

REGIONAL BUDDHISM IN ACTION:
THE RISE AND FALL OF LINGYAN MONASTERY
FROM THE EASTERN JIN DYNASTY TO THE TANG DYNASTY

by

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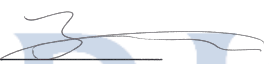
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used for sources in the footnotes and dissertation:

BQNZ	<i>Biqiu ni zhuan</i>	比丘尼傳
BQS	<i>Bei Qi Shu</i>	北齊書
GSZ	<i>Gaoseng zhuan</i>	高僧傳
LYZ	<i>Lingyan zhi</i>	靈岩志
RRS	Regional Religious System	
SGSZ	<i>Song gaoseng zhuan</i>	宋高僧傳
SS	<i>Sui Shu</i>	隋書
XGSZ	<i>Xu gaoseng zhuan</i>	續高僧傳
WS	<i>Wei Shu</i>	魏書

ABSTRACT

Lingyan Monastery, located in Jinan, Shandong Province, was a Buddhist monastery with a history of about 1600 years. It was first established in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, experienced several ups and downs, and arrived at its heyday in the Tang Dynasty. However, the history of Lingyan Monastery was rarely described in the historical records before the Song Dynasty. This dissertation thus will focus on the history of Lingyan Monastery from the Eastern Jin Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty in an attempt to sketch out its rise and fall on the basis of the existing gazetteers and *Jinshi zhi*. Moreover, it will explore the causes counting for the rise and fall of this renowned monastery. As a local Buddhist monastery, the rise and fall of Lingyan monastery was not the result of a single reason but a combination of factors both on the state level and on the regional level. The dissertation will employ the newly developed approach of Regional Religious System to investigate how these various factors interacted with each other to shape and transform Lingyan Monastery.

The history of Lingyan Monastery within the scope of investigation is divided into three sub-periods. The first is the period of the Eastern Jin Dynasty and Sixteen Kingdoms period, in which Lingyan Monastery was established and rose to fame through the struggles with the indigenous religions in Shandong. The second is the period of the Northern and Southern, and Sui Dynasties, in which Lingyan Monastery established strong relationships with the local and central officials and became a well-known monastery with the bloom of Shandong Buddhism. The third period is the Tang Dynasty, in which the reputation of Lingyan Monastery spread

across China, but at the same time, crises were hidden behind the prosperity which finally led to its decline. The rise and fall of Lingyan Monastery reflects the trend of Buddhist development in China in general on the one hand; on the other hand, it embodies distinctive regional features that have played important roles in the formation and transformation of Lingyan Monastery.

Introduction

Lingyan Monastery 靈岩寺 located in Jinan 濟南, Shandong 山東 Province is probably a quite unfamiliar place to many Chinese people because nowadays it is only a local Buddhist monastery with limited influence. However, it holds a special place in the history. It is said that the monastery was originally built in the fourth century. Li Jifu 李吉甫 (758-814), a famous cartography in the Tang Dynasty, concluded in his well-known geographical work *Shidao tu* 十道圖 (*Map of the Ten Circuits*) that Lingyan Monastery, together with Guoqing Monastery 國清寺 in Mount Tiantai 天臺山, Zhejiang 浙江 Province, Qixia Monastery 棲霞寺 in Nanjing 南京, Jiangsu 江蘇 Province and Yuquan Monastery 玉泉寺 in Jiangling 江陵, Hubei 湖北 Province, are the four greatest Buddhist monasteries in China 域內四絕.¹ Li Jifu's commentary undoubtedly helped Lingyan Monastery gain widespread fame because from that time on, Lingyan Monastery was usually believed to rank the first among the four greatest monasteries in China. Actually more than ten Buddhist monasteries in China were found with the name “Lingyan Monastery”. In Zhejiang Province alone, there are five Lingyan Monasteries nowadays. However, only Lingyan Monastery in Jinan is referred to as “Da (Great) Lingyan Monastery” 大靈岩寺 in order to distinguish itself from other Lingyan Monasteries.

In terms of sacred places, Richard H. Davis pointed out that they “have their ebbs and flows,

¹ The *Shidao tu* was already lost, but Li Jifu's commentary on the four greatest Buddhist monasteries was recorded in the *Taishan zhi* compiled by the scholar Wang Ziqing 汪子卿 in the Ming Dynasty. See *Taishan zhi jiaozheng* 泰山志校正 annotated by Zhou Ying 周郢 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2006), 187.

their times of creation and destruction, their moments of incendiary importance, and their periods of decline and lethargy.”² As a sacred Buddhist place, this is quite true with Lingyan Monastery. Ma Daxiang 馬大相³ summarized in the *Lingyan zhi* 靈岩志 that “Lingyan Monastery, rose to gain its fame in the (Eastern) Jin Dynasty, became well-known in the Wei Dynasty, and thrived in the Tang, Song, Jin, Yuan dynasties. It was still flourished before the Wanli 萬曆 era (1573-1620) in the Ming Dynasty, but declined after the Tianqi 天啟 era (1621-1627) in the Ming Dynasty. In the Qing Dynasty it began to revive gradually.”⁴ As an ancient Buddhist monastery with such a long and glorious history, the rise and fall of Lingyan Monastery is very worthy of study. Chen Jinhua once said, “The spread of Buddhism in Asia may be viewed from one perspective as a protracted and complex process in which numerous sacred sites were created and recreated in different cultural settings.....it involves complex cultural adjustments and inventions.”⁵ If so, it is important to find out these cultural adjustments and inventions in more textual resources about Lingyan Monastery in order to have a better understanding of the spread of Chinese Buddhism,

² See Richard H. Davis, “The Rise and Fall of a Sacred Place: Ayodhya over Three Decades,” in *Culture and Belonging in Divided Societies: Contestation and Symbolic Landscapes*, ed. by Marc Howard Ross (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 28.

³ Ma Daxiang was a xundao 訓導 (A teacher in a local Confucian school) at Changqing County 長清縣 during the reign of Kangxi 康熙 (1661-1722) in the Qing Dynasty. According to the preface written in the thirty-fifth year of the Kangxi reign (1696) in the *Lingyan zhi* by Li Xingzu 李興祖, the Vice Governor of Yan fa dao 鹽法道 (the Salt Control Circuit) in Shandong, it was Li Xingzu who organized a group of scholars represented by Ma Daxiang to compile the *Lingyan zhi*.

⁴ See Ma Daxiang, *Linyan zhi* (Jinan: Shandong youyi chubanshe, 1994), 29.

⁵ See Chen Jinhua, “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,” in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. Vol. 125, No. 3 (Jul. -Sep. 2005): 353.

or to be exact, the situation of Shandong Buddhism through the formation and transformation of Lingyan Monastery. Moreover, the investigation of cultural adjustments and inventions of a local Buddhist monastery is not only a cultural and religious understanding of it, but also involves geographical understanding of it. As Dr. Wu Jiang commented, “Religious sites in China can be considered the confluence of many religious elements that coexist in a delineated space with consensus and justification among the participants of religious activities on the sites. Because of the complexity involved, these sites need to be approached in a more sophisticated fashion.”⁶ This “more sophisticated fashion” is the approach of Regional Religious System (RRS). Dr. Wu developed the conception of RRS and applied it into the investigation of Chinese Buddhism. He defines RRS as followed,

Religious Regional System is a type of spatial formation in which a group of related or unrelated religious institutions are conditioned by physical, geographical, administrative, cultural, or socioeconomic systems and are highly dependent on regionally and locally distributed variables such as economy, transportation, education, culture, ethnicity, and language, etc.⁷

The formation of RRS is derived from the concept of “physiographic macroregions”

⁶ Jiang Wu, “Exploring Regional Religious Systems (RRS): Theoretical and Methodological Considerations,” in *The Formation of Regional Religious Systems in Greater China*, ed. by Jiang Wu (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 7.

⁷ Wu, Tong and Ryavec, “Spatial Analysis and GIS Modeling of Regional Religious Systems in China: Conceptualization and Initial Experiments,” in *Chinese History in Geographical Perspective*, ed. by Yongtao Du and Jeff Kyong-McClain (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003), 179-196.

proposed by American anthropologist William Skinner.⁸ Dr. Wu investigates the distribution of religious sites in China during different periods and proves the existence of various RRSs in China, which demonstrates how regional and local factors affect the establishment and development of Buddhist sites. This dissertation will employ the approach of RRS in an attempt to sketch out the vicissitudes of Lingyan Monastery in history with an emphasis on the impact of various factors both on the national and regional levels.

Besides the approach of RRS, I will employ textual analysis to examine the existing historical resources including gazetteers, the *Jinshi zhi*, and other related texts. With regard to the textual resources, the *Lingyan zhi* is probably the most important one among all the texts related to Lingyan Monastery. As a Buddhist gazetteer, it provides a multifaceted information about Lingyan Monastery. Marcus Bingenheimer pointed out, “Gazetteers are important for understanding the ways in which sacred sites are constructed—textualized—in a multiplicity of genres.”⁹ In Bingenheimer’s study of Mount Putuo, he selected and compared nine different editions of gazetteers on Mount Putuo to examine how literature and Buddhist sacred sites interacted with each other in the formation and transformation of Mount Putuo. It is not unusual that there are over ten editions of gazetteers for some important Buddhist sacred sites such as Mount Putuo, but it is unusual that the LYZ compiled in the Qing Dynasty is the only gazetteer which can be found on Lingyan Monastery with a history of over 1600 years. The preface of the

⁸ Skinner first introduced the concept in his work *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977).

⁹ See Marcus Bingenheimer, *Island of Guanyin: Mount Putuo and Its Gazetteers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 2.

LYZ mentions how the LYZ came into being. In a visit to Lingyan Monastery, Li Xingzu, the Vice Governor of Yan fa dao in Shandong, was impressed by the splendor of Lingyan Monastery and thus wanted to borrow the gazetteer to know more about Lingyan Monastery. However the monks in Lingyan Monastery told him the old gazetteer was destroyed in the war and only part of the new gazetteer was compiled. After Li Xingzu examined the compiled part of the new gazetteer, he was not satisfied with it and felt it was necessary to compile a new gazetteer. Then he gathered a group of officials, scholars, and monks to do this work. The LYZ was completed in the year of Bing Zi 丙子 during Emperor Kangxi's 康熙 reign (1696) and thus became the most authoritative text on Lingyan Monastery as the only surviving gazetteer.

Nonetheless, many recent studies showed that there existed some mistakes in the LYZ. Therefore, my study on Lingyan Monastery also includes the study of stone inscriptions inside Lingyan Monastery. There still existed over 420 stone inscriptions which were left by Buddhist monks, local officials, and literati from the past, covering a wide of range of topics. Some of them recorded the important events in the history of Lingyan Monastery, some of them depicted the beautiful scenery of Lingyan Monastery, some of them were Buddhist scriptures, and some of them recounted the lives of eminent monks associated with Lingyan Monastery. The earliest one can be traced back to the Tang Dynasty and the latest one was made in the Republican Era 民國時期 (1912-1949). The number of stone inscriptions formed in the Song Dynasty ranks the first among them, and the second most in number is the Ming Dynasty. In one of my visits to Lingyan Monastery, the present Abbot Hong'en 弘恩 affirmed to me that most of records about Lingyan Monastery were written after the Tang Dynasty, which explained why most of studies on

Lingyan Monastery focused on the periods after the Tang Dynasty. In this dissertation, however, I intend to conduct a study on the history of Lingyan Monastery from the Eastern Jin Dynasty when Lingyan Monastery was first established to the Tang Dynasty in order to reveal the rise and fall of a local Buddhist monastery in Shandong and the causes accounting for the rise and fall with the approach of RRS. I will examine how the interactions of various factors impacted and shaped Lingyan Monastery, making it an epitome of Shandong Buddhism as well.

Existing Scholarship

The earliest research related to Lingyan Monastery is *Le T'ai chan: Essai de Monographie d'un Culte Chinois* by Édouard Chavannes¹⁰ published in 1910. In this work, Chavannes not only surveyed the ceremonies and religions of Mount Tai, but also examined many important inscriptions on Mount Tai. Lingyan Monastery is located in the northwestern range of Mount Tai. Therefore, Chavannes's investigation included some of the *Jinshi zhi* inside Lingyan Monastery. Bernd Melcher's work *China: Der Tempelbau Die Lochan von Ling-yan-si*¹¹ in 1921 is a monograph focusing on the Luohan sculptures in Lingyan Monastery. No other discussions about Lingyan Monastery can be found until 1950s. With the expanded preservation and examination of historical and cultural relics across China after the founding of the People's Republic of China, more scholars paid their attention to Lingyan Monastery. These studies can roughly be divided into two categories. The first is the overall investigation on Lingyan Monastery. The 1983 book

¹⁰ Édouard Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan: Essai de Monographie d'un Culte Chinois; Appendice, le Dieu du Sol dans la Chine Antique* (London: Forgotten Books, 2018).

¹¹ Melchers Bernd, *China: Der Tempelbau die Lochan von Ling-yan-si* (Folkwang Verlag G.M.B.H, 1922).

Shandong Lingyan si 山東靈岩寺 by Zhang Heyun 張鶴雲¹², the 1999 book *Lingyan si* 靈岩寺 by Wang Rongyu 王榮玉¹³, and the 2011 book *Lingyan si shihua* 靈岩寺史話 by Guanping 管萍¹⁴ belong to this category, which is an encyclopedic presentation of Lingyan Monastery from multiple perspectives. The other category is studies on a specific aspect of Lingyan Monastery. After Bernd Melcher, the Luohan sculptures in Lingyan Monastery became a research focus. For example, Luo Zhewen¹⁵ 羅哲文 and Zhang Heyun¹⁶ first attempted to date when these Luohan sculptures were built. Hu Jigao¹⁷ 胡繼高 laid emphasis on the restoration of the sculptures. In recently years, scholars such as Tao Siyan¹⁸ 陶思炎 and Liu Yanquan¹⁹ 劉燕泉 turned to discuss the artistic features of the sculptures. In addition to the studies by Chinese scholars, there is also a Ph.D. dissertation by Rebecca M. Bieberly focusing on the Luohan sculptures in the United States.²⁰ Another important research focusing on Lingyan Monastery is

¹² Zhang Heyun, *Shandong Lingyan si* (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1983).

¹³ Wang Rongyu, *Lingyan si* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1999).

¹⁴ Guan Ping, *Lingyan si shihua* (Jinan: Jinan chubanshe, 2011).

¹⁵ Luo Zhewen, “Linyansi fangu suibi” 靈岩寺訪古隨筆 in *Wenwu cankao ziliao* 文物參考資料 (May 1957): 71-75.

¹⁶ Zhang Heyun, “Changqing lingyan si gudai suxiang kao” 長清靈岩寺古代塑像考 in *Wenwu* 文物 (December 1959): 1-17.

¹⁷ Hu Jigao, “Shandong changqing xian caisu luohan xiang de xiufu” 山東長清縣彩色羅漢像的修復 in *Wenwu* (November, 1983): 1025-1038, 1064.

¹⁸ Tao Siyan, “Lingyan si nisu luohan jixiang yishi tanjiu” 靈岩寺泥塑羅漢吉祥衣飾探究 in *Dongnan wenhua* 東南文化 (May 2003): 78-80.

¹⁹ Liu Yanquan, “Lingyansi songdai luohan caisu zaoxiang de shisuhua tedian” 靈岩寺宋代羅漢彩塑造像的世俗化特點 in *Zhishi jingji* 知識經濟 Vol.14 (2009): 178.

²⁰ Bieberly, Rebecca M.. *Seeing ‘the ‘Ordinary’ at Lingyan Temple in Eleventh-Century China* (PhD. Dissertation, The University of Michigan, 2013).

the *Jinshi zhi*. For instance, Wang Yao 王堯 examined a stele inscription written in both Chinese and Tibetan and for the first time translated the Tibetan texts into Chinese.²¹ This study provides much information on the relationship between Buddhism and imperial authority in the Yuan Dynasty. The study of Hu Xiaozhong 胡效忠 on “Chici shifang Lingyan si bei” 敕賜十方靈岩寺碑 (Inscription of Shifang Lingyan si Granted by Emperor) reveals the transformation of monastic system in Lingyan Monastery and the secularization of Buddhism in the Song Dynasty.²² The three-volume *Buddhist Stone Sutras in China: Shandong Province*²³ in both Chinese and English includes a large amount of rubbings of stone sutras across Shandong. Though it is not a direct study on Lingyan Monastery, it provides valuable primary sources for the study of Lingyan Monastery. There are also studies on various constructions in Lingyan Monastery such as Pizhi Pagoda 辟支塔 and Huichong Pagoda 慧崇塔. In addition, there is also a study on Chan poems on Lingyan Monastery in the Song Dynasty by Cao Huimin 曹慧敏²⁴, which unfolds the interaction between literati and Buddhist sacred sites.

Although it seems that western scholars have made little contribution to the study of

²¹ Wang Yao, “Shandong changqing da lingyan si dayuan guoshi fazhi bei kaoshi” 山東長清大靈岩寺大元國師法旨碑考釋 in *Wenwu* (November 1981): 45-50.

²² Hu Xiaozhong, “Beisong shandong chici shifang lingyan si bei yanjiu” 北宋山東敕賜十方靈岩寺碑研究 in *Beijing ligong daxue xuebao* 北京理工大學學報, Vol.13 (2011): 117-123.

²³ See Lothar Ledderose, and Wang Yongbo eds. *Buddhist Stone Sutras in China: Shandong Province*. Volume 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014); Lothar Ledderose, Wang Yongbo, and Glaudia Wenzel eds. *Buddhist Stone Sutras in China: Shandong Province*. Volume 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015); Wang Yongbo, and Glaudia Wenzel eds. *Buddhist Stone Sutras in China: Shandong Province*. Volume 3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017).

²⁴ Cao Huimin, “Lingyan zhi yiwen zhi san chanshi kaolun” 靈岩志藝文志三禪詩考論 in *Minzuo xinshang* 名作欣賞, Vol. 20 (2015): 8-9.

Lingyan Monastery, they have done much on the study of religious sacred sites in China. They visited various sacred religious sites and published quite a few works on them. These sacred sites include mountains such as Mount Emei²⁵ 峨眉山 and Mount Tai²⁶ 泰山, monasteries such as Da xiangguo Monastery²⁷ 大相國寺 and Tiantong Monastery 天童寺, and grottoes such as Longmen Grottoes²⁸ 龍門石窟 and Mogao Caves²⁹ 莫高石窟. On the one hand, these studies revealed the conflicts and integration between religion and local culture; on the other hand, they reminded us that there are still a lot of work to be done because though local gazetteers have played a significant role in the study of sacred religious sites. However, only a quite small part of gazetteers, especially Buddhist temple gazetteers, have been examined. Buddhist temple gazetteers record prominent monks and various schools, which deepen our understanding of Buddhist doctrines and historical transmission. They also record poems and miraculous tales, which are important supplements to other historical records. In addition, the gazetteers record the purchase and management of temple estates, which provide valuable information for the study of economic activities of Buddhist temples. Therefore, the examination of Buddhist temple

²⁵ See James M. Hargett, *Stair Way to Heaven: A Journey to the Summit of Mount Emei* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006).

²⁶ See Brian Russell Dott., *Ascending Mount Tai: Social and Cultural Interactions in Eighteenth Century China* (PhD. Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1998).

²⁷ See Chen Jinhua, "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," 353-378.

²⁸ See Amy Manair, *Donors of Longmen: Faith, Politics, Patronage in Medieval Chinese Buddhist sculpture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

²⁹ See Roderick Whitfield, Susan Whitfield, and Neville Agnew, *Cave Temples of Mogao at Dunhuang: Art and History on the Silk Road* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2015).

gazetteers is necessary and meaningful for promoting the study of religion, literature, history and even tourism on Buddhist temples. In this respect, Bingenheimer's monograph on Mount Putuo exemplifies how to take advantage of temple gazetteers to investigate the sacred site and the interaction between the sacred sites and local society. His study provides a starting point for how to compare and examine the temple gazetteers. However, with regard to Lingyan Monastery, there exists only one gazetteer. In this present study, I would explore how factors on the state level and the regional level are reflected through the LYZ and how they influenced the rise and fall of Lingyan Monastery.

As for the approach of RRS applied in the field of Chinese religion, Dr. Jiang Wu made great endeavors to promote it. He launched the Buddhist Geographic Information System (BGIS) project at the University of Arizona in 2006, held the conference on "The Formation of Regional Religious System in Greater China" at the University of Arizona in April 2016, and edited the book based on the conference papers with the same title *The Formation of Regional Religious Systems in Greater China* which was published in 2022. As Dr. Wu argued, "the RRS does not simply follow the social structure and reflect social changes. Rather, it seems to me that the RRS is an integral religious, social, and open-ended system and a spatio-temporal continuum which has its own pattern of formation, and it experiences the regional cycle of changes with a distinctive rhythm.....Attention to the RRS, to its internal organization and systemic processes, is essential if we are to view Chinese religion in a balanced perspective."³⁰ In this dissertation,

³⁰ See Jiang Wu, *The Formation of Regional Religious Systems in Greater China* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 25.

therefore, I attempt to employ the approach of RRS to view Lingyan Monastery, Shandong Buddhism, and Chinese Buddhism “in a balanced perspective”.

Chapter Outlines

This dissertation attempts to sketch out the history of Lingyan Monastery from the Eastern Jin Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty with an emphasis on the rise and fall of this Buddhist monastery on the basis of both the paper records and records of metal and stone preserved inside Lingyan Monastery. In addition to the textual analysis, this study will also employ the RRS approach to reveal how various factors both on the state level and regional level impacted the rise and fall of Lingyan Monastery and Shandong Buddhism as well. The history of Lingyan Monastery discussed in this dissertation is divided into three sub-periods.

Chapter One traces the spread of Buddhism into Shandong and establishment of Lingyan Monastery in the Eastern Jin Dynasty from various textual records. As is suggested, the formation of a Buddhist monastery was the result of interactions of both the national and regional factors.

Chapter Two reveals how Shandong Buddhism began to thrive in the Northern and Southern and the Sui Dynasties. I suggest in this chapter that the patronage from the court and the local officials was of vital importance for the development of Shandong Buddhism. As for Lingyan Monastery, this chapter not only focuses on its prosperity, but also explores the impact of the two persecutions of Buddhism on it that had happened during this period, which shows there existed regional difference for Buddhist monasteries in China even under the same circumstance.

Chapter Three continues to explore the situations of Shandong Buddhism and Lingyan Monastery in the Tang Dynasty. During this golden age of Buddhism in China, Lingyan Monastery reached its heyday. However, behind the prosperity of Lingyan Monastery there existed both external and internal troubles which finally led to the decline of Lingyan Monastery and Shandong Buddhism as well. In the declining years of the Tang Dynasty, the numbers of Buddhist monasteries and monks decreased significantly. As a result, while Buddhist centers began to decline and some of them finally disappear in Northern China, there more Buddhist centers were built in Southern China.

The history of Lingyan Monastery from the Eastern Jin Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty reveals how Lingyan Monastery from a local Buddhist monastery grew into one of the four greatest monasteries in China. Meantime, the history of Lingyan Monastery also reflects the situation of Buddhism both in Shandong and China during this period. However, though the development of Lingyan Monastery was greatly influenced by various factors on the state level such as the state policies, economic situation, cultural exchange, and etc., the regional factors such as the geographical features, the indigenous beliefs, the local political, economical, and cultural situation, and so on made Lingyan Monastery have distinctive local features. In this sense, the formation and transformation of Lingyan Monastery is the result of interactions of various national and regional factors, which embodies how RRS works in different regions.

Chapter One

The Transmission of Buddhism in Shandong:

The Establishment of Lingyan Monastery

in the Eastern Jin Dynasty and Sixteen Kingdoms Period

The rise and fall of a Buddhist monastery in China depends on various factors both at the state level and at the local level as China has always been a country with a vast size of territory throughout history. When the history of Lingyan Monastery is examined, we can find that it undoubtedly reflects the general situation of the prosperity and decline of Buddhism in the Chinese history to a degree on the one hand; On the other hand, it reveals the distinctive local and regional conditions of Shandong, or precisely, of the Mount Tai area which decides the development and destiny of Lingyan Monastery to a great extent. In this sense, “regionalism” and “localism” should be attached great importance to place studies on Chinese Buddhism as “a vast area such as China cannot be treated as a monolithic entity.”³¹ When the sociologist C. K. Yang investigated temple cults in China in his book *Religion in Chinese society*, he reminded his reader to be aware that “variations of temple cults reflect geographical and subcultural differences in diverse sections of the vast continental country.”³² He commented that “common features among these localities lie in the generalized functional pattern, and not so much in the

³¹ Wu, Tong and Ryavec, “Spatial Analysis and GIS Modeling of Regional Religious Systems in China: Conceptualization and Initial Experiments,” 157.

³² Ching Kun Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of their Social Factors* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press), 10.

concrete cults. Even for certain national cults, the names and at times the functions of the same god vary from place to place.”³³ Although the temples which Yang examined in this work cover various religions, it is still true that Buddhist temples in China exhibit a strong regional and local color which cannot be overlooked.

It is necessary to determine what the regional and local factors refer to when we attempt to define the regional and local color of a Buddhist monastery in China. These local and regional factors include not only geographical features, but also administrative, cultural, historical, social and economic features, which work together to influence or even shape a Buddhist monastery. Many previous studies have shown that religion and geography are two closely correlated academic fields, which reveal that the religious distribution is greatly influenced by geography and religious sites have significant impact on physical landscapes as well. However, this geographical approach has seldom been applied to the study of Chinese Buddhism. As Dr. Jiang Wu pointed out, “Most studies of Chinese religions lean heavily towards textual and historical research without sufficient emphasis on geographical features of religious sites.”³⁴ The previous studies on the relationship between Chinese Buddhism and geography are mainly about mapping the routes by which Buddhism was spread across China, but the spread and development of Buddhism in China is a dynamic process which involves much interaction between Buddhist sites in a particular region and the local geographical, social, economic, political and cultural

³³ Ibid., 10-11.

³⁴ Wu, Tong and Ryavec, “Spatial Analysis and GIS Modeling of Regional Religious Systems in China: Conceptualization and Initial Experiments,” 156.

systems. Thus the RRS approach could better reveal the deep connection between these factors which formed and shaped Lingyan Monastery in Shandong.

The Concept of Shandong

In order to find out what regional and local factors influence and shape Lingyan Monastery, it is necessary to determine what the region is. As for how to determine the boundaries of the region, there are different opinions. Zhou Zhenhe 周振鶴 once stated that “to mark a region by using administrative units, especially contemporary provincial boundaries, has obvious advantages” as “the administrative boundaries take form as a negotiation of different forces in history and were based on regional geographical features, many political, military, and economic considerations were taken into account.”³⁵ However, Dr. Jiang Wu did not agree with Zhou’s opinion. He pointed out that administrative units “do not fit the study of religious sites” and “a physiographic region shaped by physical geography and connected by traditionally formed transportation routes provides another alternative.”³⁶ Dr. Wu employed Skinner’s division of nine macroregions in China into his study. As Dr. Wu’s study covers the whole China while my study focuses on one Buddhist monastery in China, Skinner’s physiographic macroregions seem to be too large. Therefore, I choose to use “Shandong” as the target region in my research, which was first a geographical concept and then became an administrative division in Chinese history.

“Shandong” as a geographical concept has long been in existence in Chinese history. The appearance of the term “Shandong” may date back to the Warring States Period. Guan Zhong 管

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

仲, the famous philosopher and politician in the Warring States Period, once said “ the State of Chu is a powerful state in Shandong” in *Guanzi* 管子.³⁷ What Guan Zhong called “Shandong” is different from today’s administrative unit Shandong. It refers to the vast area east of Mount Taihang 太行山. However, when China was unified during the Qin and Han Dynasties, the term “Shandong” was not restricted to its original meaning. In the broad sense, it still refers to the area east of Mount Taihang; but in the narrow sense, it refers to the area similar to the administratively defined Shandong nowadays. Sima Qian 司馬遷, the famous historian of the Han Dynasty, used “Shandong” in its narrow sense in the *Shiji* 史記 for several times. For example, “Rulin liezhuan 儒林列傳” in the *Shiji* records the story of a Confucian scholar Fu Sheng 伏生, who hid his copy of the *Shang Shu* 尚書 inside the wall when Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇, the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty, decreed that all copies of the *Shang Shu* should be burned. When China was unified by the Han Dynasty again, Fu Sheng returned to fetch the hidden book and found that several tens of chapters was missing. He taught students with the remaining chapters in the region of Qi and Lu. Under his influence scholars were able to expound the *Shang Shu* and all the famous scholars of Shandong included the *Shang Shu* in their teachings.³⁸ The traditional explanation of “Shandong” in this text is still used in its broad sense. Watson’s translation of “Shandong” as “east of the mountains” indicates he followed this

³⁷ The original Chinese is “楚者, 山東之強國也.” See it in *Zhonghua shuju* ed., *Sibu beiyao*, Vol. 52 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 211.

³⁸ The original Chinese is “秦時焚書, 伏生壁藏之。其後兵大起, 流亡, 漢定, 伏生求其書, 亡數十篇, 獨得二十九篇, 即以教於齊魯之間。學者由是頗能言尚書, 諸山東大師無不涉尚書以教矣。” See “Ru lin lie zhuan” 儒林列傳 in the *Shiji* 史記 by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (Beijing: Tongxin chubanshe, 2012), 1450.

traditional view of point.³⁹ However, recent studies suggest that “Shandong” here is actually used in its narrow sense. “The region of Qi and Lu” and “Shandong” in the text should refer to the same area, which is the reason why Shandong is nowadays called the region of Qi and Lu.⁴⁰ Despite of different opinions on “Shandong” in the *Shiji*, it indicates that at least from the Han Dynasty “Shandong” was a universally accepted geographical concept. “Shandong” was first established as an administrative unit in 1168 during the Jin Dynasty. In the following Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, “Shandong” as an administrative division had been established.

It is noticeable that the formation of Shandong is not only because of some geographical features, but it is also based on the cultural, economic, and political features and etc.. Shandong is one of the most important cradles of Chinese civilization. The Dawenkou culture 大汶口文化, a neolithic culture which existed from 4150-2650 BC,⁴¹ was first found in Shandong. The ancient Chinese called Dongyi 東夷 was believed to be the inhabitants of Shandong area. The most well-known figure from Dongyi is Shun 舜, one of the legendary Five Emperors 五帝 in ancient China. According to the records in the *Mencius*, “Shun was born in Zhufeng 諸 (nowadays Zhucheng 諸城 in Shandong Province)⁴² and passed away in Mingtiao 鳴條

³⁹ Watson trans., *Records of the grand historian of China : translated from the Shih chi of Ssu-ma Ch'ien*. Vol.2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 366.

⁴⁰ An Zuozhang 安作璋, and Zhang Handong 張漢東, eds., *Shandong tongshi: Qin Han juan* 山東通史: 秦漢卷 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2009), 1.

⁴¹ Luan Fengshi, “The Dawenkou culture in Lower Yellow River and Huai River Basin Areas,” in *A Companion to Chinese Archaeology*, Anne P. Underhill ed. (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 411.

⁴² Scholars hold different opinions on where Zhufeng 諸馮 nowadays is. One opinion is that it should be Shangyu 上虞 in Zhejiang province such as Wang Hui 王暉. See it in his *Gushi chuanshuo shidai xintan* 古史傳說時代新探 (Beijing: Kexu chubanshe 科學出版社, 2009). However, *Shandong tongshi: Qin Han juan*

(nowadays near Kaifeng 開封 in Henan 河南 Province). He is one of Dongyi people.”⁴³ The *Shiji* also records that Shun plowed the field in Lishan 曆山 (nowadays in Jinan in Shandong), fished in Leize 雷澤 (nowadays Yanzhou 兗州 in Shandong), made pottery by the riverside, and made household utensils in Shouqiu 壽丘 (nowadays Qufu 曲阜 in Shandong).⁴⁴ Although archaeologists differ on where these ancient places mentioned in the classics are actually located, they still agree that most of Shun’s activities happened in Shandong. After Shun, his courtier Yu 禹 established the Xia Dynasty, which is the first dynasty in Chinese history. All these evidence show that Shandong area has formed its own culture long time ago.

In addition, Shandong not only owns advanced agriculture, handicrafts and textile industries, but also was rich in salt and minerals. During the Warring States period, the productivity of the field of Qi and that of the field of Lu ranked the third and the sixth respectively in China. During the Qin and Han periods, the productivity of the field of Qi ranked the first in China.⁴⁵ As a result, Shandong has always been one of the most important agricultural areas in Chinese history. The highly developed agriculture promoted the economic development and the development of some other industries as well. For example, Shandong is the largest silk production base in China in the Qin and Han dynasties and all the silk the imperial house needed was produced in

mentions it should be a place in Shandong. There is also another opinion that it is impossible to determine where Zhufeng is based on limited historical materials.

⁴³ The original Chinese is “孟子曰：‘舜生於諸馮，遷於負夏，卒於鳴條，東夷之人也。’” See it in “Li lou xia 離婁下” in *Mengzi 孟子* by Meng Ke (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 170.

⁴⁴ The original Chinese is “舜耕曆山，漁雷澤，陶河濱，作什器于壽丘”。 See it in “Wu di ben ji” 五帝本紀 in the *Shiji*, 7.

⁴⁵ See An and Zhang ed, *Shandong tongshi: Qin Han juan*, 162.

Shandong. The silk products of Shandong was sold abroad as early as the Han Dynasty through the silk road as the silk produced in Shandong was found in Dunhuang in early 20th century. The developed culture and economy made Shandong area a densely-populated region, which was the home to one-third of China's population in the Han Dynasty. At the same time, the developed culture and economy also increased the political status of Shandong and all the dynasties attached great importance to this area. Shandong has been a prosperous region long before Buddhism was spread to this region. The economic prosperity bred rich philosophical and religious thinking which also affected the whole Chinese culture. This deep cultural and religious background of Shandong became natural barriers to safeguard the values of its own culture and religion when any alien ones intended to set foot in this region. The establishment and the development of Lingyan Monastery is a good point in case. Therefore, when Lingyan Monastery is examined within a regional religious system, "Shandong" should be the most appropriate region to be chosen and the spread of Buddhism in Shandong should be investigated as well.

