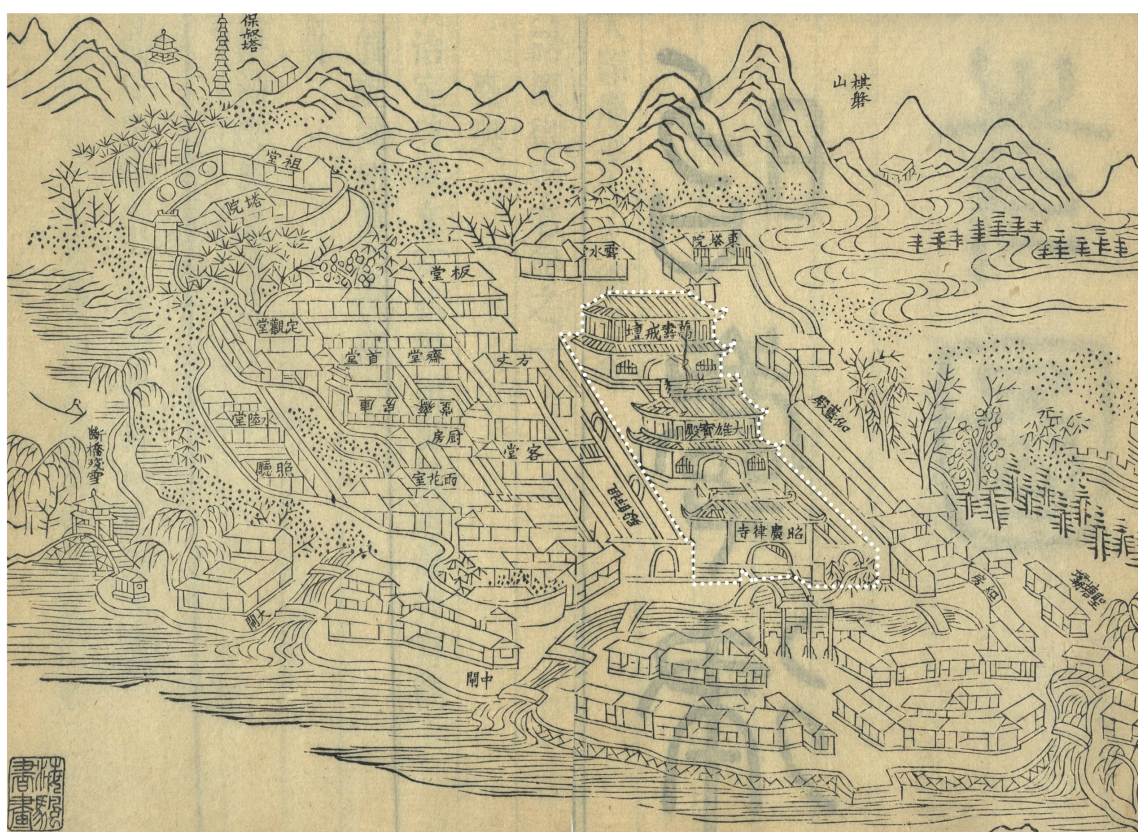


Fig. 76. Mountainous monastery map of Zhaoqing.

⁷⁸¹ Jietan is the most important monument of the Vinaya Monastery. More discussion about it is in the third part about Mount Wutai and the Zhunlin Monastery.

The Linggu Monastery⁷⁸² (Fig. 77) is known as one of the three most important monasteries of the Ming dynasty (AD 1368 - AD 1644). The Buddha court and the Buddhist court are also separate. Although there is no river flowing in front of the monastery, the monastery's ceremonial path begins at a pond used for releasing fish and turtles, and then leads to a screen wall built on the foundation of the destroyed King Kong Hall. Then, following in succession, are the Hall of the Four Heavenly Kings, normally housing the statues of *Maitreya* Buddha and the Four Heavenly Kings, the Amitābha Hall, built in 1381, the Hall of the Five Jinas, the Vairocana Hall, the Avalokitesvara Hall, and a multi-storey Pagoda.⁷⁸³ On the map it is openly accessible, that is, it has no wall enclosing the deity halls to form a closed Buddha court, but these halls were neatly arranged vertically, and the religious symbolism path is also very clear. In the Buddhist court, the dwelling houses, lecture hall and other ancillary houses were arranged to the side of the ceremonial courtyard.

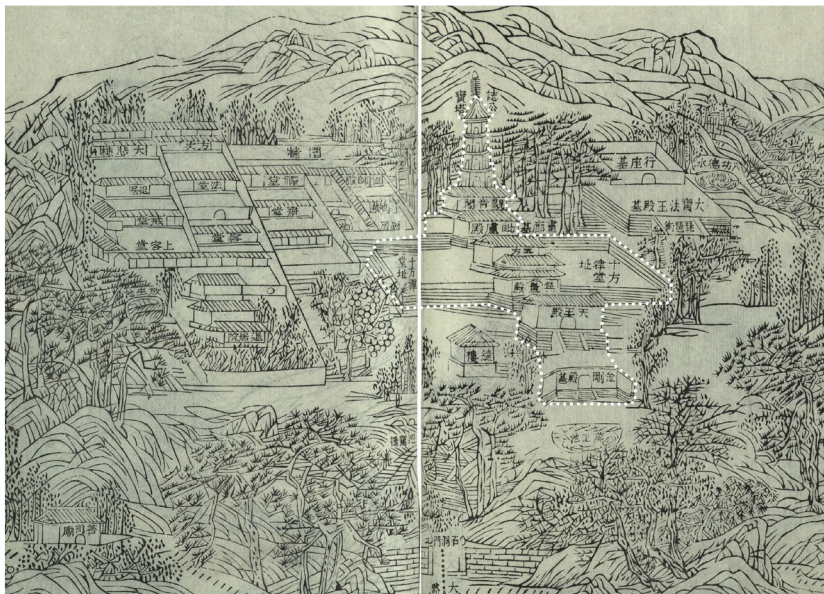


Fig. 77. Mountainous monastery map of Linggu.

⁷⁸² Linggu Monastery (靈谷禪林寺) lies to the south of Mount Zijin (紫金山) in the city of Nanjing. It was called Kaishan Si (開善寺) when it was built in the Southern dynasty (AD 420 - AD 589). In the forty-sixth year of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing dynasty (1707), the emperor visited the site and awarded it the plaque 'Linggu Zen Forest (靈谷禪林)', meaning that the Zen site has a heavenly geographical environment.

⁷⁸³ 天王殿 [Four Heavenly Kings Hall], 彌勒佛 [Maitreya Buddha], 五臺殿 [Amitābha Hall], 五方佛殿 [Five Jinas Hall], 毗盧殿 [Vairocana Hall], 觀音閣 [Avalokitesvara Hall] and 誥公寶塔 [Multi-storey Pagoda].

By studying the remains of monasteries in Gandhara (the first - fifth century AD) and the depiction of monastic courtyards in Chinese Buddhist paintings (the tenth - nineteenth century AD), the findings of this research offer insights into enclosed monastic courts. Enclosed courtyards were widespread in the monastic arrangement not only in China but also in worldwide, and which can generally be divided into two types: the Buddha court and the Buddhist court. However, the two types of enclosed courtyards differed in their specific design from country to country. The Buddha court (or called the *stūpa* court in early Buddhism) in India was usually surrounded by a fence or niche structure, and this separate courtyard bordered the *Samgharāma* square (also called dormitory cells) and sometimes the pantheon square; in China, the courts were also enclosed and separated from other Buddhist courts. However, their pilgrimage routes are different. The *stūpa* courts in the Indian Buddhist sites have a circuitous route, but as the image halls in the Buddha court of the Chinese Buddhist sites are vertically connected, that is, there is a long linear return route. The circumambulation path was gradually shifted into the image hall.

Furthermore, the higher square base become a ubiquitous adoption for erecting the Buddha's house above. In the early days of *stūpa* courts in India, for example, *stūpas* were erected on a round base; later, *stūpas* on a square base became common.⁷⁸⁴ When *stūpa* were replaced by image halls, the form of higher base to erect the image hall continued to be used. All the Buddha courts in

⁷⁸⁴ Kurt A. Behrendt, *The Buddhist Architecture of Gandhāra*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 51.

monasteries of Cave No. 61 of the Mogao Caves, even the cases discussed in historical texts, were placed in a square base.

In Buddhist communities, enclosure structures could be chapels made of wood, stone, or bricks, or simple fences, which can be traced in ancient India; therefore, closed Buddhist sites could possibly be a general trend worldwide. This adaption might not only aim to separate the secular world from the pure religious environment but also provide appropriate space for circumambulatory practise as the enclosure structures are like a site boundary. In general, all these continuous creative recontextualisations of monastic development on Chinese soil reflect the long and slow process of architectural change to meet the needs and perceptions of the Chinese. However, the form in monastic construction, which could be commonly used in various social texts, should be a clear demarcation between the sacred court and the Buddhists' living quarters. Based on these demonstrations, the following sections reinterpret three surviving Chinese monasteries, including the Foguang Monastery, all built in mediaeval China.

5.2.3 Old surviving monasteries in China ⁷⁸⁵

Few monastic buildings have survived to the present day as the majority of monastic halls were built using perishable materials. It is generally thought that, with the exception of Foguang Monastery, there are still three old timber

⁷⁸⁵ Most contents of this section were published in the Journal of *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10.1 (2023), with the title 'Rethinking the history of Buddhism through female Buddhist heritage investigation', (<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2023.2198328>). Please see full text in Appendix E.

buildings that date back to the medieval period of China: the Buddha Hall of Nanchan Monastery, built in AD 872; the Buddha Hall of Tiantai An, built in AD 907; and the main hall of the Five Dragon Monastery, built in AD 831.⁷⁸⁶ The Five Dragon Monastery is dedicated to the worship and veneration of a water god called King Guangren, who dates back to Chinese folk beliefs,⁷⁸⁷ and it is not a Buddhist site, so the courtyard will not be covered in this study. However, the following section will compare and evaluate the other three monastic cases that have survived as legacies of the Tang dynasty.

Firstly, Nanchan Monastery is located in Lijiazhuang, Wutai County, Shanxi Province, around 50 kilometres southwest of Foguang Monastery. The entire courtyard stands on a high loess plateau with gullies and sparse vegetation. The monastery consists of two courts, the square Buddha court and the Buddhist residential court. In the Buddha court, the Buddha Hall faces south, and is 11.6 m wide and 9.9 m deep. Fourteen painted sculptures from the Tang dynasty stand on the Buddhist altar in the hall, whereas previously there were seventeen sculptures, two of which are missing.⁷⁸⁸ The size of these statues is colossal and exquisite. To the south of the Buddha court is the gate hall in the centre and two deity halls on the sides. In addition, the trees were planted in pairs, although one tree has disappeared, the space and the parterre of trees is still visible. These arrangements are similar to the Buddha court in Foguang Monastery. The

⁷⁸⁶ Laiying Niu, '芮城广仁王庙《龙泉记》考释' [A Textual Research on Story of the Dragon Spring at Guangrenwang Monastery in Ruicheng], *Journal of National Museum of China*, 10 (2021), 61-71

⁷⁸⁷ Tiantian Li, '地方古建保护新实践 - 以山西广仁王庙为例' [New practice of preservation the architectural heritage - taking the Guangren King Monastery in Shanxi as an example], *Journal of Chinese Antiquity*, 6 (2019), 51-6

⁷⁸⁸ Rong Zhang and others, '南禅寺大殿重建背景、材分营造制度分析及建筑像设空间布局研究' [Historical Context of Reconstruction, Modular Design System, and Statue Arrangement of Nanchansi Main Hall], *Journal of Architecture History*, 2 (2022), 5-23

Buddhists court of Nanchan Monastery adjoins the Buddha Hall court from its eastern side and has Buddhist dormitories on one side and the Hades Hall in the corner (Fig. 78 and Fig. 79).



Fig. 78. The photo of Nanchan Monastery in 2021.



Fig. 79. The Buddha Hall at Nanchan Monastery.

In addition, the Tiantai An is a rare and valuable women's monastery from the Tang dynasty that has been preserved to this day. However, it has never been interpreted as a women's monastery; too much information has been gained from comparing its wooden construction details with other ancient buildings for that. Tiantai An, built after the late Tang dynasty and possessing one of the oldest wooden Buddha structures in China, embodies the most common female Buddhist in China's hierarchical society. In Pali, *bhikkhuni* in Theravada Buddhism translates as nun, female, fully ordained Buddhists. Accordingly, Jing Jian, the first *bhikkhuni* (an ordained female monastic) in China built the first female Buddhist community and monastery in Luoyang city of the Northern Wei dynasty, fourth century.⁷⁸⁹

With Buddhism's popularity in the Middle Ages, 5358 monasteries of high rank and built in accordance with strict building regulations called 'si' were directly monopolised and financially supported by the ruling family.⁷⁹⁰ Smaller scale and remote Buddhist sites called Lan Ruo were used by the rural population for pilgrimage, but these kinds of monasteries were deemed illegal and so were eradicated by the authorities during the early period.⁷⁹¹ The term 'An' (in Chinese 庵) initially referred to a round and small thatched hut in prehistoric China.⁷⁹² When Buddhism's popularity grew in China, the sites of female Buddhists

⁷⁸⁹ Chengzong Zhang, '魏晋南北朝妇女的宗教信仰' [Women's Religious Beliefs within the Period of Wei, Jin and the Southern and Northern Dynasties], *Journal of Nantong University (Social Sciences Edition)*, 22.2 (2006), 91-7
Yan Wu, 两晋南北朝与唐代比丘尼僧团比较研究 [Comparative Study of Bhikuni Sangha in Jin dynasty, the Southern and Northern dynasty and Tang dynasty], (master's thesis, Renmin University of China, 2005).

⁷⁹⁰ Gong Zhang, 汉唐佛寺文化史 第二卷 [Buddhist Temple Culture History from Han dynasty to Tang dynasty], Vol. 2 (Beijing: Social Sciences Press, 1997).

⁷⁹¹ Gong Zhang, (1997).

⁷⁹² Chengzong Zhang, (2006), pp. 91-7; Yan Wu, (2005),

(nunneries) was likely adopted from the word 'An', which formally referred to a prehistoric small round thatched hut.⁷⁹³

It is difficult to distinguish nunneries from monastic monasteries by the name of the temples alone because both monks and nuns were allowed to practice in a monastery during the tenth century in Tibet.⁷⁹⁴ There is also no clear record of how Buddhist communities were classified or, historically, when women began to establish female Buddhist communities.

Little is known about when exactly the 'An' became an exclusive title for female Buddhist sites due to a lack of historical records, though it is generally believed that there were two operating modes of monasteries in ancient China, those run by patrons (Chinese: 檀越施营) and those run by Buddhists themselves (Chinese: 释门自营).⁷⁹⁵ As a result of this lack of historical information, it is difficult to say whether and how the two types of monasteries differed in their construction, and even what the initial motivation for the construction of the Tiantai An actually was.⁷⁹⁶ Located in a rural hamlet, Wangqu village, Ping Shun County, Shanxi Province, the Tiantai An, erected on a four-metre-high platform, is one of China's most precious architectural and Buddhist heritage sites.⁷⁹⁷ The courtyard covers an area of approximately 450 square metres.⁷⁹⁸ Its initial construction date is

⁷⁹³ Chengzong Zhang, (2006), pp. 91-7; Yan Wu, (2005).

⁷⁹⁴ Gong Zhang, 汉唐佛寺文化史 第二卷 [Buddhist Temple Culture History from Han dynasty to Tang dynasty], Vol. 2 (Beijing: Social Sciences Press, 1997).

⁷⁹⁵ Gong Zhang, (1997), pp. 91-7.

⁷⁹⁶ Xiaolu Wang, 'Rethinking the history of Buddhism through female Buddhist heritage investigation.' *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10.1 (2023), 1-13 (p. 9).

⁷⁹⁷ Xiaolu Wang, (2023), p. 9.

⁷⁹⁸ Weidong Li, '天台庵弥陀殿' [Maitreya Hall in Tian Tai An], in 中国古建筑行业年鉴 [China Ancient Architecture Industry Yearbook] ed. by Editorial Board of China Ancient Architecture Industry Yearbook (Beijing: China Building Materials Press, 2016), pp. 270-74.

highly controversial due to a lack of associated historical data, with some academics insisting that it is a surviving relic dating back to the Tang dynasty. Through comparing the timber structure framework typology, dimensions, and the sophisticated interlocking joints with other Tang relics, in particular the Nanchan Monastery and Foguang Monastery, some scholars strongly suggest that it is a relic of the late Tang dynasty.⁷⁹⁹ However, some building elements, such as the interlocking roof and the painted art on wood, are not regarded as characteristic of the architectural typology of the Tang dynasty,⁸⁰⁰ but rather that of the architectural style of the Jin dynasty. Irrespective of whether the exact initial building time was during the medieval period or later, interpretation based on the perspectives of Buddhist nuns was neglected, although many female adherents and female providers undoubtedly played a vital role in developing Buddhist's holy sites.⁸⁰¹

It is without doubt that in traditional Chinese courtyards the main entrance was at the outset of the main ceremonial route and used to be placed on the layout's central axis.⁸⁰² The courtyard's entrance runs through a continuous outer wall, transitioning from a public space to one designated for a particular purpose. Connecting the passageway also helps the ceremonial ritual transition from the beginning gate passing by inner courts, then up into the final main hall.

⁷⁹⁹ Chunbo Wang, '山西平顺晚唐建筑天台庵' [The Building of Tiantai An in the Late Tang dynasty in Pingshun County, Shanxi Province], *Cultural Relics*, 6 (1993), 34-43
Cultural Heritage Conservation Centre of Architectural Design & Research Institute of Tsinghua University and Beijing Tsinghua Urban & Design Institute, 佛光寺东大殿建筑勘察报告 [Survey and Research on the Main Hall of Fo Kuang Ssu], (Beijing: China Heritage Press, 2011), p. 8.

⁸⁰⁰ Zhenjiang Xu, '平顺天台庵正殿' [The main hall of Tiantai An], *Traditional Chinese Architecture and Gardens*, 3 (1989), 51-2

⁸⁰¹ Xiaolu Wang, (2023), p. 9.

⁸⁰² Xiaolu Wang, (2023), p. 9.

This traditional layout tradition is typical of all Buddhist sites. At Foguang Monastery, for instance, the ceremonial route begins from the screen wall, processes through the inner courts on an east-west axis, and ascends 34 brick stairs (17.66 metres high), finally reaching the higher platform of the Buddha Hall. Moreover, Nanchan Monastery, as the oldest surviving Tang architecture in the country, has a similar building volume and architectural rank as the Tiantai An. Although Nanchan Monastery's main entrance lies opposite the Buddha Hall, it also has another ancillary court on the east of the hall, which serves as the current entry point for visitors. The original religious route connecting the entrance and the main Buddha Hall is still clearly visible (Fig. 80, left and right).⁸⁰³

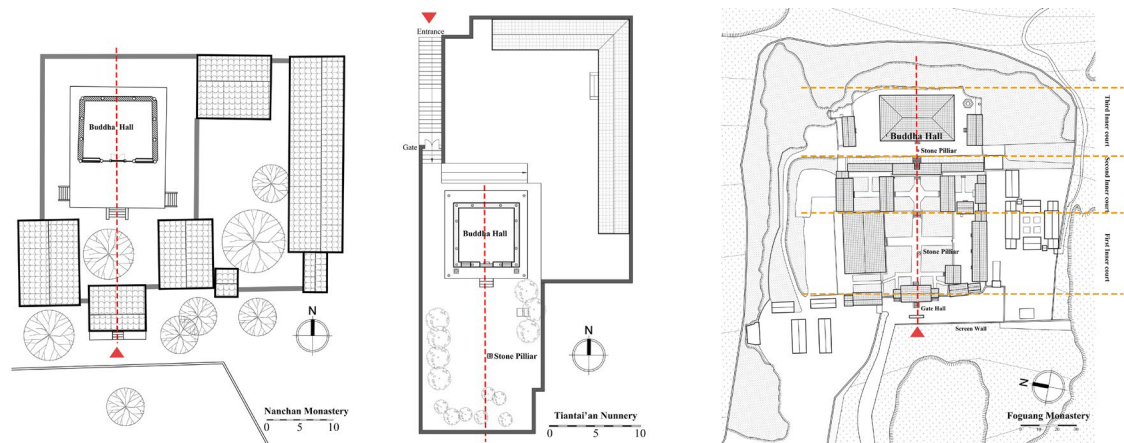


Fig. 80. The courtyards of Nanchan Monastery (**left**), Tiantai An (**middle**), and Foguang Monastery (**right**).

However, as a purely female medieval-period Buddhist site, the Tiantai An breaks the layout tradition (Fig. 81, middle). Its entrance is placed on the back wall of the Buddha Hall rather than at the front and, furthermore, does not follow the central south–north axis symmetrical framing layout. The four-metre-high multilateral square base lifts up the Buddha Hall. A retaining stonewall encircles this raised foundation. In this monastic design, there is no traditional procession entry to the south edge of the Buddha Hall terrace. In addition, of the only two

⁸⁰³ Xiaolu Wang, (2023), pp. 9-11.

investigative reports on the preservation and restoration of Tiantai An heritage relics,⁸⁰⁴ neither made mention of any past maintenance work ever being carried out on the high platform or the retaining stonewall. Therefore, it is likely that the current entry is in keeping with its initial location. An entrance set behind the main hall is unconventional in Chinese monastic sites, possibly due to the influence of the patriarchal feudal society. Although women were considered of lower status in Buddhism, there is no Buddhist creed that makes a distinction between women and men in the construction of architectural monuments.

Furthermore, it is rare to find such a case choosing an uncommon approach to create the ritual passage to reach the Buddha. The Buddha Hall is placed on a three-metre-high terrace, while the entrance proceeding the Buddha was set at the rear. As a result of recent maintenance work, the original staircase has been covered with modern slates but has most likely retained its original condition. As the difference in height between the lower level and the Buddha Terrace is only 3 metres (Fig. 81), the use of three resting landings to connect the two levels is not necessary for normal users. Therefore, this unusual form of staircase was probably adapted to the particular needs of the population, especially women in ancient China, who had to bind their feet, making them inconvenient to move.

⁸⁰⁴ In 1989, Built a new fence stone wall railings and a new door by Pingshun County Cultural Relics Museum, Shanxi Province, published in *Changzhi Yearbook*, p. 618.
In 2018, Protection and Repair Project of Tiantai An, Project Managers: Weidong Li and Cultural Relics Tourism Development Centre of Pingshun County, Shanxi Province, published in *中国古建筑行业年鉴* [China Ancient Architecture Industry Yearbook], ed. by Editorial Board of China Ancient Architecture Industry Yearbook (Beijing: China Building Materials Press, 2016), pp. 270-74.



Fig. 81. Three landings in the procession staircase of the Buddha Hall in Tiantai An.

Conversely, in Foguang Monastery, the steep stairs that front the Buddha Hall have 34 brick steps (17.66 metres high) without any landings (Fig. 82). Thereby, Tiantai An's unusual design is most likely due to concerns about women with bound feet. This Chinese custom was not uncommon prior to the seventeenth century and is also another piece of tangible evidence that the purely female Buddhist site adapted its suitable space to cater to female characteristics and against patriarchal religious standards, especially in top-down construction.

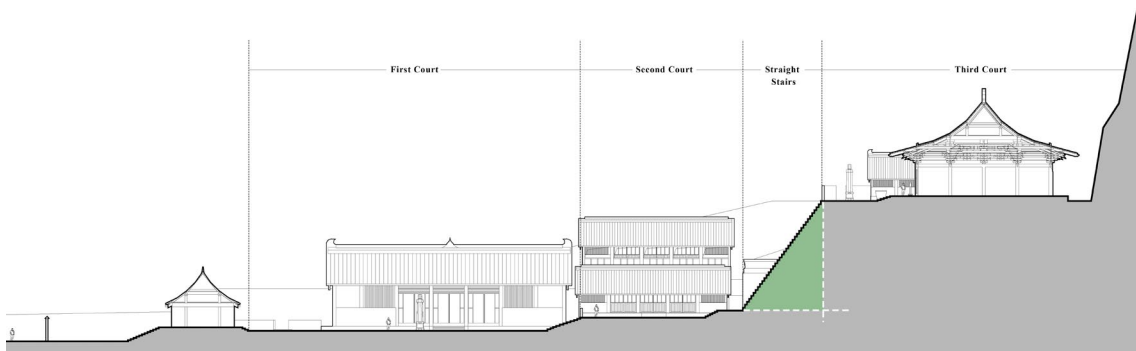


Fig. 82. Straight stairs up to the Buddha Hall of Foguang Monastery.

Since the restoration of the Buddha Hall at Tiantai An, the four wooden pillars under each corner of the eaves have been newly fitted to support the heavy roof but did not exist in the original plan (Fig. 83). Compared with the Buddha Hall at Nanchan Monastery, both have 12 columns supporting a sophisticated grid roof, whilst the distance between two columns of Tiantai An is smaller. The former plane is a rectangle, while the latter is almost a square. The curved roof at Tiantai

An, which was common in ancient wooden buildings in southern China, was used in the north. This unusual roof not only enhances the diversity of the curved aesthetics of architecture in northern China but also represents the distinctive feature of Tiantai An as a women's monastery. Since Buddhism became popular among women, they were able to challenge conservative views, for example, propose non-marriage, and they could even accept cremation after death rather than be given a proper burial. These dramatic changes amongst female Buddhists were substantial and challenged the patriarchal authority and Chinese society's then feudal system. Thereby, it is not difficult to understand the reason gender difference was manifest in Buddhist heritage. This group challenged patriarchal society and the traditional Buddhist teachings of abstinence from marriage and having children, and choosing cremation after death. Among these women, the Buddhist empresses, as the highest representatives of equality and freedom, provided the greatest inspiration. The erection of Buddhist monuments expressed the embodiment of the female inner world; however, these were not faithfully recorded in historical texts, and not even recognised as a necessary architectural typology by modern society.

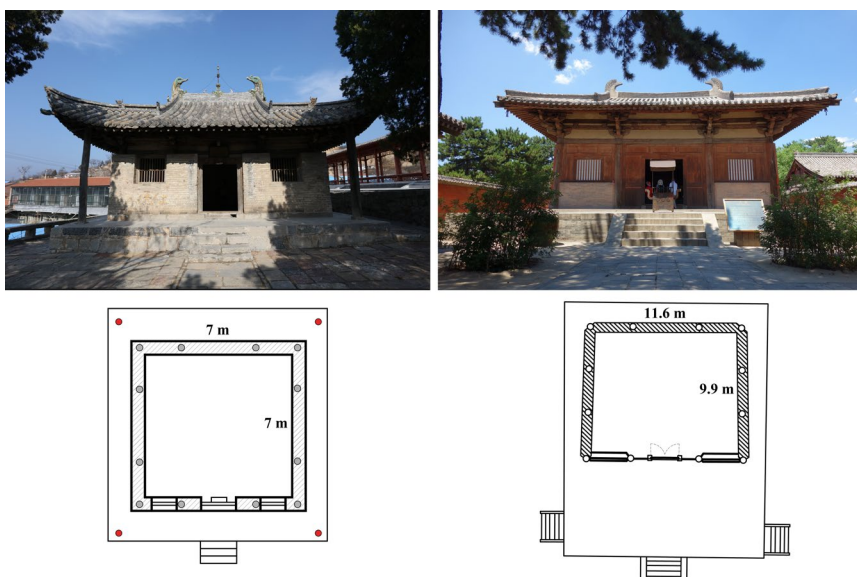


Fig. 83. The Buddha Hall of Tiantai An, with floor plan (left); the Buddha Hall of Nanchan Monastery, with floor plan (right).

Depending on their site locations, the three monasteries would have different functions for use. The Buddha Hall of Foguang Monastery (Fig. 84) is a higher-level wooden building than the other two monasteries, either because of the inner hall and courtyard size or the complexity of the dougong. It is located away from a residential area but used to play an essential role in connecting pilgrims on their way to Mount Wutai (as shown and discussed in Part Three). In contrast, Nanchan Monastery and Tiantai An are near residential areas and might play a vital role in local use. Meanwhile, the circumambulation path and pilgrimage passage of Foguang Monastery are apparently much longer than the other two monasteries.

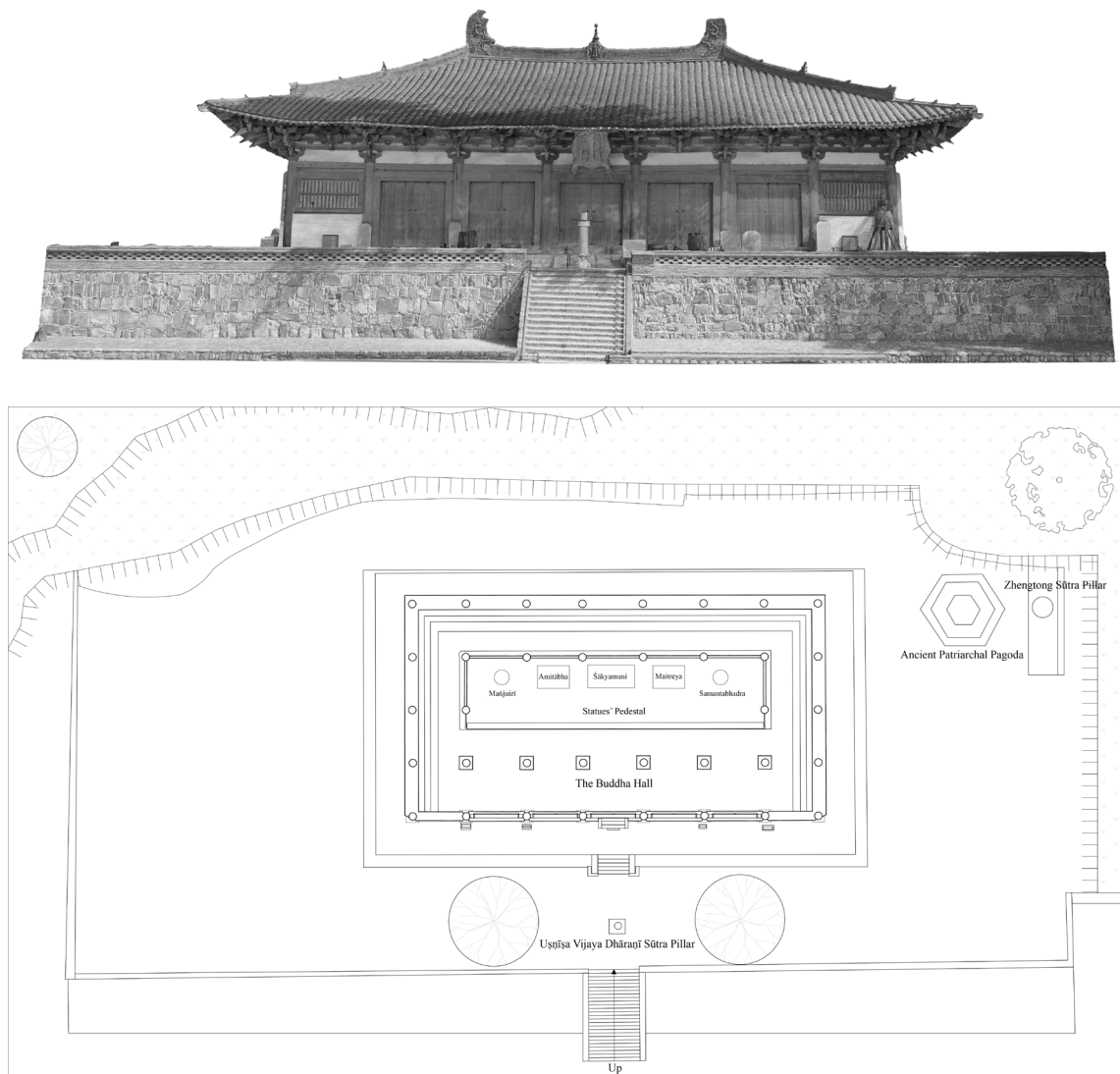


Fig. 84. The facade and plan of the Buddha Hall, Foguang Monastery.

5.3 The hypothesis of Foguang Monastery with gullies

There are some bases of knowledge and evidence to hypothesise about the Foguang Monastery regarding the building possibilities during certain historical periods. First of all, the finding of the two massive gullies indicates the possible direction in which the Buddha court of Foguang Monastery could be extended – stretching on an east-west axis. In addition, previous studies of the monasteries not only offer a religious architecture context to better understand the monastic courtyard of Foguang Monastery, but also provide the basis for hypotheses and the evaluation of the construction possibilities of Foguang Monastery. In addition, the historical contexts that contain a description of Foguang Monastery also provide the basis for the following assumption. For example, *Ancient Record of Mount Qingliang*, *Guang Qing Liang Biography*, *Qingling Shan Zhi*, *New Mount Wutai Zhi*, *The Biography of Eminent Monks of the Song dynasty*. To test the rationality of the presumed reconstructions, the plans of the monastic sites studied in Gandhāra were consulted. The discussion of the Sinicisation of the monastic components, the murals from the Mogao Caves and the historical texts, which are a rich visible source of monastic plans, will help to link the monastic origins of each hypothesis. Finally, the ancient surviving monasteries such as the Nanchan Monastery and the Tiantai An, built during the same historic period, will help to substantiate the possibility of the construction of Foguang Monastery. The various relics from the different periods of Foguang Monastery are the important evidence for the classification of the presumed construction. These building relics are therefore used as the important elements for the conception of the hypothesis's propositions.

There are few records of the construction and restoration of Foguang Monastery (for a brief history of Foguang Monastery, see Appendix A). In general, the Monastery was built four times: the original construction by Emperor Xiaowen in AD 471 to AD 499, but which was burnt down during the nationwide persecution of Buddhism; in the second phase, a new *Maitreya* Buddha Hall was built by Faxian in AD 806 to AD 824, which was also destroyed due to the persecution of Buddhism. During the third phase, Yuancheng rebuilt the Buddha Hall between AD 849 and AD 857,⁸⁰⁵ which has survived to the present day. This hall is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the country, and also the oldest surface palace structure in China at present, with most of the original structural components remaining in place.⁸⁰⁶ During the fourth phase, three new side halls were built during the Jin dynasty. Therefore, the following hypothetical reconstruction refers to these four phases.

According to text of the *Ancient Record of Mount Qingliang*, written by Shramana Hui Xiang (AD 680), '*Foguang Hill is near the West Peak, Foguang Monastery is located down the Foguang Hill, which was initially built by Emperor Xiaowen. It has three Buddhist halls and around ten Buddhist dormitories. There is also a spring that comes out of the plants*' (The corresponding Chinese text is: '台西有佛光山 下有佛光寺 孝文所立 有佛堂三间 僧室十余间 尊仪肃穆 林泉清茂').

⁸⁰⁵ Sicheng Liang, '记五台山佛光寺的建筑 - 荟萃在一寺的魏、齐、唐、宋的四个孤例: 荟萃在一殿的唐代四种艺术' [Recording the Buildings of the Foguang Monastery in Mount Wutai], *Cultural Relics*, Z1 (1953), 76-121 (p. 86). Cultural Heritage Conservation Centre of Architectural Design & Research Institute of Tsinghua University and Beijing Tsinghua Urban & Design Institute, 佛光寺东大殿建筑勘察报告 [Survey and Research on the Main Hall of Fo Kuang Ssu], (Beijing: China Heritage Press, 2011), p. 6.

⁸⁰⁶ Cultural Heritage Conservation Centre of Architectural Design & Research Institute of Tsinghua University and Beijing Tsinghua Urban & Design Institute, 佛光寺东大殿建筑勘察报告 [Survey and Research on the Main Hall of Fo Kuang Ssu], (Beijing: China Heritage Press, 2011), p. 204.

This is probably the earliest available description of the buildings of Foguang Monastery. However, the text contains a vague description of the Buddhist Hall, whether it was a three-units hall or whether there were three halls in Foguang Monastery. Nevertheless, it is possible to infer which of the two descriptions is more accurate, based on earlier discussions of Buddhist temples. The ground plan of Foguang Monastery in the text dates from before AD 574, when it was destroyed by the Buddhist persecutions. Before the time of the persecutions, Buddhism was merely in its first phase of development and rock-cut architecture was popular under the influence of Gandhara art, and direct access to the Buddha's court was common at Buddhist sites. The elongated arrangement of the Buddha court, with the image halls arranged in a row, was yet to become popular in the sixth century, but was common in many cases between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Therefore, one can infer that the text should mean that there was one Buddhist Hall with three units; instead, there are three halls in Foguang Monastery.

The three-unit Buddha Hall has a possible arrangement based on the square base on the site and the understanding of monastic courtyards discussed in India and in China. The hall could stand on the highest level as a sacred court, and the high base was the boundary between the Buddha court and the Buddhists' dwelling court. The Buddhist residential quarter would be built next to this foundation from above but near the south side; however, it would be impossible to set the Buddhist quarter at the centre of the second lower terrace. The reason for this is that in Buddhist sites in both India and China, the sacred court usually

has a direct entrance that allows devotees to walk in directly. It is therefore impossible for a Buddhist dormitory courtyard standing in front of the Buddha terrace to interfere with the path of worship from the entrance gate. In addition, there is a well on the south side of the Foguang compound. Therefore, the Buddhist residential quarter should be on the south side, the lower terrace of the hall courtyard, and the main entrance to the Buddha court is on the space for the stairs. For the ancient pagoda, as an elite monk's grave tower who practiced at the site, his grave was placed in the Buddha court, which is feasible, especially, *stūpa* court during the period of Gandhara also impacted the Chinese pagoda period.

After the collapse in AD 574, Foguang Monastery was also rebuilt, but there are no records of this, so it is difficult to determine its layout after the destruction. However, three texts report the rebuilding of the monastery during the Tang dynasty. From the biographical information of the elite monk Faxing, who was responsible for the project, it can be concluded that the construction of the building must have taken place from AD 806 - AD 824.⁸⁰⁷ The problem, however, is that two texts describing the construction by Faxing differ in the details pertaining to the Buddha Hall. In *The Biography of Eminent Monks of the Song dynasty*, written by Shi Zanning in AD 988, Monk Faxing is the person who led the construction project to build a seven-unit, three-story *Maitreya* Buddha Hall, ninety-five feet high (around 32 metres) at Foguang Monastery. In contrast, in the *Guang Qing Liang Biography*, written by Shi Yanyi in AD 1060, the Buddha has nine

⁸⁰⁷ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, 五台山佛光寺 [Foguang Monastery of Mount Wutai], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010), p. 52.

units and three floors. According to the historical dates these texts were compiled, a seven-unit, three-story Buddha Hall is more plausible. A nine-unit *Maitreya* Buddha Hall was not allowed to be used by anyone other than the Royal line, as nine represents the number exclusive to the emperor in hierarchical feudal China. To build a hall of this magnitude, the foundation would of course have to be very large and solid. The north-south direction of the Foguang Monastery is closed because of the two gullies, and the east-west direction is sloped. The most solid foundation that currently existed would be the only possible level for this historical period.

In a hypothetical reconstruction of Foguang Monastery during the Faxing construction period, it is likely that the *Maitreya* Buddha Hall was still on the highest platform, and the current twin trees in front of the Buddha Hall would cater the popularity of *Maitreya* faith, although the trees should be replaced. The north wall fresco of Mogao Cave No. 25 (AD 713 - AD 766) depicts the *Maitreya* faith, where the *Maitreya* Buddha with many other deities form the notion about the *Maitreya* faith picture. Another trend in the practice of the *Maitreya* faith is that the scale of the gods is much greater than that of mortals. The painting also shows that the buildings in which the gods live rise above a platform supported by columns on the bottom. Therefore, this colossal hall's appearance in historical texts would be hold in the highest platform of Foguang Monastery.

For the arrangement inside the hall, in the Mogao documents the Trikāya Buddha were housed inside, and *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* and Samantabhadra were

on the left and right of the three Buddha.⁸⁰⁸ As for the Buddhist residential court, this research still indicates that this should be situation on the lower platform of the Buddha court. This is because there are no archaeological reports of ruins on the second level of Foguang, where a number of residential buildings are located. Moreover, the seven *kaijian* (Chinese: 开间, seven *puzuo*, Chinese: 七铺作), three-storey *Maitreya* Buddha Hall may very well occupy the highest terrace, as the present Buddha Hall is also a seven-limbed wooden structure from the end of the Tang dynasty, so both most likely have the same floor area.

Moreover, the area of the second platform is smaller than the area of the orthographic projection of the hall's roof. Unfortunately, the *Maitreya* Buddha Hall at Foguang Monastery was damaged very soon after its construction because of the Huichang Persecution of Buddhism (AD 841 - AD 845).⁸⁰⁹ Thereafter, the most important construction works at Foguang Monastery were the reconstruction of the Buddha Hall built in AD 849 during the Tang dynasty under the direction of Monk Yuancheng, and three new halls, namely the *Mañjuśrī* Hall, the Samantabhadra Hall, and the Hall of Heavenly Kings, built in AD 1137 during the Jin dynasty.⁸¹⁰ The current Buddha Hall, therefore, was built by Monk Yuancheng. As mentioned earlier, either the hall built by Faxing between AD 806 and AD 824 or the hall built by Yuancheng in AD 849 and completed in AD 857 had seven units. It is therefore possible that the hall that survives today, adopted Faxing's plan, did not shrink the floor plan of the first floor but was reduced in height from three to

⁸⁰⁸ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, (2010), p. 48.

⁸⁰⁹ Zanning Shi (释赞宁), *宋高僧传* 卷二十七 愿诚 (唐五台山佛光寺) [The Biography of Eminent Monks of the Song dynasty, Vol. 27], (AD 988).

⁸¹⁰ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, (2010), p. 48.

one storey. The arrangement of the entire courtyard constructed in AD 857, before the Jin dynasty, was to maintain the earlier plan from the time of the *Maitreya* Faith without changing much else: the Buddha Hall was on the highest level, and the deities were all housed in the same hall; the Buddhists' residential courtyard was on the lower platform, but it was also connected to the Buddha Square; the Buddha Court still had direct access for the public. A similar arrangement to the Buddha Hall was also drawn in Cave No. 61 of the Mogao Caves (AD 907 - AD 960), where all monasteries have a Buddha Hall with a higher square base and in the middle of an enclosed courtyard to which there was direct access.

As far as the connection system of the wooden structure and the exact dimensions of each timber component are concerned, this study does not need to repeat too much information, as this has already been done by CHCCAD and TU in 2016. However, this study focuses on the front colonnade of the Buddha Hall as it is related to the hypothetical reconstruction described in this study. The plan of the Buddha Hall shows concentric two rectangles (five horizontal rows and eight vertical columns in the grid), whilst inside the rectangle there is also another smaller square surrounded by square colonnades. This architectural style was called *Jin Xiang Dou Di Cao* in the *Ying Zao Fa Shi* of the Song dynasty. In the plan, all statues were placed in the inner rectangle, but the icon stage occupies only about half the area of the inner rectangle (Fig. 85). CHCCAD and TU found some notches on the corner columns of the inner rectangle (northwest and southwest),

which they suggest were probably used to insert door leaves.⁸¹¹ Therefore, they assume that the original position of the west wall (or door panels) of the Eastern Hall was in the second row (Fig. 86).⁸¹² The Buddha Hall originally had a porch that opened to visitors. Before they entered the interior to see the Buddha, the porch was the first space they experienced.⁸¹³ The reason for this deliberate practice of placing a colonnade in front of the main entrance was explained by the fact that it was related to the visitor's experience and that the porch was an intermediate space (or in this article, an interval) between the people (or the outside space) and the religious space (or the inside space).⁸¹⁴

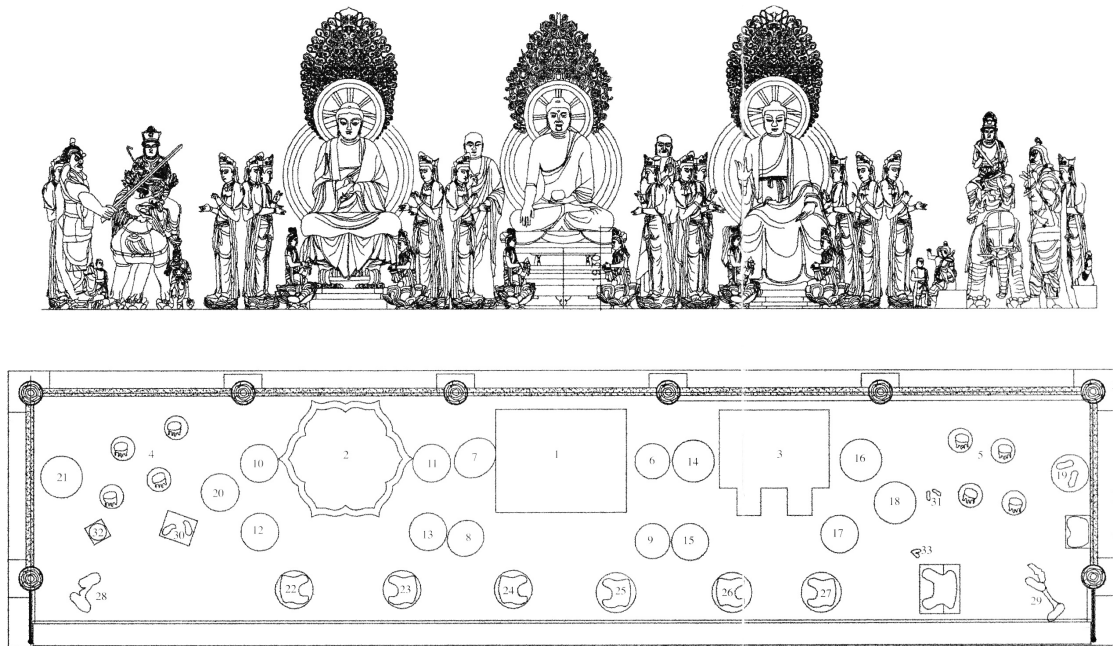


Fig. 85. Statues on the altar, at the Buddha Hall of Foguang Monastery.

⁸¹¹ Cultural Heritage Conservation Centre of Architectural Design & Research Institute of Tsinghua University and Beijing Tsinghua Urban & Design Institute, *佛光寺东大殿建筑勘察报告* [Survey and Research on the Main Hall of Fo Kuang Ssu], (Beijing: China Heritage Press, 2011), pp. 270-71.

⁸¹² Cultural Heritage Conservation Centre of Architectural Design & Research Institute of Tsinghua University and Beijing Tsinghua Urban & Design Institute, (2011), pp. 53-4.

Lu Feng, '隐匿的前廊 - 佛光寺东大殿的空间性' [A Hidden Porch - The Spatiality of the East Hall of Fuguangsi], *Architectural Journal*, 9 (2018), 38-42

⁸¹³ Mingda Chen, '对《中国建筑简史》的几点浅见' [Some thoughts on 'A Brief History of Chinese Architecture'], *Architectural Journal*, 6 (1963), 26-8

⁸¹⁴ Lu Feng, (2018), 38-42

However, the motivation to build a framework of two concentric rectangles of columns also presents another opportunity: to structure a multi-layered building, as multi-storey is the overlapping of single storey building structures,⁸¹⁵ and the ground floor is larger than the upper floor because its outermost columns were built to support the balconies above. Thus, going back to the plan of *Maitreya* Buddha Hall, which was recorded as having three layers and seven *kaijian*, it is not difficult to surmise that the present Buddha Hall was rebuilt on the basis of the ruins of *Maitreya* Buddha Hall. The historical timeline also confirms this assumption. The *Maitreya* Buddha Hall was built in AD 806 to AD 824, whilst the Huichang Persecution of Buddhism took place between AD 840 and AD 841 when the *Maitreya* Buddha Hall was also damaged, and the new Buddha Hall was completely rebuilt in AD 857. Thus, it is highly likely that the Buddha Hall reused the building plan of the *Maitreya* Buddha Hall and even reused some wooden structures to build the one-storey Buddha Hall.

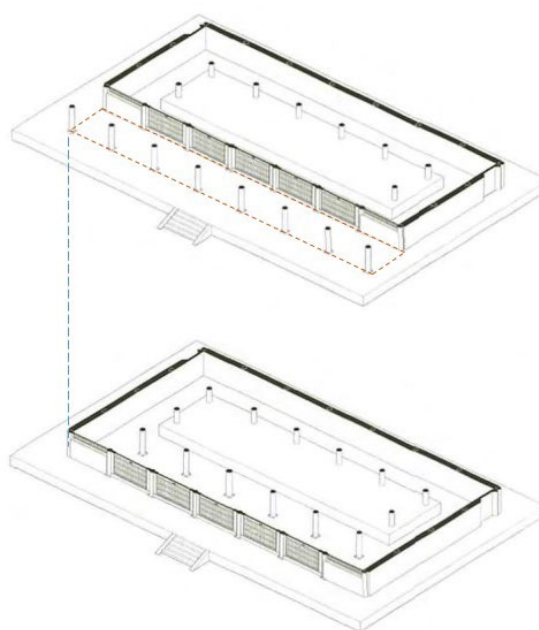


Fig. 86. The speculative drawing of the original outer door panel (up) and the current situation of the outer door panel (down).

Although the Samantabhadra Hall and the Hall of the Heavenly King were burnt down between 1628 - 1644 and 1875 - 1908, respectively, and only the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* Hall survives to this day, it is also possible to speculate about the

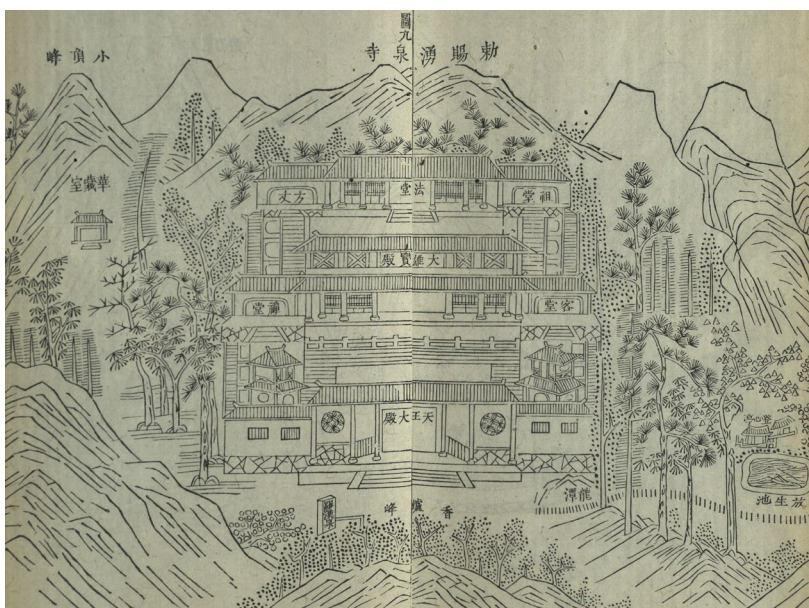
⁸¹⁵ Mingda Chen, (1963), 26-8

monastic plan of that period. Mount Wutai, as the dojo of *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*, as a sacred pilgrimage centre for Buddhists definitely has implications for the monasteries on Mount Wutai, including Foguang Monastery. This is the religious objective of the construction of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* Hall at Foguang Monastery. For the meaningful arrangement of the three new halls to be added to the earlier Foguang Monastery, *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* and Samantabhadra are the serving bodhisattvas of Vairocana Buddha according to the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*; the three together are called the Three Saints of Huayan. The Three Saints of Huayan was the most popular veneration of Buddhism since the Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907).⁸¹⁶ In Mogao Caves, there are rich frescoes depicting the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* seated at the Buddha's right hand and Samantabhadra on his left. This meaningful image may have been transformed to the spatial arrangement of the monastery design. At Foguang Monastery, for example, the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* Hall was built on the north side of the Buddha Hall. Naturally, the burnt Samantabhadra Hall was to be built south of the Buddha Hall, opposite the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* Hall. Most importantly, the two side halls could not be accommodated on the second platform of the Foguang Monastery due to lack of space. The dimensions of the current *Mañjuśrī* Hall are wider than the second platform, so the courtyard used as the Buddhists' residential courtyard could not be replaced by the two new halls. Therefore, the new halls would have had to be built on the new flat ground on the lowest platform of the Foguang Monastery. In order to create a sacred and welcoming Buddha courtyard, the Buddhist

⁸¹⁶ Rong Zhang and others, '南禅寺大殿重建背景、材分营造制度分析及建筑像设空间布局研究' [Historical Context of Reconstruction, Modular Design System, and Statue Arrangement of Nanchansi Main Hall], *Journal of Architecture History*, 2 (2022), 5-23

courtyard on the central axis of the second platform would have to remain empty so that the pilgrimage route could run smoothly.

The Hall of Heavenly Kings is used as the first hall of the Buddha Court. At Linggu Monastery (Fig. 77), the Hall of Heavenly Kings was the gate hall and is located at the beginning of the pilgrimage route. Another example is Yong Quan Monastery (Fig. 87). According to the map in 1736, the Hall of Heavenly Kings was built as the gate hall (or mountain hall) for the monastery. The bell tower and drum tower, a typical Chinese architectural form used in Buddhist architecture, are located in the first court of the monastery. The second courtyard houses the Buddha Hall and the practise rooms for local Buddhists and guests on the sides. The third courtyard houses the place for the lecture hall, the Buddhist abbot's house, and the ancestral memorial hall. This map shows the Buddha court designed on the front central axis and other functional rooms join it at the back and sides, whilst the Buddhist residential cells and their refectory, etc., are not marked on this map; in all likelihood, a closed courtyard with inferior buildings standing near the



Buddha courtyard would not be worthy of being mapped, which also preserves the neatness of the monastic compound.

Fig. 87. Yong Quan Monastery in 1736.

5.4 Summary

The enclosed courtyard of Foguang Monastery has been interpreted through the study of ancient monastic courtyards both in China and abroad. Through comparative analysis of other monastic cases, it becomes clear that monastic enclosures were ubiquitous across countries as they could create a spiritual and physical centre for Buddhists. This 'centre' could be the core of a geometric 'round or rectangular' courtyard; it could also be the centre of meaning, as in a terraced courtyard where a top level was built for the Buddha, as in Foguang Monastery. A centre was once affirmed, it symbolises the anchoring of the place of the Buddha, and the establishing of religious hierarchy. This prior identification of the Buddha court was used for the universal lineage to establish a monastery, but the difference between the sexes, the various terrain, the dynamic application of the Buddhist sects, and even the local architectural culture could be the element that led to the diversity of the Buddhist dwelling courts in various countries. The Buddhist residential court could connect with the Buddha court but be located in a secondary place (e.g., on the side or in the corridor) to eventually form a closed courtyard together, or it could develop into a more permissive closed courtyard and be separate from the Buddha court, which is more in line with the contemporary Foguang Monastery (Table 6).

Table 6 - Comparative Summary of Monastic Layouts

	Monastic Name	Year of construction	Characteristics of monastic layout	Courtyard orientation
Early Buddhist monasteries beyond China	Mohra Moradu Monastery (Archaeologist investigation)	2 nd cent. - 5 th cent AD	Stūpa quarter with one entrance; enclosure plan; circle worship path; door cells with cloister; and residential court separated from stūpa court, monastic compound	Stūpa quarter is east-west orientation. Residential court is north-south orientation.
	Jaulian Monastery (Archaeologist investigation)	3 rd cent. AD	Stūpa court with three entrances, and rounded by ranged of small cells; levelled layout; separated residential quarter, monastic compound	Stūpa quarter is south-north orientation. Residential court is west-east orientation.
	Jamalgarhi Monastery (Archaeologist investigation)	1 st - 7 th cent. AD	Dwelling cells centred the Buddha platform, rectangular and circular enclosure (stūpa quarter or residential court), monastic compound, single entrance, courtyards connected	Stūpa quarter is east-west orientation.
	Tape Monastery (Archaeologist investigation)	5 th cent. - 7 th cent. AD	Square courtyards, enclosed by either the court of dwelling cells or the court of small Buddha cells, monastic compound, single entrance, monastic compound	Stūpa quarter is northeast-southwest orientation
	Monasteries on Mount Wutai in Mogao Cave No. 61 (Visible archive)	10 th cent AD	A direct access court with the image hall (the Buddha Hall) facing the single entrance, and the image hall positioned at the centre, Chinese pavilion, enclosed courtyard	All monasteries were designed with an orientation towards the center, where the Mañjuśrī Monastery is located.
Early Buddhist monasteries in China	Jinci Monastery (Visible archive)	AD 1615	Closed quarters, progressive pilgrimage path, single access (Chinese gate hall), site surrounded by mountains on the sides and back, facing a river, monastic compound	Monastic compounds is south-north orientation
	Zhaoqi Monastery (Visible archive)	AD 1764	The ceremonial court (also known as the Buddha court) is separated from the residential enclosures and features a single access point through a Chinese gate hall, leading to a progressive pilgrimage path	Orientation is uncertain
	Linggu Monastery (Visible archive)	AD 1368 - AD 1644	Enclosed courtyard, monastic compound, progressive pilgrimage path, Chinese screen wall, the gate hall, ceremonial court separated from the residential enclosures	Orientation is uncertain
	Nanchan Monastery (Surviving remnant)	AD 782	The square Buddha court connects with the residential court, forming an enclosed courtyard that includes a gate hall.	Monastic compounds is south-north orientation
	Foguang Monastery (Surviving remnant)	AD 857	Enclosed courtyard, the ceremonial court (also known as the Buddha court) is separated from the residential enclosures and features a single access point through a Chinese gate hall, leading to a progressive pilgrimage path; the Buddha Hall is situated on the highest leveled platform	Monastic compounds is east-west orientation
	Tiantai an (Surviving remnant)	AD 907	In the female monastery, enclosure, the Buddha Hall is situated on the highest levelled platform within an enclosed courtyard, with a single entrance located at the rear, opposite the orientation of the Buddha hall	Monastic compounds are south-north orientation

Chapter 6 - Esoteric Buddhism Embodied in the Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra Pillars

Three Dhāraṇī Sūtra pillars standing at different places in the monastery indicate the predominance of the Mañjuśrī cult. They were also associated with the rite of circumambulation and the chanting of the Dhāraṇī Sūtra, showing the potential inspiration from the Aśoka pillars.

In the Foguang Monastery, three stone pillars are preserved, carved with Buddhist scriptures and dating back to different historical periods. However, these stone pillars, as an architectural scheme of Buddhist monuments, raise the question of what purpose they serve, where they came from, and whether Buddhist stone pillars spread from India to mainland China. All these questions have not yet been explored in any real depth. The chapter aims to explore the Buddhist context and motives for the construction of these *sūtra* pillars and to determine their possible origins.

These three pillars Tang Qianfu, Tang Dazhong and Ming Zhengtong, as mentioned in the Introduction Part, were erected in different historical and in separate locations of the monastery (Fig. 88). The one standing in front of the Buddha Hall has a clear date of construction, namely AD 857 during the Tang dynasty. Its inscription and patroness are considered one of the proofs for the construction date of the Buddha Hall. The Dazhong *sūtra* pillar, standing in front of the Buddha Hall, was erected in the eleventh year of Tang Dazhong, in AD 857 according to the inscription carved on it, and is 3.24 metres in height with an octagonal shaft (Fig. 89). The capital of the pillar has been lost, compared with the photography of Liang Sicheng taken in 1937. Compared with the other two

pillars, the lost capital connected to the part below without smooth transition, and the architectural details were also not transitioned smoothly. The missing capital, therefore, would not be the original form of the pillar, or there might be some connected part in-between is missing.

