

Toward a Buddhist Citizenship: Education and Civil Discourses in Modern Chinese Buddhism

Rongdao Lai

Introduction

As one of the most important aspects of the modernization project in Chinese Buddhism, monastic education went through a fervent period of growth and significant changes during the 1920s and 1930s. A history of Buddhist education in this period is a history in which the Chinese Buddhists struggled to produce an educational system that would revitalize their religion, culminating in the slogan ‘invigorating Buddhism through education’ (*jiaoyu xingjiao* 教育興教). This was a Buddhist response to the prevalent rhetoric of the time: ‘saving the nation through education’ (*jiayu jiuguo* 教育救國). Similar to the reforms that were carried out in the public schooling sector in the country, Buddhist educational reform also expressed a grand vision for China’s future – one in which Buddhism would be revitalized and thrive in the new nation. Once these Buddhist academies (*foxueyuan* 佛學院) became established, they became the locale in which a unique student-monk (*xueseng* 學僧) identity emerged. This collective identity also led to a reimagination of the monastic career and a national Buddhist community.

This article shows the connection between the emergence of the collective student-monk identity and the formulation of a distinctively Buddhist citizenship discourse. The student-monks, as enthusiastic readers and contributors for the various Buddhist periodicals, appropriated various dimensions of the existing political discourse and symbols to produce a religious citizenship that structurally connected Buddhism to the nation-state. Through their engagement and constant negotiation with the state and its numerous religious policies, they also creatively re-interpreted Buddhist soteriology to produce a national identity firmly grounded in the language of Buddhism.

Student-Monks

When Chinese monastics are introduced, whether formally or informally, their biographical information traditionally includes native places, tonsure temples, ordination monasteries, and dharma lineages (when applicable). Today, it is most likely followed by the Buddhist academies that they have attended. Douglas Gildow has shown that seminaries have emerged in the modern times as the key sites for training and producing Buddhist leadership in China.¹ In fact, one can even say that Buddhist academies emerged to become their own lineages during the twentieth century.

Elsewhere, I have shown that educational modernization underscored the processes in which the “student-monk” (*xueseng* 學僧) was created and imagined in twentieth-century Chinese Buddhism.² I attribute two levels of meaning to this newfound identity. First, the unambiguous definition for “student-monks” would be those who were students at the various Buddhist academies. Yet, confining our discussion to this exclusive definition misses the point here. I propose that, second, “student-monk” in the most inclusive sense refers to those who identified with the textual community formed around modern Buddhist academies, and, more importantly, Buddhist periodicals that were widely circulated during the Republican period. Ultimately, the “student-monk” served as an ideal image of the modern monastic career for China’s young and progressive monks.

According to this ideal, student-monks were educated in both religious and secular knowledge, had a rational and “scientific” approach to religion, were sensitive to contemporary issues in Chinese society, and shared a vision for modern China in which Buddhism would play an active role in society.³ They were both nationalistic and revivalist. They appropriated not only nationalistic discourses in justifying a more engaged role in secular matters, but also the symbolic authority of leading reformist monks, such as Taixu, to legitimize

¹ Douglas Gildow, “Buddhist Monastic Education: Seminaries, Academia, and the State in Contemporary China.” (PhD Diss., Princeton University, 2016).

² Rongdao Lai, *Citizen Bodhisattvas: Education, Student-Monks, and Identity Production in Modern Chinese Buddhism* (Brill, 2025).

³ On the construction of a “Buddhist modernism” that is the hybrid of Buddhist ideals and post-Enlightenment Western ideologies, in which Buddhism reformulated itself as rational, demythologized, and deritualized, see David McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

their movement.

The May Fourth student protest movement in 1919 is an inescapable event in historical and historiographical research on modern China. There are myriad ways to interpret, de-center, and re-center the movement that marked the passage of China from tradition to modernity.⁴ One elucidating approach is by conceptualizing the “student” as a political signifier, rather than a mere sociological category, invented during the May Fourth Movement. Rather than a neutral and stable category, the “student” was always political and potentially subversive. As Fabio Lanza has noted, it was an “interpretational space, always polysemic, always problematic.”⁵ Modern Buddhist academies were the location, the symbolic repertoire, where the meanings and boundaries of the “student-monk” were created and negotiated in a complex process. In this process, student-monks perceived themselves as future leaders of Buddhism and vanguards of its orthodoxy. This new self-definition would serve as the basis of their activism and engagement with various social, political, and religious issues for the decades to come.

Student-monks sometimes self-identified as new monks (*xinseng* 新僧) or young monks (*seng qingnian* 僧青年). Regardless of the labels deployed, the ideal of the “student-monk” remained at the very core of their identity production. This is also a process based on differentiation. By self-identifying as student-monks or new-monks, these Buddhists were distinguishing themselves from the “old monks” (*jiuseng* 舊僧) – elders who controlled the Buddhist establishment but did not support their reformist projects, especially educational modernization. Therefore, they constantly voiced harsh criticism of the “old monks,” attacking their closed-mindedness and incompetence. The “new” and “old” were also discursive tropes in the youth discourse in modern China. As Mingwei Song has shown, youth in modern China “stands for newness, future, and change ... that transcends its biological definition as the immature and vulnerable period of adolescence.”⁶ The elders were traditionally revered and obeyed as the source of wisdom in Chinese society. This youth

⁴ See, for example, Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Jeffrey Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

⁵ Fabio Lanza, *Behind the Gate: Inventing Students in Beijing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010) 14, 172.

⁶ Mingwei Song, *Young China National Rejuvenation and the Bildungsroman, 1900-1959*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2016), 15.

discourse represents one of the most dramatic turns in the political and cultural imaginations in China's pursuit of modernity.

The close link between graduates of Buddhist academies, the reform movement, and Buddhist participation in the anti-Japanese war has been well acknowledged. Young monks, we are told, tended to promote a Buddhist nationalism that supported wartime mobilization.⁷ One topic that remains unexamined, however, is the very process that made this identification with Buddhist reform and nationalism possible. I propose, therefore, to examine the convergence of identity and institution in the unique historical juncture when China's young monks adopted, negotiated with, and reformulated discourses on citizenship, education, and nationalism to craft a distinctly Buddhist, though constantly evolving, student-monk imagination.