The Transmission of Buddhism into Shandong

Buddhism was spread into Shandong not much later than it was spread into China. According to the study of Zürcher, "around the middle of the first century AD Buddhism appears already to have penetrated into the region north of the Huai, in Eastern Henan, Southern Shandong and Northern Jiangsu."⁴⁶ Zürcher's conclusion is based on a record in the *Hou Han Shu* 後漢, which records Emperor Ming issued an edict in 65 AD to Liu Ying 劉英, the King of

⁴⁶ Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 26.

Chu 楚. The edict says “the king of Chu recites the subtle words of Huanglao 黃老, and respectfully performs the gentle sacrifices to the Buddha.”⁴⁷ Liu Ying’s territory Chu was Pengcheng 彭城, which covered a vast area of nowadays Jiangsu 江蘇 and Shandong in the Eastern Han Dynasty. The record reveals the existence of Buddhist activities in Shandong as early as in the first century, which is worth further investigation. Why did Buddhist activities happen in Pengcheng but not in some other places? The primary reason is the special location of Pengcheng. As Zürcher describes, “Pengcheng was a flourishing centre of commerce; it was situated on the highway from Luoyang 洛陽 to the South-East which actually formed an eastern extension to the continental silk-route by which foreigners from the West used to arrive. Moreover, in a north-western direction it was connected with Langya 琅琊 in Southern Shandong, and to the South-East with Wujun 吳郡 and Kuaiji 會稽, all important centers of maritime trade, which via Panyu 番禺 (Guangzhou) were connected with the trade ports of Indo-China and Malaya.”⁴⁸ The unique geographical location of Pengcheng undoubtedly provided favorable conditions for the spread of Buddhism. It served as a transportation hub on the important trading route and there was no wonder to find Buddhist activities even Buddhist sites in such a place. Actually according to the *Shuijing zhu* 水經注, there had existed a Asoka-monastery 阿育王寺 in Pengcheng during the reign of Liu Ying.⁴⁹ Some scholars argue that it is impossible that there was a monastery named after King Asoka in such an early time,

⁴⁷ Ibid., 27.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁹ See Li Daoyuan’s 酈道元 *Shuijing zhu* 水經注 (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 2001), 69.

but the record in the *Shuijing zhu* at least proves that there existed one or more Buddhist sites for holding Buddhist activities as Liu Ying was an ardent Buddhist.

In terms of the regional religious system, Dr. Wu also finds that clusters of religious sites in China have a kind of continuity in the history. In the comparison of the map of the Tang and Five Dynasties with that of the Qing Dynasty, many core areas remained the same.⁵⁰ Due to its geographical location and existing Buddhist sites, it is likely that Pengcheng will remain a core area of Buddhist activities after the reign of Liu Ying. In the *Sanguo Zhi* 三國志 (*Records of Three Kingdoms*), we can find an account of how Ze Rong 笮融(?-196), a Buddhist warlord in the Eastern Han Dynasty, promoted the Buddhist activities:

He elected a large Buddhist temple. From bronze he had a human (effigy) made, the body of which was gilded and dressed in silk and brocade. (At the top of the building) nine layers of bronze scales were suspended, and below there was a building of several storeys with covered ways, which could contain more than three thousand people, who all studied and read Buddhist scriptures. He ordered the Buddhist devotees (好佛者) from the region (under his supervision) and from the adjacent prefectures to listen and to accept the doctrine (受道). (Those people) he exempted from the other statute labour duties in order to attract them. Those who on account of this from near and afar came to (the monastery) numbered more than five thousand. Whenever there was (the ceremony of) “bathing the Buddha” (浴佛),

⁵⁰ Wu, Tong and Ryavec, “Spatial Analysis and GIS Modeling of Regional Religious Systems in China: Conceptualization and Initial Experiments,” 161-162.

he had always great quantities of wine (sic) and food set out (for distribution), and mats were spread along the roads over distance of several tens of li. (On these occasions) some ten thousand people came to enjoy the spectacle and the food. The expenses (of such a ceremony) amounted to many millions (of cash).⁵¹

This account deserves much attention in the following three aspects. First, it records the flourishing of Buddhist activities in Pengcheng in the second century, which supports Dr. Wu's argument that some core areas of Buddhist sites remain the same in the history. Although the record does not mention the exact time and place of those large-scale Buddhist activities, we can infer these information from the key figure Ze Rong. Actually, Ze Rong was a subordinate of Tao Qian 陶謙 who was the governor of Pengcheng. Therefore, Ze Rong's Buddhist activities mostly happen in Pengcheng. As for the time of those Buddhist activities, we can infer it from the personal information of Tao Qian and Ze Rong. As Tao Qian became the governor of Pengcheng in 193 and Ze Rong died in 195, Ze Rong's support for those Buddhist activities must happen between 193 and 195. In other words, it seems that Pengcheng still remained as a center and economy and transportation, which guaranteed the development of Buddhism in this area. Secondly, Ze Rong's Buddhist activities were more complicated than Liu Ying's because there

⁵¹ The original Chinese is “乃大起浮圖祠，以銅為人，黃金塗身，衣以錦采，垂銅槃九重，下為重樓閣道，可容三千餘人，悉課讀佛經，令界內及旁郡人有好佛者聽受道，復其他役以招致之，由此遠近前後至者五千餘人戶。每浴佛，多設酒飯，布席於路，經數十裡，民人來觀及就食且萬人，費以巨億計”。 See it in *Ershiwu shi: Sanguo Zhi Jin Shu* 二十五史：三国志晉書 edited by Geng, Xiangxin 耿相新 and Kang Hua 康華 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1996), 272. See the English translation in Zürcher's *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 28.

involved both political and economic elements. It mentions Ze Rong exempted Buddhist devotees from the other statute labour duties in order to attract them, which indicates a big change in the relationship between the imperial state and the Buddhist monastic order. It set a precedent for Buddhist monks and nuns to receive exemptions from the imperial state. Moreover, the exemptions promoted the economic development of Buddhist monasteries. Thirdly, it reveals a wide participation in Buddhist activities. According to the record, there were thousands of people gathering in the Buddhist monastery to read and study scriptures. When it came to “bathing the Buddha” which refers to the celebration of Vesak, a Buddhist festival to commemorate the birthday of the Buddha, “some ten thousand people came to enjoy the spectacle and the food.” It is quite possible those people who participated in reading and writing scriptures and Buddhist festivals included many common people and they came not completely out of Buddhist devotions. The extension of Buddhist activities from the monastery to the public area, and the involvement of the common people, in a sense, made Buddhist permeate into the local society and culture.

Nonetheless, the spread of Buddhism in Shandong was by no means without difficulty. By the time Indian Buddhism was introduced into China in the first century A.D., China was already a highly civilized country with one of the earliest writing systems in the world. In an less civilized country, it is easier for Buddhism to be accepted because the arrival of Buddhism could bring religion, philosophy, architecture, art and etc. to these regions or promote the development of these things if they were not fully developed. In a civilized country with highly developed religion and philosophy such as China, however, it is more difficult for Buddhism to win the

heart of local people as the indigenous religious and philosophical thinking has deeply rooted in traditional Chinese civilization and exerted great influence on its people and culture. Confucianism and Daoism are two most important indigenous religious and philosophical thinking in China when Buddhism began to spread in China in the Han period. Confucianism has already been established as the dominant state ideology since the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty 漢武帝 (156 B.C.--87 B.C.). The teachings of Daoism, usually attributed to the legendary Emperor Huang 黃帝 and Laozi 老子, were quite popular among Chinese people during the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period though Daoism as a religion began in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. Therefore, Buddhism, as a religion of foreigners, had to compete with these indigenous religious and philosophical thinking represented by Confucianism and Daoism and were caught in continuous conflicts with them since the very beginning.

In a conversation between Confucius and Zengzi 曾子 recorded by the *Xiaojing* 孝經 (*Classic of Filial Piety*), Confucius says that “filial piety is the root of (all) virtue, and (the stem) out of which grows (all moral) teaching.”⁵² He further explains that “our bodies--to every hair and bit of skin-- are received by us from our parents, and we must not presume to injure or wound them. This is the beginning of filial piety.”⁵³ From a Confucian perspective, all Buddhists obviously are unfilial children as they abandon their parents, shave their heads, and remain

⁵² The original Chinese is “夫孝，德之本也，教之所由生也。” See it in the *Xiaojing zhushu* 孝经注疏 annotated by Li Longji 李隆基 and Xing Bing 邢昺 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999), 3. See the English translation in James Legge’s *The Hsiao King Or Classic Of Filial Piety* (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2004), 10.

⁵³ The original Chinese is “身體髮膚，受之父母，不敢毀傷，孝之終也。” Ibid.

celibate. Even worse Buddhists do not care about the mundane affairs and do not respect the emperors which is contrary to the Confucian conviction that “it (filial piety) commences with the service of parents; it proceeds to the service of the ruler.”⁵⁴ Thus, Confucians criticized Buddhism was not suited for the conditions of China. As for Daoists, they did not welcome this alien religion either. De Bary once points out that Chinese were convinced that “its society was the only truly civilized society in the world.”⁵⁵ As a result, Daoists believed that Buddhism, as an alien religion, was inferior to Daoism. The popular story of the “conversions of the barbarians” (huahu 化胡) fabricated by Daoist writers in the Eastern Han tells about how Laozi journeyed to India to become the Buddha or preach Buddhism which is just another form of his thoughts to the Buddha. The story reflected a strong resistance of Daoism to Buddhism and “constituted an early example of Han ‘nationalism.’”⁵⁶

This kind of rivalry between Buddhism and the indigenous religious and philosophical thinking happened not only on the state level, but also on the local level. With regard to Shandong area, the resistance to Buddhism is much stronger than the other parts of China in the Han Dynasty as both Confucianism and Daoism can be regarded as the native traditions originated in Shandong. It is in Shandong that Confucius was born, edited the *Liujing* 六經 (*Six Classics*), and assembled disciples to give lectures during the Spring and Autumn period. In this sense, Shandong is the cradle of Confucianism. In the Han Dynasty, Emperor Wu of Han

⁵⁴ The original Chinese is “夫孝，始於事親，中於事君，終於立身。” Ibid.

⁵⁵ William de Bary and Irene Bloom, *Source of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, Vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 272.

⁵⁶ Gil Raz, *The Emergence of: Creation of Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 259.

“decreed that schools must be established and school officials must be appointed in every prefecture,”⁵⁷ which is the beginning of *guanxue* 官學 (official school) in the Han Dynasty. As official schools espoused Confucianism as the orthodox ideology, schools in Shandong were believed to represent the highest level for it is the cradle of Confucianism. The *Han Shu* 漢書 (*The Book of Han*) records that a famous official called Wenweng 文翁 in West Han Dynasty established schools in Shu 蜀 (nowadays Sichuan 四川) to spread Confucianism and sent young officials to Chang’an to study Confucianism with *boshi* 博士 who were usually learned scholars. Then the people of Shu were greatly cultivated and “the number of people from Shu studying Confucianism in Chang’an was on a par with that of people from Qi and Lu.”⁵⁸ The comparison proves that Confucianism in Qi and Lu reached highest point of fame in the Han Dynasty.

The popular Daoist teachings and practices in the Han Dynasty also had close relationship with Shandong. The location for the contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought (*baijia zhengming* 百家爭鳴) during the Warring States period was the Jixia Academy (Jixia xuegong 稷下學宮) in the capital city Linzi 臨淄 of Qi State which is in nowadays Shandong. The Huanglao School 黃老學派, the largest school in the Jixia Academy, was believed to be one of the most important origins of Daoism. It was in Shandong that the Daoist teachings of Emperor Huang and Laozi originated and thrived. Besides the development of philosophical teachings of

⁵⁷ The original Chinese is “乃令天下郡國皆立學校官。” See it in *Ershisi shi quanyi: Han Shu* Vol.3 edited by Xu Jialu (Beijing: Tongxin chubanshe, 2012), 1790.

⁵⁸ The Original Chinese is “蜀地學于京師者比齊魯焉。” Ibid.

Daoism in Shandong, the most noticeable practices of fangshi 方士 (Daoist magicians) in the Han Dynasty were also found in Shandong. As it was said that the immortals (xianren 仙人) lived in the three legendary mountains including Penglai 蓬莱, Fangzhang 方丈, Yingzhou 瀛洲 at the eastern end of Bohai Sea 渤海, many Daoist magicians went to Penglai in Shandong with the hope to find the immortals and obtain medicine for immortality. Significantly, the pursuit for immortality of those Daoist magicians in the Han Dynasty was greatly advocated and supported by Emperor Wu. The first Daoist who persuaded Emperor Wu to pursue immortality is Li Shaojun 李少君. He made Emperor Wu believe that praying to Zao Shen 灶神 (stove god) could turn the cinnabar into gold. When eating with vessel which made from this gold, he could prolong his life and see the immortals on the Penglai Mountain. After seeing the immortals, the emperor should practice the fengshan 封禪 sacrifices on Mount Tai and then achieve the immortality, as Emperor Huang had done previously. Li Shaojun's theory was warmly welcomed by Emperor Wu as he combined the pursuit of immortality and the practice of fengshan sacrifices together, which endowed fengshan sacrifices with a new meaning of immortality. Because of Emperor Wu's favor with the pursuit of immortality, an endless stream of Daoists from Shandong went to Chang'an in order to introduce to Emperor Wu various methods on how to achieve immortality. Though none of these methods were efficacious, Emperor Wu was so convinced with the possibility to achieve immortality that he "sent more ships and ordered thousand of Daoist magicians who declared there were legendary mountains in the sea to seek

the immortals on Penglai.”⁵⁹ As a result, people in Shandong were fond of practicing Daoism and the pursuit of immortality became a common practice.

In a word, Buddhism revealed its vitality in some areas in Shandong represented by Pengcheng in the Han Dynasty on the one hand; on the other hand, the indigenous religious thinking represented by Confucianism and Daoism became formidable obstacles to the further development of Buddhism in Shandong. Even though the prosperity of Buddhism in Pengcheng in the Han Dynasty has been proved by various texts, the motivations of Liu Ying and Ze Rong to practice Buddhism are still doubtful. As for Liu Ying, he confused Daoism and Buddhism as a single religion, so he was not a pure Buddhist in a sense. With regard to Ze Rong, he was often described as a cruel and greedy man in the historical recordings. When Ze Rong joined Tao Qian, he was appointed as an important officer to oversee the transportation of resources. However, he embezzled the resources and used them to practice Buddhism. He lavished money on building Buddhist temples and hosting Buddhist festivals. Later Ze Rong joined Zhao Yu 趙昱, the Administrator of Guangling Prefecture 廣陵郡 for shelter as Cao Cao 曹操 attacked Xuzhou. Zhao Yu treated Ze Rong as a honorable guest while Ze Rong killed Zhao Yu and plundered Guangling when he saw Guangling was a place of abundant resources and numerous people. Then he took the plundered wealth to join Xue Li 薛禮, his former ally in Pengcheng and moved to Moling 秣陵. There Ze Rong was also treated with dinner as a guest but he murdered Xue Li and took control of Moling. Later Ze Rong left Moling and went to Yuzhang 豫章. He

⁵⁹ The original text is “乃益發船，令言海中神山者數千人求蓬萊神人”. See it in the *Shiji*, Vol. 1, 181.

wormed his way to into Zhu Hao 朱皓's confidence, who was the commander of Yuzhang at that time, and then murdered Zhu Hao and made himself the commander of Yuzhang.⁶⁰ What Ze Rong did reveals his greed, brutality and ingratitude, which is quite contrary to what Buddhism advocates. Therefore, Ze Rong cannot be called a real Buddhist. He employed Buddhism as a way to strengthen his power and expand his territory. Apparently, Ze Rong took advantage of the identity of Buddhist to realize his ambition. We have to admit Ze Rong promoted the spread of Buddhism in Pengcheng area to an extent, but his own behaviors made Buddhism he promoted doubtful. What was the intention of people in Pengcheng to practice Buddhism, what the Buddhist doctrines did they study, and what were the exact ways for people to practice Buddhism? As there are no detailed materials to answer these questions, it can be assumed that the spread of Buddhism in Shandong was still in an embryonic period.

The Transmission of Buddhism into the Mount Tai Area

As Lingyan Monastery is located on the north-western range of Mount Tai, it is necessary to focus on this particular location to examine when Buddhism was transmitted into the Mount Tai area and how Buddhism was accepted in order to better understand the rise of Lingyan Monastery. Current evidence suggests that Buddhism was spread to Shandong in the first century. Based on the existing materials, Liu Ying was the first recorded Buddhist in Shandong in the first century. Ze Rong's practice of Buddhism happened in the second century. Records show that there were quite a few Buddhist followers and Buddhist activities in Pengcheng at that time. The

⁶⁰ As for the biography of Ze Rong, see it in *Ershisi shi quanyi: Sanguo Zhi*, Vol. 2 edited by Xu Jialu (Beijing: Tongxin chubanshe, 2012), 762.

prosperity of Buddhism in Pengcheng was largely related to its geographical advantage as it was located on the east end of the Silk Road, along which Buddhism was spread into China. Compared with Pengcheng in the second century, the Mount Tai area was not on the Silk Road, and far from Luoyang, the capital city of the Eastern Han Dynasty which was an important Buddhist center at that time as well, so it seems that it had not a geographical advantage for the transmission of Buddhism, which probably explains why there were not direct records about the transmission of Buddhism in the Mount Tai area before the third century.

The earliest record to relate Buddhism with the Mount Tai area is found in the *Liudu jijing* 六度集經 translated by Kang Senghui 康僧會 in the third century. Kang Senghui equated the concept of purgatory in Buddhism with Mount Tai in his translation because Chinese people believed that Mount Tai was the final destination for the dead.⁶¹ We don't know the exact time when Mount Tai become the adobe for the dead, but in some tombs of the Eastern Han Dynasty, the tomb writings were often found to include the account “the living go to Chang'an in the west while the dead go to Mount Tai (in the east).”⁶² In the eyes of the ancient Chinese people, Mount Tai was a massive mountain, so they often referred to “泰山” as “太山” for “太” in Chinese meant “huge” and “massive”. Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, an eminent scholar in the Qing Dynasty, once stated that “(I) attempted to investigate the past history of Mount Tai, (and found) the sayings of

⁶¹ The original text is “命終魂靈入於太山地獄.” See Kang Senghui 康僧會, *Liudu jijing* 六度集經 in the *Taishōzō*, Vol. 03, No. 0152.

⁶² The original text is “生人屬西長安，死屬太山.” See it in “Jiaping sinian xushi zhenmu wen” 嘉平四年許氏鎮墓文 included in *Zhensong tang jigū yiwēn* 貞松堂集古遺文 edited by Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2003).

immortals (in Mount Tai) originated since the end of the Zhou Dynasty and the sayings of ghosts (souls) originated since the end of the Han Dynasty.”⁶³ All these evidence show that the belief that Mount Tai was the final destination for the dead and it was in charge of souls and ghosts was quite popular in the Eastern Han Dynasty, which was the basis for the confusion of the concept “purgatory” in Buddhism with Mount Tai. According to the statistics, “Mount Tai 太山” appears 28 times, “Mount Tai Purgatory 太山地獄/太山獄” 9 times, and “Purgatory 地獄” 3 times in the *Liu du ji jin*.⁶⁴ In the later translations of Buddhist scriptures (from the Three Kingdoms period to the Five Dynasties period), we found that the use of “Mount Tai” to refer to “purgatory” became an established practice. Although it is still not known to what extent the local people of the Mount Tai area accepted this mixture of Buddhism with indigenous folk belief, it can be regarded as a starting point for Buddhism to penetrate into the Mount Tai area.

The Indigenous Religions in the Mount Tai Area

Unlike the four sacred Buddhist mountains in China (which are Mount Putuo 普陀山 in Zhejiang, Mount Wutai 五臺山 in Shanxi 山西, Mount E'mei 峨眉山 in Sichuan 四川, and Mount Jiuhua 九華山 in Anhui 安徽 respectively), Mount Tai has never become a Buddhism-exclusive mountain though it played an important role in the history of Chinese Buddhism. Mount Tai has always been regarded as the most important one among the five great mountains 五嶽 in China. The other four mountains are Huashan 華山 in Shanxi 陝西 as

⁶³ The original text is “嘗考泰山之故，仙論起於週末，鬼論起於漢末。” See it in *Rizhi lu jiaozhu* 日知錄校注 annotated by Chen Yuan 陳垣 (Hefei: Anhui daxue chubanshe, 2007), 1734.

⁶⁴ See Fan Wenmei's 範文美 “Taishan ‘zhigui’ shuo yu fojiao diyu” 泰山“治鬼”說與佛教地獄 in *Dongnan daxue xuebao (Zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 東南大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) (December 2010): 64.

Xiyue 西嶽 (Western Great Mountain), Mount Hengshan 衡山 in Hunan 湖南 as Nanyue 南嶽 (Southern Great Mountain), Mount Songshan 嵩山 in Henan 河南 as Zhongyue 中嶽 (Central Great Mountain), and Mount Heng 恒山 in Shanxi 山西 as Beiyue 北嶽 (Northern Great Mountain). As the sun rises from the east, the ancient Chinese regarded the east as the most important cardinal direction. Mount Tai is called Dongyue 東嶽 (Eastern Great Mountain), which indicates it is the head of all the five mountains. The ancient Chinese legend says that Mount Tai and the other four great mountains were originally transformed from the body of Pangu 盤古, the creator of the world in Chinese mythology. After Pangu died, he was lying with his head towards east. Then his head turned into Mount Tai. The eastern location of Mount Tai associates it with the rising sun and makes the ancient Chinese believe it is the place which is closest to the Heaven 天, so Mount Tai is where life originates. The ancient Chinese equated Mount Tai with a deity, and later there appeared legends of immortals and ghosts associated with Mount Tai. Mount Tai has played a significant role in Chinese popular religion.

Mount Tai is not only a sacred mountain of popular religion, but also one of Confucianism. Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, has a close relationship with Mount Tai. According to the account of the *Kongzi shijia* 孔子世家 (*The Hereditary House of Kong*), Confucius was born in the Zou Village 陬邑 of Changping Town 昌平鄉 in the State of Lu (which is now in Qufu, Shandong) in the Spring and Autumn period.⁶⁵ Mount Tai is located on the border between the State of Qi and the State of Lu, which is about 70 kilometers away from the place where Confucius was born. In addition, Confucius spent most of life in the State of Lu which is

⁶⁵ See in the *Shiji*, Vol.1, 747.

close to Mount Tai though he is well known for his wanderings to other states. Therefore, Confucius and his philosophy had a great influence on the history and culture of the Mount Tai area.

Confucius made great contribution in recording the history of the Mount Tai area in his time. *The book of Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*) which is believed to be compiled by Confucius can be taken as an encyclopedia of the history and culture of the Mount Tai area. According to the statistics, among all of the 483 wars recorded in the *Chunqiu*, 286 of them happened within the two hundred kilometers' distance from Mount Tai. The *Chunqiu* also documents over 450 meetings for allegiance between various states and most of them happened in the Mount Tai area.⁶⁶ The *Chunqiu* also contains the information about the natural disasters and the distribution of native residents of Mount Tai area.

Furthermore, Confucius led the trend for Chinese literati to ascend and write about Mount Tai. Confucius ascended Mount Tai for several times and some historical sites related to Confucius can still be found in Mount Tai. Mencius once said, "Confucius ascended the East Mountain, and the State of Lu seemed small. He ascended Mount Tai, and the world seemed small. Therefore, one who has looked at the sea finds it difficult to think of other waters, and one who has wandered within the gates of the sage finds it difficult to think of others' words."⁶⁷

⁶⁶ See Qi Huanli's 戚煥麗 "Kongzi yu taishan wenhua" 孔子與泰山文化 in *Dongyue luncong* 東嶽論叢 (July 2007):114.

⁶⁷ The original text is "孔子登東山而小魯，登泰山而小天下，故觀於海者難為水，游于聖人之門者難為言。" See it in the *Mengzi*, 301. See the English translation in *Mencius* translated by Irene Bloom (Columbia University Press, 2011), 149.

Nowadays in Mount Tai a place called “Zhanlu tai” 瞻魯臺 (Lu-Viewing Platform) is said to be the exact place where Confucius once stood to look over his home State Lu and said these words. As the words of Confucius express the philosophical meaning that the higher you stand, the greater your vision, this site attracted numerous literati and also tourists of later generations to visit. Besides ascending Mount Tai, Confucius also wrote some famous poems about Mount Tai to express his personal intentions. “Qiuling ge” 丘陵歌 (the Song of the Hill) is one of the most famous. It was written when Ai Gong 哀公 of the State of Lu sent men to the State of Wei 魏國 to greet Confucius with gifts but Confucius realized that he would not be appointed to an important position by the ruler and thus his political ideal could not be achieved. Under such a circumstance Confucius wrote the poem “The Song of the Hill” when he passed by Mount Tai and ascended it. The poem says:

(I) clime this hill; its slopes are long and steep.

The dao of humaneness is near; but when seeking it, (it) seems so far.

At once (I) am lost, and cannot return.

I am encircled by hardships and difficulties; (and so I) sigh and look back at (my) path.

Before (me) is Mount Tai; luxuriant and firm with its majesty.

(Yet) Mount Liangfu is tortuous and winding; and thistles fill its road.

(I) ascend it, but there is no route to follow.

(I) would cut a trail, but have no axe.

(My) afflictions, like these vines, spread in all directions.

(I) can only let out a long sigh, and cry sorrowfully until (my) tears flow like streams.⁶⁸

In this poem, Mount Tai represents the State of Lu, or “more specifically, an idealized version of Lu where it serves as the repository for the consummate features of Zhou dynasty culture.”⁶⁹ So the poem on the one hand can be regarded as Confucius’s high praise for Mount Tai, and on the other hand it reflects the frustration and disappointment of Confucius that he could not achieve his goal as the dao to Mount Tai or humaneness is full of difficulties. In this sense, Confucius is a pioneer to express his aspirations through the depiction of Mount Tai in poems. As a result, later literati followed Confucius’s example to ascend and write about Mount Tai. As Dott has commented, “By inscribing the sacred space of Mount Tai with their own words, they (the literati) affiliated themselves with those who had come before them and sought to guarantee that they would be remembered and admired by future generations of likeminded

⁶⁸ The original poem is as follows:

登彼邱陵，崱嶮其阪。
 仁道在邇，求之若遠。
 遂迷不復，自嬰屯蹇。
 喟然回顧，梁甫回連。
 枳棘充路，陟之無緣。
 將伐無柯，患滋蔓延。
 惟以永歎，涕貫潺湲。

See the original poem in *Kong congzi* 孔叢子 annotated by Wang, Junlin 王鈞林 and Zhou Haisheng 周海生 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 69. See the English translation of this poem in Michael Ing’s “The Sorrow of Regret” of *The Vulnerability of Integrity in Early Confucian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 22.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

men.”⁷⁰ It is Confucius who associated Mount Tai with Confucian ideals and made Mount Tai a sacred mountain of Confucianism as well.

In addition, the folk legends of the Mount Tai area witnessed the influence of Confucius and his philosophy. The legend relate to the site named “Sheshen ya” 捨身崖 (Abandoning-Oneself Cliff) in Mount Tai is a good example. The legends says that a man named He Xiaozi 何孝梓 and his son were lodged in a small inn at the foot of Mount Tai. Unlike other guests, He and his son did not ascend Mount Tai but just stayed in the inn for several days. The inn keeper asked him what happened. He told him that he went to Mount Tai to burn incense to Bixia Yuanjun 碧霞元君 (Grandma Tai) for his sick mother last year and promised that if his mother could recover from the illness he would sacrifice his life. After he returned home from Mount Tai, he found his mother regained her health. Now it was the time to fulfill his promise. If he abandoned his own life, no one would look after his mother. So he decided to make his five-year-old son to replace him, but how could he push his own son off the cliff as the son was such a smart child? After hearing He’s story, the inn keeper decided to save the life of the child. He pretended to take the child to climb Mount Tai and pushed him off the cliff, but actually he adopted the child secretly. He Xiaozi had thought his son was dead, so he erected a stone stele inscribed with “Shenshen ya” at the cliff where his son lost his life. After many years, when the child adopted by the inn keeper grew up to a scholar and became zhuangyuan 狀元 (the first place in the imperial examination), the inn keeper informed He Xiaozi the truth and then father and son reunited. He Xiaozi was regretful for his blind filial piety and they three went to the “Sheshen ya”

⁷⁰ Dott, *Identity Reflections: Pilgrimages to Mount Tai in Late Imperial China*, p. 224.

and changed the name for “Aishen ya” 愛身崖 (Loving-Oneself Cliff).⁷¹ The theme of the legend is undoubtedly around filial piety, which is a core value in Confucianism. The name of the protagonist in this legend implies the importance of filial piety as the pronunciation of his first name “Xiaozi” 孝梓 is the same with that of “filial son” 孝子 in Chinese. Though He Xiaozi’s willingness to abandon the life of his own son for his mother is not the correct way to practice filial piety, he is undoubtedly a filial son. The reward for his filial piety is the happy ending that He Xiaozi found his son was still alive and became Zhuangyuan. The happy ending contains the best wishes for all filial children and filial behaviors and as a result, it affirms and advocates the Confucian values.

In conclusion, the influence of Confucius upon Mount Tai is profound. Confucius and his philosophy have been written into the history of Mount Tai and this history in turn stimulates more Confucian writings of Mount Tai. The poet Yan Yunxiao 嚴雲霄 of the Ming Dynasty summarizes the relationship between Confucius and Mount Tai as “it is Confucius which makes Mount Tai what is, and it is Mount Tai which makes Confucius what he is,”⁷² which is a very accurate comment.

Besides Confucianism, Daoism also exerted great influence on Mount Tai. As early as the

⁷¹ The legend was taken from *Taishan chuanshuo gushi* 泰山傳說故事 edited by Zhongguo minjian wenyi yanjiuhui shandong fenhui 中國民間文藝研究會山東分會 (Beijing: Zhongguo minjian wenyi chubenshe, 1981), 5-12.

⁷² The original text is “孔子聖中之泰山，泰山嶽中之孔子。” It is a antithetic couplets written by a Ming Dynasty poet Yan Yunxiao 嚴雲霄 on the sides of the door of the Qifu Hall 祈福殿 of Confucius Temple 孔子廟 in Mount Tai .

Qing Dynasty, activities of fangshi in Shandong have been recorded in various sources. Although the fangshi in the Qin and Han Dynasties cannot be simply equated with later Daoists, they can still be regarded as “popular Daoists” or “religious Daoists” “since all such arts were later incorporated in the Taoist religion.”⁷³ An account of a fangshi named Luan Da 樂大 found in the “Fengshan shu” 封禪書 (The Treatise of the Feng and Shan Sacrifices) of the *Shiji* provides evidence for the early activities of the fangshi on Mount Tai. In the fourth year of Yuan Ding 元鼎 (113 BC), Luan Da, a fangshi from Shandong, was recommended to Emperor Wu for he claimed that he had met some legendary immortals such as An Qisheng 安期生 in the sea.⁷⁴ Luan Da said he knew well how to refine gold, prevent the Yellow River from breaching, call down the immortals, and find the elixir of immortality. Emperor Wu was glad with his abilities, so he not only made Luan Da “Letong Hou” 樂通侯 (Marquis of Letong), but also rewarded him a lot of treasures and married his eldest daughter to him. Emperor Wu’s favor for Luan Da aroused the enthusiasm of seeking immortals of the fangshi. “After this there was hardly a soul living on the seacoast of Yan 燕 and Qi 齊 who did not begin waving his arms about excitedly and proclaiming that he possessed secret arts and could command the spirits and immortals.”⁷⁵

⁷³ See Yü, Ying-shih’s 餘英時 “Life and Immortality in The Mind of Han China” in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 25 (1964-1965): 105.

⁷⁴ According to the *Shiji*, An Qisheng is an immortal living in Penglai. In Huangpu Mi’s 皇甫謐 *Gaoshi zhuan* 高士傳 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2014), 154, An Qisheng was depicted as a native of Langya, Shandong who claimed to have lived for a thousand years. Emperor Shihuang of the Qin Dynasty had conversed with him for three days and three nights. He told the emperor that he can find him in Mount Penglai, but the emperor had never found Penglai.

⁷⁵ The original Chinese is “而海上燕齊之閭，莫不扼腕而自言有禁方，能神仙矣。” See the *Shiji*, Vol. 1, 482. See the English translation in Watson’s *The Record of Great Historian*, Vol.1, 31.

Later Luan Da left Chang'an as an envoy of Emperor Wu to seek the immortals on the sea. However, he was found to stay on Mount Tai to perform sacrifices instead of setting out to sea to search for the immortals. Emperor Wu was angry and had him executed. The account of Luan Da shows that a large number of fangshi were Shandong natives during the reign of Emperor Wu and besides the seacoast, Mount Tai was one of the favorable places for the fangshi. The close relationship between the fangshi and Mount Tai makes a good preparation for the spread of the organized forms of Daoism into Mount Tai area at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty. There were two important Daoist schools in the late years of the Eastern Han Dynasty. One school is Wudou mi dao 五鬥米道 (Way of the Five Pecks of Rice) founded by Zhang Ling 張陵 and the other is Taiping dao 太平道 founded by Zhang Jiao 張角. Both of the two Daoist schools were quite active in Shandong in the Eastern Han Dynasty.