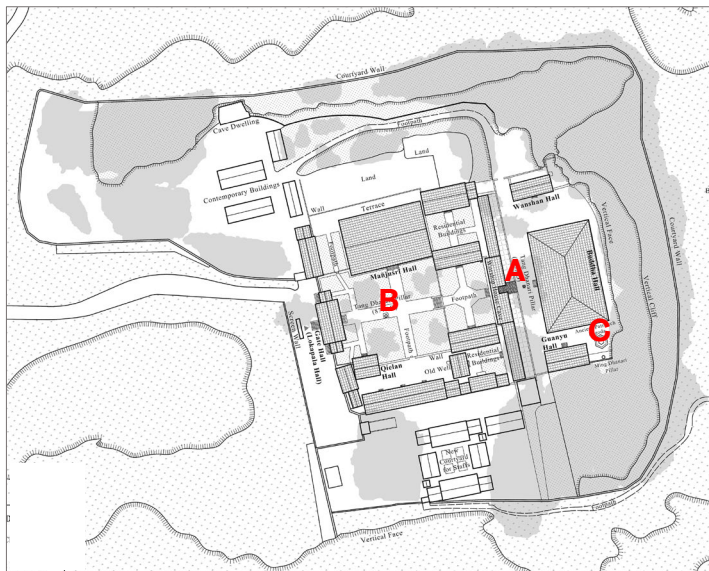


Fig. 88. *Sūtra* pillars at Foguang Monastery.

- A** - Dazhong *sūtra* pillar, built in AD 857, Tang dynasty.
- B** - Qianfu *sūtra* pillar, built in AD 877, Tang dynasty.
- C** - Zhengtong *sūtra* pillar, built in AD 1444, Ming dynasty.

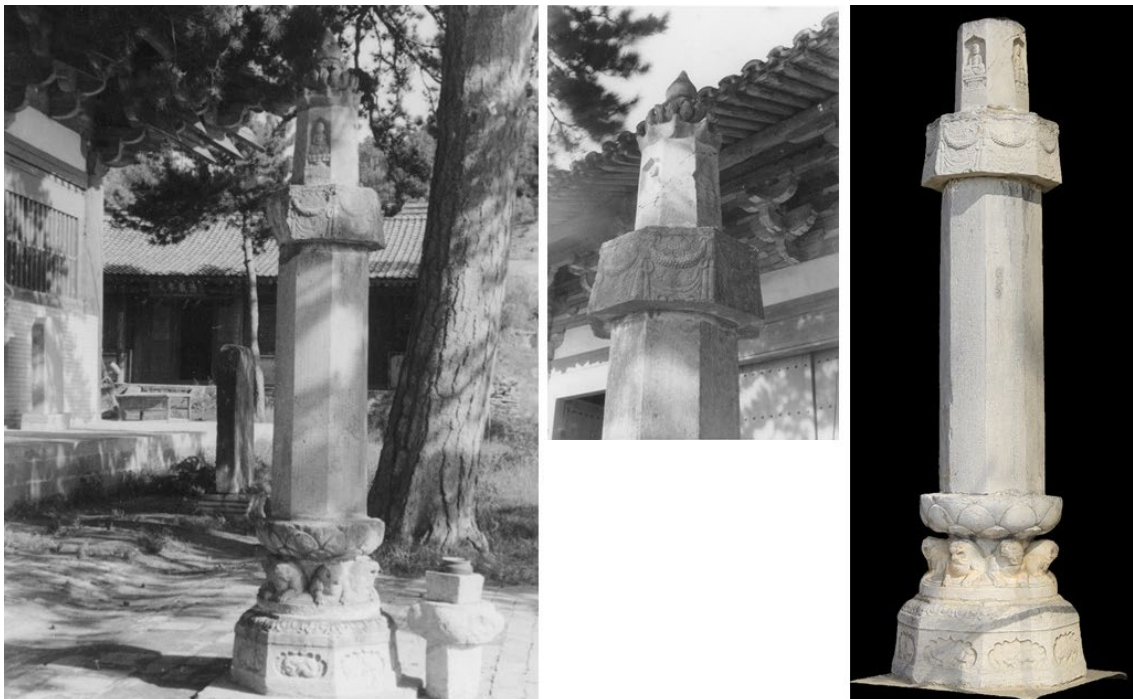


Fig. 89. Dazhong *Sūtra* pillar in front the Buddha Hall at Foguang Monastery, Shanxi Province, China.

- Left** - Pictured by Liang Sicheng in 1937,
- Middle** - Capital of stone pillar, which is missing currently.
- Right** - 3D model of the pillar.

According to the inscription date on the stone pillar, the Qianfu *sūtra* pillar was erected in the fourth year of Qianfu in AD 877 (Fig. 90). The pillar is located in front of the *Mañjuśrī* Hall, also on the main path approaching the Buddha Hall. It has a height of 4.9 metres⁴⁰⁹ with octagonal shafts of different sizes. Its upper part, which supports the capital, is the thinnest section and this shaft is supported by a round, thick slab with a simple arched line decoration. In the central part, the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra*, the name of the patron and the date of erection are engraved in Chinese. The base consists of two thick flat slabs decorated with a lotus motif and a short octagonal column carved with eight musical players. The short column is sandwiched between the two flat plates. Apart from the components of the base and the shafts, the capital is not decorated with exquisite carvings, but overlays three-layered lotus-shaped shells and places a water-droplet shape (or heart shape stone) in the centre. This water-drop shaped capital definitely also resembles the fruits of the *Ficus religiosa* (or sacred lotus bud), which is considered a sacred species of plant in Indian Buddhism that symbolises the enlightenment of the Buddha.

⁴⁰⁹ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, *五台山佛光寺* [Foguang Monastery of Mount Wutai], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010), p. 208.



Fig. 90. Qianfu *Sūtra* pillar standing in front of the *Mañjuśrī* Hall at Foguang Monastery in 1937, Shanxi Province, China.
Left - Pictured by Liang Sicheng in 1937. The picture also recorded the survey scene by Lin Huiyin who was the first female architect in modern China.
Right - 3D model of the pillar.

The Zhengtong *sūtra* pillar was built in the ninth year of Zhengtong during China's Ming dynasty (in 1444). It is located near the Ancient Pagoda and is hidden in the south-eastern corner of the highest platform (Fig. 91). It has the same elements as the above two pillars, a capital with a water-drop motif and the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī* inscription on the shaft. The main difference is that it stands near the ancient *stūpa* and not in front of the Buddhist Hall. The round stone slabs

supporting the shrunken shaft at the top are in two parts and not one, as per the others.

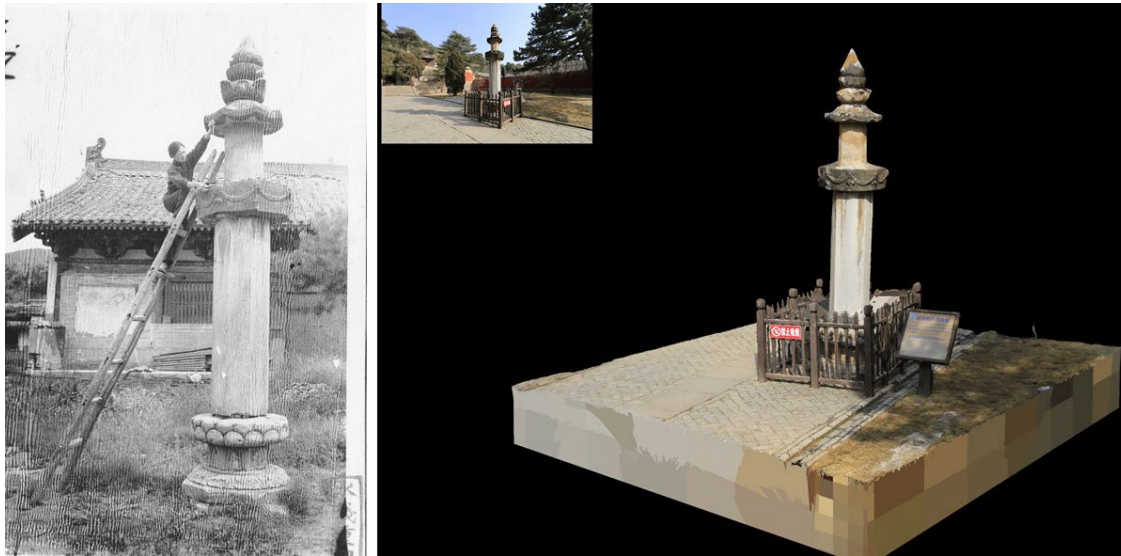


Fig. 91. Left bottom - 3D model of Zhengtong *Sūtra* pillar in a corner, near the Ancient Pagoda, Right - A photo of the pillar at Foguang Monastery.

6.1 Esoteric *maṇḍala* structured the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars at Foguang Monastery

The three pillars were all carved with the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* (Chinese: 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經), which is one of the typical scriptures of esoteric Buddhism. Esoteric Buddhism was particularly, if not extraordinarily, popular throughout the Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907).⁴¹⁰ The *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* was created by Sakyamuni to save the son of Heaven who was suffering in the hell life and was about to die.⁴¹¹ It was preached and translated by the Indian Buddhist Buddha-

⁴¹⁰ Ru Zhan, 'Ximing monastery's esoteric Buddhist traditions', *Studies in Chinese Religions*, 7 (2021), 417-34 (p. 418), cited in Motohiro Yoritomi, 'Daijō butten: Chūgoku Nippon hen 8 Chūgoku Mikkyō 大乘仏典: 中国・日本篇 8・中国密教' [Mahāyāna Buddhist Scriptures: China and Japan Vol. 8, Esoteric Buddhism in China] (Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 1988), pp. 307-9.

According to Zhan (2021): 'Esoteric Buddhism in China can be roughly divided into three stages: the early stage, which spans from the Eastern Jin to the Tang dynasty (the third to the seventh century AD); the middle stage, which takes place between the mid and late Tang dynasty (the eighth to the ninth century AD); and the late stage, which starts in the Five dynasties (the tenth century AD) and onward.'

⁴¹¹ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, '《佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經》及經幢' [*Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* and Pillar], *Journal of Chinese Antiquity*, 5 (2007), 76-80 (p. 76).

pāla in Tang in AD 679,⁴¹² but the *Sūtra* has many translated versions. The version carved on the pillars of Foguang Monastery is the one translated by Buddha-pāla and was also the most popular version amongst Chinese Buddhists.⁴¹³

The content of the *sūtra* is minimal, and can be divided into two categories: the first part explains the reason why Sakyamuni promotes the *sūtra*, how powerful it is, and how to practice it; the second is the essential content of the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra*.⁴¹⁴ The whole scripture of Buddha-pāla has 2655 words in total, the most important section only includes 326 words.⁴¹⁵ The main function of this *sūtra* is to help devotees reduce demerit and acquire merit, avoid disaster, and go to heaven after death:

*The Buddha says that if a person encounters a serious disease, he will be free from all diseases forever once he hears the Dhāraṇī Sūtra; the Buddha said, if a person who committed all the most serious sins before he dead, should fall into hell, but he will be born in heaven when someone recite the Dhāraṇī Sūtra twenty-one times close to his corpse; the Buddha said, if a person can recite the Dhāraṇī Sūtra twenty-one times every day, he will be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss after death.*⁴¹⁶

⁴¹² Zhuying Zhou, '五台山佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经幢初探' [The Preliminary Study on the Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Stone Pillars in Mt. Wutai Area], *Mt Wutai Researches*, 3 (2019), 47-53 (p. 49).

⁴¹³ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, *五台山佛光寺* [Foguang Monastery of Mount Wutai], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010), p. 207.

⁴¹⁴ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, (2007), 76-80 (p. 76).

⁴¹⁵ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, (2010), p. 208.

⁴¹⁶ The corresponding Chinese text is: '佛言, 若人遇大恶病, 闻陀罗尼, 即得永离一切诸病, 亦得消灭; 佛言, 若人先造一切极重罪业, 遂即命终, 乘斯恶业, 应堕地狱... 诵此陀罗尼二十一遍, 散亡者骨上, 即得生天; 佛言, 若人能日日诵此陀罗尼二十一遍, 应消一切世间广大供养, 舍身往生极乐世界'.

These octagonal stone pillars carved in *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* were widely distributed across the Shanxi region during Tang dynasty. It is believed that the earliest extant *sūtra* in China was built in AD 682 during the Tang dynasty in the city of Linfen, in the contemporary Shanxi Province,⁴¹⁷ whilst the earliest surviving at Mount Wutai are the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars (AD 857) in Foguang Monastery.⁴¹⁸ In addition, the erection of the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars at Buddhist sites was widespread from the Tang dynasty onwards, with the practice reaching its peak during the Song dynasty (AD 1368 - AD 1644).⁴¹⁹ In Ennin's dairy, the Japanese visiting Buddhist also reported that when he made a pilgrimage from Mount Wutai back to the Tang capital Chang'an in AD 840, he saw a *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillar erected in the Siyang Ling, near the southern mountain gate of Mount Wutai. He was told that this place is where Buddha-pāla once met the Great Saint in AD 676, who disguised himself as an old layman and instructed Buddha-pāla to bring the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* from India to Mount Wutai.⁴²⁰ This story suggests that with the popularity of esoteric Buddhism during the Tang dynasty, the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* was also disseminated in the region of Mount Wutai and engraved on the Buddhist pillar.

Source from: Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, 五台山佛光寺 [Foguang Monastery of Mount Wutai], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010), p. 208.

⁴¹⁷ Gaiping Zhao, '唐代佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经幢在山西的流布' [Spread of Buddhosnīsavijayadhārāṇī Pillars of Tang dynasty in Shanxi], *Shanxi Archives*, 2 (2012), 41-6 (pp. 41-2).

⁴¹⁸ Zhuying Zhou, '五台山佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经幢初探' [The Preliminary Study on the Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Stone Pillars in Mt.Wutai Area], *Mt.Wutai Researches*, 3 (2019), 47-53 (p. 49).

⁴¹⁹ Zhuying Zhou, (2019), 47-53 (p. 48).

⁴²⁰ The corresponding Chinese text is: '向西南行七里许, 到思阳岭。昔仪凤元年, 西天梵僧佛陀波利来到此处, 雨泪遥礼台山, 感得大圣化为老人, 约令回天竺。取佛顶之处, 今见建宝幢。幢上篆佛顶陀罗尼及序, 便题波利遇老人之事' Source from: Ennin, 入唐求法巡禮行記校注 [The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law], trans. by Huawen Bai, Dingxia Li and Denan Xu, (Shijiazhuang: Huashan Literature and Art Publishing House, 2007), p. 309.

Numerous freestanding stone pillar relics have been identified in Chinese monasteries, particularly during the 1920s. Tokiwa Daijo and Sekino Tadashi conducted an investigation of Chinese historical heritage, providing abundant images of these Buddhist pillars (Fig. 92). All of these findings serve as compelling evidence for the significance of pillars in Chinese monasteries.



Fig. 92. Stone pillars of Buddhist monuments were widely distributed across the mainland China.

In addition, some remains of *sūtra* pillars were discovered by Chinese archaeologists after the nineteenth century AD (Table 7). In general, the remains of Chinese Buddhist stone pillars vary in their construction details and are a specific product of a particular historical period from the Tang dynasty to the Ming dynasty (seventh - fifteenth centuries AD), distributed across northern and southern China. However, as the popularity of the *sūtra* pillars only emerged at a certain point in China history, not many stone columns have survived to this day because the majority of the remains have suffered many alterations and damage. The reason for the emergence of this architectural type in Chinese Buddhist sites and the religious significance of the *sūtra* pillars have yet to be thoroughly researched by scholars.

Table 7. *sūtra* pillars discovered in China.

Location	Numbers	Construction Date	Form
Wenshui, Shanxi Province	1	AD 699	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 1.77 m in height ⁴²¹
Mt. Wutai, Shanxi Province	13	Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907) and Song dynasty (AD 960 - AD 1279)	three <i>sūtra</i> pillars from Tang dynasty, 10 from the Song, octagonal stone or brick pillars ⁴²²
Tianning Monastery, Jiaocheng, Shanxi Province	6	AD 785 - AD 820	square and hexahedron column, with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i>
Yuanqi Monastery, Lucheng, Shanxi Province	1	AD 747	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 2.88 m in height ⁴²³
Dinglin Monastery, Gaoping, Shanxi Province	2	AD 977, AD 985	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 4.4 m in height ⁴²⁴
Zunsheng Monastery, Wutai, Shanxi Province	2	AD 1026, AD 1212 - AD 1249	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> ⁴²⁵
Qinglian Monastery, Jincheng, Shanxi Province	2	AD 1086	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 3.5 m in height ⁴²⁶
Yanshan Monastery, Fanyi, Shanxi Province	1	AD 1079	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , the height of the ruins is 1.9 m ⁴²⁷
Huayan Monastery, Datong, Shanxi Province	1	AD 1095	hexahedron column with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 2.87 m in height ⁴²⁸
Chongfu Monastery, Shuzhou, Shanxi Province	3	AD 1104, AD 1110 and AD 1113	hexahedron column with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , around 1.5 m in height ⁴²⁹
Xinglong Monastery, Qinyang, Henan Province	1	AD 731	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 4.4 m in height ⁴³⁰
Luoyang, Henan Province	1	AD 835	hexahedral pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , the height of the ruins is 0.3 m ⁴³¹
Kaiyuan Monastery, Xingtai, Hebei Province	14	Tang dynasty and Later Liang dynasty (AD 907 - AD 923)	11 pillars from Tang, octagonal and hexahedral pillars, carved different <i>sūtra</i> ⁴³²

⁴²¹ Li Shu, '新见圣历二年《佛说佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经》幢的文献价值' [The Documentary Value of the Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra in the Second Year of the New Sacred Calendar], *The Documentation*, 5 (2017), 69-78 (p. 69).

⁴²² Zhuying Zhou, '五台山佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经幢初探' [The Preliminary Study on the Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Stone Pillars in Mt. Wutai Area], *Mt. Wutai Researches*, 3 (2019), 47-53 (p. 49).

⁴²³ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, '《佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经》及经幢' [Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra and Pillar], *Journal of Chinese Antiquity*, 5 (2007), 76-80 (p. 79).

⁴²⁴ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, (2007), 76-80 (pp. 79-80).

⁴²⁵ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, (2007), 76-80 (p. 80).

⁴²⁶ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, (2007), 76-80 (p. 80).

⁴²⁷ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, (2007), 76-80 (p. 80).

⁴²⁸ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, (2007), 76-80 (p. 80).

⁴²⁹ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, (2007), 76-80 (p. 80).

⁴³⁰ Zhonghua Tian, '佛顶尊胜陀罗尼造像经幢' [Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra Image and Pillar], *Cultural Relics of Central China*, 1 (1993), 82-7 (p. 82).

⁴³¹ Jianhua Han, '唐东都洛阳履道坊白居易宅院出土经幢研究' [The Study on the Sūtra Pillar Unearthed from Bai Juyi's Residence at Lüdào Ward in the Tang Luoyang City], *Archaeology*, 6 (2017), 102-11 (p. 102).

⁴³² Fang Hua, 唐代邢台开元寺《佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经》经幢研究 [Study on the Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra Pillar in Kaiyuan Monastery, Xingtai, Tang dynasty], (master's thesis, Hebei Normal University, 2014), pp. 26-7.

Zhaozhou, Hebei Province	1	AD 1038	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 15 m in height ⁴³³
Lulong, Hebei Province	1	AD 1171	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 10.35 m in height ⁴³⁴
Linqu, Shandong Province	1	AD 730, rebuilt in AD 1155	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 1.75 m in height ⁴³⁵
Kunming Ksitigarbha Monastery, Yunnan Province	1	AD 937 - AD 1253	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 6.5 m in height ⁴³⁶
Shanghai	1	AD 859	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 9.3 m in height ⁴³⁷
Fantian Monastery, Hangzhou	2	AD 965	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> ⁴³⁸
Anguo Monastery, Haining, Zhejiang Province	3	AD 842, AD 844, AD 865	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> ⁴³⁹
Falong Monastery, Jinhua, Zhejiang Province	1	AD 856	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , the height of the ruins is 6.3 m ⁴⁴⁰
Chengdu, Sichuan Province	1	AD 915	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 1.79 m in height ⁴⁴¹
Nanjing, Jiangsu Province	1	AD 977	tetrahedral pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , the height of the ruins is 0.48 m ⁴⁴²
Hohhot, Inner Mongolia	1	AD 1173	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , the height of the ruins is 6.5 m ⁴⁴³
Quanzhou, Fujian Province	15	Tang - Song dynasty (AD 854 - AD 1279)	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 0.5-2 m in height ⁴⁴⁴
Liaocheng, Shandong Province	1	AD 955	octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 2.4 m in height ⁴⁴⁵
Changsha, Hunan Province	1	AD 763 - AD 903	The best preserved, octagonal stone pillar with <i>Dhāraṇī Sūtra</i> , 0.72 m ⁴⁴⁶

In Nanchan Monastery, the *sūtra* pillar was also used in the plebeian *bhikkhuni* of the female Buddhist monastery. Located in a rural hamlet, Wangqu village, Ping

⁴³³ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, '《佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经》及经幢' [Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra and Pillar], *Journal of Chinese Antiquity*, 5 (2007), 76-80 (pp. 77-8).

⁴³⁴ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, (2007), 76-80 (p. 78).

⁴³⁵ Fenggang Lang, '山东临朐唐佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经幢考' [Study on the Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra Pillars in Tang dynasty in Linqu, Shandong], *Identification and Appreciation to Cultural Relics*, 9 (2019), 14-7 (pp. 14-5).

⁴³⁶ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, (2007), 76-80 (pp. 77-8).

⁴³⁷ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, (2007), 76-80 (p. 78).

⁴³⁸ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, (2007), 76-80 (p. 78).

⁴³⁹ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, (2007), 76-80 (p. 79).

⁴⁴⁰ Yan Li and Yingying Zhang, (2007), 76-80 (p. 79).

⁴⁴¹ Xiaofeng Huang and Tangcai Dai, '成都东门大桥出土佛顶尊胜陀罗尼石经幢' [The Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra Stone Pillar Unearthed from the Dongmen Bridge in Chengdu], *Cultural Relics*, 8 (2000), 91-2 (p. 91).

⁴⁴² Zhigao Wang and Jinxi Zhang, '南京发现北宋佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经幢' [Foding zunsheng tuoluoni Dhāraṇī Pillar of Northern Song dynasty Discovered in Nanjing City], *Southeast Culture*, 4 (1998), 56-7 (p. 56).

⁴⁴³ Hanguang Hu and Xiubiao Zhang, '呼和浩特清水河县出土一方金代佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经幢' [A Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra Pillar of the Jin dynasty Unearthed in Qingshuihe County, Hohhot], *Steppe Cultural Relics*, 2 (2014), 117-18 (p. 117).

⁴⁴⁴ Yukun Li, '泉州佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经幢及其史料价值' [Study on the Historical Value of the Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra Pillar in Quanzhou City], *Buddhist Studies*, 00 (2000), 286-90 (pp. 287-88).

⁴⁴⁵ Qingyi Chen, '聊城博物馆藏后周佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经幢' [The Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra Pillar of the Later Zhou dynasty in the Liaocheng Museum], *Cultural Relics of Central China*, 5 (2006), 94 (p. 94).

⁴⁴⁶ Yongli Lei, '长沙东牌楼出土佛顶尊胜灵验陀罗尼幢及其相关问题浅析' [Preliminary Analysis of the Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra Pillar Unearthed at Dongpailou in Changsha and Related Issues], *Hunan Provincial Museum*, 00 (2018), 421-28 (pp. 423-24).

Shun County, Shanxi Province, the Tiantai An',⁴⁴⁷ erected on a four-metre-high platform, is one of China's most precious architectural and Buddhist heritage sites (Fig. 93). The courtyard covers an area of approximately 450 square metres.⁴⁴⁸ Its initial construction date is a highly controversial due to a lack of historical data, with some academics insisting that it is a surviving relic dating back to the Tang dynasty (Fig. 94).



Fig. 93. Aerial view of Tiantai An in Wangqu village. Comparing the timber structure framework typology, dimensions, and the sophisticated interlocking joints with other Tang relics, in particular the Nanchan Monastery and Foguang Monastery, strongly suggests it to be a relic of the late Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907),⁴⁴⁹ or the Jin dynasty (AD 1115 - AD 1234) depending on its architectural style⁴⁵⁰.

⁴⁴⁷ The definition of 'An' - with Buddhism popularity in the Middle Ages, 5358 monasteries of high rank and built on accordance to strict building regulations called *si* (Chinese: 寺), were directly monopolised and financially supported by the ruling family. Source from: Gong Zhang, *汉唐佛寺文化史 第一卷* [Buddhist Monastery Culture History from Han dynasty to Tang dynasty], Vol. 1, (Beijing: Social Sciences Press, 1997), pp. 37, 147.

The rural monastery usually for pilgrimage used smaller scale and remote Buddhist sites called *Lan Ruo*, but these kinds of monasteries were deemed illegal and so eradicated by the authorities during the early period. Source from: Gong Zhang, *汉唐佛寺文化史 第一卷* [Buddhist Monastery Culture History from Han dynasty to Tang dynasty], Vol. 1 (Beijing: Social Sciences Press, 1997), p. 225.

The term 'An' (in Chinese 庵) initially referred to a round and small thatched hut in prehistoric China. When Buddhism's popularity grew in China, the site of female Buddhists (nunneries) was likely adopted from the word 'An' which formally referred to a prehistoric small round thatched hut. Source from: Yan Wu, *两晋南北朝与唐代比丘尼僧团比较研究* [Comparative Study of Bhikuni Sangha in Jin dynasty, the Southern and Northern dynasty and Tang dynasty], (master's thesis, Renmin University of China, 2005; Chengzong Zhang, '魏晋南北朝妇女的宗教信仰' [Women's Religious Beliefs within the Period of Wei, Jin and the Southern and Northern Dynasties], *Journal of Nantong University (Social Sciences Edition)*, 22.2 (2006), 91-7

⁴⁴⁸ Weidong Li, '天台庵弥陀殿' [Maitreya Hall in Tian Tai An Nunnery], in *中国古建筑行业年鉴* [China Ancient Architecture Industry Yearbook] ed. by Editorial Board of China Ancient Architecture Industry Yearbook (Beijing: China Building Materials Press, 2016), pp. 270-74.

⁴⁴⁹ Chunbo Wang, '山西平顺晚唐建筑天台庵' [The Building of Tiantai'an in the Late Tang dynasty in Pingshun County, Shanxi Province], *Cultural Relics*, 6 (1993), 34-43

⁴⁵⁰ Huishi Li, '山西现存早期木结构建筑区域特征浅探' [Preliminary Discussion on the Regional Characteristics of Surviving Timber Structure Buildings in Shanxi Province], *Journal of Chinese Antiquity*, 2 (2004), 22-9



Fig. 94. *Sūtra* pillar ruins at Tiantai An. An octagonal stone column base survives at the front of the main hall (or *Maitreya* Buddha Hall). Although most of the column has crumbled, it is most likely a *Dhāraṇī-Sūtra* column, as can be inferred from the octagonal shape and the positional relationship to the Buddha Hall.

In addition, in the case study of the Kunming *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillar (Chinese: 尊胜陀罗尼经幢) by Angela F. Howard, it was pointed out that formulation of the *sūtra* stone pillars (AD 937 - AD 1253) tightly weaves together the *maṇḍala* diagram of esotericism Buddhism and the local beliefs of the Bai people⁴⁵¹ (also called Minjia, one of the most sanitised minorities in north-western Yunnan province, southwest China). This is a remarkable finding in the study of the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* that significantly influenced this research on *sūtra* pillars at Foguang Monastery.

An octagonal column shaft engraved with the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* and with a lotus bud on the pillar top is the general character of these stone column remains, which represents the visualisation of the esoteric Buddhist *maṇḍala* in Chinese *sūtra* columns. Most of the pillars have *Dhāraṇī Sūtra*, which directly indicates the application of esoteric Buddhism in these Buddhist sites. The ritual of reciting the

⁴⁵¹ Angela F. Howard, 'The *Dhāraṇī* Pillar of Kunming, Yunnan. A Legacy of Esoteric Buddhism and Burial Rites of the Bai People in the Kingdom of Dali (937-1253)', *Artibus Asiae*, 57.1/2 (1997), 33-72 (p. 69).

Dhāraṇī mantra was even written down in an imperial edict of the Tang dynasty (AD 773), which ordered that monks and nuns in the whole country must recite the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* 21 times per day.⁴⁵² When this activity became a daily ritual, it is not difficult to imagine how the Buddhists recited the mantra every day - by circumambulating a *sūtra* pillar. Most *sūtra* pillars were erected outdoors, for example, in front of a Buddha Hall or near the entrance to monastery courtyards. Without using architecture to define a space and guide the ritual of circumambulation the Buddha statue, the pillars played a similar role of marking the centre of an area, and this could lead to Buddhists walking around a pillar, on the one hand, and reciting the mantra, on the other. Therefore, the circumambulation of a *sūtra* pillar would be the daily ritual in an esoteric monastery, which was believed to gain one spiritual merit, leading to enlightenment. Meanwhile, this nationwide chanting of esoteric mantras not only promoted the spread of esoteric Buddhism, but also the erection of the *sūtra* pillars, which also proves the close intertwining of politics and religion.

The geometric configuration of the column shafts, such as octagonal, hexahedral, or circular, also corresponds to the esoteric Buddhist *maṇḍala* model of *Mahāvairocana* Buddha. As mentioned in the previous section, the diagram of the *Womb Realm maṇḍala* features an eight-petaled lotus at its centre, with *Mahāvairocana Buddha* seated in the middle and four Buddhas and four bodhisattvas seated on the surrounding petals. The four Buddhas and four

⁴⁵² Shufen Liu, '佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经与唐代尊胜经幢的建立 - 经幢研究之一' [Research on the Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra and the Establishment of the Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra Pillar in the Tang dynasty], *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology Academia Sinica*, 3 (1996), 145-93.

bodhisattvas form an octagon, and a lotus pattern is usually present at the base of pillar which links to the eight-petaled lotus of the Womb Realm *maṇḍala*. The octagon also can be regarded as representative of the Eightfold Path emphasised by Buddhism. In addition, the lotus bud at the top of these pillars represents the enlightenment of the Buddha. The lotus symbol, initially symbolic of creation and birth, then transforms into a symbol of the profound wisdom of Nirvana, the cessation of all individualised existence in heavenly, hellish, or earthly realms.⁴⁵³

6.2 Aśoka pillars give the origin of the Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Chinese Buddhists

Architecturally, the forms of the three pillars at the Foguang monastery are similar and usually consist of three main parts, an ornate lotus stone pedestal, a shaft with the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra*, and a lotus bud ornament at the top, which are the types of monuments created to embody the *maṇḍala* model of esoteric Buddhism and to chant the esoteric tantra. This sudden appearance of pillar monuments at Chinese Buddhist sites since the Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907) does not seem to have occurred on other continents. However, it is difficult to claim that this type of monument was invented by Chinese monks, as there were close interactions between domestic and foreign monks during the Tang dynasty, where Indian Buddhist pillars had appeared for more than 1000 years since the Aśoka period (AD 322 - AD 185). Therefore, this thesis argues that the stone pillars of the Indian Buddhists suggest a possible relationship with the Chinese *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars.

⁴⁵³ William E. Ward, 'The Lotus Symbol: Its Meaning in Buddhist Art and Philosophy', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 11.2 (1952), 135-46 (p. 146).

The stone pillars that first emerged at Buddhist sites could potentially date back to the Aśoka period, the third king of the Mauryan Empire in India. Before temples began to be built, stone pillars were considered a symbolic monument and played an essential role in the Buddhist rite of circumambulation. In Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, stone pillars with various symbolic motifs were created to mark sacred places and centres of worship.⁴⁵⁴ Worshippers would walk around the pillar and touch it (also known as circumambulation).⁴⁵⁵ During the third century BC, Aśoka, as the most notable of the Maurya kings, allowed the propagation of Buddhism during his reign and undertook pilgrimages to various holy sites recorded in Buddhist texts;⁴⁵⁶ indeed, 'The earliest monolithic freestanding pillars found in India are those of Aśoka'.⁴⁵⁷ Although polished sandstone pillars were not innovated by Aśoka, he was probably the first to carve inscriptions ('his words' or 'pillar of the laws') on stone columns, and the polished monumental pillars culminated in the patronage of Emperor Aśoka.⁴⁵⁸ Surviving pillars blending Indic civilisation with the

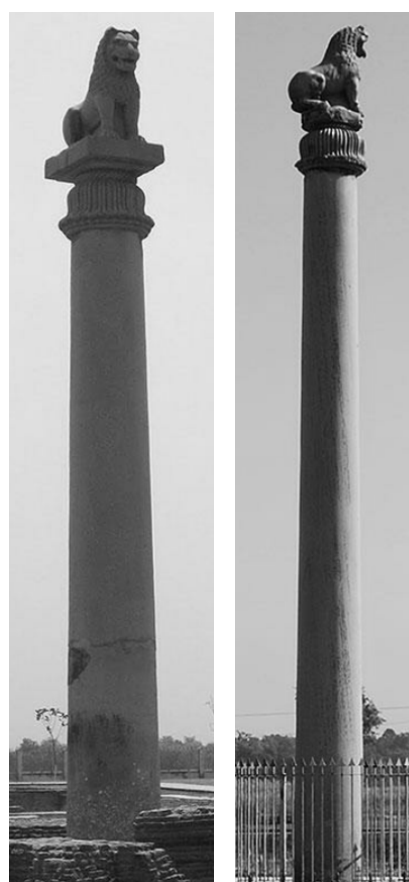


Fig. 95. Aśoka pillars.

Left - Vaishali pillar (285 BC),

Basarh Bakhirs, India.

Right - Lauriya Nandangarh pillar (245 BC),
India.

⁴⁵⁴ Santosh Kumar, 'Circumambulation in Indian pilgrimage: Meaning and manifestation', *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 12.1 (2021), 232-43 (p. 233).

⁴⁵⁵ Santosh Kumar, (2021), 232-43 (p. 233).

⁴⁵⁶ Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publications, 2014), p. 44.

⁴⁵⁷ Harry Falk, *Aśokan sites and artefacts: A sourcebook with bibliography*, (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2006), p. 139.

⁴⁵⁸ Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, (2014), p. 44.

Western Asiatic tradition⁴⁵⁹ are only to be found in North India as a hallmark of Aśoka.⁴⁶⁰ In addition, more than fifty boulder and pillar inscriptions accepting Aśoka's patronage have been identified.⁴⁶¹ Approximately forty Aśoka pillars are recorded in the Buddhist texts, while less than half have subsequently been identified by archaeologists.⁴⁶² From a careful collation of historical literature and their capitals, it appears that there were more than forty-one pillars in total but only two pillars remain *in situ*, both being nearly intact (Fig. 95).⁴⁶³ The subsequent stonework was never developed to the quality of the pillars and capitals seen during the Aśoka era.⁴⁶⁴ Therefore, during the third century BC, with the support of kingship, the Aśoka pillars exhibited carved Aśoka's edicts, as a royal and Vedic symbol, and were converted successfully into a type of sacred product for Buddhist use.⁴⁶⁵

Aśoka pillars play a vital role in the identification of Buddhist sites in India, and it is possible that each of them was once placed in front of monumental architectures or in connection with *stūpas*, although these combinations have now largely disappeared, leaving only the pillars.⁴⁶⁶ In addition, those early Buddhist sites were city-based, as these monastic remains have been identified within or adjacent to significant Indian settlements between the sixth century BC to the thirteenth century AD or along trading routes; further, all these sites

⁴⁵⁹ Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, (2014), pp. 44-5.

⁴⁶⁰ Le Huu Phuoc, *Buddhist Architecture*, (Grafikol, 2010), p. 39.

⁴⁶¹ Harry Falk, (2006), p. 139.

⁴⁶² Harry Falk, (2006), pp. 40-5.

⁴⁶³ Le Huu Phuoc, (2010), pp. 40-1.

⁴⁶⁴ Harry Falk, (2006), p. 149.

⁴⁶⁵ Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, (2014), pp. 45-6.

⁴⁶⁶ John Irwin, 'The Ancient Pillar-Cult at Prayāga (Allahabad): Its Pre-Aśokan Origins', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 115.2 (1983), 253-80 (p. 262).

received patronage from city residents, such as kings and leading merchants.⁴⁶⁷ The capital motifs of *dharmacakras* (wheel of dharma), floral ornaments and animals (such as lions, elephants, bulls, and horses) are the most popular decorative design used on the capitals of the Aśoka pillars.⁴⁶⁸ This also served to help Buddhists find a suitable practice for representing religious symbolism.⁴⁶⁹ The pillars that engraved the dharma were ordered and defined by Aśoka as an architectural scheme in Buddhist shrines.⁴⁷⁰ In principle, an Aśoka pillar would be erected 'in front of or in conjunction with a *stūpa* or monastic building'. However, this arrangement is difficult to prove as most of them have disappeared or undergone various alterations.⁴⁷¹

The interaction between Aśoka and Buddhism, such as the construction of 84,000 relic *stūpa* of the Buddha to be disseminated throughout the world and the new definition and requirements for stone pillars in Buddhist sites, not only promoted the spread of Indian Buddhism but also reflected the mutually beneficial relationship between the regime and the religion. This is because the huge stone pillars with Aśoka's edicts engraved on them were easy for people to see and easy for them to recognise that they were situated in a sacred place authenticated by the king, which meant the land had also been conquered by Aśoka. To some extent, Aśoka not only promoted the construction edict pillars as an architectural monument at Buddhist shrines, but also contributed to the

⁴⁶⁷ Dilip K. Chakrabarti, 'Buddhist Sites Across South Asia as Influenced by Political and Economic Forces', *World Archaeology*, 27.2 (1995), 185-202 (pp. 194-96).

⁴⁶⁸ Le Huu Phuoc, (2010), p. 47.

⁴⁶⁹ Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, (2014), pp. 44-7.

⁴⁷⁰ Amalananda Ghosh, 'The Pillars of Aśoka - Their Purpose', *East and West*, 17.3/4 (1967), 273-75 (p. 275).

⁴⁷¹ James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1899), p. 59.

erection of *stūpas* worldwide. However, with the passing of the reign of King Aśoka, Buddhists in the dynasties after him seemed to no longer favour building these immense pillars, though there are few investigations by archaeologists offering reports in this regard. This was also demonstrated by Faxian in the fifth century. In his book *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms* (or *Fo Guo Ji*, Chinese: 佛國記), *stūpas*, Buddha images, Buddha halls, Buddhist dormitories (Buddhists' sleeping quarters), *Vihāras* (or monasteries) were frequently witnessed by Ennin; however, stone pillars at Buddhist sites were only mentioned four times, and three such instances were related to the story of Aśoka. Obviously, the Buddhist pillar was not a necessary ingredient for the construction of monasteries after the Aśoka period, while it could be considered a Buddhist merit of Aśoka or strong evidence of politico-religious interaction in the development of Buddhism.⁴⁷²

One possible reason why this stone form was easily accepted on Chinese soil, especially during and after the Tang dynasty, could be that Chinese stone pillar culture had already developed prior to the Indian Buddhist *sūtra* pillars being transferred to China. For instance, application of the stone pillar or *Shi que* (upright stone tablet) as a symbolic monument was to identify the progressive path toward a mausoleum (or the spirit road) and used to be placed in front of the associated tomb. The earliest example of such dates back to the Han dynasty, called Han Que. It is an upright stone arch engraved with sacred divine patterns or mythical animals (Fig. 96). Its origins can be traced back to prehistoric times, but it developed into a mature and important architectural form for the Chinese

⁴⁷² Jianhua Huang, 话说中国汉阙 [Talking about Chinese Hanque], *Root Exploration*, 2(2007), 84-91 (pp. 84-91).

during the Qin and Han Dynasties (221 BC - AD 220).⁴⁷³ The foundation of the Han Que was used as an entrance, with a passageway in the middle upon which a timber structure could be built.⁴⁷⁴ Que was frequently used in various structures, such as the Que gate of a city, the Que entrance to a royal palace, the Que doorway to an ancestral hall, the Que in front of a mausoleum, the Que gate to a main street, the Que gate into a ritual building, etc.⁴⁷⁵

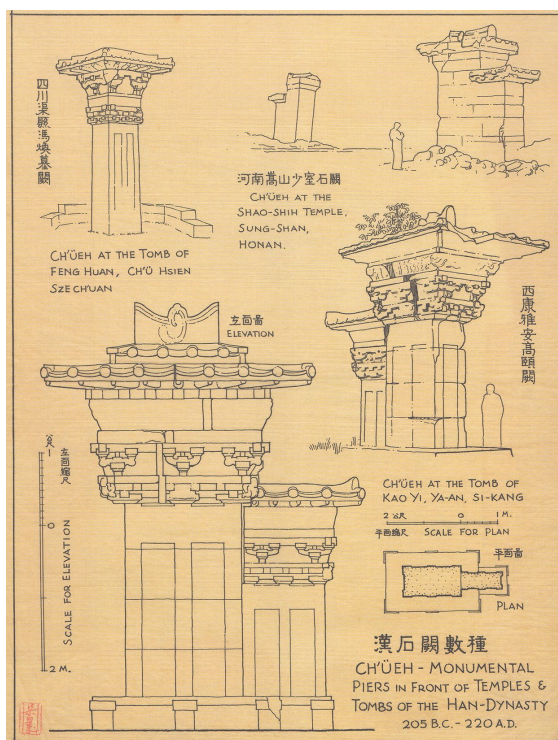


Fig. 96. Han Que (Chinese: 汉阙) from Han dynasty (205 BC - AD 220).

Besides, polished pillars of immense size, which are very similar to the Buddhist pillars in India, also appeared in Chinese history. The representation is the marble stone pillars with carved lions that were erected in imperial mausoleums and royal tombs identified from the Southern Dynasties⁴⁷⁶ (Fig. 97). These stone pillars, consisting of a circle summit plate carved with a lotus pattern, a lion capital, a shaft decorated with vertical grooves, and a column base with detailed engravings, are believed to be an evolutionary example of an Indian Aśoka pillar,⁴⁷⁷ and basically this type of stone sculpture appeared mainly at monumental sites

⁴⁷³ Jianhua Huang, (2007), 84-91 (pp. 84-91).

⁴⁷⁴ Jianhua Huang, (2007), 84-91 (p. 85).

⁴⁷⁵ Ziqi Gao, *Theory of Que in Qin and Han dynasty*, (doctoral thesis, Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts, 2013), pp. 15-21.

⁴⁷⁶ Dunzhen Liu, 刘敦桢文集 第四卷 [Collected Works of Liu Dunzhen], Vol. 4 (Beijing: China Construction Industry Press, 1992), pp. 19-23.

⁴⁷⁷ Chūta Itō, 中国建筑史 [History of Chinese architecture], trans. by Qingquan Chen, (Changsha: Hunan University Press, 2016), pp. 122, 227.

either in pairs or singly ⁴⁷⁸. Especially in the third century BC and in the second century AD, when rock-cut architecture was widely applied at Buddhist sites in India, such as *stūpas*, caves, and pillars, at the same time, the rock-cut Que ⁴⁷⁹ or stone pillars were also very familiar to the Chinese, so that Buddhist stone forms, including the stone pillars, were easily accepted by Chinese Buddhists as well. The later practise of Chinese Buddhists also supports this assumption. As already mentioned, Buddhist rock caves emerged in China in the third century and flourished in the fifth and sixth centuries, and whose use continued until the ninth century. ⁴⁸⁰



Fig. 97. Stone pillar in Xiaojing's tomb. Xiaojing (萧景) was a vital minister of the Nanliang imperial clan during the Southern and Northern Dynasties (AD 420 - AD 589).

Left - Inscription on a stone pillar by the Spirit Path to the tomb of Xiao Hong, Prince Jinghui, Linchuan, Xianhe Gate, Jiangning district, Nanjing. Southern Dynasties.

Right - Stone pillar in front of the tomb of Xiao Jing, Marquis Zhong of Wuping. Southern Dynasties. 245 cm in circumference.

There should be architectural links between the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars and Buddhist pillars in India, as they both transfer symbolic content of Buddhism. For example, the bas-relief sculpture is one of the Amaravati Marbles from the Great *stūpa* in India, which was founded in 200 BC, and was then

⁴⁷⁸ Xiaochun Yang, '南朝陵墓神道石刻渊源研究' [A Study of the Origin of the Stone Sculptures along the Spirit Roads of Tombs of the Southern Dynasties Period], *Archaeology*, 8 (2006), 74-82 (p. 81).

⁴⁷⁹ 阙 (Que: ceremonial gate tower), the Que Gate originated in the Zhou dynasty through the Han and Tang dynasties and continued to the Ming and Qing dynasties and is an important ritual architectural form from the Zhou dynasty to the Qing dynasty in ancient China.

Source from: Zhao Han and others, '古代阙门及相关问题' [The Ancient Gate Tower and the Concerning Problems], *Archaeology and Cultural Relics*, 5 (2004), 58-64).

⁴⁸⁰ Bai Su, 中国石窟寺研究 [Research on rock-cut monasteries in China], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 1996), p. 18.

expanded and embellished with countless magnificent sculptures over the following four centuries (Fig. 98). The drum slab depicts the Buddha figure standing at the entrance with a *stūpa*, five pillars, and his disciples. The five pillars (*vahalkada*) represent the Buddha manifesting from the centre to the four cardinal directions.⁴⁸¹ Link to the Aśoka pillar, the Buddha used to represent as pillars in Buddhist rock-cut practice in India, and stone pillars as an architectural form manifests Buddhists spiritual sustenance about the Buddha. Comparatively, the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars are octagonal prisms, where the number eight has religious symbolism related to the *Dharmachakra* of Buddhism that represents the 'Noble Eightfold Path of Dharma Wheel',⁴⁸² which holds a pervasive symbol in representing religious order and customary practices that devout Hindu followers must uphold.⁴⁸³ Similar symbolism can be found for another octagonal pillar remains (Fig. 99). It is a remaining part of the rock-cut sculpture from AD 401 to AD 439, unearthed at Jiuquan, Gansu Province, China, in 1969, which depicts a carving of the eight Buddha from eight directions forming an eight-faceted pattern. Buddhist scriptures and the donor's name were engraved on the base of the round columns. The eight Buddha symbolises the Noble Eightfold Path of the Dharma Wheel. Although this relic was thought by researchers to be a stone tower (Buddhist pagoda) rather than a pillar, it is nevertheless a Buddhist pillar because it has similar features to the pillars at Foguang Monastery, the same octagonal columns, carved scriptures and the

⁴⁸¹ Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stūpa*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992), pp. 170-73

⁴⁸² Bhikkhu Anālayo, 'Turning the Wheel of Dharma', in *Handbook of Ethical Foundations of Mindfulness*, ed. by Steven Stanley, Ronald E. Purser and Nirbhay N. Singh, MIBH series, (Berlin: Springer, 2018), pp. 33-49.

⁴⁸³ One tribe apparel, 'Meaning of Dharma Wheel', *One tribe apparel*, 2019

<<https://www.onetribearrarel.com/blogs/pai/meaning-of-dharma-wheel>> [accessed 15 January 2021].

name of the donor, and a very slight shrinkage of the pillar. The Noble Eightfold Path of the Dharma Wheel was also applied in the Mogao Cave (Fig. 100). The painting shows the symbol of the Dharma Wheel, a fire and lotus bud on one side, a cuboid niche on the other. Below are figures, a soldier and a woman in Chinese costume, and an elephant, which is common in Buddhist art. Meanwhile, the octagonal pillars in China have the same structure as the railing surrounding the Sanchi *stūpa* (Fig. 101). Therefore, the geometry of the octagon was defined as a symbol of the cyclical nature of Buddhist practice by early Buddhist teachings, and this is the possible religious meaning of the octagonal stone pillars at Foguang Monastery.



Fig. 98. Pillars in Amaravati Marble, the third century AD.



Fig. 99. Miniature stone pillar remains from Sixteen Kingdom and Northern Liang dynasty (AD 401 - AD 439), unearthed at Jiuquan, Gansu Province in 1969.



Fig. 100. Dharma Wheel painting in Mogao caves.

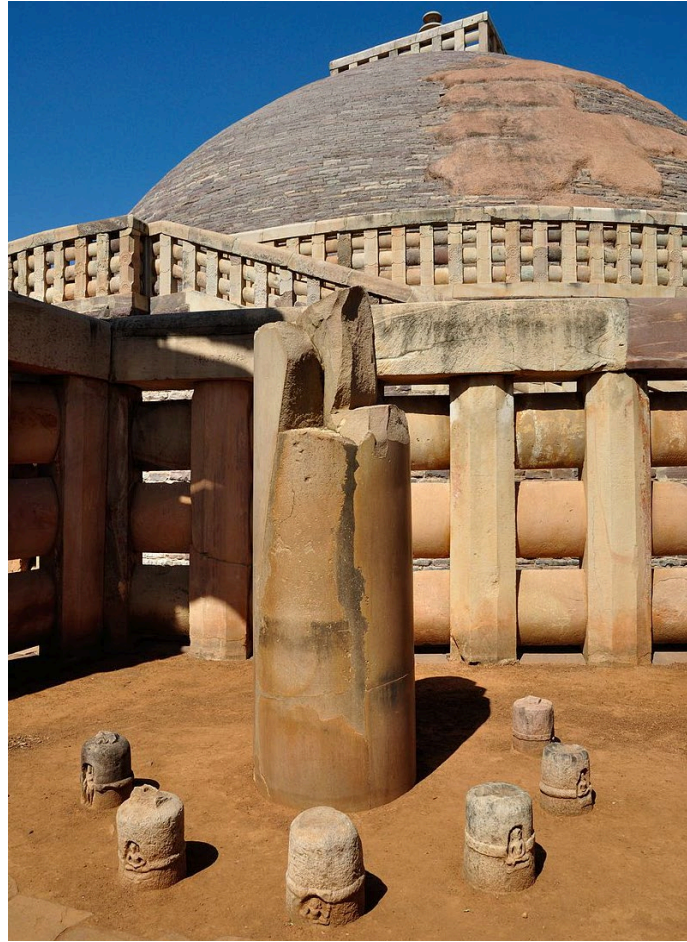


Fig. 101. Remains of the Aśoka Pillar in polished stone, located on the right side of the Southern Gateway, Great Stūpa at Sanchi (India).

As mentioned earlier, Buddhist pillars originally symbolised the Buddha in early Buddhist texts, and Aśoka enhanced this Buddhist cosmology by erecting huge stone pillars. Buddhist pillars, as sacred architectural elements at Buddhist sites, were certainly introduced to China by Indian Buddhists and witnessed by Chinese pilgrims in India. All these events encouraged the construction of Buddhist pillars in mainland China, even though only a few cases of monolithic pillars in Buddhist sites have been discovered, as most broken pillars stand in the wilderness. Moreover, Aśoka's contribution to Buddhist pillars through the interpretation and understanding of later generations can certainly be considered a merit of the founder, which could also inspire the Chinese donors who erected the *Uṣṇīṣa*

Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra pillars and into which they carved their names to gain Buddhist merits.

It is difficult to deduce the possible regulation of the location of Chinese Buddhist pillars purely on the basis of their rather limited remains, whose surroundings could well have undergone innumerable changes. For instance, some were placed in front of the image halls of monasteries or erected in individual residences, like the *sūtra* column in the house of Baiyuji; a pillar was discovered buried in an underground hall in Changsha. Meanwhile, many ruins of pillars were discovered in areas where Buddhist communities no longer existed. However, the location of the pillar should definitely be at a Buddhist site with a function, otherwise it would hardly have been shaped as a sacred monument for Buddhists. Pillars have no content like a *stūpa* where Buddhist relics are kept, or like an image hall that has a utilitarian function. This type of monument, however, was engraved with *sūtra* and symbolic decoration that enabled the Buddhist ritual of circumambulating pillars. Therefore, it was able to maintain its religious significance and stood in Buddhist communities.

There is a general consensus that the *sūtra* pillar before the Buddha Hall proves the date on which the current hall was rebuilt, as the donor's name (Ning Gongyu, Chinese: 宁公遇) and donation date (in AD 857) are carved in the pillar; furthermore, her name was written repeatedly under beam of the hall, and the architectural structure of the entire building was formed according to the

practices of the Tang dynasty.⁴⁸⁴ The thesis does not question this general consensus but hopes to underline the relationship between the hall and the pillar: they were regarded to be built at the same time of Tang dynasty when the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* was popular. Concern was then raised as to the exact role the Buddhist pillar for the Buddha Hall actually played. During the Aśoka period, massive stone pillars played an important role in highlighting a Buddhist site in India, as this type of tall pillar can be seen from a long distance; furthermore, in light of the ancient Indic civilisation, pillars have been conceptualised as a sacred bridge connecting the 'navel of the earth' and heaven.⁴⁸⁵

The ritual of worshipping a pillar carved on monuments, such as the couple worshipping a pillar on the railing of Bodhgaya (the second century BC) and the worship of a pillar by a group of Buddhists on the railing of Sanchi (the third century BC),⁴⁸⁶ shows the important religious role of the pillar and the necessity of its practise to Buddhists. The polished Aśoka pillar, surrounded by a circle of small pillars (Fig. 60), stands near the Sanchi *stūpa* where the relics of the Buddha were kept, conveying Buddhist cosmology about the importance of building *stūpas*. This pillar's form, and even the rituals of pillar worship at Buddhist sites, may indicate the reign of imperial power. Comparatively, in AD 776A during the Tang dynasty, such an order was given by the emperor: 'all monks and nuns must

⁴⁸⁴ Sicheng Liang, '记五台山佛光寺的建筑 - 荟萃在一寺的魏、齐、唐、宋的四个孤例: 荟萃在一殿的唐代四种艺术' [Recording the Buildings of the Foguang Monastery in Mount Wutai], *Cultural Relics*, Z1 (1953), 76-121

Yuanhe Cui and Shiping Luo, '五台山佛光寺东大殿唐代重建若干问题稽考' [Archive-Investigation of Some Issues about the Rebuilding of the Buddha-Light Monastery in Mt.Wutai in the Tang-dynasty], *Mt Wutai Researches*, 3 (2018), 7-19 (p. 7).

⁴⁸⁵ Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publications, 2014), pp. 44-7.

⁴⁸⁶ S. Krishnamurthy and Sachin Kr. Tiwary, 'Origin, Development and Decline of Monolithic Pillars and the Continuity of the Tradition in Polyolithic, Non-Lithic and Structural Forms', *Ancient Asia*, 7 (2016).

recite the *Dharani sūtra* within a month and recite it twenty-one times a day until the end of the year'. The *Dharani sūtra* engraved on the pillar would be easy for everyone to see and for them thus to conduct this daily ritual.

6.3 Summary

The discussion of Buddhist pillars worldwide and the interpretation of *sūtra* pillars at Foguang Monastery originally took its cue from the monumental pillars in India, especially the Aśoka pillars. Aśoka pillars is a typical example of the erection of a Buddhist pillar, which also inspired Buddhist merit for the erection of pillars in China. Meanwhile, the cult of pillars is an essential factor to be considered as a component in monastic design because it not only reflects the historical trend of Buddhist practice, but also reveals the influence of politics on religious development. The excessive interference by imperial power in the development of religious architectural forms and ceremonial ritual requirements (such as the worship Buddhist pillars in India and China) could have eventually led to the gradual disappearance of pillars at Buddhist sites. This is because successive changes of rulership certainly affected the stability of Buddhist architecture and also led to the discontinuation of the development of single-function Buddhist pillars.

Although the earliest remains of pillars discovered to date appeared during the Tang dynasty in AD 699, it is very likely that there was already a tradition of erecting pillars at Buddhist sites before the Tang dynasty, but that it could only be defined as a formal religious system since that period as the daily worship of the

sūtra pillars was first required by the Tang ruling family. This ruling also marks the officially defined use of the pillars at Buddhist sites in the following period. The popularity of erecting *sūtra* pillars at Chinese Buddhist sites was clearly spread over a long period of time as some remains date back to the Ming dynasty.

The Aśoka pillars that initially appeared in Buddhist communities in the third century BC in India inspired the generations of Chinese Buddhist stone tablets. However, the remains of *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars have only been found in China to date, and most of these after the seventh century AD, and this thesis argues that *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars are a regeneration integrating the cult of Indian pillars and the consciousness of the symbolism of the Eightfold Path of Buddhism. Based on the discussions of Buddhist pillars in India and in China in this chapter, the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars at Foguang Monastery are inevitably related to the Indian pillars, even if their dimensions and forms vary. However, a 15-metre-high Buddhist pillar was discovered in Zhaozhou in Hebei Province, suggesting that Chinese Buddhists also historically practised the construction of gigantically large pillars. Chinese Buddhist pillars are thus closely related to the Aśoka pillars, though they differ in dimension and shape.

Most importantly, Chinese *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars developed that mainly influenced the *maṇḍalisation* of esoteric Buddhism. The early period of Buddhist practice rooted from Buddhist teaching during the Aśoka era had not yet achieved systematic symbolic visualisation in the form of the *maṇḍala* diagram. The early creation was done more metaphorically (figuratively), however, the *maṇḍala*

ideology enabled Buddhist practice to reflect sacred meanings in a more abstract way and through simpler geometric forms, just as the geometric configuration of the octagonal pillar shafts corresponds to the esoteric Buddhist *maṇḍala* model of the *Mahāvairocana* Buddha. In addition, as the function of the Aśoka pillars in the third century BC played an essential role in marking Buddhist sites in India, so too did the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars at Foguang Monastery and others in Chinese Buddhist communities, and foremost the pillars provided the chance to chant the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* through circumambulation. In short, the three *sūtra* pillars erected at Foguang Monastery visualise the *maṇḍala* mode of esoteric Buddhism and have their roots in the Aśoka pillars of India.

Chapter 7 - Six Realms of Saṃsāra in the Ancient Patriarchal Pagoda of Foguang Monastery

7.1 The origins of the Patriarchal Pagoda at Foguang Monastery

The Ancient Patriarchal Pagoda as the oldest monument in the Foguang Monastery points to the different religious context before the establishment of the current Tang monastery and is related to the early Buddhist cosmology of Saṃsāra (death and rebirth). The changes in location of such funerary pagodas in the Foguang Monastery showcase the impact of Chinese culture, especially the concept of life and death, on the construction of Buddhist monument.

The Ancient Patriarchal Pagoda stands to the south of the Buddha Hall and shows reverence for the dead. It is located in the corner of the highest platform of the entire courtyard near the rock surface and was first built between AD 386 and AD 534;⁴⁸⁷ is approximately eight metres in height, has a hexagonal plane, and was made of brick, with a lotus-shaped bowl supporting a calabash-shaped capital.



Fig. 102. 3D model of Ancient Patriarchal Pagoda with the Zhengtong Sūtra stone pillar.

The decoration contains the Chinese dougong element imitating a wooden structure. It was built in the form of a flame-shaped arch that opened outwards through a narrow interior. It has survived three Buddhist persecutions (AD 840 - AD 846, AD 955 - AD 959, and AD 1507 - AD 1567) (Fig. 102).

⁴⁸⁷ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, 五台山佛光寺 [Foguang Monastery of Mount Wutai], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010), p. 189.

There are two status housings inside. Although there is direct evidence as to the identity of the owner of the tomb tower, there are two different inferences. Depending on the statue's name, it was regarded as the tomb tower of the elite monks Wuming and Huiming, who were crucial to the foundation of the Buddhist site of Foguang Monastery;⁴⁸⁸ the other suggests that the ancient pagoda is the memorial tower of Master Tanluan, who was credited as the founder of Pure Land Buddhism.⁴⁸⁹ It was built between the end of the Eastern Wei dynasty and the beginning of the Northern Qi dynasty (AD 550 - AD 557).⁴⁹⁰ Foguang Monastery is said to be the place where Master Tanluan cut his hair in his early years to become a monk. The Foguang Monastery is thus said to be the oldest monastery of Pure Land Buddhism.⁴⁹¹ This thesis agrees the latter point of view because compared to these abbots, as Tanyao apparently plays the most prominent role in the development of Buddhism and the founding of Foguang Monastery; from this perspective, he very much deserves to have a monument erected to him at Foguang Monastery.

The architectural prototype of the Chinese pagoda is the Indian *stūpa*, on which there has been general consensus for several decades. However, most research still focuses on the architectural appearance rather than in-depth interpretation of the meaning behind the architectural surface, which is also true for the Foguang Monastery pagoda. This chapter therefore focuses on the

⁴⁸⁸ Zhiyong Wang and Zhengsen Cui, *五台山佛教史* [The Buddhism History of Mount Wutai], (Taiyuan: Shaanxi People's Publishing House, 2000), p. 341.