By expanding the definition of student-monks to *possibly* anyone who came across and identified with the ideals of a new understanding of the monastic career, I fully recognize its potential pitfall. It could be so broad as to be deemed meaningless. For example, it might be impossible to quantitatively identify student-monks using this definition. I shall therefore make clear that the aim of this study is not to count or estimate the number of student-monks during the period under consideration.⁸ Rather, I focus on the qualitative processes in which categories emerged: What were the traits in the student-monk identity that later generations of China's young monks were drawn to? How did the meanings of this collective identity change over time? How did the internal tensions and conflicts play out as a growing number of monastics claimed a student-monk identity?

Identification with abstract virtues personified by eminent monks is not entirely new in the history of Chinese Buddhism, or religion in general. Some scholars have shown that hagiographies, such as biographies of eminent monks (*sengzhuan* 僧傳), should be read as representations of the ideal image for monks rather than for their historicity.⁹ Chinese Buddhists in the twentieth

⁷ Xue Yu, *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism: Chinese Monks in the Struggle against Japanese Aggressions, 1931-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 26-27. With reference to the larger national awakening (*minzu juexing* 民族覺醒) movement of self-strengthening following China's defeat in the Opium Wars (1839–1860), Xue Yu coined the term “Buddhist Awakening” to describe the revival of Chinese Buddhism in early twentieth century China. See *ibid.*, 16.

⁸ Welch estimates the enrollment for some of academies that he has read and heard about, but he admits that those are very rough figures. See Welch, *the Buddhist Revival in China*, 285-287.

⁹ John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography*

century found inspiration in late Ming reformers such as Yunqi Zhuhong 雲栖株宏 (1535 – 1615) and Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599 – 1655) because they saw a similarity in the tumultuous socio-political situations between their own time and that of the late Ming, and they identified with the regeneration of Buddhism represented by these figures.¹⁰ Yet, the student-monks were not just disparate individuals inspired by certain reformist teachers or by the ideals of a modern and progressive monastic career. It was a structural, though fluid, community that started out from the small groups of students in modern Buddhist academies, which grew over time supported by the circulation of modern print media. Taking into account the undeniable stature of Taixu as the figurehead of the reform movement, this paper focuses on the exchange, interaction, and debate among student-monks in search of new meanings for their Buddhist and national identities.

Some of them had obvious direct ties with Taixu and the numerous organizations he founded. For example, Daxing 大醒 (1899 – 1952), Jichen 寄塵 (1885 – 1974), and Fafang 法舫 (1904 – 1951) were themselves graduates who became teachers at these academies. Their leadership role in the student-monk community was legitimized through their association with the reformer and his academies. But a national student-monk community, in which a “vision of shared belonging” developed,¹¹ was only formed when its participants across the country were interacting with one another, exchanging and debating ideas through the numerous periodicals being circulated. In re-examining the role that texts, especially the canon, play in the education of novice monks in Sri Lanka, Jeffrey Samuels draws our attention to the importance of “action-oriented pedagogy,” in which monks learn through ritualized daily activities.¹² Here, the meaning of “doing” can be expanded to include social and political engagements. The “student-monk” emerged when monks learned to “perform

(Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 1.

¹⁰ Gregory A. Scott, “Conversion by the Book: : Buddhist Print Culture in Early Republican China.” (PhD Diss., Columbia, 2013), 18. For the revival efforts of Zhuhong and Ouyi, see Chün-fang Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981); Beverley Foulks McGuire, *Living Karma: The Religious Practices of Ouyi Zhixu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

¹¹ Anne Blackburn, “Introduction,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28, no. 2 (2005): 239.

¹² Jeffrey Samuels, “Toward an Action-Oriented Pedagogy: Buddhist Texts and Monastic Education in Contemporary Sri Lanka,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72, no. 4 (2004): 955–971.; Anne Blackburn, *Buddhist Learning and Textual Practice in Eighteenth-century Lankan Monastic Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001).

Buddhism” through the informal “action-oriented pedagogy” of hearing, reading, writing, and debating about the words and actions of Taixu and other reformers.

Coming to Terms with the Nation

Since its introduction in China, Buddhism was confronted with a vastly different socio-political context and had to reconcile with an existing imperial bureaucracy in China. In fact, forging a favorable relation with the state while seeking recognition for the sangha as a distinct social group has been an ongoing struggle throughout its history. The history of Buddhism-state relations can be summarized by the tension between two opposing inclinations articulated by the famous Eastern Jin (317–420) monk Dao'an 道安 (312–385) and his student Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416). Over time, through the system of monastic officials (*sengguan* 僧官), clergy registration, and the issuance of ordination certificates, Buddhism was incorporated into the imperial bureaucracy in subsequent dynasties under an office overseen by court appointed monks or members of the gentry.¹³

By the late imperial times, Chinese Buddhists had accepted not only the bureaucratic religious paradigm of patronage, prohibition, and regulation, but also the state's religio-ethical framework for moral orthodoxy.¹⁴ It is important to note, however, that central imperial management did not necessarily mean an institutionally unified *sangha*. Institutional Buddhism was organized around networks of ordination and regional lineages. By the late Qing, Chinese Buddhism had internalized this configuration characterized by the impetus to secure imperial patronage while developing its own networks of kinship. This would all change following the fall of the Qing dynasty. The fall of the Qing dynasty signified not only the end of dynastic rule but also the collapse of the state-imposed system of moral orthodoxy that had persisted from the Han to the Qing. But this should not be seen as a complete rupture as the state continued to control and regulate religion. With most intellectuals and government officials in the early twentieth century being preoccupied with the

¹³ For a history of the monastic official bureaucracy in imperial China, see Xie Chongguang 謝重光 and Bai Wengu 白文固, *Zhongguo sengguan zhidushi* 中國僧官制度史 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1990) and Wang, *Zhongguo fojiao sengtuan fazhan ji qi guanli*, chapters 1-3.

¹⁴ Timothy Brook, “The Politics of Religion: Late Imperial Origins of the Regulatory State,” in Ashiwa and Wank, *Making Religion, Making the State*, 23.

modernization project, their engagement with the issue of religion was framed in a different language and discourse compared with those in the imperial era.