With regard to the Wudou mi dao, the founder Zhang Ling was a native of Pei County 沛縣 (now in Jiangsu Province) which bordered the southern part of Shandong. Zhang Ling founded the Wudou mi jiao in Sichuan, but this Daoist sect had great influence in Shandong. It is said that Cui Wenzhi 崔文子, a disciple of Zhang Ling, went to Mount Tai to pick up herbs to compound a medicine called Huang san chi wan 黃散赤丸 (Yellow Powder Crimson Pills) and saved the lives of thousands of people when a plague was raging in the Mount Tai area. Consequently, Cui Wenzhi was highly respected and influential among the local people. It seems this account could be a good example to prove the great influence of Daoists in the Mount Tai area, but the problem is that the earliest account of Cui Wenzhi was found in the *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳 (*Biographies of Immortals*), which was compiled by Liu Xiang 劉向 in the Western Han

Dynasty.⁷⁶ Moreover, this account just mentioned that Cui Wenzhi was a native of Taishan 太山, but not the dates of either his birth or death, or his relationship with Zhang Ling. If Cui Wenzhi was recorded as an immortal in a work compiled in the Western Han Dynasty, then he would not be a disciple of Zhang Ling since Zhang Ling was living in the Eastern Han Dynasty. However, scholars doubted Liu Xiang was not the real compiler of the *Liexian zhuan* and more textual evidence supports that the date of compilation of this work is probably in the Eastern Han Dynasty. If so, the account of Cui Wenzhi can still be taken as the evidence that Daoism was transmitted into and popular in the Mount Tai area. Moreover, both the *Baopuzi* 抱樸子 which was compiled by Ge Hong 葛洪 in the Jin Dynasty and the *Taiping yulan* 太平禦覽 which was compiled by a group of literati under Li Fang 李昉 in the Northern Song Dynasty include the account of Cui Wenzhi. In addition to the story that Cui Wenzhi made medicine and saved thousands of people's lives in the Mount Tai area, the *Taiping yulan* also mentions that Cui Wenzhi later went to the place Shu 蜀 (Now Sichuan 四川) to sell medicine. As Zhang Ling founded his Daoist sect in Sichuang and Sichuang was an important center of the Wudou mi dao, this account reinforced the relationship between Zhang Ling and Cui Wenzhi though none of the three works mention directly that Cui Wenzhi was a disciple of Zhang Ling.

As to the Taiping School, it was widely spread across Shandong in just over ten years since it was founded by Zhang Jiao. Kaltemark held that Taiping School was founded in Shandong in

⁷⁶ See the biography of Cui Wenzhi in the *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳 by Liu Xiang 劉向 and Ge Hong 葛洪 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990), 13.

175 CE.⁷⁷ Though his opinion is speculative, Shandong is an important center for the Taiping School based on the historical records. The *Hou Han Shu* records that “In addition to his preaching in Zhangzhou, his hometown, Zhang Jiao sent eight disciples to go to various places to preach. In just over a decade, eight out of ten states in the country have participated in the Taiping Road, with as many as hundreds of thousands of people. In order to facilitate organizing and management, Zhang Jiao has complied the Taoist organizations in Qingzhou, Xu, You, Jing, Jing, Yang, Yi and Yuzhou as the parish organization with the unit as the unit.”⁷⁸ The two places “Qing” 青 and “Yan” 兗 were in Shandong, and the three places “Xu” 徐, “Ji” 冀, and “Yu” 豫 include all the rest area of Shandong in addition to “Qing” and “Yan”. Therefore, the scope of Zhang Jiao’s preach covers all Shandong and the Mount Tai area is no exception though there is no specific record about the activities of the Taiping School in the Mount Tai area.

Since Mount Tai is linked to popular religious belief--Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism--it is a sacred mountain with “multiple identities.”⁷⁹ Dott applies Preston’s “Spiritual Magnetism” theory into the analysis of Mount Tai and concludes “Mount Tai’s drawing power was based on all four of Preston’s categories,” that is, miraculous cures, apparitions of

⁷⁷ See Max Kaltenmark, “The Ideology of the T’ai-P’ing Ching,” in *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion*, Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel eds. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 19-53.

⁷⁸ The original text is “角因遣弟子八人使于四方，以善道教化天下，轉相誑惑。十餘年閑，眾徒數十萬，連結郡國，自青、徐、幽、冀、荆、楊、兗、豫八州之人，莫不畢應。” See Xu Jialu ed., *Ershisi shi quanyi: Hou Han Shu*, Vol. 3 (Beijing: Tongxin chubanshe, 2012), 1411. See the English translation in *The Religious History in the Qin and Han Dynasty* by Li Shi, ebook, <https://www.kobo.com/gr/en/ebook/the-religious-history-in-qin-and-han-dynasty>.

⁷⁹ Brian Russell Dott, *Identity Reflections: Pilgrimages to Mount Tai in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asian Center, 2005), 79-81.

supernatural beings, sacred geography, and difficulty of access.⁸⁰ Obviously, the magnetism of Mount Tai was not from a single belief or religion, but from various religious beliefs or religions. It is hard to conclude which belief or religion in the Mount Tai area was strongest or weakest before the time when Lingyan Monastery was established, but the coexistence of various beliefs and religions inevitably led to both integration and conflict. Buddhism, as a foreign religion, encountered strong resistance from the indigenous religious thinking. Even though it shows that Buddhism began its integration with the popular beliefs in the Mount Tai area in the Han Dynasty, it was still at a disadvantage since the indigenous religious thinking in the Mount Tai area had a much longer history than Buddhism. The *Taiping jing* 太平經, which is said to inspire Zhang Jiao to found the Taiping dao contains some obvious anti-Buddhism ideas. Kaltenmark comments that “there can hardly be any doubt that this section (referring to four pernicious kinds of conduct 四毀之行 in the *Taiping jing*) is an allusion to Buddhist practices.”⁸¹ The four pernicious kinds of conduct are “lack of filial piety, not to procreate, to eat manure and urine, and to beg”, which “constitute an insult to the true Celestial Tao.”⁸² Apparently the four pernicious kinds of conduct were aimed at Buddhism, and “clearly displays a hostile rejection in whatever form Buddhism existed in China when the passage was written.”⁸³ Since the formation of the *Taiping jing* predated that of the Taiping School and was used by Zhang Jiao to preach his Taiping dao, the followers of Zhang Jiao should have been familiar and

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ See Kaltenmark, “The Ideology of the T’ai-P’ing Ching,” 35.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ See Holmes Welch, the Introduction to *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion*, 5.

agreed with this anti-Buddhism idea. As Shandong was an important center for the Taiping School at that time, it was quite unfavorable for the spread of Buddhism. In addition, Confucianism and the local popular beliefs were also the main forces against the spread of Buddhism in Shandong. As a result, the spread of Buddhism was still in its embryonic period in Shandong. Nonetheless, the magnetism of each religion varies in different periods and circumstances. Buddhism was waiting for its turn to rise in due course.

The Establishment of Lingyan Monastery

It is acknowledged by scholars that the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, or the Six Dynasties Period play an important role in the development of Chinese Buddhism since Buddhism began to gradually expand across China and transformed the Chinese philosophical thinking to a great extent in this period. There are several reasons for the fast development of Buddhism. Translation of Buddhist scriptures is a primary condition for the spread of Buddhism. Since the Han Dynasty, a succession of foreign monks came into China and made great contribution to the translation of Buddhist scriptures. There were An Shigao 安世高 and An Xuan 安玄 from Anxi 安息 (Arsacid, now Iran), Lokaksema 支婁迦隱 and Zhi Yao 支曜 from Kushan, Zhu Foshuo 竺佛朔 from Tianzhu 天竺, Kang Mengxiang 康孟祥 from Kangju 康居 and some other translators in the Han Dynasty. In the Three Kingdoms Period, Tan Kejia 曇柯迦羅, Tandi 曇諦, Kang Sengkai 康僧鎧, An Faxian 安法賢 and etc. translated Buddhist scriptures in Cao Wei 曹魏; Translators such as Wei Zhinan 維祇難, Zhi Qian 支謙, Kang Senghui 康僧會 did their translation in Dong Wu 東吳. In the Western Jin Dynasty, there was Zhu Fahu 竺法護 (Dharmaraksa) who was believed to be the most important translator of

Buddhist scriptures before Kumarajiva. With their efforts, a large number of Buddhist scriptures have been translated into Chinese which were more accurate and comprehensible than the earliest versions, which guaranteed the further penetration of Buddhism into different social strata.

At the same time, the social and political environment in the Six Dynasties strengthened the attraction of Buddhism. The Six Dynasties is a period full of turmoils in general. The internal corruption and external uprisings finally made the Eastern Han Dynasty collapse in 220, and after that China went into a chaotic period for over three hundred years until the Sui Dynasty reunited China in 581. The political fragmentation and endless civil wars forced people to leave their home and wander about, and the peasant uprisings erupted one after another. Under such a circumstance, people could not control their own fates, so they tended to seek spiritual comfort. Buddhism brought hope to the people who were living miserable lives that they could practice Buddhism for a better afterlife. Therefore, more and more common people became followers of Buddhism. As for the literati, they were attracted by Buddhist teachings for it shared much similarity with “xuanxue” 玄學 (Dark Learning) which was a popular trend among the literati in the Jin Dynasty because both Buddhism and “xuanxue” “talk about emptiness and non-being.”⁸⁴ As Zürcher has commented, “the popularity of such ‘talk about emptiness and non-being’ was a factor of the utmost importance in the development of early Chinese gentry

⁸⁴ Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaption of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 46.

Buddhism.”⁸⁵ Most importantly, Buddhism was gradually recognized and accepted by the rulers during this period. The rulers began to support the translation of Buddhist scriptures and other Buddhist activities, and in turn the circulation of these Buddhist scriptures became an important means for Buddhism to penetrate into Chinese society. At the same time, the rulers realized that Buddhism could be of great use to consolidate their power and therefore they greatly advocated Buddhism.

As Buddhism was thriving on the state level, it was revealing the upright momentum at the local level as well. However, if comparisons were made among different regions, the unbalanced development of Buddhism was especially apparent. In the Han Dynasty and the Three Kingdoms Period, the Buddhist monasteries were built to provide foreign monks and the merchants who practice Buddhism a place to respect the Buddha and also a place for accommodation. Since the Jin Dynasty, a large amount of Buddhist monasteries were built by the court and the nobles, and were supported by Buddhist followers. The appearance of these Buddhist monasteries transformed the way of practice of Buddhist monks. They were residing, practicing and propagating Buddhism inside the monasteries, which began to make Chinese Buddhism different from Indian Buddhism. I will compare the numbers of Buddhist monasteries in various regions in the Western Jin Dynasty and use them as an example to demonstrate the regional disparity in the development of Chinese Buddhism.

According to the records in the *Bianzheng lun* 辯正論 (*On the Right Way*), there were altogether 180 Buddhist monasteries in Luoyang and Chang’an and over 3700 Buddhist monks

⁸⁵ Ibid.

and nuns in the Western Jin Dynasty.⁸⁶ The *Luoyang jialan ji* 洛陽伽藍記 (*The Monasteries of Luoyang*) mentions that there were 42 Buddhist monasteries in Luoyang in the reign of Emperor Yongjia 永嘉 in the Western Jin Dynasty.⁸⁷ A study based on the local gazetteers shows that 58 Buddhist monasteries were newly established in the Western Jin Dynasty, which were distributed in the 12 of 19 zhou 州 (province) of the Western Jin Dynasty.⁸⁸ The following chart shows the numbers of newly established Buddhist monasteries in each zhou in the Western Jin Dynasty based on this study:

Chart I

Province	Number of Newly Built Buddhist Monasteries
Si Zhou 司州	5
Yan Zhou 兗州	1
Yu Zhou 豫州	0
Ji Zhou 冀州	2
You Zhou 幽州	2
Ping Zhou 平州	0
Bing Zhou 並州	1
Yong Zhou 雍州	2

⁸⁶ See Falin 法琳, *Bianzheng lun* 辯正論 in the *Taishōzō*, Vol. 52, No. 2110.

⁸⁷ See Yang Xuanzhi 楊衒之, *Luoyang jialan ji* 洛陽伽藍記 in the *Taishōzō*, Vol. 51, No. 2029.

⁸⁸ See Lai Yonghai's 賴永海 *Zhongguo fojiao tongshi* 中國佛教通史, Vol. 1 (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 2010), 285-286.

Liang Zhou 涼州	0
Qin Zhou 秦州	0
Liang Zhou 梁州	1
Yi Zhou 益州	2
Ning Zhou 寧州	1
Qing Zhou 青州	0
Xu Zhou 徐州	0
Jing Zhou 荊州	8
Yang Zhou 揚州	31
Jiao Zhou 交州	0
Guang Zhou 廣州	2

It can be seen that over half of the newly built Buddhist monasteries were located in Yang Zhou, which indicates Buddhism spread quickly in Yang Zhou and Yang Zhou became a most important Buddhist center besides Luoyang and Chang'an. Jing Zhou was also a place worth much attention as there were 8 newly built Buddhist monasteries here. Based on some historical texts, scholars agree that these Buddhist monasteries were probably located in Xiangyang 襄陽. Luoyang and Chang'an were located in Si Zhou and Yong Zhou respectively. However, the numbers of the newly built Buddhist monasteries in the two places were much fewer than Yang Zhou. The possible reason might be most of the existing Buddhist monasteries in Luoyang and Chang'an were built before the Western Jin Dynasty and thus they were not included in the

statistics. If we turn our attention to Shandong, we can find that the number of newly Buddhist monasteries is much smaller compared with other Buddhist centers. All of Qing Zhou and most parts of Yan Zhou belong to Shandong. In addition, a north-western part of Shandong belongs to Ji Zhou, a south-western part of Shandong belongs to Yu Zhou, and a southern part of Shandong belongs to Xu Zhou. When the five provinces are examined, it can be found that there were not any newly built Buddhist Monasteries in Qing Zhou, Yu Zhou and Xu Zhou, and there were 2 in Ji Zhou and 1 in Yan Zhou respectively. These numbers indicate that though Buddhism expanded quickly into various parts of China in the Western Jin Dynasty, Shandong was far from being a Buddhist center. Whatever the reason accounts for the delay of Buddhist prosperity in Shandong, the numbers of newly built Buddhist monasteries in different regions show that the regional factors play a significant role in the formation of Buddhist monasteries. Buddhism in Shandong was actually booming since the Eastern Jin Dynasty and it is also in the Eastern Jin Dynasty that Lingyan Monastery was established. A study on the distribution of Buddhism in Shandong in the Western and Eastern Jin Dynasties proves it.⁸⁹ As the primary sources of this study are the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (*Biographies of Eminent monks*), the *Biqiu ni zhuan* 比丘尼傳 (*Biographies of Buddhist nuns*), and the *Wei Shu* 魏書 (*The Book of Wei*), I will use the abbreviations GSZ, BQNZ, and WS to refer to the three sources respectively in the following chart:

Chart II

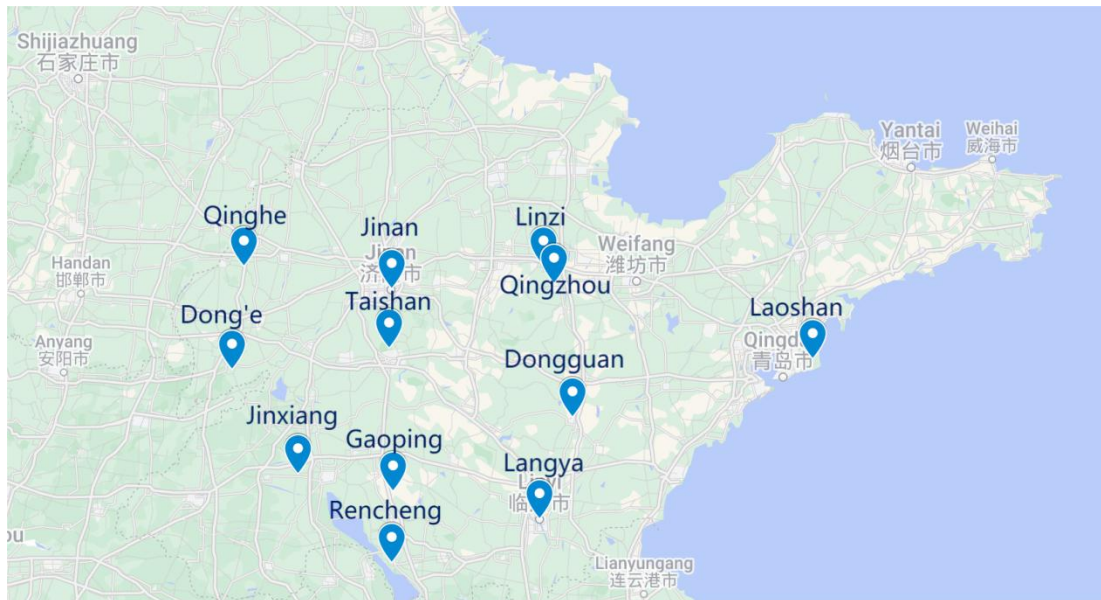
⁸⁹ See An Zuozhang ed., *Shandong tongshi: Wei Jin Nanbei chao juan*, 206.

Periods	Regions	Sources
The Western Jin Dynasty	Langya 琅琊 (nowadays in the northern Linyi 臨沂 in Shandong)	“Zhuqian zhuan” 竺潛傳 (Biography of Zhuqian) and “Daobao zhuan” 道寶傳 (Biography of Daobao) attached to “Zhu Fachong zhuan” 竺法崇傳 (Biography of Zhu Fachong) in the GSZ
The Eastern Jin Dynasty and the Sixteen Kingdoms Period	Mount Tai 泰山	“Zhu Senglang zhuan” 竺僧朗傳 (Biography of Zhu Senglang) in the GSZ, “Daoxin ni zhuan” 道馨尼傳 (Biography of Buddhist Nun Daoxin) in the BQNZ, and “Shi lao zhi” 釋老志 (Records of Buddhism and Daoism) in the WS
	Qinghe 清河 (nowadays	“Shi lao zhi” in the WS,

	Linqing 臨清 in Shandong)	“Shi Tanshi zhuan” 釋曇始傳 (Biography of Shi Tanshi) and “Shi Huiguan zhuan” 釋慧觀傳 (Biography of Shi Huiguan) in the GSZ, and “Fasheng ni zhuan” 法盛尼傳 (Biography of Buddhist Nun Fasheng) in the BQNZ
	Dong’e 東阿 (nowadays in the northeastern Yanggu 陽穀 in Shandong)	“Shi Huijing zhuan” 釋慧靜傳 (Biography of Shi Huijing) in the GSZ
	Gaoping 高平 (nowadays in the southwestern Zouxian 鄒縣 in Shandong)	“Minggan ni zhuan” 明感尼傳 (Biography of Buddhist Nun Minggan) in the BQNZ
	Rencheng 任城 (nowadays in the northwestern Weishan 微山)	“Huizhan ni zhuan” 慧湛尼傳 (Biography of Buddhist Nun Huizhan) in

	in Shandong	the BQNZ
	Jinxiang 金鄉 (nowadays in the southern Jiexiang 嘉祥 in Shandong)	“Lingzong ni zhuan” 令宗尼傳 (Biography of Buddhist Nun Lingzong) in the BQNZ
	Jinan 濟南	“Sengji ni zhuan” 僧基尼傳 (Biography of Buddhist Nun Sengji) in the BQNZ
	Dongguan 東莞 (nowadays Yishui 沂水 in Shandong)	“Zhu Fatai zhuan” 竺法汰傳 (Biography of Zhu Fatai) in the GSZ and “An Lingshou ni zhuan” (安令首尼傳 Biography of Buddhist Nun An Lingshou) in the BQNZ
	Linzi 臨淄	“Shi Huiliang zhuan” 釋慧亮傳 (Biography of Shi Huiliang) in the GSZ
	Qingzhou 青州	“Zhi Tanlan zhuan” 支曇

		蘭傳 (Biography of Zhi Tanlan) in the GSZ.
	Laoshan 牢山 (nowadays Laoshan 嶗山)	Faxian zhuan 法顯傳 (Biography of Faxian)



The Eastern Jin Dynasty and the Sixteen Kingdoms Period (303-439 AD), Major Buddhist sites, Shandong, China

In the Western Jin Dynasty, Buddhist activities were only found in Langya in Shandong, which is related to the two eminent monks Zhuqian and Daobao as both of them were natives of Langya. In contrast to the Western Jin Dynasty, there was a sudden flourishing of Buddhism in Shandong during the Eastern Jin Dynasty and the Sixteen Kingdoms period. The map shows Buddhist activities were found in most areas of Shandong. Moreover, according to the GSZ and BQNZ, not only the number of Buddhist monks increased rapidly in Shandong, but that of

Buddhist nuns grew a lot. Particularly, activities of Buddhist monks and nuns in the Mount Tai area were recorded by all the three major sources used by this study. Scholars agree that the Mount Tai area was the most important Buddhist center in Shandong during this period.⁹⁰ The reason why the Mount Tai area played such an important role in the development of Buddhism in Shandong is primarily due to the eminent monk Zhu Senglang 竺僧朗 who was the founder of the Lingyan Monastery. The GSZ includes a biography of Zhu Senglang:

Zhu Senglang was a native of Jingzhao (a prefecture around Chang'an). When he was young, he wandered around to seek "dao". After he grew older, he returned to Guanzhong (a region in nowadays Shanxi) to expound scriptures. Once he went with several Buddhist monks to conduct a ceremony at the invitation (of someone). When they were halfway there, he suddenly told his companions that it seemed a thief was stealing their clothing and other personal items in the temple. Upon hearing this they returned to the temple right away and found there was indeed a thief in the temple. Because he discovered the thief in time, no one had a loss. Lang regularly ate vegetables and wore simple clothes. His intent was outside the mundane affairs. In the first year of the reign of Fu Jian of the Former Qin Dynasty, he chose to move to Mount Tai. He and a recluse named Zhang Zhong became intimate friends in seclusion. They frequently visited and communicated with each other. Zhong later was summoned by Fu Jian (to Chang'an) and died when he just arrived at Mount Huayin (which was in the area of Mount Hua). Lang then built a

⁹⁰ An Zuozhang ed., *Shandong tongshi: Wei Jin Nanbei chao juan*, 195.

jingshe in Jinyu Valley of Mount Kunlun, which was a mountain to the northwest of Mount Tai. The peak (of the mountain) was high and steep, and the waters and rocks were magnificent. Lang built up the houses and rooms and made them to take advantage of the beauty of the mountain. Inside and outside (the jingshe) there were tens of rooms and over a hundred people came here after hearing about it. Lang diligently instructed and motivated (the followers) and even though he was tired he never talked about it. Emperor Fu Jian of the Former Qin Dynasty admired his virtue and sent an envoy to summon him (to his court). Lang declined saying he was old and sick so that (Fu Jian) stopped (doing so). As a result (Fu Jian) wrote letters (to Lang) every month and sent donations. Jian later eliminated (fake) monks. He promulgated a separate edict saying “Dharma master Lang has precept virtue as pure as ice, and his disciples are pure and accomplished. He is like the Kunlun Mountain, excluded from the investigation.”⁹¹ When it came to the Later Qin Dynasty, (the emperor) Yao Xing also highly praised and respected Lang. Murong De, the Emperor of Yan, admired Lang’s reputation and behavior and conferred the title of “King of Dongqi” to him. (The emperor also) gave him two counties’ taxes. Lang refused to accept the title but accepted the two counties’ taxes to perform charitable deeds to accumulate merits (for the emperor). Emperor Xiaowu of the Eastern Jin Dynasty wrote letters to express his regards to Lang. The Emperor

⁹¹ John Lagerwey and Pengzhi Lü, eds. *Early Chinese Religion, Part II: The Period of Division (220-589 Ad)* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 216.

Tuoba Gui of the Northern Wei Dynasty also sent letters and gifts (to Lang). How was he respected by the people! There were previously tigers in the valley to threaten people's lives, so the people had to walk in groups with sticks in hands. When Lang began to live here, all wild beasts submitted (to him). Both Buddhists and the common people could walk on the way without fear either in the morning or at night. The people praised him for his ultimate goodness. Therefore Lang was revered as a man of great talent and noble character. Thus Jinyu Valley was called Langgong Valley. Lang always knew in advance by a day that how many people would pay him a visit the second day and made his disciples prepare drinks and food for them. The guests indeed came as he had predicted. Everyone praised him for his precise divination. Later he passed away in the mountain when he was eighty-five years old. At that time, there was a monk named Zhi Sengdun in Mount Tai. He was originally a native of Jizhou. When he was young, he was wandering around the regions of River Qian and Mount Long (in nowadays Gansu 甘肅). As he grew older, he traveled through Jin zhou and Yong zhou. He had a thorough understanding of Mahayana Buddhism and was good at several Buddhist doctrines. He wrote the *Renwu shiyi lun*, which is still circulated among the people.

竺僧朗。京兆人也。少而遊方問道。長還關中專當講說。嘗與數人同共赴請。行至中途忽告同輩曰。君等寺中衣物似有竊者。如言即反果有盜焉。由其相語故得無失。朗常蔬食布衣。志耽人外。以偽秦符健皇始元年。移荀泰山。與隱士張忠為林下之契。每共遊處。忠後為符堅所徵。行至華陰山而卒。朗乃於金

輿穀昆侖山中。別立精舍。猶是泰山西北之一岩也。峰岫高險水石宏壯。朗創築房室制窮山美。內外屋宇數十餘區聞風而造者百有餘人。朗孜孜訓誘勞不告倦。秦主苻堅欽其德素遣使徵請。朗同辭老疾乃止。於是月月修書餽遺。堅後沙汰眾僧。乃別詔曰。朗法師戒德冰霜學徒清秀。昆侖一山不在搜例。及後秦姚興亦佳歎重。燕主慕容德欽朗名行。假號東齊王。給以二縣租稅。朗讓王而取租稅為興福業。晉孝武致書遺。魏主拓跋圭亦送書致物其為時人所敬如此。此穀中舊多虎災。常執仗結群而行。及朗居之猛獸歸伏。晨行夜往道俗無滯。百姓謠嗟稱善無極。故奉高人至今。猶呼金輿穀為朗公穀也。凡有來詣朗者。人數多少未至一日輒以逆知。使弟子為具飲食。必如言果至。莫不歎其有預見之明矣。後卒於山中。春秋八十有五。時泰山復有支僧敦者。本冀州人。少遊汧隴長曆荊雍。妙通大乘兼善數論。著人物始義論。亦行於世矣。⁹²

From this account, we see that Senglang built a jingshe in Jingyu Valley of Mount Kunlun after his intimate friend Zhang Zhong died. As Senglang was believed to be the first Buddhist monk to spread Buddhism in the Mount Tai area, this jingshe then evolved into the first recorded Buddhist monastery there. However, “the Biography of Zhu Senglang” in the GSZ did not mention the name of this jingshe, so disputes appeared among scholars on which monastery was originally built as this jingshe and what is the exact time when this jingshe was built. Zürcher believed Zhu Senglang “went to Shandong and in 351, founded an important monastery at the Tai Shan 泰山, the establishment of which is commonly considered to mark the beginning of

⁹² Shi, Huijiao 釋慧皎, *Sichao gaoseng zhuan: Gaoseng zhuan* 四朝高僧傳: 高僧傳 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian chubanshe, 2018), 72.

Buddhism in that region.”⁹³ The GSZ said that Senglang moved to Mount Tai in 351 (in the first year of the reign of Fu Jian of the Former Qin Dynasty), so here Zürcher equated the time when Senglang moved to Mount Tai with that when the jingshe was built. However Fu Jian did not take control of Mount Tai area until he defeated the Former Yan 前燕 in 370. In 384, the Later Yan Dynasty 後燕 defeated the Former Qin and took control of the Mount Tai area. Therefore, the year Fu Jian summoned Zhang Zhong to Chang’an should be between 370 and 384 and thus the jingshe was probably built during the same period, but not in 351.⁹⁴

The LYZ also contains a biography of Zhu Senglang. When comparing this biography with that in the GSZ, we see the biography in the LYZ quoted most part of the biography in the GSZ except for the part of the Buddhist monk Zhi Dun. In addition, a passage quoted from the *Shenseng zhuan* 神僧傳 (*The Biography of Holy Monks*) appeared in the biography in the LYZ .

The following is a translation of the passage from the *Shenseng zhuan*:

(When) the monk Langgong expounded Buddhist teachings in a northern hill of Mount Tai, under (him) there were a thousand listeners, and the rocks nodded their heads. The listeners told it to Langgong, and Langgong said, “this hill is spiritual because I awakened its mind to enlightenment. When I obtained nirvana one day, (you) should bury me inside the hill.” The disciples of Langgong remembered his words by heart. Then hundreds of years later, (this hill) still made all the people

⁹³ Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaption of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 185.

⁹⁴ Gong Weizhang 公維章 and Zhang Mei 張梅, “Senglang yu taishan fojiao shishi biannian” 僧朗與泰山佛教史事編年 in *Taishan xueyuan yuanbao* 泰山學院院報, Vol. 39, No. 2 (March 2017): 15.

who were studying (Buddhism) to (come to) observe and respect. It is the origin of the lingyan (spiritual hill).

山靈也，為我解化，他時涅槃，當埋於此。”傳衣鉢者記取，數百年後，能使一切學人，來觀仰焉！此靈岩所本來也。⁹⁵

The additional passage in the LYZ explains the origin of the name of the Lingyan Monastery, but does not specify the relationship between the Jinyu Valley and the place where the spiritual rocks existed. Nonetheless, some related records found in other sources prove that the jingshe mentioned in the GSZ is actually a monastery called Langgong Monastery 朗公寺 or Shentong Monastery 神通寺. These sources include the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, the *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄, the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林, and the *Beishan lu* 北山錄. All the sources confirm that a monastery which was built in the Jinyu Valley of Mount Tai was called Langgong Monastery or Shentong Monastery while the name of Lingyan Monastery was mentioned in none of these sources. But the problem is that these records indicate Langgong or Shentong monastery was built in the Western Jin Dynasty, which is contradictory to the time recorded in the GSZ. An explanation for it is that the three names refer to the same monastery,⁹⁶ which means Langgong or Shentong Monastery later changed its name to Lingyan Monastery. However, it still cannot explain the time conflict in these records. Moreover, there are still Shentong Monastery and Lingyan Monastery in nowadays Jinan, Shandong and their locations are very close to each other. Thus, a more reasonable explanation is

⁹⁵ Ma Daxiang ed., *Lingyan zhi*, 35.

⁹⁶ An Zhanghe ed., *Shandong tongshi: Wei Jin Nanbei chao juan*, 196.

Seng Zhulang built not only one Buddhist monastery but at least two or even more Buddhist monasteries in the Mount Tai area. The most prominent ones include both Langgong Monastery and Lingyan Monastery. A literati named Yao Ding 姚鼎 in the Qing Dynasty recorded his trip to Lingyan Monastery and in the account of his trip, we found more details of the two monasteries.

I was originally planning to visit Lingyan Monastery with Zhu Ziyang, but Ziyang had business affairs. So he sent a native of Tai'an named Nie Jianguang to accompany me. Pointing to the northern valley of Mount Lingyan, Nie told me: "(if walking eastward against (the stream in the valley), crossing a mountain ridge, (we could) arrive at Mount Kunrui. All the streams in the valleys of Mount Lingyan flow westward, merge with the water of Zhongchuan, and flow into Jishui (the River of Ji). The streams in Mount Kunrui flow northwestward, and merge into Jishui too. All belong to the streams of the northern valley of Mount Tai. According to the legend, the eminent monk Zhu Senglang in the Jin Dynasty, a disciple of Fotu Deng, was once living in Mount Kunrui. He sometimes went to Lingyan Monastery to expound Buddhism. Hence the valley of Mount Kunrui is called Valley Langgong, and a great rock in Lingyan Monastery is called Langgong Rock. During the reign of Fu Jian in the Former Qin Dynasty, Zhu Senglang built halls and houses at a large scale in Mount Kuirui. The buildings and pavilions were magnificent, (but) later were collapsed and deserted. On the contrary, since the Song Dynasty, the construction of monastery was thriving within Lingyan Monastery."

餘初與朱子穎約來靈岩，值子穎有公事，乃俾泰安人聶劍光偕餘。聶君指岩之

北穀，溯以東，越一嶺，則入於琨瑞之山。蓋靈岩穀水西流，合中川水入濟；琨瑞山水西北流入濟，皆泰山之北穀也。世言佛圖澄之弟子曰竺僧朗，居於琨瑞山，而時為人說其法於靈岩。故琨瑞之穀曰朗公穀，而靈岩有朗公石焉。當苻堅之世，竺僧朗在琨瑞大起殿舍，樓閣甚壯，其後頽廢至盡；而靈岩自宋以來，觀宇益興。⁹⁷

Yao Ding's writings confirmed that Langgong Monastery and Lingyang Monastery coexisted in the Mount Tai area when Langgong was living there. It is possible that Langgong Monastery was built earlier than Lingyan Monastery, but it seemed both the two monasteries were prosperous Buddhist sites in the Eastern Jin Dynasty. Yao's writings mentioned Langgong "built halls and houses at a large scale" which indicated Senglang attracted a large number of followers to stay with him in this valley so that he needed to built a lot of houses. The LYZ described that a thousand people were listening to Senglang's teachings in Lingyan Monastery, which revealed the popularity of Senglang. The coexistence of the two monasteries reflect not only the prosperity of Buddhism in the Mount Tai area, but also the formation of Buddhist Sangha in this area, which is a key factor to the rise of Buddhist monasteries in the Eastern Jin Dynasty and the Sixteen Kingdoms Period.