⁴⁸⁹ Xun Cao (a), '建筑史的伤痛' [Fallacies in the History of Architecture], *The Architect*, 2 (2008), 95-102

⁴⁹⁰ Xun Cao (b), '建筑史的伤痛' [Fallacies in the History of Architecture], *Journal of Chinese Architecture History*, 1 (2012), 428-88

⁴⁹¹ Xun Cao (b), (2012), 428-88

comparative analysis between the Indian *stūpa* and the Chinese pagoda and aims to find the Buddhist ideology and architectural meaning of the construction of the Foguang Monastery pagoda.

When Indian *stūpa* made of stone or brick reached China, the dome-form fabricated from this durable material was quickly integrated into the Chinese culture of funerary architecture. It was not often used for people who were still alive, but this dome and tomb-shaped architecture was rather more typically applied in cemetery building. These cultural conflicts without a doubt would lead to architectural changes, but the process would be very slow, starting from the imitatory construction of *stūpa*. Liang Sicheng has already mapped out the evolution of Indian *stūpa* in China (Fig. 103): Indian dome-shaped stone *stūpa* possibly found their way towards hybridisation with Chinese multi-storied towers (made by wood) that finally led to the creation of the Chinese Buddhist pagodas. The various pagodas, depending on their forms, were divided into five categories: uni-storeyed; multi-storeyed; multi-eaved; bottle-shaped; and Vajra-based.⁴⁹² The Ancient Patriarchal Pagoda (also called Ancient Master Monks' Pagoda) in Foguang Monastery was uni-storeyed.

The location of the Ancient Patriarchal Pagoda is unusual because it was built on the highest platform, which is normally the most important place of a courtyard in Chinese building culture, but it was not treated as a focal point; rather, it was built in a corner, with the Buddha Hall placed in the middle. On this

⁴⁹² Sicheng Liang, *图像中国建筑史* [A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture], (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2011), p. 51.

highest platform, there is not even enough space to walk around the pagoda. This deliberate arrangement of the Patriarchal Pagoda being placed close to the Buddha Hall has remained unnoticed and unexplained. This drives the current research to determine the possible reasons for such by tracing back its archetype - the Buddha *stūpa*.

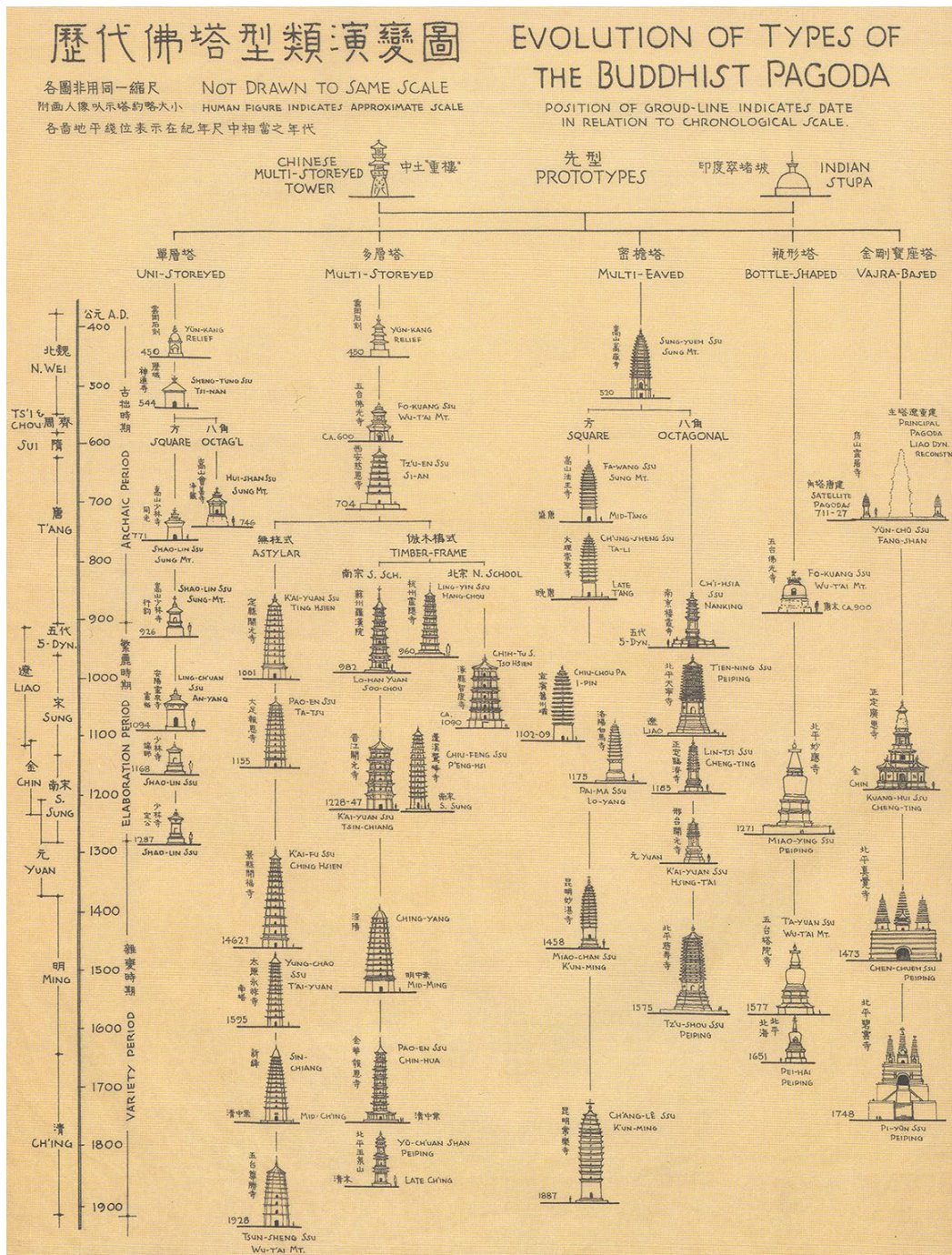


Fig. 103. Evolution of types of Buddhist pagodas.

This rather peculiar arrangement is clearly different from the usual locations depicted in historical texts or shown in paintings: for instance, with the exception of the Buddha's relics *stūpa*, according to the *Fo Guo Ji* (Chinese: 佛国记) by Faxian (AD 399 - AD 416), the reasons for erecting, and the forms of erected *stūpa* could be various in nature, which could be directly or indirectly related to the Buddha, such as the place where the Buddha was born, or the site where Buddha taught and meditated; the birthplace of the Kassapa Buddha (the third Buddha of Bhadrakalpa), or the place where Kassapa Buddha encountered his father; even the location where the Kassapa Buddha died. *Stūpa* could be erected facing the Buddha Hall, rising to twenty-one to twenty-four metres in height, or be built in front of houses but be smaller in size (six to seven metres).⁴⁹³

There are few remains comparable to the Patriarchal Pagoda of Foguang Monastery; the remains of the foundation of the Patriarchal Pagoda at Baolin Monastery could perhaps be considered close. This is also an ancient Tang dynasty monastery in the present-day city of Lianjiang in Fujian province. The site of the Patriarchal Pagoda was at the back of the Buddha Hall.⁴⁹⁴ Furthermore, according to Zhang Yuhuan's research on Buddhist pagodas, the relationship between the Buddha Hall and the pagoda is varied and difficult to generalise: on the back hill to the Buddha Hall; in front of the Buddha Hall; inside the Buddha Hall; on the axis or in the middle of the courtyard; on one side of the courtyard; and so

⁴⁹³ 佛国记 [Fo Guo Ji], the earliest extant historical text by Chinese traveling Buddhist Faxian, recorded his seeking Buddhism journey from Chang'an city in China to India between AD 400 - AD 410.

⁴⁹⁴ Xun Cao (b), '建筑史的伤痛' [Fallacies in the History of Architecture], *Journal of Chinese Architecture History*, 1 (2012), 428-88

on.⁴⁹⁵ The freestanding pagodas (Indian *stūpas*) in Chinese Buddhist monasteries contradict the classical architectural concept of standardisation, modularisation, and similarity. The different locations of the pagodas within Chinese Buddhist sites also indicates the uncertain view of application adopted by the Buddhists. Not all parts of foreign cultures can emerge anew after being digested by local tradition; indeed, they can disappear completely in the process of cultural integration. If the ancient *stūpa* of Foguang Monastery was indeed the funerary monument of a Chinese monk, this is somewhat strange because, from the Chinese point of view, a funerary monument was not normally erected next to a space used by living people, so this kind of monument would have been counter to Chinese tradition. This could be the reason why sepulchral pagodas at Foguang Monastery were gradually removed out of the enclosed courtyard.

Tracing *stūpa* back to India, one may note that they are also called Dagoba or Dagaba, which consists of the words Dhatugraba (the Buddha relics) and container in Sanskrit.⁴⁹⁶ Originally, *stūpa* were employed to house the ashes and/or charred remains of the dead from a funeral pyre, and the funeral ceremony custom was organised by a funerary association.⁴⁹⁷ Erecting tumuli over corporeal relics could be rooted in pre-Buddhist India, although this practice was not particular to India alone.⁴⁹⁸ The Buddha seems to have initiated the practice of remembering a dead master through erecting *stūpa* at the crossing

⁴⁹⁵ Yuhuan Zhang, *中国佛塔史* [Chinese Stūpa History], (Beijing: Science Press, 2006), pp. 66-8.

⁴⁹⁶ Funo Shuji, *亚洲城市建设史* [History of Asian Cities], trans. by Huiqin Hu and Yao Shen, (Beijing: China Construction Industry Press, 2010), p. 84.

⁴⁹⁷ Debala Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1971), p. 21.

⁴⁹⁸ Debala Mitra, (1971), p. 21.

of four highways, therefore *stūpas*, from their origins as simple mounds, became integral ritual sites for Buddhists and the principal emblematic impression of the Buddhist faith.⁴⁹⁹ Undoubtedly, The Buddhist *stūpas* emerged immediately after the demise of Buddha, although these kinds of monumental mounds did, in fact, exist in his lifetime.⁵⁰⁰ When Buddha underwent his 'great pass away' (or *Mahāparinirvāṇa*) at the age of 80 at Kusinagara⁵⁰¹ in 483 BC,⁵⁰² after his cremation, his relics were divided into eight portions and allotted to eight places: Ajatasattu (Kng of Magadha); Licchavis of Vesali; Sakyas of Kapilavastu; Bulis of Allakappa; Koliyas of Ramagama; Brahmin of Vethadipa; Mallas of Pava; and Mallas of Kusinara.⁵⁰³ Furthermore, Droṇa, who divided the portions, retained the cremation urn of Śākyamuni, and Moriyas received the funeral pyre's embers. Ten *stūpas* were then erected over these relics.⁵⁰⁴ Because few of these earliest *stūpas* have been identified, it is difficult obtain any accurate construction information. Davids points out that the *stūpas* were discovered at Sakyas by William Claxton Peppe in the late nineteenth century,⁵⁰⁵ although this speculation is somewhat controversial (Fig. 104).⁵⁰⁶

⁴⁹⁹ Debala Mitra, (1971), p. 21.

⁵⁰⁰ Debala Mitra, (1971), p. 21.

⁵⁰¹ Robin Andrew Evelyn Coningham and others, 'The Earliest Buddhist Shrine: Excavating the Birthplace of the Buddha, Lumbini (Nepal)', *Antiquity*, 87.338 (2013), 1104-23

⁵⁰² John M. Senaveratne and others, 'THE DATE OF BUDDHA'S DEATH AND CEYLON CHRONOLOGY', *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 23.67 (1914), 141-273

⁵⁰³ Thomas William Rhys Davids, 'Aśoka and the Buddha - Relics', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland*, 33.3 (1901), 397-410 (p. 397).

⁵⁰⁴ Thomas William Rhys Davids, (1901), 397-410 (p. 398).

⁵⁰⁵ Thomas William Rhys Davids, (1901), 397-410 (p. 398).

⁵⁰⁶ Anandajoti Bhikkhu, 'Stūpa at Piprahwa', *World History Encyclopaedia*, 2020
<https://www.worldhistory.org/image/12881/stupa-at-piprahwa/> [accessed 6 May 2022].



Fig. 104. Brick *stūpa* at Piprahwa.

For the relic *stūpa* of the Buddha, although the Buddha died, his biography still goes on in the sense of a ‘pre-life’, ‘life’, and ‘post-life’.⁵⁰⁷ In addition, Strong also concludes that from the single *stūpa* at a crossroads for a master of Buddhism, and the eight great *stūpa* housing the Buddha’s relics as divided by Droṇa, to the 84,000 *stūpas* ascribed to Aśoka who popularised this monumental tradition,⁵⁰⁸ this way of diffusion and recoupment is not only applied to Buddhist relics but is universal throughout Indian cosmology and philosophy. Moreover, he determined that because division ‘makes the whole Buddha multiply present’, the relics imply ‘embodiment of the Buddha’s life’.⁵⁰⁹

Stūpas are employed to ‘contain the physical remains of Buddha or one of his prominent disciples, or even commemorate a place linked to an important event

⁵⁰⁷ Brian O. Ruppert, ‘Review of *Relics of the Buddha*, by J. S. Strong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004)’, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 64.2 (2005), 437-39

⁵⁰⁸ The story of 84,000 *stūpas* erected because of Aśoka, also mentioned in 佛國記 [Foguo Ji or A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms] by Chinese Buddhist Fa-hsien (法显) who travelled by foot from China to India to acquire Buddhist texts at the end of the 3rd century AD and the beginning of the 4th century AD. The corresponding Chinese text is: ‘阿育王坏七塔，作八万四千塔。最初所作大塔，在城南三里余。此塔前有佛脚迹。起精舍，户北向塔。塔南有一石柱，围丈四五，高三丈余，上有铭题，云：“阿育王以阎浮提布施四方僧，还以钱赎，如是三反。”塔北三四百步，阿育王本于此做泥犁城，中央有石柱，亦高三丈余。上有师子，柱上有铭，记作泥犁城因缘，及年数、日、月’ [Aśoka destroyed seven *stūpas* (although it did not mention whether they are the seven of the eight ones containing the fragments of Buddha), erect 84,000 *stūpas*. The first one is placed three miles away from the city. There are Buddha’s footprints in front of this *stūpa*, and an abode facing to the north and this *stūpa*. In the south of the *stūpa*, a stone pillar is erected forty or fifty feet in width and more than thirty in high, inscription on it]. Source from: Peng Guo, 佛國記注釋 [Annotation of Foguo Ji], (Changchun: Changchun Publishing House, 1995), p. 90.

⁵⁰⁹ John S. Strong, ‘Two Buddha Relic Traditions’, *Religion Compass*, 1.3 (2007), 341-52

of the Buddha life or the Buddhism history'.⁵¹⁰ As previously mentioned, no pre-Aśoka *stūpa* have been identified with any real certainty, and no Buddhist text has recorded relic mounds being venerated prior to the Maurya period; thus, *stūpa*-worship can likely be traced from Aśoka's reign as the result of royal patronage from Buddhism.⁵¹¹ Archeologically speaking, most Buddhist shrines that were associated with the Buddha's life have been identified, with excavations reporting on any remains earlier than the third century BC.⁵¹² After the Maurya Empire and during the following Sunga Empire, sophisticated ornamentation of stone railings and the gateways surrounding the Buddhist *stūpa* or relic mounds emerged in central and eastern India.⁵¹³

The erection of *stūpas* in early times could be for various reasons: *Sārīrika*, as a receptacle for the bones and ashes of the Buddha and his chief disciple; *paribhogika*, as a receptacle for a sacred object such as a begging bowl or robe, ever used by the Buddha; the sacred places associated with the Buddha, e.g., the birthplace of the Buddha, the place where the Buddha once preached, etc.; to obtain religious merit, some small votive *stūpas* were erected by pilgrims.⁵¹⁴

Architecturally, *stūpas* were small and simple, consisting mainly of a base and a dome.⁵¹⁵ A wall or railing (or *vedika*) fenced off an enclosed path at the base of

⁵¹⁰ Dilip Kumar Chakrabarti, 'Buddhist Sites Across South Asia as Influenced by Political and Economic Forces', *World Archaeology*, 27.2 (1995), 185-202

⁵¹¹ Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, 2nd edn (Suffolk: Penguin Books, 1953), p. 45.

⁵¹² Robin Andrew Evelyn Coningham and others, 'The Earliest Buddhist Shrine: Excavating the Birthplace of the Buddha, Lumbini (Nepal)', *Antiquity*, 87.338 (2013), 1104-05

⁵¹³ Benjamin Rowland, (1953), p. 45.

⁵¹⁴ Debala Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1971), pp. 21-3.

⁵¹⁵ James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, (London: John Murray, 1899), p. 66.

a *stūpa*.⁵¹⁶ The dome usually has a square capital at the top, bearing a '*chhattra*', or umbrella, in the centre 'as a symbol of dignity'.⁵¹⁷ A stone railing with gates surrounded the typical decorative feature of the *stūpa*, which was common in the Sunga period (185 BC - 72 BC).⁵¹⁸ This arrangement created a circular passageway for Buddhists within the complex. One of most remarkable surviving cases, and which has been referred to frequently, is great *stūpa* I in Sanchi (Fig. 105). ranks among the oldest stone structures in India and is believed to have been originally built during the Aśoka period (268 BC - 232 BC) and then enlarged to approximately thirty-six metres during the Sunga period (185 BC to 73 BC) through the construction of a dome-shaped structure enveloping the original and smaller one.⁵¹⁹ It was also adorned with stone facings and a *vedika*.⁵²⁰ In addition, the Buddha's ashes' *stūpas* by the Licchavis clay at Vesali (or Vaishali), which was a small mound formed of 'layers of piled-up mud', was originally 25 ft (7.62 m) in diameter but was subsequently enlarged four times, with the first enlargement built of bricks (Fig. 106).⁵²¹ This *stūpa* is also considered the representative of the Maurya period and is one of the earliest *stūpas* discovered by archaeologists.⁵²² It is also believed that the popularity of *stūpa* building might change the Buddhist

⁵¹⁶ James Fergusson, (1899), p. 66.

⁵¹⁷ James Fergusson, (1899), p. 66.

⁵¹⁸ Benjamin Rowland, (1953), p. 45.

⁵¹⁹ Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient Indian: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publications, 2014), p. 91.

⁵²⁰ Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, (2014), p. 91.

⁵²¹ Debala Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1971), p. 21.

⁵²² Lars Fogelin, *An archaeological history of Indian Buddhism*, (Oxford: Oxford Handbooks, 2015), p. 84.

ritual path, moving it from circumambulating trees to the focal points of the *stūpa*.⁵²³



Fig. 105. Screenshot of Great *Stūpa* I at Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, India.
Ca. the third century BC through the first century AD.

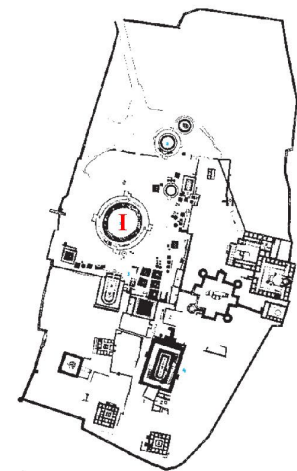


Fig. 106. Buddha's Ashes *Stūpa* at Vesali.

Stūpas came in a variety of forms. Brown illustrated these various forms at disparate locations and throughout different historical phases.⁵²⁴ Generally, there were three typical characteristics of *stūpa*: ① progressing symmetrically with a geometric centre-point; ② rising symmetrically and centrifugally from the geometric centre by a vertical axis; and ③ being oriented so that the cardinal

⁵²³ Lars Fogelin, (2015), pp. 82-5.

⁵²⁴ Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu Period)*, (Redditch: Read Books Limited, 2013), p. 62.

direction could be marked by gateways, niches, pillar groups, *vahalkada* (frontispiece), or face the supporting base of a polygonal *stūpa*.⁵²⁵ It also believed that this kind of strictly oriented *stūpa* plan, which is highly correlated to the 'maṇḍala field',⁵²⁶ indicates a central space employed for ritual practices, and the foremost of these subdivided squares in the layout are divided by grid lines to aid in positioning and installing the Buddha, *Bodhisattvas*, or gods.⁵²⁷ Architecturally, based on the discussion of the construction of *stūpas* in the early period, especially after the death of Gautama Siddhartha, the form was created following Buddhist philosophy, symbolic patterns (*maṇḍala*, for instance), and the basic principle that the Buddha is the centre of geometry. The closed structure of the shrines, such as the square stone fence or the circular stone dome, defines the spiritual symbolic space; it also defines the path of worship that leads around the centre of the architectural space where the Buddha's place is symbolised. The creation of *stūpa* with a '*pradakshina*'⁵²⁸ passage therefore defined and boosted the important ritual of circumambulation (or *pradakshina*) in Buddhism since the earliest times.

Since Buddhism first disseminated in the first century AD of Han dynasty from during the period of Indian emperor Aśoka of the Mauryan Empire (304 BC - 232 BC), more than two hundred years had passed (detailed discussion about when Buddhism initially spread across mainland China can be seen in the Introduction).

⁵²⁵ Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stūpa*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992), pp. 12-3, 104-15.

⁵²⁶ *Maṇḍala* is a spiritual guidance system and used to map by a square (or a circle) with four gates connecting various deities, which is deployed for meditation and trance induction. Source from: Wikipedia, 'Mandala', *The Wikipedia*, <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandala>> [accessed 15 June 2021].

⁵²⁷ Adrian Snodgrass, (1992), pp. 12-3, 104-15.

⁵²⁸ The Britannica, 'pradakshina', *The Britannica*, 2012 <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/pradakshina>> [accessed 16 May 2023].

However, between the second century BC to the second century AD, rock-sculpture (image, pillar) and rock-architecture (*stūpa*, cave, Chaitya Hall) were applied widely in Buddhist practice, showing considerable audacity and imaginative creation in India.⁵²⁹ When the first group of Chinese itinerant monks trekked from mainland China to India, these enduring and magnificent rock monuments on the pilgrimage roads certainly impressed their knowledge of monastic architecture. This is also the reason why Buddhist rock caves in China originated in the third century, flourished in the fifth and sixth centuries AD, and declined in the ninth and tenth AD.⁵³⁰ The popularity of rock architecture then gradually took hold in mainland China.

When comparing the similarities and differences in the function of *stūpas* in India and China, it can be inferred that Chinese Buddhist *stūpas* were not solely built for the purpose of containing Buddha's relics. Instead, these Chinese replicas served as tangible reminders, offering a suitable and reverent means of preserving the relics of esteemed monks. They also expressed the disciples' respect while potentially conveying the practical teachings of the Trikāya doctrine of Buddha.

An early study by the Japanese architectural historian Itō Chūta comparing Chinese and Indian *stūpas* argues that this type of monument undoubtedly originated in India due to there not being the same functional type of architecture

⁵²⁹ Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu Period)*, (Redditch: Read Books Limited, 2013), p. 80.

⁵³⁰ Bai Su, *中国石窟寺研究* [Research on rock-cut monasteries in China], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 1996), p. 18.

for containing Buddha's relics in China during this period.⁵³¹ Although stūpa, as one of the monumental components in Buddhism, were also used in Chinese monasteries, very few of these have survived. The Great White Stūpa is one such example. Also known as Sakyamuni Buddha relic tower erected in the centre of Tayuansi Monastery located on Mount Wutai (Fig. 107), it is currently 75.3 metres in height and has undergone a number of refurbishments throughout different dynasties. Therefore, it is difficult to determine its original design due to a lack of historical documentation or evidence.

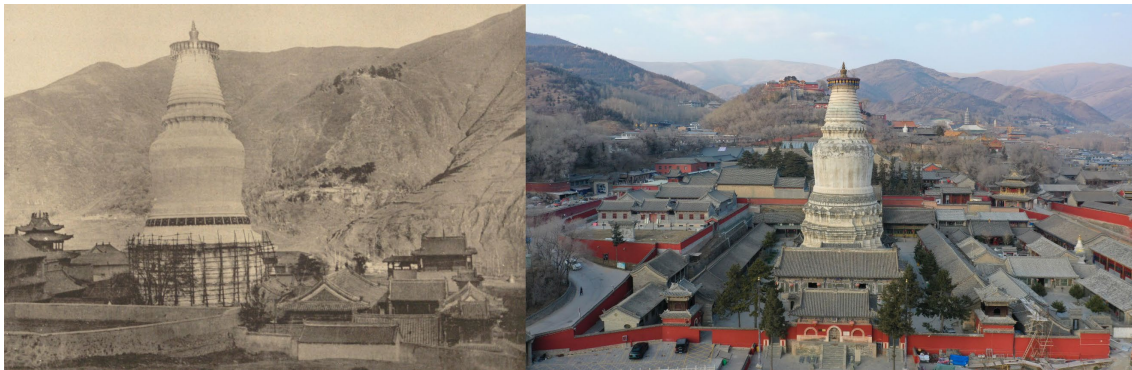


Fig. 107. Sakyamuni Buddha relic tower in Tayuansi Monastery on Mount Wutai, photo taken by Tokiwa Daijo and Sekino Tadashi in 1925-1931 (left) and the same shown in 2020, photo taken by author (right).

However, it is generally regarded to have initially been built during the same period when thousands of Buddhist relics were spreading throughout Aśoka's India. Based on stone inscriptions⁵³² and historical texts, scholars have confirmed this interpretation and point out that the current Great White Pagoda (stūpa) differs from the typical Indian type; rather it is more akin to the Nepalese style constructed by the artist Araniko, who came to China and built Buddhist

⁵³¹ Chūta Itō, *中国建筑史* [History of Chinese architecture], trans. by Qingquan Chen, (Changsha: Hunan University Press, 2016), pp. 122, 227.

⁵³² 嘉靖十七年《五台山大塔院寺重修阿育王所建释迦文佛真身舍利宝塔》[In the 17th year of Jiajing Reign (嘉靖十七年, AD 1538), an inscription was made for the 'Restoration of True Body Relics of Shakyamuni Buddha at Mount Wutai Data Si (Great Stūpa Monastery) built by the Emperor Aśoka].

万历十年《敕建五台山大塔寺院寺碑记》: '昔阿育王获佛舍利三千余颗, 各建塔藏之, 散布华夷, 今五台山灵鹫山塔是其一.....' [In the 10th year of Wanli Reign (万历十年, AD 1582), an inscription was made for establishment of the Data Si (Great Stūpa Monastery) at Mount Wutai].

Although in Wanli inscription, the number of Buddha's relics (more than three thousands) is different from the quantity recorded in *佛國記* [Fo Guo Ji] by Chinese Buddhist Fa-hsien (AD 840), the two text show the existence of stūpa in China, associated with Aśoka.

monuments in the Yuan dynasty, and this Great White stūpa is one of his masterpieces.⁵³³ In addition, according to Huang, this kind of monument should have first become prevalent in Nepal, then spread to Tibet, and finally arrived in Beijing.⁵³⁴

Stūpas played a significant role in terms of housing the relics of the Buddha, which were constructed in relation to the *maṇḍala*. However, other *Bodhisattvas* mentioned in Buddhist *sūtras* lack physical bodies or relics, instead, their existence can be symbolically depicted within the Buddhist cosmos, it is possible that a proficient Buddhist practitioner familiar with Sanskrit may have created this paraphrase.⁵³⁵

7.2 Conceptualisation of the Patriarchal Pagoda via the Wheel of *Samṣāra* theory

According to the research by Le Huu Phuoc on the history of Tibetan Buddhism, this form of Buddhist monument can be traced back to eighth-century AD Tibet where Buddhism developed the prevailing religion as a result of the defeat of Bön (the native pre-Buddhist religion).⁵³⁶ Prior to this, Tibetan Vajrayāna possibly interacted with the culture or rituals of Bön. Vajrayāna⁵³⁷ was the Buddhist sect

⁵³³ Sen Zheng, '五台山塔院寺大白塔' [The White Stupa at Sakyamuni Buddha relic tower Monastery on Mount Wutai], *Mt Wutai Researches*, 1 (1987), 27-9 (p. 29).

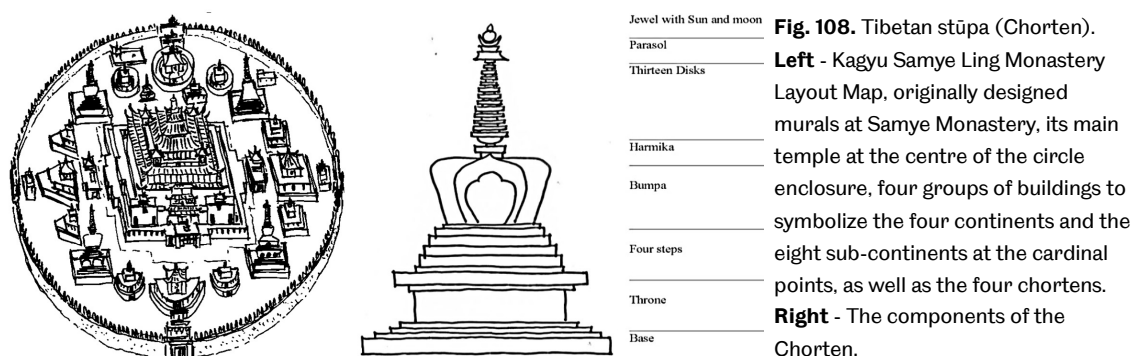
⁵³⁴ Shengzhang Huang, '五台山塔院寺的来源与创建新考' [Rethink of the history of the Sakyamuni Buddha relic tower Monastery on Mount Wutai], *Academic Journal of Jinyang*, 1 (1982), 51-5

⁵³⁵ Hiram Woodward, 'Esoteric Buddhism in Southeast Asia in the Light of Recent Scholarship', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 35.2 (2004), 329-54

⁵³⁶ Le Huu Phuoc, *Buddhist Architecture*, (Grafikol, 2010), p. 40.

⁵³⁷ *Vajrayāna* (Sanskrit: "Diamond Vehicle" or "Thunderbolt Vehicle") or *Mantrayāna* (Sanskrit: "Path of the Sacred Formulas"), also known as Tantric Buddhism, first emerged in various parts of India and Sri Lanka. The esoteric nature of Tantric doctrine and practice makes identifying the origins of the *Vajrayāna* school difficult, but some Buddhist traditions associate them with *Nāgārjuna* and *Asaṅga* and therefore suggest that *Vajrayāna* began to develop quietly in the 2nd or 4th century AD. *Vajrayāna* was prominent in India and Tibet, and a form of it, which does not seem to have

which dominated Tibet, Mongolia, and the Himalayan countries, as opposed to the Theravada and Mahayana that conquered Southeast and East Asia.⁵³⁸ The Tibetan stūpa is also known as a chorten (or mchod.rten),⁵³⁹ and is believed to be ‘a direct evolution from the Indian stūpa’ consisting of a base, medhi, and a throne. However, the form of the chorten varies widely based on these usual configurations.⁵⁴⁰ Kagyu Samye Ling Monastery, for instance, ‘the first Buddhist school in Tibet’, designed and supervised by Padmasambhava who was the first ancestral master of Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism was planned and overseen the initial Buddhist school in Tibet, and the project was completed in AD 779.⁵⁴¹ Samye Monastery’s layout is believed to be based on the maṇḍala: an immense hall enclosed by small-scale stūpas or buildings. The monastery is placed in the centre of the site and the whole layout is circled by a fence wall decorated with tiny chortens on top, and with four chortens arranged at the four corners (northwest, southwest, northeast and south-east) (Fig. 108).⁵⁴²



emphasised sexoyogic practices, spread to China and then to Japan, where it became associated with the Tendai and Shingon schools.

Source from: Giuseppe Tucci, David Llewelyn Snellgrove and Hajime Nakamura, 'Vajrayana (Tantric or Esoteric) Buddhism', *The Britannica*, 2019 <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Buddhism/Vajrayana-Tantric-or-Esoteric-Buddhism>> [accessed 11 May 2022].

⁵³⁸ Le Huu Phuoc, (2010), pp. 40-1.

⁵³⁹ Le Huu Phuoc, (2010), p. 47.

⁵⁴⁰ Wah Sang Wong, 'Stūpa, pagoda and Chorten: origin and meaning of Buddhist Architecture', in *Proceedings of the 4th Annual International Conference on Architecture, Athens, Greece, July 7-10, 2014*, (Athens: Athens Institute for Education and Research), pp. 11-5.

⁵⁴¹ Weirong Shen, 大喜乐与大圆满 - 庆祝谈锡永先生八十华诞汉藏佛学研究论集 [Introduction to Omniscient Wisdom - Architecture of the Heart Sūtra, the Maṇḍala and the Samye Monastery in Great Bliss, Great Perfection - Monograph Series in Sino - Tibetan Buddhist Studies], (Beijing: China Tibetology Press, 2014), pp. 676-92.

⁵⁴² Weirong Shen, (2014), pp. 676-92.

However, if housing the Buddha's relics is the principal purpose for erecting *stūpas* in India,⁵⁴³ whereas Tibetan *stūpas* (or chortens) have patently widened this commemorate role, chortens could be small-scale free-standing sculptures used as decorative components, such as the chortens on the top of the Samye Monastery's wall. It is impossible to be certain that each chorten contains the Buddha's relics as many chortens have been erected since the eighth century AD; it also could be placed in the minor part to support the protagonist - main hall, instead of standing in the ritual centre of the Buddhist site as is found in India. Architecturally, if housing the Buddha's relics is not the essential requirement for erecting *stūpa*, what then are the reasons for the presence of *stūpas* in Tibet or the Chinese mainland, and the primary function of Tibetan *stūpas* in Buddhist communities? Furthermore, in mainland China, another form of architecture, known as pagodas or towers made from timber or brick, were used for housing the Buddha's relics, but how should this type of monument in Chinese Buddhist sites (or *vihara*) be understood now? For example, the White pagoda remains found in Qingzhou, Inner Mongolia, built in AD1047 and finished in AD1049 and measured 73.27 m in height, were placed in the geometric centre of the entire monastery courtyard.⁵⁴⁴ This seven-layer brick tower is regarded as imitating the Chinese timber pavilion style.⁵⁴⁵ Although it is also known as Shakyamuni Buddha *stūpa* and commonly named a pagoda in Chinese, no scholar has evaluated whether any of Buddha's remains are contained within. Another

⁵⁴³ *Stūpa*: The Buddha had instructed his followers to cremate his body as the body of a universal monarch would be cremated and then to distribute the relics among various groups of his lay followers, who were to enshrine them in hemispherical reliquaries, called *stūpas*. Source from: Donald S. Lopez, 'The Buddha's relics', *The Britannica*, 2017 <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Buddha-founder-of-Buddhism/The-Buddhas-relics>> [accessed 11 May 2022].

⁵⁴⁴ Xi'nian Fu, 中国古代城市规划, 建筑群布局及建筑设计方法研究 [Research on urban planning, architectural group layout and architectural design methods in ancient China], (Beijing: Construction Industry Press, 2001), p. 83.

⁵⁴⁵ Xi'nian Fu, (2001), p. 83.

example of a timber pagoda is the one found in Yingxian that is generally believed to have been built in 1056, later experiencing several restorations over subsequent dynasties.⁵⁴⁶

According to a space design analysis by Wang et al., it was erected 'as a vertically rising Buddhist temple and the interior space of each of its successive layers was customised for statues installed on each floor'.⁵⁴⁷ However, if it has been identified that it housed the Buddha's tooth, this Chinese *stūpa*, providing accessible inner space for worship, seems to fulfil the same ritual needs as the Chaitya-griha, although the main difference is that it not only contains Buddha's remains, it also enshrines an externalised Buddha statue at its centre.

Furthermore, Giant Wild Goose Pagoda in Xi'an city was originally built in AD 652 during the Tang dynasty, and placed in the great Ci'en Monastery where Xuanzang lived after travelling back from India and spending ten years translating the Buddhist *sūtras*, in order to house the seventy-five paper books (translated from Sanskrit to Chinese) and one thousand three hundred and thirty-five rolls of translated *sūtras*, Xuanzang proposed to build a tower and supervised the design and construction of the pagoda.⁵⁴⁸ However, it is unlikely that the existence of Buddha's relics inside can be proven, but it is certain that Xuanzang's skull used to be housed in Giant Wild Goose Pagoda before it was dug out by the

⁵⁴⁶ Zehui Li and others, 'A Design Hypothesis for the Floor-Plan Dimensions of Sakyamuni Pagoda, Ying County, Shanxi Province: Starting with an Old Photo Taken in 1933', *Journal of Architecture History*, 2 (2021), 56-70 (p. 57).

⁵⁴⁷ Nan Wang, Zhuonan Wang and Hongyu Zheng, 'Round Heaven and Square Earth, Unity of Pagoda and Statuary - A Study on the Geometric Proportions of Space and Statues inside the Timber Pagoda in Ying County', *Journal of Architecture History*, 2 (2021), 71-94 (p. 72).

⁵⁴⁸ Giant Wild Goose Pagoda Safekeeping Office, '大雁塔' [Giant Wild Goose Pagoda], *Cultural Relics*, 5 (1978), 90-1

Japanese in 1942.⁵⁴⁹ The great Patriarchal Pagoda at the southern end of the Buddha Hall of Foguang Monastery has a hexagonal plan and is approximately eight metres high,⁵⁵⁰ which is not comparable to the giant towers discussed. It is only a small tomb tower with a small volume, but its ground plan transmits the Buddhist 'six worlds of existence'.

Pagodas became the places where monks die and represent rebirth. Mahayana Buddhism defined a 'Wheel of *Saṃsāra* (existence, Chinese: 轮回)' as the cosmic model for Buddhists, which has 'Six Realms of Existence' or a 'Twelve-fold Cycle of Dependent Co-Origination'.⁵⁵¹ The conceptualisation of *Saṃsāra* usually has six segments, which show the six realms of being (Heaven Realm; Hell Realm; Realm of Animals; Realm of Rage and Conflict; Real of Frustrated Carving; and Human Realm) at four distinct levels (metaphysical; reincarnational; ecological; personality typology; and typology of states of consciousness).⁵⁵² In this *Saṃsāra* - the beginningless and endless process of living and dying - the goal of Buddhism is to be liberated from this cycle, to attain freedom from this transmigration of souls and to awaken to nirvana.⁵⁵³ This foundation knowledge was the ground theory of Buddhist practice, such as meditation, *maṇḍala* images, and

⁵⁴⁹ Scientific Research Management Department of the Party History Research Center of the CPC Central Committee, *军侵华罪行纪实: 1931-1945* [Documentary on the crimes of Japanese invasion of China: 1931-1945], (Beijing: Chinese Communist Party History Publishing House, 2015), pp. 297-307

⁵⁵⁰ Yingying Zhang and Yan Li, *五台山佛光寺* [Foguang Monastery of Mount Wutai], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010), p. 140.

⁵⁵¹ Ralph Metzner, 'The Buddhist six-worlds model of consciousness and reality', *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 28 (1996), 155-66 (p. 156).

⁵⁵² Ralph Metzner, (1996), 155-66 (p. 156).

⁵⁵³ Masao Abe, 'Transformation in Buddhism', *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 7 (1987), 5-24 (p. 7).

architectural monuments. The hexagonal Patriarchal Pagoda at Foguang Monastery also transfers the same spiritual allocation (Fig. 109).

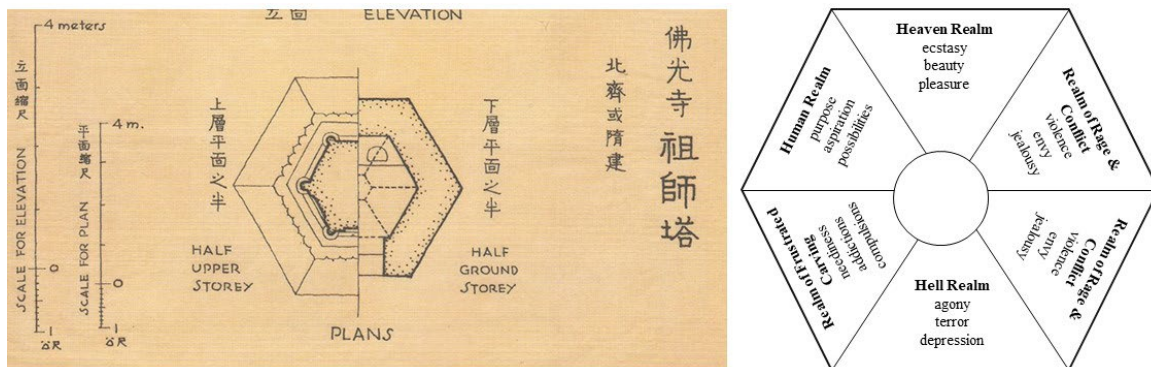


Fig. 109. Hexagonal plan of the Great Patriarchal Pagoda represents the 'six worlds of existence' cult.⁵⁵⁴

Mount Wutai near the Foguang Monastery had numerous monasteries. Tokiwa Daijo and Sekino Tadashi's book has provided many valuable images regarding these.⁵⁵⁵ Five pagodas (Fig. 110, left), for instance, were built of copper during the Ming dynasty to contain *sūtras* and are enshrined in front of the Buddha Hall, and has a result of the material used, their dimension shrunk dramatically. Only two of them currently survive, but all of them could see the 'six segments' of the Wheel of *Samsāra*. Another is an octagonal brick pagoda with five layers (Fig. 111, right), integrating the traditional pavilion style of Chinese architecture seen at Bamboo Monastery located on the west peak of Mount Wutai. Likewise, its pagoda used to be placed at the centre of the whole layout. Furthermore, the pagoda was made of stacked hexagons that gradually shrink, which would be related into the 'Wheel of Birth and Death'.

⁵⁵⁴ Left: Sicheng Liang, 图像中国建筑史 [A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture], (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1991), pp. 43-9. Right: Drawn by the author.

⁵⁵⁵ Daijo Tokiwa and Tadashi Sekino, 支那文化史迹 [China Cultural Historic Site], (Kyōto-shi: Hozokan, 1941), pp. 90-8.



Fig. 110. Pagodas of Zhulin Monastery, Mount Wutai, Shanxi province.

Left - Five pagodas in front of Buddha Hall at Great Xiantong Monastery, Mount Wutai, Shanxi.

Right - Pagoda in the centre of Zhulin (bamboo forest) Monastery, West Peak in Mount Wutai, Shanxi.

In addition, Liang Sicheng has provided an exhaustive map charting the evolutionary process of Chinese Buddhist pagodas from their 'India *stūpa*' roots, integrating elements of the 'Chinese multi-storied tower'.⁵⁵⁶ There is diversity in the range of materials and dimension, such as timber, brick, or metal used in constructing *stūpas*. These factors may be the driving force accelerating the diversity of Chinese *stūpas*, pagodas, and Tibet chorten; however, undoubtedly the definition of a Chinese Buddhist *stūpa* is broader than just relating to Shakyamuni relics alone. Similar research into this area conducted by Wong concluded that 'the pagoda of Han ethnicity represented our (Chinese) traditional world when Buddhists started to intermingle'.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁶ Sicheng Liang, *图像中国建筑史* [A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture], (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2011), p. 19.

⁵⁵⁷ Wah Sang Wong, 'Stūpa, pagoda and Chorten: origin and meaning of Buddhist Architecture', in *Proceedings of the 4th Annual International Conference on Architecture, Athens, Greece, July 7-10, 2014*, (Athens: Athens Institute for Education and Research), pp. 11-5.

In *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* of the Ming dynasty, there are descriptions about the ritual: *'keeping the right side of the body towards the centre of a pagoda three times (in a clockwise direction) can practise and reap the fruits of piety'*.⁵⁵⁸ The *Avataṃsaka sūtra* was initially created in India, became widespread in South India between the second and the middle of the fourth century AD, and later spread to northwest India, central India, and China.⁵⁵⁹ It is the most important classic of Mahayana Buddhism and the basis of the Huayan sect.⁵⁶⁰ As the oldest act or custom in Buddhism and Hinduism, circumambulation has been practised on various levels, including a deity or tree, a hill, a river and a city, depending on the central symbolism, and these spiritual creations can be both significant and valuable to Buddhists.⁵⁶¹

Although some types of *stūpa* are huge, it is worth uncovering the potential implications behind this construction trend in order to understand this type of Buddhist monument. The long-standing dynamic development of *stūpa* (or pagoda in China) represents the fierce conflict and confrontation between local tradition and alien cultures. In ancient times, cremation was unacceptable and regarded as disrespecting traditional culture and parents. However, for Buddhists, a cremation ceremony is the necessary process to ensure enlightenment once they pass away. The pagoda in China therefore provides a

⁵⁵⁸ 大方广佛华严经 [Avataṃsaka Sūtra]: '右绕于塔 当愿众生 所行无逆 成一切智 绕塔三匝 当愿众生 勤求佛道 心不懈歇' (The Chinese translation of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra was written in the sixth year of Ming Chenghua (明成化六年, AD 1470). The original version has a total of 75 volumes, while the extant version has only four volumes, and they are now in the archives of Wuwei city, Gansu province).

⁵⁵⁹ Fengtian Wu, '明代凉州写经《大方广佛华严经》的历史价值及其书学意义' [The historical value of the 'Dafang Guangfo Huayan sūtra' written in Liangzhou in the Ming dynasty and its bibliographical significance], in *Proceedings of the 2017-2018 Annual Meeting and Scientific Symposium of the Gansu Archives Society*, pp. 35-41.

⁵⁶⁰ Fengtian Wu, (2018), pp. 35-41.

⁵⁶¹ Santosh Kumar, 'Circumambulation in Indian pilgrimage: Meaning and manifestation', *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 12.1 (2021), 232-43

possible way to express different beliefs surrounding death, and to even identify the conquest of the local convention. However, local culture, because of its deep foundations and universality, would also impact on this new trend about death and is likely the reason why pagodas moved out from Buddhist community centres and became dramatically smaller in size.

Its name even changed from Chinese *stūpa* (pagoda) to tomb pagodas (or grave towers) in order to contain Buddhist remains after cremation. Instead of raising a burial mound for final burial as part of the family tombs, Chinese Buddhists were cremated after death and their remains housed in Buddhist pagodas or burial towers, such as the pagodas near Foguang Monastery and Songshan Shaolin Monastery (Fig. 111). This unnoticed transformation represented the final conquest after a bitter conflict between the adopted religion and indigenous traditions. The one in Foguang Monastery certainly transfers similar religious motivation, which this research suggests expressing the wished award of a devoted and accomplished Buddhist, his afterlife can stand with the Buddha. This may be a normal way of showing the enlightenment of the Buddha's disciple on Chinese soil.



Fig. 111. Tomb pagodas in Songshan Shaolin Monastery. This burial ground is separated by about one kilometre from the Shaolin Monastery courtyard, erecting numerous grave towers.

Meanwhile, the current surviving pagodas, either the ones at Foguang Monastery or nearby, either at Songshan Shaolin Monastery, or Mount Wutai, have almost identical architectural dimension and plan, a hexagon, which embodies the cult of Buddhist philosophy regarding death and rebirth (Figs. 112 and 112).

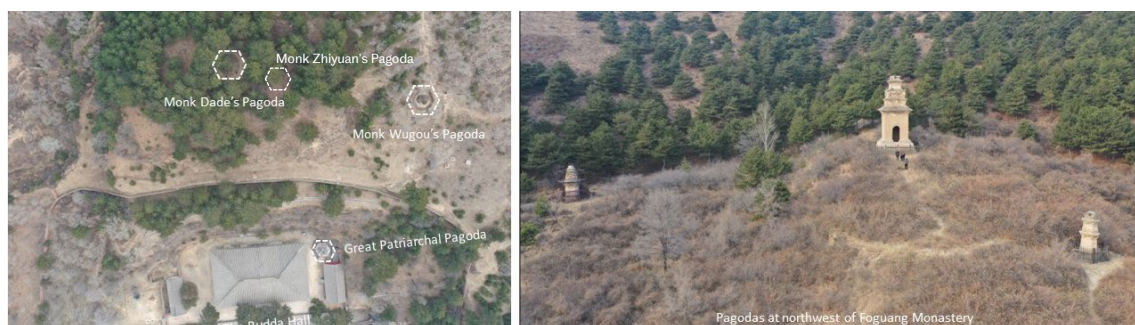


Fig. 112. Left - tomb pagoda of Dade built in AD 795, tomb pagoda of Zhiyuan built in AD 844 and tomb pagoda of Wugou built in AD 745 (from left to right). Right - tomb pagodas of Faxing in AD 828, Jie Tuo in AD 824, and Xing Yan in AD 849 (from left to right). These are situated northwest of Foguang Monastery, one kilometre away from the Foguang Monastery courtyard.

The location of the tomb pagodas at Foguang Monastery underwent a gradual shift over time. Initially, they were erected near to the Buddha Hall, symbolising the coexistence of the living and the dead on the same land. However, subsequent developments led to their relocation to the hill behind the Buddha Hall, and eventually to the northwest area, situated one kilometre away from the Monastery itself. This progressive movement of the tomb pagodas signifies the evolving Buddhist perspective on the rebirth of life and reflects the traditional Chinese belief in maintaining a certain distance between the realms of the living and the deceased, which gradually transformed into a Buddhist conceptualisation. These changes not only demonstrate the convergence of Buddhist and Chinese views on life and death, but also provide compelling evidence for the gradual alignment between the two perspectives.

7.3 Summary

This chapter focuses on interpreting the origin, transformation, and meaning of the Great Patriarchal Pagoda at Foguang Monastery. Like many ancient Chinese pagodas, it has its roots in the *stūpa* of the Buddha, but it is linked to the spiritual desire for the Buddhist philosophy of the Wheel of *Saṃsāra*. The hexagonal structure represents the six worlds of existence. The motives for the construction of the funerary pagoda in China were the desire to free oneself from the transmigration between life and death and to awaken to the final nirvana. With the development of Buddhism and cultural interaction, *stūpas* gradually evolved into different forms, but small stone or brick pagodas were common in ordinary monasteries. The locations of the pagodas, however, differ according to the identity of the pagoda lord. Some pagodas that housed relics of the Buddha were built in the centre of the monastic layout, while most of the pagodas that served the important master monks were built prior to and during the Tang dynasty near the Buddha Hall, which might reflect the hierarchy between the Buddha and his disciples in the *maṇḍala* diagram.

**Chapter 8 - Structuring a Religious-
landscape Framework of *Mañjuśrī*
Bodhisattva on Mount Wutai**

The closed relationship (religious and geographical location) between the Foguang Monastery and Mount Wutai allows the Monastery to be seen in a larger context. Its closed geolocation with the religious centre - Mount Wutai - drives this thesis to explore their interaction under changes of imperial power. The following chapters therefore provide a comprehensive and detailed account of the historical development of Mount Wutai, from its origins as a Taoist site to its transformation into a prominent destination for Buddhism pilgrims. The narrative will examine the changes in pilgrimage routes and the monastic setting on the mountain, as well as the various rites and ceremonies associated with these practices. This historical analysis covers a broad time span, stretching from the first century to the nineteenth. By utilising a chronological approach, this study aims to shed light on the complex and multi-layered transformation of Mount Wutai over the centuries and provide a broader context for the unfolding of the historical role of Foguang Monastery.

Political involvement certainly supported the beginning of the transformation of Mount Wutai from a local sacred mountain to a Buddhist religious centre. During its chronological development, Mount Wutai gradually became a morphological structure which was systematically symbolised by *esoteric maṇḍala*. Since the establishment of the Buddhist religious centre, Buddhist networks and rites among the monasteries quickly followed the emergence of the mountain's sacredness.

8.1 The religious culture of Mount Wutai prior to the advent of Buddhism

Before the advent of Buddhism on Mount Wutai, religious practices in the region were already deeply rooted in Chinese mountain culture, with a strong emphasis on mountain worship. *The Book of Rites* reports that the ancient rituals of the emperors during the Warring States period (475 BC - 221 BC) took place on five divine mountains.⁵⁶² Taoism also worships nature and rivers, especially mountains. For example, Taoists always carry the Genuine Map of the Five Sacred Mountains (Chinese: 五岳真形图) with them when they set out on long and arduous treks, as they firmly believe that this symbolic map, on which the five great mountains of China were marked by the Chinese ancestors, can protect them from accidental injury or threat.⁵⁶³ As Zhang Lin created Taoism on Mount Emei in the middle and late Eastern Han dynasty,⁵⁶⁴ Taoism quickly spread to Mount Wutai as followers practised in huts and caves there, according to the *Qingliang Shan Zhi*.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶² 礼记·王制 [Liji, Book of Rite]: '天子祭天下名山大川 五岳视三公 四渎视诸侯 诸侯祭名山大川之在其地者'

Accordingly, the imperial etiquette, emperor was required to worship the five mountains, although the book did not accurately define the location of each mountain in the country, it is patently that the nature worship of mountain god appeared firstly before Buddhism arrived at China mainland, because it was widely believed that the consecration closely linked to the rise and fall of political power and national destiny.

⁵⁶³ Li Fang, 太平广记·汉武内传 [Tai Ping Guang Ji, Vol.3, The Inner Biography of Emperor Wu of Han], (AD 960 - AD 1279). The corresponding Chinese text is: '武帝: "此书是仙灵之方耶? 不审其目, 可得瞻盼否?" 王母出以示之曰: "此五岳真形图也..... 诸仙佩之, 皆如传章; 道士执之, 经行山川, 百神羣灵, 尊奉亲迎". The English translation of the given text is as follows: 'Emperor Wu asked, 'Is this book a magical talisman of immortals? Without examining its content, can one still glimpse its brilliance?' The Queen Mother [of the West] brought it out and showed him, saying, 'This is the Genuine Map of the Five Sacred Mountains (Wu Yue, Chinese: 五岳)... Immortals wear it as a badge of authority, and Taoists hold it while traversing mountains and rivers, where all the gods and spirits pay them respect and welcome'. Ge Hong, 抱朴子·遐览 [Baopuzi Xialan], (AD 284 - AD 364). The corresponding Chinese text is: '道书之重者, 莫过于三皇文, 五岳真形图也。古人仙官至人尊秘此道, 非有仙名者不可授也..... 修道之士, 栖陷山谷, 须得五岳真形图佩之, 则山中魑魅虎虫, 一切妖毒皆莫能。 The English translation of the given text is as follows: 'among the important Taoist texts, none surpass the Three Sovereigns' Script (San Huang Wen) and the Genuine Map of the Five Sacred Mountains. Ancient immortals and dignitaries of the Tao highly regard and keep this secret knowledge. It can only be passed on to those who have achieved the title of immortal...for practitioners of Daoism, dwelling in mountain valleys, they must possess the Genuine Map of the Five Sacred Mountains to wear as a talisman. With it, no evil spirits, monsters, or venomous creatures in the mountains can approach them'.

⁵⁶⁴ Fayi Jia, '山西道教历史发展特点析论' [Study on the Taoism history of Shanxi], *Religious Studies*, 1 (2010), 1-2

⁵⁶⁵ Shi Zhencheng, 清凉山志 [Qingliang Shan Zhi], (1569).

Mount Wutai is the earliest Buddhist centre, as compared with other Buddhist cults on Chinese mountains. As mentioned in the Introduction, there are four places of holy Buddhist pilgrimage centres in China: Mount Wutai, Mount Emei, Mount Putuo, and Mount Jiuhua (see Fig. 10). Mount Emei was widely believed to be the *Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Bodhimaṇḍa*, as started in AD 1179, although as early as the Tang dynasty there was a legend about *Puxian Bodhimaṇḍa*. Mount Putuo being described as the shrine for offering Guanyin by Emperor Shenzong of Song (AD 1048 - AD 1085); Mount Jiuhua was marked as being the holy shrine of *Kṣitigarbha* from the time of the Ming dynasty (AD 1368 - AD 1640).⁵⁶⁶ Comparatively, as one of the Five Sacred Mountains and a hallowed mountain for Taoists throughout history, Mount Wutai's significant spiritual significance convinced Indian Buddhists to designate it as a Buddhist place,⁵⁶⁷ and it was widely recognized by Chinese Buddhists as the earthly abode of *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* as early as the Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 690).

8.2 Recognised as a sacred site of Buddhists on Mount Wutai

The historical process by which Mount Wutai was transformed into a significant site for Buddhist worship remains a matter of conjecture, largely because of the fragmentary nature of the available historical texts. Nevertheless, scholars have attempted to decipher the various factors that contributed to the selection and gradual transformation of Mount Wutai into a revered Buddhist destination.

⁵⁶⁶ Fengyi Li and Xiong Li, '中国传统大地理观在五台山的体现' [Embodiment of the Chinese Macro-Geographical-View in Mt. Wutai Culture], *Mt Wutai Researches*, 3 (2018), 21-6 (pp. 24-5).

⁵⁶⁷ Karl Debreczeny, Wutai Shan: Pilgrimage to Five-Peak Mountain, *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies (JIATS)*, 6 (2011), 1-133

The original shrine of the Pre-Buddha is a hut in the natural environment as mentioned. A structure left behind in the Jetavana is thought a particular place in the life of Gautama Siddhārtha for more than twenty-five years, which is an ascetic and wild hut, in the far from Buddha's palatial dwellings.⁵⁶⁸ The Buddha's ascetic 'abode', such as tree, cave, or hut, transmitted the original principles - Buddha's teachings and the way he lived his life exemplified the renunciation of desires, disciplined asceticism, and deep contemplation'.⁵⁶⁹ In the Buddha's view, social dwelling is a place of metaphor 'for his ascetic liberation' and nirvana.⁵⁷⁰ After the passing of the Buddha in 232 BC the ascetic dwelling gradually came to commemorate structure by his adherents, and numerous *stūpas* with great spiritual significance as symbols of the Buddha have been built since the Mauryas emperors.⁵⁷¹ Accordingly, from the 'geographical and geological characteristics', the Amarāvati *stūpa* is located on a higher plateau than the rest of the midland to avoid flooding, and the surrounding hills secure water resources for survival and irrigated agriculture.⁵⁷² In addition, the summit (the square structure) on the *stūpa* known as Harmika is believed by devotees to represent a small dwelling for Buddha, and the dome-shaped part represents a mountain, which together are symbolic of a high temple on a sacred mountain, whilst the high location in a wild environment is the connection to Tirtha.⁵⁷³

⁵⁶⁸ Kazi K. Ashraf, The Buddha's House, *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 53.1 (2008), 233-43

⁵⁶⁹ Kazi K. Ashraf, (2008), 233-43

⁵⁷⁰ Kazi K. Ashraf, (2008), 233-43

⁵⁷¹ Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu Period)*, (Redditch: Read Books Ltd, 2013), p. 58.

⁵⁷² Akira Shimada, *Early Buddhist Architecture in Context: The Great Stūpa at Amarāvati (ca.300BCE - 300CE)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p. 35.

⁵⁷³ Kazi K. Ashraf, The Buddha's House, *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 53.1 (2008), 233-43 (pp. 239-40).

8.3 The defining Mount Wutai, a sacred place of *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva Dojo*

There are various historical descriptions regarding Mount Wutai's transformation into the sacred dwelling place of *Mañjuśrī*. Firstly, as introduced in Part I of this thesis, the non-indigenous elite monk Amoghavajra (AD 705 - AD 774) contributed to the spread of esoteric Buddhism in mainland China and helped establish the *Mañjuśrī* cult on Mount Wutai during the medieval period. Furthermore, The *Mañjuśrī Dharma Treasure Dhāraṇī Sūtra* (Chinese: 佛說文殊師利法寶藏陀羅尼經), translated by Bodhiruci during AD 508 - AD 530, who was a north Indian monk and esoteric master⁵⁷⁴ in the Tang dynasty at the same time as Tan-luan (Chinese: 曇鸞, AD 476 - AD 542), provides an early prophecy about the relationship between *Mañjuśrī* and Mount Wutai:

'At that time, the World-Honored One spoke again to the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Vajrapani, saying, 'After my parinirvana, in the northeast of this Sambhava continent, there is a country named 'Dazhenna' (Chinese: 大振那, Sanskrit name: Cīna-sthāna, Pali name: Cīna; Current: China)⁵⁷⁵. In the middle of this country, there is a mountain called Wuding (five peaks mountain). The Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva resides there, walking and living, and speaks the Dharma to all sentient beings. There are countless heavenly dragons, gods, yakshas, rakshasas, gandharvas, asuras, and other beings who respectfully surround and

⁵⁷⁴ Oxford reference, 'Bodhiruci', *Oxford reference*,

<<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095514794>> [accessed 19 May 2022].