Although this was a period marked by disorder and uncertainty, there was a consensus that the emperor-subject system had to be replaced by a new way to imagine the relationship between individual citizens and the state. New terms such as “republicanism,” “democracy,” “progress,” and “science” dominated political writing of this period. It was believed that for China to become a wealthy and strong nation in a world of competing nation-states, it needed the creation of a new citizenry who shared equal rights and duties and who considered the nation (*guo* 國) as their collective identity. Therefore, it can be said that citizenship in China took nationalism as its foundation.¹⁵ Furthermore, as sovereignty shifted from the divine power (*shenquan* 神權) of the imperial ruling house to popular power (*minquan* 民權) of the people, many intellectuals were convinced that China needed a moral reorientation.

In the political cosmology of imperial China, public interest (*gong* 公) was represented by the emperor and a small group of morally refined scholar-officials educated in the Confucian classics. The shift in the understanding of sovereignty took place when reformers and revolutionaries, while continuing to emphasize the importance of public interest, associated it with popular participation instead.¹⁶ Liang Qichao, for example, was famous for his very influential view on the understanding of citizenship in China in his serial essay *The New Citizen* (*Xinminshuo* 新民說). He criticized Confucianism for inspiring the cultivation of personal morality (*side* 私德) over civic or public morality (*gongde* 公德).¹⁷ He saw the lack of a sense of obligation as the root cause for China’s ills and proposed to renew the people by educating them in citizenship which emphasized public morality. He considered private and public morality not as opposing but complementary virtues.¹⁸ In developing his theory of civic nationalism, he claimed that public morality should revolve around the collective interest of the nation composed of a people (*minzu* 民族). By transforming imperial subjects into citizens (*guomin* 國民), a nation-state

¹⁵ Goldman and Perry, “Introduction: Political Citizenship in China,” in *Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 6.

¹⁶ Peter Zarrow, “Constitutionalism and the Imagination of the State: Official Views of Political Reform in the Late Qing,” in *Creating Chinese Modernity: Knowledge and Everyday Life, 1900-1940*, ed. Peter Zarrow (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 81.

¹⁷ Liang Qichao, *Xinminshuo* 新民說, YBH, vol. 8, 12; Hao Chang, *Liang Ch’i-Ch’ao and Intellectual Transition in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 151.

¹⁸ Liang Qichao, *Xinminshuo*, 118.

would be formed when each individual member of the group (*qun* 群) was united by the underpinnings of nationalism (*minzu zhuyi* 民族主義).¹⁹ Such a view was shared by government officials throughout the twentieth century.

There is often an overlooked religious dimension in the thought of late Qing reformers. Many imagine modernization to be a moral awakening in which the nation developed by combining Western technology and a national essence (*guocui* 國粹). Yet, religion was often viewed as the unifying principle in the creation of a national identity. From Kang Youwei's campaign to develop Confucianism as the state religion to Liang Qichao, Zhang Taiyan and Tan Sitong, who saw Buddhism as a superior religion grounded in rationality that could play a positive role in renewing the Chinese nation, late Qing intellectuals turned to and affirmed the role of religion in formulating their project for national survival. Furthermore, their political project was also a religious one. Insofar as they were critical of traditional religious practices, which they ferociously denounced as superstitious, their project was aimed at introducing a spiritual reform that China pressingly needed.²⁰

Although this religio-political reform eventually gave way to secular nationalism and mobilization politics, especially during the Nanjing decade of Nationalist rule (1927–1937), religion remained a dominant issue in state-building throughout the twentieth century. By imposing the newly conceived categories of religion and superstition, as well as the corporatist model for managing religion, the Nationalist regime conceived of most religious practices as superstition that was a hindrance for both the nation-building and modernization projects. The secular nationalist project aimed at defining, managing, and separating religion from the realm of public life on the one hand, while persecuting and eradicating superstition on the other. Although national law guaranteed the freedom of religion, Nationalist leaders could not agree on where to bureaucratically place state-recognized religious organizations. Nor were they clear about how religion should function in society.²¹ The Chinese Buddhists creatively appropriated all of the above – by presenting Buddhism as a unifying moral force compatible with the political ideology of the new republic, differentiating Buddhism from superstition, and invoking

¹⁹ Zarrow, "Citizenship in China and the West," in *Imagining the People: Chinese Intellectuals and the Concept of Citizenship, 1890-1920*, eds. Fogel, Joshua, and Peter Zarrow (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1997) 17-18.

²⁰ Goossaert, "1898," 311; Ryan Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China, 1857-1927* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), xviii.

²¹ Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 50-51.

constitutional rights and freedom of religion as citizens – as discursive tools in reorienting and negotiating a place for Buddhism in the new nation-state.

Following Gellner, Hobsbawm posits that the “nation” should not be viewed as an unchanging entity. It is nationalism that makes the state, not the other way around. Yet, his view differs from Gellner in that nation-making is not only a top-down process but should be analyzed from below.²² By looking at the ways in which Chinese Buddhists, especially the young student-monks who had received a modern education, engaged with the discourse of nation and nationalism, I hope to show one aspect of this view from below. Another argument of Hobsbawm that is relevant to our discussion of the Buddhist appropriation of nationalist discourse is the multiplicity of identifications that existed alongside national identity.²³ In reconciling their Buddhist identity with that of the nation, Chinese Buddhists not only viewed religion as an indispensable component in the formation of a nation, but further asserted a national identity deeply rooted in Buddhism:

The five primary components of a nation are livelihood, language, ethnicity, religion, and custom. From this, religion is clearly seen as important and intrinsically related to the nation-state. In the past, our country's government did not understand that religion was the key to the rise and fall of a nation-state. [It] did not realize that the Chinese nation would never be rejuvenated if Buddhism did not thrive, [and] the Republic of China would never be free and independent if Buddhism was not established.²⁴

Considering that Buddhism, and religion in general, was faced with the government's persistent attack during this period, such a blunt assertion might seem curious. Yet it is exactly this insistence and creativity in associating the fate of Buddhism with that of the nation that points to my argument: in adopting the language and discourse imposed on them by the state, Chinese Buddhists turned nationalist propaganda into a potent weapon for resisting

²² E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 10–11.