The Formation of Buddhist Sangha in the Mount Tai Area

Scholars have long since noticed the various patterns of the spread of Buddhism in Southern China and Northern China. When Zürcher discussed Southern Buddhism in China, he

⁹⁷ Yang, Rongxiang 楊榮祥, ed. *Fang Bao Yao Ding wen xuanyi* 方苞姚鼐文選譯 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1991), 259.

pointed out that “the late third and early fourth century AD witness the formation of a wholly new type of Chinese intellectual élite, consisting of cultured monks who, by a fruitful combination of Buddhist doctrine and traditional Chinese scholarship, were able to develop the particular type of Buddhism which spread among the upper classes and which we therefore have called ‘gentry Buddhism’.”⁹⁸ Unlike Southern Buddhism, Northern Buddhism in China did not attract the intellectual circles first, but drew the attention of the rulers of Northern China and established close relationship with the court to win support. Some eminent monks or sanghas led by these eminent monks played a vital role in the spread of Buddhism in Northern China. Zürcher once states that “its introduction (the introduction of Buddhism) into China means not only the propagation of certain religious notions, but also the introduction of a new form of social organization: the monastic community, the sangha. To the Chinese Buddhism has always remained a doctrine of monks. The forces and counter-forces which were evoked by the existence of the Buddhist Church in China, the attitudes of the intelligentsia and of the government, the social background and status of the clergy and the gradual integration of the monastic community into medieval Chinese society are social phenomena of fundamental importance which have played a decisive role in the formation of early Chinese Buddhism.”⁹⁹ The establishment of Buddhist sacred sites is an important means for the early Buddhist monks to advocate and expand Buddhism. The appearance of more and more Buddhist sacred sites in

⁹⁸ Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaption of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 185.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

turn attracted more Buddhist monks, and finally led to the formation of Buddhist sangha. The rise of Lingyan Monastery along with other Buddhist sacred sites in the Mount Tai area verified the tremendous influence of these eminent monks in propagating Buddhism and forming the Buddhist sanghas in Shandong.

With regard to Shandong, the most eminent monk is undoubtedly Zhu Senglang who was the founder of the Lingyan Monastery and the initiator of Buddhism in the Mount Tai area as well. Neither of Zhu Senglang's biographies in the GSZ and the LYZ mentioned who Zhu Senglang's teacher was, but Yao Ding's writings made it clear as it said Zhu Senglang was a disciple of Fotu Deng. A passage found in the *Shuijing zhu (The Commentary to the River Classic)* compiled by Li Daoyuan in the Northern Wei Dynasty also supported that Zhu Senglang was a disciple of Fotu Deng:

The Ji Shui (the River of Ji) again flows northeastward, (and) to the west merges with the Yu Shui (the River of Yu). The origin of Ji Shui is (the stream in) the Langgong Valley of Mount Tai which was called Kunrui Xi (the Stream of Kunri) previously. There was a Buddhist monk (named) Zhu Senglang, who served Fotu Deng when he was young. Senglang was learned and erudite, and was especially good at astrology. He lived in seclusion in this valley, so the valley was named after him as Valley Langgong.

濟水又東北，右會玉水，水導源太山朗公穀，舊名琨瑞溪，有沙門竺僧朗，少

事佛圖澄，碩學淵通，尤明氣緯，隱於此穀，因謂之朗公穀。¹⁰⁰

Fotu Deng was one of the most important figures in the history of early Chinese Buddhism. It was him who made Buddhism expand into Northern China during the Eastern Jin Dynasty and the Sixteen Kingdoms Period. He was very erudite as “he had a subtle understanding of profound sutras and besides could comprehend secular writings. On the day of a lecture, he simply laid bare the principles, making the whole text clearly understandable.”¹⁰¹ Therefore, he had numerous followers. “Those who received instruction and followed him about always numbered several hundred. His disciples all told were nearly 10,000. In the provinces 州 and prefectures 郡 through which he passed, he erected Buddhist temples to the number of 893. Such a flourishing condition of the propagation of Buddhism was unprecedented.”¹⁰² Fotu Deng and his disciples formed a large Buddhist sangha which exerted great influence on Chinese society. Later when his disciples went to various parts of China, they followed their master’s example to propagate Buddhism. As a result, more Buddhist sanghas came into being under Fotu Deng’s disciples across China. As a disciple of Fotu Deng, Zhu Senglang received good training from his teacher. When he arrived at the Mount Tai area, he applied what he had learned from Fotu

¹⁰⁰ See Li Daoyuan’s *Shuijing zhu*, 65.

¹⁰¹ The original text is “妙解深經傍通世論。講說之日止標宗致。使始末文言昭然可了。” See Shi Huijiao’s 釋慧皎 *Sichao gaoseng zhuan: Gaoseng zhuan* 四朝高僧傳：高僧傳 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian chubanshe, 2018), 144. See the English translation in Arthur Frederick Wright’s “Fo-t’u-têng: A Biography” in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3/4 (December 1948): 367.

¹⁰² The original text is “受業追游常有數百。前後門徒幾且一萬。所曆州郡興立佛寺八百九十三所。弘法之盛莫與先矣。” Shi Huijiao, *Gaoseng zhuan*, 345. See the English translation in Wright’s “Fo-t’u-teng: A Biography,” 367-368.

Deng into practice. He gave lectures on Buddhist scriptures and built monasteries as his teacher had done. Most importantly, he learned from his teacher how to obtain support of the rulers to expand Buddhism. The success of Fotu Deng lies in his close relationship with the ruler, the Shi Family, to a great extent. The primary reason why Fotu Deng could win the support of the rulers is that he “demonstrated the fetish power of Buddhism.”¹⁰³ “The Biography of Fotu Deng” in the GSZ contains many examples to illustrate his “fetish power of Buddhism.” The following is a good example:

Lo’s general, Kuo Hei-lüeh 郭黑略, had long honored the Dharma, so Teng went to stay [383c] at lüeh’s house. Lüeh, after accepting from him the Five Commandments, paid Teng the courtesies of a disciple. Afterwards, when on a punitive expedition under Lo, Lüeh always knew beforehand whether [an engagement] would be a victory or a defeat. Lo marveled at this and asked him, “I was not aware that you had such extraordinary discernment, yet you know every time whether a military expedition will be a success or a failure. How is this?” Lüeh replied, “General, your naturally extraordinary military prowess is being aided by supernatural influences. There is a certain sramana whose knowledge of devices is exceptional. He said that you, my general, should conquer China and that he should be your teacher. All the things I have told you on various occasions were his words.” Lo was delighted and said, “He is a gift from heaven.” He summoned Teng and enquired, “What miraculous efficacy does Buddhism have?” Teng knew that Lo did

¹⁰³ Wright, “Fo-t’u-teng: A Biography,” 325.

not understand profound doctrines and would only be able to regard magic as evidence [of the power of Buddhism]. Accordingly he said, “Though the highest teachings are remote [from the general understanding], we can take nearby things as proof [of the efficacy of Buddhism].” Thereupon he took his begging bowl, filled it with water, burned incense, and said a spell over it. In a moment there sprang up blue lotus flowers whose brightness and color dazzled the eyes. Lo was convinced by this, and Teng accordingly admonished him, saying, “Now when a king’s virtuous influence pervades the universe, the four sacred creatures appear as good omens. When government is corrupt, and the Way is neglected, then comets will appear in the heavens. When heavenly signs manifest themselves, fortune and misfortune come in their wake. This is the constant testimony of ancient and modern times and the clear rule for Heaven and man.” Lo was very pleased at this. Of those remaining who were to have been executed, eighty or ninety per cent benefited from this [intervention on the part of Fo-t’u-teng]. Thereupon almost all the barbarians and Chinese in Chung-chou 中州 worshipped the Buddha.¹⁰⁴

勒大將軍郭黑略素奉法。澄即投止略家。略從受五戒崇弟子之禮。略後從勒征伐。輒預克勝負。勒疑而問曰。孤不覺卿有出眾智謀。而每知行軍吉凶何也。略曰。將軍天挺神武幽靈所助。有一沙門術智非常。雲將軍當略有區夏已應為師。臣前後所白。皆其言也。勒喜曰。天賜也。召澄問曰。佛道有何靈驗。

¹⁰⁴ See the original text in Shi Huijiao’s *Gaoseng zhuan*, 346. See the English translation in Wright’s “Fo-t’u-teng: A Biography”, 339-340.

澄知勒不達深理。正可以道術為徵。因而言曰。至道雖遠亦可以近事為證。即取應器盛水燒香咒之。須臾生青蓮花。光色曜日。勒由此信服。澄因而諫曰。夫王者德化洽於宇內。則四靈表瑞。政弊道消則彗孛見於上。恒象著見休咎隨行。斯乃古今之常徵。天人之明誠。勒甚悅之。凡應被誅餘殘。蒙其益者。十有八九。於是中州胡晉略皆奉佛。

In this passage, Futo Deng was depicted as if he was a sorcerer in the Medieval ages. He was a seer who could predict the outcome of the coming wars. He also could do some miraculous things by saying spells. He attributed his magic power to Buddhism so that not only the rulers but “all the barbarians and Chinese in Chung-chou” were converted by him to practice Buddhism. This type of biographies in the GSZ were often criticized for it “blurs the already fuzzy boundaries that separate myth-making from the writing of ‘factual biographies.’”¹⁰⁵ Thus, the real image of Fotu Deng might be hidden by the exaggerated description of his magic power. It is quite possible that he was very accomplished in Buddhist doctrines and monastic rules. However, the rulers such as Shi Le 石勒 mentioned in the biography “did not understand profound doctrines” and they were interested in Buddhism mainly because the Buddhist monks exhibited certain magic power. It is also true to Zhu Senglang. Although there is not so much description about Zhu Senglang’s magic power in his biography as in Fotu Deng’s, the magic power still plays a vital role for him to get support from the rulers. The existing biographies of Zhu Senglang in various sources lay much emphasis on his ability of prediction. The biography in the

¹⁰⁵ Mario Poceski, *The Records of Mazu Daoyi and the Making of Classical Chan Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 45.

GSZ gives several examples as Zhu Senglang could know in advance there would be a thief in the monastery which was proved when the monks returned to the monastery. Fotu Deng draw the attention of the ruler Shi Le first by correctly predicting success or failure of wars. Similarly, Zhu Senglang used the ability of prediction to win the support of a succession of barbarian and Chinese rulers in the Eastern Jin Dynasty and the Sixteen Kingdoms Period. From the “Biography of Zhu Senglang” in the GSZ, we know the rulers such as Fu Jian of the Former Qin, Yao Xing of the Later Qin, Murong De of the Southern Yan, Emperor Xiaowu of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, and Tuoba Gui of the Northern Wei had high regard for Zhu Senglang, sent envoys to greet him with gifts. To a large extent the rulers expected to take advantage of Senglang’s ability of prediction, or “the fetish power of Buddhism” to help them fulfill their political ambitions.

The following passage in the *Jin Shu* 晉書 (*The Book of Jin*) proves it:

The sramana Langgong always knew (how to) predict (the future) by astrology. (Murong) De therefore visited (Langgong and asked him) where was the best place (for him) to settle down. Lang said, “(I) carefully examined the three proposals (by your ministers and thought) the proposal of Minister Pan could be called a way to thrive the state. At the beginning of this year, the long star rose from Kui lou (one of twelve sector divisions of the ecliptic), and then swept over Xu and Wei (two of the Twenty-Eight Mansions 二十八星宿). While Xu and Wei (in the sky) correspond to the State of Qi (on the earth), it is a sign of getting rid of the old to make way for the new. It is suitable to first settle down in the previous State of Lu, then patrol and placate Langya. At the time when the autumn wind begins to blow, (you should) go

northward to besiege and approach the State of Qi. This is the way of Heaven.” De was very glad to hear it. (He) led the army down south. Yanzhou and all the counties at the northern territories surrendered, and (he) appointed the shouzai (a title for the local official) to placate (the people of) these counties. (He) expressed regards and concern to the aged. The army did not privately plunder (these counties). The local people were appeased, and the cattle and the wine (used for sacrifice could be seen) along the way.

沙門郎公素知占候，德因訪其所適。郎曰：「敬覽三策，潘尚書之議可謂興邦之術矣。今歲初，長星起於奎婁，遂掃虛危，而虛危，齊之分野，除舊佈新之象。宜先定舊魯，巡撫琅邪，待秋風戒節，然後北圍臨齊，天之道也。」德大悅，引師而南，兗州北鄙諸縣悉降，置守宰以撫之。存問高年，軍無私掠，百姓安之，牛酒屬路。¹⁰⁶

With Senglang’s help, Murong De finally crowned himself emperor. The GSZ says Murong De conferred the title of “King of Dongqi” to Senglang and also gave him two counties’ taxes because he admired Senglang’s “fame and behavior.” However, based on the account of the *Jin Shu*, it seems the title and the taxes from Murong De is more like a reward as Senglang helped him realize his ambition to become the supreme ruler. In a sense, Senglang acted as a spiritual leader to improve the morale of the army and placate the people. As a result, the rulers were willing to please him and support Buddhism.

¹⁰⁶ Fang Xuanling et al. ed., *Jin Shu* edited by Geng Xiangxin 耿相新 and Kang Hua 康華 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1996), 618.

Like his teacher, Zhu Senglang was very intelligent so that he attributed his ability of prediction to the fetish power of Buddhism and combined the fate of the state with Buddhist doctrines. During the Eastern Jin Dynasty and the Sixteen Kingdoms Period, Shandong was taken control by a succession of barbarian regimes. Despite of their military success, the most urgent problem which needed to be solved for these barbarian rulers is to legitimate their authority both politically and culturally. The Buddhist monks with magic power such as Fotu Deng and Zhu Senglang made the rulers realize that Buddhism was very useful and powerful to strengthen their authority so that they transformed into Buddhist followers and made Buddhism as a state religion. With regard to the Mount Tai area, Buddhism was probably used to contend with the deep-rooted Confucianism and Daoism in Shandong. Hence more Buddhist monasteries were built in the Mount Tai area and then became important sites to further promote the spread of Buddhism. During this period, quite a few influential monks in the Chinese history had set foot on Mount Tai. When Senglang gave lectures on the *Fangguang bore jing* 放光般若經 (*Light-Emitting Wisdom Sutra*), there were many pious listeners and Seng Rui 僧叡 was one of them. He had studied with Senglang for two years in the Mount Tai area before he became one of the most important assistants of Kumārajīva.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the “Biography of Fahe” 法和傳 in the GSZ mentioned that Fotu Deng’s disciples, Fahe and Dao’an, once met in the Valley Jinyu of Mount Tai. Though Senglang’s name did not appear in this record, scholars such as Tang Yongtong 湯用彤 believed it should be a meeting among the disciples of Fotu Deng which was

¹⁰⁷ Shi Huijiao, GSZ, 244.

organized by Senglang¹⁰⁸ since the Valley Jinyu was the place where Senglang was residing. This meeting revealed that exchange and interaction between Buddhist monks were frequent in the Mount Tai area, which actually suggested a Buddhist sangha centered around Senglang came into being. The development of this Buddhist sangha had profound influence on Buddhism both in the Mount Tai area and Shandong in the later dynasties. As Wright has commented, “They (the disciples of Fotu Deng) strengthened and expanded the church, and they ensured the continuance and further development of Buddhism in China.”¹⁰⁹

Fengshui and the Cult of Mountain Tai

The spread of Buddhism in the Mount Tai area in the Eastern Jin and the Sixteen Kingdoms Period reflected that Buddhist monks represented by Zhu Senglang knew well how to avail themselves of the opportunity to develop Buddhism under the support of the rulers in the turbulent days on the one hand. On the other hand, it revealed how Buddhism sought development according to local circumstances. Compared with other regions of China, Shandong, especially the Mount Tai area, was a place of strong religious atmosphere. The strong religious atmosphere not only provided good opportunities for an alien religion such as Buddhism to expand, but also at the same time posed a great challenge for it. Buddhism had to compromise with these indigenous religious thinking to a degree to get acknowledgement, which was shown in its combination with fengshui and the cult of Mount Tai.

¹⁰⁸ See Tang, Yongtong's 湯用彤 *Han Wei liang Jin Nanbei chao fojiao shi* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1955), 144.

¹⁰⁹ Wright, “Fo-t'u-teng: A Biography,” 327.

Fengshui means “wind” and “water”, which was used as a way to pursue the harmony between human and cosmos by ancient Chinese. The practices of fengshui may vary, but as Bruun pointed out, “Forms of divination, which in theory and practice had much in common with fengshui, date back to the earliest Chinese historical records.”¹¹⁰ Zhu Senglang was depicted as a Buddhist monk good at divination in various sources. The passages on Zhu Senglang in the GSZ and the *Shiliu guo chunqiu* 十六國春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals of Sixteen Kingdoms*) told similar stories that before Zhu Senglang moved to Mount Tai, he first divined in order to find out what was the best place to settle down.¹¹¹ Based on the result of the divination, Zhu Senglang chose Mount Tai to propagate Buddhism. Zhu Senglang’s divination indicates Buddhism in China began to incorporate the Chinese fengshui theory into itself and in this period “divination received a new impetus from the Buddhist cosmological concepts of ceaseless cycles of construction and destruction of the material world.”¹¹² Moreover, “while China was in a state of disunion, divination philosophy rose to a golden era and gave birth to many renowned figures in the various arts of divination, including the prophet Guan Lu, the historian and writer on supernatural powers Gan Bao and the outstanding scholar Guo Pu (276-324), the last commonly credited as the founder of modern fengshui.”¹¹³ Guo Pu defined “fengshui” in the *Zang shu* 葬書 (*The Book of Burials*) as the following:

¹¹⁰ Ole Bruun, *An Introduction to Feng Shui* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 11.

¹¹¹ Both of the two sources include the text “yi bu tai shan” 移卜泰山, and the character “蔔” means divination.

¹¹² Bruun, *An Introduction to Feng Shui*, 11.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Qi rides the wind and scatters, but is retained when encountering water. The ancients collected it to prevent its dissipation, and guided it to assure its retention. Thus it was called fengshui. According to the laws of fengshui, the site which attracts water is optimum, followed by the site which catches wind.¹¹⁴

Though Guo Pu here mainly discussed fengshui in the selection of burial sites, his fengshui theory was actually applied to the divination of site selection for both the living and the dead. Based on Guo Pu's theory, Mount Tai was undoubtedly an ideal place because there were plenty of waters inside it and thus retained qi and wind. Guo also gave the detailed description on how to select mountain sites:

The mountains of exalted ground descend from Heaven like a succession of bows, like billowing waves, or galloping horses.

上地之山，若伏若連，其原自天。若水之波。若馬之馳。

They come in a rush, and they cease as if laid to rest, like someone resting peacefully while embracing treasure, or fasting in purity while laying out a feast; like a bulging bag, or a brimming plate; like dragons and phoenixes, soaring and circling.

其來若奔。其止若屍。若懷萬寶而燕息。若肯萬善而潔齊。若橐之鼓。若器之貯。若龍若鸞，或騰或盤。

¹¹⁴ The original Chinese is “氣乘風則散，界水則止，古人聚之使不散，行之使有止，故謂之風水，風水之法，得水為上，藏風次之。” See Guo Pu's 郭璞 *Zangjing jianzhu* 葬经笺注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), 91. The English translation is from Dr. Stephen L. Field who posted his translation on <https://fengshuigate.com/zangshu.html>.

Birds hover and beasts crouch, as if paying homage to a noble of ten thousand chariots.

禽伏獸蹲，若萬乘之尊也。

The heavenly lights regenerate, like rivers returning to the sea, or like the stars revolving around the North Star.

無光發新。朝海拱辰。

Embraced and protected by dragon and tiger, receiving each other like host and guest.

龍虎抱衛，主客相迎。

The Four Aspects¹¹⁵ correct and clear, the Five Dangers¹¹⁶ nowhere near.

四勢朝明，五害不親。

If one-tenth deficient, the site is inferior.

十一不具，是謂其次。¹¹⁷

If the above criteria were used to examine the site where Lingyan Monastery was built, we see the site could be regarded as a land of treasure according to the fengshui theory. Lingyan Monastery is located in the valley of Mount Fang 方山, which is also either called Mount Yufu 玉符山 by Li Daoyuan in his *Shuijing zhu* because it is as square as a jade seal, or called Mount

¹¹⁵ The four aspects refer to dragon, tiger, bird and turtle (龍、虎、主、客).

¹¹⁶ The five dangers refer to bare, severed, bouldery, overreaching, and solitary mountains (五害者，童、斷、石、獨、過也). See the English translation on <https://fengshuigate.com/zangshu.html>.

¹¹⁷ See Guo Pu's *Zangjing jianzhu*, 99-100. See the English translation on <https://fengshuigate.com/zangshu.html>.

Lingyan 靈岩山 based on the legend of Langgong. A local official of Jinan County named Bian Yu 卞育 in the Song Dynasty recorded his travel to Lingyan Monastery as the following:

With the prepared stick and shoes, (I) hiked every trail of Mount Fang. The trails are narrow and winding like the bowel of the sheep. It is so dangerous as if only birds can fly over it. The trails are so twisting that one moment I went uphill, the other I went downhill. I climbed along the edge of the mountain and did not know how many thousands of ren (仞 an ancient measurement of length) I had walked. When I (finally) climbed to the top and looked out, I could appreciate the panorama (of the mountain). The rolling hills either look like ceasing there to have a rest or come in a rush. They rise up from the land in great numbers and form a circle. (Inside the mountain), rare birds and strange animals, ancient trees and strange rocks, (amount to) thousands of categories and ten thousands of shapes. You can find anything you want to see inside the mountain.....From the west side of the mountain, a stream winds down and forms a spring midway among the rocks. The water tastes as sweet as liquor. I stopped drinking the spring water and splashed it. The splashed water is like beautiful gems which makes beautiful sound and spatters on the rocks.¹¹⁸

Comparing this passage with Guo Pu's depiction of exalted mountain sites, we see the location of Lingyan Monastery fits entirely into the Guo Pu's model. The superior location of Lingyan Monastery according to the fengshui theory undoubtedly increased the attraction of this

¹¹⁸ See Ma Daxiang, LYZ, 46-47.

monastery because Chinese people believed a place with good fengshui could bring good fortune to people who were living there or visited there. Zhu Senglang's application of divination into the selections of Buddhist sites endowed Buddhist monasteries a kind of sacredness which was directly related to the popular Chinese religions and thus made the people who believed in divination and the fengshui theory more easily to embrace Buddhism.

The fengshui of Lingyan Monastery is not only related to Mount Fang where it is located, but also related to Mount Tai as Mount Fang is one of the twelve branch hills of Mount Tai. China is a mountainous country so that mountains play an important role in Chinese culture. Scholars such as Lin Wei-cheng believe that "mountain cults in China may have developed long before the creation of the written word."¹¹⁹ Many inscriptions on oracle bones found in the Shang Dynasty prove there already existed mountain cults or mountain sacrifices at that time. From the Zhou Dynasty, people believed that all the mountains were deities and misfortunes might happen if people did not offer sacrifices to mountain deities. A passage in the *Zuo Zhuan* 左傳 (*The Zuo Tradition*) emphasizes the importance of mountain sacrifices:

Mountains and rivers are the mainstay of the domain. Thus, when mountains collapse and rivers run dry, the ruler abstains from meat and elaborate food, reduces the splendor of his apparel, rides carriages without decoration, banishes music, and leaves his usual abode. The diviner displays objects to be sacrificed to the spirits;

¹¹⁹ Lin Wei-cheng, *Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), 1.

the scribe reads ritually appropriate words to honor them.¹²⁰

Moreover, there was strict regulations on mountain sacrifices in the Zhou Dynasty. The emperors of the Zhou Dynasty could offer sacrifices to all mountains and rivers all over the country while the vassals could only offer sacrifices to mountains and rivers within their own realm.¹²¹ The mountain cults or mountain sacrifices later combined with the five elements theory and developed into a cult for the five great mountains in China. Mount Tai, as the head of the five great mountains, enjoys a special place in the tradition of mountain cults. The *Liji* 禮記 (*The Book of Rites*) well documented the origin of Mount Tai cult:

The son of Heaven, every five years, made a tour of Inspection through the fiefs. In the second month of the year, he visited those on the East, going to the honored mountain of Tai. There he burnt a (great) pile of wood, and announced his arrival to Heaven; and with looks directed to them, sacrificed to the hills and rivers. He gave audience to the princes; inquired out those who were 100 years old, and went to see them: ordered the Grand music-master to bring him the poems (current in different states), that he might see the manners of the people; ordered the superintendents of markets to present (lists of prices), that he might see what the people liked and disliked, and whether they were set on extravagance and loved what was bad; he ordered the superintendent of rites to examine the seasons and months, and fix the

¹²⁰ See the English translation in Stephen W. Durrant's translation in *Zuo Zhuan: Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), 754.

¹²¹ The original Chinese is “天子祭天下名川大山。” See it in the *Shiji*, 467.

days, and to make uniform the standard tubes, the various ceremonies, the (instrument of) music, all measures, and (the fashion of) clothes. (Whatever was wrong in these) was rectified.¹²²

From this passage, we see an emperor's inspection tour within his realm is relate to mountain cults. The inspection tour of emperors is originated from antiquity when the chieftains of tribes inspected their realms to deter the armed forces from rebelling and strengthen the allies. In the pre-Qin period, this inspection evolved into a political and military activity which was an important means for the emperors to assert their authority. Since the Qin and Han Dynasties, the inspection has been institutionalized and contained more cultural meanings. When the cult for Mount Tai combined with the inspection tours of emperors, the fengshan 封禪 sacrifices came into being. The fengshan sacrifices is a religious ceremony held on Mount Tai for the emperors to pay homage to the gods of the heaven as Mount Tai was believed to be the mountain which was closest to the heaven. The first emperor to offer the fengshan sacrifices on Mount Tai was Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇 (259-210 B.C.). According to the accounts of the *Shiji*, there are altogether seventy-two emperors who performed the fengshan sacrifices on Mount Tai before the Qin Dynasty.¹²³ The fengshan sacrifices on Mount Tai justify the divine power of emperors and in turn strengthen the supreme position of Mount Tai in Chinese culture. The particular geographical position and mysterious cultural and religious background of Mount Tai made it an

¹²² Ch'u Chai and Winberg Chai ed., James Legge trans. *Li Chi: Book of Rites* (New York: University Books, Inc., 1967), 216-217.

¹²³ See it in the *Shiji*, 469.

ideal place for Zhu Senglang to expand Buddhism.

However, as Confucianism, Daoism, and popular religions began to exert its influence much earlier than Buddhism in the Mount Tai area, it is not easy to find a suitable site to build Buddhist monasteries on the main range of Mount Tai especially the summit. At the foot of Mount Tai, there is Dai Temple 岱廟, a Daoist temple, which was built in the Han Dynasty and used for emperors to hold the fengshan sacrifices. The oldest Daoist architecture in Mount Tai is the Pool of Queen Mother 王母池 which was built in the Three Kingdoms Period. In addition, Confucius himself ascended Mount Tai several times and left numerous traces there. In this context, if Buddhist architectures want to win a place in Mount Tai, the location is of vital importance. Zhu Senglang was so intelligent that he chose Mount Fang in a western branch range of Mount Tai to build Buddhist monasteries, which avoided direct competition with the other existing religions. Dang Huaiying 黨懷英, a famous scholar in the Jin Dynasty 金朝 wrote in his travelogue to Lingyan Monastery that “Mount Tai is the head of all great mountains. The mountain peaks form a circle as if they are bowing with streams at the foot of them. The magnificence and beauty of the mountain concentrates on the northwestern direction. With regard to the most wonderful scenery in the northwestern part of the mountain, nothing is better than Mount Fang.”¹²⁴ The favorable location of Lingyan Monastery in the fengshui theory is a good start for the rise of it in the future because this selection integrated with indigenous popular religion and also took advantage of indigenous religion to advocate Buddhism. At the same time,

¹²⁴ The original Chinese is “泰山為諸岳之宗，其峰巒拱揖，溪麓回抱，神秀之氣尤鐘於西北。而西北之勝，莫勝於方山。” See Ma Daxiang, LYZ, 48.

the rich water resources, trees and rocks in Mount Tai provided necessary construction materials for Buddhist monasteries. A dense population in Shandong also made it possible for Buddhist monasteries here to obtain more donations and attract more devotees.

In conclusion, the establishment of Lingyan Monastery is not accidental, but decided by a combination of various factors. It is a deliberate decision by Zhu Senglang. More importantly, it is a joint result of political, military, economic and cultural factors both on the state level and on the local level. Though Buddhism experienced a rapid development in the Jin Dynasty in general, its expansion in different regions were not the same. In this sense, the regional factors or the local religious system plays a more important part. Meantime the appearance of Buddhist sites must have impacted the local religious system, which was reflected through the interaction between Lingyan Monastery and the region of Shandong.

Chapter Two The Bloom of Shandong Buddhism: The Re-Establishment and Expansion of Lingyan Monastery during the Northern and Southern, and Sui Dynasties

The Northern and Southern Dynasties started with the founding of the Liu Song Dynasty by Liu Yu 劉裕 in 420 and ended with the founding of the Sui Dynasty by Yang Jian 楊堅 in 581. The Northern Dynasties include five short-lived dynasties: Northern Wei, Eastern Wei, Western Wei, Northern Qi and Northern Zhou while the Southern Dynasties divided into Liu Song, Southern Qi, Southern Liang, and Southern Chen. The division of the north and south and the frequent regime change made the Northern and Southern Dynasties a period full of political chaos and endless wars. In such circumstances, life was hard for the common people. Chen Yuan 陳垣 once says that “When life is good, religion is not a necessity. However, when life is hard and unstable, (people) will often think of getting out of the current situation and going to a land of happiness. It’s not easy to find a land of happiness, but religionists will soothe the hearts of people. This is the land of happiness.”¹²⁵ Hard life and social turbulence benefited the spread of Buddhism and as a result Buddhism flourished across China during this period.

However, because of the division between the north and the south, the development of Buddhism in the south and the north exhibited different characteristics. In terms of Southern

¹²⁵ The original Chinese is “人當得意之時，不覺宗教之可貴也，惟當艱難困苦顛沛流離之際，則每思超境而適樂土，樂土不易得，宗教家乃予以心靈上之安慰，此即樂土也。” See it in Chen Yuan’s 陳垣 *Mingji dianqian fojiao kao* 明季滇黔佛教考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 285.

Buddhism, Zürcher points out that the most striking aspect is “its orientation towards the higher and highest strata of society, the government, the court” since the first half of the third century.¹²⁶ Generally speaking, the emperors of the Southern Dynasties provided strong support for Buddhism. Regardless of their various intentions, the emperors supported the translation of Buddhist scriptures, organized compilation of Buddhist canons, held Buddhist festivals, respected and provided financial support to Buddhists, which accelerated the spread of Buddhism. The aristocratic literati in the south were also devoted to Buddhism. They attached much importance to the philosophical aspect of Buddhism and combined Buddhist teachings with xuanxue, which accelerated the infusion of Buddhism with traditional Chinese thoughts. Accordingly, this period saw a tremendous bulge in the number of Buddhist devotees, Buddhist monasteries and Buddhist sanghas in the southern part of China.

Meanwhile, the development of Buddhism in the north was more complicated than in the south. As the north was under the control of the Xianbei 鮮卑 tribe which was regarded as a barbarian tribe traditionally, the alien emperors adopted various measures to promote assimilation of the Xianbei tribe into Chinese culture. Buddhism had to compete with traditional Chinese religious thinking especially Daoism and experienced ups and downs during this period. Quite a lot emperors were friendly to Buddhism, but some emperors were hostile to Buddhism. There were altogether four Buddhist persecutions in the Chinese history, two of which happened in the Northern Dynasties. The first persecution was started by the Daoist Emperor Taiwu 太武

¹²⁶ Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaption of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 47.

帝 of Northern Wei during the years 446-452. The second persecution was related to a Daoist Wei Yuansong 衛元嵩 who was a Buddhist formerly but later converted to Daoism. He urged the Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou Dynasty 周武帝 to abolish Buddhism and thus started the second Buddhist persecution in China. Overall, when Buddhism was flourishing, Daoism was suppressed; when Daoism was flourishing, Buddhism was suppressed in Northern China. In addition, Zürcher proposes that “a marked devotional tendency combined with the use of icons, a stress on dhyana which is practically absent in the gentry Buddhism of the South-East, and a heroic effort to become free from the entanglement of Chinese traditional thought in order to understand the real message of Buddhism”¹²⁷ were features of Northern Buddhism in the fourth and fifth century. These features reflect not only the conflicts between Buddhism and traditional Chinese religious thinking in the north but also the heavy dependence of Northern Buddhism on state power. In spite of the two Buddhist persecutions in the Northern Dynasties, Buddhism was generally booming in the period, which was reflected in the appearance of a large number of Buddhist statues and steles, Buddhist monasteries and Buddhist paintings.

The Development of Buddhism in Shandong during the Northern and Southern Dynasties

Buddhism was thriving in the Northern and Southern Dynasties on the whole, and the same was true with Shandong on the regional level. During this period, Buddhism spread into more places in Shandong. According to Chart II in Chapter One, Buddhist activities were found in 12 places in Shandong in the Wei and Jin Dynasties based on the statistics from the GSZ, the WS,

¹²⁷ Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaption of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 180.

and the BQNZ. In the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Buddhist activities were found in 46 places in Shandong based on both textual sources and physical evidences including Buddhist statues and inscriptions.¹²⁸ The following chart provides an overview of the distribution of Buddhist activities in Shandong in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, in which the XGSZ, the BQS and the SS refer to the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (*Biographies of Prominent Monks*), the *Bei Qi Shu* 北齊書 (*The Book of Northern Qi*) and the *Sui Shu* 隋書 (*The Book of Sui*) respectively.