⁵⁷⁵ Venerable Ci Yi (慈怡法師), '震旦' [Cīna-sthāna], 佛光大辭典 [Buddhist Dictionary],

<<http://buddhaspace.org/dict/fk/data/%25E9%259C%2587%25E6%2597%25A6.html>> [accessed 6 August 2022].

*make offerings. Thus, the World-Honored One spoke again to Vajrapani, saying, 'That is the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.'*⁵⁷⁶

The *sūtra* may be one of the earliest known texts to identify Mount Wutai in present-day China as an important Buddhist site. This identification has since become a key reference point in numerous works of later literature, cementing the mountain's status as a revered spiritual destination.

However, another much-quoted text traces the transformation of Mount Wutai into a Buddhist site to the first century AD. According to a description in *Qingliang Shan Zhi*⁵⁷⁷: *'there are 64 monasteries in the span of the Five Peaks, and the first Monastery is Great Xiantong, originally called Dafu Lingjiu Monastery. During the reign of Emperor Ming of Han (AD 28 - AD 75), the Indian Buddhist monks Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna visited mainland China. When they visited to Mount Wutai, they proposed to the emperor that they wanted to establish a monastery in the village of Taihuai on Mount Wutai, as this place was the residence of Mañjuśrī and possessed the Buddha relics, and the typography in this landscape corresponded to the situation on the Holy Eagle Peak of Rājagṛha in Indian.'*⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁶ Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA) (中華電子佛典協會), '佛說文殊師利法寶藏陀羅尼經' [Mañjuśrī Dharma Treasure Dhāraṇī Sūtra] in '大正新脩大正藏經' [Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, Vol. 20, No. 1185A], *Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA)*, <http://buddhism.lib.ntu.edu.tw/BDLM/sutra/chi_pdf/sutra10/T20n1185A.pdf> [accessed 15 April 2022]. The original text in Chinese is: 爾時世尊復告金剛密迹主菩薩言 我滅度後於此瞻部洲東北方 有國名大振那 其國中有山號曰五頂 文殊師利童子遊行居住 為諸眾生於中說法 及有無量諸天龍神夜叉羅刹緊那羅摩睺羅伽人非人等 圍遶供養恭敬 於是世尊復告金剛密迹主言 是文殊師利童子

⁵⁷⁷ Shi Zhencheng, 'Chinese Rare Book - 清涼山志, 卷十' [Qingliang Shan Zhi, Vol. 10], *Harvard University: Curiosity Collections*, <<https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/chinese-rare-books/catalog/49-990080224720203941>> [accessed 23 December 2022].

⁵⁷⁸ Guoquan Zeng (曾國荃) and Xu Zhang (張煦), *山西通志(光緒)·卷五十七* [Shanxi Tong Zhi (Guang xu), Vol. 57, Chapter 8 of historic sites investigation], (1892 - 1895), p. 1.

Holy Eagle Peak (also known as Vulture Peak) was one of the eight early Buddhist shrines in Rājagṛha, India (mentioned in Part One, Table 5, p.90), which is also significant to Buddhist history. Visiting Chinese Buddhists Faxian and Xuanzang went on pilgrimage to Rājagṛha, which was the place where the Buddha recruited a few his foremost disciples. 'Eagle' is '灵鹫 Lingjiu' in Chinese; Kasyapa Matanga gave the name 'Lingjiu' to the first monastery on Mount Wutai.⁵⁷⁹ Emperor Ming (AD 28 - AD 75), as a devotee of Buddhism, was convinced of the request by the Indian Buddhists, then added the two Chinese words 'Dafu' before 'Lingjiu', because 'Dafu' means great faith ('Da 大' means big and giant, 'Fu 孚' was the special term for naming Buddhist monuments).⁵⁸⁰ Therefore, the final name of the earliest monastery on the Wutai Mountain is Dafu Lingjiu Monastery. The first monastery erected at Mount Wutai might thus be the Dafu Lingjiu Monastery, dating back to the Emperor Ming of Han. It is also the second-oldest monastery in China, the first being the White House Monastery in the city of Luoyang.

This legend of the founding of the first monastery by Indian Buddhists on Mount Wutai in China suggests that Indian Buddhists bridged the gap between the two places (Holy Eagle Peak and Mount Wutai) by reference to the Chinese Mountain culture and that of the Indian Buddhist culture. This process mirrors the selection of Buddhist sites on Chinese soil by Indian Buddhists. There is even a story that 'Vulture Peak is one of the sacred mountains in India that flied to

⁵⁷⁹ Shi Zhencheng, 五台山志·卷三 [Mount Wutai Chronicle, Vol. 3], (AD 1546 - AD 1617). The corresponding Chinese text is: 大孚灵鹫寺肇于汉明帝, 立寺之始也 [Dafu Lingjiu Monastery (also named Xiantong Monastery) was initially build by the emperor Ming of Han, which is the beginning of erecting monasteries on Mount Wutai].

⁵⁸⁰ Shi Zhencheng, 清凉山志 [Qingliang Shan Zhi], (AD 1569). The corresponding Chinese text is: 台内佛刹凡六十四所 曰大显通寺 古名大孚灵鹫寺 汉明帝时 滕兰西至 见此山 乃文殊住处 兼有佛舍利 奏帝建寺 滕以山形若天竺灵鹫 寺依山名 帝以始信佛化 乃加大孚二字 大孚 弘信也

China.⁵⁸¹ It is believed that new pilgrimage sites on Chinese land with the sacred shrines in India were requested as though the missionaries had received the emperor's approval, implying that they would receive support to spread Buddhism in the region and that a new Buddhist community would be established there.

However, the geographical features of the two bases are completely different. The Vulture Peak is a hill on a plain, whilst Mount Wutai is a small region between two mountain ranges in China. They therefore have no similarity in topography, as the Indian monks told the emperor (Fig. 113). However, this does not change the story that has been passed down to the present day, which suggests that building the sanctuary of Mount Wutai is a possible way to convince its followers or the royal family to fund the site, while also being compelling reason for a non-indigenous religion to take root and develop on new ground. The Vulture Peak in Rājagṛha, which is one of the two mountainous places among the eight ancient sacred lands in India, is the only possible regional resemblance to Mount Wutai, which could also be the reason why the Indian Buddhists told the emperor about it. For a mountainous place, this may be the only possible approach to redefining Mount Wutai as a sacred site.



Fig. 113. Screenshot of Vulture Peak and Mount Wutai.

⁵⁸¹ William Edelglass, 'Buddhism and the Environment', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2021 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.721>> [accessed 18 July 2022].

The Five Peaks of Mount Wutai were intelligently connected with Buddhist literature. For the concept of the Five Dhyani Buddhas (Fig. 114), each of the Buddhas rules over a particular direction and transmits the Vajrayana philosophies: *Vairocana*, seated in the centre, symbolises the sun or the luminous (white colour); *Aksobhya*, seated to the east, represents the unshakable (blue colour); *Ratnasambhava*, seated to the south, represents the jewel-birth (golden colour); *Amitabha*, seated to the west, symbolises the infinite light (green colour); and *Amoghasiddhi*, seated to the north, represents the attainment that is not void (red colour).⁵⁸² Architecturally, the early *stūpas* are amongst the most important structures in the history of Buddhism, which are an expression of the Diamond World *maṇḍala* of the five Jina Buddhas.⁵⁸³ In the meantime, the entire mountainous site was created and transformed into a tantric (or esoteric) *maṇḍala* ontology.⁵⁸⁴ The visualisation of Buddhist cosmology, such as the *maṇḍala*, unifies the order of Buddhism as it shows the "right ritual", such as "moving clockwise around the outer circle and looking at the different deities and symbols in the right order"; it also shows the fixed position of each deity. Therefore, the five peaks of the mountain with information about orientation (north, south, centre, west, and east) were interpreted within the framework of the *maṇḍala*.

⁵⁸² Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2018), pp. 135-38. World Heritage Journeys, 'Who are the Five Buddhas?', *World Heritage Journeys*, <<https://visitworldheritage.com/en/buddha/who-are-the-five-buddhas/14b72a36-4e4a-4c6f-9e11-14d96ce4abbd>> [accessed 9 December 2022].

⁵⁸³ Adrian Snodgrass, pp. 135-38. World Heritage Journeys, [accessed 9 December 2022].

⁵⁸⁴ Wei-Cheng Lin, *Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014).



Fig. 114. Five Buddhas representing five directions with five sacred colours.

Another interpretation of the origin of Mount Wutai as a Buddhist site comes from Buddhist doctrine. Due to each peak having a flat summit without plants, it was regarded as the 'Five Wisdom Tathāgatas's throne' and 'five hair knots of *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*.'⁵⁸⁵ The five peaks of Mount Wutai were associated with the hair knots of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*, as the five knots represent the five syllables of a Sanskrit invocation used in the worship of the *Bodhisattva of Wisdom*, where each syllable has a different meaning and can help the worshipper gain certain benefits. Many practical items are also derived from this Buddhist doctrine. For example, the gilded bronze statue of *Mañjuśrī* (Fig. 115) from the mid-eleventh century AD (Liao dynasty) was fabricated according to the Buddhist teaching on the characteristics of the Bodhisattva of Wisdom: the five small knots are evenly distributed on the *Bodhisattva*'s head at the front, back, left and right, and in the middle. However, the five knots were depicted in different ways depending on the type of Buddhist practice or in different historical periods or regions, as shown in the painting of *Mañjuśrī* in fourteenth-century Japan AD (Fig. 116). Furthermore, this is a typical example of Buddhist

⁵⁸⁵ Menglei Chen, 钦定古今图书集成·方輿汇编·山川典·五台山部 [Qinding Gujin Tushu Jicheng - Mount Wutai Section], (1726 - 1728). The corresponding Chinese text is: '按宋僧延一五臺山志.....五臺山是五方如来之座也亦象菩萨顶有五髻'.

theory determining the form of Buddhist practice in art, includes the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva maṇḍala* of esoteric Buddhism (Fig. 117). *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* also was defined as having Five Sacred Meanings, such as the Five Dhyani Buddhas, which would certainly integrate with the Five Peaks of Mount Wutai, especially in terms of conceptualising the religious meanings of each peak.



Fig. 115. The section of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* of wisdom with five topknots. A gilded bronze statue of *Mañjuśrī*, mid-eleventh century AD, Liao dynasty.



Fig. 116. The drawing of the five hair topknots of *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*, the fourteenth century AD.



Fig. 117. Five Forms of *Mañjuśrī* Thangka.

Centre - Arapacana *Mañjuśrī*

Top Right - Red *Simhanada Mañjuśrī*

Bottom Right - Blue *Vimala Mañjuśrī*

Top Left - Green *Tikshna Mañjuśrī* **Bottom**

Left - White *Mañjuśrī*

Top Centre - Amitabha Buddha

No matter how long the transitional process of Mount Wutai had previously taken, it was eventually defined as a sacred place for Buddhism and as the *dojo* of Manjusri Bodhisattva during the Tang dynasty. The establishment of Mount Wutai as the abode of the *Manjusri Bodhisattva* signifies the beginning of geo-systematic monasticism, which is also manifested in the foundation of the first monastery with the syllable of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*.

In *Shanxi Tong Zhi*, the Pusading Monastery (also known as Great *Mañjuśrī* Monastery, and *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* Real Body Monastery),⁵⁸⁶ located in Taihuai Village of Wutai County, Shanxi province, was built by Monk Fayun.⁵⁸⁷ He asserted that he saw an apparition of *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* (real body) in the sea of clouds of Mount Wutai due to the prayers he offered to the *Bodhisattva*. Therefore, he reported this incredible sacred scene to the court and gained permission to construct a great *Mañjuśrī* Hall in Pusading Monastery in AD 763. The ruling family invested heavily in this project; the *Mañjuśrī* Hall was even decorated with copper tiles and a gilded *Mañjuśrī* statue. Furthermore, as Buddhism became to advocate vigorously by the Emperor Suzong's reign, as many of the essential ministers of the Imperial Court were devout Buddhists; even the Emperor Daizong of Tang was an adherent who believed in Buddhism, to the extent of giving up his original beliefs in Taoism. In Chinese historiography, in confronting the threat from warlords and the political instability subsequent to the Anshi Rebellion, the Emperor Suzong even encouraged Buddhists to comfort and convince those remonstrating to yield the Tang regime.⁵⁸⁸ Therefore, Mount Wutai became identified as the *Mañjuśrī Bodhimaṇḍa* (the abode of *Mañjuśrī*) with the construction of *Mañjuśrī* Hall at Pusading Monastery (also referred to as the

⁵⁸⁶ There are records that suggest that the construction of the *Mañjuśrī* Monastery began during the Northern Wei dynasty under the reign of Emperor Xiaowen and was rebuilt on the same site during the Tang dynasty. This thesis does not discuss the initial construction date of the Wenshu Monastery but emphasises that it was indeed highly valued during the Tang dynasty. According to the *Qinding Gujin Tushu Jicheng, Fangyu Hui Bian, Shanchuan Dian*, Vol. 031 (欽定古今圖書集成·方輿彙編·山川典 三十一卷), there were ten ancient monasteries on Mount Wutai (Lingjiu, Wangzi, Lingfeng, Fanxian, Tianpan, Qingliang, Shiku, Foguang, Dangchang, and Louguan). However, during the Tang dynasty, six more monasteries were added (Zhulin, Jingge, Ansheng, *Mañjuśrī*, Yuhua, Shengshou, and Lingji), with *Mañjuśrī* Monastery being mentioned, so this thesis only focus on the role of the *Mañjuśrī* Monastery in the planning of monasteries on Mount Wutai during the Tang dynasty. The corresponding Chinese text: '古十寺大字: 靈鷲、王子、靈峰、鉢仙、天盤、清涼、石窟、佛光、宕昌、樓觀。今益唐來寺六: 竹林、金閣、安聖、文殊、玉華、聖壽、靈跡'.

⁵⁸⁷ *山西通志·五十七卷·古迹考八* [Shanxi local chronicle - Shanxi Tong Zhi, Vol. 57, Research on Historic heritage in Chapter 8].

⁵⁸⁸ Guang Sima and others, *資治通鑑·卷二百二十四* [Zizhi Tongjian, Vol. 224], (1071 - 1086).

Great *Mañjuśrī* Monastery) by the Tang Imperial Court (AD 618 - AD 907), although it suffered anti-Buddhist persecution between AD 841 and AD 846 (Fig. 118).



Fig. 118. Great White Pagoda, Mount Wutai, China.

The concept of the Five Peaks of the mountain range was redefined but has changed little since this redefinition with the confirmation of the abode of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*. Since the *Mañjuśrī* monastery was built during the Tang dynasty on the summit of Lingjiu Hill and at the foot of the central peak, the other four peaks had to be on either side of it. This is also the scenario seen in many of the visible archives of Mount Wutai. It would be the early Buddhist cosmology for the systematic construction of a Buddhist land.

Mount Wutai had generally been considered the '*Mañjuśrī Bodhimaṇḍa*' (renamed Wenshu Daochang, the sacred abode of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*) since the Tang dynasty. Emperor Daizong of Tang (AD 726 - AD 779) first confirmed Mount Wutai to be the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva Bodhimaṇḍa* (the

position of awakening).⁵⁸⁹ The Sanskrit word 'Bodhimaṇḍa' (translated as 'Daochang' 道场 in Chinese) means the places where Buddhist observances are carried out, and for which another term developed, 'Neidaochang' (Chinese: 内道场), which expressly refers to Buddhist chapels (which can be a separate building or a part of a palace) but which can only be accessed by the ruling family for the purposes of worship.⁵⁹⁰ *Neidaochang* initially originated during Eastern Jin dynasty (AD 317 - AD 420) and with the gradual improvement of the religion system in the Sui dynasty (AD 581 - AD 618); the consecration of royal Buddhism ashrams eventually became prevalent during the Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907).⁵⁹¹ In *Dhāraṇī Sūtra*, which is one of the most admired Buddhist scriptures since the time of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty (AD 685 - AD 762),⁵⁹² Mount Wutai was chosen as the dwelling of *Mañjuśrī* and the place for the Buddha after he passed away.⁵⁹³

The time when *Mañjuśrī* dwells on Mount Wutai in China is referred to as the "dissolution of dharma" (mo - fa, Chinese: 末法) and represents a time of spiritual turmoil.⁵⁹⁴ However, this also underlines the importance of Mount Wutai, which has become a sacred place for Buddhists who might seek confirmation and

⁵⁸⁹ Yuqing Cui, 五台山世界文化景观遗产 [Wutai Mountain - World Cultural Landscape Heritage], (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishing House, 2016), p. 93.

⁵⁹⁰ Jinhua Chen, 'The Tang Buddhist Palace Chapels', *Journal of Chinese Religions*, 32.1 (2004), 101-2

⁵⁹¹ Lanlan Wang, '唐代佛教内道场考补' [Research and supplement about the Buddhist Ashram of The Royal Household in Tang dynasty], *Journal of Chinese Historical Geography*, 33 (2018), 105-13

In Wang's treatise, the author states that the definition of Neidaochang (the Buddhist Ashram of the royal household) in the Tang dynasty is the palace where 'conduct Buddhist activities either in the capital cities or in other residences outside the capital, for instance, summer and winter palace, cemetery, and imperial mansion'.

⁵⁹² Yun-jo Lin, '唐代《佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經》的譯傳與信仰' [The Translation and Popularisation of Buddhōṣṇīṣavijayadhāraṇī Sūtra in Tang dynasty], *Dharma Drum Journal of Buddhist Studies*, 3 (2008), 145-93

⁵⁹³ Sabaree Mitra, *Encyclopedia of India - China Cultural contacts, Vol. I*, (New Delhi: Maxposure Media Group, 2014), p. 167.

⁵⁹⁴ Raoul Birnbaum, 'Thoughts on T'ang Buddhist Mountain Traditions and Their Context,' *Tang Studies*, 2 (1984), 5-23 (pp. 8-9).

affirmation in their faith through pilgrimage to Mount Wutai.⁵⁹⁵ Mount Wutai gradually transformed from a purely Chinese mountain into a non-indigenous Buddhist cultural site. The Five Dhyanī Buddhas and the Five Hair Knots of *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* redefined Mount Wutai and conferred religious significance on the five peaks. However, Mount Wutai does not consist of only Five Peaks, which depends on the actual geographical conditions. The Five Peaks have also experienced changes over the course of history. In *Lingji*, the old Five Peaks were different to those identified during the Tang dynasty.⁵⁹⁶ When the researcher visited in 2020, there was an Ancient South Peak three miles southwest of South Peak. However, the scale of monastic construction there was unnoteworthy, and the number of tourists to the Ancient South Peak Monastery was considerably lower than to the South Peak, even though the two monasteries are closed (Fig. 119). Further, the historical attention on the Ancient South Peak was much lower than on the South Peak. Ennin did not mention the old southern peak during the Tang dynasty in his diary, and in the 18th century text, the old peak was also mentioned only by name, with no other indication of its history⁵⁹⁷.



Fig. 119. Aerial photo of Ancient South Peak and South Peak, Mount Wutai.

⁵⁹⁵ Raoul Birnbaum, (1984), pp. 8-9.

⁵⁹⁶ *Lingji* records that there are four mounds in Wutai, and each mound is 120 li from the other. According to ancient maps, the current North Peak was formerly known as Central Peak, Central Peak was formerly known as South Peak, Dahuangjian was North Peak, Kao Lao Shan was West Peak, and Mantian Shi was East Peak. However, there were differences between the ancient North Peak and Central Peak, which were the two western mounds, and they remain unchanged from ancient to modern times. The corresponding Chinese text in *Qinding Gujin Tushu Jicheng - Fangyu Hui Bian - Shanchuan Dian*, Vol. 031 (欽定古今圖書集成·方輿彙編·山川典·三十一卷): '靈記, 五臺有四堆, 去臺各一百二十里。據古圖所載, 今北臺即古中臺, 中臺即古南臺, 大黃尖即北臺, 栲栳山是西臺, 漫天石是東臺, 惟北臺、中臺古時有異, 東西二臺, 古今無異'.

⁵⁹⁷ Menglei Chen, 欽定古今圖書集成·方輿彙編·山川典·五台山部 [Qinding Gujin Tushu Jicheng - Mount Wutai Section], (1726 - 1728). The corresponding Chinese text is: '古南台台南二里嘉靖間香林大士卓庵其上'.

The religious landscape framework of Mount Wutai then was accordingly formed by Five Dhyani Buddhas and *Mañjuśrī* cult. The Five Peaks delimit the scope of the core religious area, with two essential monasteries in the middle. The oldest and first monastery, Dafu Lingjiu, symbolising the existence of the Buddha, adjoins *Mañjuśrī* Monastery, located on Lingjiu Hill and at the foot of Central Peak. Two important monasteries and five peaks characterise the structure of early religious landscape framework of Mount Wutai.

In addition, from the perspective of the architectural lens, monasteries, and Mount Wutai mutually, though gradually, achieved their own divine conception. Monasteries, which were also bound by the physical context of the Five Peaks of Mount Wutai, were organised so as to build a liminal realm for encountering the divine and jointly aspiring to the transcendent.⁵⁹⁸ The Chinese Buddhist architecture and practice becomes microcosmic and synecdochic for Mount Wutai's history.⁵⁹⁹ Monastic architecture as a mediator changed the way Mount Wutai was perceived by the people, who gradually came to believe that it was a sacred place for Buddhists.

However, as a place for the Buddhists living there, it had to also provide one basic survival condition: Mount Wutai is separated from the villages, but Wutai County is not far away, ensuring access for visitors; the location of the monasteries in the mountains successfully avoids the risk of flooding, but they are

⁵⁹⁸ Wei-Cheng Lin, 'Building a Sacred Mountain: Buddhist Monastic Architecture in Mount Wutai during the Tang dynasty, 618 - 907CE', *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 67.9 (2006), 15-7

⁵⁹⁹ Wen-shing Chou, 'Review - Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai', *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 64.1 (2016), 225-28

also close to the river because the tributaries of the Hutuo River surround Mount Wutai and provide sufficient water sources. The long process of transformation and evolution from an unremarkable rural area without any Buddhist context to a global Buddhist Centre, several factors, such as Buddhists, monastic architecture, Dharma and Buddhist cosmology, simultaneously contributed to gain this final result. In short, all these external and internal factors eventually led to Mount Wutai being chosen. In a slow process of development, the concept of the Five Peaks was gradually clarified with religious symbolism, fully demonstrating that Buddhist cosmology and theory dominate the Buddhist landscape and architecture. Since Mount Wutai became a pilgrimage centre for Buddhists, its success has not been surpassed by any other Buddhist Mountain site.

8.4 The influence of the foundation of the *Mañjuśrī* Monastery

Although the *Mañjuśrī* Monastery has been rebuilt numerous times, its location at the top of Lingjiu Hill at the foot of Central Peak has not been changed over the centuries, illustrating the particular religious significance of Mount Wutai. Indeed, this identify of *Mañjuśrī* dojo has driven the religious landscape, monasticism, and Buddhist rites on Mount Wutai.

The *Mañjuśrī* monastery was the centre of the entire scenario relating to Mount Wutai. For example, information on the fresco gives the orientation of these monasteries. They all were drawn facing towards the centre, the central monastery - the hall of the true body of the great sage *Mañjuśrī*. However, as

discussed previously, the orientation of the enclosed monastic courtyards at many Buddhist sites discussed in ancient India is not uniform; basically, the image of the Buddha faces the entrance from which people walk. After enlightenment, his houses in their various forms, such as *stūpa*, Chaitya Hall, or the image hall of the Buddha, were usually built on a higher platform placed in the middle or at the highest level, facing the entrance of the enclosed courtyard. Whether the house was oriented east - west or north - south axis or otherwise is not clear, but it is probably because it was in a rainy season of tropical climate. In this mural, however, all the monasteries face the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* Monastery, although their actual orientation may not be the same as represented on the fresco. This deliberate arrangement stresses the importance of the *Mañjuśrī* Monastery, the *Mañjuśrī* Monastery was placed at the centre of the fresco and dominates the orientation of all the monasteries in this painting. Compared to the orientation of early monasteries in India, they seem have not a uniform regulation. However, the frescoes depicting Chinese monasteries showcase a unique emphasis on the significance of the *Mañjuśrī* cult on Mount Wutai. The monastic orientation methods employed exemplify the integration of Chinese culture (centripetal tendencies) into Buddhist practices, reflecting the intricate tradition of architectural orientation that is deeply rooted in Chinese architectural heritage. The painting of the monasteries on Mount Wutai also indicates the cultural integration of 'Bud - Chin' culture (Fig. 120).

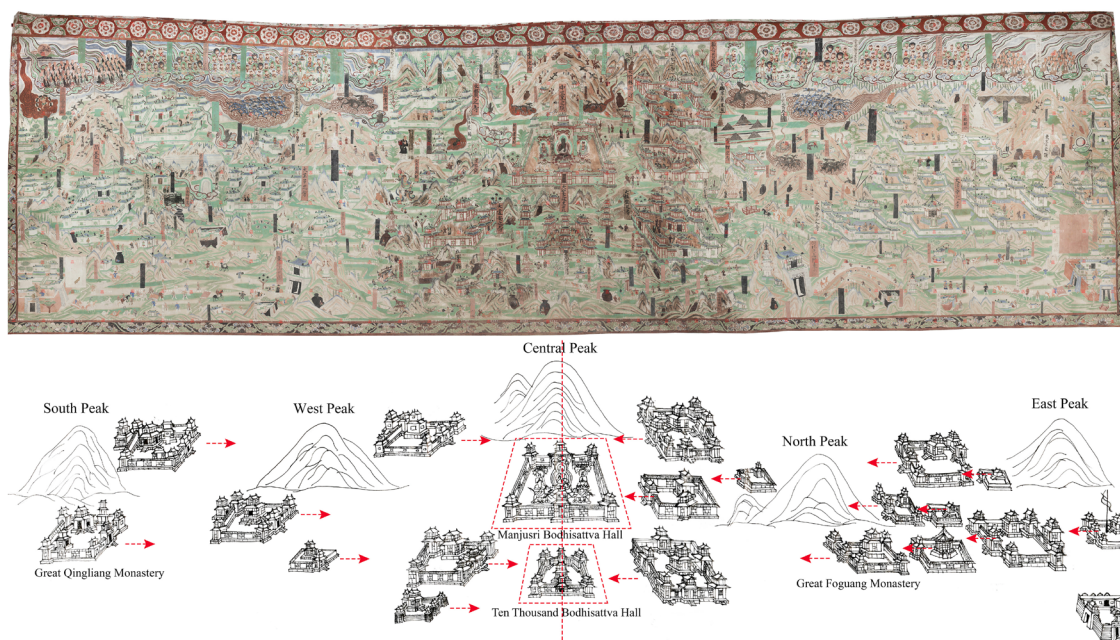


Fig. 120. The monastic orientation in fresco of Cave No.61, Dunhuang Grottoes.

The *dojo* of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* also dominated Buddhist important rite - Xingxiang (Chinese: 行像) on Mount Wutai. Based on the textualisation of Faxian and Ennin's records, this study concludes that the gathering rite scene showing on drawing of 'Mount Wutai Sheng Jing Quan Tu' (Fig. 121), should be the Xingxiang rite, which has not been understood by other scholars. The engraving of 'Mount Wutai Sheng Jing Quan Tu' depicts the scenes of the Buddhist assembly on Mount Wutai in 1846.⁶⁰⁰ It is clear that in the nineteenth century, Tibetan Buddhism was strongly supported by the Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty. The ritual route seems to start at the *Mañjuśrī* Monastery (also called Pusading 菩萨顶) and run to the Great Pagoda Monastery (Tayuansi 塔院寺), as two lines of officials and a number of greeters are waiting in front of the gate hall of the Great Pagoda Monastery.

⁶⁰⁰ Library of Congress, '五臺山圣境全圖' [Map - Wutai shan sheng jing quan tu], *Library of Congress*, <<https://www.loc.gov/item/gm71005136/>> [accessed 20 September 2021].

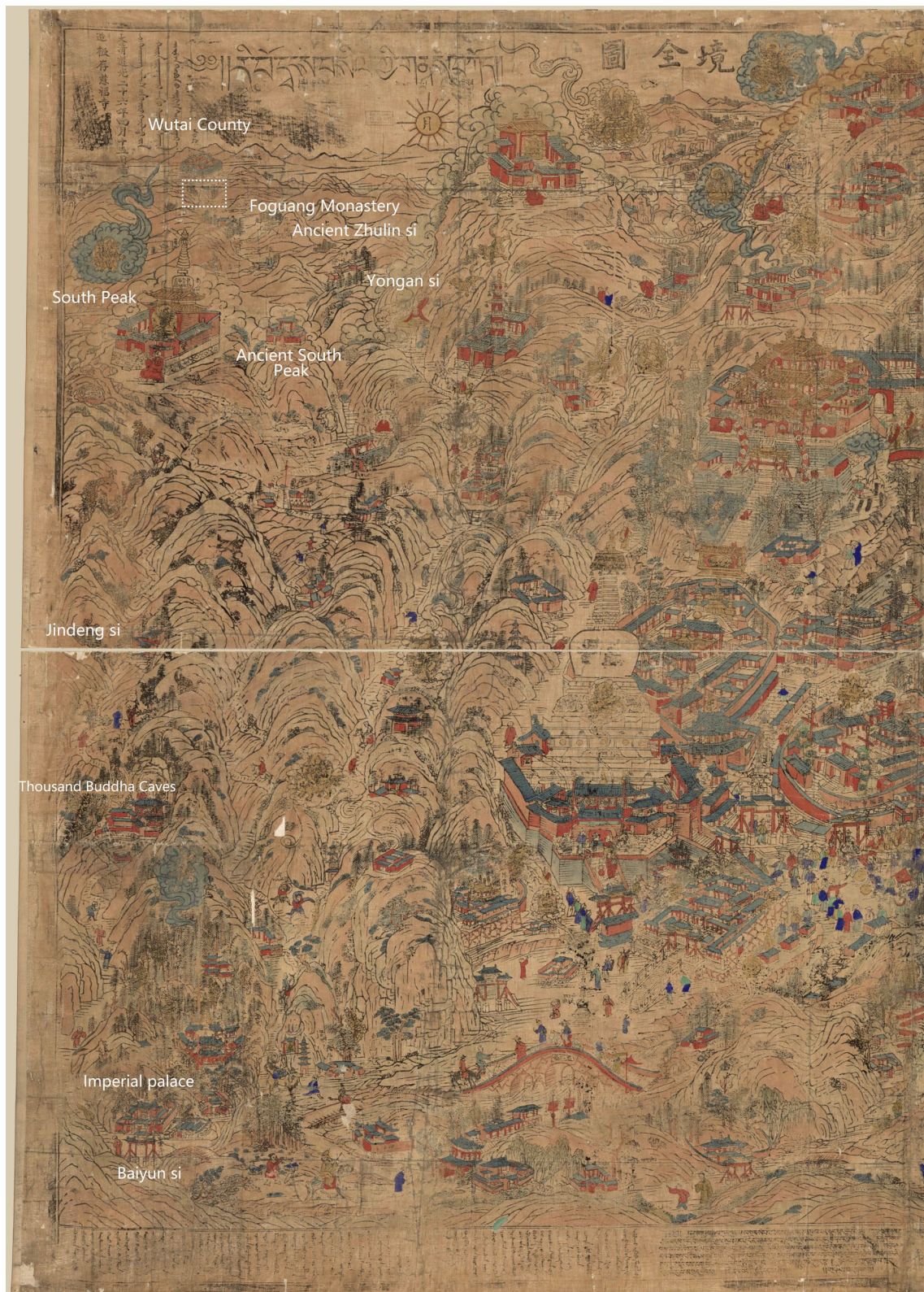


Fig. 121. Screenshot of a drawing of Mount Wutai Sheng Jing Quan Tu (五臺山聖境全圖).

This bird's-eye view drawing shows the Xingxiang ritual (行像, image procession or walking images) scene on Mount Wutai, and also indicates the Buddhist churches, Five Peaks, mountain streams, and worshipping devotees on Mount Wutai and in Taihuai village during the Qing dynasty (1846).

Mañjuśrī Monastery was highly likely a Vajrayāna community, also known as Huang Miao in China, as the roof colour of the buildings in the monastery is golden. Normally, and follows Tibetan Buddhism. In contrast, the Great White Pagoda Monastery should represent Chinese or Zen Buddhism, also called Qing Miao in Chinese due to the ultramarine colour of the roofs.

The Tibetan Buddhists in the front of the long procession are wearing brownish-red robes or yellow robes with red capes, and huge yellow hats. A clergyman of high status, who is wearing a yellow robe and yellow Tibetan lotus hat, is processing down the road on a wooden, topless sedan chair, followed by four government servants at the back of the procession.

Few academics have yet clarified or interpreted the ritual scene in this drawing. However, based on the exploration of the Xingxiang ritual in the fourth and seventh centuries AD in India, which was witnessed by Faxian and Xuanzang, the author speculates that the ancient Xingxiang ritual was likely 'inherited' at Mount Wutai during the modern historical period. 'Xingxiang' is a Chinese phrase, translated from the Sanskrit pronunciation, to describe the most significant part of the ritual: the ceremonial moving of the Buddha's image from one place to another sacred area. The seated clergyman in the Buddhist procession is venerated as a saint and is being shown to the public. This ritual scene could be considered the contemporary and evolutionary performance of the ancient Xingxiang, as a reincarnated, living Buddha is carried on a sedan chair of Tibetan Buddhism on Mount Wutai.

Chinese Buddhists who embarked on pilgrimages to India have left behind detailed and rich descriptions of the Xingxiang rite. For instance, XingXiang rite, held in Yōtkaṇ, text from 'A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms' by Faxian (AD 337 - AD 422):

Faxian's friends (Huijing, Daozheng and Huida) set out first and marched towards the land of Kashi. Faxian and others wanted to admire the ritual of the Buddha statue travelling and stayed in Kashi for three months. There are fourteen immense Buddhist monasteries in the country, not counting small monasteries. From 1 April, the city began to water and clean the streets, decorate, and renovate the roads, hang large curtains on the city gates and ornament everywhere. The king, his queen and his concubines are living in the city. The monks of Qumodi Monastery all practise Mahayana Buddhism and are respected by the king; therefore, they are the first to carry out the ceremony. Three or four miles from the city, a four-wheeled chariot pulled by elephants about three feet high like a moving palace. In the chariot, adorned with seven kinds of treasures, is the Buddha statue flanked by bodhisattva statues. All images are all carved from gold and silver and look like floating in the sky. When the Buddha statue was a hundred paces from the city gate, the king began to take off his crown and put on new clothes. Everyone then walked barefoot, holding incense and flowers in their hands, and followed the king out of the city to meet the Buddha statue. As the Buddha statue approached the city, the ladies who were staggering over the city gate began to strew

flowers. Such excessive offerings are different for each decorated vehicle. According to the rules, each monastery may only perform this ceremony on one day. The period for the ceremony, which lasts fourteen days, begins on 1 April and ends on 14 April. After the ritual was over, the king and his wife returned to the palace.⁶⁰¹

Xingxiang rite in Magādhā in the Central Indian Kingdoms, text from 'A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms' by Faxian (337 - 422AD):

Among the countries of Central India, only this country has the largest city, its people are prosperous and powerful, and they are all benevolent and righteous. Normally, the ritual of Xingxiang (the ritual of the Buddha statue travelling) is celebrated every year on the 8th day of the second month. In preparation, four-wheeled vehicles are made, the upper part of which is woven from five layers of bamboo. These tall constructions, some shaped like bucket arches, others like dogs' teeth, are about 40 feet high like a tower. These towers are wrapped with white felt cloth and then painted with the image of the gods, decorated with gold, silver, and play glass and tied with a hanging Buddhist banner. The four sides of the structure are designed as Buddhist niches with the seated Buddha statue, two bodhisattvas stand on either side of the Buddha. There are about twenty floats in total, each with a

⁶⁰¹ Faxian, 佛国记 [A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms], (AD 399 - AD 416). The corresponding Chinese original text is: '慧景道整慧达先发向竭叉国 法显等欲观行像 停三月日 其国中有十四大僧伽蓝无数小者 从四月一日城里便扫洒道路庄严巷陌 其城门上张大帷幕 事事严饰 王及夫人嫔女皆住其中 瞿摩帝僧是大乘学 王所敬重 最先行像 离城二四里作四轮像车 高三丈余 状如行殿 七宝庄校 悬缯幡盖 像立车中二菩萨侍 作诸天侍从 皆以金银雕莹悬于虚空像去门百步 王脱天冠易着新衣 徒跣持花香翼从出城 迎像头面礼足散花烧香 像入城时 门楼上夫人嫔女遥散众花纷纷而下 如是庄严供具 车车各异 一僧伽蓝则一日行像 自月一日 为始至十四日行像乃讫 行像讫王及夫人乃还宫耳'.

different disguise. On this day, Buddhist monks and lay people gather to pray, sing, dance and offer fragrant flowers. The Brahmas came to invite the Buddha-images, and the Buddha-images entered the city in orderly sequence. On the second night, after the Buddha entered the city, the lights were lit throughout the night. Chants and dances were performed throughout the night. This ritual is common in all parts of India. The elders or laymen throughout the land each establish a medical clinic in their town and invite all the poor, lonely, disabled, lame and other patients of the land. They also provide the lower class people with various things. The doctors in these clinics treat the patients and give them food and medicine to make them comfortable until they are cured completely.⁶⁰²

Xingxiang, held in Kutsi, text from 'Great Tang Records on the Western Regions'
by Xuanzang (AD 626 - AD 645):

On the left and right sides of the western city gate are statues of the standing Buddha. The statues are more than 90 feet high. This is where the 'Five Year Assembly' is held. The ceremony begins normally after the autumn equinox for dozens of days, during which monks from all over the country gather. During this time, from the king down to the clergy, they have forgotten fatigue in order to donate, observe the

⁶⁰² Faxian, 佛国记 [A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms], (AD 399 - AD 416). The corresponding Chinese original text is: '凡诸中国唯此国城邑为大 民人富盛 竞行仁义 年年常以建卯月八日行像 作四轮车 缚竹作五层 有承庐 据载 高二丈许 其状如塔 以白氈缠上 然后彩画 作诸天形像 以金银琉璃庄校其上 悬缯幡盖 四边作龕 皆有坐佛 菩萨立侍 可有二十车 车庄严各异 当此日 境内道俗皆集 作倡伎乐 华香供养 婆罗门子来请佛 佛次第入城 入城内再宿 通夜然灯 伎乐供养 国国皆尔 其国长者 居士 各于城内立福德医药舍 凡国中贫穷 孤独 残跛 一切病人 皆诣此舍 种种供给 医师看病 随宜 饮食及汤药 皆令得安 差者自去'.

*Buddhist precepts and listen to the Dharma talks, even to the point of sleepless nights. Every monastery solemnly adorns the Buddha statue with treasures and fabrics. The Buddha statues are placed on huge carts that are pulled forward along the formulated road, ritually called Xingxiang . Thousands of people regularly take part in such events.*⁶⁰³

Xingxiang in the Qunvcheng of Kānyakubja (India), text from 'Great Tang Records on the Western Regions' by Xuanzang (AD 626 - AD 645):

The Harshavardhana Empire decided to hold the assembly in the Qunvcheng of Kānyakubja. On that day, more than a hundred thousand participants of the Harshavardhana Empire moved along the south bank of the river Ganga. In contrast, the procession of the Kumara kingdom (tens of thousands of people) moved along the north bank. The four processions on land by riding elephants and flowing on the river all marched together under the leadership of the two kings. With drums, trumpets and whistles, they advanced in order. After 90 days of travel, the marchers finally reached the great flower forest west of the Sangjia River in Qunvcheng. More than 20 kings from different countries gave the first order to assemble together with the ascetic monks, Brahmins, officers and soldiers of the Harshavardhana Empire. The king built a large Buddha Hall to the west of the Sangjia River. To the east of the Buddha Hall is a treasure platform more than

⁶⁰³ Xuanzang, 大唐西域记 [Great Tang Records on the Western Regions], (AD 626 - AD 654). The corresponding Chinese original text is: '大城西门外路左右各有立佛像 高九十余尺 于此像前建五年一大会处 每岁秋分数十日间 举国僧徒皆来会集 上自君王下至士庶 捐废俗务奉持斋戒 受经听法渴日忘疲 诸僧伽蓝庄严佛像 莹以珍宝饰之 锦绣 载诸辇輿谓之行像 动以千数云集会所 常以月十五日晦日 国王大臣谋议国事 访及高僧然后宣布'.

a hundred feet high, as high as the king, which houses a golden Buddha statue. South of the platform is a massive pool for the Buddha bath. Fourteen or five miles to the northeast of this pagoda is the emperor's palace. In the second month of spring, people make offerings of delicious food to Śramaṇa and Brahmins for 20 days. The two sides of the main street connecting the palace and the Buddha Hall are built with pavilions decorated beyond all measure. The whole street is filled with music and dancers. The king ordered that the golden Buddha statue be carried out of the palace on an elephant. The golden statue was more than three feet high and was covered by a luxurious canopy. The Harshavardhana kingdom follows Buddhist traditions and uses canopies serving on the left; the Kumara kingdom follows the Brahmā convention and uses a white fly wing on the right. The two kings each sent a procession of five hundred fully armed elephants. One hundred elephants with musicians and drummers walked in front of the chariot carrying the Buddha statue. King Jie Ri scattered the various treasures such as pearls, gold and silver ingots and multitudinous flowers at every step to offer to the Three Jewels. The procession team arrived first at the sacred pool. After bathing the Buddha statue with fragrant water, the king of Harshavardhana personally sent it to the top of the west terrace and brought it various treasures and a large quantity of silk cloth as an offering. At that time, only about twenty Śramaṇa could follow, including other kings who served this ritual as guards. After the meal, the speakers began to

*make their own profound and subtle remarks and engaged in heated discussions with others. The event lasted until nightfall, not before the emperor returned to his palace in his carriage. The ritual of "the ritual of the Buddha statue travelling in the Daytime" will be repeated every day until the 20th day.*⁶⁰⁴

Xingxiang ritual in Qunvcheng also had another appellation, as shown by Wuzhehui (Chinese: 无遮会)⁶⁰⁵. However, it is believed that Xingxiang does not exist in the Indian language, but it is well-known to Chinese Buddhists as Emperor Wu of Liang performed it.⁶⁰⁶ According to Xuazang's record, the Xingxiang ritual in Kutsi was held in the same place as the 'Five Year Assembly' (Chinese: 五年大会), also known as the Pañcavārṣika Assembly, and the Pañcavārṣika, as recorded in early Indian texts, is one of the major Buddhist festivities.⁶⁰⁷

Two basic similarities in two texts content can be seen: showing the Buddha statue on agreed routes, even though their starting and ending points varied; and that the ritual was monopolised by the government. In Yōtkan, Xingxiang was

⁶⁰⁴ Xuanzang, 大唐西域记 [Great Tang Records on the Western Regions], (AD 626 - AD 654). The corresponding Chinese original text is: '时戒日王将还曲女城设法会也 从数十万众 在宛伽河南岸 拘摩罗王从数万之众 居北岸 分河中流 水陆并进 二王导引 四兵严卫 或泛舟 或乘象 击鼓鸣螺 拊弦秦管 经九十日 至曲女城 在宛伽河西大花林中 是时诸国二十余王先奉告命 各与其国髦俊沙门及婆罗门 群官 兵士 来集大会 王先于河西建大伽蓝 伽蓝东起宝台 高百余尺 中有金佛像 量等王身 台南起宝坛 为浴佛像之处 从此东北十四五里 别筑行宫 是时 仲春月也 从初一日以珍味饌诸沙门婆罗门 至二十一日 自行宫属伽蓝 夹道为阁 穷诸宝饰 乐人不移 雅声递奏 王于行宫出一金像 虚中隐起 高余三尺 载以大象 张以宝幟 戒日王为帝释之服 执宝盖以左侍 拘摩罗王作梵王之仪 执白拂而右侍 各五百象军 被铠周卫 佛像前后各百大象 乐人以乘 鼓奏音乐 戒日王以真珠杂宝及金银诸花 随步四散 供养三宝 先就宝坛 香水浴像 王躬负荷 送上西台 以诸珍宝 饌奢耶衣数十百千 而为供养 是时 唯有沙门二十余人预从 诸国王为侍卫 饌食已訖 集诸异学 商榷微言 抑扬至理 日将曛暮 回驾行宫 如是日送金像 导从如初 以至散日'.

⁶⁰⁵ Dinghua Ge, '《大唐西域记》所记第七世纪印度历史概观' [An overview of the history of India in the seventh century recorded in 'Great Tang Records on the Western Regions'], *Journal of Hebei University (Philosophy and Social Science)*, 1 (1982), 127-41 (p. 133).

⁶⁰⁶ Max Deeg, 'Origins and Development of the Buddhist Pañcavārṣika - Part I: India and Central Asia', *Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism: Saṃbhāṣā*, 16 (1995), 67-90 (pp. 67-9).

⁶⁰⁷ Max Deeg, (1995), p. 67.

conducted among the fourteen represented great monasteries, and the king and queen continuously participated in the event for fourteen days. In the Magādhā of the central Indian kingdoms, although the engagement of the imperial family was not recorded in the Faxian script and the Xingxiang ritual was performed by the Brahmin family, the Brahmin family had the highest status in society and usually performed such royal ceremonies. In Kutsi, there are also no details about the ceremonial assembly, but the final dates for the rite were only confirmed by the emperor in consultation with his ministers, and the place and route on which the event was held was also determined by the government. In Qunvcheng, the plot was even more grand and magnificent. Xuanzang reported that the ceremonial passage began from the temporary imperial palace and ran to the top of a sacred terrace. The king himself even carried the golden Buddha statue on his back and climbed to the top of the treasure scorpion, clearly reflecting imperial engagement with, and support for, Buddhism.

Apparently, however, the date of the Xingxiang ritual was not fixed in different regions or countries. For example, it was usually held in spring, but in Kutsi (龟兹) the timing seems to be different, as it took place in autumn, and indeed Xuanzang defined the term Xingxiang there for the first time. At present, however, the ritual is usually performed on 8 April in the lunar calendar to memorialise the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death.⁶⁰⁸ Meanwhile, the ritual details vary without there being a consistent pattern, either in the different historical periods or in the same witness statement. Accordingly, the manners in which the Buddha

⁶⁰⁸ Xianlin Ji, 大唐西域记校注 [Annotation of Great Tang Records on the Western Regions, Vol. 1], (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2000), p. 61.

statues were disposed of may follow different plans. Kings as participants vary, and this could be referred to as diplomatic interaction or networking through religious rituals.

The role of Buddhist rituals in the history of Mount Wutai should be the same as for the present day. They were to uphold the reputation of the Buddhist centre of Mount Wutai, which was certainly also an attractive destination for pilgrims from all over the world. Through ethnographic observation, the Himalayan Buddhist ritual Naro Gyen Druky, which brings together sanghas from around the world, creates a connection between participants that allows them to share experiences, build the Buddhist community, and conceptualise religious belonging.⁶⁰⁹ The primary objective of Tibetan Buddhist rituals is to sow karmic seeds and uphold a devout connection with a specific Buddhist lineage and its esteemed masters.⁶¹⁰ The ritual of Xingxiang is referenced in the earliest Indian sutras and Vinayas.⁶¹¹ Buddhist rituals, such as the Xingxiang, also attracted pilgrims from widespread locations who trekked to Mount Wutai. Certainly, the monasteries along the roads significantly contributed to the success of pilgrimages in ancient times.

8.5 Summary

This chapter has mainly discussed the transformation of Mount Wutai from a place of Taoists. The transformation contains multi layers implants. By shaping

⁶⁰⁹ Elizabeth Williams-Oerberg, 'Buddhist Ritual as "Connectionwork": Aesthetics and Technologies of Mediating Religious Belonging,' *Numen* 68.5-6 (2021), 488-512 (pp. 490 - 97).

⁶¹⁰ Elizabeth Williams-Oerberg (2021), pp. 507-08.

⁶¹¹ Qinggui, Chanyuan, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Code in China* (University of Hawaii Press, 2002), p. 10.

the landscape of Mount Wutai via the integration of the Five Wisdoms of *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* and the establishment of *Mañjuśrī* Monastery, Mount Wutai gradually became the *dojo* of *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* and thus a significant religious centre in China. This transformation also involved Buddhist rite holding in monasteries. The old Chinese mountain worship and Taoist rituals were replaced by Buddhist rites such as the Xingxiang, which originated in early India and was practised by Chinese pilgrims on Mount Wutai until the eighteenth century.

**Chapter 9 - The dynamic role of Foguang
Monastery in the developed *Mañjuśrī* cult
model of monasticism on Mount Wutai**

Based on the previous chapter, namely that Mount Wutai was transformed into a sacred mountain for Buddhists through the redefinition of the mountain's religious meaning, the large-scale landscaping to associate it with Buddhist deities and the construction of important monasteries to mark the religious identification of the *Mañjuśrī* abode, this chapter deals with the discussion of Buddhist pilgrimage and routes proceeding to this religious centre. By analysing the changing pilgrimage routes that were influenced by the changes in the regime, this chapter shows in particular the dynamic role of Foguang Monastery in the geographical framework of monasticism on Mount Wutai.

Buddhist pilgrimage on Mount Wutai had an exclusive Chinese term, namely 'Xun Li Wutaishan, Chinese: 巡礼五臺山', pilgrimage (or circuit) of Mount Wutai. 'Xun' in Chinese means to patrol or guard (an area) by walking or passing through somewhere regularly; 'Li' means to hold ceremonies or make offerings to the gods or ask for blessings by invoking traditional customs or exclusive rituals. On this long, arduous journey, pilgrims from different parts of the world have suffered great hardships to reach the mountain to show their humble devotion to the Buddha and seek enlightenment at this sacred shrine.

As a sacred international pilgrimage destination for Buddhist tourists, Mount Wutai attracts countless visitors in history. Qing Lian Shan Zhi reports that more than 50 Buddhist masters from the Han dynasty (202 BC - AD 220) to the Qing dynasty (1636 - 1912) either visited or lived at Mount Wutai to seek the Buddhist

Dharma or experience the sanctity of the shrine;⁶¹² the Japanese Buddhist Ennin (AD 794 - AD 864) wrote about his journey to the sacred Mount Wutai in his book, *'The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law (Ennin's Diary)'*. In addition, many historical emperors of the Qing dynasty also visited the sacred Buddhist shrine, including Emperor Kangxi in 1672, 1698, 1702, and 1710,⁶¹³ Emperor Qianlong in 1746, 1750, 1761, 1781, and 1792, and Emperor Jiaqing in 1811.

In order to uncover the pilgrimage routes to Mount Wutai, to determine the site's relationship with monasticism on Mount Wutai, to discover the Buddhist rituals that took place in this religious centre, and to find out the role and importance of Foguang Monastery, in the following sections the study uses flashbacks to the timeline from the nineteenth century AD of the Qing dynasty to the fourth century AD of the Northern Wei dynasty to structure the comparison and the interpretation, as the rich contemporary archive provides the opportunity to open up the exploration of the pilgrimage and the argumentation of the following discussion.

Scholars have provided valuable insights into the ancient pilgrimage routes leading to Mount Wutai and its Buddhist history. The earliest research is by Lin Yun-jo, who, based on contextualisation, describes the two main pilgrimage routes of the Tang dynasty (the eastern and western) and other bypass routes.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹² 清凉山志 [Qingliang Shan Zhi], is a historical geography book compiled by Shi Zhencheng (释镇澄) in the Ming dynasty (1596). It contains a wealth of content about Mount Qingliang, such as scenic and historical sites, biographies, significant historical events, poems, etc.

⁶¹³ Jiyu Xu (徐继畲), 五臺新志 卷首 [New Wutai County Annals, Vol. 1], (1883). The corresponding Chinese text is: '圣祖仁皇帝康熙二十二年二月壬辰 幸五臺山'.

⁶¹⁴ Yun-jo Lin, '唐代的五台山巡禮活動 - 兼論入謁五台山的域外僧人' [The Wutai Mountain Tour in the Tang dynasty - Also on the monks from abroad who visited Wutai Mountain], in 中國中古史研究: 中國中古史青年學者聯誼會會刊 第一卷

He also stated that since the middle period of Xuanzong during the Tang dynasty (AD 712 - AD 756), Buddhism went into a gradual decline.⁶¹⁵

9.1 The pilgrimage routes proceeding to Mount Wutai after the decline of the Tang Empire (AD 618 - AD 907)

9.1.1 Great Wall Gate of Mount Wutai

Mount Wutai in historical maps shows its importance with regard to political geography. In the Qing dynasty map in 1855 AD, Mount Wutai was bound by the Great Wall from the east side. This boundary is part of the Ming Great Wall, which was an 8851.8 km-long wall built between in 1368 and 1644, which was measured in 2009 via such techniques as aerial remote sensing, geographic information systems, and global positioning systems, etc.⁶¹⁶ It started from Mount Tiger in Liaoning Province, passed through 10 contemporary provinces and 156 cities or villages, and ended in Jiayu guan (Chinese: 嘉峪关) in Gansu Province at Mount Heng and the Taihang mountain range (Fig. 122).⁶¹⁷ The historical map also shows the part of the wall extending to Mount Wutai. Accordingly, the total length of the Great Wall in Shanxi Province is 3,500 kilometres, and the existing, relatively complete city walls and relics are more than 2,000 kilometres long. These Great Walls were intermittently built during various dynasties, such as the Eastern Wei dynasty (AD 534 - AD 550), Northern Qi dynasty (AD 550 - AD 557), Five Dynasties

[Research on Chinese Medieval History: Journal of the Association of Young Scholars of Chinese Medieval History, Vol. 1], ed. by Chong Xu, (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2014), pp. 313-43.

⁶¹⁵ Yun-jo Lin, pp. 313-43.

⁶¹⁶ Yuting Wang, '我国首次精确测出明长城长度' [China's first accurate measurement of the length of the Ming Great Wall], *China Surveying and Mapping*, 3 (2009), 82 (p. 82).

⁶¹⁷ Yuting Wang, (2009), p. 82.

and Ten Kingdoms Period (AD 907 - AD 979), Song dynasty (AD 960 - AD 1279), Ming dynasty (AD 1368 - AD 1644), and Qing dynasty (AD 1636 - AD 1912).⁶¹⁸ Based on the available historical texts of *Ming Shilu*, the Ming Empire was probably the most assiduous in terms of building the Great Wall, and the only king led continuously on its construction for more than 250 years.⁶¹⁹ The part running north-south of the Ming Great Wall, is closed to the Mount Wutai scope and has a gate called Longquan Guan (or Great Wall Gate), built between AD 1437 and AD 1451.

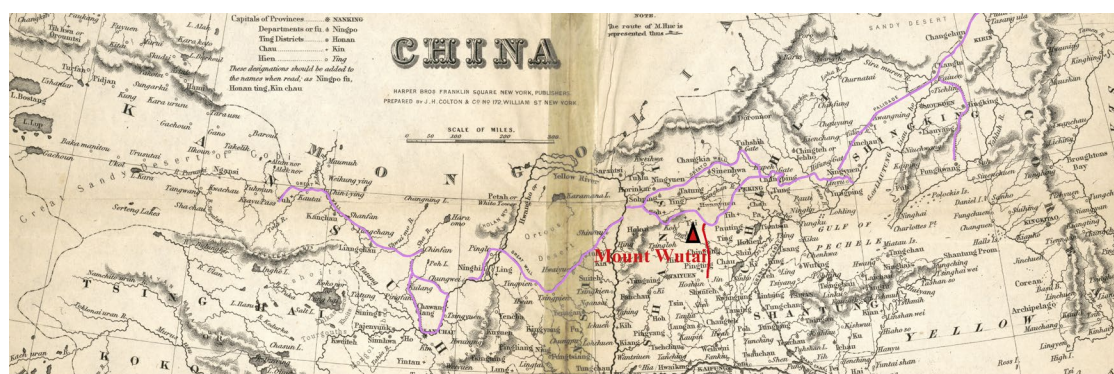


Fig. 122. Ming Great Walls highlighted and the east-west part (in red) close to the Mount Wutai area, map dated 1855.

In another mesoscale historical map of the Qing dynasty, the mountainous topography near Mount Wutai was also marked.⁶²⁰ The entire area of Mount Wutai is surrounded by the Hutuo River to the south, west and north. The Hutuo River around Wutai Mountain has many tributaries that stretch over a wide area, such as Fanzhi County, Daizhou County, Guo County, Dingxiang County, Yu County and Wutai County, and then join the Ziya River in Hebei Province and the Haihe River, finally flowing into the Bohai Sea. In the historical text *Dao Xian Li Dai Yan Ge Biao* of Shanxi province, Mount Wutai belongs to Wutai County, and Wutai

⁶¹⁸ Hulong Shi, '山西长城的现状 & 保护对策' [Current Situation and Protection Strategy of Shanxi Great Wall], *China Great Wall Museum (Special Issue of The First China Great Wall Forum)*, 2008 (4), 14-9 (p. 14).

⁶¹⁹ Juzheng Zhang and others, *明實錄* [Ming Shilu], (AD 1328 - AD 1627).

⁶²⁰ Shilin Jueluo (觉罗石麟) and Dawen Chu(储大文), *山西通志* (雍正) [Shanxi Tongzhi (Yongzheng)], (1664-1773).

county was originally called Lusi (Chinese: 虑虬) in 403 BC, as it was surrounded by the Lusi River which is in the northwest, 8 kilometres away from Wutai County.⁶²¹ It was then renamed Lvyi (Chinese: 驢夷) in AD 486, during the Northern Wei dynasty, and known as Wutai county until the time of the Sui dynasty in AD 606 because of Mount Wutai.⁶²² The Lusi River also changed its name to Lvyi River. The nomadic peoples of Tiefu tribe, a branch of the Xiongnu (a tribal confederation), once lived there in the third to fourth centuries AD.⁶²³ The tributary whose source is at Mount Wutai is that of the Qingshui River, which the author will discuss in the following section. The Hutuo River crosses the part of the Great Wall of the Ming and reaches the border of Hebei Province (Fig. 123).

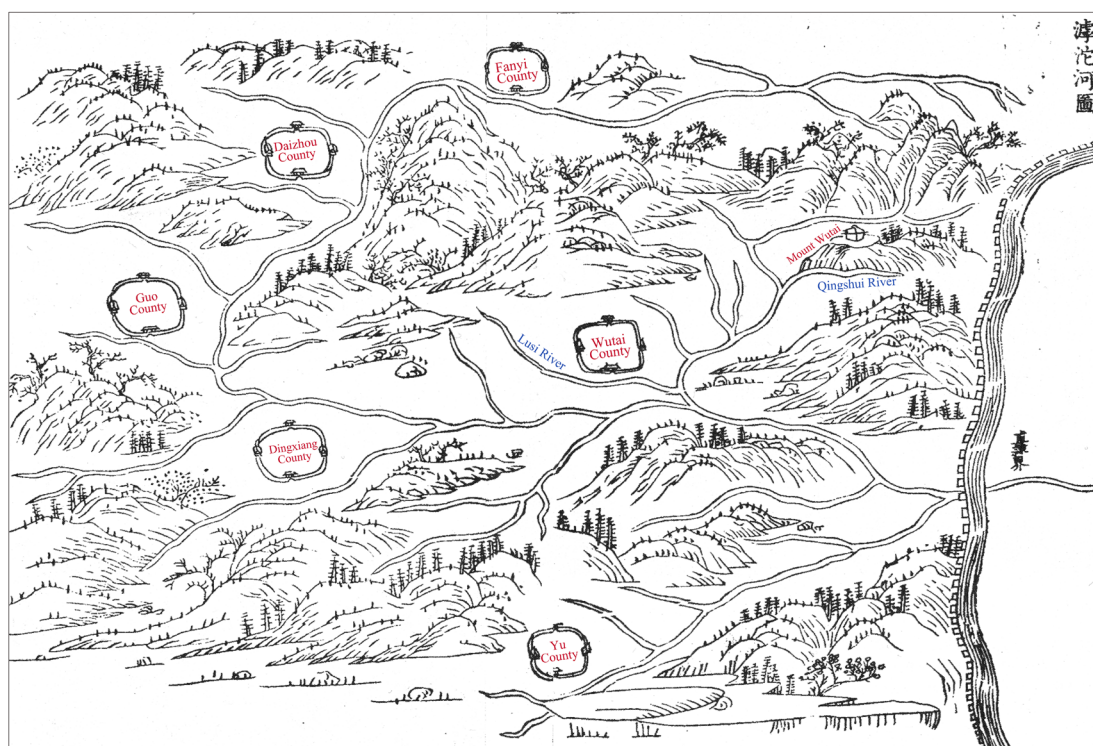


Fig. 123. Hutuo River and the surrounding villages of Mount Wutai in AD 1664 - AD 1773.