²³ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁴ Yanqi 延祺, “Fojiao yu Zhongguo 佛教與中國.” *Miaofalun* 妙法輪, vol. 1, no. 1 (1943), MFQ 97:338. For similar arguments by other young-monks, see also Fafang, “Juantouyu 卷頭語.” *Haichaoyin*, vol. 17, no. 4 (1936), MFQ 193:143-148; Cangjiang 滄江, “Lun Fojiao yu guomin zhi guanxi 論佛教與國民之關係.” *Foxue congbao*, no. 1 (1912), MFQ 1:53.

the secularizing impulse and justifying their place in the modern nation-state. This “view from below” shows the complexity of the nation-building process. In addition, the Buddhists’ skilled deployment of nationalist and citizenship discourse in defending their religion prompts one to rethink the simplistic understanding of the efficacy of the state’s secular nationalist approach to religion.²⁵

In providing justifications for the assertion above, which was representative of the Buddhists’ self-understanding of their relation to the state during this period, the young monks advocated for the capacity of Buddhism as a unifying moral force, as well as compatibility between modern Buddhism and the nation. It is important to also note that in arguing for the centrality of religion in the modern nation, the Christian West was often cited as an example.²⁶ Buddhism, as an integral element of Chinese culture, needed to be revitalized alongside the nation to counter the challenge of Christianity represented by the numerous foreign powers in China. Cihang 慈航, in discussing the importance of public morality in ensuring a stable and prosperous nation, opined that Buddhism, whose foundational teaching was the elimination of the three poisons of greed, hatred, and ignorance, could contribute greatly to the virtue education for citizens.²⁷ This view was echoed by Yimo 儀模, for whom building the nation and establishing Buddhism were one goal with two names as there was no better religion than Buddhism to serve as the unifying force in the moral order for the nation.²⁸ The revolutionary monk Zongyang 宗仰 (1865 – 1921) also asserted that Buddhism was the only solution to China’s moral dilemma, while educational and legal reforms could only address the symptoms but not the root cause.²⁹ Such a claim by Zongyang is especially illuminating of

²⁵ This is not only true about Buddhism in the early twentieth century but similar developments can be seen in post-Mao China, where the national Buddhist Association, originally sanctioned by the Communist state to exert control over the Buddhists in the country, has paradoxically transformed into the structural foundation for the Buddhists to represent their interests and negotiate with the state. See Ji Zhe, “Secularization as Religious Structuring: Statist Institutionalization of Chinese Buddhism and Its Paradoxes.” In Yang, *Chinese Religiosities*, 233-260.

²⁶ Taixu, “Minguo yu fojiao 民國與佛教,” TXQ 22:1247.

²⁷ Cihang, “Lun minde wei liguo zhiben 論民德為立國之本,” *Foxue banyuekan* 佛學半月刊, vol. 3, no. 23 (1933), MFQ 49:4.

²⁸ Yimo, “Jianguo yu jianjiao 建國與建教,” *Juequn zhoubao* vol. 2, no. 31 (1947), MFQ 101:454. Yimo attended the Wuchang Academy and later returned to lay life. He was one of the Wuchang graduates lobbying for the reopening of the academy in 1994.

²⁹ Wumu shanseng 烏目山僧 (Zongyang), “Lun zunchong fojiao wei jinri zengjin guomin daode zhi qieyao 論尊崇佛教為今日增進國民道德之切要,” *Foxue congkao* 4 (1913), MFQ 2: 11-16.

the optimism and high hopes for the republic shared by China's new monks.

With the collapse of the dynastic rule came the crumbling of the Confucian moral order. By adopting a nationalistic tone, these young monks presented Buddhism as an integral component of Chinese culture – something that would have been impossible under Confucian hegemony – that was to be protected and developed to counter the threat of Christianity. Therefore, despite the secularist religious policies, Chinese Buddhists during this period also saw an opportunity to reposition Buddhism as both a uniquely Chinese answer to imperialism, as well as a superior source for the state's effort to rebuild the moral order. By linking Buddhism to the development of the state, they sought to increase the prominence and legitimacy of Buddhism in the new republic. In addition, the founding of the new republic brought about a conceptual transformation in the Chinese imagination of their relationship to the nation, and the Buddhists were no exception. The Buddhists often invoked the ideals of republicanism and Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles (*Sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義) in stressing the compatibility between Buddhist teachings and the new republic. In speaking about democratic republicanism, in which citizens shared equal rights, Chinese monks likened that to the Buddhist ideals of compassion, egalitarianism, and Buddha-nature, which teaches that every sentient being possesses the full potential to achieve perfect enlightenment.³⁰

In comparing the republic to previous imperial regimes, they claimed that:

In an autocratic polity, religion can only reach a small number of believers. In a republican polity, it can spread to the whole nation. Why? That is because the principle for republicanism is the same as the Buddhist teaching of compassion and equality. If the people are inclined towards republicanism, then Buddhism can shine through politics.³¹

The Buddhists were quick to react to the promulgation of the provisional constitution of 1912, which placed sovereignty in the people and guaranteed the equality of the citizens regardless of race, class, and religion. It also included a clause that grants the “freedom of religion” (*xinjiao zhi ziyou* 信教之自由). Although the constitution went through several drafts between the founding of the republic and the 1940s, it did not diverge from this earlier tone, which

³⁰ Fushan 福善, “Gonghe zhengzhi yu fojiao 共和制治與佛教.” Zhang Mantao, *Fojiao yu Zhengzhi*, 56.

³¹ Lingjiang 菱江, “Fodan jinian dahui yanshuo 佛誕紀念大會演說,” *Fojiao yuebao* 2 (1913), MFQ 5: 342.

included religious freedom as one of the basic rights guaranteed to all Chinese citizens.³² Hence, there was optimism that the founding of the republic meant that the rights of the Buddhists would be protected by the constitution.