Chart III

Regions	Sources
Wudi 無棣	Stone Buddhist statues in the Northern Qi Dynasty
Yangxin 陽信	Bronze Buddhist statues in the Eastern Wei Dynasty
Huimin 惠民	Bronze Buddhist statues in the Northern Wei Dynasty
Boxing 博興	Stone, bronze and china Buddhist statues in the Northern Wei Dynasty, stone and bronze Buddhist statues in the Eastern Wei Dynasty, and stone and bronze Buddhist statues in the Northern Qi Dynasty
Zouping 鄒平	Ruins of Liquan Monastery 醴泉寺
Ge County 鬲縣 in Pingyuan 平原 (Nowadays	“Shi Sengxun zhuan” 釋僧詢傳 (Biography of Shi Sengxun) in the XGSZ

¹²⁸ An Zuozhang ed., *Shandong tongshi: Wei Jin Nanbei chao juan*, 206-208.

the northern part of Pingyuan in Shandong)	
Qinghe 清河 (Nowadays Linqing 臨清 in Shandong)	“Shi Tanchao zhuan” 釋曇超傳 (Biography of Shi Tanchao) in the GSZ, “Tanjian ni zhuan” 曇簡尼傳 (Biography of Buddhist Nun Tanjian) and “Tanyong ni zhuan” 曇勇尼傳 (Biography of Buddhist Nun Tanyong) in the BQNZ
Jizhou 濟州 (Nowadays the South-western part of Chiping 茌平 in Shandong)	“Su Qiong zhuan” 蘇瓊傳 (Biography of Su Qiong) in the BQS
Jinan 濟南	“Shi Huijue zhuan” 釋慧覺傳 (Biography of Shi Huijue) and “Shi Jingbian zhuan” 釋淨辯傳 (Biography of Shi Jingbian) in the XGSZ, Buddhist stone statues in Longdong 龍洞 (Long Grotto), Simen Ta 四門塔 (Four-door Pagoda) and some other places in the Eastern Wei Dynasty, Buddhist statues in Huangshi ya Grotto 黃石崖石窟 in the Northern Wei and Eastern Wei Dynasties
Shanchi 山茌 in Changqing 長清	Grottoes with Buddhist statues in Mount Wufeng 五峰山 in the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi Dynasties, “Shi

(Nowadays the south-eastern part of Changqing in Shandong)	Zhizhan zhuan” 釋志湛傳 (Biography of Shi Zhizhan) in the XGSZ, the ruins of Xiancao Monastery 銜草寺 to the south of Guanwangzhuang Village 關王莊村
Taishan 泰山	“Shi Sengyi zhuan” 釋僧意傳 (Biography of Shi Sengyi), “Shi Sengzhao zhuan” 釋僧照傳 (Biography of Shi Sengzhao), “Shi Zhizhan zhuan” 釋志湛傳 (Biography of Shi Zhizhan), and “Shi Daobian zhuan” 釋道辯傳 (Biography of Shi Daobian) in the XGSZ, “Sengnian ni zhuan” 僧念尼傳 (Biography of Sengnian Ni) in the BQNZ, and <i>The Diamond Sutra</i> engraved on rocks in Jingshi Yu 經石峪 (Stone Sutra Valley) at Mount Tai in the Northern Qi Dynasty
Tai’an 泰安	Bronze Buddhist statues in the Northern Wei Dynasty
Mount Culai 徂徠山	<i>Bore boluo mi jing</i> 般若波羅蜜經 (Prajna-paramita sutra) engraved on rocks at Mount Culai in the Northern Qi Dynasty
Dongping 東平	“Shi Fa’an zhuan” 釋法安傳 (Biography of Shi Fa’an) in the GSZ, “Shi Fahu zhuan” 釋法護傳 (Biography of Shi Fahu) in the XGSZ, and stone Buddhist statues in the Northern Wei Dynasty

Jining 濟寧	Stone Buddhist statues in the Northern Wei Dynasty
Wenshang 汶上	Stone Buddhist statues in the Northern Qi Dynasty, stone steles engraved with <i>Mañjuśrī Prajñāpāramitā sutra</i> on Mount Shuiniu 水牛 in the Northern Qi Dynasty
Yanzhou 兗州	“Shi Bao’an zhuan” 釋寶安傳 (Biography of Shi Bao’an) in the XGSZ, and “Yang Lie zhuan” 羊烈傳 (Biography of Yang Lie) in the BQS
Lujun 魯郡 (Nowadays the Eastern part of Qufu)	Stone Buddhist statues in the Eastern Wei Dynasty, bronze Buddhist statues in the Northern Qi Dynasty, “Shi Sengzhong zhuan” 釋僧鐘傳 (Biography of Shi Sengzhong) in the GSZ, and “Shi Fali zhuan” 釋法力傳 (Biography of Shi Fali) in the XGSZ
Sishui 泗水	Stone Buddhist statues in the Northern Qi Dynasty
Tieshan 鐵山	Stone steles engraved with the <i>Diamond Sutra</i> in the Northern Zhou Dynasty
Gangshan 崗山	Stone steles engraved with <i>Sutra of Immeasurable Life</i> and <i>Lankavatara Sutra</i> in the Northern Zhou Dynasty
Yishan 嶧山	Stone steles engraved with <i>Mañjuśrī Prajñāpāramitā sutra</i> in the Northern Qi Dynasty
Gaoping 高平 (Nowadays	“HuiXu ni zhuan” 慧緒尼傳 (Biography of Huixu ni

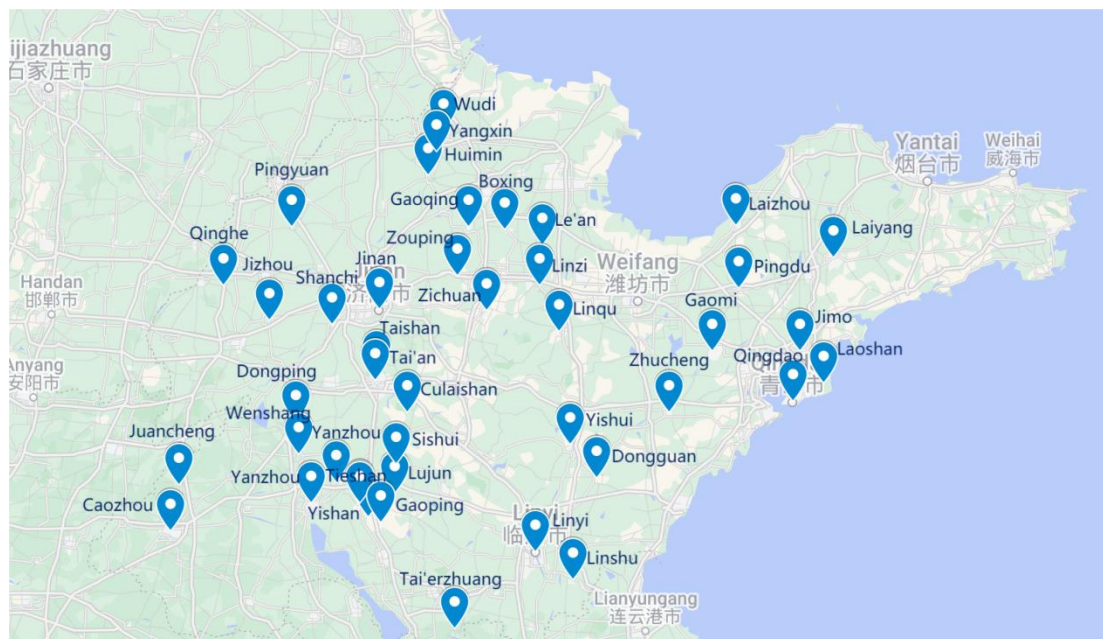
the southern-western part of Zou County 鄒縣)	zhuan) in the BQNZ
Caozhou 曹州 (Now Hejing 荷澤 in Shandong)	“Shi Fakai zhuan” 釋法楷傳 (Biography of Shi Fakai) and “Shi Daopan zhuan” 釋道判傳 (Biography of Shi Daopan) in the XGSZ
Juancheng 鄆城	Stone Buddhist statues in the Northern Qi Dynasty
Puyang 濮陽 (Nowadays the Northern part of Juancheng)	“Wuxing zhi” 五行志 (Record of Five Elements) in the SS
Tai'erzhuang 台兒莊	Buddhist bronze statues in the Northern Qi Dynasty
Linyi 臨沂	“Tandu zhuan” 曇度傳 (Biography of Tandu) attached to “Shi Sengjin zhuan” 釋僧瑾傳 (Biography of Shi Sengjin) in the GSZ, “Shi Zhishun zhuan” 釋智順傳 (Biography of Shi Zhishun) in the GSZ, stone Buddhist statues in the Northern Qi Dynasty
Yishui 沂水	“Shi Mingcan zhuan” 釋明璨 (Biography of Shi Mingcan) in the XGSZ
Dongguan 東莞 (Nowadays Juxian 莒縣 in Shandong)	“Shi Daodeng zhuan” 釋道登傳 (Biography of Shi Daodeng), “Shi Baoqiong zhuan” 釋寶瓊傳 (Biography of Shi Baoqiong), and “Tanguan zhuan” 曇觀傳

	(Biography of Tanguan) in the XGSZ, the Ruins of Dinglin Monastery
Linshu 臨沭	Bronze Buddhist statues in the Northern Wei Dynasty, and stone Buddhist statues in the Northern Qi Dynasty
Le'an 樂安 (Nowadays in Shandong) Guangrao 廣饒	Stone Buddhist statues in the Northern Wei and Eastern Wei Dynasties, “Maming si gen fashi bei” 馬鳴寺根法師碑 (Gravestone of Master Gen in Maming Monastery), “Shi Sengmi zhuan” 釋僧密傳 (Biography of Shi Sengmi) in the XGSZ
Gaoqing 高青	Bronze Buddhist statues in the Northern Wei Dynasty, stone Buddhist statues in the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi Dynasties
Linzi 臨淄	“Shi Puming zhuan” 釋普明傳 (Biography of Shi Puming) and “Shi Fawu zhuan” 釋法悟傳 (Biography of Shi Fawu) in the GSZ, stone Buddhist statues in the Eastern Wei, Northern Qi and Northern Zhou Dynasties
Zichuan 淄川	Stone Buddhist statues in the Eastern Wei Dynasty
Qingzhou 青州	“Shi Sengyuan” 釋僧遠傳 (Biography of Shi Sengyuan) and “Shi Baoliang zhuan” 釋寶亮傳 (Biography of Shi Baoliang) in the GSZ, “Shi Daozong zhuan” 釋道宗傳

	<p>(Biography of Shi Daozong), “Shi Fashen zhuan” 釋法申傳 (Biography of Shi Fashen), “Shi Huihai zhuan” 釋慧海傳 (Biography of Shi Huihai), “Shi Zhenyu zhuan” 釋真玉傳 (Biography of Shi Zhenyu), “Shi Sengmi zhuan” 釋僧密傳 (Biography of Shi Sengmi), “Shi Mingshun zhuan” 釋明舜傳 (Biography of Shi Mingshun), “Shi Sengshi zhuan” 釋僧世傳 (Biography of Shi Sengshi) in the XGSZ, “Huihui ni zhuan” 慧暉尼傳 (Biography of Buddhist nun Huihui) in the BQNZ, stone Buddhist Statues in the Northern Wei and Eastern Wei Dynasties, Grottoes with Buddhist statues in the Northern Zhou Dynasty, and “Lou Dingyuan bei” 婁定遠碑 (Lou Dingyuan Stele)¹²⁹ in the Northern Qi Dynasty</p>
Linqu 臨朐	Stone Buddhist statues in the Northern Wei Dynasty
Gaomi 高密	“Shi Daosong zhuan” 釋道嵩傳 (Biography of Shi Daosong) in the GSZ
Zhucheng 諸城	Bronze Buddhist statues in the Northern Wei and Northern

¹²⁹ *Lou Dingyuan bei* was also known as “Sikong gong qingzhou cishi linhuai wangxiang bei” 司空公青州刺史臨淮王像碑 (Minister of Public works, Governor of Qingzhou, King of Linhuai Stele). The texts on this stele sings high praise of Lou Dingyuan, who was the governor of Qingzhou at that time, as he reestablished Nanyang Monastery in Qingzhou.

	Qi Dynasties
Qingdao 青島	Stone Buddhist statues in the Northern Wei
Laoshan 嶗山	Stone Buddhist statues in the Northern Qi
Jimo 即墨	“Shi Daozong zhuan” 釋道宗傳 (Biography of Shi Daozong) in the XGSZ
Pingdu 平度	Grottoes with Buddhist statues in Mount Taizhu 天柱山 in the Eastern Wei Dynasty
Longkou 龍口	Stone Buddhist statues in the Northern Wei Dynasty
Laiyang 萊陽	Stone Buddhist statues in the Eastern Wei Dynasty
Laizhou 萊州	Bronze Buddhist statues in the Northern Qi Dynasty



The Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-589 AD), Major Buddhist Sites, Shandong, China

The total number of places in which Buddhist activities were found in the Northern and Southern Dynasties is over three times than that in the Wei and Jin Dynasties, which not only reflects the rising influence of Buddhism in Shandong, but also the prosperity of Buddhist art. According to the statistics, stone Buddhist statues were found in 25 places, bronze Buddhist statues were found in 9 places, Buddhist inscriptions were found in 6 places in Shandong during this period. Besides, a Buddhist statue made of china of this period was found in Boxing 博興 in Shandong.¹³⁰ At the same time, the number of Buddhist monks and nuns in Shandong also had a rapid growth. The historical records show that 16 eminent monks and nuns were Shandong natives in the Wei and Jin Dynasties, and 40 eminent monks and nuns were Shandong natives in the Northern and Southern Dynasties.¹³¹

The expansion of Buddhism profoundly affected the regional politics, economics and culture. Buddhist monks established close relationship with state power and were often involved into political decisions. The generous donations from the emperors and powerful aristocratic clans 士族 made Buddhist monasteries amass a large amount of wealth and the economic strength was further strengthened. Thus more and more Buddhist monasteries were founded and more and more people converted to Buddhism. In addition, as Buddhist monks of high rank did not do any physical labour, there were a large amount of peasants and slaves attached to Buddhist monasteries to do various of physical work for them. The rising number of Buddhists and Buddhist monasteries led to the loss of labour force and farming land. Thus, since the

¹³⁰ Ibid., 200.

¹³¹ Ibid.

Northern Wei Dynasty, the government set up institutions to supervise Buddhist monks and related affairs. With regard to Shandong, a historical record shows that a monk named Daoyan 道研 took the position of Sha men tong 沙門統 to administrate Buddhist monks and affairs in Jizhou 濟州(now near Chiping 茌平 in Shandong) in the Northern Qi Dynasty.¹³² The record also says that “(Daoyan) had a great deal of wealth. He obtained a lot of profits from (local tax), which was frequently levied by the local officials for him.”¹³³ It indicates Buddhist officials or Buddhist monasteries colluded with other local officials to exploit the peasants and also reveals how Buddhist monasteries amassed wealth. The expansion of Buddhism caused friction and drew criticism from non-Buddhists, which finally resulted in the Buddhist persecution started by Emperor Taiwu in 446. However, it is a controversial issue that how and to what extent the first Buddhist persecution affected Shandong Buddhism especially Lingyan Monastery because the Northern Wei and the Liu Song had been fighting for the control of Shandong from 420 to 469. The Wei Dynasty did not gain a complete control of Shandong until 469 and some of the important areas were occupied by the Liu Song Dynasty before that. Actually it was in the year 467 that the general Murong Baiyao 慕容白曜 of the Northern Wei occupied the Licheng 曆城 area where Lingyan Monastery is located. Therefore, the first Buddhist persecution in the year 446 should not have influenced Lingyan Monastery.

The Reestablishment of Lingyan Monastery

¹³² See “Biography of Su Qiong” 蘇瓊傳 in *Bei Shi* 北史 by Li Yanshou 李延壽 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 2876.

¹³³ Ibid. The original Chinese is “僧人道研為濟州沙門統，資產巨富，在郡多有出息，長得郡縣為征。”

Although Lingyan Monastery should not have suffered from the first Buddhist persecution, it experienced a reestablishment in the Northern and Southern Dynasties and historical records show the reestablishment was related to the first Buddhist persecution, which is contradictory to the previous conclusion. As the only existing temple gazetteer for Lingyan Monastery, the LYZ elaborated on the historical evolution of Lingyan Monastery as the following:

Lingyan Monastery is located at the foot of Mount Fang. That is what the *Shui jing* mentions, “Mount Yufu is one of the hills on the northwestern range of Mount Tai.” During the reign of Fu Jian, he changed the name to Jinyu Valley of Mount Kunlun because he considered (Langgong) was a very important figure and hoped to deify this place where Langgong was expounding Buddhist teachings. It is within the territory of Shanchi County of Taishan Prefecture. In the seventh year of the Taiping zhenjun era (446) during the reign of Emperor Taiwu of the Northern Wei Dynasty, Emperor Taiwu issued an imperial edict that all monks should be slaughtered and all Buddhist monasteries should be destroyed. He also ordered the name of Valley Jinyu of Mount Kunlun should be changed back to its previous name Mount Fang which lasts till today. In the first year of the Zhengguang era during the reign of Emperor Xiaoming of the Northern Wei Dynasty, Master Fading first established a monastery in the north of Mount Fang and named it “Shenbao”. Later he established another monastery in the south of Mount Fang and named it

“Lingyan.”¹³⁴

From this passage, we see the mountain where Linyan Monastery is located had several different names in the history. It can be called either Mount Fang, Mount Yufu, or Mount Kunlun. As the first Buddhist monastery built by Zhu Senglang in Shandong is located in Valley Jinyu of Mount Kunlun, the LYZ here equates this monastery with Lingyan Monastery. However, this assertion is challenged by many other different historical sources which prove the first Buddhist monastery built by Langgong in Shandong is called Shentong Monastery or Langgong Monastery.¹³⁵ Even if Lingyan Monastery was built by Langgong, it should have been built in a different location and probably in a later time than Shentong Monastery though it is not clear in which year Lingyan Monastery was built. The passage then mentions Lingyan Monastery was destroyed in the first Buddhist persecution in 446 and Emperor Taiwu also required the name of the mountain should be changed back to its previous one. It explains why Master Fading rebuilt the monastery later in 520, but this assertion is still questionable as the region where Lingyan Monastery is located was still in control of the Liu Song Dynasty in 446. When the first emperor Liu Yu of the Liu Song Dynasty was still a general in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, he led the army to attack the Southern Yan, pulled off a great victory, and thus put an end to the Southern Yan in the year 410. After that, the prefectures in Shandong such as Qing Zhou and Qi Zhou were under the

¹³⁴ The original text is 靈岩寺在方山下，即《水經》：“玉符山，乃泰山西北麓之一岩也。”符秦時改名昆侖山金輿谷，蓋重其人而神其地也。時朗公在此說法。屬泰山郡山茌縣。元魏太武帝太平真君七年，詔誅天下沙門，毀佛寺，革昆侖金輿之名，仍名曰方山，至今因之。元魏孝文帝正光初，法定禪師先建寺于方山之陰，曰“神寶”。後建寺于方山之陽，曰“靈岩”。See Ma Daxiang, LYZ, 22.

¹³⁵ See my discussion in Chapter One.

control of Liu Yu. Mount Tai and Lingyan Monastery were within the territory of Qi Zhou. In the year 420 when Liu Yu founded the Liu Song Dynasty, Qi Zhou became a northern prefecture of the Liu Song. As Shandong was a place of strategic significance, the Northern Wei and the Liu Song had fought for the control of Shandong for decades. Both sides took over some important regions in Shandong respectively, but Qi Zhou was always in control of the Liu Song till the year 467. So how did the edict of Emperor Taiwu of the Northern Wei Dynasty influence a region not ruled by him in 446? The record in the LYZ is confusing when comparing it with the records in the *Book of Wei*.¹³⁶

Actually there are few historical records about Lingyan Monastery during the Northern and Southern Dynasties in books, but the existing stone inscriptions in Lingyan Monastery can provide some information about this period. Among all the stone inscriptions of the Tang Dynasty, one broken stone stele is of great importance for it records the early history of Lingyan Monastery. This stone stele is called “Lingyan si song bei” 靈岩寺頌碑 (The Stone Stele Inscribed with an Eulogy for Lingyan Monastery). The *Jinshi lu* 金石錄 (*The Records of Metal and Stone Inscriptions*) composed by Zhao Mingchen 趙明誠 (1081-1129), an epigrapher of the Song Dynasty, records some details of the “Lingyan si song bei”, “The eulogy for Lingyan Monastery of the Tang Dynasty was composed and written in the xingshu 行書 (running script) by Li Yong 李邕 on the fifteenth day of November in the first year of the Tianbao era (742).”¹³⁷

¹³⁶ See Wei Shou’s 魏收 *Wei Shu* 魏書 Vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 69-106.

¹³⁷ The original text is “唐靈岩寺頌，李邕撰並行書，天寶元年（747）十一月十五日。” See Zhao Mingcheng 趙明誠 ed., *Jinshi lu* 金石錄 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2009), 56.

Li Yong (674-746) was a famous calligrapher in the Tang Dynasty who was especially good at the running script. According to the *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐書 (*New Book of Tang*), Li Yong served as the governor of Ji Jun 汲郡 (now in Henan Province) and Beihai 北海 (now in Shandong Province) in 472.¹³⁸ As he was holding a post in Shandong, it seemed reasonable that he wrote the eulogy for Lingyan Monastery which was a well-renowned Buddhist monastery in China in the Tang Dynasty. However, the “Lingyan si song bei” was destroyed for some unknown reason. When the LYZ was compiled in 1696, this stele “was deserted in the thickets right to the ruined Shenbao Monastery and half covered with sand. On it was a prose written by Li Yong, the governor of Beihai, but it was wore away and could not be read.”¹³⁹ Later when Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849) compiled the *Shanzuo jinshi zhi* 山左金石志 in 1793, the stele was broken into two pieces and hang on the wall of Luban Cave 魯班洞 in the monastery till today.¹⁴⁰ The inscription was first included in the *Baqiongshi jinshi buzheng* 八瓊室金石補正 by a Qing Dynasty scholar Lu Zengxiang 陸增祥 (1816-1882), and the rubbing of the “Lingyan si song bei” can be found in a 1999 book *Lingyan Monastery*.

¹³⁸ The original text is “出為汲郡、北海太守”. See it in *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐書 by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 and Song Qi 宋祁 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 5754.

¹³⁹ See Ma Daxiang, LYZ, 37.

¹⁴⁰ See Yang Yang 楊陽 and Wang Jing 王晶, “Tang ‘lingyansi bei song bing xu’ bei kao” 唐《靈岩寺碑頌並序》碑考 in *Taishan xueyuan yuanbao* 泰山學院院報, Vol. 3 (2021): 34-35.



The picture is taken from *Lingyan si* edited by Wang Rongyu et al., 108.

From the upper half of the stele, we see a few lines as follows:

During the time when the Eastern Jin Dynasty was replaced by the Liu Song Dynasty, there was a Buddhist master whose name is Fading. He was a native of Jingcheng Jun (It includes part of Tianjin, part of Hebei, and part of Shandong nowadays). He once went to a lanruo (a small Buddhist temple).....(Here 22 characters are missing). (Things) like this lasted for years. Because the master was worried that (he might) bring trouble to the host, he planned to leave this place. Suddenly two lay Buddhists.....(here another 22 characters are missing). (Fading) built a sengfang (a Buddhist monastery) to advocate Buddhist teachings. People

who knew (Fading) thought he was a mountain deity.¹⁴¹

According to this passage, Master Fading was living around the time when the Liu Song Dynasty replaced the Eastern Jin Dynasty. The Liu Song Dynasty was founded in 420. Then it was around the year 420 that Master Fading went to a small Buddhist temple and stayed there for several years. It is not known what Master Fading did in this Buddhist temple during these years because of the missing characters, but he was planning to leave for he did not want to bother the host any longer. However things were turning around because there suddenly appeared two lay Buddhists. Probably the two lay Buddhists did something and made Master Fading change his idea. So Master Fading stayed here and established Lingyan Monastery. Thus the time when Master Fading established Lingyan Monastery should be several years later than 420. The problem is the LYZ mentions that Master Fading reestablished Lingyan Monastery in 520. Even if Master Fading was born in 420, he was already one hundred years old when he reestablished Lingyan Monastery. Though based on the biographies of some eminent monks they could live over one hundred years, we know this kind of hagiographies are usually full of exaggerations. So if Master Fading began to advocate Buddhism around the beginning of the Liu Song Dynasty, it is unlikely Lingyan Monastery was built as late as in 520. In his study of the “Lingyan si song bei”, Wen Yuxian 溫玉咸 believed that the founder of Lingyan Monastery was not Zhu Senglang but actually Master Fading, and Lingyan Monastery was built around the year 420. He points out

¹⁴¹ The original Chinese is “晉宋之際，有法定禪師者，景城郡人也，嘗行蘭若，（以下缺二十二字）若是者歷年，禪師以勞主人，逝將辭去，忽有二居士（以下缺二十二字）建立僧坊，宏宣佛法，識者以為山神耳。” Ibid., 28-29.

that it is Shenbao Monastery that was built in the year 520 but not Lingyan Monastery. A record in the *Baqiongshi jinshi buzheng* mentions that Shenbao Monastery was built in 520,¹⁴² so those who believe Lingyan Monastery was built in 520 should have mixed it with Shenbao Monastery. Nonetheless, it is far from a good explanation as the LYZ mentions Master Fading established Shenbao Monastery first in the north of Mount Fang and then Lingyan Monastery in the south. If the record in the LYZ is true, Lingyan Monastery was established later than 520.

The contradictions in the current textual sources covered the early history of Lingyan Monastery with deep mist. It is hard to distinguish between the historical facts and the legends in these sources. Bingenheimer once states “the foundation legends of a sacred site are an important part of the textual landscape draped around the place. As myths of origin, foundation legends of sacred sites must fulfill two functions equally well: they must tie the location into the wider *imaginaire* of the religion and establish a plausible local connection that explains why the sacred came to manifest itself in this very place.”¹⁴³ With regard to Lingyan Monastery, it needs to relate itself with certain eminent Buddhist monks and the miraculous stories happened to them to “manifest itself” in Shandong especially in the Mount Tai area as it had long been a highly competitive region in the field of religion. In the legend how Langgong built Lingyan Monastery, Langgong revealed his magical power through divination to choose the right place to build

¹⁴² The original text is “粵有沙門諱明，不知何許人也……以正光元年，象運仲秋，于時振錫登臨，思同鷲嶺，徘徊引望；想若雞口(山)，歎口彈指發聲，此為福地也。遂表請國主，……立此伽蘭，以靜默為號。自梁齊以來，不易題榜。屬隋季……所存，殆將半矣。” See it in Lu Zengxiang’s 陆增祥 *Baqiongshi jinshi buzheng* 八瓊室金石補正 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985), 381-382.

¹⁴³ See Bingenheimer, *Island of Guanyin: Mount Putuo and its Gazetteers*, 79.

monasteries and at the same time when he gave lectures on Buddhism in the chosen place, the rocks there were moved and nodded their heads which proved the chosen place was a place full of spirituality. Similarly, the legend how Master Fading built Lingyan Monastery also involves both the “fetish power” of Buddhism and the spirituality of the sacred place as revealed in a conversation between Abbot Master Yunmen 雲門禪師 and a Jinan native named Chen Shoukai 陳壽愷 of the Jin Dynasty 金朝:

My patriarch (here referring to Master Fading) originally came from the west, and planned to establish a Buddhist monastery in this place. In front of him there were two tigers carrying Buddhist sutras on their backs, and a green snake leading the way. Holding the vines and waving the stick, the Master climbed up all the steep cliffs until there was no way to go. So he lingered around the top of the southern peak, and faced the rocks for a long time (reciting Buddhist sutras). (His behavior) moved the Sun, so a beam of sunlight shoot through the peak and formed a cave. There was red light through the cave for several li (a traditional Chinese unit of distance). The Master then followed the light down the cave, (and found a place which was) beautiful with magnificent mountains and luxuriant trees. (This place) is ideal for many to live in. On the way (the Master) met a woodcutter who was also a person with magic power. The woodcutter was staring at the Master and asked, “Does the Master have the intention to stay here?” The Master replied, “(I am) worried there was no water here.” (The woodcutter) turned around and pointed to the east, saying, “A few li from here, (when you arrive at a place where) the cranes

were whooping, you will find water.” The Master then walked slowly along the way, (and found) yellow apes were walking (in front of him) while turning back, and white rabbits were leaping in the front. After a while (he was) surprised to see two cranes were flying. Under the cranes there were trickling waters (which flew from) two springs. The Master stroke the springs with his tin stick, and then the waters were pouring out and splashed. So (the Master) established a Buddhist Monastery (Lingyan Monastery) and till now it is over 800 years old.¹⁴⁴

我祖師其始西來，欲興道場於茲也。前有二虎負經，青蛇引路，捫蘿策杖，窮絕壁而不可登。乃徘徊于南山之巔，面石之久。感日射巔峰成穴，透紅光於數裡，師乃躡光而下，美其山林秀蔚，可居於眾。道遇樵夫，亦異入也，顧師而言曰：“師豈有意於茲？”“患其無水耶！”回指東向：“不數里間，雙鶴鳴處可得之矣！”師既徐行，則有黃猿顧步，白兔前躍，俄驚雙鶴飛鴻，其下涓涓，果得二泉。又擊山溝，隨錫杖飛瀑迸湧。遂興寺宇，逮今八百餘歲。

This passage provided more details about how Master Fading established Lingyan Monastery. Master Fading was a foreign monk from the west, and came all the way to the Mount Tai area to establish a Buddhist monastery. Though the passage does not mention that Master Fading chose the Mount Tai area by divination, it seems that he just knew where to establish this monastery by instinct. When he could not find the exact place to establish the monastery, a woodcutter appeared showing him the way. With the help of the woodcutter, Master Fading finally established Lingyan Monastery. Woodcutter has always had a symbolic meaning in

¹⁴⁴ See it in “Linyan kaishan zushi xiangtu ji” 靈岩開山祖師像圖記 in the LYZ, 47-48.

Chinese culture because they often behave like recluses or sages though they look vulgar in appearance. One of the most famous woodcutters in the Chinese history can be found in the story of Boya 伯牙 and Zhong Ziqi 鐘子期. Boya was a famous qin 琴 (a musical instrument) player in the Spring and Autumn period or the Warring States period. Once when he was playing qin on the river bank, he met a good listener Zhong Ziqi. Though Zhong Ziqi was a woodcutter, he could truly understand and appreciate Boya's music. Boya considered Zhong Ziqi as his zhiyin 知音 (sympathetic friend). Similarly, in the legend of Master Fading, the unnamed woodcutter knew exactly what Master Fading thought and told him the exact place to establish the monastery. In this sense, he, like Zhong Ziqi, is a zhiyin to Master Fading.

The legend of Master Fading shares much similarity with that of Senglang. Before Senglang established Lingyan monastery, he made friends with Zhang Zhong, a recluse in Mount Yufu. Senglang often went to Mount Yufu to visit Zhang Zhong, so Zhang Zhong invited Senglang to expound Buddhist scriptures in Mount Yufu. When Senglang gave lectures on Buddhism in Mount Yufu, the rocks were moved and nodding their heads. So Senglang established Lingyan Monastery here. In this legend, Zhang Zhong is also a zhiyin to Senglang. Both of the two foundation legends associate Buddhist monks with traditional Chinese recluses. Though Buddhist monks held an alien belief, they could still find the traditional Chinese recluses as their zhiyin. Therefore, these foundation legends not only “provide both an Indian connection and a Chinese connection for a given site”¹⁴⁵ but also indicate Buddhism as a foreign religion can adapt itself into Chinese culture well and there are no fundamental conflicts between

¹⁴⁵ See Bingenheimer, *Island of Guanyin: Mount Putuo and its Gazetteers*, 79-80.

Buddhism and traditional Chinese thinking.

With regard to the difference between the founders and the date when Lingyan monastery was founded in the two foundation tales, the LYZ uses the first anti-Buddhist persecution to explain why there exist two foundation legends. However, it has been proved that the Mount Tai area was not under the control of the Northern Wei when the first anti-Buddhist persecution happened, so the argument is untenable. Bingenheimer's viewpoint may provide another explanation. When he examined the foundation legends of Mount Putuo, he suggests Mount Putuo "acquires a reputation for being numinous because people tell stories about it, which--in their way--attest the extraordinary power of the place."¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, he pointed out that "while some places might be remembered for but a single miraculous event, large pilgrimage sites like Mount Putuo or Lourdes generate new tales with every generation."¹⁴⁷ As Lingyan Monastery became the head of the four greatest Buddhist monasteries in China during the Tang Dynasty, it can be regarded as one of such places which possibly own different foundation tales during various periods. Actually it is almost impossible to determine the exact time when Lingyan Monastery was founded, but the two foundation legends reveal the prosperity of Buddhism since the Eastern Jin Dynasty in Shandong. Many eminent monks came to Shandong to spread Buddhism by establishing Buddhist monasteries. Both Langgong and Master Fading were outstanding representatives among them. In a conservative and traditional region such as Shandong, the spread of Buddhism is not plain sailing. Tigers ravaged the region before

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 78.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Langgong arrived in the foundation legend of Langgong while Master Fading walked all the way but could not find a place to establish the Buddhist monastery in the later foundation legend. The difficulties Senglang and Fading met symbolize the obstacles in the process of expanding Buddhism. Zhang Zhong and the woodcutter imply the attitudes of the indigenous religious thinking towards Buddhism. As Boya and Zhong Ziqi exemplify a kind of ideal friendship, the relationship of Senglang and Zhang Zhong, and that of Master Fading and the woodcutter suggest an ideal way how Buddhism coexist with other indigenous religious thinking, which in turn indicates Buddhism has already integrated with traditional Chinese culture in Shandong as well.

The Fall of Lingyan Monastery in the Second Anti-Buddhist Persecution

The first three anti-Buddhist persecutions in Chinese history are called “Three Disasters of Wu” 三武之禍 for the names of all the three emperors who started the anti-Buddhist persecutions contained the character “武”. Among the three disasters, the first two happened in the Northern and Southern Dynasties. Though some textual sources claim that Lingyan Monastery was destroyed in the first anti-Buddhist persecution started in 446, more historical evidence has denied the possibility. However, it can be confirmed that Lingyan Monastery did not escape from the second anti-Buddhist persecution which started in the third year of the Jiande 建德 era (574) by Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou Dynasty, Yuwen Yong 宇文邕 (543-578).