⁶²¹ Guoquan Zeng (曾国荃) and Xu Zhang (张煦), *山西通志 (光绪) · 卷四十三* [Shanxi Tong Zhi (Guang xu), Vol. 43, Chapter 13 of mountains and rivers investigation], (1892 - 1895).

⁶²² The archive *Dao Xian Li Dai Yan Ge Biao of Shan Xi Province* (山西省道县历代沿革表) is a history table recorded different geographical location of each district and county in China, wrote by Yuchang Wang in 1927, p. 45. Ji Yu Xu (徐继畲), *五臺新志 · 卷首* [New Wutai County Annals, Vol. 1], (1883).

⁶²³ Guoquan Zeng (曾国荃) and Xu Zhang (张煦), Vol. 43, Chapter 13 of mountains and rivers investigation, (1892 - 1895).

龙泉关 *Longquan Guan*

释德清(明) *Shi Deqing (Ming dynasty)*

策杖烟霞外，重关虎豹林。

*Walking forward with cane at Great Wall gate where is a dangerous jungle with
tigers and leopards.*

路当崎曲险，山入寒垣深。

*The road (towards the Mount Wutai) is winding and arduous, Longquan Guan
(or Great Wall Gate) sits in the frontier of the country far away from human
habitat.*

惨淡黄云色，萧条落日阴。

*The sky is full of pale-yellow clouds, and the gloomy sunset makes people
depressed and wistful.*

边笳如怨客，呜呜岭头吟。

*The sound of the flute flying over the crest of the Great Wall seems to be a
people quietly weeping their grief at parting with their homeland.*

The above is a traditional Chinese poem from the time of the Ming dynasty (AD 1368 - AD 1644) which depicts a gloomy, bleak, depressing scene of Longquan Guan on the Great Wall of Mount Wutai. It was written in 1573 by the Buddhist Deqing from southern China. Based on the translation of the poem from the Ming dynasty, it describes that travelling Buddhists had to undertake an arduous journey through the Great Wall Gate to Mount Wutai, and the Longquan Gate was used by pilgrims in the Ming dynasty. Geographically, Longquan Guan (Chinese:

関, Guan means gate tower) lies 60 miles to the south of Mount Wutai and was the border between the Zhinu and Shanxi regions during the Ming dynasty; to the east is Zhinu, the region's prefecture, which was directly administered by the central government of the Ming dynasty, whilst to the west is the Shanxi region, where Mount Wutai is located.⁶²⁴ During the Ming dynasty, Emperor Taizu was a monk before he became emperor through the peasant revolt; Emperor Chengzu appointed monks to be his strategist to govern the country; Peking, the capital during the Ming dynasty, had more than 1000 monasteries, and monastic buildings were distributed throughout the entire city.⁶²⁵ Chinese Buddhism during the Ming dynasty, flourished under the substantial support of the ruling elite, including the political class.

Furthermore, in the historical text *Qingliang Shan Zhi* (1546 - 1617), which was copied in the *Qingliang Shan Ling Zhi* (1644 - 1912),⁶²⁶ they show its geographical relation with the adjacent counties, the Hutuo River surrounding Wutai outside, the locations of monasteries or Buddhist monuments in the Mount Wutai region, and indicates the passages there (Fig. 124). Compared to today's routes, the routes of the Qing dynasty are almost identical. The paths mapped out also indicate the possible historical pilgrimage passages. To worship the five peaks without turning back, the route could start at the road junction near Jiao Kou on the contemporary map (Fig. 125) and then climb up to the South Peak. The South Peak is actually a junction that led to three different destinations. Visitors to

⁶²⁴ Shi Zhencheng, *清涼山志* [Qingliang Shan Zhi], (1569). The corresponding Chinese text is: '龙泉关 台东南六十里 关之东即直隶 关之西即山西'.

⁶²⁵ Ming Guo, *Buddhism History in Ming and Qing dynasty*, (Beijing: People's Publishing House & Oriental Press), pp. 8-37.

⁶²⁶ Shi Zhencheng, *清涼山志* [Qingliang Shan Zhi], (1569). Qu Zhen, *清涼山靈志* [Qingliang Shan Ling Zhi], (1644 and 1912).

South Peak could either reach the Ancient South Peak directly, or go down via the Jinge ridge to Qingliang Stone (Chinese: 清凉石) and then to the Lion's Cave; or they could go down to Jiulong Gang, pass Zhulin si (or Bamboo Monastery), and reach the Lion's Cave. They could then cross Qingliang Bridge and walk to the West Peak, then Centre Peak. A path near the Zaoyu Chi (*Bodhisattva* bathing place) connected the Centre Peak and the highest peak then extended to the last peak, which is the same route that visitors take today. The mountain gate (or Great Wall gate, Longquan Guan) in the Great Wall ridges is the only eastern entrance to Mount Wutai referred to on the map (Fig. 125).

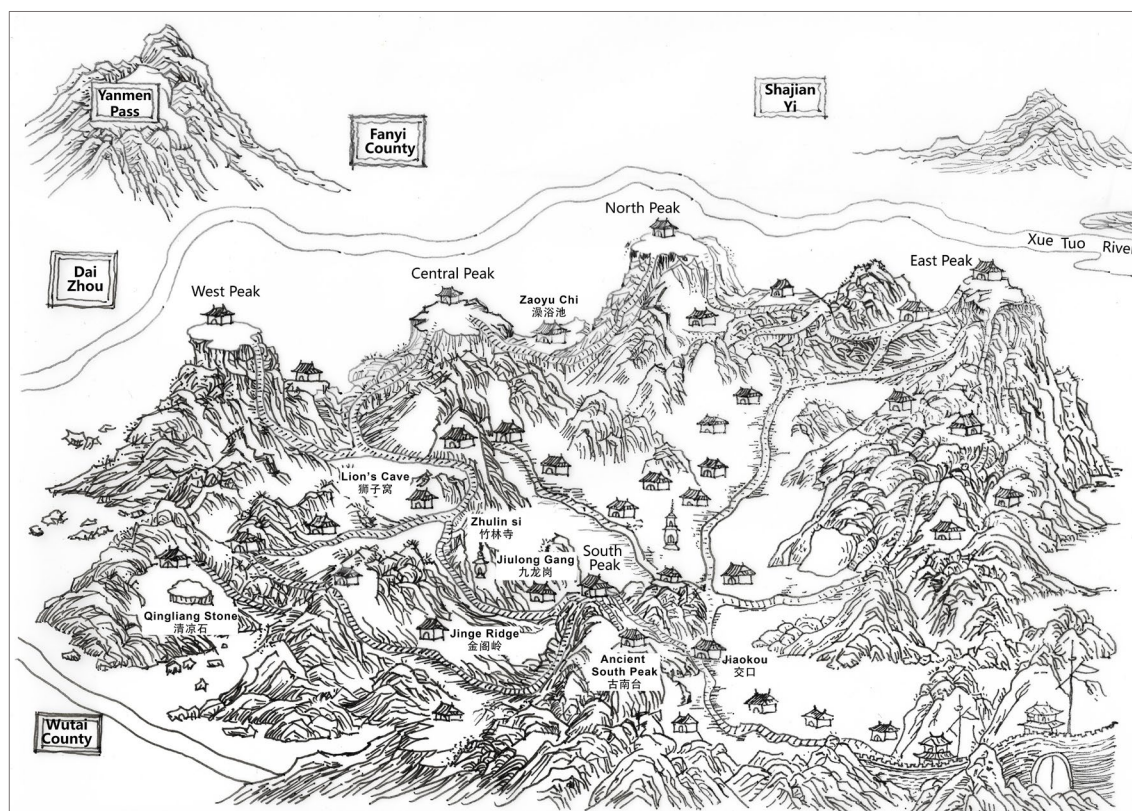


Fig. 124. Mount Wutai in *Qingliang Shan Zhi*, created between AD 1546 and AD 1617 (Ming to Qing dynasties).

Furthermore, in the historical text *Qingliang Shan Ji Yao* of the Qing dynasty in AD 1780,⁶²⁷ the map of Mount Wutai shows the routes differently (Fig. 125). The

⁶²⁷ *Mount Qingliang Gazetteer - Vol.1* (清凉山志辑要 卷一) by Guaerjia Yade (瓜尔佳 雅德) of Shanxi Governor (山西巡抚) in the Emperor Qianlong period in 1780.

only mountain entrance (Mountain Gate on the Great Wall ridge) is unchanged, still being at the same location as on the previous map (Fig. 124). However, Qingshui River, a tributary of the Hutu River, which is flowing from north to south through Taihuai village, was only marked on the map of AD 1780. Furthermore, the dot lines representing the hiking routes on the map no longer show the circuit route (from the south summit to the west summit and the middle summit to the north summit), as Zaoyu Chi disappears where there used to be a route bridging the Centre and North Peaks (Fig. 124). Instead, this map shows different one-way routes marked on the map. These changes to the routes seem to indicate that the circular pilgrimage route might not adopt, although the locations of most of the monasteries were not changed.

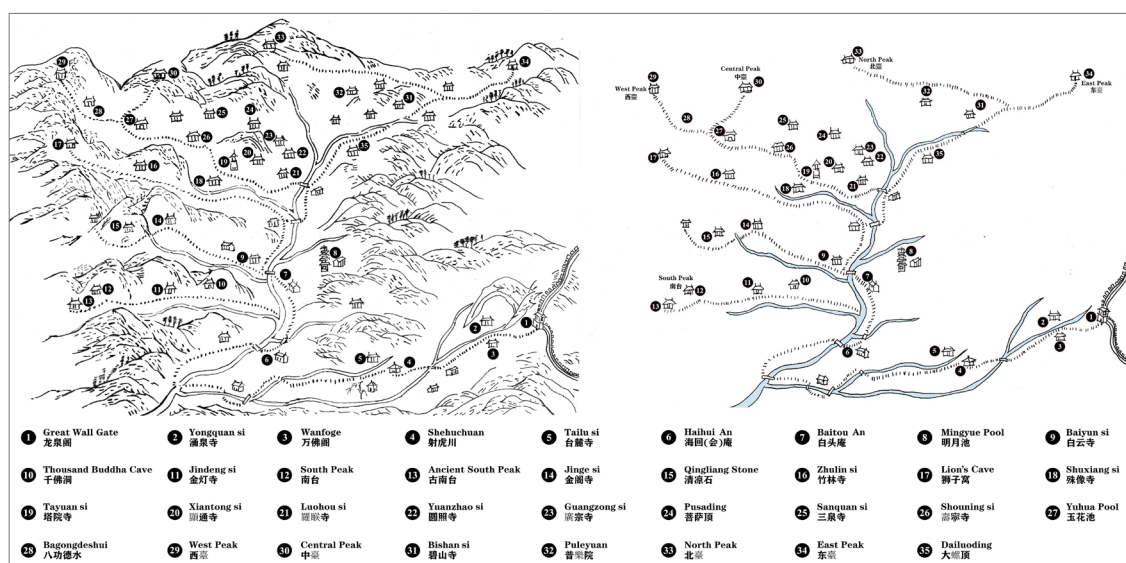


Fig. 125. Pilgrimage at Mount Qingliang in AD 1780.

9.1.2 Compelling pilgrimage route through the Great Wall Gate of Mount Wutai

The Great Wall Gate is also marked on another map from the Qing dynasty of 1850 (Fig. 126). This accordion map may be printed in the late Qing dynasty (AD 1850 -

AD 1912) because it has no preface or postscript.⁶²⁸ Accordingly, the names and the locations of monasteries, villages, roads and rivers in Mount Wutai scope were pointed out, also involving the exact positions of imperial palaces and the precise distances between two resting palaces. The function of this map was to serve for the emperor's trip to Mount Wutai to be consecrated as a Buddhist. Meanwhile, in terms of the outset and the destination of this pilgrimage route in Mount Wutai in the nineteenth century, it starts at the Great Wall gate, and ends at the five peaks of Mount Wutai and involves monasteries, countryside, and three Imperial Palaces (Tailu si ③ is the first imperial palaces; Baiyun si ⑦ is the second, and Pusading ⑨ is the third in Fig. 127).⁶²⁹ Along the way, once passing the Great Wall gate and the Chinese architectural archway (Junction Paifang, Chinese: 牌坊), visitors would successively go through the Shehuchuan, the Jingangku, the Shifo, and finally arrive at Taihuai village at the foot of Mount Wutai. In Taihuai village, Xiantong Monastery (also Dafu lingjiu Monastery, the first Buddhist church in Mount Wutai) is adjacent to the imperial palace, Pogada Monastery and Pusading Monastery. Because this area is on the foot of Mount Wutai, it is possible an essential food supply point supporting stay and rest before worshipping the Five Peaks for Buddhism adherents and visitors.

⁶²⁸ Library of Congress, '五臺山道路全圖' [Map - Road map in Mount Wutai], *Library of Congress*, <<https://www.loc.gov/item/2012402693/>> [accessed 5 September 2022].

⁶²⁹ In Chinese, 'si' is a term used to refer to a 'monastery.' In this thesis, some entities have been referred to as 'monasteries,' while others are referred to as 'si.' Although they do not exhibit significant differences, the monasteries that require discussion are specifically designated with the term 'monastery.'

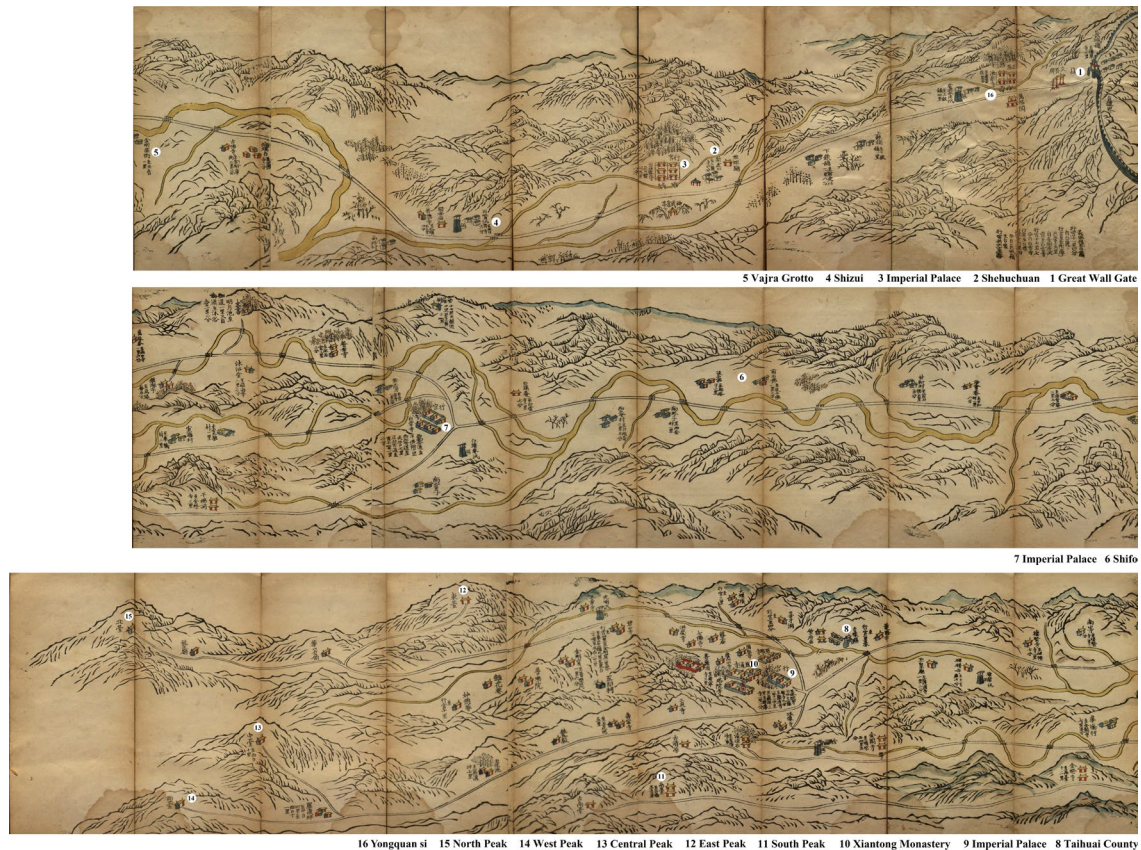


Fig. 126. The accordion fold book shows the pilgrimage routes on Mount Wutai from AD 1850 - AD 1912. (Please refer to Appendix F for a larger-sized map, p. 451).

The locations of the three imperial palaces are marked in the archive (Fig. 126). The first palace past the Great Wall Gate is (in Tailu si) near the ‘Shehuchuan’;⁶³⁰ the second is close to present-day Baiyun si (or Jiaokou in Fig. 124); and the third is in Taihuai village, near Xiantong Monastery. Moreover, this map does not show the circuit path and there is no path between Centre Peak and North Peak; rather, it shows a number of parallel paths. Specifically, there is only one passage from the mountain gate to the first imperial palace. After the first palace, there are three branches leading to different destinations. One path leads to the South Peak and the ancient South Peak, another leads to Qingliang si and Qingliang Stone, which one can also take to reach Taihuai village, whilst the third goes

⁶³⁰ Shehuchuan (射虎川), the place Emperor Kangxi visited in 1683 and shot a tiger. A stone tablet of the Kangxi Imperial Monument can still be seen there.

directly to Taihuai village, where the second palace is also located. From Taihuai village, there are two paths, one leading to West Peak and Centre Peak, the other connecting North Peak and East Peak. These paths are similar to those shown on the map from AD 1780 (Fig. 125).

Compared to the aforementioned pilgrimage maps on Mount Wutai, access to the mountains via the Great Wall is the only access to the mountain region. The locations of the monasteries and the distance between two sites were shown clearly in the archive. This important information provides an opportunity to compare with current situation. Unsurprisingly, the distances recorded in historic text are almost identical to those presently recorded. Therefore, the monastic locations and the distances between different sites can be aligned with today's maps (Fig. 127). Besides, the Qingshui River (coloured blue), the winding paths across the mountainous land are also marked as essential elements (Fig. 125).

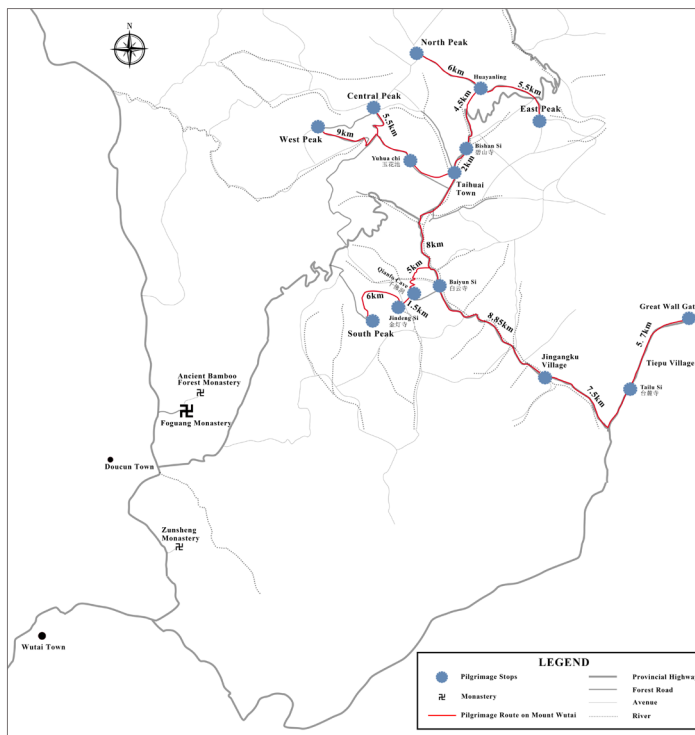


Fig. 127. The pilgrimage routes on Mount Wutai aligned with current maps.

Another precious historical archive in the late Qing dynasty, the engraving of Mount Wutai Sheng Jing Quan Tu⁶³¹ created around AD 1846, also shows the mountain entrance on the Great Wall (Fig. 128). In addition, the 34 marked points drawn on the map reveal the Buddhist churches' scenario with architectural details from a bird's-eye view. In the northwest corner of the map, there is a sentence in Chinese and Tibetan: '大清道光二十六年四月十五日吉, 造板存慈福寺' [*on the April 15th of the lunar calendar in 1846 is an auspicious day, and the stencil printing if wooden template is preserved in Cifu Monastery which is close to the Pusading Monastery (Mañjuśrī Monastery)*]. In the middle of the map, near the Pusading Monastery (②④ in Fig. 128), a cluster of Tibetan Buddhists are walking with court officials, and a Buddhist priest is sitting in a larger litter without roof following a government sedan chair. This is one of the more important rituals for Buddhists - Xingxiang (Chinese: 行像, image procession, or walking images), which was discussed in the previous chapter. Besides, female Buddhist Monasteries (Nunneries) also can be found at the bottom of the map, represented at the foot of the Mount Wutai.

Furthermore, on the AD 1864 woodblock print map of Shanxi Province (Fig. 129), the Great Wall boundary between the Shanxi (left) and Hebei (right) connects the pilgrimage route between the sacred shrine and the imperial city of Beijing. The Great Wall Gate numbered in Fig. 128 can also be found on the map of Shanxi (Fig. 129). The Great Wall Gate of Mount Wutai would play an essential

⁶³¹ Library of Congress, '五臺山圣境全圖' [Map - Wutai shan sheng jing quan tu], *Library of Congress*, <<https://www.loc.gov/item/gm71005136/>> [accessed 20 September 2021].

role in guiding Buddhist devotees walking to the holy shrine from an easterly direction in the nineteenth century. The AD 1811 book on the *Jiaqing Emperor's Pilgrimage to Mount Wutai* describes the route from the Great Wall Gate to his Old Summer Palace in the capital Beijing, a total of 805 li (about 40.25 km). It also records the fifteen Xing Gong (Chinese: 行宮, Imperial Palace for short stays outside the capital), villages and small towns, monasteries, Taoist temples and scenic spots along the way.⁶³² The Great Wall Gate (Chinese: 龙泉関), the first stop on the entire journey, is the closest place to the capital on Mount Wutai. It is important to note that this entrance was confirmed as the king's preferred entrance to the mountain in the Qing dynasty (Fig. 130).

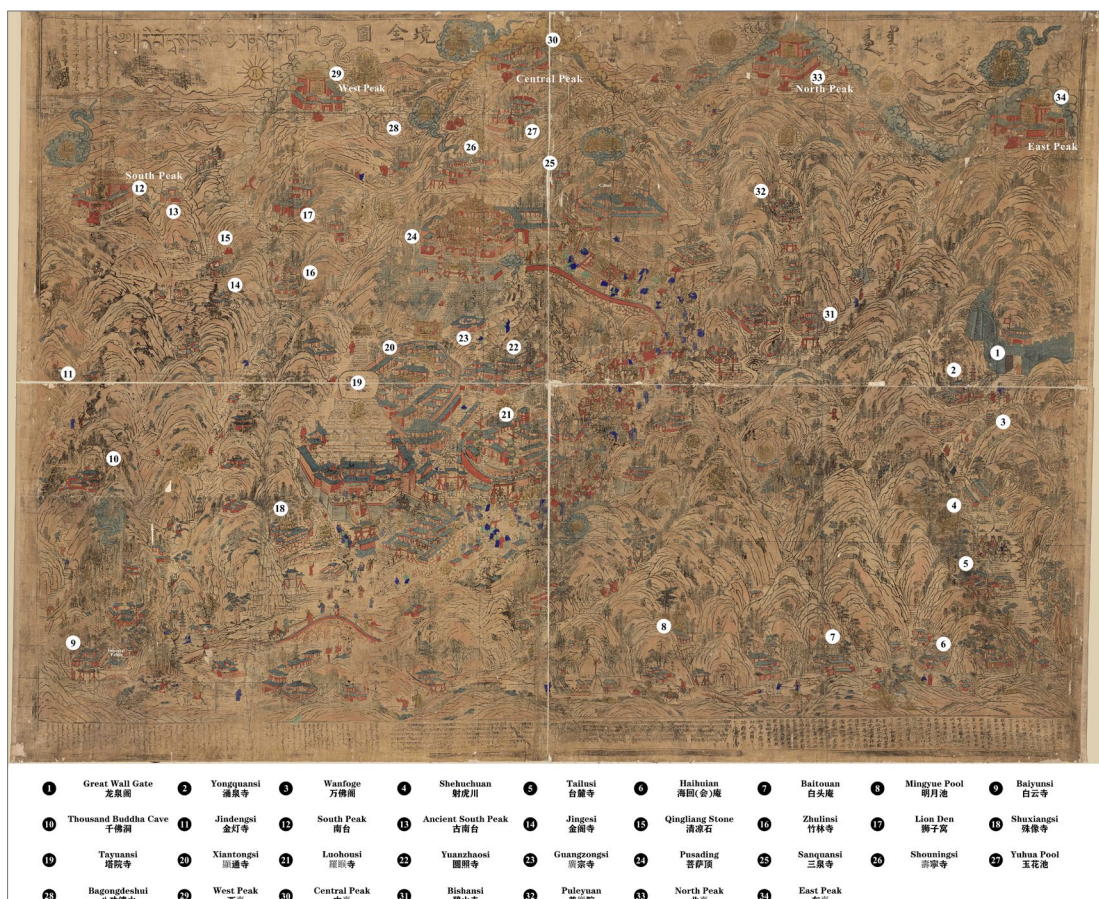


Fig. 128. Mount Wutai Sheng Jing Quan Tu (The map of sacred Mount Wutai Shrine) in AD 1846

⁶³² Author unknown, 嘉慶巡幸五台圖說 [Jiaqing Emperor Pilgrimage Mount Wutai]. (1811).



Fig. 129. Wood block print map of Shanxi Province in AD 1864.

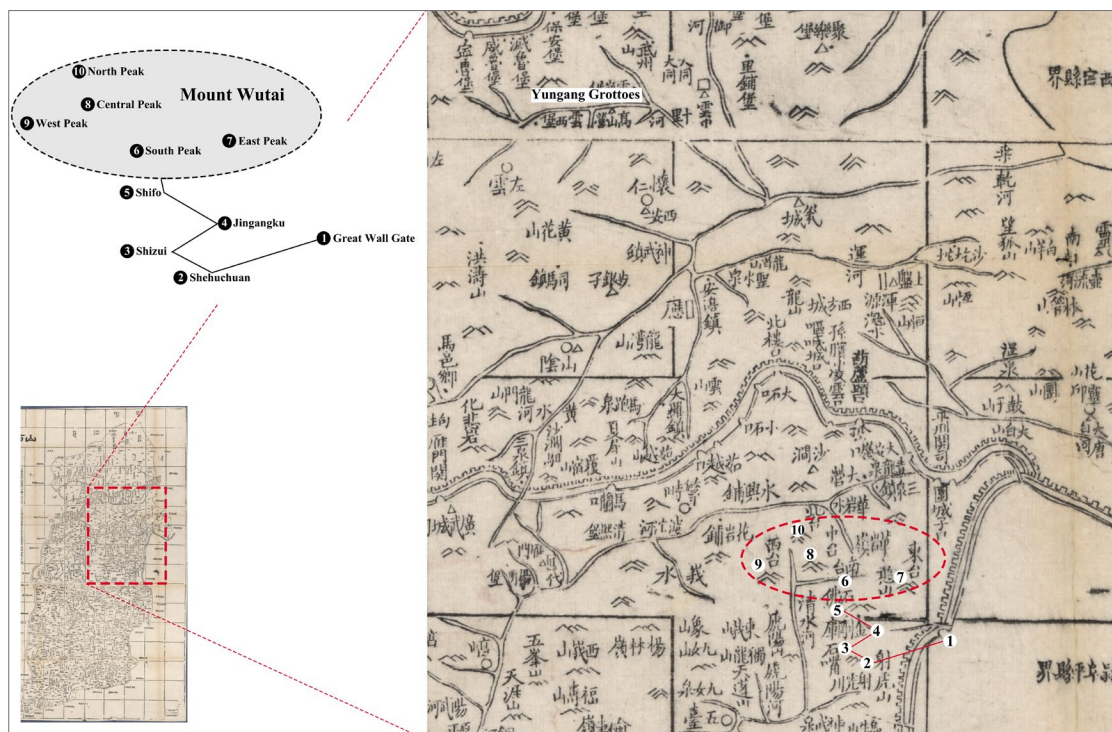


Fig. 130. The map of pilgrimage on Mount Wutai taken by the Jiaqing Emperor in AD 1811.

The archives about the roads on Mount Wutai in the nineteenth century provide information about the emperor's pilgrimage from an easterly direction (the east Mount gate of Great Wall) toward Mount Wutai. In addition, these maps show the footpaths leading to each peak, as well as the names and locations of the monasteries that lie along each path. The mountain gate of Mount Wutai, which was under royal patronage because of the frequent pilgrimages there by the Qing emperors, marks the main entrance of sacred Tibetan Buddhist land during the Qing dynasty, although the Great Wall Gate is no longer the present-day gate.

A possible reason for the mountain gate scenario, Longquan Guan, is because the gate is the closest place to the capital of Beijing. Peking is known to have been the capital during the Liao dynasty (AD 916 - AD 1125), the Jin dynasty (AD 1115 - AD 1134), the Yuan dynasty (AD 1271 - AD 1368), the Ming dynasty (AD 1368 - AD 1644) and the Qing dynasty (AD 1636 - AD 1912), that is, for more than eight hundred years, and the majority of rulers during this time were adherents to Buddhism. For instance, In Liao and Jin dynasties, as Buddhism prevailed, numerous Buddhist buildings were erected, many of which remain today, such as the Guanyin Pavilion of the Dule Pagoda in Ji County, Tianjin city, and the Shakyamuni Pagoda at Fogong Monastery in Ying County, Shanxi Province. During the Yuan dynasty (AD 1271 - AD 1368), Tibetan Buddhism impacted on the Buddhist arts, involving mainly statues and architecture. With the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism, Tibetan monastic architecture was also first introduced on Mount Wutai, where Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism then coexisted, and Mount Wutai became a common holy place

for both Chinese and Tibetan Buddhists.⁶³³ The mountain gate on the Great Wall was thus to be used for a very long time, not only during the Qing dynasty, and the capital Beijing undoubtedly determined its popularity. The imperial family undoubtedly felt the need to conveniently open this eastern entrance for pilgrimages and imperial patronage. However, this does not mean that the Great Wall Gate was the only entrance to the mountain in history.

9.1.3 The inconspicuous Foguang Monastery hiding on the south pilgrimage route

The southern approach to Mount Wutai, which also existed in the nineteenth century, is missing from many visual maps, which only highlights the Great Wall Gate (or Long Quan Guan). For instance, the map from AD 1846 not only indicates how the pilgrimage routes from the Great Wall gate go onward to each peak, but also drew the other mountain access (the south gate) hidden at the back of the South Peak (Fig. 131). Through the Great Wall gate, one would follow the path through Yongquan si (the same location of the first palace in Fig. 126) and Shehuchuan⁶³⁴, down to the bottom left of the map to Baiyun si, to the Imperial Palace. The route corresponds to the information given on the maps from AD 1780 (Fig. 125) and 1850 (Fig. 126). From Baiyun si, the road branches into three paths leading in different directions. The left path from Baiyun si on the map goes on to the South Peak.

⁶³³ Xianli Lu, '元代藏传佛教在五台山传播探析' [On the Spread of Tibetan Buddhism in the Yuan dynasty in Mount Wutai], *Journal of Heihe University*, 6 (2016), 211-13

⁶³⁴ Shehuchuan (射虎川) means a valley where the tiger was shot.

Towards the back of the South Peak, Foguang Monastery and the Ancient Bamboo Monastery are marked in Chinese characters. This Foguang Monastery is the one this study focuses on, as they both share the same geographical location. For example, the Ancient Bamboo Monastery is marked on the map near the Foguang Monastery (Fig. 131). At present, Ancient Bamboo Monastery is 1500 metres away from Foguang Monastery (see Fig. 33). The Count of Wutai marked on the map is also near Foguang Monastery and Ancient Bamboo Monastery. It should be noted that the two monstrosities have long been administered by Wutai County and have nothing to do with Mount Wutai. Most importantly, the map between Wutai County and Foguang Monastery shows a mountain gate, which should be the south access to Mount Wutai. This is because if visitors go through the gate in the direction of Foguang Monastery and Ancient Bamboo Monastery, they will enter a valley leading to Mount Wutai. The reason why the south entrance is not mentioned in most of the fourteenth to nineteenth-century archives is not entirely clear. However, the most convincing explanation might be that after the Tang dynasty, when the capital shifted from Chang'an to Beijing, the gate lost much of its former popularity.



Fig. 131. South access to Mount Wutai, Mount Wutai Sheng Jing Quan Tu (The map of sacred Mount Wutai Shrine) in AD 1846.

Ancient Bamboo Monastery was also an important monastery with famous deeds, but it is not one Ennin ever visited. In Ennin's records of the return journey from Mount Wutai to the capital Chang'an in AD 841, he did not pass the Foguang Monastery, nor is anything reported about the Ancient Bamboo Monastery, since

the two were outside the sanctuary of Mount Wutai, and he did not have to pass them on his way back either.

There are two Bamboo Monasteries shown in the Mount Wutai Sheng Jing Quan Tu (Fig. 131). Their locations are also quite close to each other, and both are near the West Peak; their legends in historical texts both refer to bamboo.⁶³⁵ The Ancient Bamboo Monastery near Foguang Monastery lies 30 li (15 km) southwest of Mount Wutai. To provide clarity, the monastery located near Foguang Monastery is referred to as 'Ancient Bamboo Monastery' in this thesis, while the one situated in the core area of Mount Wutai is designated as 'Zhulin Monastery'. Some scholars even considered the Zhulin Monastery to be the Ancient one and concluded that the Zhulin Monastery was the *dojo* of the Tang Buddhist Fazhao and the place where Ennin learned Buddhist teachings and rituals,⁶³⁶ which led to misunderstandings about the Tang dynasty pilgrimage route and the location of the Foguang Monastery.

⁶³⁵ In *Qingliang Shan Zhi*: '化竹林 台西南支山二十里 亦名泉竹林 昔人还望万竹林林 尽责失之 随此卓庵; 古竹林 台西南三十里 唐法照入圣境 镇澄诗 森森万竹拂苍烟 可信人间别有天 回首不知谁是梦 夕阳山色意茫然'.

⁶³⁶ Zhi Xiang, '五台山竹林寺和日本圆仁慈觉大师' [Zhulin Monastery of Mount Wutai and the Japanese elite monk Ennin], *Mt Wutai Researches*, 3 (1987), 15-8

9.2 Shaping the pilgrimage routes and monastic geography through the model of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva maṇḍala* on Mount Wutai in mediaeval China

9.2.1 Pilgrimage routes and various monasteries created by different Buddhist sects in the diary of Ennin

Based on the pilgrimage routes during the Ming and Qing dynasties described above, the diary of the visiting Japanese Buddhist Ennis, who recorded his journey to worship Mount Wutai during the Tang dynasty, and various historical records from Mount Wutai, provide rich resource to track the possible pilgrimage routes in the medieval China.

The map of Mount Wutai Sheng Jing Quan Tu confirms the existence of the southeast access (the Great Wall Gate) and southwest access (the Mountain Gate near the Foguang Monastery) (Fig. 131), besides, the diary of visiting Japanese visiting Buddhist, from the time of the Tang dynasty, also proves this fact. Accordingly, when Ennin first came to China by ship from Japan, he learned and practised Buddhism at the Fahua Monastery at Mount Chi (during the Tang dynasty). When he decided to go on pilgrimage to Mount Wutai and received his travel permit 'Du Die',⁶³⁷ he left Fahua Monastery in Mount Chi in AD 840 and finally reached Mount Wutai in AD 841. The pilgrimage route leading from Shandong, through Hebei to Mount Wutai was not explored by Ennin himself but

⁶³⁷ Dudie (度牒), which is roughly equivalent to today's passport. Dudie is a declaration of consent in ancient China to administer, which allows laities to become monks or Taoist. "Die" mentioned in Ennin's diary many times, is likely a passport for travelling. Before Ennin could travel to another area of China as an international Buddhist, he first had to apply for the Dudie from an official. Therefore, every time he travelled, he had to wait for getting the Die.

was very familiar to other local pilgrims who familiarised Ennin with its details. Ennin learned that the long distance from Mount Chi to Mount Wutai was 2990 li (about 1495 km), as calculated from his diary (Fig. 132).



Fig. 132. Pilgrimage-walking route map by Ennin from Mount Chi to Mount Wutai, AD 840 - AD 841, Tang dynasty.

The trek to Mount Wutai via the East entrance was thus Ennin's first choice as he set out from the middle east shrine of China - Mount Chi in Shandong. During his long journey, with the exception of sleeping in peasants' houses or monasteries along the road at night, he often stayed at 'Putong Yuan'⁶³⁸, a place where visiting pilgrims could stay, usually for just a short time; sometimes, Putong Yuan provided free meals for monks during the Tang dynasty. The royal family built imperial palaces as places of rest in on their pilgrimages, which usually took place in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, while Putong Yuan played the same role for ordinary pilgrims, where Ennin also usually stayed when he travelled, rather than resting in a monastery (Fig. 133).

⁶³⁸ Ennin, 入唐求法巡礼行记 [The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law], (838 - 845AD). The corresponding original Chinese text is: '不论僧俗 来集便僧宿 有饭即与 无饭不与 不妨僧俗赴宿 故曰普通院' [Whether monk or nonprofessional, all are welcome to stay in the place. If the place provides a meal, visitors are free to eat it. If the place does not have food for hospitality, it also provides a place for visitors to sleep. For this reason, the place is called 'Putong Yuan'].

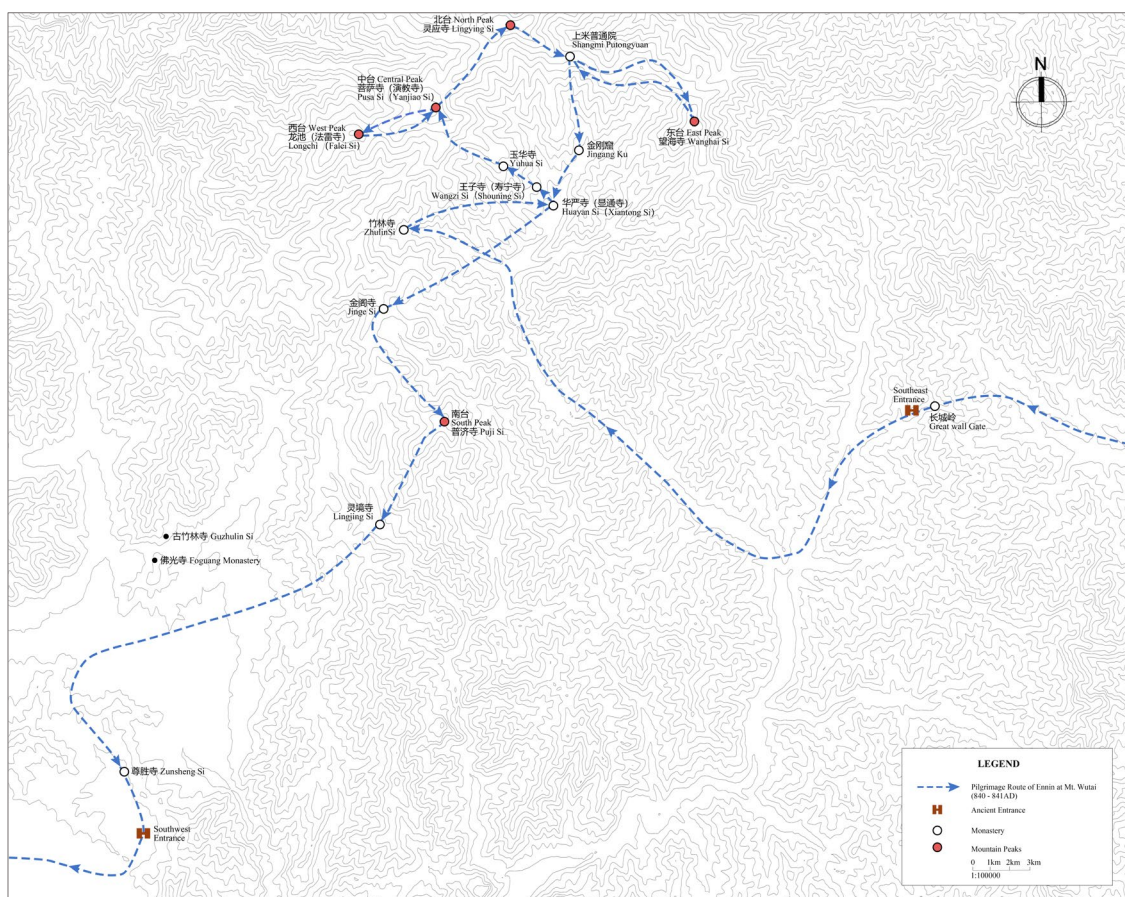


Fig. 133. Ennin's pilgrimage routes around Mount Wutai in AD 841.

In Putong Yuan, especially near the southeast approach to Mount Wutai, Ennin met many pilgrims and recorded various stories about them. At Guoyuan Putong Yuan (or Orchard Court), he once saw a large pilgrimage tour with more than 100 pilgrims returning from Mount Wutai, including patrons, nuns, and women. Besides, Ennin frequently saw Buddhists from Jinge Monastery, which lies to the west of Mount Wutai, going to Shenzhou (near present-day Hengshui in Hebei) to ask for alms oil. It is therefore certain that the east passage to Mount Wutai was already in use during the Tang dynasty, and the pilgrimage network and interaction of Buddhists allows for the possibility of several exits leading to Mount Wutai. Moreover, according to the geographical description of Ennin, the Putong Yuan of Longquan (the Dragon Spring site) is near the Longquan Gate (or the Great Wall Gate, East access to Mount Wutai in Tang dynasty), and indeed the

Longquan Gate has been mentioned in various archives (Figs. 123, 124, 125, and 128). Due to the Great Wall initially being built during the Ming dynasty (1368 - 1644),⁶³⁹ as the boundary of Mount Taihang and Mount Wutai, it has different names but of course is in the same location. Therefore, the southeast mountain gate that existed during the Tang dynasty was later rebuilt as a Great Wall Gate in the Ming dynasty.

During the period when Ennin was living in Zhulin Monastery at Mount Wutai, he spent some time experiencing Chinese *Lǜ Yuan* (律院, precepts or commandment school). Zhulin Monastery likely built between AD 770 - AD 771 by the elite Buddhist Fazhao during the Tang dynasty.⁶⁴⁰ Fazhao created five sessions of Buddha-chanting by changing the speed and pitch of the voice of Buddha-chanting to express the lightness and urgency of Buddha-chanting, and he ever constantly travelled between Mount Wutai and Chang'an to spread his Dharma. After his death, he was posthumously given the title Monk Dawu (大悟).⁶⁴¹ A stone inscription discovered from the Ming dynasty Wanli (AD 1601) tells the story of the Tang monk Fazhao, who entered the Bamboo Monastery and supported the erection of a Jade Buddha statue.⁶⁴² Thus, the Ancient Bamboo is the *dojo* of monk Fazhao.

⁶³⁹ Yuting Wang, '我国首次精确测出明长城长度' [China's first accurate measurement of the length of the Ming Great Wall], *China Surveying and Mapping*, 3 (2009), 82 (p. 82).

⁶⁴⁰ Zhi Xiang, '五台山竹林寺和日本圆仁慈觉大师' [Zhulin Monastery of Mount Wutai and the Japanese elite monk Ennin], *Mt Wutai Researches*, 3 (1987), 15-8 (p. 15).

⁶⁴¹ Shi Zhencheng, *清凉山志* [Qingliang Shan Zhi], (1569).

⁶⁴² Yingtang Guo and Peiling Li, '五台县佛光村古竹林寺出土唐代白石佛教造像' [White Marble Buddhist Statues of the Tang dynasty Unearthed from the Ancient Zhulin Monastery in Foguang Village, Wutai County], *Journal of Chinese Antiquity*, 4 (2003), 3-6 (p. 4).

The place was the first monastery where Ennin lived and learned Vinaya Buddhism (Chinese: 律宗) when he arrived at Mount Wutai. Most of the present buildings of the Zhulin Monastery were constructed contemporarily, with the exception of the octagonal *stūpa*, which was erected during the Hongzhi period of the Ming dynasty (AD 1488 - AD 1505) and rebuilt during the Jiajing period (AD 1522 - AD 1566) (Fig. 134).



Fig. 134. Zhulin Monastery in 2019.

Zhulin Monastery had six yards when Ennin was there: *Lǚ Yuan* (Chinese: 律院), Warehouse Court (Chinese: 库院), Huayan Court (Chinese: 华严)⁶⁴³, Fahua Court (Chinese: 法华), Pavilion Hall Court, and the Buddha Court, with each court hosting around forty Buddhists. The geographical location of Zhulin Monastery on Mount Wutai is very close to Taihuai village and, indeed, is even closer than Qingliang Monastery and South Peak. 'Jietan' of Zhulin Monastery, as described by Ennin, served as a Buddhist training centre and played the role of transforming lay people into formal Buddhists.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴³ The Huayan School flourished during the Tang dynasty, but gradually declined after the destruction of Buddhism by Emperor Wuzong of the Huichang period (845 AD). With the revival of Buddhism after the death of Emperor Wuzong, the Huayan sect redeveloped and merged with many other concepts of Buddhism.

⁶⁴⁴ In the early 19th century, Zhulin Monastery only left a pagoda in the centre of a court, mentioned in the Chapter III.

For the Lü Yuan, it was described that seventy-two statues of Chinese saints and Buddhist deities are housed on the upper level (of a hall) with exquisitely drawn decoration; in another room is an octagonal altar (*Jietan*, 戒坛 in Chinese, *Kaidan*), made of jade stone, one metre high (three chi), covered by a colourful carpet. At the base of the orientation platform is a quantity of fragrant clay. For the *Jietan* of Buddhists, Ennin also explained that the common people are not allowed to shave privately in order to become monks. There are only two Vinaya monasteries in total as described by Ennin in his diary, one located on Mount Wutai and the other on Mount Heng (in contemporary Henan Province of China). With the independent development of Chinese Vinaya Buddhism, its disciples earnestly followed the 'Vinaya' beliefs of Buddhism, strictly adhering to Buddhist precepts and procedures during the Tang dynasty.⁶⁴⁵ Vinaya monasteries became a special place for accommodating Vinaya followers, performed ordination ceremonies and passed on the experience of building altars (or *Jietan*, 戒坛).⁶⁴⁶ Although there is no direct evidence that Zhulin Monastery was the only Vinaya monastery on Mount Wutai, it used to contain the Vinaya court in its monastic complex. Ennin's visit in AD 840 may have been influenced by the Tang dynasty Chinese master Jianzhen, who travelled to Japan between AD 743 and AD 754 and who brought the Dharmagupta Vinaya (monastic rules) of Buddhism and monastic construction there.

⁶⁴⁵ Guowei Liu and Qi Lu, '佛教寺院的戒律实践：古代律宗寺院建筑“戒坛”的源流考述与特征演进' [The Origin and evolution of the ordination platform in the ancient Vinaya monasteries], *Architectural Journal*, S1 (2019), 175-82 (p. 175).

⁶⁴⁶ Guowei Liu and Qi Lu, (2019), p. 175.

The detailed description of the ordination platform (*Jietan* or *Kaidan*) in Zhulin Si indicates the diversity of monastic compounds during the Tang dynasty on Mount Wutai. The *Jietan* was the most significant component of the Vinaya monastery but was not one that was necessary for other monasteries. The initial ordination platform in China was constructed in AD 434 at Nan-lin-ssu temple in Chien-k'ang.⁶⁴⁷ The location of *Jietan* (Lü Yuan) was believed to vary. However, during the Tang dynasty in Han China, the layout predominantly featured ordination platforms situated to the left front (southeast) of the main axis of the Vinaya monastery.⁶⁴⁸ The first construction of the Japanese *Jietan* was commissioned by the Chinese Buddhist Jianzhen (AD 688 - AD 763), who travelled to the Tōshōdai-ji Monastery, Nara, Japan, in AD 754, and the *Jietan* was erected in front of the Great Buddha Hall.⁶⁴⁹

The appearance of Vinaya Monastery is one possible reason that Buddhist architectural complexes gradually move towards immobilisation and unification. The eminent Tang dynasty Chinese Buddhist monk Daoxuan, as the patriarch of the Four-part Vinaya school in the Tang dynasty, had books about the Dharmagupta-vinaya from the Dharmaguptaka of Indian early Buddhist schools, and the map 'Picture of the Establishment of the Ordination Altar in Guanzhong' provided a reference from which to construct an ideal Vinaya Monastery with religious meanings (64 courts in total in a Vinaya monastery, see Fig. 135). Jietan Square Court is towards the northwest of the map. It also changed the old pattern of

⁶⁴⁷ <https://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/dic/Content/O/45>

⁶⁴⁸ Guowei Liu and Qi Lu (2019), pp. 177-178.

⁶⁴⁹ Jason A. Carbine and Erik W. Davis, *Simas: Foundations of Buddhist Religion* (University of Hawaii Press, 2022), pp.67-68.

ancient Indians, that the *stūpa* was usually placed at the centre of the Buddhist courtyard. Instead, both the pagoda and the Buddha Hall were placed in the centre, creating several courtyards in a row, symbolising the indefinite change of monastic arrangement on Chinese soil.⁶⁵⁰ In this monastic context during the Tang dynasty, not all monasteries had to be built according to these guidelines, but this certainly influenced the nature of the construction of monasteries during the same historical period, including Foguang Monastery, which was also built during the Tang dynasty and is located along the southwest pilgrimage route proceeding to the religious centre at Munt Wutai.

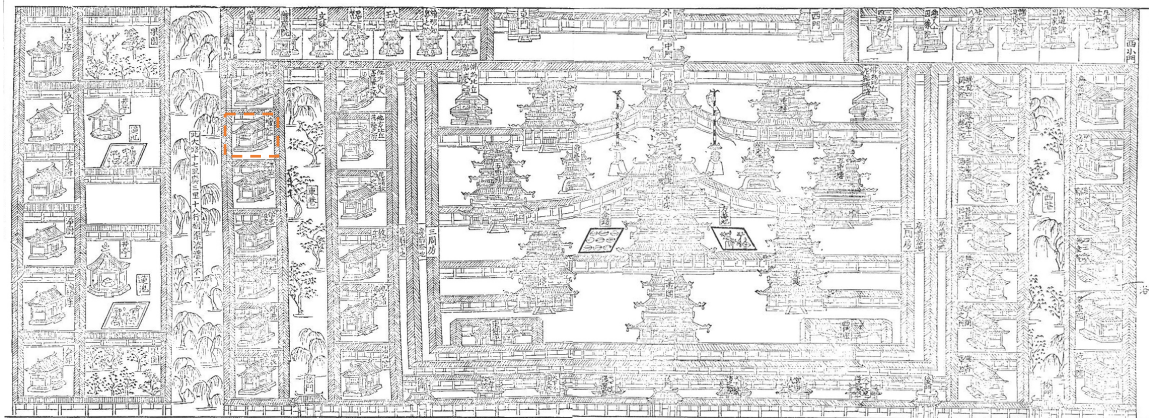


Fig. 135. Picture of the establishment of the Ordination Altar in Guanzhong by Daoxuan during Tang dynasty, Jietan Square Court is towards the northwest.

For Buddhists to use their sites, in Ennin's diary, he mainly recorded five types of rituals he experienced on the July 2, AD 838 and January 23, AD 848 in China: scripture; Vesak; Śrāddha, Offering Food; the Emperors' Birthday Celebration, and Emperors' Death Ceremony; and Chinese Traditional Festival Celebrations (Spring Festival, Hanshi Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival).⁶⁵¹ These activities can generally be classified into two groups: the continuation or development of Indian

⁶⁵⁰ Hangshuo Na, '《戒坛图经》与佛寺建筑中国化' [Ring Attar Map and the Sinicization of Buddhist Temple Architecture], *China Religion*, 12 (2018), 68-9

⁶⁵¹ Vesak (佛诞辰), the festival commemorates the birth, enlightenment (Nibbāna), and death (Parinirvāna) of Gautama Buddha; Śrāddha (盂兰盆), the ceremony to pay homage to one's dead parents; Offering Food (斋僧), providing food to Buddhists; Hanshi Festival (寒食节), Chinese traditional festival, it was one or two days before the Qingming solar term in the spring, no allowed to use heat to cook hot food, cold food only.

Buddhist rituals, and the Chinese traditions' application. In the following sections, the event of offering food observed by Ennin is explained and discussed by comparing it with the Faxian records of food sacrifices at Zhulin Monastery:

*On May 5 in AD 840 (Chinese Lunar Calendar), there were 750 Buddhists engaging in the eating porridge ceremony in Zhulin Monastery, which was a compound of six courts. This event was under the patronage of the provider from Linyan Monastery in Qizhou.*⁶⁵²

When the bell rang at noon, all the people, including masters, samaneras (or sāmaṇera in Pali, a novice in Buddhism), laypeople, children, and women, began to come into the main lobby and then they progressively sat down in a hall. A little later, the Biaotan teacher⁶⁵³ struck a wooden percussion instrument (Wooden fish) and chanted the respectful salutation to the Triple Gem (or three jewels), after which all the audiences recited the same phrase. Two young monks held a golden lotus sculpture and played cymbals while three or four people chanted the psalms at the same time. Afterward, all the people burned incense to worship the patron who provided the Buddhists with food. Biaotanshi first reads out the incense offering of the patron. After thanking this patron, Biaotanshi asked all the prayers to chant the Buddha simultaneously. Then great monks recited the Mahā-Prajñā-

⁶⁵² Lingyan Monastery (灵岩寺) is an ancient monastery in Qizhou Prefecture (now Jinan City, Shandong Province) in ancient China.

⁶⁵³ Biaotanshi (表叹师) was the Buddhist teacher who presides ritual and leads everyone to sing and recite Buddhist scriptures.

pāramitā Sūtra in unison, and behind it, they were to recite the names of the Bodhisattvas. All the worshippers then repeated the same chant of the psalms. This ceremony included not only an invocation in which the priest asks for divine favour for the gods, but also the veneration of the patron, their priest and their parents. When the thero (senior bhikkhus or bhikkhunis) had finished his prayer and made wishes, all the audiences began to eat. Young or old, men or women, Buddhists or laypeople, they all received the same food and were treated equally. After the meal, they drank water soup, and then all the worshippers began to chant to the Buddha with striking wooden fish. After reciting the Buddha, the crowd dispersed when the beating of the wooden fish gave the signal.

On May 6 in AD 840, it thundered and hailed at dusk. The pavilion hall court was decorated with ring ornaments such as crowns, garlands, earrings, etc., to make offerings to the seventy-two sages (disciples of Shakyamuni). The priest of this courtyard dispersed to each court to invite the Japanese Buddhists to watch the chanting. Ennin then went to the appointment and arrived at the lobby in the evening. The portraits of the seventy-two sages hung in rows. A wealth of treasures, such as precious banners and jewels, were neatly laid out neatly. A colourful felt blanket was spread on the floor. Lanterns, famous incense, tea, and medicated diet are offered to the saints. After twilight, great monks gathered in the hall, a master ascended the ceremonial

seat, first struck the cymbal, and then explained the reason for Buddhist teaching and practice. Meanwhile, he recited all the patrons and their offerings and invoked Bodhisattva to obtain protection for the patrons. Next, he recited the names of the seventy-two sages one by one. The same psalms of praise and earnest wishes were repeated each time a name was pronounced. After reciting seventy-two times in all, he went down the ceremonial seat. Another master then ascended the seat and began to praise the Buddha, Maitreya Buddha, the Twelve Superiors, the Great Sage Manjushri Bodhisattva, the Great Sage Bodhisattva, and the Ten Thousand Bodhisattvas. The audience then sang some psalms wholeheartedly. Afterward, a representative of the nuns repeated the same psalms of praise. The ritual practice was not finished until midnight and the crowd then dispersed.

On May 7 in AD 840, the court of the Pavilion Hall Court held offering food rituals for seven days, assisted by a patron. The procedure was similar to that of yesterday's event. The main discrepancy was that the Bodhimaṇḍa (or position of awakening, Daochang in Chinese) was offered by other Buddhists (who seem were not the Buddhists in Zhulin Monastery) for chanting psalms when it was time to burn incense (to worship the patron. Therefore, Biaotanshi did not sing the praise psalms, but just stood there. The practice of striking the wooden fish was even passed on to someone else. This non-local Buddhist also

*performed the succeeding steps of the ritual. While the subsequent process of the eating ceremony was the same as yesterday.*⁶⁵⁴

By translating the ritual of food offering at the Zhulin Monastery in AD 840, the role of monasteries becomes clear. For Buddhists, Lv Yuan was like a Buddhist school, attracting Buddhists (both national and international) to exchange ideas and learn. For the laity, monasteries were not only a place where they could get free food, but also a place where they could pray for the emperor and connect with their rulers, as most of the free offerings came from supporting the emperor's special events. For the royal family, monasteries represented a space in which to express their devotion to the god through donations, building works, and rituals.