In contemplating how to relate to the new polity in 1916, Taixu drew a parallel between the Yogācāra understanding of the nature of the self and the nature of the nation. Describing any ego as merely the coming together of the five aggregates (*wuyun* 五蘊), he considered the Republic of China as a result of the accumulation of the consciousness of its people – an “ultra illusory ego” (*da huanwo* 大幻我) which, apart from its compositional elements, the individual citizens, did not possess any unchanging existence.³³ Rather than merely pointing out the illusionary nature of the nation, he was stressing its fluidity and transient nature to offer a Buddhist explanation for the re-imagining of the collective identity of the new nation. Each citizen, by this definition, would be the basic constituent of the nation and the cause and condition for its existence. Therefore, the individual mind and actions of the citizens mattered as they would directly lead to effects on the entire nation.

Scholars have acknowledged that the symbolic significance of Sun Yat-sen as the founding father of the Republic (*guofu* 國父) only surged after his death. This is closely associated with the Nationalist creation of a new narrative for the nation surrounding Sun and the KMT during and after the Northern Expedition. It has also led to the “partification” (*danghua* 黨化) of politics during the Nanjing regime, in which the symbols of the party were identified with the symbols of the nation. Of specific importance to our discussion here is Sun’s deathbed message, which consolidated the legitimacy of Sun as a national leader, and set up his Three People’s Principles (*sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義)³⁴ at the center of the KMT’s political ideology. Written in vague language, there was no consistent view of Sun’s will and it was subject to different interpretations. However, its symbolic importance increased with the Nationalist regime’s expansion of power. Soon, the armed forces and school children were holding weekly ceremony during which they reverently bowed to Sun’s portrait and

³² Qu Haiyuan 瞿海源, *Zongjiao, shushu yu shehui bianqian: jidu zongjiao yanjiu, zhengjiao guanxi yanjiu* 宗教, 術數與社會變遷：基督宗教研究, 政教關係研究, vol. 2 (Xindian, Taipei: Guiguan, 2006), 199.

³³ Taixu, “Shi Zhonghuo minguo 釋中華民國,” TXQ 22:1225.

³⁴ Namely, the Three People’s Principles are nationalism, democracy, and livelihood of the people – doctrines at the core of Sun’s political philosophy to transform China into a modern nation. See Marie-Claire Bergère, *Sun Yat-sen*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 352. *Sanmin zhuyi* is often directly translated as Sanminism.

chanted his will.³⁵

The Buddhists almost univocally praised Sun's doctrine by claiming that it was in complete harmony with the teachings of Buddhism. They claimed that, "Buddhism is ultimately *sanmin zhuyi*, and *sanmin zhuyi* is Buddhism in practice."³⁶ Zhifeng urged his fellow new monks to rise to the responsibility of bringing about a moral awakening for modern China:

The polity in China now has changed from the previous despotic monarchism to enter a time of democracy. This is also the time of Nationalist party rule according to the Three People's Principles founded by Mr. [Sun] Zhongshan ... Therefore, to revitalize Buddhism, we have to demonstrate the great spirit of Buddhism and develop its true morality. [We] have to take up responsibility toward all of humanity! At the same time, [we need to] serve as the moral foundation for the conduct of modern Chinese citizens, and successfully [become] the great national spirit for our citizens to promote a modern China under democratic politics.³⁷

In an age when the doctrine of Sun, the semi-mythical national hero, was enthusiastically studied, quoted, and interpreted by all players on the socio-political field, perhaps it is not at all surprising that the Buddhists would cite Sun to support their position. Chen Jinlong has observed that by the 1930s, Buddhist academies had started to promote party education (*dangyi jiaoyu* 黨義教育) by including the Three People's Principles in their curriculum. Also, the KMT central propaganda unit was distributing its Central Daily News (*Zhongyang ribao* 中央日報) in the Buddhist academies.³⁸

³⁵ Henrietta Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China, 1911-1929* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 157 – 158. Harrison has also pointed out that the will was not even penned by Sun himself. On his deathbed, Sun was presented with the testament prepared by Wang Jingwei 汪精衛 with five other members of the left, including the communist Li Dazhao 李大釗, who served as Sun's entourage to Beijing to negotiate with the chief of the Beijing government, Duan Qirui 段祺瑞. Sun fell ill and died in Beijing in 1925. See *ibid.*, 136.

³⁶ Xinsheng 心聲, "Foxue yu san minzhuyi 佛學與三民主義," *Fohaideng*, vol. 2, no.1 (1936), MFQB 51: 377. See also Dakong 達空, "Fofu yu Sanmin zhuyi 佛法與三民主義," *Renjian fojiao* 人間佛教 1, MFQ 100:355.

³⁷ Zhifeng, "Xiandai fojiao yu xiandai Zhongguo 現代佛教與現代中國," *Xiandai fojiao* vol. 5, no.1 (1932), MFQ 67: 305-306.

³⁸ Chen, *Nanjing guomin zhengfu shiqi zhengjiao de guanxi*, 13, 177. As early as 1928, the Minnan Buddhist Academy had included Sanminism in its curriculum. See Changxing and

At around the same time, several Buddhist periodicals started to publish the “Deathbed Teachings of the Premier” (*Zongli yijiao* 總理遺教). What is interesting about the Buddhist version of the *Zongli yijiao* is that, rather than Sun’s will, it consisted of excerpts of Sun’s remarks about religion in general and Buddhism in particular. They were given in point form: (1) Religion was a mighty force in the creation of nations; (2) There were three types of benevolence which shared the quality of universal love: saving the world, saving humanity, and saving the nation. Saving the world was the benevolence of a religion such as Buddhism, which taught self-sacrifice for the sake of sentient beings; (3) Buddhism could make up for what science lacked.³⁹ Later on, Sun’s affirmation of the role of Buddhism in his formulation of a nationalist discourse became the cornerstone of many discussions and petitions put forth by the Buddhists on issues ranging from property rights to political participation and Buddhist patriotic education.