Actually anti-Buddhist voices were often heard during Emperor Wu’s reign. As early as the year 567, Wei Yuansong 衛元嵩, a former Buddhist devotee, submitted a memorial to Emperor

Wu of the Northern Zhou Dynasty for the abolition of Buddhism. He explained in the memorial that “Governing the state does not lie in Buddhism. During the period of Emperor Tang (Yao) and Emperor Yu, there did not exist Buddhism and the state was stable while in the Qi and Liang Dynasties, there are Buddhist monasteries and then our fortune was lost. In order to bring fortune to the Northern Zhou Dynasty, (we should) admire the customs of (the period of) Emperor Tang and Emperor Yu and it is beneficial to abandon the Buddhist law of latter day.”¹⁴⁸ Although Emperor Wu agreed with Wei Yuansong, he had to hide his anti-Buddhist attitudes because the de facto governor of the state was Yuwen Hu 宇文護 who favored Buddhism. However, Emperor Wu organized debates on the advantages and disadvantages of the three representative philosophies which were Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism for eight times during the years 569-574. Emperor Wu killed Yuwen Hu in 572 and finally gained the ultimate power. Then in the seventh debate in 573, Emperor Wu decided that Confucianism ranked first, then Daoism, and Buddhism ranked last, which could be seen as a preparation for the abolition of Buddhism. On the second day of the eighth debate in 574, Emperor Wu issued an edict to ban both Buddhism and Daoism as “The day of Bing Zi 丙子 (the 17th day of the fifth month in the year 574) is the beginning to ban the two religions Buddhism and Daoism. All the sutras and statues (of the two religions) should be destroyed and all Buddhist and Daoist monks should return to secular life. All the inappropriate rituals should be banned and any ritual which was not recorded in the books

¹⁴⁸ The original text is “國治豈在浮圖，唐、虞無佛圖而國安，齊、梁有寺舍而祚失。大周啟運，遠慕唐、虞之化，宜遺齊、梁之末法。” See it in Shi Daoxuan’s 釋道宣 *Guang hong ming ji* 廣弘明集 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1912), 63.

of rituals should be abandoned.”¹⁴⁹ Compared with the first anti-Buddhist persecution, this persecution was relatively mild because there were not large-scale slaughters of Buddhists as in the first one. Nonetheless, as Northern China were already under the control of the Northern Zhou, this persecution had far-reaching impact on Northern Buddhism. Fei Changfang 費長房 has commented in the *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記 (*Records of the Three Treasures Throughout Successive Dynasties*) as follows,

“Previously when Emperor Taiwu of Northern Wei carried out the anti-Buddhist persecution, the scope (of it) was limited to several prefectures, and the sutras and statues were not destroyed. When it came to the anti-Buddhist persecution of Emperor Wu, Buddhist statues were melted and Buddhist sutras were burned; Buddhist monks were driven out (from monasteries) and Buddhist stupas were destroyed; (As for) the properties of sacred religion and the lands where the Buddha had made his presence, they were confiscated and none of them were left; All Buddhist monasteries were changed into houses for lay people and all Buddhists were defrocked. After ten years (of persecution), (nobody) knew the Three Jewels.

When this (persecution) started, it was the end of the dharma.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ The original text is “（五月）丙子，初斷佛、道二教，經像悉毀，罷沙門、道士，並令還民。並禁諸淫祀，禮典所不載者，盡除之。” See Linghu Defen 令狐德棻, *Zhou Shu* 周書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 90.

¹⁵⁰ The original text is “昔魏太武毀廢之辰。止及數州弗湮經像。近遭建德周武滅時。融佛焚經驅僧破塔聖教靈跡削地靡遺。寶刹伽藍皆為俗宅。沙門釋種悉作白衣。凡經十年不識三寶。當此毀時即是法末。” See Fei Changfang 費長房, *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記 in the *Taishōzō*, Vol. 49, No. 2034.

As Shandong was already under the control of the Northern Zhou, this anti-Buddhist persecution was a major blow to Shandong Buddhism. Though the buildings of Buddhist monasteries were kept in this persecution, Buddhist statues were severely damaged. In 1980s, a large number of damaged Buddhist statues of the Northern Dynasties were unearthed in Shandong, which were believed to suffer vandalization in this persecution. In the construction of a local stadium in Zhucheng, Shandong in 1988, over 200 pieces of damaged Buddhist statues were excavated which include various heads, corpses, and lotus pedestals. After careful examination of the features and styles of these pieces, the experts concluded that they were made in the Northern Dynasties and should be destroyed in Emperor Wu's anti-Buddhist persecution.¹⁵¹ In addition, accounts of destroying Buddhist statues in Shandong during Emperor Wu's reign can also be found in historical records. In *the Book of Sui*, it records an incident happened in the first year of Emperor Wu's reign (572). A stone Buddhist statue was found in Puyang Prefecture 濮陽郡 (Nowadays the northern part of Yuncheng, Shandong). The governor of prefecture ordered that the statue be transported to the government office and gold coating of the statue be scraped there.¹⁵² As for Lingyan Monastery, pieces of Buddhist statues were also unearthed in the excavation of Bozhou Hall 般舟殿, which are believed to be damaged in Emperor Wu's persecution.

Not only were Buddhist statues destroyed in this persecution in Shandong, but Buddhist

¹⁵¹ See Ren Rixin 任日新, "Shandong zhucheng faxian beichao zaoxiang" 山東諸城發現北朝造像 in *Kaogu* 考古, Vol. 8 (1990): 717-726.

¹⁵² The original text is "周建德元年,濮陽郡有石像,郡官令載向府,將刮取金." See Wei Zheng 魏徵, *Suishu* 隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 644.

monks were also faced with two choices: either to return to lay life or to escape to the south where the anti-Buddhist persecution was not spread to. In order to keep their beliefs, many Buddhist monks left Shandong and headed south in droves. Before the persecution, Lingyan Monastery was famous far and wide. In 570, the eminent monk Fakan 法侃 (551-623), who was a Henan native, heard about the reputation of Lingyan Monastery and went to there to study Buddhism. However, due to the persecution, he had to leave Lingyan Monastery, headed to the south of the Yangtze River and stayed there to set himself up for success.¹⁵³ Similarly, the eminent monks such as Shi Mingshun 釋明舜 in Qingzhou, Shi Fakai 釋法楷 in Caozhou, and Shi Bao'an 釋寶安 in Yanzhou chose to leave Shandong and made great achievement in the south.¹⁵⁴ The death of Emperor Wu in 578 put an end to this persecution, but Lingyan Monastery and Shandong Buddhism suffered a severe setback and never had a real recovery despite of later prosperity. Before the persecution, it was estimated that one tenth of the population in the Northern Qi were Buddhists and the number is about two million. However, after the persecution, the total number of Buddhists in the Sui and Tang Dynasties has never exceeded 260,000.¹⁵⁵ In a sense, “the brief suppression of Buddhism was serious enough to be viewed as an ominous sign of the advent of the darkening age”¹⁵⁶ because this persecution denied the possibility of the

¹⁵³ See “Biography of Fakan” in Shi Daoxuan’s 釋道宣 *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, Vol.1 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian chubanshe, 2018), 176-178.

¹⁵⁴ See “Biography of Shi Mingshun” 釋明舜傳 in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* Vol.1, 172; See “Biography of Shi Fakai” 釋法楷傳 in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* Vol. 2, 220-221; See “Biography of Shi Bao’an” 釋寶安傳 in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* Vol. 2, 217-218.

¹⁵⁵ See the numbers in *Shandong tongshi: Wei Jin Nanbei chao juan*, 199 and p.205.

¹⁵⁶ See Wei-Cheng Lin, *Building A Secret Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai*

unification of imperial authorities and Buddhism in China. The over-reliance of Chinese Buddhism on imperial authorities made it vulnerable for attack from any powerful class.

The Revival of Lingyan Monastery in the Sui Dynasty

The first emperor of the Sui Dynasty, Yang Jian 楊堅 (541-604) was originally an official serving the Northern Zhou Dynasty. He usurped the throne from Emperor Jing of the Northern Zhou 周靜帝 and founded the Sui Dynasty in 581. Later he conquered the Chen Dynasty in the south, ended the long division between the north and the south and united China in 589. Due to Emperor Wu's anti-Buddhist persecution, Northern Buddhism was engaged in a life-or-death struggle before the Sui Dynasty was founded. Fortunately, Yang Jian (Emperor Wen of Sui) was a devout Buddhist and vigorously supported Buddhism. Thus, there appeared a revival of Buddhism across China soon.

Yang Jian's devotion to Buddhism was closely related to his personal experience. From the moment he was born the life of Yang Jian became inextricably bound up with Buddhism. The *Book of Sui* records Lady Lü, mother of Yang Jian gave birth to her son in Bore Monastery 般若寺 in Pingyi 馮翊 (Nowadays in Dali county 大荔縣 of Shanxi Province 陝西省) at night of the 13th day of the sixth month of the seventh year of the Datong 大統 era (541). It is said the purple clouds were filled with the hall of the monastery at the moment of Yang Jian's birth. A nun told Yang Jian's mother that Yang Jian must be a special child and could not be raised up in secular world. Then the nun raised Yang Jian in person in the monastery.¹⁵⁷ After Yang Jian

(Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), 82.

¹⁵⁷ See *Sui Shu*, 1.

became Emperor Wen of Sui, he often talked about his childhood in the Buddhist monastery with his ministers and commented that “I am rising from Dharma.”¹⁵⁸ Thus it is easy to understand why Emperor Wen issued a decree abolishing all the anti-Buddhist policies of the Northern Zhou and encouraging people to become monks and nuns, copy Buddhist scriptures, and make Buddhist statues in the first year of his reign. As a result, “people across the country became followers of Buddhism. They competitively admire and respect (Buddhism). The number of Buddhist scriptures owned by the common people was hundreds of that of Six Classics.”¹⁵⁹

Shandong Buddhism, especially Buddhism in the Jinan area, gained full support from Emperor Wen because Emperor Wen’s mother was a Jinan native. According to the *Bei Shi* 北史 (*History of the North*), Yang Zhong 楊忠, father of Emperor Wen, was living a wandering life in the Mount Tai area when he was eighteen years old.¹⁶⁰ Then he met a country girl named Lü Kutao 呂苦桃 in Jinan which was located to the north of Mount Tai. Lü Kutao took Yang Zhong back home. Yang Zhong was seven feet eight inches tall (about 180 cm). He was of great stature and unusually beautiful.¹⁶¹ Lü’s parents were satisfied with this young man and made the marriage between Yang Zhong and Lü Kutao. When Yang Jian founded the Sui Dynasty, he immediately conferred a posthumous title “Governor of Qi Prefecture” to Lü Kutao’s father Lü Shuangzhou 呂雙周 and made his mother’s brother Lü Daogui 呂道貴 governor of Jinan. He

¹⁵⁸ The original text is “每以神尼為言，雲：我興由佛。” See it in Shi Daoxuan’s 釋道宣 *Guang hong ming ji* 廣弘明集 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1912), 279.

¹⁵⁹ The original text is “天下之人，从风而靡，竞相景慕，民间佛经，多于六经数十百倍。” See *Sui Shu*, 1104.

¹⁶⁰ The original text is “年十八，客游泰山。” See it in the *Bei Shi*, 124.

¹⁶¹ The original text is “身長七尺八寸，狀貌瑰偉。” Ibid.

also started a large scale reconstruction of Buddhist monasteries in Jinan, which ushered the revival of Lingyan Monastery. In the year 594, after making sacrifice on Mount Tai, Emperor Wen decreed that King of Henan 河南王 (Yang Zhao 楊昭, the eldest grandson of Emperor Wen) became the benefactor of Shentong daochang 神通道場 (Shentong Ashram, which was the previous Shentong Monastery), King of Qi 齊王 (Yang Jian 楊暕, the second eldest grandson of Emperor Wen) became the benefactor of Shenbao 神寶 (which was the previous Shenbao Monastery), and King of Huangyang 華陽王 (Yang Kai 楊楷, also a grandson of Emperor Wen) became the benefactor of Baoshan (which was the previous Lingyan Monastery).¹⁶² It is a great event in the history of Shandong Buddhism as the three grandsons of Emperor Wen became direct benefactors of three major Buddhist monasteries in the Jinan area, which greatly simulated the development of Buddhism in this area. Moreover, Emperor Wen visited Lingyan Monastery and Jingmo Monastery during an inspection tour in the first month of the year 595, and thus became the first emperor who visited Lingyan Monastery in the history.¹⁶³

Emperor Yang of Sui 隋煬帝, the successor of the throne after Emperor Wen, continued to support Buddhism. A poem titled “Visiting Lingyan Monastery in Mount Fang” by Emperor Yang proved that Emperor Yang had also visited Lingyan Monastery in person.¹⁶⁴ However, no record was found in the official books of history about Emperor Yang’s visit to Lingyan Monastery. Thus, Zhang Zhuo 張焯 suspected that Lingyan Monastery in this poem was not the

¹⁶² See “Biography of Shi Yunqian” 釋曇遷傳 in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* Vol. 2, 3-9.

¹⁶³ See *Sui Shu*, 29.

¹⁶⁴ See Ma Jiye 馬繼業, *Lingyansi shilue* 靈岩寺史略 (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 2014), 35.

Lingyan Monastery in Jinan, but another Lingyan Monastery in Yungang Grottoes 雲岡石窟 in Shangxi 山西.¹⁶⁵ Even though which Lingyan Monastery Emperor Yang wrote about was debatable, Emperor Yang should have visited Lingyan Monastery before he wrote the poem when he was still a prince. It is recorded that he accompanied his father Emperor Wen to make sacrifice on Mount Tai in the year 595¹⁶⁶ and after the sacrifice Emperor Wen visited Lingyan Monastery. Thus it is assumed that Emperor Yang should have been there too. Actually it does not matter whether Emperor Yang had visited Lingyan Monastery or not. Most importantly, Emperor Yang was a passionate advocator of Buddhism. During his reign, he promoted the unity of Northern Buddhism and Southern Buddhism and nationalization of Buddhism as well. In this context, Lingyan Monastery commenced a construction boom. A recent study shows that “Zhengmeng gongde kan” 證盟功德龕, a niche built inside the towering walls of Mount Fang and Pizhi Pagoda 辟支塔 were either built or rebuilt in the Sui Dynasty.¹⁶⁷ Previously, most scholars believe that Zhengmeng gongde kan was built in the Tang Dynasty. However, Li Yuqun 李裕群 first proposed that the niche was possibly built as early as in the Sui Dynasty because the style of Buddhist statues inside the niche are very similar to the Buddhist statues built in the Sui Dynasty in Simen Pagoda 四門塔 of Shentong Monastery in Jinan.¹⁶⁸ Ma Jiye agreed with

¹⁶⁵ See Zhang Zhuo, “Suiyang di yu yungang shiku” 隋煬帝與雲岡石窟 in *Zhongguo wenwu bao* 中國文物報, December 27 2002.

¹⁶⁶ See *Sui Shu*, 59.

¹⁶⁷ See Ma Jiye, *Lingyansi shilue*, 35-36.

¹⁶⁸ See Li Yuqun 李裕群, “Lingyan si shike zaoxiang kao” 靈岩寺石刻造像考 in *Wenwu* 文物, Vol. 8 (2005): 79-87.

Li and proposed it must have spent numerous manpower and material resources to carve such a large scale niche out of the rock face. After an examination of the economic conditions and eminent monks of Lingyan Monastery in the Sui and Tang Dynasties respectively, he drew the conclusion that this niche was more possibly built in the Sui Dynasty because the Sui court paid special attention and provided strong financial support to Buddhism in the Jinan area. A large number of Buddhist grottoes and statues built in the Sui Dynasty in the Jinan area are the best proof of the trend of carving Buddhist statues out of rocks during that period. More importantly, the revived Lingyan Monastery began to take shape as one of the four greatest Buddhist monasteries across the nation.

The revival of Lingyan Monastery was not only recorded in the official histories, but also found in the biographies of eminent monks of the Sui Dynasty. In his study on the eminent monks in medieval China, Kieschnick summarizes “after receiving basic training and full ordination, monks were encouraged to travel for a period of time and to listen to lectures by an assortment of teachers.”¹⁶⁹ The monks usually chose to travel to the renowned Buddhist monasteries to further their study. Lingyan Monasteries were mentioned at least three times in the biographies of various eminent monks of the Sui Dynasty, which proves the wide-spread reputation and the growing fascination of Lingyan Monastery held for monks. The “Biography of Shi Huixiao” 釋慧蕭 who was an eminent monk living in the early Sui Dynasty, provides evidence for the prosperity of Lingyan Monastery in his time. Shi Huixiao, surnamed Liu, was a

¹⁶⁹ See John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 121.

native of Pengcheng. Before he became a monk, he was a Confucian scholar and well versed in classics. However, when he found the classics were not something he really desired, he went to Mount Song to study Buddhism and became a monk. During the reign of Emperor Wen, he heard Lingyan Monastery was a place ideal for seclusion and famous for righteous acts (of monks) as well, so he went to Lingyan Monastery.¹⁷⁰ Similar accounts of Lingyan Monastery can also be found in the biographies of eminent monks Shi Sengsheng¹⁷¹ 釋僧生 and Shi Huibin 釋慧斌.¹⁷² These evidence showed that Lingyan Monastery restored to its former glory and its glorious fame spread far which attracted many eminent monks.

The Decline of Lingyan Monastery in the Sui Dynasty

The revival of Lingyan Monastery during the Sui Dynasty was mainly due to the imperial patronage. However, the prosperity and decline of a Buddhist monastery was decided by both the national and local factors, and sometimes the local factors played a more significant role. Despite of the imperial patronage, Lingyan Monastery still went into decline in the final years of the Sui Dynasty. Nonetheless, the decline of Lingyan Monastery was not a microcosm of Buddhist monasteries across China as it was in the previous Emperor Wu's anti-Buddhist persecution. Precisely speaking, it was rather a reflection of the decline of Shandong Buddhism which was impacted by the constant uprisings of peasants in Shandong.

Shandong has long been a place of flourishing feudal economy and significant strategic

¹⁷⁰ See "Biography of Shi Huixiao" 釋慧蕭傳 in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* Vol. 2, 99-100.

¹⁷¹ See "Biography of Shi Sengsheng" 釋僧生傳 in the *Hongzan fahua zhuan* 弘贊法華傳 the Taishōzō, Vol. 51, No. 2067.

¹⁷² See "Biography of Shi Huibin" 釋慧斌傳 in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* Vol. 2, 44.

position in the history. However, Emperor Yang of Sui 隋煬帝 took excessive advantage of Shandong which severely destroyed the local economy and greatly intensified the class contradictions. During his reign, Emperor Yang launched several large-scale construction projects and initiated three wars against Goguryeo which especially brought great disasters to the people in Shandong. In the year 610, Emperor Yang issued a decree ordering a military institution to be set up in Shandong to raise horses and train soldiers in preparation for the war against Goguryeo. As the Sui navy planned to depart from Weihai 威海 in Shandong to assault Pyongyang, Emperor Yang sent officials to the seaport in Donglai 東萊 (nowadays Laizhou 萊州 in Shandong) to supervise the construction of ships for the war against Goguryeo in the second month of the year 611. These officials whipped the local laborers to stand in the water to build ships without rest. Because the laborers were soaked in the sea water for too long time, maggots grew out from their bodies and approximately thirty to forty percent of these laborers eventually died.¹⁷³ In this way, the court extorted a large amount of wealth from Shandong and added great woes to the miserable life of the common people in Shandong. In the last years of the Sui Dynasty, as a result, the first peasant uprising occurred in Shandong and then numerous peasant uprisings sprang up across the whole Shandong area. According to the statistics, there were about 130 peasant armies by the end of the Sui Dynasty and over 30 of them were active in the Shandong area.¹⁷⁴ Peasant uprisings broke out in every prefecture and county of Shandong. Over one million peasants in Shandong took part in these uprisings.

¹⁷³ *Shandong tongshi: Sui Tang Wudai juan*, 12.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

The main targets of these peasant uprisings were the local tyrants, gentry and landlords. However, Buddhist monks and monasteries were also attacked by peasants army. Zürcher once pointed out that “the late third and early fourth century AD witness the formation of a wholly new type of Chinese intellectual élite, consisting of cultured monks who, by a fruitful combination of Buddhist doctrine and traditional Chinese scholarship, were able to develop the particular type of Buddhism which spread among the upper classes and which we therefore have called ‘gentry Buddhism’.”¹⁷⁵ This “gentry Buddhism” actually still existed in the Sui Dynasty. Many eminent monks of the Sui Dynasty were from large gentry clans and thus they can be regarded as gentry Buddhists. The *Guang hong mi ji* 廣弘明集 (*Expanded Collection on the Propagation and Clarification of Buddhism*) records that “during the Sui and Tang Dynasties, many of the Buddhist monks were the noble and privileged people”.¹⁷⁶ It proves that Buddhist monks have close connection with the upper class and thus it is no wonder why the rebellious peasants attacked Buddhist monks and monasteries. As a Buddhist monastery patronized by the Sui court, Lingyan Monastery could not escape the attack from peasants army. Many Buddhist monks in Lingyan Monastery were forced to go into exile during this chaotic period. A record in the XGSZ mentions that an eminent Buddhist monk called Daobian 道辯 in Lingyan Monastery went to Xiangyang 襄陽 in the middle of Emperor Yang’s Daye Reign period.¹⁷⁷ The lost of monks especially eminent monks undoubtedly had negative impact on Lingyan Monastery. As a

¹⁷⁵ Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaption of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 6.

¹⁷⁶ The original text is “出家沙門，多是貴勝。” See *Guang hong ming ji*, 99.

¹⁷⁷ See “Biography of Shi Daobian” 釋道辯傳 in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* Vol. 2, 190-191.

result, the prosperity of Lingyan Monastery was gone with the demise of the short-lived Sui Dynasty.

Chapter Three The Heyday of Shandong Buddhism:

The Prosperity and Destruction of Lingyan Monastery in the Tang Dynasty

The Prosperity of Buddhism in Shandong in the Tang Dynasty

With the death of Emperor Yang of Sui in 618, Li Yuan 李淵 (566-635), a former governor of the Sui Dynasty, took the throne and founded the Tang Dynasty. The large-scale peasant uprisings in the end of the Sui Dynasty were finally suppressed one by one by the Tang army. Shandong, together with most parts of China, restored political and economic stability during the years from the reign of Emperor Taizong of Tang 唐太宗 (627-649) to Emperor Xuanzong of Tang 唐玄宗 (713-741). The political and economic stability in Shandong once more led to the prosperity of Buddhism, which proves the continuity of most of the clusters of religious sites in the Chinese history.

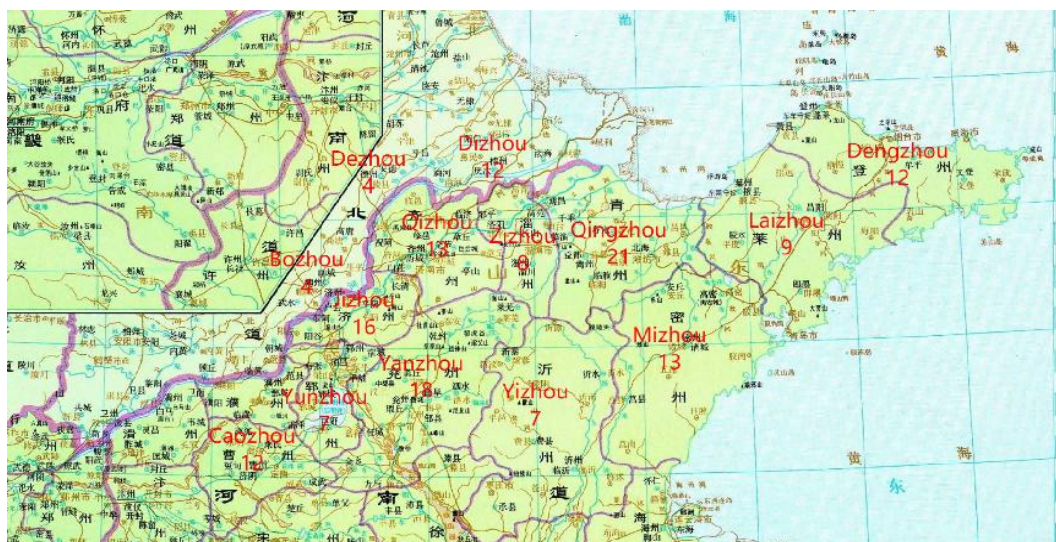
A study made by Lu Tongyan 魯統彥 on the geographical distribution of Buddhist temples in Shandong during the Tang Dynasty provides some meaningful statistics.¹⁷⁸ I created a chart based on Lu's study as follows:

Chart IV

Prefecture	Number of Buddhist Monasteries
Qingzhou (青州)	21

¹⁷⁸ See Lu Tongyan 魯統彥, "The Geographical Distribution of Buddhism in Shandong during the Tang Dynasty 山東唐朝時期佛教的地理分佈" in *Journal of Shandong Normal University* 山東師範大學學報, Vol. 55 (2010): 40-44.

Jizhou (濟州)	16
Mizhou (密州)	13
Dizhou (棣州)	12
Laizhou (萊州)	9
Yunzhou (鄆州)	7
Dezhou (德州)	4
Yanzhou (兗州)	18
Qizhou (齊州)	13
Caozhou (曹州)	12
Dengzhou (登州)	12
Zizhou (淄州)	8
Yizhou (沂州)	7
Bozhou (博州)	4



The Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), Number of Buddhist Temples in Shandong, China¹⁷⁹

Chart IV shows the distribution of Buddhist temples in the fourteen prefectures in Shandong during the Tang Dynasty. It reveals that Buddhist temples existed in all the fourteen prefectures during the Tang Dynasty and there are corresponding relationships between the number of temples and the economic, political, social and cultural conditions in each prefecture. Qingzhou, as the prefecture which owned the most Buddhist temples, had long been an economic and political center in the history. It was also a place of great military significance as it lied between Mount Tai and the sea. Qingzhou had been a most important Buddhist center in Shandong long before the Tang Dynasty. Bailong Monastery 白龍寺 was located in Qingzhou Prefecture and famous for its large amount of Buddhist statues made between the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) and the Eastern Wei Dynasty (534-550). As a result, it is no wonder why Qingzhou owned the most temples in the Tang Dynasty. Next to Qingzhou is Yanzhou Prefecture which owned eighteen Buddhist monasteries. The prosperity of Buddhism in Yanzhou was closely related to the transportation because the Grand Canal passed through this prefecture. The Grand Canal, also called Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, was a largest artificial canal in China. The oldest part of this canal was built in the fifth century. When the routes from Beijing to Hangzhou were finally connected in the Sui Dynasty, it immediately became an important transporting method and at the same time promoted the economic development of those regions which it ran through. As one of the regions where the Grand Canal ran through, Yongzhou benefited a lot from it. With regard to Jizhou, Qizhou and Mizhou, transportation again played a big part in the

¹⁷⁹ The base map is quoted from the website of historical maps. See <http://www.txlzp.com/ditu/199.html>.

Buddhist prosperity as the Yellow River ran through those three prefectures. Transportation greatly impacted the spread of Buddhism and at the same time promoted the economic development in those regions. As Gernet pointed out, “Buddhism made its appearance in China both as an organised religion and a great economic power.”¹⁸⁰ The economic activities such as donation and buying and selling lands of Buddhist monasteries resulted in “a profound social and economic transformation”¹⁸¹ during the Tang Dynasty. In this way, Buddhist monasteries significantly impacted local economy and further impacted local politics, society and culture.

Two coastal regions, Dengzhou and Laizhou, need our special attention. With regard to their geographic locations, the two regions were located in the eastern part of Shandong and far from the Grand Canal and the Yellow River. It seems that those two regions did not have the favorable conditions for the spread of Buddhism, but they still owned relatively more Buddhist monasteries. It is the overseas exchanges with Silla and Japan that account for the prosperity of the two regions. The Tang Dynasty is usually regarded as the greatest imperial Dynasty in the history. Meanwhile, it is also a golden age for Buddhism because Buddhism has become an integrated part of Chinese life in this period. The neighboring countries such as Silla and Japan, sent a large number of envoys and monks to China to study Chinese culture and Buddhism. Dengzhou and Laizhou were the regions which were closest to Korea peninsula and Japan, so many foreign envoys and monks from Silla and Japan chose the maritime routes to arrive at Dengzhou or

¹⁸⁰ See Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*, trans. Franciscus Verellen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 65.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

Laizhou first. From either Dengzhou or Laizhou, they went to the neighboring regions such as Qizhou, Qingzhou and Caozhou, and then to Kaifeng, Luoyang and finally Chang'an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty. According to Yasuhiko Kimiya, there were altogether seven times that the Japanese envoys and monks landed on Dengzhou or Laizhou from the year 630 to 759. He also mentioned that once the Japanese envoys and monks went to Kaiyuan Monastery 開元寺 in Dengzhou to pray to the Buddha.¹⁸² Moreover, the famous Japanese monk Ennin in his work *Nittō Guhō Junrei Kōki* (入唐求法巡禮行記) recorded he made a visit to a Korean Buddhist establishment which was founded by a Korean in Shandong and all the resident monks there were of Korean origin.¹⁸³ In fact, there were a large number of Korean Buddhist establishments which were called Korean Cloisters 新羅院 in the Tang Dynasty. Due to the frequent cultural communications between China and the two Asian countries, Dengzhou and Laizhou became the ideal transfer locations for Japanese and Korean envoys and monks. Thus there appeared a number of monasteries in Dengzhou and Laizhou. With more and more foreign monks arriving in China, there appeared more foreign Buddhist establishments in Shandong. These foreign Buddhist establishments were usually affiliated to the local monasteries. However, these foreign Buddhist establishments were not limited in Dengzhou and Laizhou. A Korean cloister was found in Longxing Monastery 龍興寺 in Qingzhou Prefecture. There were also independent Korean monasteries in Shandong. The abbot and the resident monks were all Koreans. On

¹⁸² Yasuhiko Kimiya 木宮泰彦, *Nikka bunka kōryūshi* 日中文化交流史, trans. Hu Xinian 胡錫年 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1980), 86.

¹⁸³ See Edwin O. Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1955), 93.

important festivals and occasions, the Korean people in Shandong would have a gathering in these monasteries. The coexistence of local and foreign monasteries in Shandong indicates not only a kind of cultural fusion but also possibly a fusion of Buddhism. The fusion could not happen in Shandong without the special geographical location of Shandong. In a sense, Buddhist sites in Shandong in the Tang Dynasty provides a good example to illustrate how a Regional Religious System works.

The Relocation of Lingyan Monastery in the Tang Dynasty

Since the Mount Tai area was a significant Buddhist center in Shandong in the Tang Dynasty, Lingyan Monastery, as a Buddhist monastery with long history in this area, was seeking greater development. The Abbot Huichong 惠崇 made great contribution to strengthening the reputation of Linyang Monastery as a most renowned Buddhist monastery in China through relocating Lingyang Monastery. Lingyan Monastery was originally located to the west of Ganlu Spring 甘露泉 because Ganlu Spring could provide a steady supply of drinking water. However, this siting was somewhat isolated and thus limited the development of Lingyan Monastery. Huichong, an eminent monk living during the Zhenguan 貞觀 era (627-649), relocated the monastery to the place where a building called Imperial Library 禦書閣 was located and made it scale up to a large and magnificent monastery. Though the natural landscape of the original location was better than the later one, the new siting provided enough and necessary space for the expansion of Lingyan Monastery. Therefore, Ma Daxiang commented that Huichong's

contribution to Lingyan Monastery was no less than Master Fading.¹⁸⁴

According to the LYZ, another important reason for the relocation of Lingyan Monastery was related to the eminent monk Xuanzang 玄奘. It records that in the early years of the Zhenguan era, Xuanzang once translated Buddhist scriptures in Lingyan Monastery. The translation of Buddhist scriptures involved a lot of Buddhist monks and Buddhist texts, and the original monastery could not hold so many people and book. In order to solve the problem, Abbot Huizhong relocated the monastery and expanded Lingyan Monastery in the new location.¹⁸⁵ Xuanzang, as one of the most eminent monks in the Tang Dynasty, was best known for his sixteen-year pilgrimage to India. He studied Buddhist philosophy and Indian Buddhism there and brought lots of valuable Buddhist texts to China. He devoted himself to the translation of Buddhist texts when he returned to China. Due to his piety and great contribution to Buddhism, he was conferred a honorific title “Sanzang” 三藏 (Tripitaka). His legendary pilgrimage also inspired the famous Chinese classic novel *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (*Journey to the West*) by Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 in the Ming Dynasty.

It would be a great honor for Lingyan Monastery if Xuanzang indeed translated Buddhist texts there. However, there is no other evidence showing that Xuanzang had been to Lingyan Monastery in his lifetime except in the LYZ. The LYZ also records some other activities of Xuanzang in Lingyan Monastery. For example, before Xuanzang started his pilgrimage to India,

¹⁸⁴ The original is “與定公功相侔矣”. See Ma Daxiang, LYZ, 35.

¹⁸⁵ See Ma Daxiang, LYZ, 29.

he caressed the head of a small pine tree in Lingyan Monastery saying, “I will go to the West to seek Buddhism. You could grow toward west.” After Xuanzang left, this small pine tree indeed began to grow toward west and the branches were as long as several chi 尺. One year these branches of the pine tree turned to grow toward east unexpectedly, the disciples of Xuanzang said, “Our master will come back soon.” Then they made preparations to welcome Xuanzang back and he really came back in that year.¹⁸⁶ That pine tree was therefore named as “Moding song” 摩頂松 (Caressing-head pine). We can still find the pine nowadays in Lingyan Monastery.