Offerings Food in Yōtkaṇ, text from 'A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms' by Faxian (AD 337 - AD 422): after travelling for a month and five days, I arrived in Yōtkaṇ, a rich and happy land with a large

⁶⁵⁴ Ennin, 入唐求法巡礼行记 [The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law], (838 - 845AD). The corresponding original Chinese text is: '五月五日, 寺中有七百五十僧斋, 诸寺同设, 并是齐州灵岩寺供主所设。午时打钟, 众僧入堂。大僧、沙弥、俗人、童子、女人, 依次列座了。表叹师打槌, 唱一切恭敬礼常住三宝, 一切普念。次寺中后生僧二人手把金莲, 打蠡钹, 三四人同音做梵。供主行香, 不论僧俗男女, 行香尽遍了。表叹先读施主设供香, 次表赞了, 便唱'一切普念'。大僧同音唱摩诃般若波罗蜜多, 次唱佛菩萨名。大众学词, 同礼释迦牟尼, 弥勒尊佛, 文殊师利菩萨, 大圣普贤菩萨, 一万菩萨, 地藏菩萨, 一切菩萨摩訶萨。为廿八天, 释梵王等, 敬礼常住三宝。为圣华无穷, 敬礼常住三宝。为今日供主众善庄严, 敬礼常住三宝。为师僧父母, 法界众生, 敬礼常住三宝。打槌唱云'施食咒愿'。上座僧咒愿了, 行饭食。上下老少, 道俗男女平等供养也。众僧等吃斋了, 行水汤口, 次打槌念佛。表叹师打槌云: '为今日施主善庄严及法界众生, 念摩诃般若波罗蜜多。'大众同音念释迦牟尼, 弥勒尊佛, 文殊师利菩萨, 大圣普贤菩萨, 一万菩萨, 地藏菩萨, 一切菩萨摩訶萨。如次学词同念。念佛了, 打槌随意, 大众散去。暮际, 雷鸣雹雨。阁院铺严道场, 供养七十二贤圣。院主僧常钦有书巡报诸院知, 同请日本僧。便赴请入道场, 看理念法事。堂中傍晚, 次第安列七十二贤圣画像。宝幡宝珠, 尽世妙彩, 张施铺列。杂色毡毯, 敷地上。花灯, 名香, 茶, 药食供养圣贤。黄昏之后, 大僧聚会, 一僧登礼座, 先打蠡钹, 次说法事之兴由。一一唱举供主名及施物色。为施主念佛菩萨。次奉请七十二贤圣, 一一称名。每称名竟, 皆唱唯愿慈悲, 哀愍我等, 降临道场, 受我供养之言。立礼七十二遍, 方始下座。更有法师登座, 表叹念佛, 劝请诸菩萨云: '一心奉请大师释迦牟尼佛, 一心奉请当来下生弥勒尊佛, 十二上愿师琉璃光佛, 大圣文殊师利菩萨, 大圣贤菩萨, 一万菩萨。'首皆云'一心奉请, 次同音唱花供养之文, 音曲数般。次有尼法师, 又表叹等, 一如僧法师。次僧法师与诸僧同音唱赞了。便打蠡钹, 同音念阿托佛便休。次尼众赞僧亦如前。如是相替赞叹佛, 直到半夜, 事毕, 俱出道场归散。七日, 阁院有施主设七日僧斋。斋时法用, 略同昨日。但行香时, 道场供养音色, 表叹师不唱一切恭敬等, 但立表叹。更有别僧打槌, 作余法事, 饮食如法。'

population, all of whom believe in Buddhism and entertain with Buddhist music. There are tens of thousands of monks, most of whom are educated Mahāyāna Buddhists and are provided with food by public donations. The people of the country live in scattered villages. There are small pagodas in front of each residential building. The smallest pagoda is about two metres high. It serves as a house for migrant monks from all directions and provides the migrant monks with food and everything. The king arranged for Faxian and the others to live in the monastery of Qumodi, a Mahayana Buddhist church. There are three thousand Buddhist monks and normally they eat together when the inverted bell is struck. When they entered the cafeteria to eat, they sat neatly and seriously, one after the other, and all was quiet. There was not even a sound from the bowls [used] to eat. If someone wants more food through the caretaker, he is not allowed to shout loudly, but only to point to the flag with his finger.⁶⁵⁵

Based on the translation of the event held in Zhulin Monastery and in Yōtkaṇ, the details of the ritual vary, but the essence of the event is no different. Buddhists from different monasteries gathered in an orderly manner at a site to share food without discrimination or hindrance; this scene attracted public attention and authorities' engagement, and built connections between monasteries. This was

⁶⁵⁵ Faxian, 佛国记 [A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms], (337 - 422AD). The corresponding original Chinese text is: '在道一月五日, 得到于阗。其国丰乐, 人民殷盛, 尽皆奉法, 以法乐相娱。众僧乃数万人, 多大乘学, 皆有众食。彼国人民星居, 家家门前皆起小塔, 最小者可高二丈许。作四方僧房, 供给客僧及余所须。国主安堵法显等于僧伽蓝。僧伽蓝名瞿摩帝, 是大乘寺, 三千僧共键槌食。入食堂时, 威仪齐肃, 次第而坐, 一切寂然, 器钵无声。净人益食不得相唤, 但以手指麾'。

an excellent opportunity to promote Buddhism's development and build its social reputation and connection with the public. Meanwhile, with regard to the effect of the Buddhist rituals in China, it was believed that 'mediaeval Chinese emperors used public appearances to win and influence public opinion, and the gatherings are more than just religious activities.'⁶⁵⁶ Moreover, the gathering of Buddhists would also encourage the transportation of large amounts of goods and the movement of monks around the world. The linkage between the royal family and monasteries was to their mutual benefit. The royal family as the group with the most supplies, the seat of the imperial city favours the pilgrimage route between the capital and the pilgrim centre.

9.2.2 The core zone of monasteries symbolises the Buddha and the *Mañjuśrī*

When Ennin left Zhulin Monastery one morning, he walked ten li (about 5 km) east into the valley (or Taihuai village), then walked around 15 km northeast and reached Great Huayan Monastery (including the current Xiantong Monastery or Dafo Lingjiu Monastery, Tangyuan Monastery, and the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* Monastery). According to his account, Huayan Monastery had fifteen courtyards, of which he visited six. He was first to be received in the courtyard of the Warehouse Court, which corresponds to the situation in the monastery at Zhulin. He then visited and observed the Nirvana Court, Intelligence Court (or Prajñā Court, 般若院), Bodhisattva Court, Pavilion Hall Court, and Shanzhu Court. This

⁶⁵⁶ Jinhua Chen, "Pañcavārṣika' Assemblies in Liang Wudi's Buddhist Palace Chapel", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 66.1 (2006), 43-103 (p. 45).

complex was managed by Huayan, which was a Mahayana Buddhism sect based primarily on the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*.

In the Nirvana Court, after drinking tea and worshipping the Nirvana Dojo of the Buddha, there was a 3.5-metre-long Buddha statue lying on the right side, where he worshipped the twin trees (or twin sal trees), which is a typical posture depending on the Nirvana sūtra. However, even during the same historical period, this Buddhist legend is illustrated in diverse Buddhist art (see the moulded clay plaque, made in AD 500 - AD 600, in the section on the Twin trees with the Buddha Hall). In the Intelligence Court, he met believers of the Tiantai sect.

Further, in the Bodhisattva Court, he heard various Buddhist legends about *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*, where a dignified *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* statue riding a lion is housed in the main hall. This statue was the original archetype of other *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* statues in monasteries on Mount Wutai, whose form was gained from this statue. The *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* Hall also has a line of sight to the peaks of Mount Wutai. As described in Ennin's diary, Ennin could see the North Peak and the East Peak from the northerly direction of the outside of the hall and could see the South Peak when in front of the outside of the hall. Today's Bodhisattva Court, as part of the Huayan Monastic Complex, is a separate monastery called Bodhisattva Terrain (or Pusa ding), located on the summit of Vulture Peak, which is at the back of Great White Pagoda Monastery (see Chapter 5, Fig. 119). Its geographical position allows for the possibility of a line-of-sight connection, which was applied in deliberate religious landscaping to reflect the interaction between

the natural peaks of the mountains and the architectural sites; it further emphasises the Buddhist meanings leading from the sacred peaks defined as the place of *Mañjuśrī*'s appearance to the Buddhist living spaces - the monasteries. This linkage between monasteries and the mountain also enables the shift of pilgrimage ritual from architectural space, such as the Buddha Hall, the Pagoda, and the Bodhisattva Hall, to one of nature, that is, the mountain itself.

Pavilion Hall Court, in Ennin's text, had a Buddha relic *stūpa* and was one of the 84,000 *stūpas* related to the Aśoka king period (304 BC – 232 BC) as mentioned. The Buddha relic *stūpa* was kept underground, and it was forbidden to visit it. On the ground, it was a two-tier and octagonal *stūpa*, and was placed in front of the Pavilion Hall when Ennin was there. However, due to a lack of compelling evidence, whether the *stūpa* was built as a result of the Aśoka king is disputable. One view regards that it houses the Buddha relic and was built by Miaosheng on the orders of Wu Zetian in AD 702, according to historical text.⁶⁵⁷ The current Sakyamuni Buddha relic tower is not the one Ennin ever visited, but a contemporary one built by Araniko in 1301.⁶⁵⁸ The Buddha relic *stūpa* mentioned by Ennin was built inside the current White *Stūpa* by Araniko in AD 1301.⁶⁵⁹

Ennin's pilgrimage to the Five Peaks began at the Centre Peak. There was a Jade Flower pool, also named Dragon Pond by locals, on top. In the middle of the pond

⁶⁵⁷ Sen Zheng, '五台山塔院寺大白塔' [The White Stūpa at Sakyamuni Buddha relic tower Monastery on Mount Wutai], *Mt Wutai Researches*, 1 (1987), 27-9 (p. 28).

⁶⁵⁸ Shengzhang Huang, '五台山塔院寺的来源与创建新考' [Rethink of the history of the Sakyamuni Buddha relic tower Monastery on Mount Wutai], *Academic Journal of Jinyang*, 1 (1982), 51-5 (p. 54).

⁶⁵⁹ Sen Zheng, (1987), p. 29

is a hall in which stands the statue of *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*. The water of the pond is crystal clear and about three chi deep (about one metre, chi, like li, being an ancient Chinese unit of measurement). The top of the middle platform is very shallow, and the other four platforms can be seen from the top of the centre terrain, as reported in Ennin's diary, and which can be further corroborated by the author during the site survey. This line-of-sight connection between the five peaks is essential to shaping a holy shrine for Buddhists because all five peaks can be seen at the same time from the same place. The Five Peaks represent the five sacrednesses of *Mañjuśrī*, which conceptualized the religious meanings of Buddhist pilgrimage. This deliberate arrangement of the visual connection between the peaks is also a good example of how religious ontology could influence the religious landscape and monastic geography.⁶⁶⁰

Besides, Ennin's description of the Centre Peak is essentially the same as the scenario drawn in the main chamber of the west wall in Cave 61 of the Dunhuang Grottoes (Fig. 136). Cave 61 is thought to have been created during the Five Dynasties (AD 907 - AD 960)⁶⁶¹, more than fifty years after the text written by Ennin (AD 838 - AD 848). The present situation is quite different from when Ennin visited. The Yanjiao Monastery on the summit of Centre Peak was first built in AD 581 during the Sui dynasty (AD 581), and was rebuilt during the Ming dynasty (1488 - 1505); however, all the buildings were demolished, and only a brick *stūpa*, called

⁶⁶⁰ Eye contact between monasteries and peaks of Mount Wutai can be seen the Huayan Monastery complex.

⁶⁶¹ Digital Dunhuang, 'Mogao Grottoes Cave 061', *Digital Dunhuang*, <<https://www.e-dunhuang.com/cave/10.0001/0001.0001.0061>> [accessed 15 October 2022].

the Qiguang tower, was preserved (Fig. 137). The dragon pond also disappeared, even though there still is a square pool which is next to a new *stūpa*.



Fig. 136. Screenshot of Central Peak of Mount Wutai from Digital Dunhuang, on the main chamber of the west wall in Cave 61 of the Dunhuang Grottoes, AD 907 - AD 960.



Fig. 137. Current Central Peak of Mount Wutai in 2021.

On the Dunhuang fresco in Cave 61 (Fig. 138), ponds are depicted on each peak, and a platform is placed in the centre of the pond on the summit of the Centre Peak. Even on the top of the central peak and the eastern peak there is some architecture, while Ennin attests to three ponds and says that there is no water and no dragon pond on the eastern peak and the South Peak. Since Ennin's text predates the Dunhuang fresco, it is difficult to confirm whether the pond on the

East Peak was naturally formed or artificially created subsequent to the Tang dynasty. However, it is certain that ponds served as important monuments for the Buddhists, especially prior to the tenth century AD, as the nineteenth-century painting of Mount Wutai makes no representation of this element (see Fig. 128). Even in ancient India, during the ritual of Xingxiang in the Qunvcheng of Kānyakubja, Xuanzang (AD 626 - AD 645) witnessed the Buddha statue being washed in a pond before being placed in a hall; the details of this ritual have been discussed in the section on Xingxiang (see Chapter 5). On the mountaintop, pond on each peak is said to have formed naturally, which is certainly impossible, so it is likely that pilgrims built them. A proper supply of water is difficult to the shrines on the high peaks, but devotees could certainly have helped carry water if they are going on pilgrimage to the top of the mountain.⁶⁶²



Fig. 138. Screenshot of the Five Peaks of Mount Wutai, drawn in the main chamber of the west wall in Cave 61 of the Dunhuang Grottoes.

⁶⁶² John Marshall, *A Guide to Taxila*, 2nd edn (India: Superintendent Government Printing, 1921), p. 114.

When Ennin had finished his pilgrimage to the central peak, he went down, proceeding to the West Peak and then returning to *Mañjuśrī* Monastery near the Centre Peak to spend the night resting there. The next day he set off for the North Peak, and then a few days later he arrived the East Peak. He did not, however, worship at the South Peak until he left Mount Wutai via the west access. When he finished his devotional worship of Mount Wutai, he departed via the South Peak, passing by Lingjing Monastery, and then arriving at Fahua Monastery. He mentioned that Foguang Monastery was fifteen li (7.5 km) northwest of Fahua Monastery, though he did not actually visit. Thereafter, he reached the Siyang Ridge, which was close to Zunsheng Monastery. Finally, he arrived at Daxian Ridge, which was considered the southern mountain gate of Wutai (Fig. 139).⁶⁶³

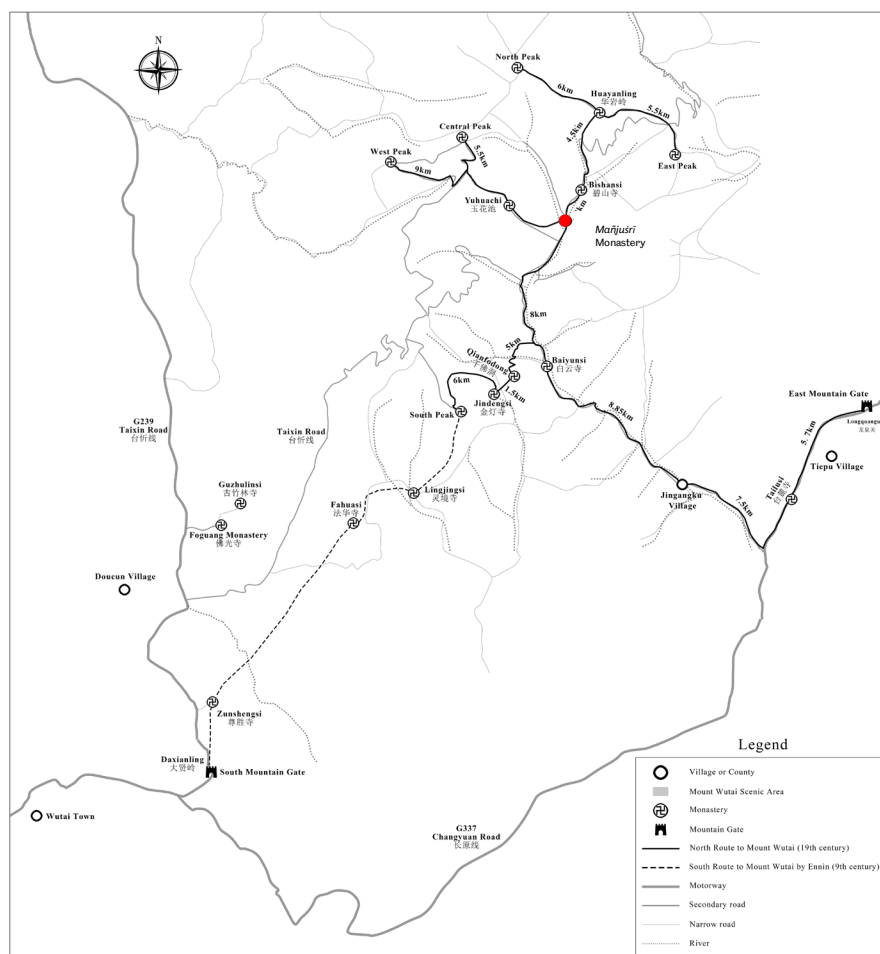


Fig. 139. Ennin's return route from the South Peak of Mount Wutai to the south mountain gate - Daxian Ridge, AD 840 - AD 841, Tang dynasty. The pilgrimage routes with distance in the nineteenth century are shown in the archive (Fig. 127). Pilgrimage routes in both directions pass through the corresponding mountain gates and lead to the capitals of different dynasties. (Please refer to Appendix F for a larger-sized map, p. 452).

⁶⁶³ Ennin, 入唐求法巡礼行记 [The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law], (838 - 845AD).

Foguang Monastery was not actually visited by Ennin because of its location, as he did not have to pass by it (Fig. 133, 139).⁶⁶⁴ After leaving the border of Mount Wutai through the southern mountain gate, Ennin left Shanxi, crossed the Yellow River again, and finally returned to Capital Chang'an, the capital during the Tang dynasty. His journey to that point had been some 1100 km but was not yet over. As already mentioned, the Buddhist pilgrimage could also be seen as a large-scale circumambulation. Visiting Buddhists planned their journeys and visited all the important monasteries they passed, such as Faxing and Xuanzang, as, of course, did Ennin, who eventually returned to Mount Chi and completed his round trip before leaving for Japan (Fig. 140).



Fig. 140. Pilgrimage-walking route map by Ennin, from Mount Chi to Mount Wutai, then to Chang'an capital, and finally the return to Mount Chi, between AD 838 and AD 847, Tang dynasty.

9.2.3 Foguang Monastery in monastic geographical framework during the medieval period

From Ennin's dairy, the role of Foguang Monastery is hard to determine as he even did not pass by it. However, Foguang Monastery was of particular significance to

⁶⁶⁴ Ennin, 入唐求法巡礼行记 [The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law], (838 - 845AD). There is only one sentence describing Foguang Monastery: '...從法花寺西北十五里有佛光寺...' [Northwest of the Fahua Monastery is the Foguang Monastery. The distance between the two monasteries is fifteen li (about 7500m, li is a Chinese unit of measurement for length)].

the monastic geography of the esoteric *maṇḍala* model. According to the AD 1755 text by *Shanxi Tongzhi*, there are sixty-four monasteries on Mount Wutai, with thirty-six monasteries at the periphery of Mount Wutai (Fig. 141). In the *Qing Liang Shan Zhi* by Zhen Cheng, there were more than two hundred monasteries at Mount Wutai and its surroundings.⁶⁶⁵

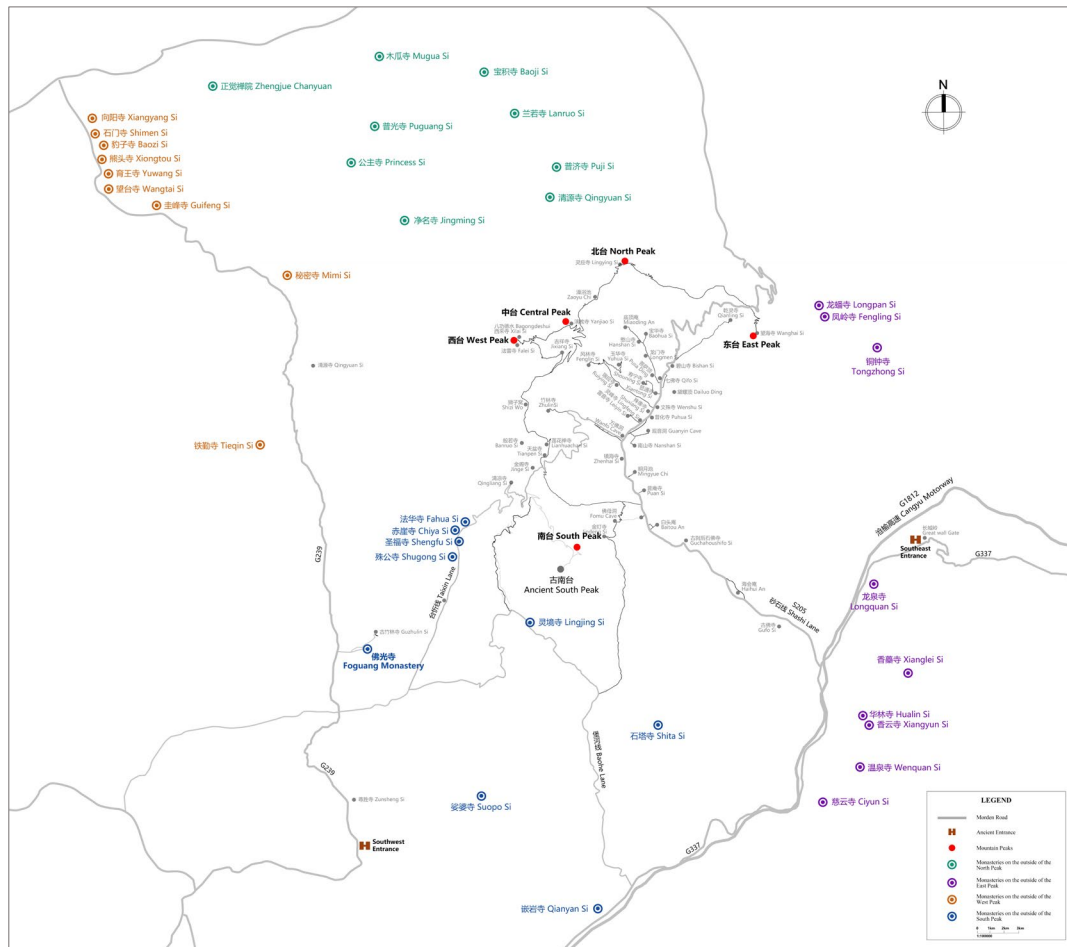


Fig. 141. Monasteries outside of the Five Peaks of Mount Wutai.

Most importantly, many monasteries were built outside the core area of Mount Wutai, playing a significant role in connecting the sacred Mount Wutai with the outside world. Accordingly, each peak had nine monasteries that were located

⁶⁶⁵ Shi Zhencheng, *清凉山志* [Qingliang Shan Zhi], (1569).

The corresponding Chinese text is: '高齐建寺两百余所，割八州税，以克香火之需。后魏孝文帝再建大孚灵鹫寺，环市鹫峰，置十二院'。The translation for the sentence into English is 'in the Gaoqi region (AD 550 - AD 577), more than two hundred monasteries were built, and taxes from eight provinces were allocated to meet the needs of sustaining Buddhists. Later, Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei dynasty (AD 476 - AD 499) rebuilt the Dafu Lingjiu Temple (or *Mañjuśrī Monastery*), encircling the Lingjiu Hill established twelve monasteries.'

beyond the scope of Mount Wutai but that were adjacent to the peaks (Table 8).⁶⁶⁶ It is unclear whether 'nine' was the actual number of monasteries or whether it was just a list of the more well-known ones and omits ones of lesser fame.

Table 8. Monasteries on the outside of the Five Peaks of Mount Wutai

<i>Location</i>	<i>Name of Monastery</i>	<i>The original date of constructing</i>
Outer part of the East Peak (Nine monasteries)	Hualin Monastery (or si) 华林寺	Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907), repaired during the Qing dynasty (AD 1636 -AD 1912)
	Longquan si 龙泉寺	Song dynasty (AD 960 - AD 1279)
	Tongzhong si 銅鍾寺, Wenquan si 温泉寺	The date of its establishment is unknown, but it was completely rebuilt during the Yuan dynasty (AD 1271 - AD 1368)
	Xiangyun si 香云寺, Xianglei si 香夔寺, Ciyun si 慈云寺, Longpan si 龙蟠寺, Fengling si 凤岭寺	No information on date of construction
Outer part of the South Peak (Nine monasteries)	Foguang Monastery 佛光寺	Emperor Wencheng of Northern Wei dynasty (AD 440 - AD 465), rebuilt during the Tang dynasty by Monk Jietuo (AD 618 - AD 907)
	Qianyan si 嵌岩寺	Emperor Wencheng of Northern Wei dynasty (AD 440 - AD 465)
	Suopo si 娑婆寺	Northern Qi dynasty (AD 550 - AD 577)
	Shita si 石塔寺	Yuan dynasty (AD 1271 - AD 1368)
	Lingjing si 灵境寺	
	Chiya si 赤崖寺, Shengfu si 圣福寺, Fahua si 法华寺, Shugong si 殊公寺	No detailed information recorded in the text.
Outer part of the West Peak (Nine monasteries)	Guifeng si 圭峯寺	Sui dynasty (AD 581 - AD 619)
	Shimen si 石門寺	Sui Tang dynasty (AD 581 - AD 907)
	Baozi si 豹子寺	
	Xiongtou si 熊头寺	
	Xiangyang si 向阳寺	

⁶⁶⁶ Shi Zhencheng, 清凉山志 [Qingliang Shan Zhi], (1569).

台外佛刹凡三十六所，东台外九寺……华林寺，龙泉寺，銅鍾寺，温泉寺，香云寺，香夔寺，慈云寺，龙蟠寺，凤岭寺……南台 外九寺……佛光寺，嵌岩寺，娑婆寺，石塔寺，灵境寺，赤崖寺，圣福寺，法华寺，殊公寺……西台外……秘密寺，圭峰寺，豹子寺，熊头寺，向阳寺，育王寺，望台寺，石门寺，铁勤寺……北台外……木瓜寺，普济寺，公主寺，净名寺，正觉禅院，清源寺，蓝若寺，普光寺，宝积寺 ' [Outside of Mount Wutai, there are a total of thirty-six Buddhist monasteries, with each of the four peaks having nine temples. Outside of East Peak...Hualin si, Longquan si, Tongzhong si, Wenquan si, Xianglei si, Ciyun si, Longpan si, Fengling si; outside of South Peak ... Foguang si (Monastery), Xiangyan si, Suopo si, Shita si, Lingjing si, Chiya si, Shengfu si, Fahua si, Shugong si; outside of West Peak ... Guifeng si, Shimen si, Baizi si, Xiongtou si, Xiangyang si, Yuwang si, Wangtai si, Mimi si and Tiegqin si; outside of North Peak ... Princess si, Puji si, Jingming si, Lanruo si, Zhengjue Chanyuan, Qingyuan si, Puguang si, Baoji si and Mugua si.]

	Yuwang si 育王寺	Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907)
	Wangtai si 望台寺	
	Mimi si 秘密寺	
	Tieqin si 铁勤寺	
Outer part of the North Peak (Nine monasteries)	Princess si 公主寺	Emperor Wencheng during the Northern Wei dynasty (AD 440 - AD 465), rebuilt during the Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907)
	Puji si 普济寺	Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907)
	Jingming si 净名寺	Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907); rebuilt during the Song dynasty (AD 960 - AD 1279) and Jin dynasty (AD 1161 - AD 1189); repaired in AD 1131
	Lanruo si 兰若寺	Tang dynasty (AD 618 - AD 907)
	Zhengjue Chanyuan 正觉禅院	Song dynasty (AD 960 - AD 1279)
	Qingyuan si 清源寺	Yuan dynasty (AD 1271 - AD 1368)
	Puguang si 普光寺	Hongwu Emperor of Ming dynasty (AD 1368 - AD 1369)
	Baoji si 宝积寺, Mugua si 木瓜寺,	No detailed information recorded in the text.

From this description, it appears that only the monasteries outside the South Peak and the North Peak were originally established during the Northern Wei dynasty (AD 386 - AD 535). It reveals the plan of monasticism during the Northern Wei dynasty, as monasteries outside the peaks marked the pilgrims' approaches to the pilgrimage centre, Mount Wutai. Furthermore, the two directions (south and north) indicate the directions to which the pilgrims had access. The direction of the South Peak connects the roads that could extend to the capital, Pingcheng, and the other capital, Luoyang,⁶⁶⁷ which is also the direction that would allow a connection to the Silk Road; the direction of the North Peak represents the fastest way to connect to the capital, Pingcheng, which represented an essential point on the trade routes in history. In the Western Han dynasty (202 BC - AD 8),

⁶⁶⁷ In the nineteenth year of Taihe of the Northern Wei dynasty (in AD 495), Emperor Xiaowen moved the capital from the Pingcheng to Luoyang.

before the Silk Road, there were bronze trade routes connecting the Pingcheng with the West, North Asia and mainland China, as evidenced by the bronzes excavated in the city of Hohhot in Inner Mongolia.⁶⁶⁸ One of the trade routes for bronze goods ran from Hohhot through Shanxi province and then stretched into Henan province.⁶⁶⁹

For Buddhism spread within Shanxi during and before the Northern Wei Dynasty, according to the preaching Buddhism route of elite monks Fo Tu Cheng, he came from Kucha to Shanxi in 311 AD and built Buddhist schools and took in many students.⁶⁷⁰ His disciples, other elite local monks and royal patrons developed Buddhism during the fourth - sixth centuries AD in Shanxi (Fig. 142).⁶⁷¹ Therefore, the south pilgrimage route, arriving first at the South Peak, and the northern route, arriving first at the North Peak, were probably the main approaches to Mount Wutai during the early period of monasticism at Mount Wutai. The monasteries at the periphery of the South Peak and the North Peak provided the link between the interior of Mount Wutai's scope and the outside world.

⁶⁶⁸ Ziming Zhen, 'The Silk Road of the Ordos Plateau', *Journal of Chifeng University*, 7 (2021), 35-40

⁶⁶⁹ Ziming Zhen, (2021), 35-40

⁶⁷⁰ Xueqin Li, 云岗石窟 - 刻在石头上的北魏王朝 [Yuungang Grottoes - The history of Northern Wei Dynasty carved on stone], 3rd edn (Taiyuan: Shanxi Science and Technology Press, 2020), p. 54.

⁶⁷¹ Xueqin Li, (2020), p. 54.

Tang dynasty, indicating that access could be obtained from each of the four peak's directions.

Furthermore, outside the West Peak, all nine monasteries in the historical records were originally built during the Sui and Tang dynasties, demonstrating the importance of the western access during the Sui and Tang periods. A monastery called Wangtai si, which means 'view the peaks of Mount Wutai' in Chinese, also indicates that there used to be a pilgrimage route to Mount Wutai from the west, but due to there being no further information about the construction or restoration of these Tang Monasteries after the dynasties, it is likely that the western access was gradually abandoned by the dynasties after Sui and Tang dynasties. Foguang Monastery, therefore, was one of the nine monasteries (restrooms/night halts) on the southern passage that crossed through the south mountain gate. From the other three directions, mountain gates with nine monasteries guided visitors walking toward the core religious centre at Mount Wutai. This deliberate arrangement also represented the religious meaning of monasticism on Mount Wutai, which was probably influenced by the esoteric maṇḍala model that concentrated on the sacred diagram (Fig. 143).

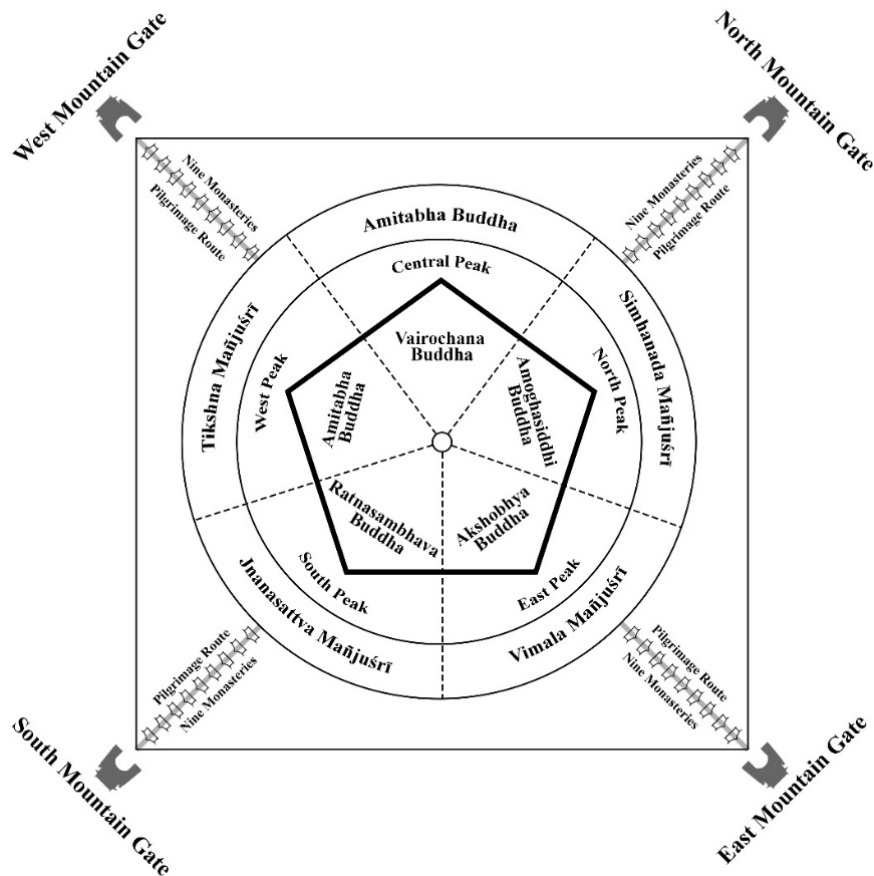


Fig. 143. Speculative diagram of monastic geography on Mount Wutai during medieval China.

The use of maṇḍala in Buddhist practices, including their three-dimensional transformation in architecture and two-dimensional representation in Buddhist art, is quite common. A commonly accepted and long-standing theory about Borobudur's overall design suggests that the monument is structured as a mandala.⁶⁷² Meanwhile, the incorporation of mandalas in Dunhuang Grottoes between the 8th and 10th centuries significantly influenced Buddhist visual and material culture.⁶⁷³ This integration established new connections between Buddhist practices, ritual spaces, and artistic representation.⁶⁷⁴ These two previous case studies comprehensively illustrate how esoteric Buddhism

⁶⁷² Julie Gifford, *Buddhist Practice and Visual Culture: The Visual Rhetoric of Borobudur*, (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), p. 30.

⁶⁷³ Michelle C. Wang, *Maṇḍalas in the making: the visual culture of esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang*, vol. 139, (Brill, 2017), p. 274.

⁶⁷⁴ Michelle C. Wang (2017), p.274.

maṇḍalas were presented in Buddhist practices, especially during medieval China. They therefore also provide a dependable reference for speculating about the monastic setting on Mount Wutai.

In addition, Jinge si, in the core area of Mount Wutai, representing esoteric Buddhism, provides a possible context for this monastic geography. Jinge si was erected in AD 770 by the disciples of Amoghavajra, who successfully persuaded the Emperor to approve the construction.⁶⁷⁵ The Jinge si, the Qingliang si, the Huayan si (*Mañjuśrī* Monastery), and the Fahua si were the royal *dojos* or royal shrines of the Tang dynasty, where Buddhist religious ceremonies were performed and prayers used to be offered for the country.⁶⁷⁶ In Ennin's diary, he also notes that he visited Jinge si and met with emissaries from the Imperial Court who were distributing royal patronages to the monasteries of Wutai Mountain. Jinge si was an important stop for these emissaries. When the envoys arrived, all the monks at the monastery would go out to greet the emperor's patronages. Every year, only twelve monasteries (ten great monasteries and two nunneries although the names of the monasteries were not mentioned by Ennin) at Mount Wutai were allowed to receive a large number of gifts from the Imperial Court, such as five hundred Buddhist robes made of fine silk, one hundred and fifty kilogrammes (500 tun) of cotton cloth, five hundred pieces (1000 duan, 500 pi, 3330 m) of cyan-blue Buddhist cassock cloth, fifty kilogrammes of incense, fifty kilogrammes of tea, and one thousand towels. When the ambassadors had

⁶⁷⁵ Zhiyong Wang and Zhengsen Cui, *五台山佛教史* [The History of Mount Wutai], (Taiyuan: Shaanxi People's Publishing House, 2000), p. 341.

⁶⁷⁶ Zhiyong Wang and Zhengsen Cui, (2000), pp. 342-43.

completed their mission, they returned to the Jinge si and then travelled directly back to the capital, Chang'an.

Five peaks and ten great monasteries create a central and divine space accessible through four mountain gates from the north, south, west and east;⁶⁷⁷ nine monasteries distributed outside each peak create a transitional space from the non-religious to the divine centre (Mount Wutai). This order and arrangement convey the cosmology of the Buddhist maṇḍala, and the components such as the centre, the peaks, the monasteries, the paths, and the gates represent the essential approaches for practitioners (planners or designers) to achieve the transformation of people's concepts.

From the description of the monasteries located beyond the east peak, it appears that two such were built subsequent to the Tang dynasty, and that five have no descriptions about their histories, only brief location information. This may be because the monasteries were first constructed by general funders during the Qing dynasty and have no glorious historical backgrounds or legends about famous monks associated with them. However, when the capital was moved from Chang'an to Beijing subsequent to the Tang dynasty, this shift promoted the popularity of the south route to Mount Wutai and, of course, also boosted the development of monasteries along the corresponding pilgrimage route.

⁶⁷⁷ Ten great monasteries are the Manjusri Bodhisattva's True Body Monastery (真容), Huayan Monastery (华严), Xiantong Monastery (显通), Zhulin Monastery (竹林), Jinge Monastery (金阁), Fahua Monastery (法华), Mimi Monastery (秘密), Shengjing Monastery (圣境), Dasheng (大圣).

Furthermore, although it is difficult to restore all routes during different historical periods, royal pilgrimages and offerings must be the most influential in history, so the road connecting the Imperial City with Mount Wutai and the gate of Mount Wutai facing the capital would naturally have been the most accessible (Fig. 144).

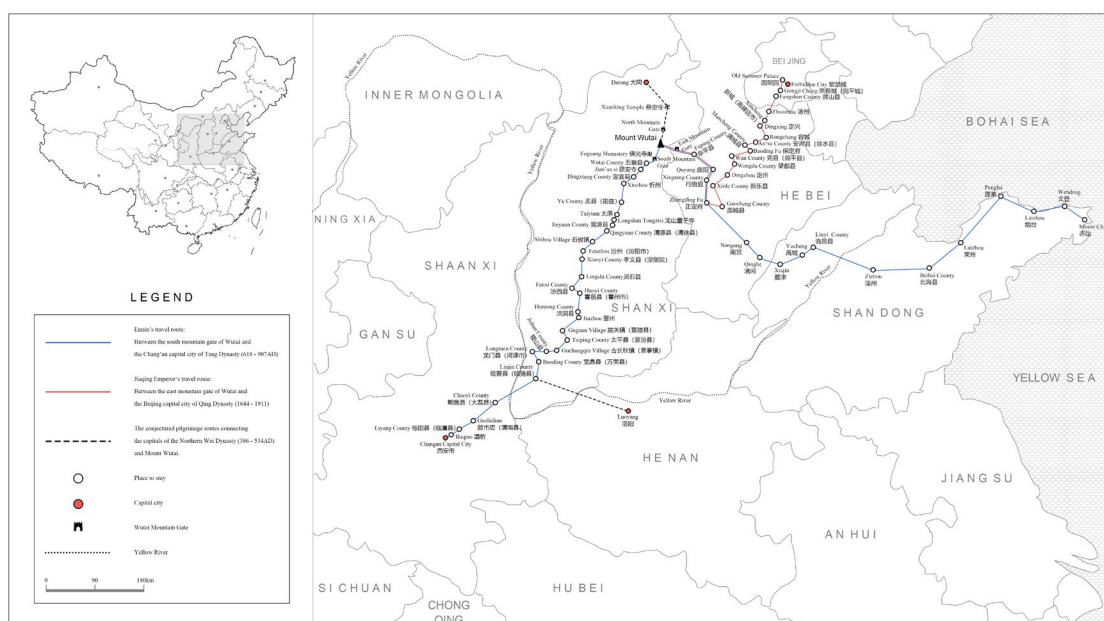


Fig. 144. The pilgrimage routes in Northern Wei, Tang and Qing dynasties.
(Please refer to Appendix F for a larger-sized map, p. 453).

9.3 Summary

The monumental Buddhist work and culture accumulated over more than a thousand years on Mount Wutai created a splendid dynamic showcase for the development of Buddhist dharma, the faith of Buddhism, the Sinicisation of Buddhist culture (or the religious interaction between China and other countries on the Silk Road practise and Chinese tradition), religio-political interaction, and socio-economic intervention. The pilgrimage routes though monasteries leading to Mount Wutai operate as a dynamic and multifaceted system that fosters a range of religious activities and interactions. As such, they represent an important

aspect of religious culture and tradition, facilitating the exchange of ideas and beliefs while promoting social culture and architectural growth.

In addition, the design of the monastic geography of Mount Wutai in mediaeval China was probably shaped by the visualisation of the *Mañjuśrī maṇḍala*, which incorporated esoteric Buddhism and the *Mañjuśrī* cult. In this vast network, Foguang Monastery was essentially inconspicuous. As a stopover, it was located on the southern pilgrimage route to Mount Wutai. However, Foguang Monastery, and another 35 monasteries outside the religious core area of Mount Wutai and the four mountain gates, successfully led pilgrims to the religious centre (the pure land symbolising the Buddha and the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*). The theoretical philosophy behind this deliberate arrangement through the Five Peaks, five pilgrimage routes, and nine outside monasteries, is representative of the cosmic diagrams of the Maṇḍala of Esoteric Buddhism. However, the shift in location of political capitals led to the paths of the pilgrimage routes to Mount Wutai being somewhat dynamic.

The existence of Foguang Monastery during the Tang dynasty was meaningful because it was one of the many monasteries that shaped the sanctity of Mount Wutai as a *Mañjuśrī* abode, especially as a new religious centre since the 'Mo Fa' phase of Buddhism. As the concentration of imperial support changed, the cosmological framework for the structure of Mount Wutai also changed, altering the significance of Foguang Monastery. The route that passed by Foguang Monastery gradually fell out of favour as the route to the circumambulation of the

Five Peaks no longer began to the south but to the east, namely at the gate of the Great Wall.

Chapter 10 - Conclusion

The monumental Buddhist architecture and culture accumulated over more than a thousand years, such as Foguang Monastery and monasteries on Mount Wutai created a splendid dynamic showcase for the development of Buddhist dharma, the faith of Buddhism, the sinicization of Buddhist architectural culture (or the religious interaction between China and other countries on the Silk Road and Chinese tradition), and religious–political interaction. The pilgrimage routes through the monasteries leading to Mount Wutai operate as a dynamic and multifaceted system that fosters a range of religious activities and interactions. As such, they represent an important aspect of religious culture and tradition, facilitating the exchange of ideas and beliefs while promoting social culture and architectural growth.

This thesis explores the religious practises of Foguang Monastery from historical, architectural, non-building elements and landscape perspectives, providing an overview of faith, space and rites, particularly in the Chinese Tang dynasty. Foguang Monastery, the most celebrated monastery of the Tang dynasty, with its multiple symbolic monuments, conceptual landscape, and meaningful location, embodies the knowledge of the fusion of Buddhist philosophy, art practice, local culture integration, and political engagement. As one of the Tang monasteries near Mount Wutai, it contributed to the formulation of the morphological structure of the esoteric maṇḍala on Mount Wutai itself. 'Mo Fa' (Dissolution of Dharma, Chinese: 末法时代) not only underlines the importance of the Mañjuśrī cult on Mount Wutai since the Tang dynasty,⁶⁷⁸ but also confirms

⁶⁷⁸ Raoul Birnbaum, (1984), pp. 6-7.

the religious context of esotericism and Mañjuśrī with regard to the transformation of Mount Wutai. These teachings are visually represented by many layers of elements, such as the five peaks, the four main pilgrimage routes from four directions connected to the four mountain gates, the numerous monasteries inside and outside the core area, and the essential rites.

Centred on a research question aimed at contributing new insights into the Foguang Monastery from the vantage points of religious architecture and landscape, this thesis, grounded in original field research at Foguang Monastery and the Mount Wutai valley, is structured into three comprehensive sections. The first part delves into the unique architectural features of Foguang Monastery, examining its historical evolution and stylistic elements. The second part explores the integration of the monastery within the broader landscape of Mount Wutai, focusing on landscaping techniques and environmental interactions. The final part synthesizes these elements, offering new insights into how architecture and nature coalesce in this sacred space, reflecting broader cultural and spiritual themes.

The religious significance of the monuments gathered in the monastery and the implication of its location. The methodology determined by research questions combines common methods of historical subjects such as archival study, textualization, site visits, and mapping and narrative via current digital technology that broadens the view of the architectural landscape. Through rich texts and visible information collected on Buddhism and Buddhist arts in different

countries, this thesis mainly focuses on the history of Buddhism in mediaeval China. In part one of this thesis, a religious context such as esoteric Buddhism, the *Mañjuśrī* cult, Buddhist *maṇḍala*, circumambulation, and global pilgrimage is presented to offer a specific background knowledge of Buddhism and to align the interpretation of the following chapter with this context. Part two of this thesis concentrates on a small scope, the monastic courtyard, buildings, monuments, Foguang Hill, and mountainous topography; and part three expands to the religious centre of Mount Wutai.

This thesis involves the development of a comprehensive theoretical conversation between architecture, Buddhism, ritual, religious art, and geography. By narrating the Tang heritage of Foguang Monastery, it contributes to a theoretical approach to understanding Chinese historical Buddhist architecture, particularly monasteries in the mediaeval period. It argues that the long-lasting development of Foguang Monastery mingled with multiple Buddhism concepts (esoteric Buddhism, the six realms of *saṃsāra* concept, Nirvana Buddhism Jingbian, circumambulation, and *Mañjuśrī maṇḍala*) and succeeded the gene of early monuments of Buddhists. As one of the legacies of the Tang period, the monastery also served to mark the southern pilgrimage route leading to the religious centre in the Tang dynasty but lost its function of circumambulating the *Mañjuśrī* abode with the relocation of the capital from Chang'an to Beijing.

This thesis, through the lens of religious architecture, conducts a comparative analysis of monastic courtyards, encompassing both existing structures and non-building monuments. A universal characteristic identified in these monastic courtyards is their enclosed nature and a centrally oriented design of housing the most sacredness transcending different countries and cultures. Diversity in the appearances of monastic courtyards manifests in various aspects, including the materials used, their orientation, and the design of pilgrimage paths, attributed to the integration of local cultural elements. This diversity not only demonstrates the adaptability of religious architecture to local contexts but also highlights the rich tapestry of cultural influences that shape sacred spaces.

In addition, through the analysis lens of the 'religious landscape, the design of the monastic geography of Mount Wutai in medieval China was probably shaped by the visualization of the Mañjuśrī maṇḍala, which incorporated esoteric Buddhism and the Mañjuśrī cult. In this vast network, Foguang Monastery was essentially inconspicuous. As a stopover, it was located on the southern pilgrimage route to Mount Wutai. However, Foguang Monastery, and another 35 monasteries outside the religious core area of Mount Wutai and the four mountain gates, successfully led pilgrims to the religious center (the pure land symbolizing the Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva. The shift in location of political capitals led to the paths of the pilgrimage routes to Mount Wutai being somewhat dynamic. The route that passed by Foguang Monastery gradually fell out of favour as the route to the circumambulation of the Five Peaks no longer began to the south but to the east, namely, at the gate of the Great Wall Gate. During the medieval period,

the Five Peaks and the Ten Great Monasteries constituted a central and sacred space, accessible through four mountain gates in the north, south, west, and east. The nine monasteries surrounding each peak created a transitional zone bridging the secular and the divine center, Mount Wutai. This arrangement mirrors the cosmology of the Buddhist mandala, with its central elements - the center, peaks, monasteries, paths, and gates - offering essential avenues for transformation in the minds of practitioners, including politicians, planners, and Buddhists.

The methodological approaches combining architecture with landscape lens effectively uncover the enclosed courtyard design of Foguang Monastery. This design is not only a traditional Chinese residential enclosure but also a universal characteristic of Buddhist sacred courts across countries. Furthermore, based on the analysis of Foguang Monastery, these approaches reveal the interconnectedness of Buddhist practices, encompassing art and architecture, rituals, pilgrimages, and monastic networks in China and beyond.

10.1 Contribution to knowledge

- By specifically researching the location and landscape of Foguang Monastery, this study contributes to a new understanding of its architecture, setting, land uses, and historical role. It also fosters an understanding of the panorama of the geography of Buddhist sites in China. This comprehensive train of thought in the thesis could contribute a theoretical framework for considering religious and architectural relationships in the historical society of Asia.

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- The thesis includes a critical analysis and interpretation of the monastic compound that challenges the cultural preconception that the enclosed Buddhist monastery in China was originally founded by ancient Chinese Buddhists. Its creation was intended to combine the inspiration of early Buddhist monuments, such as the *stūpa* and the Sangha dormitory, with ancient Chinese wooden residential buildings.
 - The demonstration of non-building elements (twin trees, Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī sūtra pillars) of Foguang Monastery on their significance, connection with early Indian Buddhist monuments will be a contribution to the study of Buddhist monastic history, which has so far focused mainly on buildings.
 - The visual documentation of Foguang Monastery and the creation of large-scale survey maps between Foguang Monastery and Mount Wutai help to reveal the historical religious networks and geographical relationships that shaped them.

10.2 Research findings

The original knowledge contributed by this thesis comprises six main points. First, this thesis shows how the photogrammetry method offers new insights into the landscape of Foguang Monastery - two massive gullies were first found. These gullies indicate the possible transformation of a religious site from ordinary to sacred. They are the evidence of artificial excavations, which was the approach used by the builders to level the monastery site for the purpose of constructing monuments. They also blocked the extent of the Foguang monastic complex from

the southern and northern directions, but only from the east, to allow for development. Symbolically, the best-sacred platform must be used to emplace the Buddha monument, and others (image halls) can only remain lower or on the side. Due to the artificial alteration of the geographical landscape and Buddhist cosmology, the highest terrain as the platform for the Buddha was probably never changed, and the Northern Wei dynasty may be the first period in which the level of the Buddha was established, which was continuously adopted in the following period.

The geographical limitation of the site of Foguang leads to the orientation of the site: facing to the west. Based on early case studies of monastic complexes in India and present-day Pakistan, the study found that the original ideology underlying the orientation of *stūpas*, or image caves of the Buddha did not in any way enforce strict and uniform requirements, which would influence the freedom of orientation of the Buddha halls in Chinese Buddhist sites. This is the most likely reason that the Buddha Hall is oriented to the west and the whole courtyard developed in this same direction, namely the lower ground, and not to the south like most monastic buildings in northern China.

The monastic courtyards of the Buddhists, which were enclosed and separated the Buddha court from the Buddhist residential court, were used as a general design approach for structuring monasteries not only in China but also in other Buddhist countries throughout history. The present courtyard of Foguang Monastery was the Buddha court, according to its pilgrimage route. The

monasteries consisted of rectangular and closed courtyards, which can be considered '*jingbian*', transferred from visible paintings or engravings to solid three-dimensional architecture. Both two-dimensional and three-dimensional tangible creations were attributed to the immaterial theories of Buddhist texts.

Secondly, the erection of the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* pillars at Foguang monastery shows that political religion reinforced the creation of Buddhist pillars and encouraged the circumambulation ritual. By comparing with Buddhist pillars in India and discussing the process of how the Asoka pillars led to the interaction between politics and religion, this thesis concludes that the erection of sutra pillars in mediaeval China mirrored the same architectural practice in Chinese monasteries and that the role of the pillar served to identify the monastic place of the *Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*, and to fulfil the associated ritual needs related to the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra*.

Thirdly, the twin trees that stand in front of the Buddha Hall in Foguang Monastery translate the legend of the Buddha and Bodhi tree into architecture, whilst the numerous visible practices of the Buddhists, such as frescoes, sculptures, and silk products, all tell the same story about the Buddha's enlightenment. However, Buddhists in their monasteries, including Foguang Monastery, did not give systematic thought to landscape design, as gardens have no religious necessity or symbolism; nor could practitioners find support from sacred literature regarding landscape design.

In addition, the architectural term 'pagoda' is limited and vague in describing the rich variety of Chinese Buddhist towers (or temples) that evolved from the Indian *stūpa*. Some Chinese pagodas are expressive and house a relic of the Buddha, symbolising the Buddha's nirvana, and played an equally essential role for Buddhist communities compared to the early *stūpas* in India; others are humble and contain the relics of deceased elite monks. The Patriarchal Pagoda at Foguang Monastery, for example, is a funerary monument and is not architecturally directly related to *stūpa*, but it embodies the same Buddhist ideology of death and life because of its hexagonal tower body.

Finally, the monastic geography of Mount Wutai in mediaeval China consisted of four mountain gates, nine monasteries that drove pilgrims to the core area of Buddhism, and five peaks symbolising the *Five Buddhas* and the *Five Wisom Manjurishi Bodosstiva*, into which numerous sacred monasteries were integrated. Foguang Monastery was one of the nine monasteries that could be reached through the southern mountain gate.

10.3 Limitations of study

- The lens of archaeology represents an essential perspective on historical topics; however, there are no available archaeological reports of Foguang Monastery; this thesis, therefore, does not rely on the evidence from archaeology.

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- Since indoor image acquisition is not permitted by the local administration, the 3D model of Foguang Monastery is missing information pertaining to the interiors of the two image halls.

10.4 Recommendations for professionals

- This thesis advocates the exploration of the theoretical approach of Buddhist creation and incorporating the concept of monastic geography into the representation of religious architecture. These new insights could inspire researchers of religion and architecture.
- This thesis's exploration of the architectural distinctions between female and male Buddhist monasteries offers valuable insights into the architecture of female Buddhists, enriching the field of study for scholars interested in gender differences in architecture.
- The digital documentation of Foguang Monastery could be useful to researchers in terms of conserving and restoring the monastery.

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ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT DURING PHD

Publications:

Wang, Xiaolu, Ren Xiang, and Jan Woudstra. 'Buddhist Pilgrimage at Mount Wutai: Architecture, Landscape, and Religious Heritage'. *Religions*, 2023, 14, 1530. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14121530>

Wang, Xiaolu, 'Activities Rethinking the history of Buddhism through female Buddhist heritage investigation', *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10.1 (2023), 1-13.

Wang, Xiaolu, 'Photogrammetry Enables the Critical Reinterpretation and Regeneration of Architectural Heritage - The case study of Foguang Monastery in China', *Digital Design Reconsidered (eCAADe Conference)*, 2023

Wang, Xiaolu and Ren Xiang, 英国厨房空间简史 [A Brief History of British Cuisine] in book 碧山 [Bishan], Vol. 2 (Beijing: Gold Wall Press), 2023. pp. 55-62.

Conferences / Symposiums attended:

Presented at the eCAADe2023 Conference as a speaker at Graz University of Technology in Austria from September 20th to 23rd, 2023.

Presented at the MANIFESTO/S 2023 PhD Research Conference, Sheffield School of Architecture on June 26th and 27th, 2023.

Presented the Architectural Humanities Research Association (AHRA) Research Student Symposium at Cardiff University from April 12th to 14th, 2023.

Presented with my supervisor, Dr. Xiang Ren, at the Interjectures - in midst of 'either-or's – 2 Desiring Transitionality PhD Seminar Series at the Architectural Association School of Architecture (AA School) on November 28th, 2022.

Presented at the History of Gardens and Landscapes Seminar at the Institute of Historical Research (IHR), University of London, on June 30th, 2022.

Presented at the Sustainable Living and Cultures of Place Symposium at the University of Huddersfield with Dr. Xiang Ren and two other colleagues on June 28th, 2022.

Presented multiple times at the school East-West seminar, School Lunchtime seminar, and School SCP seminar at Sheffield University from September 2019 to May 2023.