By manipulating the image of Sun as a national symbol, Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist government were able to portray themselves as the legitimate representatives for the masses. In other words, by infusing national symbols, which also included a national flag and anthem, with the ideology of the KMT, legitimacy was transferred from the citizens as a whole to the party.⁴⁰ However, the Buddhist appropriation of Sun as a symbol shows that they were not just passively repeating the nationalist discourse imposed by the party-state. By infusing Buddhism into the symbol of Sun and his legitimacy, they were laying claim to a positive national identity as patriotic citizens. They also attempted to link Buddhism to politics or even to politicize Buddhism by adopting the changing concepts of the nation in the formulation of a Buddhist nationalist discourse. Given the power struggle in the political realm that went on for the early decades of the republic and the subsequent anti-religious policies of the Nanjing government, the freedom of religion and constitutional rights that the student-monks so passionately engaged with in their writings might have been only ideals that could not be realized in reality. Yet these ideals were powerful ones nonetheless. They resulted in the reconfiguration of

Taixu, “Minnan Foxueyuan xuzhao xueseng jianzhang 閩南佛學院續招學僧簡章,” HCY, vol. 9, no. 7 (1928), MFQ 170: 558.

³⁹ “Zongli yijiao 總理遺教,” *Zhongguo fojiaohui yuekan* 中國佛教會月刊 46-48 (1933), MFQB 29: 2. There are variations that include Sun’s will (*Zongli yizhu* 總理遺囑) and a photograph of him. See, for example, “Zongli yixiang, zongli yizhu, zongli yijiao 總理遺像, 總理遺囑, 總理遺教,” *Zhongguo fojiaohui huibao* 中國佛教會會報 1 (1936), MFQB 30: 106.

⁴⁰ Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen*, 242 and passim.

the monks' identity as Buddhists as well as a new understanding of their place in the nation-state as Buddhist citizens.

Another characteristic of the young monks' self-understanding of their relationship with the state was the association of nationalism with progress. In a self-critical reflection on the lack of national consciousness among the Chinese Buddhists, monk Jiying 寂英 contended that Chinese monks still held onto the ancient concept of placing religion above the state. This had led to the escapist mentality in which monks and nuns would only focus on their practice of chanting the Buddha's name and keeping a vegetarian diet. Comparing Buddhism to other "modern" religions such as Christianity and even Japanese Buddhism, he observed that these religions embodied a strong nationalist impulse. Therefore, he concluded, no religion could exist outside of the laws and constitution in a modern nation-state.⁴¹

The teleological understanding of modernity is definitely noteworthy here. These monks seemed to have shared the Enlightenment view of history in which modernization would culminate in the evolutionary transformation of medieval divine kingship/autocracy into modern nation-states. But what I would like to highlight here is the monks' optimism about Buddhism's ability to generate appropriate new forms. Time and again, we encounter young monks who were acutely aware of the changing conditions in their country yet had a strong faith in the capacity of Buddhism to adapt accordingly. This inclination can be summed up in the phrase "in accordance with the doctrine and external conditions" (*qili qiji* 契理契機), which was prevalent among Chinese reformers in this period. It is a conviction, based on the Mahāyāna doctrine of emptiness, that justifies the doctrinal reinterpretation according to the needs of the historical moment. James Ketelaar has observed similar strategies by the Japanese Buddhists during the Meiji period.⁴² In other words, in countering the criticisms of Buddhism, the Buddhists tended to stress the capacity of Buddhism to express itself appropriately according to the needs of the current time while remaining a universal truth that transcended differences.

At the same time, the young student-monks, such as Daxing quoted above, were aware that simply identifying with the state was not enough to ensure the relevance of Buddhism in the new nation. To them, reforms internal to Buddhism were necessary for Buddhism to fulfil its mission as a modern,

⁴¹ Jiying 寂英, "Sengxun ji qita 僧訓及其他," *Fojiao yu foxue* 佛教與佛學, vol. 2, no. 19 (1937), MFQ 79: 87.

⁴² Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan*, 174 and passim.

ethical religion for national advancement. Assuming that to be modern was to be free of superstition, reformers and young student-monks were quick to differentiate themselves from the uneducated ignorant monks who, in order to generate profit, installed many statues to confuse and deceive equally ignorant worshippers:

So [they] burn incense and bow to any statue they see without questioning whether these are Buddhas, immortals, Bodhisattvas, or Daoist deities. ... They do not know that these are not Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, but non-Buddhist immortals and deities. [They are] wasting energy and money and go from blindly following to superstition. Alas, how laughable and pathetic!⁴³

As much as the harsh tone against superstition is apparent, it is important to note that these young monks were not iconoclastic *per se*. Indeed, they were denouncing the worship of the wrong deities branded as superstition. Therefore, these arguments should be seen as “definitional strategies,” to borrow James Ketelaar’s term,⁴⁴ in which the student-monks appropriated the language originally used to attack their practice in order to defend their religion and justify internal reform. These young monks were not trying to “get rid of the buddhas and bodhisattas,” in Birnbaum’s words, but to advocate for reform and the restructuring of the Buddhist establishment according to new expectations for religious practices.⁴⁵ In fact, I have encountered no evidence for even the most radical reformist monks attempting to destroy statues or eliminate rites and rituals from their practice. Taixu was definitely critical of monks who made a living solely by performing funeral rites. He was concerned that this would lead to the Buddhists’ irrelevance in the modern world. He encouraged the design of various modern Buddhist ceremonies and officiated the first Buddhist wedding, an act which was highly controversial among the Chinese Buddhists at the time.⁴⁶ Other scholars have noted his creation of a new ritual cult surrounding Maitreya and his involvement in popularizing the nation-protection dharma assembly based on the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra*

⁴³ Jichen, “Cong siyuanli gaicao qi 從寺院裡改造起,” *Haochaoyin*, vol. 17, no. 4 (1936), MFQ 193: 199.

⁴⁴ Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan*.

⁴⁵ Birnbaum, “Buddhist China at the Century’s Turn,” 129.

⁴⁶ Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism, Taixu’s Reforms* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), 249.

for *Humane Kings Protecting Their Countries* (*Renwang huguo bore boluomiduo jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經), which was often lavishly patronized by eminent monastic leaders as well as by the prominent political and cultural elite.⁴⁷

The same can also be said about the “Humanistic” Buddhist organizations in Taiwan, which are often considered the spiritual heirs of Taixu’s reform. Without repeating the details of the historical development of Buddhism in the modern period, I would just point out that most of these organizations are erecting grandiose monastery compounds, regularly holding elaborate rituals, and inventing new rituals to redefine and strengthen the sense of loyalty and identity of their respective members.⁴⁸ In other words, the socio-political context in which the anti-superstition discourses internal to Buddhism emerged is as important, if not more, as the actual content in the articulation of these discourses.