Not considering the miraculous elements in the account, we still have the question whether Xuanzang had been to Lingyan Monastery or not. Based on the XGSZ, Xuanzang was born in Yanshi 偃師 of Henan and became a monk in Luoyang of Henan in 612, the eighth year of the Daye 大業 era in the Sui Dynasty. In the end of the Sui Dynasty, the Sui army and the uprising peasants were fighting for Luoyang, so Xuanzang left Luoyang and began wandering in China. He went to Chang’an and Sichuan. It was in Chengdu 成都 of Sichuan that Xuanzang got ordained. Then he went to Hubei 湖北, and then to the north including Anyang 安陽 of Henan and Daming 大名 of Hebei 河北 to visit eminent Buddhist masters. Chinese scholar Xu Wenming argued that it is hard to determine the exact route of Xuanzang when he left Hubei for the north.¹⁸⁷ One possibility is that Xuanzang crossed the Yangtze River to Pengcheng, then he

¹⁸⁶ See Ma Daxiang, LYZ, 40.

¹⁸⁷ Xu Wenming, “Xuzang dashi zaoqi shicheng luekao” 玄奘大師早期師承略考 in *Zhongguo fojiao zhexue* 中國佛教哲學 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2008), 241-256.

went all the way north, passed by Shandong and finally arrived in Hebei. The other possibility is that he left Hubei and went to Henan, and then he arrived in Hebei from Henan without passing by Shandong. Scholars were not sure if Xuanzang had been to Shandong, not to mention if he had been to Lingyan Monastery. Even if Xuanzang had visited Lingyan Monastery before his pilgrimage to India, we still have doubt if he had the idea of seeking Buddhism in India at that time. The tale of “Moding song” sounds like Lingyan Monastery was the starting point of Xuanzang’s pilgrimage, which cannot be proved by any other historical materials.

Since there is little possibility that Xuanzang had visited Lingyan Monastery before his pilgrimage, had he translated Buddhist texts in Lingyan Monastery after he came back from India? According to the biography of Xuanzang in the XGSZ, Xuanzang returned to Chang’an on the 24th day of the first month of the nineteenth year of the Zhenguan era (645). When he arrived at Chang’an, both Buddhist monks and laymen poured into the streets to welcome him and even all the shops were closed in the market.¹⁸⁸ However, the LYZ records that in the third year of the Zhenguan era (629), Xuanzang translated Buddhist texts in the Imperial Library of Lingyan Monastery, which is contrary to the record in the XGSZ. Various historical sources show that Xuanzang left for India to seek Buddhism in the first year of the Zhenguan era (627). In the year 629, Xuanzang was still in India. Therefore, the information in the LYZ might not be accurate.

Actually when Xuanzan returned to China, he hoped that he could go to Shaolin Monastery 少林寺 to translate Buddhist texts. But Emperor Taizong did not allow him to leave the capital

¹⁸⁸ See “Biography of Xuanzang” in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* Vol.1, 43-64.

area, and then Xuanzang did his translation work in the imperial monastery called Hongfu Monastery 弘福寺 in Chang'an. In the tenth month of the year 648, Xuanzang moved to the fojing yichang 佛經譯場 (Sutra Translation Assembly) in Ci'en Monastery 慈恩寺 newly built by Emperor Gaozong 唐高宗 in commemoration of his mother Empress Zhangsun 長孫皇后. In the ninth month of the year 652, Xuanzang submitted a memorial to Emperor Gaozong, requesting to leave for Shaolin Monastery to continue his translation work, but was declined again by the emperor. During his lifetime, Xuanzang expressed his wish to return to Shaolin Monastery for several times, but was never permitted by the emperor until his death.¹⁸⁹ In fact both Emperor Taizong and Emperor Gaozong persuaded Xuanzang to return to lay life and offered positions in the court to him, which reflected the two emperors' real attitude towards Buddhism. For them, Confucianism was the fundamental philosophy they needed to follow to govern the state while Buddhism was a religion which should be taken advantage of. Emperor Taizong once said, "What I prefer is the ways of (Emperor) Yao and Shun, and teachings of Zhou Gong 周公 and Confucius. I believe these ways and teachings to the state are as important as wings to the bird and water to the fish. If (we) lose them, (we) will surely die. So (we) cannot have them for even a moment."¹⁹⁰ The emperors wanted to make Buddhism under control rather than give unconditional support to Buddhism. As for a Buddhism monk of great influence such

¹⁸⁹ See Huili 慧立 and Yancong 彥棕, *Daci'en si sanzang fashi zhuan* 大慈恩寺三藏法師傳 (Beijing: zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1983), 185-213.

¹⁹⁰ The original text is "朕今所好者，惟在堯、舜之道，周、孔之教，以為如鳥有翼，如魚依水，失之必死，不可暫無耳。" See Wu Jing 吳兢, *Zhenguan zhengyao* 貞觀政要 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1978), 194.

as Xuanzang, it was much safer to keep him under supervision to translate Buddhist texts in Chang'an. In this circumstance, it was practically impossible for Xuanzang to go to Lingyan Monastery to do his translation work.

Then why did there appear some accounts of Xuanzang in Lingyan Monastery in the LYZ? Ma Jiye suggested that probably Ma Daxiang, the author of the LYZ, confused two monks having the same name Sanzang with each other. Xuanzang, was conferred the title Monk Sanzang 三藏和尚 by Emperor Taizong. But another monk called Yijing 義淨, was also conferred the title Monk Sanzang by Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 and Emperor Zhongzong 唐中宗 in the Tang Dynasty. Yijing, originally named Zhang Wenming 張文明, was born in Qizhou of Shandong (nowadays Jinan of Shandong).¹⁹¹ He became a monk in a monastery called Tuku Temple 土窟寺, the name of which was later changed into Sichan Temple 四禪寺 in his hometown. In the second year of the Linde 麟德 era (665), when Empress Wu Zetian visited Shentong Monastery, she heard the abbot of Tuku Temple was pious and determined to go to the West to seek Buddhism and then she came to Tuku Temple to visit Yijing. Yijing welcomed Empress Wu Zetian and sent her a valuable scroll of the *Lotus Sutra* which he obtained from his master. Empress Wu Zetian was so glad that she took Yijing to Lingyan Monastery and appointed him as the abbot there. In the second year of the Xianheng 咸亨 era (671), all the monks in Qizhou saw Yijing off when he departed for the West.¹⁹² If the tale of

¹⁹¹ See Zhisheng's 智昇 *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (*Record of Śākyamuni's Teachings Compiled during the Kaiyuan Era*) in the Taishōzō, Vol. 55, No. 2154.

¹⁹² See Fang Zeshui 房澤水 and Wang Qiang 王強, "Sichan si yu Tang Sanzang Yijing" 四禪寺與唐三藏

“Moding song” was true, the one who caressed that small pine was more likely Yijing rather than Xuanzang. When Yijing finally returned to China in 695, he devoted to the translation of Buddhist texts as Xuanzang did in several monasteries. But none of these monasteries was Lingyan Monastery. In another word, neither Xuanzang nor Yijing seemed to have translated Buddhist texts in Lingyan Monastery.

Another reason for the appearance of Xuanzang in the LYZ is probably related to Xuanzang’s identity. As Dorothy C. Wong commented, “Over the centuries, Xuanzang was made into a protean and multifaceted figure that provided inspiration for diverse groups of Buddhist believers and audiences.”¹⁹³ In a sense, Xuanzang has become a sage in Chinese Buddhism who proves a great degree of acceptance and popularity of Buddhism in China. Thus, it would increase the reputation and attraction of a monastery if it establishes a connection with Xuanzang. More importantly, the connection with Xuanzang would consecrate the monastery. Mircea Eliade once pointed out, “For religious man, space is not homogeneous; he experiences interruptions, breaks in it; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others.”¹⁹⁴ The same is true of Chinese Buddhists. In their eyes, Lingyan Monastery, as a sacred Buddhist site, was “qualitatively different from others” from the day when it was established. The foundation tale is full of supernatural elements, so the tale of the monastery’s relocation should not be a common

義淨 in *Changqing zhengxie wenshi ziliao* 長清政協文史資料, Volume 8, 2007.

¹⁹³ See Dorothy C. Wong, “The Making of a Saint: Images of Xuanzang in East Asia” in *Early Medieval China* (June 2002): 78.

¹⁹⁴ See Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (San Diego, CA: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1959), 20.

one. “Since religious man cannot live except in an atmosphere impregnated with the sacred, we must expect to find a large number of techniques for consecrating space.....This behavior is documented on every plane of religious man’s existence, but it is particularly evident in his desire to move about only in a sanctified world, that is, in a sacred space. This is the reason for the elaboration of techniques of orientation which, properly speaking, are techniques for the construction of sacred space.”¹⁹⁵ The sacredness of Lingyan Monastery, from the very beginning, is evolved from hagiographies, miraculous stories, and imperial patronage. Consequently, the sacredness would inspire more religious imagination to keep it. The tales of Xuanzang in Lingyan Monastery belong to this kind of religious imagination, which in turn secure the continuity of the sacredness of Lingyan Monastery in the changing historical era.

Although Xuanzang did not translate Buddhist texts in Lingyan Monastery, at least two monks from Lingyan Monastery participated in the translation activities organized by Xuanzang. One is Master Shi Daoyin 釋道因, born in Puyang 濮陽 of Henan, became a monk at the age of seven in Linyan Monastery. Later in order to flee the wars, Daoyin went to Sichuan and became the abbot of Duobao Monastery 多寶寺. Xuanzang once studied Buddhism in Duobo Monastery and thus established a close relationship with Daoyin. When Xuanzang returned to China from India and began his translation work, he invited Daoyin to Chang’an to participation in his translation work. Whenever Xuanzang met difficult passages, he always discussed with Daoyin who made great contribution to Xuanzang’s translation work.¹⁹⁶ The other one is Master

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 28-29.

¹⁹⁶ See Zanning 贊寧, “Biography of Daoyin of Duobao Monastery in Yizhou during the Tang Dynasty” 唐益

Lingrun 靈潤 who was born in Yongji 永濟 of Shanxi and later became an eminent monk in Hebei. Even though he was well-known in Hebei and the capital city, he still decided to go to Lingyan Monastery to study Buddhism.¹⁹⁷ Later he also became one of the most significant members of Xuanzang's translation team. Daoyin and Lingyun's connection with Lingyan Monastery, on the one hand, shows Lingyan Monastery made a significant contribution to Xuanzang's translation work even though Xuanzang had not been there. On the other hand, it proves Lingyan Monastery enjoyed a high reputation across China in the Tang Dynasty.

The Dominant Buddhist Teachings in Lingyan Monastery in the Tang Dynasty

The Tang Dynasty is usually seen as a golden age for Chinese Buddhism. In this period Buddhism was totally sinicized and there appeared various schools of Buddhism, each of which developed their distinctive doctrines and teachings. Among them, Chan Buddhism was the most influential one. Since the Kaiyuan 開元 era, Chan Buddhism was divided into Southern School and Northern School. Of the four greatest Buddhist monasteries in the Tang Dynasty, only Lingyan Monastery was located to the north of Yangtze River. Thus, it became an important place for the Northern School of Chan Buddhism to propagate the traditional Chan doctrine of gradual enlightenment in the Mount Tai area. Many monks came to Lingyan Monastery to preach or study the doctrines of the Northern School. Among them, the two most well-known ones were Master Jingjue 淨覺 and Master Xiangmo 降魔.

州多寶寺道因傳 in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* (*Biographies of eminent monks compiled during the Song period*) Vol.1 宋高僧傳上 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian chubanshe, 2018), 16-17.

¹⁹⁷ See "Biography of Lingrun" in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* Vol. 1, 244-247.

Master Jingjue, the author of the *Lengqie shizi ji* 楞伽師資記 (*Record of the Masters and Disciples of the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*), was believed to have preached the Dharma in Lingyang Monastery at the end of the Kaiyuan era. We can find evidence in Li Yong's "Lingyan si bei song", which said, "The Dade 大德(Great Worthy) monk Jingjue 淨覺 only reveres all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,(here six characters cannot be recognized in the stele). Shangzuo seng 上座僧 (head monk) Xuanjing 玄景, duweina seng 都維那僧 (administrator of the monastery) Kexiang 克詳, and Sizhu 寺主 (the abbot of the monastery) Anchan 安禪, (sitting) at the head explained the emptiness, or spoke to(here two characters cannot be recognized in the stele) the meaning."¹⁹⁸

The life of the Dade monk Jingjue mentioned in the above passage was not recorded in the various biographies of eminent monks, but we can find some information of him on the tomb inscription "Datang Da'anguo si gu dade Jingjue shi taming"¹⁹⁹ 大唐大安國寺故大德淨覺師塔銘 by Wang Wei 王維, Li Zhifei 李知非's preface to Jingjue's *Commentary on the Heart Sutra*²⁰⁰ 注般若波羅蜜多心經序, and the preface to the *Lengqie shizi ji*²⁰¹. According to these

¹⁹⁸ The original text is "大德僧淨覺，敬惟諸佛，口口口口口口。上座僧玄景、都維那僧克祥、寺主安禪，或上首解空，或出口口義。" See Yang Yang and Wang Jing, "Tang 'Lingyansi bei song bing xu' bei kao," 34-35.

¹⁹⁹ See Dong Gao 董誥, et al., eds., *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 Vol. 5 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 4193-94.

²⁰⁰ See Yang Zengwen 楊曾文, *Jingjue jiqi zhu bo re bo luo mi duo xin jing xu yuqi jiaoben* 淨覺及其《“注”般若波羅蜜多心經》與其校本 in *Zhongguo foxue xuebao* 中國佛學學報, Vol. 6 (July 1993): 237-261.

²⁰¹ See Jingjue 淨覺, *Lengqie shizi ji* 楞伽師資記 in the *Taishōzō*, Vol. 85, No. 2837.

three historical sources, we can trace some important events in Jingjue's lifetime. Jingjue was born in the first year of the Yongchun 永淳 era (683) in Chang'an. In the first year of the Dazu 大足 era (701), he met Master Shenxiu 神秀, the founder of the Northern School of Chan Buddhism, in the Eastern Capital Luoyang, and studied Buddhism with him. In the first year of the Shenlong 神龍 era (705), Jingjue was ordained in Baiyan Monastery 柏岩寺 in Taihang Mountain 太行山. He stayed there for three years and wrote *Jingang bore lijing* 金剛般若理鏡 which was already lost. In the second year of the Jinglong 景龍 era (708), he became a disciple of Xuanze 玄曠 in Luoyang. In the early years of the Kaiyuan era (approximately 712-716), he returned to Taihang Mountain and wrote the *Lengqie shizi ji* in Lingquan Valley 靈泉穀. In the fifteenth year of the Kaiyuan era (727), he went to Jinzhou 金州 (nowadays Ankang 安康 in Shanxi 陝西) and completed the *Commentary on the Heart Sutra*. In his later years, Jingjue stayed in Da'anguo Monastery in Chang'an and had over seventy disciples there. He passed away in the year between the Kaiyuan era and the Tianbao 天寶 era, which probably was the year 740 and was buried in Shaolingyuan 少陵原 (nowadays Chang'an County of Shanxi province).

Actually all these three sources did not mention that Jingjue had been to Lingyan Monastery to propagate the doctrines of the Northern School, but we can find there were two relatively long gaps between the year 716 and 727, and 727 and 740 as well. Probably sometime during these two periods, Jingjue went to Lingyan Monastery and stayed there for a while. In Li Yong's account, Jingjue was placed before the three most important monks, shangzuo seng, duweina seng and si zhu, in Lingyan Monastery, which indicates Jingjue probably played a central role in

the monastery. Wang Wei said Jingjue was a brother of Empress Wei 韋皇后 (second wife of Emperor Zhongzong of the Tang Dynasty 唐中宗)²⁰², and Li Zhifei said Jingjue was a descendant of Xiaoyao gong 逍遙公 (Duke Xiaoyao) whose surname is Wei²⁰³. No matter which identity Jingjue owned, he was either connected to the royal family or to the high-rank officials, which might explain why Jingjue was placed before the other three most important monks in Lingyan Monastery in Li Yong's account. Lingyan Monastery has always been a royally patronized monastery since it was established. It is impossible for it to become one of the four greatest monasteries in the Tang Dynasty without imperial support. As Dr. Welter pointed out, "Imperial support and official recognition were crucial for the success of the Chan movement in China. Throughout the rise and fall of Chan factions, all sides, regardless of strategy, depended heavily on official support and recognition for success."²⁰⁴ During Jingjue's lifetime, the Northern School of Chan Buddhism was quite influential and won substantial support from the royal family. Thus it is not unusual that the Northern School achieved a dominant position in Lingyan Monastery in the early Tang Dynasty.

The other important Chan master of the Northern School in Lingyan Monastery during the

²⁰² See Wang Wei 王維, "Datang Da'anguo si gu dade Jingjue shi taming" 大唐大安國寺故大德淨覺師塔銘 in the *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文, 4193–94.

²⁰³ See Lu Cheng 呂澂, "Dunhuang xieben tang Shi Jingjue zhu bore boluomiduo xinjing yuqi jiaoben (fu shuoming)" 敦煌寫本唐釋淨覺《注般若波羅蜜多心經》與其校本(附說明) in *Zhongguo dunhuang xue bainian wenku: zongjiao juan* Vol.4 中國敦煌學百年文庫.宗教卷(四) (Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 1999), 81-87.

²⁰⁴ See Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 15.

Tang Dynasty is Master Xiangmo. According to the SGSZ, Master Xiangmo, also called Master Xiangmo Zang 降魔藏, was born in Zhan Jun 趙郡 (nowadays in Hebei) with the family name Wang. When he was seven years old, he was bold enough to stay by himself in an empty room or in the wilderness without fearing any demons. Thus he got the nickname “Xiangmo Zang” meaning “Demon subduing Zang”. Later he became a Buddhist monk and studied under Master Mingzan 明贊 of Guangfu yuan 廣福院. At first Xiangmo was interested in the sudden enlightenment propagated by the Southern School of Chan Buddhism. But when Master Shenxiu rose to fame in Northern China, Xiangmo paid a visit to Shenxiu. McRae translated the dialogue between Shenxiu and Xiangmo when they first encountered in the SGSZ as follows:

(Shen)-hsiu asked: “Your name is ‘Demon-subduer’. At my place there are no mountain or tree spirits, so will you turn around and become a demon (yourself)?”

(Tsang) said: “(If) there is a Buddha, there are demons.”

(Shen)-hsiu said: “If you are a demon, then you must reside in an inconceivable realm.”

(Tsang) said: “This Buddha is also nonsubstantial. What is the inconceivable (realm) of being?”²⁰⁵

Shenxiu was satisfied with Xiangmo’s reply and told him, “You are destined to go to Shaohao zhi xu 少昊之墟.”²⁰⁶

“Shaohao zhi xu” means the ruins of the place in which Shaohao once lived. Shaohao was a

²⁰⁵ See the translation in John McRae’s *The Northern School and the Early Formation of Ch’an Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 63.

²⁰⁶ See it in the SGSZ Vol. 1, 106.

leader of Dongyi tribe in ancient China. The legend says that he led his people to live in Qufu, Shandong. Therefore “Shaohao zhi xu” refers to Qufu. Following Shenxiu’s instruction, Xiangmo went to Lingyan Monastery in the Mount Tai area which is very close to Qufu in the Kaiyuan era and made it a center of the Northern School of Chan Buddhism in Northern China. Moreover, during his stay in Lingyan Monastery, Xiangmo made tea drinking not only a common practice for monks but a popular custom for the people in Northern China. When John Kieschnick explored the history of tea in Chinese monasteries, he noticed the connection between Xiangmo in Lingyan Monastery and tea drinking recorded in the *Fengshi wenjian ji* 封氏聞見記 (*Master Feng’s records of hearsay and personal experience*) by Feng Yan 封演 in the Tang Dynasty:

[Originally] southerners were fond of drinking tea, but at first few northerners drank it. During the Kaiyuan era [713-41] there was one Master Xiangmo of the Lingyan Monastery at Mount Tai who propagated the teachings of Chan with great success. When practicing meditation he emphasized the importance of staving off sleep. Also, he did not eat in the evening. For this reason, the Master allowed all [of his followers] to drink tea. Everyone then adopted [the habit], and tea was boiled everywhere. From this time on, the custom spread from one to another as it became a fashion. From Qu, Qi, Qiang, and Li [tea drinking] spread eventually to the capital, and tea shops appeared in many cities, where tea was then boiled and sold.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ See the original text in Feng Yan’s 封演 *Fengshi wenjian ji* 封氏聞見記 (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2001), 125. See the translation in John Kieschnick’s *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*

The above passage confirms that what the monks of Lingyan Monastery followed were the teachings of the Northern School of Chan Buddhism in the Kaiyuan era because “staving off sleep” propagated by Xiangmo was a practice guided by Shenxiu’s famous poem “Body is the bodhi tree; Mind is like clear mirror stand; Strive to clean it constantly; Do not let the dust motes land.”²⁰⁸ In this circumstance, tea became an important thing to banish fatigue in accordance with the Buddhist precepts. More importantly, Lingyan Monastery owned a great deal of lands during that time and most of the peasants of nearby villages were tenants of the monastery. Therefore, the monastery was capable to provide enough tea for both its monks and laymen. Some tea trees of over one hundred years old can still be found in the monastery to this day, which were the best proof of the tea plantation in the Lingyan Monastery. Lingyan tea became a special local product of the Jinan area since then. It is no wonder that Lingyan Monastery was called the ancestral temple of tea culture.

The activities of Jingjue and Xiangmo in Lingyan Monastery provide solid evidence that Lingyan Monastery was a center of the Northern School of Chan Buddhism in the early Tang Dynasty. With regard to the middle and later periods of the Tang Dynasty, there was few records about the monks and the teachings propagated in Lingyan Monastery. However, in the SGSZ, it can be found that Huaihui 懷暉, a prominent monk of the Southern School of Chan Buddhism, had been to Lingyan Monastery. Huaihui (765-815), was a Quanzhou 泉州 native with the

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 167.

²⁰⁸ The original poem is “身是菩提樹，心如明鏡臺，時時勤拂拭，勿使惹塵埃。” See it in the *Liuzu tanjing* 六祖壇經 in the Taishōzō, Vol. 48, No. 2008.

family name Xie 謝. At the beginning of the Zhenyuan 貞元 era (765-805), Huaihui went to Hongzhou 洪州, Jiangxi 江西 and became a disciple of Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一. Mazu Daoyi was a disciple of Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 and started the Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism 洪州禪. Naturally Huaihui belonged to the Southern School of Chan Buddhism. Huaihui traveled a lot in Northern China to propagate the teachings of the Southern School. He went to Cuilai Mountain (located southeast to Tai'an, Shandong), then to Lingyan Monastery in Qizhou, and then to Baijia yan 百家岩 (in nowadays Jiaozuo 焦作, Henan), and finally to Zhongtiao Mountain 中條山 (in nowadays Yongji 永濟, Shanxi). The book *Lingyan Monastery* mentions that the reason why Huaihui went through so many places in Northern China was that the teachings of the Northern School of Chan Buddhism were dominant in these places where Huaihui visited and there his propagation of the Southern School was resisted. He stayed in Lingyan Monastery just for a short time and then left because he found the teachings of the Southern School could not be tolerated in a monastery dominated by the Northern School.

The repulsion of the Southern School does not mean that the Northern School was the exclusive Buddhist sect advocated in Lingyan Monastery. The “Lingyan si song bei” mentioned that “(Buddhist monks) practiced true emptiness to apprehend holiness; (Buddhist monks practiced) esoteric Buddhism to connect to the mundane world.”²⁰⁹ This statement can be seen as evidence that Chan Buddhism and Esoteric Buddhism were practiced at the same time in

²⁰⁹ The original text is “或真空以悟聖，或密教以接凡。” See Yang Yang and Wang Jing, “Tang ‘lingyansi bei song bing xu’ bei kao”, 34-35.

Lingyan Monastery. To be exact, it is that the Northern School of Chan Buddhism and Esoteric Buddhism coexisted in Lingyan Monastery because the Northern School of Chan Buddhism predominated in the time when Li Yong wrote the “Lingyan si song bei”.

With regard to the relationship between the Northern School of Chan Buddhism and Esoteric Buddhism, many Buddhist scholars have noticed the close interactions between the the schools in the Tang Dynasty. Although many texts of Esoteric Buddhism were translated into Chinese in the early years of the Tang Dynasty, the formation of Esoteric Buddhism did not happen until the eighth century with the efforts of Buddhist masters represented by Shanwuwei 善無畏 (637-735), Jingangzhi 金剛智 (671-741) and Yixing 一行 (683-727). When Esoteric Buddhism began to rise, the Northern School of Chan Buddhism was already flourishing and won imperial support. During the reign of Emperor Xuanzong (685-762), “Esoteric Buddhism first received active encouragement and official recognition.”²¹⁰ Therefore, much of the interaction between the two schools happened during the reign of Xuanzong. According to the *Wuwei sanzang chanyao* 無畏三藏禪要 (*Tripitaka Master Śubh ākarasimha's Essential [Instructions] for Meditation*), Jingxian 敬賢 (660-722), one of the most important students of Shenxiu who was the first patriarch of the Northern School, had met with Shanwuwei to discuss Buddhist doctrines in Huishan Monastery 會善寺 on Mount Song 嵩山 in a year during the fifth year to the eleventh year of the Kaiyuan era (717-713). The *chanyao* mentions that when Shanwuwei expounded the doctrines, all the listeners including Jingxian closed their hands and

²¹⁰ See Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 54.

knocked their heads (hezhang koutou 合掌扣頭).²¹¹ Based on this description, Japanese monks believed that Jingxian was one of Shanwuwei's students. Actually, there are no more historical sources that support the teacher-student relationship between Shanwuwei and Jingxian, but the meeting between Shanwuwei and Jingxian is of great significance because it marks the beginning of the close interactions between the two schools. Yifu 義福 (658 -736), another important student of Shenxiu, was often regarded as a student of Jingangzhi. Yixing, as a student of Puji 普寂 (651-739) who was the second patriarch of the Northern School, had studied under both Shanwuwei and Jingangzhi and became one of the important figures of Esoteric School in China.

Why did masters of the Northern School and Esoteric masters have such extensive contacts during the Kaiyuan reign? Weinstein pointed out that “When we examine the background of those Chinese and Indian monks who enjoyed imperial favor during his reign, it becomes apparent that the Emperor's interest in them stemmed from the fact that they were all practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism (mi-chiao).”²¹² Here Weinstein emphasized the similarity of ritual practices between the two schools, but as many scholars have highlighted, the similarities of these two schools existed in their concepts and doctrines as well. The coexistence of the Northern School and Esoteric School in Lingyan Monastery not only proves the affinity between the the two schools, but also suggests the Northern School and Esoteric Buddhism interacted

²¹¹ See *Wuwei sanzang chanyao* 無畏三藏禪要 in the *Taishōzō*, Vol. 18, No. 0917.

²¹² See Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, 54.

with each other in more extensive ways in the Tang Dynasty. The Buddhist monks practicing Chan Buddhism and Esoteric Buddhism mentioned in Li Yong's "Lingyan si song bei" should be the same group of monks, which means though monks in Lingyan Monastery during the Tang Dynasty were called Chan masters, they practiced tantras as well. In addition, some architectures of the Tang Dynasty in Lingyan Monastery have distinctive esoteric features. For example, two stone pillars of the Tang Dynasty excavated in the ruins of Bozhou Hall 般舟殿 in Lingyan Monastery were proved to be dharani pillars (tuoluoni chuang 陀羅尼幢) because the top of the two pillars were engraved with *Usnisavijaya Dharani Sutra* (*Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經). This sutra was one of the most popular esoteric sutras in the Tang China because people believed that this sutra could help them escape from disasters and prolong their lifespan as well. Thus, the discovery of dharani pillars in Lingyan Monastery once again proved the coexistence of the Northern School and Esoteric School during the Tang Dynasty. Considering Lingyan Monastery being a Chan monastery at that time, it is probably more accurate to say that the coexistence of the two schools reflected esoteric Buddhism was integrated into Chan Buddhism during the Tang Dynasty and made Chan Buddhism have distinctive esoteric features. From a different perspective, the coexistence of the two schools showed Lingyan Monastery attracted greater attention from various Buddhist schools as its reputation increased. Thus, the integration of Chan Buddhism and Esoteric Buddhism in Lingyan Monastery was an epitome of the development of Chinese Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty.

The Crises behind the Prosperity of Lingyan Monastery in the Tang Dynasty

As Weinstein pointed out, "The T'ang is notable as the first dynasty to give precedence to

Taoism over Buddhism.”²¹³ Emperor Gaozu, the first emperor of the Tang Dynasty, claimed Li family was descendants of the legendary founder of Daoism Laozi whose surname was also Li. For this reason, Gaozu put Daoism in the first place among all three teachings and set it as the state religion. The second emperor of Tang, Emperor Taizong, continued to give Daoism strong patronage. As for Buddhism, however, a host of scholars have noticed the contradiction of policies towards Buddhism made by Taizong. It seems that he sometimes repressed Buddhism, and sometimes propagated Buddhism. For example, he once decreed to limit the numbers of Buddhist monasteries and monks across the state. On the other hand, he showed great respect to the eminent monk Xuanzang and provided great support for his translation work. With regard to the reasons for Taizong’s contradictory policies towards Buddhism, a Chinese scholar Wei Chengsi 魏承思 believed that Taizong was greatly influenced by Buddhism since his childhood, and thus he had a special feeling for Buddhism. However, he was a politician rather than a Buddhist follower. When his religious faith contradicted with political necessity, he would suppress his religious faith and made it to submit to political necessity.²¹⁴

After the establishment of the Tang Dynasty, the peasant uprisings were gradually put down due to the great disparity of strength between the ruling class and the peasants. Then the contradictions within the ruling class began to rise. The principal contradiction Taizong facing was that the gentry families in Shandong had too much power and did not show enough respect

²¹³ Ibid., 5.

²¹⁴ Wei, Chengsi 魏承思, “Shilun Tangtaizong dui fojiao de taidu” 試論唐太宗對佛教的態度 in *Fayin* 法音, Vol.4 (1984): 30-33.

for the new emperor. In the fifth year of the Zhenguan 貞觀 era (631), Taizong ordered a group of scholars to compile the *Shizu zhi* 士族志 (*The Annals of the Gentry Families*). The Cui family from Shandong was listed as the first class while the Li family, the imperial family, was only listed as the third class. The social status of some traditional gentry families in Shandong was even higher than the imperial family. It is sure that Taizong could not tolerate it because the orthodoxy of the imperial family would be challenged if the Li family was not the noblest family in China. To solve this problem, one way was to draw these gentry families in Shandong to the side of the imperial family which could greatly increase his political influence. However, it was not easy to take advantage of the gentry families in Shandong as they were relatively far from the capital, the political center, regarding the geographical location. Thus, Taizong adopted another way, that is, to suppress these gentry families. He flew into a rage when he saw the initial version of the *Shizu zhi* and ordered the scholars to recompile it. In the revised version, the Li family from Shanxi was listed in the first class while the Cui family from Shaodong were listed in the third class. In addition, the families that had close relations with the Li family were all listed in a higher class than that of the powerful traditional gentry families in Shandong. As a result, the compilation of the *Shizu zhi* established the authority of the Li family and enhanced the cohesiveness of the ruling clique on the one hand; on the other hand, it suppressed the gentry families in Shandong and brought them to heel.

In addition to the political suppression of the gentry families in Shandong, Taizong also emphasized the importance of giving precedence to Daoism over Buddhism. The claim that the Li family was descended from Laozi undoubtedly raised the status of the Li family and at the

same time realized the apotheosis of the Li family. As quite a few members in the gentry families in Shandong showed great interest in Buddhism, Tazong's special patronage of Daoism considerably counteracted the social impact of these powerful gentry families and thus consolidated his rule. As a local Buddhist monastery in Shandong, therefore, Lingyan Monastery was in a subtle situation. As Weinstein summarized,

Although none of the T'ang emperors before Hstian-tsung, with the sole exception of Chung-tsung, could be described as enthusiastic Buddhists and all attempted through one means or another to bring the church to heel, they nevertheless felt obliged to pay lip service to Buddhism and make certain concessions in the realization that Buddhism had a great hold on their subjects. T'ai-tsung, despite his avowed personal distaste for Buddhism, built the magnificent Hung-fu ssu in Ch'ang-an and, even before coming under the influence of Hüantsang, had authorized the ordination of thousands of monks.²¹⁵

Buddhist monks in China made good use of this ambivalent attitudes of the Tang emperors to protect and spread Buddhism. Lingyan Monastery was an officially recognized monastery and enjoyed the imperial patronage on all accounts before An Lushan Rebellion. As a result, Lingyan Monastery was even more influential with its increasing reputation. Buddhist monks from across China were attracted to Lingyan Monastery. Dang Huaiying (1134-1211) 党懷英, a famous scholar in the Jin Dynasty, recorded the grandeur of Lingyan Monastery in his “Lingyan si ji” 靈岩寺記 as follows:

²¹⁵ See Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, 53.

From the Sui Dynasty to the Song Dynasty, the architectures and paintings (of Lingyan Monastery) had been added and accumulated over time. The magnificence (of it) was in the first place across China. (People from) the four directions came to visit (the monastery) with gifts, (and) donated gold and cloth in order to get blessings. Each year tens of thousands of people (came here). With the Buddhist ceremonies being more and more prosperous, (there were) more and more monks residing (in Lingyan Monastery). (The monastery) was divided into thirty-six courtyards.²¹⁶

The above passage affirmed the high status and the great influence of Lingyan Monastery. The biggest event that made the reputation of Lingyan Monastery reach to its peak during the Tang Dynasty was Emperor Gaozong (628-683) 唐高宗 and Empress Wu Zetian (624-705) 武則天's visit to Lingyan Monastery. Empress Wu was the only female emperor in the Tang Dynasty and also in the whole Chinese history. First being a concubine of Emperor Taizong, she later married Emperor Gaozong and became the empress. She was a strong and ambitious woman and soon she replaced her husband Emperor Gaozong to become the controller of the court. Different from the previous emperors, she was an enthusiastic supporter of Buddhism. She adopted various means to improve the status of Buddhism. In the fourth month of the second year of the Tianshou 天授 era (690-692), Empress Wu decreed that "from then on, it is suitable

²¹⁶ The original text is "曆隋至宋，土木丹繪之工，日增月葺，莊嚴為天下冠。四方禮謁，委金帛以祈福也，歲無慮千萬人。佛事益興，而居者益眾，分而為院者三十有六。" See Ma Daxiang, LYZ, 48.

to give precedence to Buddhism over Daoism.”²¹⁷ It changed the guideline “Daoism first, and Buddhism second” made by Emperor Gaozu into “Buddhism first, and Daoism second”, which was a significant change of religious policies during the Tang Dynasty.