Appendix A: The brief chronology of the building activities of Foguang Monastery

<i>Dynasty</i>		<i>Main event (s)</i>
Han dynasty 汉 (206 BC - AD 220)	Western Han 西汉 (206 BC - AD 8)	--
	Eastern Han 东汉 (AD 25 - AD 220)	Master Shi Zhencheng (释镇澄), author of Qingliang Shan Zhi (清凉山志) written during the Ming dynasty, believed that the monasteries in Wutai mountain were built in the Eastern Han dynasty.
Sanguo dynasty 三国 (AD 220 - AD 265)	--	--
Weijin dynasty 魏晋时期 (AD 265 - AD 420)	Western Jin dynasty 西晋 (AD 265 - AD 316)	1. Before AD 309, Buddhism had not been introduced to Mount Wutai. 2. Buddhism developed rapidly during the end of the Western Jin dynasty.
	Eastern Jin and Sixteen States dynasty 东晋、十六国 (AD 317 - AD 420)	1. Fo Tucheng (AD 231 - AD 348) (佛图澄) who came from the western minority area (西域) of China earned the trust of the Shile (石勒) Emperor; subsequently he began to preach Buddhism widely in the Houzhao (AD 319 - AD 352) (后赵). 2. Shi Daoan (AD 321 - AD 385) (释道安), as the best Buddhist of Fo Tucheng (佛图澄), was the first-person preaching Buddhism at Mount Wutai. He established Wutai Buddhism in AD 353. 3. Shi huiyuan (释慧远), as the best learner of Shi Daoan (释道安), built the earliest monasteries in Mount Wutai, but there was no record regarding Foguang Monastery.
	Northern Wei	AD 478 - AD 485: The king of the Dangchang Qiang Nationality (宕昌羌国)

Northern and Southern dynasty 南北朝时期 (AD 420 - AD 589)	北魏 (AD 386 - AD 534)	erected a Buddha Hall (with three units) and an accommodation (more than ten rooms) for monks when he passed through Wutai county on the way back to his region. He then called this building Foguang Monastery. AD 489: Tanluan (昙鸾) became a monk when he visited Foguang Monastery. AD 478 - AD 532 and AD 550 - AD 557: The Ancestor Pagoda was built in Northern Wei (AD 478 - AD 532) or Northern Qi. The stone tower's initial construction date is controversial.
	Northern Qi 北齐 (AD 550 - AD 577)	The first prosperous of Wutai Mountain Buddhism in the history appeared in the Emperor Wenxuan era (文宣帝) (AD 550 - AD 559) and the Emperor Wucheng era (武成) (AD 561 - AD 565).
	Northern Zhou 北周 (AD 557 - AD 581)	The number of monks accounted for one-seventh of the population in the Zhouwu era (周武帝 宇文邕) (AD 560 - AD 578), which had a severe negative influence on the state's finances, resulting in the then emperor launching an anti-Buddhist movement. Buddhism in Wutai Mountain suffered a severe attack because of this Buddhism Banning Campaign. The Buddha Hall (with three floors) of Foguang Monastery and the monks' accommodation were all destroyed in AD 574.
Sui dynasty 隋 (AD 581 - AD 618)	1. A reawakening of religious fervour supported by the emperors (隋文帝, 隋炀帝) throughout the whole dynastic period. 2. Buddha <i>Mañjuśrī</i> religion became popular again, and Wutai Mountain was regarded as the sacred abode of <i>Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva</i> . 3. Many dilapidated monasteries were repaired, and a large number of monasteries were built.	
	In AD 633, the Foguang Monastery was erected by the monk Jietuo 解脱. In AD 745, a Tomb tower was built in the Foguang Monastery. In AD 795, the tower of tomb for the monk Fangbian (方便) was built. Between AD 806 - AD 824, the master of Buddhism, Faxing (法兴禅师), guided	

<p>Tang dynasty 唐朝 (AD 618 - AD 907)</p>	<p>and built a <i>Maitreya</i> Hall (弥勒大阁) which included 7 units based and three floors. The height of the Hall is more than 95 Chi (尺)(A unit of measurement in Ancient China).</p> <p>In AD 824, a Tomb tower was built to commemorate the 171st anniversary of Monk Jietuo's (解脱) death.</p> <p>In AD 828, a Tomb tower was built to commemorate Faxing's death.</p> <p>In AD 844, a Tomb tower was built to commemorate the Monk Zhiyuan's (志远和尚) death.</p> <p>In AD 845, the <i>Maitreya</i> Hall (弥勒大阁) fell into disuse because of the ban on Buddhism from Emperor Wu (唐武宗李炎).</p> <p>In AD 849, monk Yuancheng (愿诚) lead the reconstruction of Fo Kuang Hall because Emperor Xuanzong (唐宣宗) supported preaching Buddhism.</p> <p>In AD 857, the Buddhist Pagoda and Cave (佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经 经幢) located in front of the main hall was built. This pagoda is for the female Ninggong Yu (宁公遇).</p> <p>In AD 877, the Buddhist Pagoda and Cave (佛顶尊胜陀罗尼经 经幢) located in front of the main hall was built by monk Yuancheng (愿诚) for the <i>Mañjuśrī</i> Hall (文殊殿).</p> <p>In AD 887, Jietuo died. In order to commemorate his outstanding merits, later generations set up a monument 500 meters (一里) away from the Foguang Monastery.</p>
<p>Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period 五代十国 (AD 907 - AD 979)</p>	--
<p>Song dynasty 宋朝 (AD 960 - 1279)</p>	--
<p>Jin dynasty</p>	<p>In 1137, the King of Golden State (金国) ordered the construction of the</p>

金朝 (1115 - 1234)	<p><i>Mañjuśrī</i> Hall (文殊殿), the Puxian Hall (普贤殿) and the Heavenly King Hall (天王殿).</p> <p>In 1205, the monk Gaogong (杲公) built a Hexagonal brick tower located northwest of the Foguang Monastery</p>
Yuan dynasty 元朝 (1271 - 1368)	<p>In 1351, the roofs of the Eastern Hall (东大殿) and the <i>Mañjuśrī</i> Hall (文殊殿) were repainted by monks in the Foguang Monastery.</p>
Ming dynasty 明朝 (1368 - 1644)	<p>In 1434, the Eastern Hall (东大殿) was the first part to be renovated. This construction project focused on the northern unit of the main hall.</p> <p>In 1437 - 1438, new renovation worked focused on the Buddha statues and the murals in the Eastern Hall. Monk Zhao An (照庵) was the leader.</p> <p>In 1558, maintenance work: the Eastern hall and the Luohan (罗汉) statues.</p> <p>In 1576, the pilgrim Taizhi Liu (刘太知) painted murals on the walls of the Eastern Hall.</p> <p>In 1614, the Eastern wall was renovated.</p> <p>In 1617, the emperor provided the name of this building - 'The True Ancient Monastery'.</p> <p>In 1628-1644, the Puxian Hall (普贤殿) was burnt down.</p>
Qing dynasty 清朝 (1644 - 1911)	<p>In 1677-1721, the <i>Mañjuśrī</i> Hall (文殊殿) was renovated</p> <p>In 1744, the statues in the Foguang Monastery were reshaped.</p> <p>In 1768, renovating and repairing of the Eastern Hall occurred.</p> <p>In 1793, the <i>Mañjuśrī</i> Hall (文殊殿) was renovated.</p> <p>In 1893, the walls of the Eastern Hall were painted.</p> <p>Between 1875 - 1908, the Heavenly King Hall (天王殿) was burnt down.</p>
Republic of China 中华民国 (1912 - 1949)	<p>Between 1923 - 1926, the Buddha Statue in the Eastern Hall was renovated and repainted.</p> <p>In 1937, Liang Sicheng (梁思成) and his team discovered the Foguang Monastery.</p>
The People's Republic of China (1949 - Now)	<p>In 1950, the first cultural relics were investigated by the China Cultural Relics Bureau.</p> <p>In 2004, survey and research commenced on the Main Hall of the Foguang Monastery by the Ancient Building Protection Institute of Shanxi Province.</p> <p>In 2006, survey and research commenced on the Main Hall of the Foguang Monastery by Tsinghua University.</p>

	<p>In 2009, the Foguang Monastery was listed on the World Heritage List.</p> <p>In 2010, survey and research commenced on the Main Hall of the Foguang Monastery by Tsinghua University.</p>
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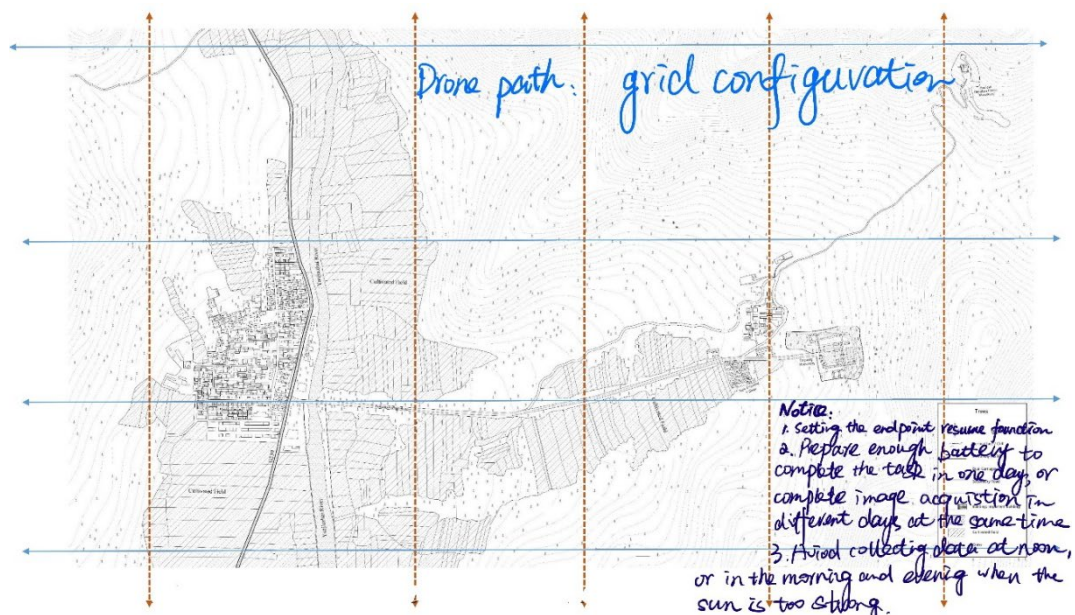
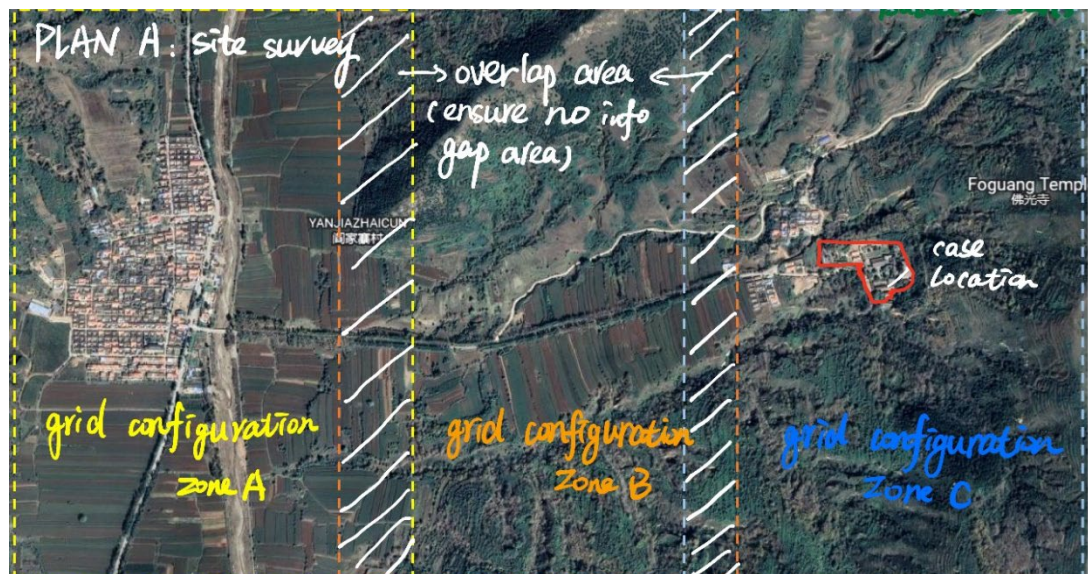
Appendix B: Photography investigation diary, plan, and consent forms

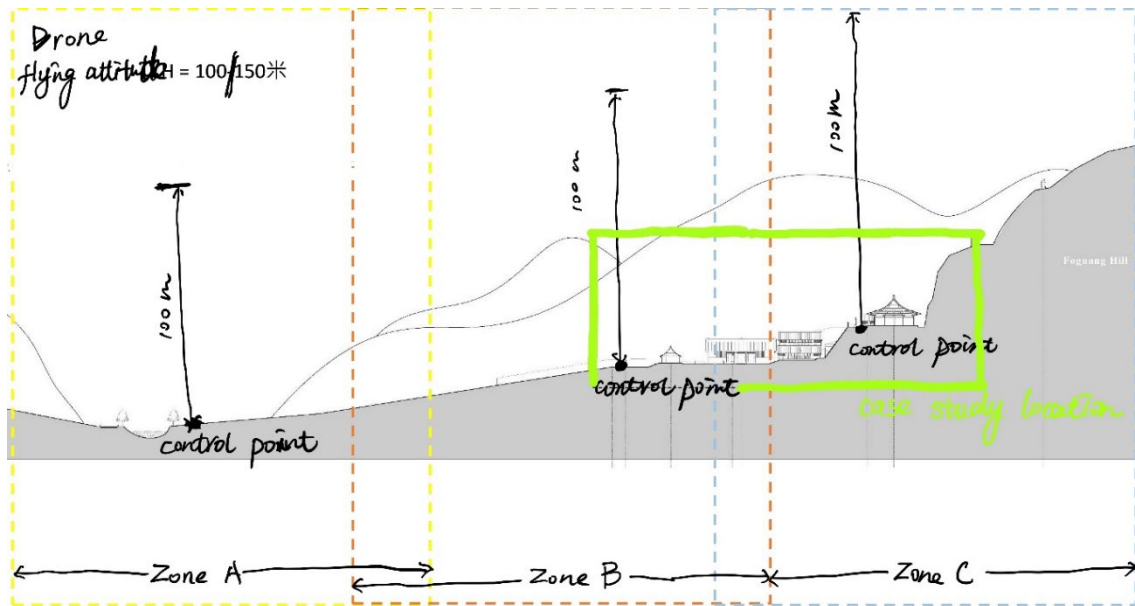


Aerial photography

Plan A: entire site survey (failed)

↓ survey scope is too large, not suit to Drone survey, but to laser scanning to collect site data





Plan B: Focus on case base. (Foguang Monastery) ^{succeeded!}

main tasks: the whole monastery complex/
the foguang hill/site boundary/gully.
each buildings/pagoda/columns.

Architecture and landscape.

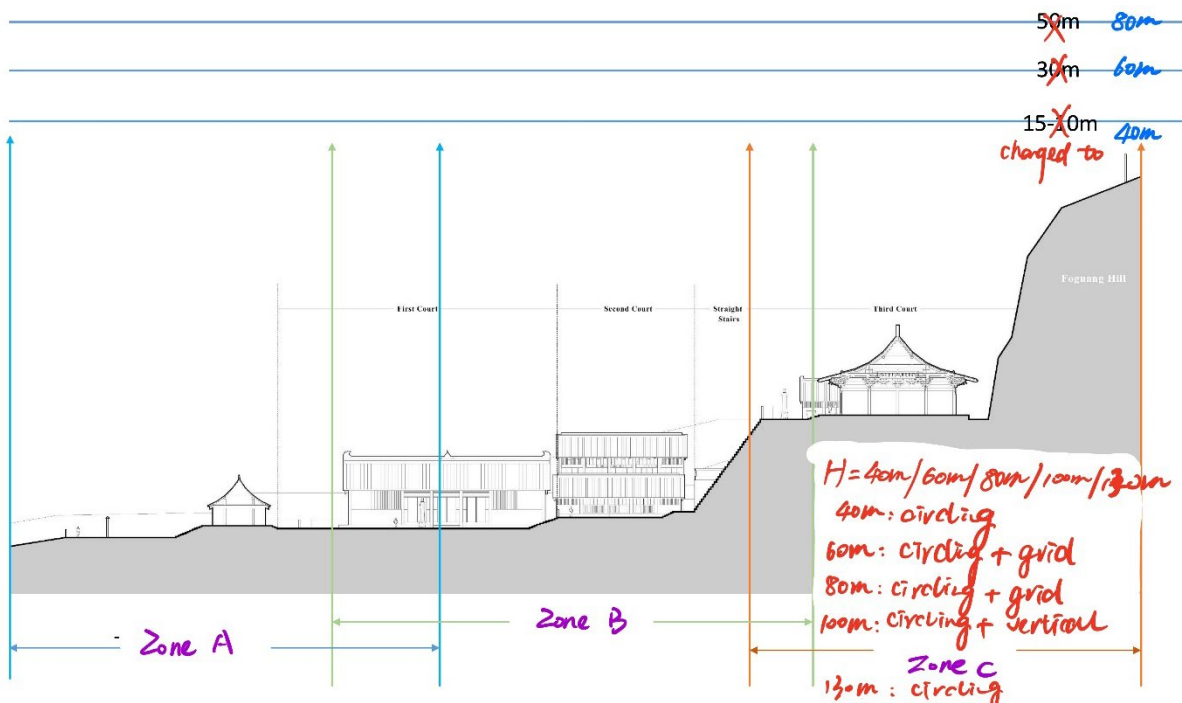
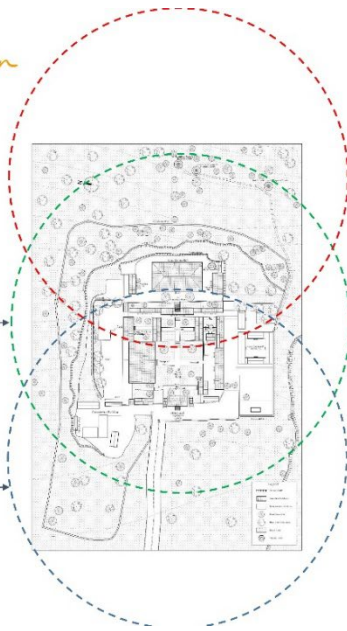


Image acquisition in
sub-areas above FG
Monastery

circling configuration
(fly twice)

circling configuration
(fly twice)



circling configuration
(fly twice)

flight altitude:

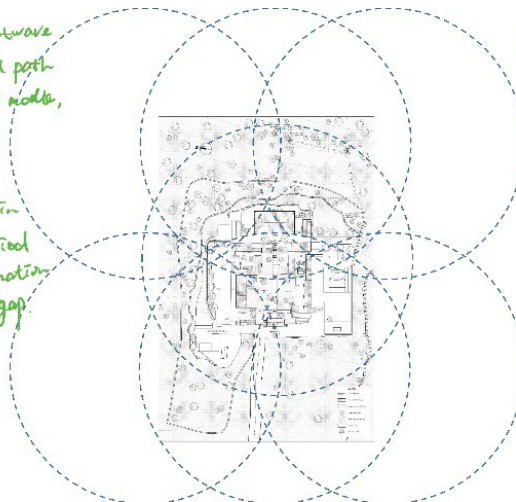
H=50m (✓)

H=30m (X)

H=15-10m (X) too close to
buildings, trees
and mountain

Not every software
can read grid path
to generate 3D model,
so circling is
prior.

grid is just in
case, and avoid
to lose information
or have info. gap.



Possible flying paths:

H: 40m } circling
survey

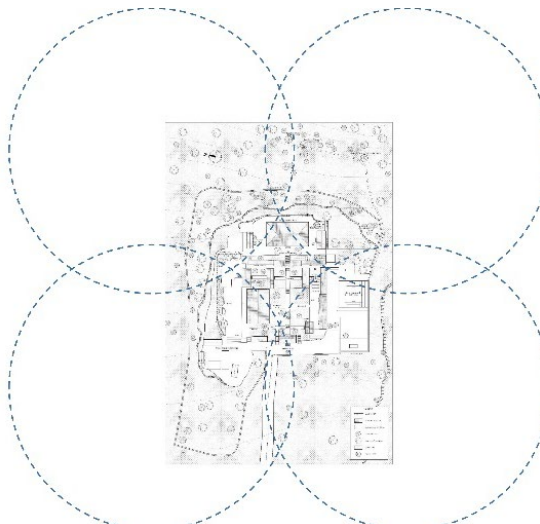
H: 60m

H: 80m

H: 100m

H: 130m

H: 60-100m
grid paths



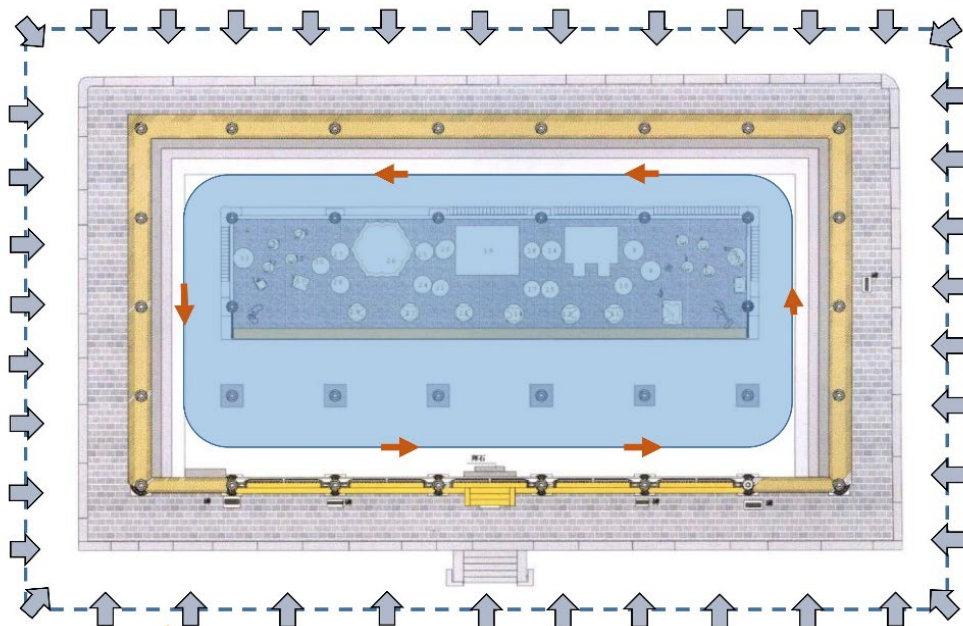
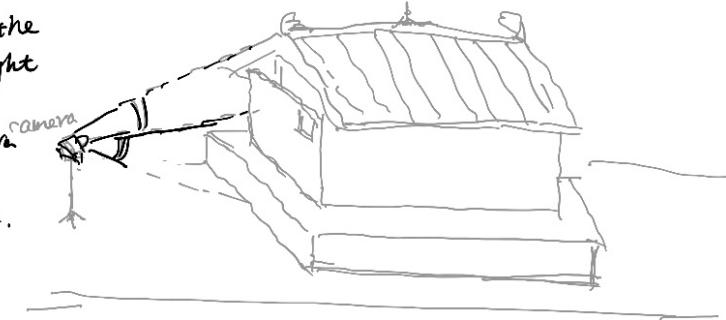
Drone paths

Set to take a
photo every two
seconds

Terrestrial photogrammetry:

1. Great Eastern Hall - - - 3D model Great Eastern Hall with or without trees
2. Wenshu Hall - - - 3D Model
3. Ancient Pagoda - - -
4. (Sutra) pillars - - -

camera lens cannot cover the entire facade due to the height of the building and limited space to go back, so the camera repeatedly shoots from top to bottom in the same position. (twice or three times)



the location and circling path of camera lens.
(circle twice ensure no information gap)



Photography Consent Form

'Religious and physical' contextual exploration of Foguang Monastery, Mount Wutai, China

Please tick the appropriate boxes	Yes	No
I have read and understood the project information sheet dated (07/01/2022) or the project has been fully explained to me. (If you will answer No to this question please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to be hired by PGR researcher Xiaolu Wang to collect photography data in the project. I understand that taking part in the project will include to help collecting aerial videos of the Foguang Monastery site involving generate the rough 3D model of the whole site; take photos of the Great Eastern Hall and the Manjusri Hall outsides and insides; and take aerial videos of the three pagodas.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree the recruitment fee is 5000 CNY in total. Employers must pay half of the deposit before data entry, and when the task is fully completed, the researcher must pay the balance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand my personal details such as name, phone number, address and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree that the copyright of the entire document belongs to Xiaolu Wang. I agree that I will not share or sell the information I collect to anyone else. If I post videos or photos on my personal social media, I must include the name of the PGR researcher (Xiaolu Wang), the name of the project and the University of Sheffield (UK).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of participant [printed]
Ruifeng WANG

Signature *Ruifeng Wang* Date 08/03/2022

Name of Researcher [printed]
Xiaolu WANG

Signature *Xiaolu WANG* Date 07/03/2022

Project contact details for further information:

If you have questions about this study and the cooperation, please contact Xiaolu WANG, School of Architecture, The University of Sheffield, Arts Tower, Western Bank, Sheffield S10 2TN, Email: xwang209@sheffield.ac.uk; PhD Supervisors: Xiang Ren (xiang.ren@sheffield.ac.uk) and Jan Woudstra (j.woudstra@sheffield.ac.uk).



图像采集同意书

中国五台山佛光寺研究

请在适当的方框中打勾	是	否
我已经阅读并理解了日期为 (07 / 03 / 2022) 的项目信息表, 或者王晓璐已经向我全面解释了该项目。(如果您对这个问题的回答为“否”, 请在您完全了解参与该项目的含义之前, 不要继续使用此同意书。)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我有机会提出有关该项目的问题。	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我同意协助博士生王晓璐的课题研究, 并按照其要求, 帮助其完成佛光寺院落无人机拍摄及基地模型的制作; 东大殿及文殊殿室内外的图像采集; 两个经幢及祖师塔的图像采集工作。	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我同意此次有偿拍摄任务, 总费用共计人民币 5000 元。王晓璐需要在任务开始之前预付给我人民币 2500 元, 当任务完全结束之后, 王晓璐需要立刻结清剩余费用 (人民币 2500 元)。	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我了解我的个人详细信息 (例如姓名, 电话号码和电子邮件地址等) 不会透露给项目外的人。	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我理解并同意, 我所拍摄的图像信息可能会在出版物, 报告, 网页和其他研究成果中引用。我也同意我的名字会在这些出版物中被署名。	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我理解并同意, 其他获授权的研究人员只有在同意按照此表格的要求保留信息的机密性后, 才能访问此数据。	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我理解并同意, 其他授权研究人员只有在他们同意按照此表格的要求对信息保密的前提下, 才能在出版物, 报告, 网页和其他研究成果中使用我的数据。	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我同意将我在此项目中产生的任何材料中拥有的版权分配给英国谢菲尔德大学的博士研究生王晓璐, 也绝不共享及售卖给其他人。我有权上传该项目的有关图片到我个人的网络媒体上, 但我同意备注上本课题的研究名称, 研究员王晓璐以及研究员所在的大学英国谢菲尔德大学。	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

参加者姓名[印刷]
王瑞峰

签名 王瑞峰

日期 2022.3.8

研究员姓名[印刷]
王晓璐

签名 王晓璐

日期 07/03/2022

项目联系方式以获取更多信息:

如果您对本研究和合作有疑问, 请联系谢菲尔德大学建筑学院王晓璐, 地址: 谢菲尔德艺术大厦, 邮编: S10 2TN, 电子邮件: xwang209@sheffield.ac.uk; 博士生导师: 任翔 (xiang.ren@sheffield.ac.uk) 和 Jan Woudstra (j.woudstra@sheffield.ac.uk)。

Appendix C: Reality Capture modelling process and result reports

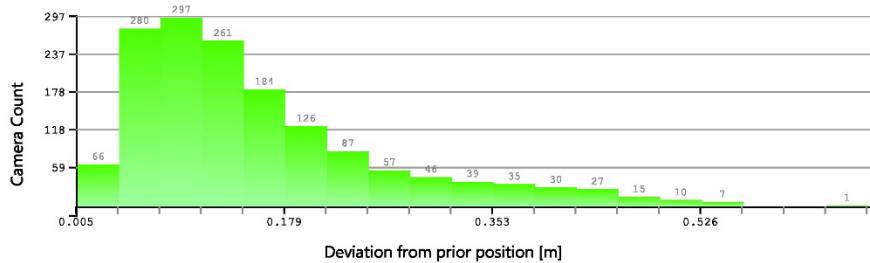
Component Registration Report

Project: Whole site

Component Name	Component 0 (1)		
Camera Count	3893 / 4710	Engine	RealityCapture / High / Downscale 1x
Automatic Point Count	9159888	Features / Pre-selector / Sensitivity	40000 / 10000 / Medium
Control Point Count	21	Max Re-projection Error	2.00
Constraints Used	0	Lens Model	Brown3
Use Camera Positions	True	Final Optimization	True
Output Coordinate System	epsg:4326 - GPS (WGS 84)	Camera Groups Count	all inputs are registered independently

Camera Position

The following histogram shows the number of cameras (Y-axis) whose total 3D deviation to the prior is within values on the X-axis. Histogram bins are colored as described in [legend](#) below with the accuracy threshold set to 24.50 m.



Geo-location of cameras and ground and test control points with color coded accuracy.



Gray dots represent un-registered images with known prior positions. Cyan dots represent registered images with unknown prior positions. Accuracy is color coded as described in [legend](#) below.

All cameras are positioned within the defined prior position accuracy.

Accuracy of geo-location of cameras and ground and test control points is color coded as follows:

- green/none if the total deviation is smaller than the expected prior accuracy,
- yellow if the total deviation is 1.0 times greater than the prior accuracy,
- orange if the total deviation is 1.5 times greater than the prior accuracy,
- red if the total deviation is 2.0 times greater than the prior accuracy,

Relative Camera Position Uncertainty



Ellipses represent relative camera position uncertainties. Blue points in the middle of the ellipses represent estimated camera positions. Color of the ellipses correspond to relative camera position in Z direction. The uncertainty ellipses are ~400x magnified. Distortion caused by pseudo-mercator projection is not compensated.

Statistics of relative camera position uncertainty in X,Y,Z direction.

	X[m]	Y[m]	Z[m]
Mean	0.000	0.000	0.000
Std	0.000	0.000	0.000
Max	0.006	0.013	0.012
Min	0.000	0.000	0.000

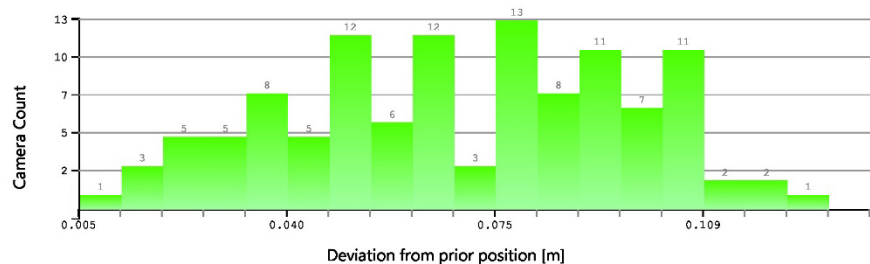
Component Registration Report

Project: Eastern Hall with Roof Beasts and Trees

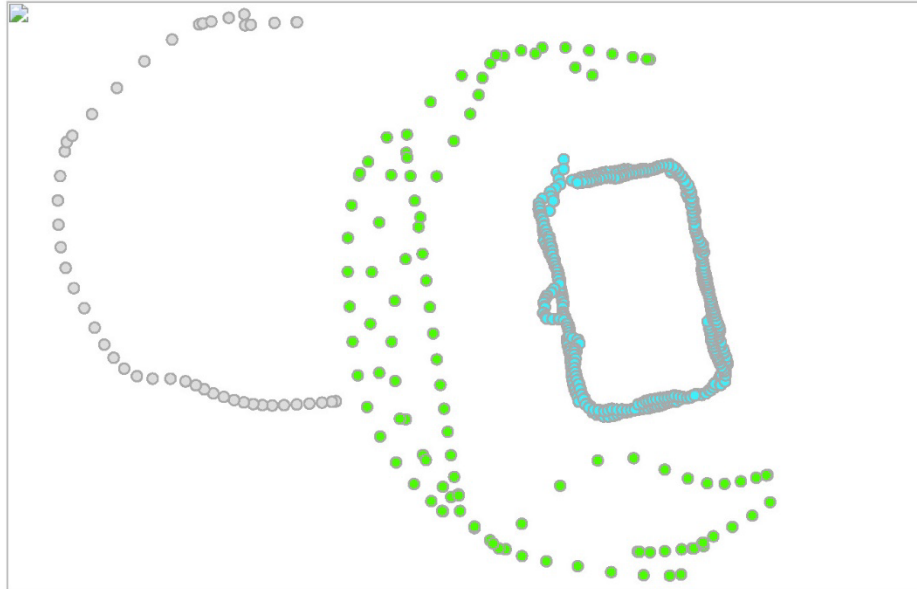
Component Name	Component 0 (2)		
Camera Count	1831 / 1881	Engine	RealityCapture / High / Downscale 1x
Automatic Point Count	4285716	Features / Pre-selector / Sensitivity	40000 / 10000 / Medium
Control Point Count	21	Max Re-projection Error	2.00
Constraints Used	0	Lens Model	Brown3
Use Camera Positions	True	Final Optimization	True
Output Coordinate System	epsg:4326 - GPS (WGS 84)	Camera Groups Count	all inputs are registered independently

Camera Position

The following histogram shows the number of cameras (Y-axis) whose total 3D deviation to the prior is within values on the X-axis. Histogram bins are colored as described in [legend](#) below with the accuracy threshold set to 24.50 m.



Geo-location of cameras and ground and test control points with color coded accuracy.



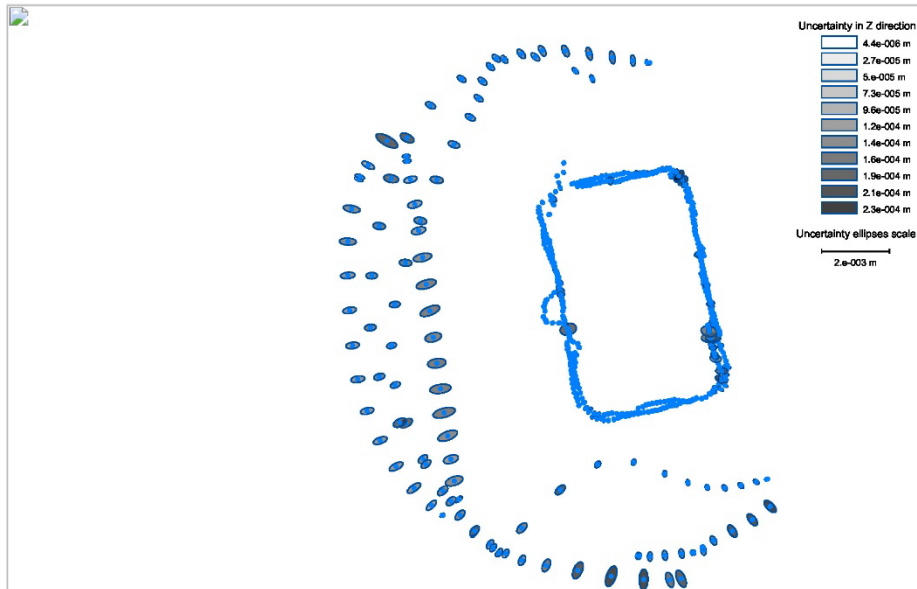
Gray dots represent un-registered images with known prior positions. Cyan dots represent registered images with unknown prior positions. Accuracy is color coded as described in [legend](#) below.

All cameras are positioned within the defined prior position accuracy.

Accuracy of geo-location of cameras and ground and test control points is color coded as follows:

- green/none if the total deviation is smaller than the expected prior accuracy,
- yellow if the total deviation is 1.0 times greater than the prior accuracy,
- orange if the total deviation is 1.5 times greater than the prior accuracy,
- red if the total deviation is 2.0 times greater than the prior accuracy,

Relative Camera Position Uncertainty



Ellipses represent relative camera position uncertainties. Blue points in the middle of the ellipses represent estimated camera positions. Color of the ellipses correspond to relative camera position in Z direction. The uncertainty ellipses are ~5000x magnified. Distortion caused by pseudo-mercator projection is not compensated.

Statistics of relative camera position uncertainty in X,Y,Z direction.

	X[m]	Y[m]	Z[m]
Mean	0.000	0.000	0.000
Std	0.000	0.000	0.000
Max	0.000	0.000	0.000
Min	0.000	0.000	0.000

Appendix D: Ethics Application and Approve Letter

(1) Ethics application



Application 036414

Section A: Applicant details

Date application started:

Fri 28 August 2020 at 17:50

First name:

Xiaolu

Last name:

Wang

Email:

xwang209@sheffield.ac.uk

Programme name:

Architecture (Architecture FT- ARCR131)

Module name:

PhD Research Thesis

Last updated:

29/09/2020

Department:

School of Architecture

Applying as:

Postgraduate research

Research project title:

'Religious and physical' contextual exploration of Foguang Monastery, Mount Wutai, China

Has your research project undergone academic review, in accordance with the appropriate process?

Yes

Similar applications:

- not entered -

Section B: Basic information

Supervisor

Name

Email

Xiang Ren

xiang.ren@sheffield.ac.uk

Proposed project duration

Start date (of data collection):

Thu 1 October 2020

Anticipated end date (of project)

Tue 31 August 2021

3: Project code (where applicable)

Project externally funded?

N/A

Project code
- not entered -

Suitability

Takes place outside UK?

Yes

Involves NHS?

No

Health and/or social care human-interventional study?

No

ESRC funded?

No

Likely to lead to publication in a peer-reviewed journal?

Yes

Led by another UK institution?

No

Involves human tissue?

No

Clinical trial or a medical device study?

No

Involves social care services provided by a local authority?

No

Is social care research requiring review via the University Research Ethics Procedure

No

Involves adults who lack the capacity to consent?

No

Involves research on groups that are on the Home Office list of 'Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations'?

No

Indicators of risk

Involves potentially vulnerable participants?

No

Involves potentially highly sensitive topics?

Yes

Section C: Summary of research

1. Aims & Objectives

Foguang Monastery is the only case study of this research. This study not only seeks to interpret the cultural meaning that was closely associated with Buddhism through the case study of Foguang Monastery in China but also aims to discover the physical history of the old surviving monasteries as much as possible.

Research objectives:

1. To explore the reason for its location.
2. To find out whether and how local beliefs influenced the selection of site location.
3. To establish the historic building processes of Foguang Monastery.

2. Methodology

This PhD study is inter-disciplinary and will be carried out across several disciplines, including architectural history, cultural studies, cultural anthropology, sociology. The epistemological stance of this research is in the sphere of constructionism. The theoretical perspective of this study is historicism. To discover as much as possible about the religious and physical history of Foguang Monastery,

archive and mapping are effective methods for this research.

1. Archive Research

This research will focus on the paradigmatic textual archives that have informed Foguang Monastery between the first and tenth century.

(1) Shanxi Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau - data collection aspects: archaeological report, analytical drawings, local History, religion history, geography of Mount Wutai, political records in Shanxi Province (1st to 10th century), book of anecdotes relevant, oral histories or memories about Foguang Monastery.

(2) First Historical Archives of China & Second Historical Archives of China - the official regulations of the Ming and Qing Dynasty, information about the context in the Republic of China Period (1912-1949)

(3) National Library of China - creative literature (e.g. novels, poems) in Tang Dynasty, autobiography and biography of monks, academic publications about Buddhism.

(4) Secondary data on monastic research between Japan and China - construction process of Hōryū-Ji and Tōshōdai-Ji, Buddhism development in Japan, Japan architecture history, comparative timber structure between China and Japan.

(5) National Archives and British Library in the UK - explore the motif of Indian Buddhism History between the 1st and 10th century.

2. Mapping

In this study, mapping method can benefit this study by unfolding the realignment of historic landscape features of Mount Wutai, such as roads and the development of built-up areas so as to interpret the reason for the location of Foguang Monastery. Besides, mapping is an effective way to reveal the meaning of orientation of Foguang Monastery. Furthermore, the relationship between Foguang Monastery and other monasteries which also were built in Mount Wutai could be unfolded by mapping.

Some equipment, such as Drones, digital camera, and smart measurement tool, will support the generation of 2D maps, 3D models and aerial photographs of Fogang Monastery, including the topographic map, the layout map, the timber structure map. Furthermore, the author aims to map out the geographic relationship between Foguang Monastery and Mount Wutai; the location meaning of monasteries in the five peaks in history; and the framework of the construction process in its physical history.

3. Interview

In this architecture historical research, there is no need to attain highly personalized data as evidence for using. Still, it is a worth way to understand the experiences, opinions, attitudes, values and processes about the remaining relic of Foguang Monastery.

3. Personal Safety

Have you completed your departmental risk assessment procedures, if appropriate?

Yes

Raises personal safety issues?

No

The data collection process will be conducted in public areas, such as archive centres, museums and national libraries, where are possible to be surrounded by crowds of people. To reduce the potential risk of infecting the COVID-19, this fieldwork will be carried on following the local safety regulation, and the principal investigator will do the best personal security protection, for example, wearing a mask, travelling by private vehicle rather than by public transportation. (The risk assessment form has been attached)

Recently, the places where I am going to explore in, such as the libraries, museums, archive centres, are all reopened either in China or in UK. That is the reason why I should conduct my fieldwork plan at an early date.

Section D: About the participants

1. Potential Participants

1. Some academics who have been studying on or working with the historical Buddhism architecture in China will be interviewed because their working experiences and opinions could help for broadening the data collection dimension.

2. Some local residents who live in Doucun the nearest village to Foguang Monastery could help for collecting memories and attitudes about Foguang Monastery.

3. Some monks or nuns practising in Mount Wutai will help to understand the Buddhism doctrine. Meanwhile, it is likely to reveal the data collection bias about Foguang Monastery.

2. Recruiting Potential Participants

This research will use two sampling methods: purposive and snowball. The purposive sample selected according to relevance to study, while snowball refers to after initially sampling a few participants by the purposive way, participants nominate other potential participants.

The researcher will connect some interviewees to explain the aim and purpose of this study and then try to get their help to recruit more relevant participants.

2.1. Advertising methods

Will the study be advertised using the volunteer lists for staff or students maintained by IT Services? No

- not entered -

3. Consent

Will informed consent be obtained from the participants? (i.e. the proposed process) Yes

An information sheet will be given to participants before the interview. Participants will read the consent form and information sheet and sign in if they fully understand the information sheet and agree to attend. Due to the research will be conducted in the non-English region, all the information will be translated into the local language (Chinese), the translation will be reviewed and discussed with the colleague who is Chinese native speaker, good at English and doing a related study.

4. Payment

Will financial/in kind payments be offered to participants? No

5. Potential Harm to Participants

What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm/distress to the participants?

There will not be any physical and psychological harm to participants.

How will this be managed to ensure appropriate protection and well-being of the participants?

This is inapplicable to my research topic.

Section E: About the data

1. Data Processing

Will you be processing (i.e. collecting, recording, storing, or otherwise using) personal data as part of this project? (Personal data is any information relating to an identified or identifiable living person).

Yes

Which organisation(s) will act as Data Controller?

University of Sheffield only

2. Legal basis for processing of personal data

The University considers that for the vast majority of research, 'a task in the public interest' (6(1)(e)) will be the most appropriate legal basis. If, following discussion with the UREC, you wish to use an alternative legal basis, please provide details of the legal basis, and the reasons for applying it, below:

- not entered -

Will you be processing (i.e. collecting, recording, storing, or otherwise using) 'Special Category' personal data?

Yes

The University considers the most appropriate condition to be that 'processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific research purposes or statistical purposes' (9(2)(j)). If, following discussion with the UREC, you wish to use an alternative condition, please provide details of the condition, and the reasons for applying it, below:

This research will involve raw materials about Foguang Monastery; maps of Mount Wutai; photographs about monastic architecture, Buddhist statues and religious murals; voice records of academics, residential, monks and nuns. No other special category data will be mentioned.

3. Data Confidentiality

What measures will be put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data, where appropriate?

The principal investigator keeps investigation notes in a black book; also, I make notes of things what I need to check and what I should understand more profoundly and comprehensively. Then I look at them afterwards. Some non-digital resource collected in fieldwork will be gathered and locked in my room. Besides, all digital data will be encrypted before it is stored, and will be store securely personal PC and personal external hard drive.

The interviews will be recorded by an audio recorder. The audio recordings will be transcribed and the original recordings will be stored safely and destroyed after the research finished. All interview transcript documents will be anonymised and participants will not be identified or identifiable in any reports, theses or publications. The researcher

will only use the title, number when referring to a specific interviewee.

4. Data Storage and Security

In general terms, who will have access to the data generated at each stage of the research, and in what form

Only the researcher will have access to the raw material collected. The transcriptions will be accessible to authorised researchers, such as supervisor, co-authors of publications and colleagues. All the participants will be anonymised.

What steps will be taken to ensure the security of data processed during the project, including any identifiable personal data, other than those already described earlier in this form?

Encrypted survey audio, transcripts and survey files will be stored indefinitely at University Google Drive, school computer and personal mobile hard disk in MP4, JPG, DWG, DOC, PDF, MP3 forms after the project, which are encrypted and accessible only by the researcher, supervisor and authorised researcher. All the interview data will be anonymised. The participants will not be able to be identified in any reports, theses or publications.

Will all identifiable personal data be destroyed once the project has ended?

Yes

Please outline when this will take place (this should take into account regulatory and funder requirements).

5 years after theses writing up.

Section F: Supporting documentation

Information & Consent

Participant information sheets relevant to project?

Yes

Document 1082552 (Version 1)	All versions
Document 1082549 (Version 1)	All versions

Consent forms relevant to project?

Yes

Document 1082533 (Version 2)	All versions
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Additional Documentation

Document 1082550 (Version 3) Risk Assessment	All versions
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External Documentation

- not entered -

Section G: Declaration

Signed by:

XWang209@sheffield.ac.uk

Date signed:

Tue 8 September 2020 at 23:33

Official notes

- not entered -

(2) Approval letter



Downloaded: 09/01/2024
Approved: 29/09/2020

Xiaolu Wang
Registration number: 190183372
School of Architecture
Programme: Architecture (Architecture FT- ARCR131)

Dear Xiaolu

PROJECT TITLE: 'Religious and physical' contextual exploration of Foguang Monastery, Mount Wutai, China
APPLICATION: Reference Number 036414

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 29/09/2020 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 036414 (form submission date: 08/09/2020); (expected project end date: 31/08/2021).
- Participant information sheet 1082552 version 1 (08/09/2020).
- Participant information sheet 1082549 version 1 (08/09/2020).
- Participant consent form 1082533 version 2 (07/09/2020).

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Chengzhi Peng
Ethics Administrator
School of Architecture

Please note the following responsibilities of the researcher in delivering the research project:

- The project must abide by the University's Research Ethics Policy: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/research-services/ethics-integrity/policy>
- The project must abide by the University's Good Research & Innovation Practices Policy: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.671066!/file/GRIPPolicy.pdf
- The researcher must inform their supervisor (in the case of a student) or Ethics Administrator (in the case of a member of staff) of any significant changes to the project or the approved documentation.
- The researcher must comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.
- The researcher is responsible for effectively managing the data collected both during and after the end of the project in line with best practice, and any relevant legislative, regulatory or contractual requirements.

Appendix E: Related publications of the author

Wang, *Cogent Arts & Humanities* (2023), 10: 2198328
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2023.2198328>



Received: 12 July 2022
Accepted: 29 March 2023

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Floor 9, Sheffield S10 2TN, UK
E-mail: xwang209@sheffield.ac.uk

Reviewing editor:
Timothy Clack, School of
Anthropology & Museum
Ethnography, University of Oxford,
United Kingdom

Additional information is available at
the end of the article

CULTURAL HERITAGE | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Rethinking the history of Buddhism through female Buddhist heritage investigation

Xiaolu Wang^{1*}

Abstract: As the merits of Buddhism in history gave rise to architectural constructions, the preserved historical heritage opens a window to a better understanding of the past. However, most of these cultural-historical treatises have been read and narrated only from a paternal perspective. Even though there is an increased awareness of female Buddhism, a number of Buddhist constructions built under female patronage have yet to receive full recognition. Based on a field survey conducted by the author, this paper examines three representative female Buddhist architectural relics in China: the Yungang Grottoes, the Great Vairocana (or the Lu-shhe-na Buddha) of the Longmen Grottoes, and the Tiantai'an Nunnery, in order to understand the diversity of Buddhist practise and discuss the role of women in early Chinese Buddhism. Through case studies and comparative analysis, this paper presents Buddhist practise based on female engagement, social context, and female traditions in China. The author argues for a re-evaluation of the history of Buddhist architecture and for it to be placed into a broader framework that takes into account female Buddhist communities and their contribution to the history of architecture.

Subjects: Architecture; History of Art & Design; Religion; Cultural Studies

Keywords: Buddhist architecture; female Buddhism; historical heritage; monastery; nunnery

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Xiaolu Wang

Xiaolu Wang is currently a PhD candidate at the School of Architecture, University of Sheffield, co-supervised by Dr Xiang Ren and Dr Jan Woudstra. She is a member of the East West Studies in Architecture and Landscape Research Unit and Space, Cultures and Politics Research Group. Her research aims to contextualize and interpret the historic Buddhist architecture of Foguang Monastery from a landscape and architectural perspective. This research is also concerned with understanding cultural interaction, religious feminism, pilgrimage networks, religious landscapes, and Buddhist rituals. Before coming to the UK, Xiaolu Wang was a lecturer at Jinan University in China and a visiting researcher at Waseda University in Japan.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This article aims not only to interpret pre-modern Chinese Buddhist architecture, female Buddhism, religious politics, and art history but also to enrich the knowledge of early religious architecture and contribute to the historical development of Buddhist history in Asia. In addition, this research hopes to provide inspirational information for Buddhist women's community worldwide, feminist researchers, designers of religious spaces, religious artists, or anyone interested in women's history.



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1. Introduction

It is generally believed that Buddhism arrived in mainland China after 126 BC, due mainly to international diplomacy and spread further by the travels of missionaries such as Zhang Qian (138 BC-126 BC) from the capital Chang'an to the western regions (Liu, 2010; S. Zhang, 2004). The first group of monks probably came to China from India via Pakistan and Afghanistan around the 1st century (Liang, 1961). The Han dynasty thus witnessed the first phase of Buddhism expansion, in particular the way in which this foreign religion was introduced from India to China. After its arrival via the Silk Road, Buddhism experienced a long and slow process of development in China (Tang, 1987, p. 48). It is generally accepted that Buddhism went through four phases: preparation (65-317AD), domestication (317-589AD), independent growth (589-900AD), and appropriation (900-1900AD) (Wright, 1959). The three case studies used in this paper are from different periods in the flourishing development of Buddhism. The second construction phase of Yungang Grottoes, manipulated by the Empress Dowager Feng, dates from a time when Buddhism was beginning to grow, namely between 453 and 495 AD of the Northern Wei Dynasty. The Great Vairocana (or Lushana Buddha) in the Longmen Grottoes, which were under the patronage of Empress Wu Zetian, was built during the heyday of Buddhism (672-675 AD in the Tang Dynasty). Tiantai An (or Tiantai Nunnery), one of the few ancient monasteries in China, was built during the later Tang Dynasty (around 907 AD). This paper's argument is structured around three selected cases and narrated using photography and mapping methods.

Buddhist merit to some extent boosted the Buddhist architectural construction, and the surviving historical heritage has opened a window to a better understanding of the history and cultural significance of women. Fortunately, some representative Buddhist relics from the growth and flourishing periods in China have been well preserved. Some representative examples are as follows: the rock-cut architecture, such as the Yungang Grottoes, the Longmen Grottoes, and the Dunhuang Caves, the ancient wooden architecture of the Tang Dynasty, such as the oldest surviving building of the Nanchan Monastery, the oldest above-ground palace building of the Foguang Monastery from 857 AD, and the Tiantai'an Nunnery made during the Late Tang Dynasty and described in greater detail later in this paper.

The author agrees with the view that Buddhist philosophy put greater value on the role of men, resulting in women being afforded little freedom being treated as dependents and given lower duties (Paudel & Dong, 2017). Historically, Chinese Buddhism was no exception to this. In feudal patriarchal societies, although Buddhism provided only a limited space for women to challenge gender inequality, it did, however, offer them an opportunity where they could represent and free themselves from the feudal hierarchy. Buddhist monumental relics, such as rock caves or some surviving architecture located in China provide solid evidence that trace the history of feminism within Buddhism.

The reasons for women choosing Buddhism in China were complicated. Through an investigation into the epitaphs of women living during the Tang dynasty, it has been concluded that apart from seeking purely doctrinal creed, other specific factors also caused the spread of Buddhism among women, for instance parental influence in Buddhists' families (Jiao, 2000). Moreover, the hardships commonly faced by women, such as being widowed or divorced, being orphaned would induce them to seek spiritual redemption and psychological healing through the practice of meditation (Jiao, 2000).

This paper examines the three representative architectural relics with the aim of revealing the impact of Buddhist nuns' communities on Buddhist architectural development and discuss religious feminism and Buddhist history. To better understand the history of female Buddhist architecture in China, this article highlights how female Buddhists created a unique style of architecture by modifying existing monuments to suit their social status and needs. The author argues that women Buddhists played an important role in the evolution and development of Buddhism, revealing them to be an indispensable part of Chinese and world history.

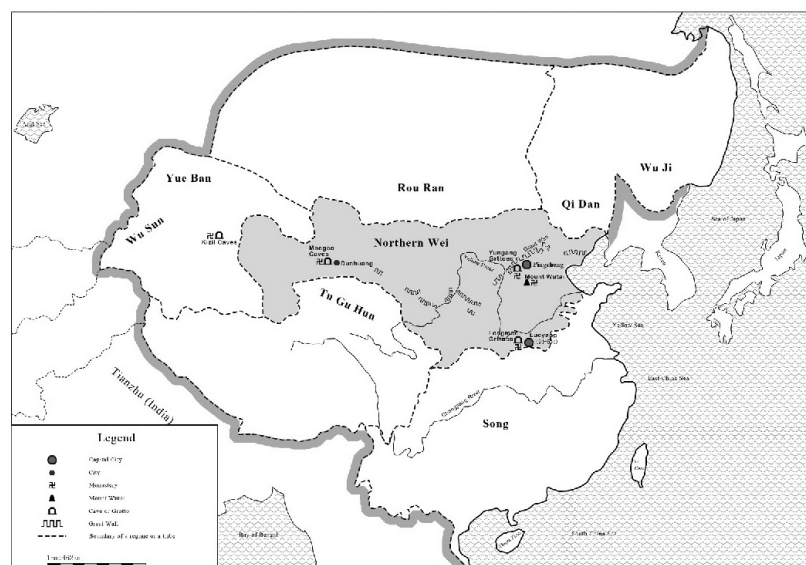
2. Empress Dowager Feng with Yungang Grottoes

Since patrons could achieve merits through supporting monumental construction, Buddhist adherents contributed to numerous representative Buddhist architectural projects in their communities, particularly throughout the first construction boom period during Northern Wei Dynasty. The Yellow Turban Rebellion broke out nationally in 184 AD, eventually destroying the Eastern Han regime (Z. Wang, 2004). Thereafter, China was divided for more than 400 years, apart from the brief unification of the Western Jin Dynasty (266–316 AD). Not until 589 AD when Emperor Wen of Sui reunited the north and south did this long-standing state of separatism end.

Although the protracted conflicts had adverse effects upon the whole of society, for example, large numbers of civilians suffered severe hardships, urban decline, and market stagnation, the spread of Buddhism was unexpectedly not affected by the political chaos. The first Buddhist commandments were created initially in the Cao Wei regime (220–265AD); Buddhism even spread to the south of China, such as Dong Wu kingdom (229–280AD) wherein Buddhist monasteries were gradually erected; the translation of scriptures became crucial and favoured events that had occurred during the Jin Dynasty (266–420AD) due to the large increase in Buddhist (C. Huang, 2013). Many eminent monks emerged and contributed significantly towards the successful promotion and continuation of Buddhism in China, such as Fotudeng, Dao'an, Huiyuan, and Kumārajīva (Han, 1979).

Later during the Southern and the Northern dynasties (420–589AD), Buddhism began to flourish in China. Tiantai Buddhism, initially created by the Chinese monk Zhiyi' in the Southern Chen dynasty (557–589AD), is known as “the earliest attempt at a thoroughgoing Sinitic reworking of the Indian Buddhist tradition” (Ziporyn, 2016). In the Northern dynasties (439–581AD) (including Northern Wei regime, Northern Qi regime, and Northern Zhou regime), Buddhism also received widespread praise, especially during the period when Tuoba of Xianbei's nomadic clan unified northern China and built the Northern Wei kingdom (386–534AD) (Ziporyn, 2016, pix). According to dialectics by Fa Lin, in 386, the Northern Wei regime first built Pingcheng (current Datong) as their capital city under their Xianbei Emperor Daowu (Figure 1). In 477AD of the Northern Wei, the number of Buddhists numbered no more than 77,000, but after 60 years it had risen dramatically

Figure 1. Northern Wei regime during the Song and Wei dynasties of China (447 AD), redrawn by the author from the historical atlas of China by Tan (1996).



to around 2,000,000 (the total population of the northern China was about 30 million during the same period) (Z. Wang, 2004).

Empress Dowager Feng (441–490 AD) played an indelible role in spreading Buddhism and developing religious architecture during her 15-year reign from 465 to 480 AD, the development of Yungang Grottoes being the clearest demonstration of this. The construction history of the Yungang Grottoes is generally divided into three phases: The first period (460 – 470AD) saw the construction of caves 16–20 (also known as the Five Caves of Tanyao); the second period (470 – 494AD) culminated in double caves 7 and 8, as well as cave 9, double cave 10, caves 11–13, double caves 1 and 2; and the third period (494 – 524AD) when the western caves and some repair work to caves of the first and second phases were completed (W. Huang, 2017). The third-phase caves, excavated after the death of Empress Dowager Feng, are very small and inferior in terms of spatial design, Buddhist art and building techniques compared to the previous excavations carried out during the first two periods, so are not discussed in this article. The impressive changes in Buddhist practice from the first to the second phase reflect how Empress Dowager Feng gradually advanced the reformation of the Buddhist rock architecture in the fifth century.

Although the Empress Dowager Feng did not witness the construction of the Five Caves of Tanyao, she did, however, learn how patriarchal authority was able to strengthen its power through religious symbolism. In 465 AD, the sudden death of Emperor Wencheng left the 24-year-old Empress Feng widowed with an 11-year-old adopted son born to the imperial concubine Li. At this time, the First Period Caves were in the fifth year of their construction awaiting completion, when the royal family of Northern Wei wanted to make the capital Datong a Buddhist centre. Attending to state affairs behind a curtain whilst continuing the Yungang Caves project were Empress Dowager Feng's in stopgap strategy to ensure a stable society under the rule of a female emperor. Although she was probably not involved in the planning of the Yungang Grottoes during Emperor Wencheng reign, she guaranteed the successful completion of the Five Caves of Tanyao.

Beyond their religious symbolism, the five-giant statues are regarded as depicting the five deceased emperors of the Northern Wei Dynasty. The five caves are aligned from west to east and represent the emperors Daowu, Mingyuan, Taiwu, Prince Jingmu, and Wencheng, each built in the following historical order: 20, 17, 19, 18, and finally 16 (Wei, 2020) (Figures 2-3). This type of architectural statement is understandable for monumental cases in which religion was used to maintain social stability and is not uncommon throughout history. At this point, the Empress would be keen to ensure that peace be maintained within the traditionally patriarchal order of the Northern Wei Dynasty.

Political symbolism, however, should be based on religious cosmology. In Buddhism, the five cosmic Buddhas represent different sanctities with different names and orientations (Williams et al., 2012), which were adopted to define the holiness of the Yungang caves. Therefore, the creation of the Five Caves of Tanyao probably also embodies the theory of the Five Cosmic Buddhas. Although Empress Dowager Feng was the centre of power in the Northern Wei Dynasty, even actively helping in the completion of the first phase of the Yungang Grottoes, it does not appear that she interfered directly with the Buddhist practices representing patriarchal society. The five caves are huge, and the details contained within the carvings are intricate; however, there are no traces of Empress Dowager Feng.

Figure 2. Left – the first phase caves floor plan and right – the second phase caves floor plan, drawn by the author.



Figure 3. Five Tanyao Caves (460-465AD) of Yungang Grottoes, author's picture, taken in 2020.

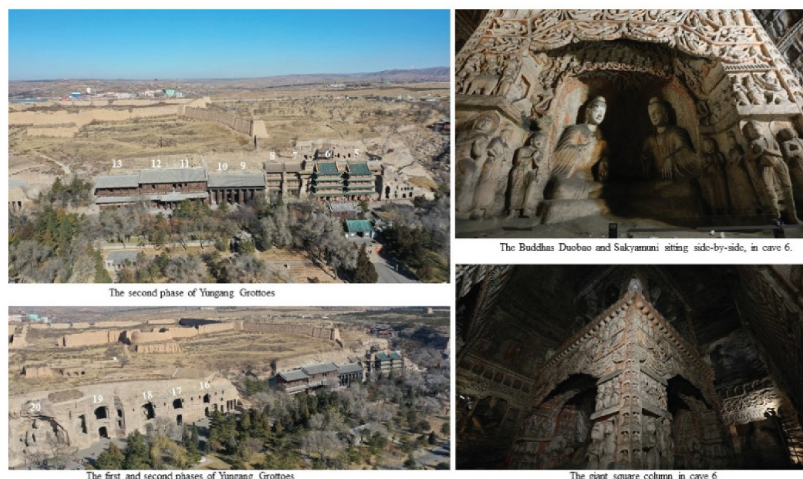


During the second phase of the Yungang Grottoes, however, she began to exert her influence on Buddhist practice to better serve a female-led imperial empire. Accordingly, she dominated the second phase of the Yungang Grottoes project when the first phase of the Five Tanyao Caves were finished (Xia, 1994). In comparison, the main statue in the Tanyao Five caves occupies most of the area in each cave, and in the outer wall of each cave, two openings were excavated from the bottom and from the top. With the collapse of the outer wall in cave 20, the Buddha statue was fully exposed. The five huge statues, respectively, symbolise the five early Northern Wei Dynasty emperors (Li, 2020, p. 65). Architecturally, the cave plan in each was designed in the shape of a horseshoe chamber, which housed a huge statue, with a short and straight ritual passage.

However, the space design approach of the Yungang caves, which had been built during a subsequent phase under the empress Dowager Feng's guidance, became more sophisticated and diverse in sculpture art and engraving theme. The inner space, compared with the caves constructed during the first phase, was divided more meticulously because it was dug deeper and had become divided into two chambers, a lobby and a back room, which increased the size of the worship passage and the amount of time that devotees could remain inside. The giant square column, added as a new architectural component, such as can be seen in cave 6, stands in the centre of the cave making the "circumambulation" more convenient and fluid. The carving themes in each cave also became more diverse with greater engraving details (Figures 2-4).

Moreover, the Empress Dowager Feng made subtle interventions in Buddhist practice to represent herself. The double caves, which consist of two distinct areas connected by an antechamber, as seen in the second phase (such as caves 7 and 8, caves 9 and 10, and caves 5 and 6), represent a breakthrough in the ancient cave-building pattern seen in the first phase. Meanwhile, the various legends depicting Buddhist deities carved into the walls challenge the traditionally male orientated theocratic images. For example, the Buddhas Duobao and Sakyamuni seated side by side (Figure 4) are believed to be avatars of Empress Dowager Feng and her foster son (Emperor Xiaowen) (W. Lin, 2012). Thus, the evolution of the Yungang Grottoes from the first to the second phase embodies the awakening of Empress Dowager Feng's feminine consciousness, and through Buddhist architectural practice she was able to convey her religio-political power. It is also conceivable that this expression provided a strong reference for later queens to use religious architecture to articulate themselves.

Figure 4. Illustrating the second phase of Yungang Grottoes, author's picture, taken in 2020.



3. Empress Wu Zetian with Longmen Grottoes

Many Tang emperors (618–907 AD) were Buddhists or nominally supportive of Buddhism, although it suffered a period of anti-Buddhist persecution between 841 and 846 AD. The Sui and Tang Dynasty was the heyday of Buddhism development in medieval China. Accordingly, 52 caves of Dunhuang Grottoes were excavated during the Tang dynasty (Hu & Mei, 1997)¹, which involved creating 56 frescoes of Mañjuśrī Jingtu Bian (Buswell & Lopez, 2013, p. 390)². Two extensive excavations taking place over 140 years also took place in the Longmen Grottoes during the Northern Wei and Tang dynasty. In the Longmen Grottoes, there are more than 2,100 extant remains of the ancient cave niches and 100,000 Buddha statues depicting the Lu-she-na Buddha (or Great Vairocana Buddha), which is 17.14 meters in height (Figure 5) (Gong, 2002); 60 percent of the excavation projects were completed during the Tang period, compared with 30 percent from the Northern Wei (Li, 2020). 271 monasteries were constructed during the Sui dynasty and the number of monastic sites' reached 3985 (excluding private temples) at the end of Sui China (581–618AD). 3901 monasteries were originally built during the Tang period (618–907AD), especially by

Figure 5. Lu-she-na Buddha of Longmen Grottoes built in 675AD, Luoyang, China, author's picture, taken in 2020.



the emperors Taizong, Xuanzong, and Zhaozong (G. Zhang, 1997). The implementation of the construction law—Yingshanling 營繕令 ensured huge Buddhist construction investment during the Sui and Tang constructions. This provided a highly efficiently project management criterion encompassing strict regulations governing building projects and uniform construction standards in timber structures during the medieval period (Fu, 2012, pp. 18–25). Therefore, if project funds were sufficient, this advanced system made constructing a large number of buildings possible.