Welch describes the association of modern Chinese elites with Buddhism as an “expression of cultural loyalism.” By choosing Buddhism as their religious identity, he says, they were choosing to be Chinese. He also concludes that monks “did not have the same problem of religious identity as laymen.”⁴⁹ He seems to be suggesting that a “Buddhist identity” for monks was, or at least ought to be, static despite the tumultuous socio-political environment. I have shown that this was very much not the case. One of the most significant developments in twentieth century Chinese Buddhism was the reformulation of Buddhist identity as a result of changes in the socio-political sphere. Without overemphasizing the impact-response and tradition-modernity approaches, I would argue that the Chinese Buddhists felt a genuine threat

⁴⁷ See Justin Ritzinger, *Anarchy in the Pure Land: Reinventing the Cult of Maitreya in Modern Chinese Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017) and Gregory Scott, “The Buddhist Nationalism of Dai Jitao,” “The Buddhist Nationalism of Dai Jitao.” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 39, no. 1 (2011): 55-81, respectively.

⁴⁸ For a study of the historical development of Buddhism in Taiwan from the Qing to the 1990s, see Charles Brewer Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan Religion and the State, 1660-1990* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999). For the centrality of ritual in the Taiwanese Tzu Chi movement, see C. Julia Huang, *Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009). Richard Madsen seems to be arguing that these organizations devalue external rituals and emphasize internal morality (p.6). Yet in his book, which is based on his fieldwork of religious organizations in modern Taiwan, there is no lack of instances in which rituals play a central role in the activities of these organizations. See Richard Madsen, *Democracy’s Dharma: Religious Renaissance and Political Development in Taiwan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

⁴⁹ Welch, *Buddhist Revival in China*, 261.

from the secularist state's adoption of the Western paradigm of religion and superstition and the presence of Christian missionaries beginning at the turn of the twentieth century. On top of that, a deep sense of moral dilemma and rising nationalism became the impetus for the reformulation of Buddhist identity. In addition, educated student-monks, who have not gained much scholarly attention, were the most vocal and earnest participants in this process.

In order to reposition Buddhism in modern society, they were faced with two dilemmas: how to imagine a Buddhist identity under the new system of governance, and how to fit into the nation-building project. They tried to solve both problems by proposing a linkage between Buddhism and the state – that is to say, by binding the fate of Buddhism to that of the nation or by tying patriotism/nationalism to their Buddhist piety. These young monks passionately voiced their opinions about how love for the country was love for their religion. This would allow them to create a citizenship discourse that justified their participation in politics and national defense, as I have shown elsewhere.⁵⁰ In communist China, this discourse on nationalism and patriotism was also deployed to support a collaborationist approach vis-à-vis the government. In other words, the current Buddhist slogan of love for the party, nation, and Buddhism (*aidang aiguo aijiao* 愛黨, 愛國, 愛教), in that particular order, which is the underlying principle for Buddhism in mainland China, is not new but a continuation of the conceptualization of the Buddhism-state relationship dating to the Republican period.

Lastly, this tendency should not be seen merely as a secularization of Buddhism. To the contrary, I see the Chinese Buddhists' production of nationalist and citizenship discourse as a manifestation of their resistance to secularization, where the government consistently attempted to relegate religion to the private sphere. This created a structural tension when, in negotiating with the state, the Buddhists reacted by constantly trying to write themselves back into the public sphere. Yet this tension did not always manifest in conflict and opposition. Paradoxically, by associating the fate of Buddhism with that of the nation, the Buddhists were willing to relinquish part of their autonomy to the state, maintaining that it was the state that bore the responsibility of interfering and supervising necessary reform within Buddhism to safeguard the modernization process. Fafang and Daxing, for example, claimed that the difficulty in systematically re-organizing Buddhism was due to the lack of government effort to directly manage and supervise

⁵⁰ Lai, *Citizen Bodhisattvas*, ch. 5.

Buddhist affairs.⁵¹ Citing the secularist framework of the separation of religion and state, the Republican government turned down proposals to set up a national council of religious affairs, but it continued to assert control over the definition and regulation of religion.⁵² The Nationalist government only decided to step in and interfere, in 1936, when the fight for control of the Chinese Buddhist Association between Taixu and Yuanying's factions intensified and Taixu quit all his positions and withdrew from the association. The Ministry of Mass Training (Zhongyang minzhong xunlian bu 中央民衆訓練部) prepared a draft charter to reorganize the Chinese Buddhist Association, which was considered to be siding with the reformist faction. Dai Jitao later urged the KMT Central Party Committee to not meddle with Buddhist affairs. Without the cooperation of Yuanying's group, the reorganization ended in failure.⁵³

In short, it was within these paradoxes that we see the production of Buddhist nationalism based on the conviction that there was a place for Buddhism in Chinese modernity. And the Chinese Buddhists succeeded by appropriating the language and symbols imposed on them by the secular nationalists. During the early years of the republic, Buddhist engagement with the political realm was limited to stressing the compatibility between Buddhism and the ideology of the state. Entering the late 1920s and 1930s, they began to seriously contemplate the issues of their rights and duties as citizens – a topic which is beyond the scope of this paper that I have explored elsewhere.⁵⁴

Conclusion

Chinese Buddhists had high hopes for the republic, both in 1912 and in 1927, when Chiang Kai-shek's forces successfully placed the nation under a relatively stable central government in Nanjing. They were eager to participate in the nation-building process by emphasizing how Buddhism could contribute to the modernization of China. Undoubtedly, the relationship between Buddhism and the state was not without tension and competition, but the

⁵¹ Fafang, "Juantou yu 卷頭語," HCY, vol. 17, no. 4 (1936), MFQ 193: 143; Daxing, "Minguo shibanian de Zhongguo fojiao 民國十八年的中國佛教," XDSQ 43-44 (1930), MFQB 39:204.

⁵² Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 46.