There are several reasons accounting for Empress Wu’s favor for Buddhism. First, it is related to her personal experience. Though she had developed a love affair with Gaozong, a son of Emperor Xuanzong, when she was still a concubine of Xuanzong, Empress Wu had her head shaved and was sent to Ganye Monastery 感業寺 as a Buddhist nun after Emperor Xuanzong died. It was in this Buddhist Monastery that she met Emperor Gaozong again and resumed the love affair with him. Then she could return to the palace and gradually reached the prime of her life. Therefore, Empress Wu had a special feeling for Buddhism. The second reason is related to her family background. Empress Wu’s mother Lady Yang was descended from the imperial Yang family of the Sui Dynasty. As the Sui family had a tradition to practice Buddhism, Lady Yang was a pious Buddhist. Affected by her mother, Empress Wu favored Buddhism rather than Daoism. The most important reason is that Empress Wu needed a theoretical basis for her rule as she established her Zhou Dynasty to replace the original Tang Dynasty. Buddhism preached all lives were equal and all sentient beings possessed Buddha-nature regardless of the gender, which was the theoretical basis Empress Wu needed to prove the orthodoxy of her rule. Thus, Empress Wu provided strong support to enhance the status of Buddhism.

The event which connected Empress Wu to Lingyan Monastery was the fengshan sacrifices

²¹⁷ The original text is “從今以後，釋教宜在道法之上。” See Dong Gao et al., eds., *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 Vol. 1, 979.

held in Mount Tai in the third year of the Linde 麟德 era (666). According to the records of the *Jiu Tang Shu* 舊唐書 (*Old Book of Tang*), on the day of Wu Wu 戊午 of the tenth month of the second year of Linde era (665), Empress Wu requested to have the fengshan sacrifices. On the day of Ding Mao 丁卯 of the tenth month of the same year, Emperor Gaozong and Empress Wu departed from the East Capital Luoyang for the fengshan sacrifice. On the Bing Wu 丙午 day of the tenth month, they arrived at the official residence of Qizhou. On the Yi Mao 乙卯 day, Emperor Gaozong ordered the officials to make sacrifice on Mount Tai. On the Bing Chen 丙辰 day, Emperor Gaozong and Empress Wu departed from Lingyan Monastery to Mount Tai.²¹⁸ It is every Chinese Emperor's desire to hold the fengshan sacrifices on Mount Tai. So it is not unusual that Emperor Gaozong had his pilgrimage to Mount Tai. However, the route he chose this time was unusual. Before he went to Mount Tai, he first visited Lingyan Monastery to burn incense and worship the Buddha. More importantly, he stayed in Lingyan Monastery for ten days. Why did Emperor Gaozong stay in Lingyan Monastery for ten days? Karetzky held that Empress Wu "began her ascent to the throne, which was achieved in 655 when she was installed as Empress at the age of 32. Emperor Gaozong's regard for her was such that he often consulted with her, earning them the title of Twin Sages."²¹⁹ So in this pilgrimage to Mount Tai, it was quite possible that Empress Wu had the last word on everything. Then it was probably Empress Wu's decision to visit Lingyan Monastery first before the fengshan sacrifices, which reflected

²¹⁸ See Liu Xu 劉昫, et al., *Jiu Tang Shu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 89.

²¹⁹ See Patricia E. Karetzky, "Wu Zetian and Buddhist Art of the Tang Dynasty," in the *T'ang Studies* (March 2002), 113-114.

her support for Buddhism to a great extent.

In addition to her favor for Buddhism, Empress Wu chose Lingyan Monastery because it was not only the most prestigious monastery in the Qizhou area, but it was a large and rich monastery which could accommodate the Emperor, the Empress and their followers. It is said that Emperor Gaozong and Empress Wu were followed by about three thousand people in their pilgrimage to Mount Tai. The fact that Lingyan monastery could accommodate over three thousand visitors for ten days proves Dang Huaiying's statement that "its magnificence was in the first place across China." The splendor of Lingyan Monastery did not stop here. It took advantage of this chance to have greater development. Li Yong recorded in the "Lingyan si song bei" the grand follow-up constructions in Lingyan Monastery after Emperor Gaozu and Empress Wu left. Several new halls and pagodas were built such as the Hall of Dabei guanyin (Dabei guanyin ge 大悲觀音閣) and the Liuzu Meditation Room (Liuzu chantang 六祖禪堂), and many new statues of Arhats and Vajras were erected in the monastery. The large-scale expansion of Lingyan Monastery was due to "the strength of the emperor who donated the state treasure (to Lingyan Monastery)."²²⁰ For a while Lingyan Monastery upstaged all the other monasteries at least in the Mount Tai area.

However, under the prosperous appearance of Lingyan Monastery there was tension hidden beneath. Although Buddhism was sinicized to a great degree in the Tang Dynasty, the indigenous religions especially Daoism still regarded it as a major threat. As the Tang emperors claimed to

²²⁰ The original text is "此皆帝王之力，舍以國財。" See Yang Yang and Wang Jing, "Tang 'lingyansi bei song bing xu' bei kao," 34-35.

be the descendants of Laozi and provided special patronage toward Daoism, Daoism grew more rapidly than before. Even in the Dunhuang area which was traditionally Buddhism-dominated, there appeared quite a few Daoist temples in the Tang Dynasty. As mentioned previously, Daoism was believed to originate in Shandong. Shandong had long been an important center of Daoism in the history. Daoist rituals were very popular in the Tang Dynasty. Two major forms of rituals performed in Daoist temples were called Zhai-Jiao 齋醮 rituals. The Zhai-Jiao rituals were particularly prominent in the Mount Tai area. Originally, the Zhai ritual and the Jiao ritual were two separate rituals. The Zhai ritual refers to the zhai-purification which “were actual fasts aimed at purification and preparation for ritual.”²²¹ “It appears that zhai-purifications ceased being a separate ritual at least as early as the Tang dynasty. Within this context, large-scale offerings were incorporated as part of the overall liturgy, and term jiao was introduced to designate the concluding segment.”²²² It can be seen that in the Tang Dynasty the two major forms of Daoist rituals were combined into one which was the Zhai-Jiao rituals. The Zhai-Jiao rituals were believed to have functions of helping people avoid disasters and diseases and bringing good fortune. Most importantly, the rituals could bring prosperity to the state and peace to the people.

As a result, the emperors of the Tang Dynasty were very enthusiastic about the Zhai-Jiao rituals. The “Shuangshu bei” 雙束碑 which was a stele erected on Mount Tai recorded the ritual

²²¹ See Louis Komjathy, *The Daoist Tradition: An Introduction* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 249.

²²² Ibid.

activities of six Tang emperors (including Emperor Gaozong, Emperor Zhongzong, Emperor Ruizong, Emperor Xuanzong, Emperor Daizong, and Emperor Dezong) and Empress Wu.²²³ According to the record of the “Shuangshu bei”, in the sixth year of the Xianqing 顯慶 era (661), Emperor Gaozong and Empress Wu sent a Daoist called Guo Xingzhen 郭行真 to Mount Tai to hold the Zhai-Jiao rituals. Guo and his disciples held a grand Zhai-Jiao rituals on Mount Tai for seven days. In the first year of the Qianfeng 乾封 era (666), which is also the year when Emperor Gaozong and Empress Wu went to Mount Tai to hold the fengshan sacrifices, Emperor Gaozong and Empress Wu ordered that Daiyue Temple 岱嶽廟 was built in honor of Laozi on Mount Tai. From the third year of the Yifeng 儀鳳 era (678) to the fourth year of the Changan 長安 era (704), Empress Wu sent Daoists to have the Zhai-Jiao rituals on Mount Tai for seven times. The main purpose of these imperial Zhai-Jiao rituals was to pray for the longevity of the emperors. In this way, the Daoist Zhai-Jiao rituals were associated with political activities of secular regime.

An interesting fact is that Empress Wu seems both a Buddhist believer and a Daoist believer. She had both Buddhist and Daoist monasteries built and held both Buddhist and Daoist rituals. She first visited Lingyan Monastery, then went to Mount Tai to have the fengshan sacrifices, and had a Daoist temple built on Mount Tai. Though we can say that she seemed to favor Buddhism over Daoism, it is more accurate to say that she just took advantage of whichever worked best for her. This was also true to most of the emperors in the Tang Dynasty. Both Buddhism and Daoism

²²³ See Li Yun 李雲 “Taishan shuangshu bei zaitan” 泰山雙束碑再探 in *Zhongguo wenwu kexue yanjiu* 中國文物科學研究, Vol.3 (2011): 49-53.

were means to strengthen and consolidate their rule. In terms of Lingyan Monastery, it faced a tougher circumstance in the Tang Dynasty than before. It relied heavily on the imperial and official patronage, but the imperial Li family made Daoism as the state religion. It was located in the Mount Tai area, but not in the central place of Mount Tai. There was no record of the exact number of Buddhist and Daoist monasteries on Mount Tai in the Tang Dynasty, but we can find from the record of the *Taishan zhi* 泰山志 that there were about eighty Daoist monasteries and about forty Buddhist Monasteries on Mount Tai in the Jin and Yuan Dynasties.²²⁴ The number of Daoist monasteries doubled that of Buddhist monasteries in Mount Tai in this period. Although the numbers of Daoist and Buddhist monasteries would not be the same in the Tang Dynasty as those in the Jin and Yuan Dynasties, these two numbers still reflect the trend that Daoism had the advantage compared with Buddhism in the Mount Tai area. In addition, Shandong was the birthplace of Confucius and the stronghold for Confucians. Therefore, Buddhism was at a disadvantage in the Shandong area. Besides these outside challenges, there was a crisis inside Lingyan Monastery. The Northern School of Chan Buddhism dominated in Lingyan Monastery, but the Southern School was on the way of becoming the mainstream Buddhist school gradually. The inability to keep up with the mainstream of Buddhism was a dangerous thing for Lingyan Monastery. In a word, behind the prosperity of Lingyan Monastery, it faced both internal and external troubles.

The Decline of Lingyan Monastery during the Huichang Persecution of Buddhism

²²⁴ See The Editorial Committee of Shandong difang shizhi 山東地方史志編纂委員會 ed., *Shandong shengzhi: Taishan zhi* 山東省志: 泰山志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), 255.

As an old Chinese saying goes, things always reverse themselves after reaching an extreme. It is so true to Lingyan Monastery, and to Chinese Buddhism as well. An Lushan Rebellion which began in the year 755 and ended in the year 763 was a turning point for Chinese Buddhism. As Weinstein has said, “If the An Lu-shan rebellion gravely weakened the authority of the imperial government and undermined its economy, its impact on the Buddhist church was no less deleterious.”²²⁵ Several Buddhist schools declined or even disappeared after An Lushan Rebellion. Weinstein explained the causes as followed,

In contrast to the highly complex metaphysical systems that characterized the Buddhist school founded during the first half of the T’ang, the most significant feature of the Buddhism of the post-An Lu-shan era was its ‘popular’ character. Inasmuch as Buddhism had a mass following in China before the rebellion, it obviously contained elements that had a broad appeal to the Chinese people. But this popular side tended to be despised or at best ignored by those eminent monks who enjoyed the patronage of the imperial family and the aristocracy.²²⁶

The success of the Northern School of Buddhism largely depended on the patronage of the imperial family. When these privileged patrons lost their power, the Northern School went into decline. Buddhist monasteries within the sphere of influence of the Northern School also went into decline. Many Buddhist monasteries dominated by the Northern School in Shandong fell into desolation and disrepair. However, Lingyan Monastery did not seem to be impacted by this.

²²⁵ See Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T’ang*, 61.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 62-63.

It is said that in the fifth year of the Kaicheng 開成 era (840), Lingyan Monastery sent 750 monks to Zhulin Monastery 竹林寺 of Mount Wutai to attend a fast ceremony.²²⁷ If it is true, it indicates that Lingyan Monastery was still thriving after An Lushan Rebellion. The reason accounting for its prosperity probably was it had accumulated a great deal of wealth in the past and the profound economic basis made the ill effects of An Lushan Rebellion not to be seen within a short time. Nonetheless, the great wealth accumulated by large Buddhist monasteries did harm to the interests of the imperial power, which was the economic reason for the Huichang Persecution of Buddhism started in the fifth year of the Huichang era (845).

In the seventh month of the fifth year of the Huichang era, Emperor Wuzong 武宗 “issued edicts that Buddhist temples and shrines be destroyed, that all monks (desirables as well as undesirables) be defrocked, that the property of the monasteries be confiscated, and that Buddhist paraphernalia be destroyed.”²²⁸ The persecution of Buddhism took a serious toll of Buddhist monasteries in Shandong. In the Japanese Buddhist monk Ennin’s record of his pilgrimage in the Tang China, he described the situation of Dengzhou, a remote prefecture in Shandong, after the Huichang Persecution of Buddhism as follows, “Though a remote place, all monks were made to return to lay life, the monastery was destroyed, all the Buddhist scriptures were prohibited, all the Buddhist images were destroyed, and the property of the monastery was confiscated. (All these) were not different from (what happened to Buddhist monasteries) in the

²²⁷ See Ma Jieye, *Lingyan si shilue*, 64.

²²⁸ See Edwin O. Reischauer, *Ennin’s Travels in Tang China* (New York: Ronald Press, 1955), 253.

capital city.”²²⁹ As for Lingyan Monastery in this persecution, scholars have different opinions. One opinion is that Lingyan Monastery was not impacted greatly by this persecution considering the rise of fanzhen 藩鎮 (buffer town). As Qingzhou and Qizhou in Shandong was under the control of the provincial military commanders, they were actually in a semi-independent state. The edict of Buddhist persecution from the emperor was not fully executed. Thus, as a local monastery in Qizhou, Lingyan Monastery probably escaped from this persecution. The other opinion is when the Huichang Persecution of Buddhism happened, the court regained control of most parts of Shandong including Qizhou. As a result, Lingyan Monastery was impacted greatly. As there are no direct records of Lingyan Monastery in this persecution, we cannot draw a definite conclusion. However, the archaeological discovery shows that Buddhist statues made of metals were indeed destroyed in this persecution, but the buildings of Lingyan Monastery were not fully destroyed.²³⁰

However, even though Lingyan Monastery had kept some of its buildings, it was severely undermined by this persecution which brought heavy blow to Shandong Buddhism. Some studies on the distribution of Buddhist monks and of Buddhist monasteries in Shandong clearly show the changes of Buddhism in Shandong in the declining years of the Tang Dynasty. An Lushan Rebellion was usually regarded as a turning point in this history of the Tang Dynasty because the Tang Dynasty fell into decadence after this rebellion. I created a chart on the distribution of

²²⁹ See Yuanren 圓仁, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji* 入唐求法巡礼行记 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2007), 167.

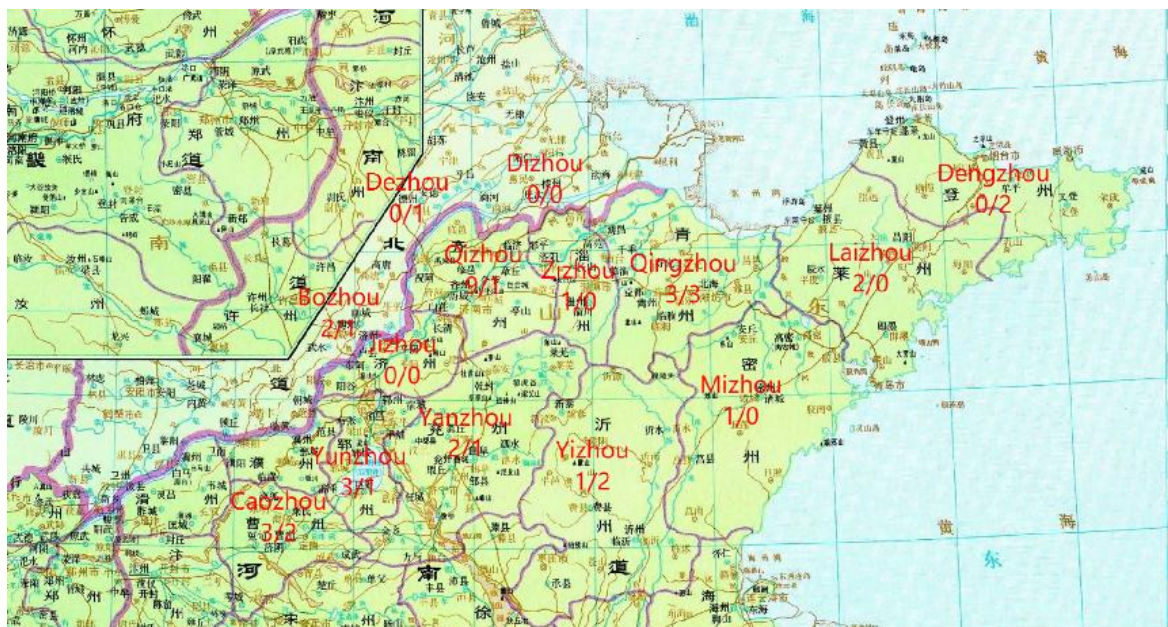
²³⁰ See Ma Jiye, *Lingyansi shilue*, 67.

eminent Buddhist monks who were born in Shandong in the Tang Dynasty based on the statistics in the *Shandong tongshi*²³¹ as follows:

Chart V

Prefecture	Period before	Period after	Total Number
	An Lushan Rebellion	An Lushan Rebellion	
Qizhou	9	1	10
Caozhou	3	2	5
Yunzhou	3	1	4
Yanzhou	2	1	3
Yizhou	1	2	3
Mizhou	1	0	1
Qingzhou	3	3	6
Zizhou	1	0	1
Laizhou	2	0	2
Bozhou	2	1	3
Dezhou	0	1	1
Dengzhou	0	2	2
Dizhou	0	0	0
Total Number	27	14	41

²³¹ See Gao Fenglin 高鳳林, *Shandong tongshi: Sui Tang Wudai juan* 山東通史：隋唐五代卷, 289.



The Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), Number of Eminent Monks Who were Born in Shandong, China²³²

The names of these eminent monks who were born in Shandong in the above chart were mentioned in the XGSZ, the SGSZ, the *Datang xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan* 大唐西域求法高僧傳, the *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統記, the *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* 淨土往生傳 and some other historical records. From this chart, we can see the eminent monks were widely distributed in Shandong. There were eminent monks in most of prefectures in Shandong, but they were unevenly distributed. Qizhou, where Lingyan Monastery was located, had the largest number of eminent monks, which accounts for almost a quarter of the total number. Qingzhou had the second largest number of eminent monks, accounting for 14.7%. The number of eminent monks in Caozhou is

²³² The number before the slash refers to the number of eminent monks who were born in Shandong before An Lushan Rebellion, and the number after the slash refers to the number of eminent monks who were born in Shandong after An Lushan Rebellion. The base map is quoted from the website of historical maps. See <http://www.txlzp.com/ditu/199.html>.

in the third place, accounting for 12.2%. Then Yunzhou accounts for 9.8% of the total number. Yanzhou, Yizhou, and Bozhou account for 7.3% respectively. Laizhou and Dengzhou account for 4.9 respectively. Mizhou, Zizhou and Dezhou account for 2.4% respectively. There were no eminent monks in Dizhou. Compared with Chart IV based on Lu's study, we can find the distribution of eminent monks is roughly corresponding to the distribution of Buddhist monasteries in most of prefectures, which shows prefectures which had a large number of Buddhist monasteries also had a relatively large number of eminent monks.

Lu did not divide the Tang Dynasty into two periods in his study, so we cannot see the change of the numbers of Buddhist monasteries in each prefecture. However, as there was a corresponding relation between distribution of eminent monks and that of Buddhist monasteries, we can infer the change of Buddhist monasteries in Shandong from Chart V. Chart V shows after An Lushan Rebellion, there were altogether 14 eminent monks in Shandong. The number of eminent monks was greatly reduced compared with that of the period before An Lushan Rebellion. In each prefecture, except that the number of eminent monks increased in Yizhou and the number was the same in Qingzhou, the numbers of eminent monks in Qizhou, Qingzhou, Caozhou and etc. were significantly reduced. As for Laizhou, Mizhou and Zizhou, there were no eminent monks at all. The reduction of eminent monks in these prefectures shows that Buddhist monasteries were impacted greatly by An Lushan Rebellion and on the decline. Probably there was a distinct reduction of Buddhist monasteries as well in these prefectures. As for Qizhou, there were 9 eminent monks before the rebellion, but there was only 1 eminent monk after the rebellion. This change indicates An Lushan Rebellion and the Huichang Persecution of

Buddhism wreaked havoc to Buddhism in Qizhou Prefecture. The economic recession and depopulation made Qizhou lost its previous status as a political and economic center in Shandong. Therefore, we can infer Lingyan Monastery located in Qizhou was on a downward trajectory after An Lushan Rebellion.

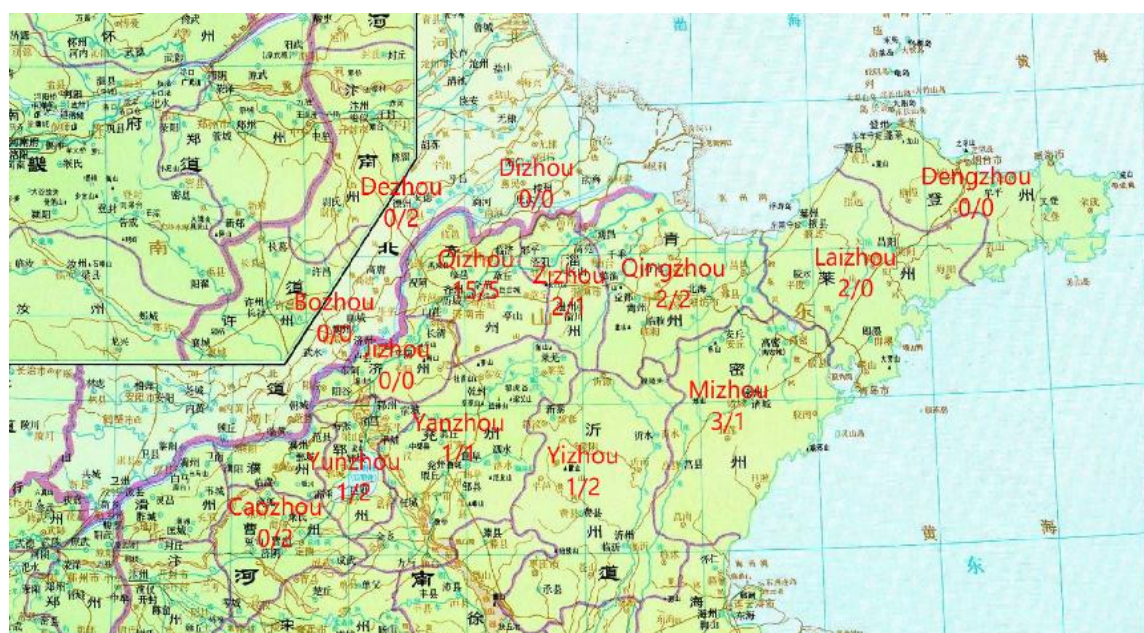
It is sure that eminent monks were usually not limited to one place to preach Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty. An eminent monk born in Shandong could move to other places while an eminent monk not born in Shandong could go to Shandong. Thus I created Chart VI on the number of eminent monks who were active in Shandong based on the statistics in the *Shandong tongshi* as follows,²³³

Chart VI

Prefecture	Period before An Lushan Rebellion	Period after An Lushan Rebellion	Total Number
Qizhou	15(9/6)	5(2/3)	20
Qingzhou	2	2	4
Yunzhou	1	2	3
Yizhou	1	2	3
Mizhou	3	1	4
Zizhou	2	1	3
Yanzhou	1	1	2

²³³ Ibid., 291.

Laizhou	1	0	1
Caozhou	0	2	2
Dezhou	0	2	2
Total Number	26	18	44



The Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), Number of Eminent Monks Who were Active in Shandong, China²³⁴

Eminent monks in Shandong counted in Chart VI were also mentioned in the XGSZ, the SGSZ, the *Datang xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan* 大唐西域求法高僧傳, the *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統記, the *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* 淨土往生傳 and some other historical records. Numbers before the slash in the brackets refer to the numbers of the eminent monks who were not born in

²³⁴ The number before the slash refers to the number of eminent monks who were active in Shandong before An Lushan Rebellion, and the number after the slash refers to the number of eminent monks who were active in Shandong after An Lushan Rebellion. The base map is quoted from the website of historical maps. See <http://www.txlzp.com/ditu/199.html>.

Shandong, but later went to Shandong. Numbers after the slash in the brackets refer to the numbers of the eminent monks who were born in Shandong and later preached Buddhism in Shandong.

Chart VI also shows that the numbers of eminent monks in the prefectures of Shandong were unevenly distributed. Nearly half of eminent monks had Buddhist activities in Qizhou, accounting for 45.5%. The numbers of eminent monks in Qingzhou and Mizhou account for 9.1% respectively, those of Yunzhou, Yizhou and Zizhou account for 6.8% respectively, and those of Yanzhou, Caozhou, and Dezhou account for 4.5% respectively. There was only one eminent monk in Laizhou and there found no activities of eminent monks in Dengzhou, Dizhou and Bozhou. In a word, the distribution of activities of eminent monks in Shandong is narrower than that of the birth place of eminent monks, which means the activities of eminent monks usually happened in some large monasteries. Take Qizhou for example. Among the fifteen eminent monks who had Buddhist activities in Qizhou, nine were not born in Shandong but went to Qizhou later, and this number was 50% more than the native eminent monks. Moreover, all the nine eminent monks from non-Shandong places went to Lingyan Monastery in Qizhou either to study or propagate Buddhism. If compare the number of eminent monks who had Buddhist activities in Qizhou before An Lushan Rebellion and that after An Lushan Rebellion, we can find there was substantial decrease. Although in terms of absolute numbers, Qizhou still held the first place, it reveals the status of Qizhou as the political and economic center was severely weakened, which was the social root on which the prosperity of Buddhist monasteries relied. In brief, Chart V and Chart VI show that in the first half of the Tang Dynasty, Qizhou was one of the important

Buddhist centers in China. However, in the second half of the Tang Dynasty, Qizhou was no longer a Buddhist center in China. Lingyan Monastery, as the most largest Buddhist monastery in Qizhou, witnessed and experienced the rise and fall of Buddhism, and was also an epitome of Buddhist monasteries in Shandong.

Actually in the declining years of the Tang Dynasty, Buddhist centers in China were moving southward. Chinese scholar Li Yinghui 李映輝's research on Buddhist geography in the Tang Dynasty proved it.²³⁵ He compared the distribution of Buddhist monasteries across China of the first half of the Tang Dynasty and that of the second half of the Tang Dynasty and found the number of major Buddhist centers in Northern China was reducing and the number of major Buddhist centers in Southern China was increasing, which indicated the decline of Buddhism in Northern China in the second half of the Tang Dynasty. The rise and fall of Lingyan Monastery, in this sense, corresponds to the overall trend of Chinese Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty and is the result of both factors on the state level such as the state policies, economic situation, cultural exchange, and etc., and factors on the regional level such as the geographical features, the indigenous beliefs, the local political, economical, and cultural situation, and so on.

²³⁵ See Li Huiying 李輝映, *Tangdai fojiao dili yanjiu* 唐代佛教地理研究 (Hunan daxue chubanshe, 2004), 85-96.

Conclusion

From the Eastern Jin Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty, the development of Lingyan Monastery involved a series of up and down moments. It experienced the three famous persecutions of Buddhism in the Chinese history, but it survived in all these difficult circumstances and regained its vitality. Although the Huichang persecution of Buddhism brought a heavy blow to Lingyan Monastery, the monastery revived again in the Song Dynasty which was not discussed in this dissertation. The rise and fall of Lingyan Monastery is quite typical in the development of Shandong Buddhism, and at the same time it is also an epitome of the development of Chinese Buddhism in the following two aspects:

First, the establishment of Lingyan Monastery reveals the efforts Buddhism made to incorporate the indigenous religious thinking into itself to accommodate to the local situation of Shandong. The cult of Mount Tai and the fengshui theory play important roles in the miraculous stories about the founder of Lingyan Monastery Langgong and the establishment of Lingyan Monastery. Bingenheimer pointed out, “The general theme of the miracle tales at Buddhist sites is closely related to the local focus of worship.”²³⁶ As Lingyan Monastery was built in the northwestern range of Mount Tai, the cult of Mount Tai, which was deeply rooted in the minds of the local people and the ancient Chinese people as well, naturally enhanced its attractiveness and sacredness. In addition, though Lingyan Monastery was not in the center of Mount Tai, the miraculous stories about its location incorporated the fengshui theory. In this way, Lingyan

²³⁶ Marcus Bingenheimer, *Island of Guanyin: Mount Putuo and Its Gazetteers*, 77.

Monastery from the very beginning distinguished itself as an all-inclusive Buddhist monastery, which was an reflection of syncretism of Chinese Buddhism. Since the introduction of Buddhism into China, Buddhism, as a religion of foreign origins, has formed a complicated relationship with traditional Chinese religious thinking represented by Confucianism and Daoism. The continuous conflicts between Buddhism and native Chinese religious thinking finally led to the fusion of Buddhism with Confucianism and Daoism, which were called “the unity of three teachings” 三教合一. The Buddhist scholars often employed the term “syncretism” to refer to the fusion of Buddhism with Confucianism and Daoism. Syncretism can be understood as “a generalization about diverse elements incorporated into some target religion from an external religious or secular source or sources.”²³⁷ The spread of Buddhism in China is actually a process of incorporating Confucian, Daoist, and other native secular elements into Buddhism on the state level. The establishment of Lingyan Monastery was a good example of this syncretism not only on the state level, but also on the regional level.

Secondly, since the establishment of Lingyan Monastery, Lingyan Monastery attached great importance to the official acceptance and patronage. The founder Senglang won support from six different regimes, which was rare in the history of Chinese Buddhism. Of course Senglang was not a flatterer to win the favour of these rulers, but rather a Buddhist tactician of great foresight. He realized the importance of harmonious relationship between Buddhism and secular authorities in

²³⁷ Martin Luther H., and Anita M. Leopold, “New Approaches to the Study of Syncretism” in *New Approaches to the Study of Religion: Regional, critical, and historical approaches*, ed. by Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz and Randi Warne (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2004), 93.

China and took it as the guideline for the development of Lingyan Monastery. Each rise of Lingyan Monastery in history proved the correctness and foresightedness of this guideline made by Senglang. According to the LYZ, some government offices were found inside Lingyan Monastery in the Ming Dynasty. Most importantly, these offices were not responsible for Buddhist affairs, but for local taxes, which is quite unusual in the Chinese history. On the one hand, it shows the close connection between Lingyan Monastery and the central and local governments, and the tradition of attaching importance to official acceptance and support of Lingyan Monastery. On the other hand, it reveals the complicated circumstances Lingyan Monastery had always faced with. In terms of Mount Tai, it was a sacred mountain not only for Buddhism, but also for Daoism and Confucianism. With regard to Shandong, it has long been a Daoist center and birthplace of Confucianism as well. Contradictions and conflicts among the three teachings have always existed in the history. Under this context, Lingyan Monastery had to take advantage of official acceptance and support to survive and develop itself.

Most importantly, the history of the rise and fall of Lingyan Monastery from the Eastern Jin Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty demonstrates how the national factors and the regional factors co-worked to impact the development of a local Buddhist monastery from the perspective of RRS. In Dr. Wu's study, he pointed out that "the core areas of Buddhist sites overlap with major central places."²³⁸ Qizhou, the place where Lingyan Monastery was located, had been a

²³⁸ Wu, Dong and Ryavec, "Spatial Analysis and GIS Modeling of Regional Religious Systems in China: Conceptualization and Initial Experiments," 190.

significant political, economical, cultural and military center in various dynasties. Therefore, Buddhism was most prosperous in this area in Shandong. However, when it lost its central position after An Lushan Rebellion, Buddhism in this area went into decline and so did Lingyan Monastery. Though factors on the state level were always of great significance, the regional factors sometimes played an important role which could not be neglected.

Nowadays Lingyan Monastery is still a well-known local Buddhist monastery, but its influence in China cannot be compared with what it was in its glorious days. In my conversation with the present Abbot Hong'en, he mentioned there were altogether seven monks inside the monastery because nowadays few young men were willing to become Buddhist monks. He said what he could do now was to try his best to preserve this ancient monastery. An important way to preserve it was to collect the historical materials related to Lingyan Monastery and then sort them out. A group of local Buddhist scholars and lay Buddhists were helping him with this work. He was happy to know that I was writing an dissertation on Lingyan Monastery and provided all the materials he owned to me generously. Though it is not known whether the declined Lingyan Monastery would revive or not in the future, I hope that my study will help to draw attention from more and more Buddhist scholars to conduct studies on Lingyan Monastery, and other ancient Buddhist monasteries in Shandong as well because these Buddhist monasteries not only provide valuable primary sources to examine Shandong Buddhism, but also raised new questions on how to view regional factors in Buddhist studies. The RRS approach I employed in this dissertation only relates to some basic concepts of regional studies, but RRS undoubtedly can do more in further our understanding of this ancient monastery and Shandong Buddhism, which will

not only make the splendor of Lingyan Monastery reappear, but also will continue to enlighten all who have close examination of its history.

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