Empress Wu Zetian, as a Tang dynasty Buddhist, inevitably affected the Buddhist practice. Her reign (650–704 AD) is held to be the most glorious developmental period of the Longmen Grottoes, as two-thirds of the statues were engraved in this period (Gao, 2006). Meanwhile, Wu Zetian is believed to be promoting the popularity of the cult of Maitreya (Gao, 2006). In Buddhist philosophy, Maitreya Bodhisattva is regarded as the future age of the Buddha. From the fourth century onwards, the cult of Maitreya spread from India along the Silk Road to mainland China (Wong, 2001). The Maitreya Bodhisattva is believed to live in “Tushita Heaven” where he practises virtues and preaches to devas (heavenly beings) while awaiting his rebirth on Earth (Wong, 2001). Wu Zetian is considered to be the one who decisively pushed the popularity of the Buddhist Maitreya, but towards the end of her political career, faith in Maitreya declined, and the project of the three Buddha statues were not completed in Longmen Grottoes (Gao, 2006).

It is generally believed that in order to strengthen her political leadership role as a woman, she supported the creation of Lu-she-na Buddha to convince her subjects that she was the incarnation of Lu-she-na Buddha on earth (Gong, 2002, pp. 291–298). She adopted the same previously used approach of expressing an emperor’s connection to the Buddha through tangible statues and rock architecture in her new faith and political intention with the Lu-she-na Buddha.

The shape of the Lu-she-na niche is unique, resembling a massive opened-up painting carved in stone. Technically speaking, the space of Lu-she-na may not be defined as a cave, but rather a niche, because instead of digging statues into a cave like the Yungang Grottoes, it has no interior, all the statues carved into the rock are directly visible to pilgrims. At 33.50 meters wide from north to south and 27.30 meters deep from east to west, it contains the central Lu-she-na Buddha, two disciples, two bodhisattvas, two deities, two Hercules, and two patrons (N. Zhang, 1999). Initially over the statue of the Lu-she-na Buddha, there was a wooden canopy of which currently only a few holes remain, which formally held the wooded pillars supporting the roof (Figure 5).

The strategy of using Buddhism to manifest political ambition was also employed by Empress Wu Zetian. However, the monumental spatial design in the Lu-she-na niche is more obvious and more visible compared to the Buddhist architectural practices seen in the Yungang Grottoes. The form of the Lu-she-na niche might have been inspired by the first phase of the Yungang Grottoes, featuring the five Buddha statues symbolising the five emperors of the Northern Wei, but on a more massive scale. However, the more feminine features and art applied in the Lu-she-na statue is distinct from the more masculine representation seen in the Yungang Grottoes Buddhas. Furthermore, the second phase of the space in Yungang Grottoes is indirect to access because of its exterior wall entrance lobby. These monastic design makes Buddha statues hidden in the extended interior surrounded by abundant sculptural content and decorative detail. In contrast, the Lu-she-na Buddha is fully exposed and is located on the highest platform as part of the Fengxian Monastery complex. The Fengxian Monastery used to be at the foot of the mountain until being flooded by the Yi River (Gong, 2002, p. 288). The format of a monastery consisting of a cave and a temple points to ritual events being shifted from the cave space to the temple (Figure 6).

It can be seen that, Empress Wu Zetian’s representation in Buddhist practice is reflected more boldly compared with Empress Dowager Feng. This not only influenced medieval period Buddhist art to reflect more on women’s insights but would also encourage more laywomen devotees to engage in and rethink their social and religious positions in a feudal patriarchal society. The memorial niche of Lanfeng Shan in Anyang of Henan, for instance, created in honor of the nuns

Figure 6. Lu-she-na Buddha, located in the west of Yi River, Yungang Grottoes, Luoyang, China, author's picture, taken in 2020.



who dedicated their lives to Buddhist practice, modified the landscape at Lanfeng Shan and created a unique bricolage based on various pre-established iconographic, literary, and funerary traditions (Adamek, 2009). The creation of this female Buddhist community separate from men suggests that laywomen also had the opportunity to engage in Buddhist practice. Individual performance as a Buddhist nun, therefore, entitles the same practice as male devotees. Physical Buddhist practice could be used as a political tool to help enforce ruling the ideologies, such as how the Lu-she-na niche was used by Empress Wu Zetian, which can also gain merits such as the niche in Lanfeng shan. Either top-down intervention or bottom-up involvement culminated in the architectural expression of an ancient civilisation that remains to the present day.

4. Plebeian bhikkhunī in Tiantai'an

If the aforementioned caves reflect the interaction of high-ranking women with Buddhist practice, the Tiantai'an nunnery, built after the late Tang dynasty and possessing one of the oldest wooden Buddha structures in China, embodies the most common female Buddhist in China's hierarchical society.

In Pali, Bhikkhunī in Theravada Buddhism translates as nun, female fully ordained Buddhists. Accordingly, Jing Jian the first bhikkhunī (an ordained female monastic) in China built the first female Buddhist community and monastery in Luoyang city of the Northern Wei dynasty fourth century (C. Zhang, 2006; Yan, 2005).

With Buddhism popularity in the Middle Ages, 5358 monasteries of high rank and built on accordance to strict building regulations called Sì (in Chinese 寺) were directly monopolised and financially supported by the ruling family (G. Zhang, 1997). Smaller scale and remote Buddhist sites called Lan Ruo were used by the rural population for pilgrimage, but these kinds of monasteries were deemed illegal and so eradicated by the authorities during the early period (G. Zhang, 1997). The term "An" (in Chinese 庵) initially referred to a round and small thatched hut in prehistoric China (C. Zhang, 2006; Yan, 2005). When Buddhism's popularity grew in China, the site of female Buddhists (nunneries) was likely adopted from the word "An" which formally referred to a prehistoric small round thatched hut (C. Zhang, 2006; Yan, 2005).

It is difficult to distinguish nunneries from monastic monasteries by the name of the temples alone because, both monks and nuns were allowed to practice in a monastery during the tenth century Tibet (G. Zhang, 1997). There is also no clear record of how Buddhist communities were classified and historically when women began to establish female Buddhist communities.

Little is known about when exactly the "An" became an exclusive title for female Buddhist sites due to a lack of historical records, though, it is generally believed that there were two operating modes of monasteries in ancient China, those run by patrons (in Chinese 檀越施營) and those run by Buddhists themselves (in Chinese 釋門自營) (G. Zhang, 1997). As a result of this lack of historical information, it is difficult to say whether and how the two types of monasteries differed in their construction, and even

what was the initial motivation for the construction of the Tiantai'an. Located in a rural hamlet Wangqu village, Ping Shun county Shanxi Province, the Tiantai'an erected on a four-meter-high platform is one of China's most precious architectural and Buddhist heritage sites (Figure 7). The courtyard covers an area of approximately 450 square meters (Li, 2018). Its initial construction date is highly controversial due to a lack of historical data with some academics insisting that it is a surviving relic dating back to the Tang Dynasty. Through comparing the timber structure framework typology, dimensions and the sophisticated interlocking joints with other Tang relics, in particular the Nanchan and Foguang monastery, some scholars strongly suggest that it is a relic of the late Tang Dynasty (C. Wang, 1993), Tsinghua University Architectural Design and Research Institute et.al, 2011, p. 8). However, some building elements, such as the interlocking roof and the painted art on wood, are not regarded as characteristic of the architectural typology of the Tang Dynasty (Xu, 1989), but rather that of the architectural style of the Jin Dynasty. Irrespective of whether the exact initial building time was during the medieval period or later, interpretation based on the perspectives of Buddhist nuns was neglected, although many female adherents and female providers undoubtedly played a vital function in developing Buddhist's holy sites.

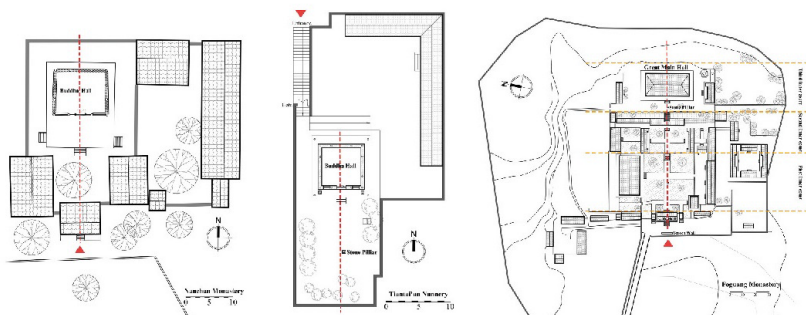
It is without a doubt that in traditional Chinese courtyards, the main entrance was at the outset of the main ceremonial route and used to be placed on the layout's central axis. The courtyard's entrance runs through a continuous outer wall, transitioning from a public to a space designated for a particular purpose. It connecting the passageway also helps the ceremonial ritual transition from the beginning gate passing by inner courts, then up into the final main hall. This traditional layout tradition is typical of all Buddhist sites. At Foguang Monastery, for instance, the ceremonial route begins from the screen wall, processes through the inner courts on an east-west axis, and ascends 34 brick stairs (17.66 meters high) finally reaching the higher platform of the Great Main Hall. Moreover, Nanchan Monastery as the oldest surviving Tang architecture in the country has a similar building volume and architectural rank as the Tiantai'an nunnery. Although Nanchan Monastery's main entrance lies opposite the Buddha-Hall, it also has another ancillary court on the east of the hall, which serves as the current entry point for visitors. The original religious route connecting the entrance and the main Buddha hall is still clearly visible (Figure 8 -left and right)

However, as a purely female medieval-period Buddhist site, the Tiantai'an nunnery breaks the layout tradition (Figure 8 -middle). Its entrance is placed on the back wall of the Buddha Hall rather than at the front and furthermore and does not follow the central south-north axis symmetrical framing layout. The four-meter-high multilateral square base lifts up the Buddha hall. A retaining stonewall encircles this raised foundation. In this monastic design, there is no traditional procession entry to the south edge of the Buddha Hall terrace. In addition, according to the two only investigative reports on the preservation and restoration of Tiantai'an heritage relics³, neither made mention of any past maintenance work ever being carried out on the high platform or the retaining stonewall. Therefore, it

Figure 7. Aerial view of Tiantai'an in Wang Qu Village, author's picture, taken in 2020.



Figure 8. The courtyards of Nanchan Monastery (left), Tiantai'an Nunnery (middle), and Foguang Monastery (right), drawn by the author in 2020.



is likely that the current entry is in keeping with its initial location. An entrance set behind the main hall is unconventional in Chinese monastic sites, possibly due to the influence of the patriarchal feudal society. Although women were considered of lower status in Buddhism, there is no Buddhist creed that makes a distinction between women and men in the construction of architectural monuments.

Furthermore, it is rare to find such a case choosing an uncommon approach to create the ritual passage to reach the Buddha. Buddha hall is placed on a three-meter-high terrace, while the entrance proceeding the Buddha was set at the rear. As a result of recent maintenance work, the original staircase has been covered with modern slates but has most likely retained its original condition. As the difference in height between the lower level and the Buddha Terrace is only 3 metres (Figure 9), the use of three resting landings to connect the two levels is not necessary for normal users. Therefore, this unusual form of staircase was probably adapted to the particular needs of the population, especially women in ancient China, who had to bind their feet, making them inconvenient to move.

Conversely, in Foguang monastery, the steep stairs that front the Great Main Hall have 34 brick steps (17.66 meters high) without any landings (Figure 10). Thereby, Tiantai'an's unusual design is most likely due to concerns about women with bound feet. This Chinese custom was not uncommon before the seventeenth century and is also another piece of tangible evidence that the purely female Buddhist site adapted its suitable space to cater to female characteristics and against patriarchal religious standards, especially in top-down construction.

Since the restoration of the Buddha hall of Tiantai'an, the four wooden pillars under each corner of the eaves were newly fitted to support the heavy roof, the four pillars did not exist in the original plan (Figure 11). Compared with the Buddha hall in Nanchan Monastery, both

Figure 9. Three landings in procession staircase of Buddha Hall in Tiantai'an, author's picture, taken in 2020.

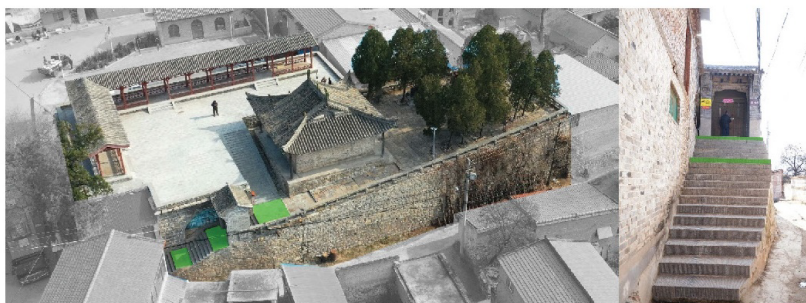
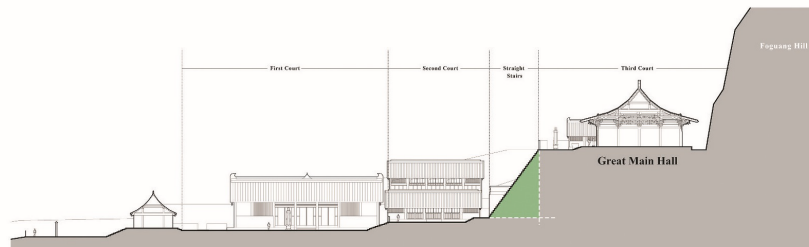
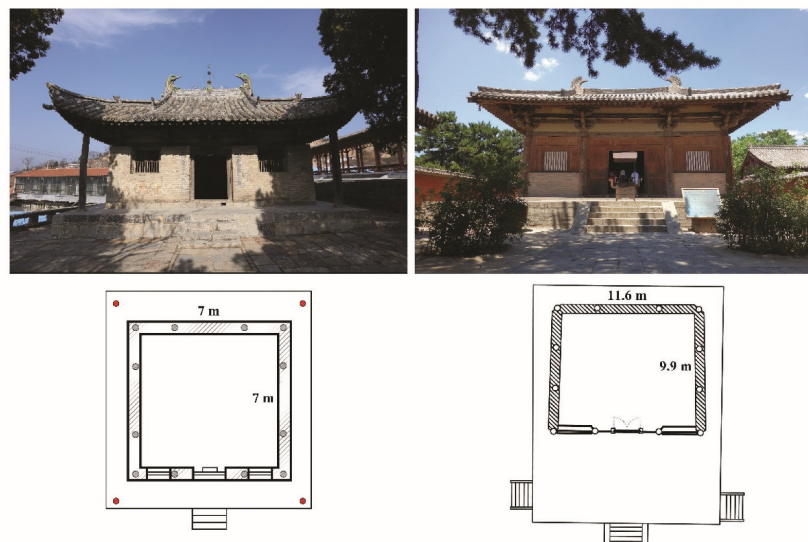


Figure 10. Straight stairs up to the Great Main hall of Foguang Monastery, drawn by the author.



have 12 columns supporting a sophisticated grid roof, whilst the distance between two columns of Tiantai'a, is smaller. The former plane is a rectangle, while the latter is almost a square. The curved roof in Tiantai'an, which was common in ancient wooden buildings in southern China, was used in the north. This unusual roof not only enhances the diversity of the curved aesthetics of architecture in northern China but also represents the distinctive feature of Tiantai Temple as a women's monastery. Since Buddhism became popular among women, they were able to challenge conservative views, for example, propose non-marriage, and they could even accept cremation after death rather than be given a proper burial. These dramatic changes in female Buddhists were substantial and challenged the patriarchal authority and Chinese society's then feudal system. Thereby, it is not difficult to understand the reason gender difference was manifested in Buddhist heritage. This group challenged patriarchal society and the traditional Buddhist teachings of abstaining from marriage and having children, and choosing cremation after death. Among these women, the Buddhist empresses, as the highest representatives of equality and freedom, provided the greatest inspiration. The erection of Buddhist monuments expressed the embodiment of the female inner world; however, these were not faithfully recorded in historical texts, and not even recognised as a necessary architectural typology by modern society.

Figure 11. Buddha Hall of Tiantai'an with floor plan (left), Buddha Hall of Nanchan Monastery with floor plan (right), drawn by the author, taken in 2020.



5. Conclusions

The three case studies of Yungang Grottoes, Longmen Grottoes, and Tiantai'an all show women's interaction with Buddhism from the ruling class to laywomen. The ideas and donations made by female devotees also visibly influenced the architecture history visibly. These historical heritage sites reference the living environment for women in Buddhist communities. By comparing and analysing the three preserved architectural relics, the rock-cut architecture in Yungang Grottoes, Longmen Grottoes, and even Longmen Grottoes and other numerous small grottoes are considered as significant evidence for researchers to narrate art, Buddhism, and history in China. Women are always involved in the construction work at these sacred shrines, and should not be ignored by researchers. Meanwhile, Tiantai'an, as a female Buddhist monastery, has obvious features of social context that had previously been ignored. However, the main focus of this paper is not only on gender equality in Buddhist practice in the history of China but also on the proper awareness of the study of Buddhist architectural history and even Asian history that includes women's involvement and contribution. Human history is filled with contradiction and complexity from a multi-dimensional scope. It is impossible to reveal the story and interpretation of Buddhist architectural history only by looking at case studies from a period of patriarchal domination. The female Buddhist community is consistent with Buddhist history, and this engagement created a diversity of architectural history. Fully understanding cultural heritage is the first step towards the sustainable innovation of traditional human heritage.

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Notes

- Seven caves began to engrave in the Early Tang (618–705 AD) and were completed until the mid-Tang and the Late Tang (848–907 AD), before dynasties' unfinished caves, such as No. 392, No. 397, No. 206, No. 401, and No. 431 also were completed during the Tang period (Hu and Fu 1997, pp. 63–66).
- Jingtu Bian 淨土變 'the counterparts of what transformation tableaux of the pure land' or 'transformation paintings', through drawing diagrams and dramatic visual aids for disseminating pure land ideas. (Buswell and Donald 2013, p390)
- In 1989, Built a new fence stone wall railings and a new door by Pingshun County Cultural Relics Museum, Shanxi Province, published in Changzhi Yearbook, p618.
 In 2018, Protection and Repair Project of Tiantai'an, Project Managers - Li W. D. & Shuai Y. C., Cultural Relics Tourism Development Center of Pingshun County, Shanxi Province, published in China Ancient Construction Industry Yearbook, pp. 270–274.

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Photogrammetry Enables the Critical Reinterpretation and Regeneration of Architectural Heritage

The case study of Foguang Monastery in China

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Photogrammetry is a digital technique that uses 2D images to create 3D models, which has various applications in cultural heritage such as documentation, digital tourism, and restoration, which mainly focus on current and future needs. However, there is limited literature regarding on how photogrammetry can be used for better research of architectural history. Photogrammetry is a potential tool to obtain a comprehensive exploration of the past. A more comprehensive exploration of the past will certainly have an impact on the sustainable regeneration of architectural heritage. Therefore, this paper aims to bring forward digital application as a research method of historical interpretation by using photogrammetry. The research implemented the photogrammetric method to investigate the site of 'UNESCO Foguang Monastery' in China by collecting aerial photographs using drone, then employed Reality Capture software to create a 3D model of the mountain monastery. Through this 3D model of the monastery and its vicinity, the artificial gullies around the enclosed courtyard, as a part of religious landscape, were discovered for the first time by the author. This discovery promotes the understanding of religious landscape history because the gullies create land boundaries and define the sacred place that presents Buddhist cosmology. This finding indicates that in transforming a common land into a sacred site, Buddhists not only erected monastic monuments, but also considered the religious landscape. This study also aims to inspire historical architecture researchers to employ digital methods and broaden their perspective on surveying architectural heritage, particularly in relation to their landscape scale.

Keywords: Architectural heritage, photogrammetric technology, Reality Capture, architectural history, religious landscape, Foguang Monastery

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of recent technological advances, historical researchers have increasingly turned their attention to digital applications during the last two decades. The emergence of 'digital' art history gained rapid prominence because computing techniques provide historians with

new bases on which they can build their judgments (Drucker 2013). It also extends traditional methods of observation and analysis through the use of technological means at micro and macro scales. (Drucker 2013). Although digital art history is not as advanced as disciplines focused on textual analysis, the introduction of

innovative, digital standards for visual and spatial data, along with advancements in computer vision, have the potential to bring about a transformative shift in the field (Brey, 2021). Photogrammetry is one such representative application in architectural research. A digital measurement technique, photogrammetry allows one to generate 3D modelling by using 2D images (Linder, 2009, p. 1; Egels and Kasser, 2001, p. 1).

Photogrammetric method has fascinated cultural heritage in many ways, including documenting tangible heritage, digital tourism of cultural heritage, and conservation and restoration of architectural relics, which mainly focus on current and future needs (Bedford, 2017, pp. 1-3). The photogrammetric survey of historical heritage has also become increasingly popular because it overcomes the weaknesses of the traditional high-resolution topographic survey, namely the high cost of data acquisition and the fact that specialised third parties dominate (Brey, 2021). Instead, the photogrammetric technique of structure-from-motion (SfM) for creating high-resolution digital elevation models from extensive photo series taken with a consumer camera, offers a low-cost, user-friendly approach for researchers to collect data themselves (Westoby, 2012, p. 300).

In the last two decades, many achievements have indeed been made in the field of architectural heritage through the use of photogrammetry. Researchers have never had access to such an abundant digital resource of cultural heritage before, encompassing numerous virtual museums and 3D models of historical sites. However, the process of effectively utilizing this vast database for the analysis of architectural history is just beginning. There is a scarcity of studies in the field of architecture that specifically focus on analyzing architectural history based on photogrammetric data. Merely a handful of publications have been able to demonstrate the ways in which the utilization of digital 3D

information obtained through photogrammetry yields significant benefits for the reinterpretation of architectural history.

Nonetheless, the utilisation of digital applications represents a promising avenue for further exploration in the realm of architectural history research. Using photogrammetry to observe the site by offering a broader perspective to re-read a historical space, inspired the author to examine the place in terms of the broader religious landscape in which historical sites are situated. Therefore, this paper demonstrates how the technical approach broadens the view of Foguang Monastery and how the 3D model of the site reveals two huge gullies, which is an original finding of this study.

Through hybrid methods such as photogrammetry and traditional methods (photography, archiving and mapping), this article critically reinterprets the history of religious architecture via the case study of Foguang Monastery. In particular, it discusses how the vast gullies revealed by photogrammetric technology help to explore Buddhist ideology in the transformation of a secular Chinese landscape into a pure Buddhist shrine. This paper argues that the motivation for manually digging two huge gullies along the two sides of Foguang Monastery is likely to have a religious significance, dating back to the construction period. It can also be deduced that the gullies were dug to separate the land between religious sanctity and irreligion.

REVIEW THE DIGITAL APPLICATIONS OF FOGUANG MONASTERY

Located in Doucun County, Shanxi Province, China, Foguang Monastery is a landmark among the architectural relics of mediaeval China and attracts great attention worldwide. The Great Eastern Hall of Foguang Monastery, a high-level structure dating back to 857AD, has been well preserved and is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the country. It is also the oldest above-ground palace structure in China, and

most of the structural components have been preserved in their original state. In 2009, Foguang Monastery and Mount Wutai were designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. As such, it holds significant historical worth for scholarly investigation.

There are two recent digital applications of Foguang Monastery. First, in 2005 and 2011, the CHCCAD & TU used 3D Laser Scanning to probe the wooden frame of the Eastern Hall. In order to efficiently monitor the long-term conservation status of the hall and analyse the impact of human intervention, this investigation provided a composite database of a precise survey on heritage buildings: the Culture Heritage Information System (CHIS). Besides, based on the identification of deterioration at Tou-Kung, the team also highlighted the vital structural parts which directly impacted on the overall stability of the building that needed to be addressed immediately. However, this prestigious report, by paying meticulous attention to the actual condition of the Eastern Hall, placed less emphasis on the whole monastic complex of Foguang. In addition, it provided limited discussion regarding how the religious context and social factors affected the construction of Foguang Monastery in Mount Wutai (Cultural Heritage Conservation of Architectural Design & Research Institute of Tsinghua University and Beijing Tsinghua Urban & Design Institute, 2011).

The second recent digital application concerned the investigation of the Foguang Monastery Complex and Nanchan Monastery by researchers from the University of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 2019 to demonstrate their investigative approach of combining data from multiple sources, such as aerial photography, terrain surveys and LiDAR data, to document the models of the two case studies (Gao et al., 2019). However, both reports highlighted the limitations of their conventional digital approaches, namely that they could not obtain clean and high-quality models of the main halls because they could not

successfully align the aerial and camera photos, which can provide an entire courtyard view and delicate architectural texture. Advanced equipment and a competent strategy to capture the raw data are essential; nevertheless, the appropriate software application for processing the raw data is also important to create a 3D model with high accuracy.

WORKING FLOW OF PHOTOGRAMMETRIC SURVER

Making the site survey plan

The present surroundings of Foguang Monastery still preserve its natural environment. It is halfway up the western slope of Foguang Hill and faces west. The other three sides of the courtyard are surrounded by mountains. A 600-metre-long brick wall built in 1954 delimits the inner courtyard, which is about 34,000 m² (approximately 50 hectares) in size and 92 m long from east to west. The entire courtyard of Foguang Monastery is divided into three levels. The top terrace (40.31 m long and 23.48 m wide) is 15 m higher than the second platform, with 37 steps in between; and the second platform is about 1 m higher than the lowest level on which the Mañjuśrī Hall stands (Zhang and Li, 2010, p.69) (Figure 1).



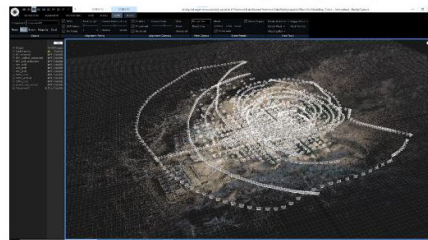
Figure 1
Top: A screenshot of the Foguang site on Google earth.
Bottom: The full section of the Buddha Hall in the Foguang Monastery courtyard with the surrounding landscape.

Due to the complicated terraced landscape of Foguang Monastery, it is important to establish a feasible plan for collecting suitable and clear aerial photographs in order to successfully create a high-quality 3D reconstruction model. Apart from the fact that Foguang Monastery is a very valuable architectural heritage, researchers need to ensure the safety of the whole survey process. Therefore, many different survey plans were evaluated in this study, such as the circling configuration (the drone flies in an arc around the site) or the grid configuration at different heights.

The mixed configuration (circling and grid) with ground control points was made finally because the investigation was conducted on a little cloudy day in winter 2022. Grid Drone path is suited to large and plain land. To cover a large area of Foguang Monastery, including its landscape and its back mountain, which is the study addresses to. However, the courtyard of Foguang Monastery is high terraced with many plants, and buildings with large roof. If only using grid-flying plan, some areas for example, the area under trees or under roof, will lose information, which leads not able to align photos. Circling path can avoid this disadvantage, but its weakness is only can covers a limited area. However, the terraced site sits in the Foguang hill, which cause some circle path in a lower height can only fly half a circle, otherwise the Drone will crash into the back Foguang hill. Therefore, mixed configuration is the better choses for the site investigation.

To successfully match the two types of geo-referenced photos, the paths must have a certain amount of overlap in height. Circling configurations were carried out using a DJI Air 2S drone to complete image acquisition at 40 m, 60 m, 80 m, 100 m and 130 m (with the first courtyard of Foguang Temple as zero elevation), with images taken at a 45° angle; grid paths were carried out at 60 m, 80 m and 100 m. 40 m is the minimum altitude for drone flight, because if the drone flies below 40 m, two large trees would obscure the image capture of the Buddha Hall

behind, and the drone would not be able to approach. The highest flight altitude is 130 m. Another fact requiring consideration is that the higher the drone flies, the stronger the wind, which affects the stability of the lens and the accuracy of the resultant images (Figure 2).



The survey was carried out on a slightly cloudy day in the winter of 2022, as the vegetation cover is limited due to the season, and the site features are more visible. In cloudy weather, there is less direct sunlight, which would not create too much shaded area. This can improve the performance of the architectural texture in modelling.

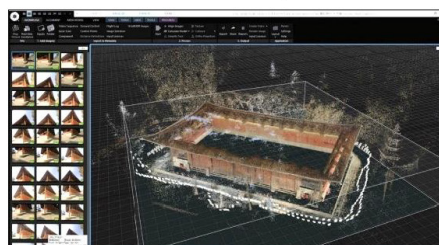
Photogrammetry is not just limited to the entire courtyard. It can create 3D models of the architecture that contains the interior and exterior architecture, thus providing reliable and comprehensive information for architectural conservation and regeneration. This study used the Buddha Hall of Foguang Monastery as an example to show the detail workflow.

It is challenging to completely reveal the architectural information about the Great Eastern Hall. On the highest terrace of the complex, the hall was blocked on four sides: Foguang Hill to the east; two buildings erected near the north and south sides; and two huge cypress trees standing in front of the Great Eastern Hall. In addition, the giant roof covers a large part of Dougong. Therefore, scholars have not published a full informational model of the hall. Most of the extant documentation consists of hand-drawn models, photographs, 2D maps created by surveying, and information about the structural

Figure 2
The alignment point cloud of the entire terrain in Reality Capture software.
The white paths show the locations of the individual aerial images from different heights.

Figure 3
Close-range
photography
reconstruction
process and
camera locations
in Reality Capture.
These images are
non-geo-
referencing, which
cannot be
exported to the
'registration and
geo-referencing
accuracy report'.
In order to reduce
the risk of
information gaps,
photography was
done twice.

elements based on 3D laser scans. In order to obtain complete information about the Hall, close-range photographs using a Canon EOS 70D Digital SLR Camera were matched with aerial photographs using Reality Capture software to create an accurate 3D model of the Great Eastern Hall (Figure 3). If the 3D model was created only using aerial photography, the hall's huge roof and the many other obstacles (such as the hill, trees and buildings around its base), the drone would be unable to fly too close to the hall and thus take photos of Dougong under the roof. If the 3D model was created via close-range photos, although this approach could provide high quality information about the details, it could not reach up to the roof because the range is dependent only on the human eye. Moreover, space for the photographer to move and adjust the camera angle is very limited. Therefore, close-range photography associated with the aerial photos is the best way to generate a 3D map of the Great Eastern Hall and provide reliable and precise information about the texture, the roof, the interior space and the Dougong. It is worth pointing out that indoor photogrammetry is not allowed; therefore, this study cannot provide 3D information about the indoor space.



The position of the terrestrial camera lens can be seen in Figure 3. In order to capture the entire façade from top to bottom, the lens must look up, vertical and down three times at each point. This process can lead to a slight distortion of the building façade as not all images are

perpendicular to the lens. However, as the drone cannot operate due to limited space in the site (for example, trees and other buildings), the plan could be improved in future to obtain highly accurate dimensional data on each architectural façade. To obtain seamless information, the path of the image capture was circled twice.

The 3D model generated by close-range photos provide clear information about Dougong but cannot cover the roof. The missing information about the roof was obtained via aerial photographs taken from a height of 40 m. Notably, the closer the drone gets to the main hall, the more accurate and clearer the image information it captures, but in consideration of the safety of timber heritage and the flight safety of drone, the flight altitude was set at 40 m, and shot at 45°.

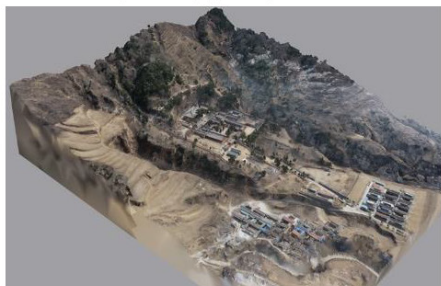
3D model generation

Many different software that can be explored to create 3D models, including Agisoft Metashape; Reality Capture; Autodesk ReCap Pro; and Meshroom. Reality Capture software was finally selected for this study. This is because the author has a large number of aerial images (3,893 in total) and Reality Capture can input a large number of images at once and this photogrammetry software is the fastest in terms of reconstruction processing. Also, the author has a license for Reality Capture.

Reality Capture reports indicate that all cameras are positioned within the pre-determined positional accuracy. The accuracy of the geolocation of the cameras and the ground and test control points is color-coded as follows: green/none if the total deviation is smaller than the expected prior accuracy; and yellow if the total deviation is 1.0 times greater than the expected prior accuracy (Figure 4).



The final 3D model was successfully created by setting many control points in the Reality Capture software that aligned with all 3,893 aerial photographs. While this is not the first study to use photogrammetry to model the site, it is the first to discover the two huge gullies on the north and south sides of the site, which cannot be fully seen by individual aerial photographs. Important finding helps this study to examine the landscape approach, the site selection, the orientation of the monastic complex and the possible development process from the Northern Wei to the medieval and modern periods (Figure 5).



In the model of the Buddha Hall, the geo-camera's location of terrestrial photos and the

aerial photos were successfully aligned using control points and according to the registration and georeferencing accuracy report exported by Reality Capture. The details of the Dougong, which are barely visible under its large roof, can be clearly shown in the 3D model (Figure 6).



Figure 4
All cameras are positioned within the defined prior position accuracy.

Figure 6
Top: 3D model of the Great Eastern Hall.
Bottom: Camera location map of the drone and the handheld camera around the Great Eastern Hall.

RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS BASED ON THE 3D MODEL OF FOGUANG MONASTERY

The photogrammetric method provides a much broader view about the entire site, which cannot be obtained by traditional photography methods. This is in comparison to the earliest photos by scholars in the early nineteenth century, despite providing the widest possible perspective offered by camera technology at this time. Even the use of drones to take the aerial photos in the 2019 study by the University of the Chinese Academy of Science, from a 120 m height, and merging multiple photos together could not reveal the typology of the entire site. The past practice of using photos limited by contemporary technology also affected the scholars' attention. When examining the literatures on Foguang

Figure 5
3D model images of the entire site of Foguang Monastery, generated by 3893 aerial photos using Reality Capture software.

Figure 7
Top: Foguang Monastery in 1937, photographed by The society for Research in Chinese architecture (中国营造学社).
Middle: Foguang Monastery in 1939, taken by Tokiwa Daijo and Sekino Tadashi (1939, p. 102).
Bottom: Foguang Monastery in 2019, author's picture.

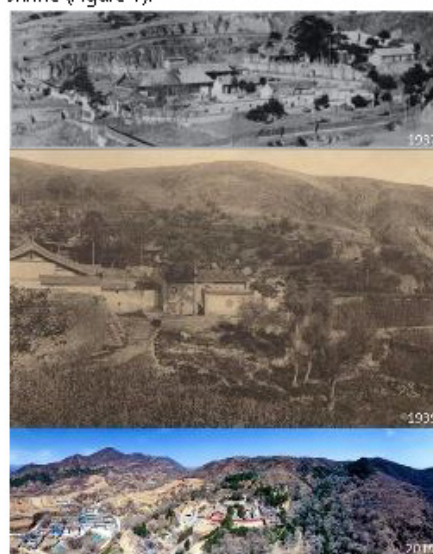


Figure 8
Artificial gullies shown in the survey plan of Foguang Monastery, drawn by the author based on the 3D model.

Based on the modelling results, the two gullies extend from the top to the bottom of the hill in the south and north of the site, and it is certainly that they are not naturally formed (Figure 8). As the surface of the two edges are vertical and sharp, and the width and depth in each side have small changes, especially the part near the monastic courtyard, it is clear that they were artificially constructed. No available evidence can confirm the gullies' initial construction date, however, the two deep gullies, were probably constructed during the Tang Dynasty. Only the building volume of the Tang dynasty is the largest in the historical records.

According to Biography of eminent monks of the song dynasty – Faxian, a large pavilion hall with seven units was built on a three-layer foundation, at the Foguang Monastery. It is likely that they were built when the foundation of the site was originally levelled. At the foot of Foguang Hill and downstream of the northern gully lies the hamlet of Foguang Cun. There is no historical record of the original foundation date of the old Foguang hamlet. However, another small group of residential areas (less than 50 households in total) are situated next to it. The new Foguang hamlet was established more recently contemporarily, as told by local people. In fact, the location of the two hamlets at the foot of Foguang Hill represents a risk of flooding from above and the choice of location would therefore jeopardise the safety of the two small hamlets. However, the current existence of the Foguang hamlets shows that this area is low in rainfall and does not flood; therefore, residents could be safely housed there.



It would be disingenuous to ignore a possible reason for digging such ravines due to safety needs, such as drainage or security defense. The entire court was built in the middle of Foguang Hill and not on its summit. It is therefore

necessary and essential to build a drainage system to protect the courtyard from flooding. Above the two ravines, some ditches can also be seen at the vertical edge, positioned behind the Buddha Hall, which could have been naturally formed due to their irregular shape. On rainy days, rainwater from the mountains flows down natural ditches to eventually collect in the artificial gully; this is instead of flowing into the monastery complex. In addition, the vertical rocks at the back of the Great East Hall have also been assumed to be the result of artificial excavations, namely as the approaches used by the builders to level the monastery site for the construction of the Buddha Hall (Ren, 2017, pp. 25-26).

Drainage techniques were not uncommon in ancient times. In the Longmen Grottoes, archaeologists identified the herringbone-shaped drainage ditches in 1976, and confirmed it was constructed in the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907AD) (Gong, 1979, p.93). The herringbone ditches were dug into the surface of the rocky hill from top to bottom and the Great Vairocana Statue was buried under the ditches so that rainwater flowing towards the Great Vairocana Statue was successfully diverted via the artificial ditches. However, the ditches in the Longmen Grottoes are much smaller than the ones at Foguang Monastery. Levelling platforms and rising foundation might require more soil material, that the two gullies conveniently provided, but Foguang Monastery was built on a slope and therefore did not need a lot of soil to level and raise its foundation. Instead, it required excavation to some platforms, which would result in leaving a lot of earth. According to the climate characteristics of Shanxi, which emulate a continental climate, the average annual rainfall is not sufficient to lead to risky flooding. Put simply, the massive sized gullies are actually oversized in terms of the need for them. Thus, it is argued here that the construction of the gullies at Foguang Monastery was mainly for religious purposes – to form a sacred landscape. In other words, the

design of the Buddhist landscape of the mountain was planned together with the two ravines on the north and south sides and the vertical cliff behind the Buddha Hall.

Most importantly, the two gullies define the position of the platform of the Buddha Hall and limit its direction of expansion. The platform of the Buddha Hall is the central point of the monastery. The Buddha Hall of Foguang Monastery is located at the highest level of the courtyard, which is a common strategy of Buddhists to build a monastery in the mountains. The courtyard has undergone many reconstructions and extensions from 478 AD – 532 AD (Northern Wei Dynasty), when the oldest part - the Patriarchal Pagoda - was built, to 1875 – 1908 (Qing Dynasty), when the Hall of the Heavenly King was burnt down. Nonetheless, it can be assumed that the platform of the Buddha Hall has not changed its location in more than a thousand years, due to the existence of the two gullies.

Because the ravines on the north and south sides would restrict the development of the courtyard, the enclosed courtyard could only extend from east to west. In addition, symbolically, the best sacred platform must be used to place the Buddha monument, and others (image halls) can only remain lower or on the side. The highest terrain at Foguang Monastery was defined as the sacred platform for the Buddha since its initial construction period and this arrangement was probably last until now. The Northern Wei Dynasty may be the first period in which the level of the Buddha was established, which was continuously adopted in the following period.

Clarification of the initial Buddha platform is crucial, as it rationally determines the development of the monastic courtyard in the different historical periods and allows researchers to understand the Buddhist cosmology of the transformation of land into sanctity.

The patriarch pagoda proves that the highest terrain was built in the early period. The brick tomb is the oldest relic of the site and dates from the fifth century AD. It stands on the same terrace as the Buddha Hall, a high foundation of 34 brick steps (17.66 m high) (Zhang and Li, 2010, p. 52). The foundation would be first levelled by the builders, before the pagoda was built. No remaining records show the existence of any changes since the pagoda was initially erected. It can therefore help to identify the earliest terrain of the Buddha Hall was at least built in the same period as the pagoda. In addition, with the limitation of the extension by the two gullies from north to south, the monastery can therefore only extend towards the west, and the highest location in the east would be defined as the location of the Buddha since the initial construction period, and foremost, the location of the platform would not be changed once it was regarded as the place of the Buddha. Because of the two gullies and the mountainous topography, the platform identified as the location of the Buddha would therefore never be changed, although the monastery itself had undergone many changes and even suffered religious persecution on several occasions (Figure 8).

The sutra pillar at the front of the Buddha Hall indicates the possible first year of construction of the hall - 857 AD, the late Tang dynasty. The main hall therefore would certainly present Buddhist ideology of architectural practice in the Tang Dynasty. The frescoes on the walls of the Dunhuang Grottoes are always an indispensable testimony and visible resource for scholars to study Buddhist cosmology and art. Accordingly, 52 caves of Dunhuang Grottoes were excavated during the Tang dynasty (Hu and Fu, 1997), which involved creating fifty-six frescoes of Mañjuśrī Jingtū Bian (Buswell and Lopez 2013). Jingtū Bian (淨土變) is 'the counterparts of what transformation tableaux of the pure land' or 'transformation paintings', through drawing diagrams and dramatic visual aids for

disseminating pure land ideas (Buswell and Donald, 2013, p. 390). The Tang Dynasty frescoes, such as those on the north wall of Cave No. 217, on the north and south walls of Cave No. 322 and on the north wall of Cave No. 023, all depict the scenario of a Buddha with two main Bodhisattvas and other deities. These Buddhist practices, which originated at the same time as the Foguang temple, naturally have similar Buddhist ideology.

These visible images created based on Buddhist sutras, also would influenced the visualization of the monastery complex. The wooden structure which housing icons inside in a monastery, like a timber shell, has no real meaning, but the locations of these individual shells symbol the meaningful represents a hierarchy in the arrangement of Buddhist monastery. The Buddha occupy the center in plate site, but topmost or highest point on terraced courtyards. The architectural layout embodies this religious arrangement of relationships between the Buddha and other deities. Buildings therefore in the courtyard of a monastery plays an essential role in determining the position of each Buddhist deity. This strategy of transforming the sacred land from an ordinary refers not only to the arrangement of the icon shells, but also to the transformation of the landscape, such as the gullies that enclose the courtyard and separate the land from its surroundings.

REGENERATION THE FOGUANG MONASTERY

These visible images created based on Buddhist sutras would also influence the visualisation of the monastery complex. The wooden structure housing the icons inside in a monastery, like a timber shell, has no real meaning, but the locations of these individual shells symbolise the meaningful representation of a hierarchy in the arrangement of Buddhist monastery. The Buddha does not occupy the centre in the plate site, but topmost or highest point on terraced courtyards. The architectural layout embodies this religious

arrangement of relationships between the Buddha and other deities. Buildings in the courtyard of a monastery, therefore, play an essential role in determining the position of each Buddhist deity. This strategy of transforming the land from the ordinary to the sacred refers not only to the arrangement of the icon shells, but also to the transformation of the landscape, such as the gullies that enclose the courtyard and separate the land from its surroundings. This comprehensive documentation by using photogrammetry provides a reliable information for future preservation and restoration.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper demonstrates how the application of photogrammetry method contributes to new insights in the analysis of the architectural heritage of Foguang Monastery, specifically focusing on the investigation of its landscape - two significant gullies. These gullies indicate the possible transformation process of a religious site from ordinary to sacred. A future concern also arises from this case study, namely the construction of a database with numerous 3D models of monastic heritage in different countries, which would be a remarkable opportunity for the study and regeneration of Buddhist architecture and landscape.

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Appendix F: Larger-sized maps

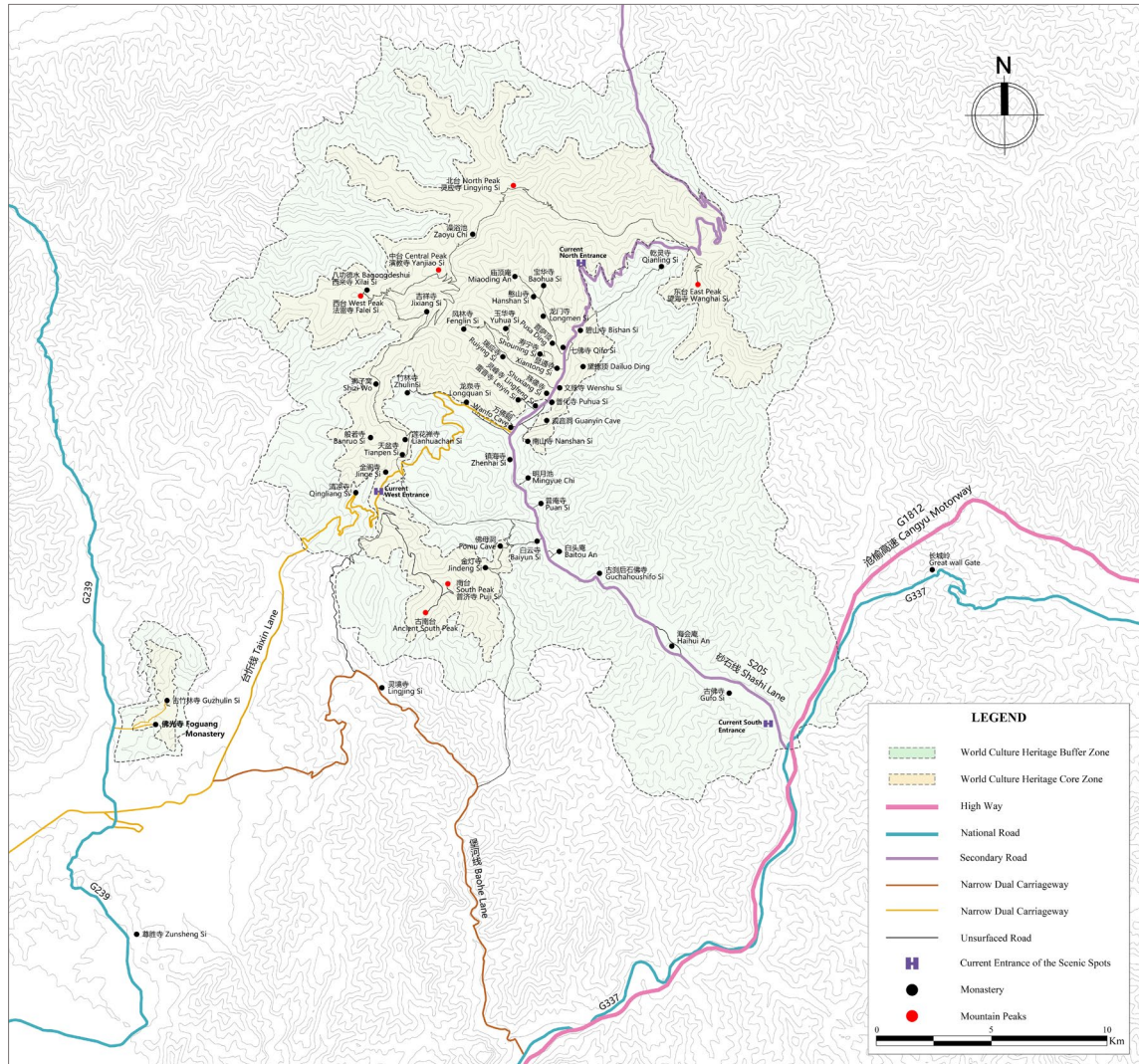
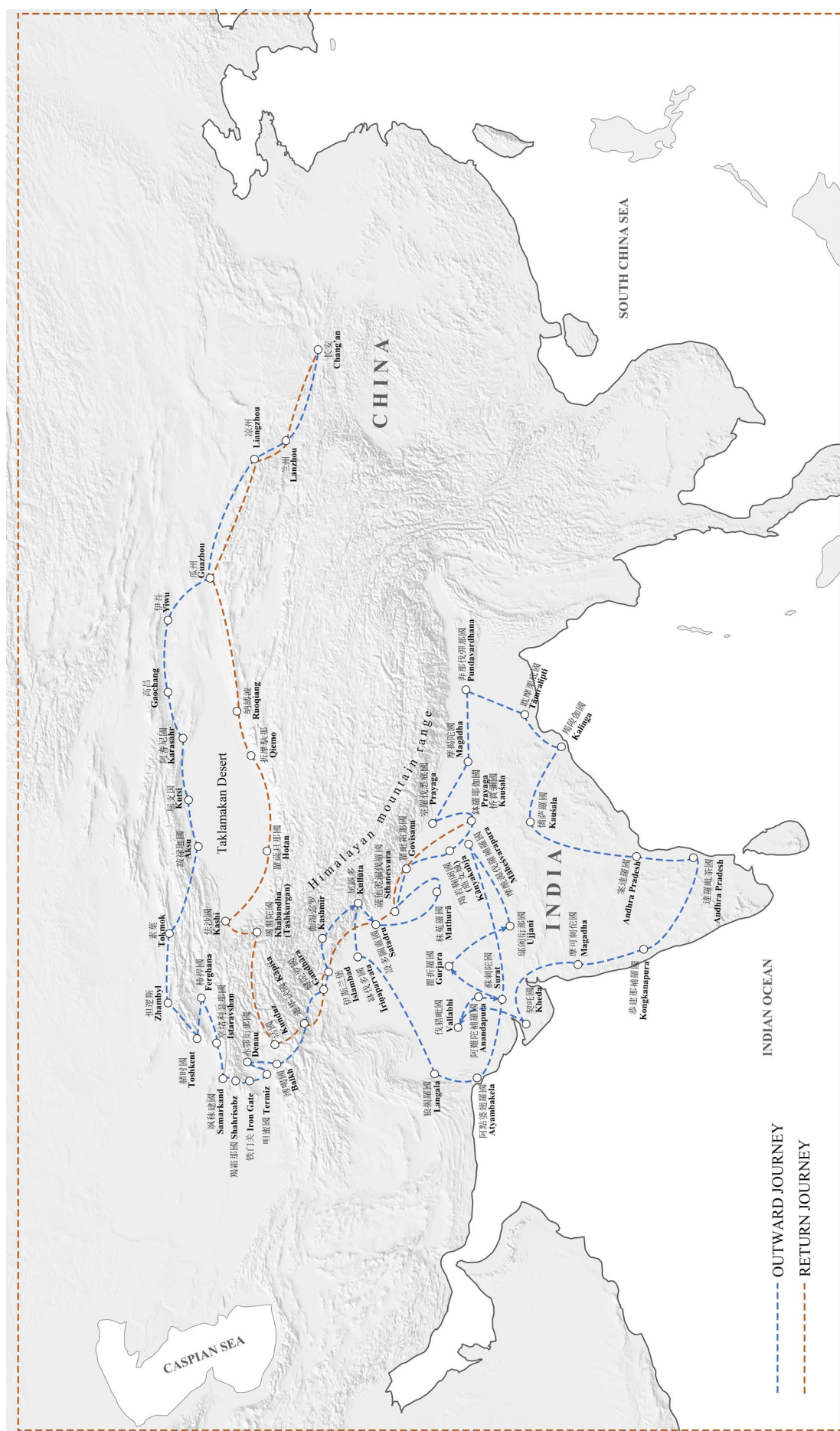


Fig. 12. Road's map of Mount Wutai in 2020. There were three entrances accessing to the scenic spots (North, South and West).



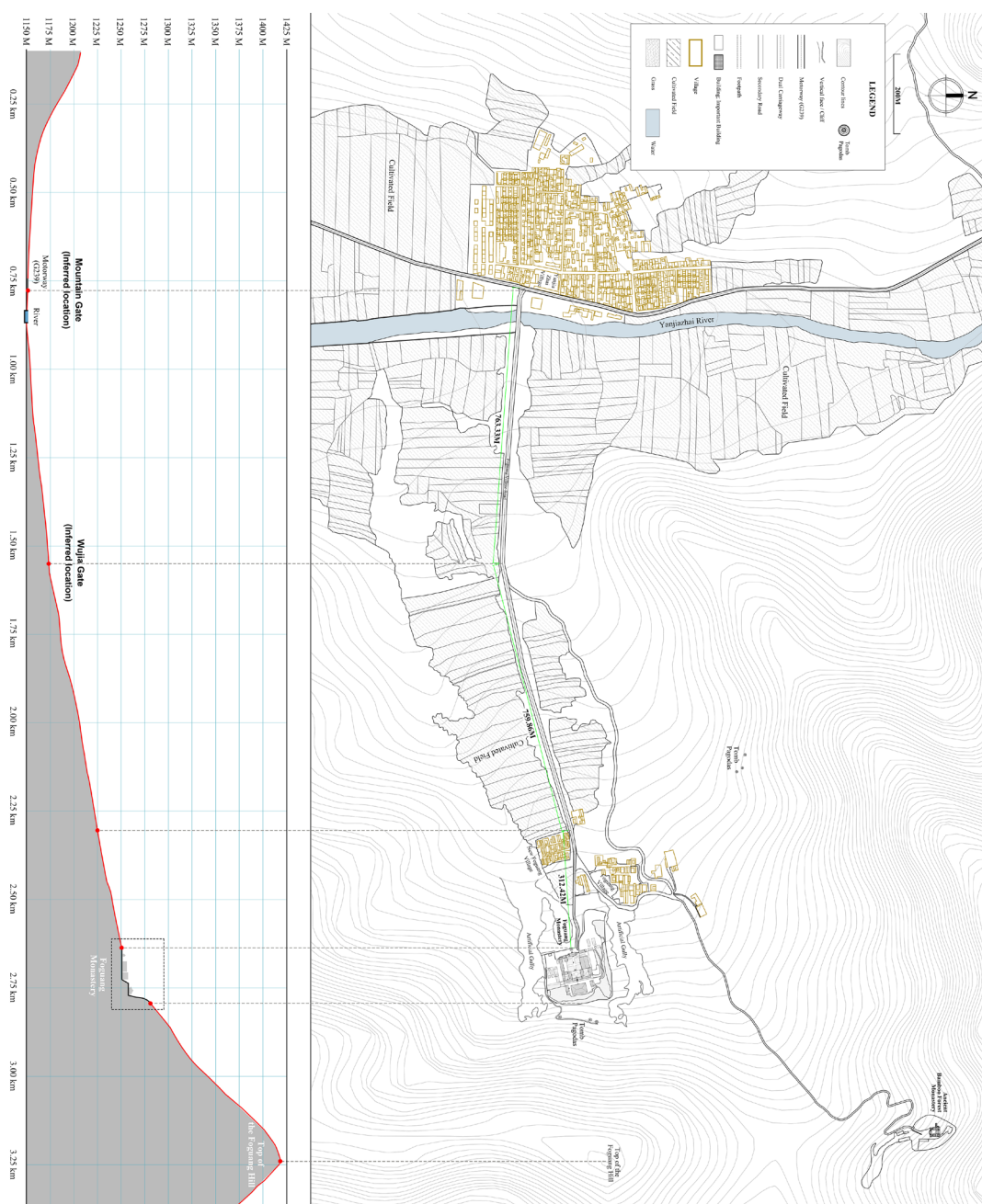




Fig. 39. Two huge ravines of Foguang Monastery.



Fig. 126. The accordion fold book shows the pilgrimage routes on Mount Wutai from AD 1850 - AD 1912.

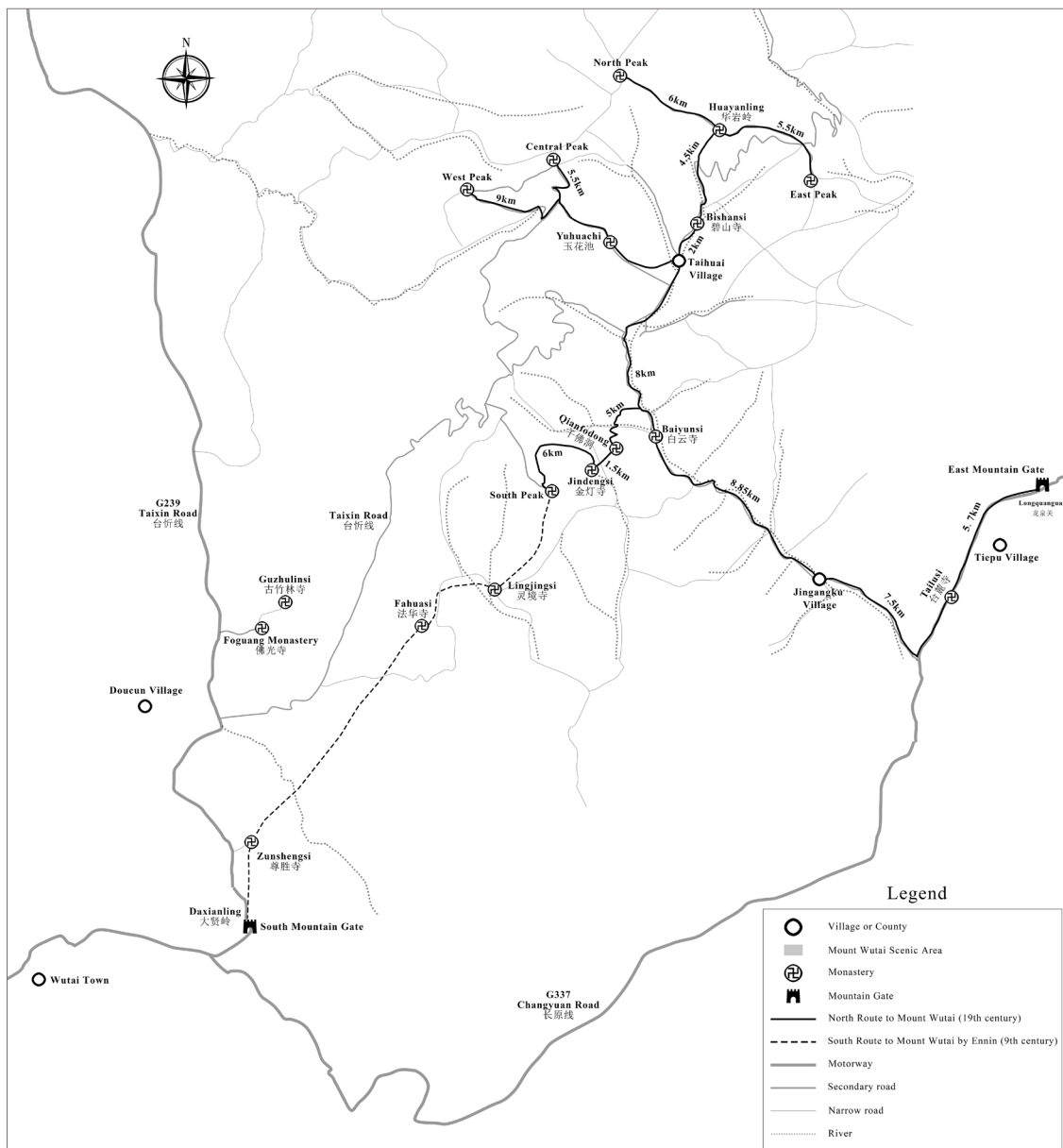


Fig. 139. Ennin's return route from the South Peak of Mount Wutai to the south mountain gate - Daxian Ridge, AD 840 - AD 841, Tang dynasty; the pilgrimage routes with distance in the nineteenth century are shown in the archive (Fig. 128). Pilgrimage routes in both directions pass through the corresponding mountain gates and lead to the capitals of different dynasties.