⁵³ Chen and Deng, *Ershi shiji Zhongguo fojiao*, 47-50; Chen, *Nanjing guomin zhengfu shiqi zhengjiao de guanxi*, 134-147. Chen is of the opinion that the Nationalist government decided to interfere in order to unify the Chinese Buddhists in the anti-Japanese war, which seemed inevitable by this time. In addition, it was also trying to prevent the penetration of Chinese Buddhist circles by Japanese Buddhist missionaries.

⁵⁴ Lai, *Citizen Bodhisattvas*, ch. 5.

Buddhists were unmistakably arguing for a legitimate place in the nation's public sphere. I have shown above that there was an integral connection between the rise of the collective student-monk identity and the formulation of Buddhist nationalism. The Buddhist academies as well as the numerous Buddhist periodicals were instrumental in the emergence of a textual community that enabled various citizenship discourses to be formulated, debated, and negotiated among the student-monks. The production of such citizenship discourse then structurally connected Buddhism to the nation-state. This articulation of Buddhist identity is crucial to any attempt to understand later development in the ways in which the sangha interacts with the state in the Chinese Buddhist world.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Liang Qichao 梁啟超. *Yinbingshui heji* 飲冰室合集. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1932.
- Huang, Xianian, ed. *Minguo fojiao qikan wenxian jicheng* 民國佛教期刊文獻集成. Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2006. [MFQ]
- . *Minguo fojiao qikan wenxian jicheng bubian* 民國佛教期刊文獻集成補編. Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 2008. [MFQB]
- Taixu 太虛. *Taixu dashi quanshu* 太虛大師全書. Taipei: Shandaosi fojing liutongchu, 1980. [TXQ]

Secondary Sources

- Bergère, Marie-Claire. *Sun Yat-sen*. Translated by Janet Lloyd. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Birnbaum, Raoul. "Buddhist China at the Century's Turn." In *Religion in China Today*, edited by Daniel Overmyer, 123–144. *The China Quarterly Special Issues*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Black, Anne. "Introduction." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28, no. 2 (2005): 235–340.
- . *Buddhist Learning and Textual Practice in Eighteenth-century Lankan Monastic Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Brook, Timothy. "The Politics of Religion: Late Imperial Origins of the Regulatory State." In *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*, edited by David Wank and Yoshiko Ashiwa, 22–42. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Chang, Hao. *Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.

- Chen Bing 陳兵, and Deng Zimei 鄧子美. *Ershi shiji Zhongguo fojiao* 二十世紀中國佛教. Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2000.
- Chen Jinlong 陳金龍. *Nanjing guomin zhengfu shiqi de zhengjiao guanxi: Yi fojiao wei zhongxin de kaocha* 南京國民政府時期的政教關係：以佛教為中心的考察. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2011.
- Dunch, Ryan. *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China, 1857-1927*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Gildow, Douglas. "Buddhist Monastic Education: Seminaries, Academia, and the State in Contemporary China." PhD Diss., Princeton University, 2016.
- Goldman, Merle, and Elizabeth Perry, eds. *Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Goossaert, Vincent. "1898: The Beginning of the End for Chinese Religion?" *The Journal of Asian Studies* 65, no. 2 (2006): 307-335.
- Harrison, Henrietta. *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China, 1911-1929*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Huang, Julia. *Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Ji, Zhe. "Secularization as Religious Restructuring: Statist Institutionalization of Chinese Buddhism and Its Paradoxes." In *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*, edited by Mayfair Yang, 233–260. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.
- Jones, Charles. *Buddhism in Taiwan Religion and the State, 1660-1990*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999.
- Ketelaar, James. *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Kieschnick, John. *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.
- Lai, Rongdao. *Citizen Bodhisattva: Citizen Bodhisattvas: Education, Student-Monks, and Identity Production in Modern Chinese Buddhism*, Brill, 2025.
- Lanza, Fabio. *Behind the Gate: Inventing Students in Beijing*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.
- Madsen, Richard. *Democracy's Dharma: Religious Renaissance and Political Development in Taiwan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- McGuire, Beverley Foulks. *Living Karma: The Religious Practices of Ouyi Zhixu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

- McMahan, David. *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Nedostup, Rebecca. *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009.
- Pittman, Don. *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001.
- Qu, Haiyuan 瞿海源. *Zongjiao, shushu yu shehui bianqian: Jidu zongjiao yanjiu, zhengjiao guanxi yanjiu* 宗教, 術數與社會變遷：基督宗教研究, 政教關係研究. Vol. 2. Taipei: Guiguan, 2006.
- Ritzinger, Justin. *Anarchy in the Pure Land: Reinventing the Cult of Maitreya in Modern Chinese Buddhism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Samuels, Jeffrey. "Toward an Action-Oriented Pedagogy: Buddhist Texts and Monastic Education in Contemporary Sri Lanka." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72, no. 4 (2004): 955–971.
- Schwarz, Vera. *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Scott, Gregory. "Conversion by the Book: Buddhist Print Culture in Early Republican China." PhD Diss., Columbia University, 2013.
- . "The Buddhist Nationalism of Dai Jitao." *Journal of Chinese Religions* 39, no. 1 (2011): 55–81.
- Song, Mingwei. *Young China National Rejuvenation and the Bildungsroman, 1900–1959*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2016.
- Wasserstrom, Jeffrey. *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.
- Welch, Holmes. *The Buddhist Revival in China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.
- Xie, Chongguang 謝重光 and Bai, Wengu 白文固. *Zhongguo sengguan zhidushi* 中國僧官制度史 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1990).
- Xue Yu. *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism: Chinese Monks in the Struggle against Japanese Aggressions, 1931–1945*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Yü, Chün-fang. *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.
- Zarrow, Peter. "Citizenship in China and the West," in Fogel, Joshua, and Peter Zarrow, eds. *Imagining the People: Chinese Intellectuals and the Concept of Citizenship, 1890–1920*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1997.
- . "Constitutionalism and the Imagination of the State: Official Views of Political Reform in the Late Qing." In *Creating Chinese Modernity: Knowledge and Everyday Life, 1900–1940*, edited by Peter Zarrow, 51–82. New York: Peter Lang, 2006.