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ESSAYS

An Interfaith Dialogue between the Chinese Buddhist Leader Taixu and Christians

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INTRODUCTION

On June 21, 1938, a Buddhist monk, the Venerable Taixu (1889–1947), delivered a speech at West China Union University. The interesting title of this speech, which was delivered at the request of University President Dr. Zhang Linggao² and Vice President Dryden Phelps, was “China needs Christianity and Europe and America need Buddhism.”³ It might seem surprising that the Venerable Taixu, a Chinese Buddhist leader, would give a speech calling for the propagation of Christianity in China. More plausible, perhaps, would have been for him to insist on the spread of his own religion. This paper will explore the background behind this apparent contradiction.

Taixu was one of the most important Buddhist figures in the history of modern China. As a pained and sympathetic witness to the untold sufferings of the Chinese people, he advocated reform of Buddhism as a response to imperialist invasions and the widespread corruption that existed not only among contemporary government officials, but also among Chinese Buddhists themselves. As part of his plan, he outlined the reorganization of the *Sangha*⁴ system in China, seeking to bring Buddhism up to date by making it scientific and socially conscious, thereby eliciting respect from intellectuals and youth alike. This worthy goal could, in his view, only be achieved if the monastic system was cleansed of commercialism and superstition. His forty-year crusade failed, however, as much because of strong resistance from Chinese Buddhists themselves as from the incessant warfare and resulting social disorder. Exhausted from his many labors, he died in 1947, by which time he had barely succeeded in winning control of the Chinese Buddhist Association.

After his death, Buddhist scholars and practitioners alike began to heap praises on him for his life-long, but unsuccessful, efforts to reform and reorganize the Chinese Buddhist *Sangha* system. His disciples published *Taixu dashi quanshu* (the Complete Works of the Venerable Taixu) in 1950. These authors, owing to their close association with Taixu, recorded his activities quite uncritically. One of Taixu's followers even referred to him as the Martin Luther of modern Chinese Buddhism.⁵

In recent years, scholars in the People's Republic of China have published books on the development of modern Chinese Buddhism and its relationship to society. Most of them describe positively Taixu's contributions and thoughts in this area. At least six books about modern Chinese Buddhism have come out since 1989.⁶ For some reason, these scholars have shown little disagreement in the way they have recorded his life and activities, his thoughts, and his role in the development of modern Chinese Buddhism. There are other aspects to the story, however, generally neglected, that deal with negative comments, criticism, and unfavorable views of his personal shortcomings.

In light of the generally favorable treatment he has received, it is difficult to find records that support alternative interpretations of the Venerable Taixu's legacy. Chinese scholars have ignored the negative responses from participants at the gathering where Taixu delivered his speech. The late Professor Holmes Welch, though, has made both positive and negative comments in his book *The Revival of Chinese Buddhism* which was published in 1968.⁷

More than sixty years have elapsed since Taixu's speech. It seems unlikely that—at the time of its delivery—Taixu realized that he was calling for a kind of interfaith dialogue between Chinese Buddhism and Christianity. The term “interfaith dialogue” refers to a discussion that occurs between persons or groups belonging to different religions. In the theological climate of the 1960s and 1970s, this type of dialogue was quite frequent. Taixu, it now appears, seemed to realize the importance of adopting some elements from Christianity into Chinese Buddhism. For example, he fully intended to introduce Christian pastoral training into his program of Chinese Buddhist reform.⁸ Today, we still have many questions. To what extent did Taixu succeed in his reforms? What were his most significant achievements? Where did he fail in his endeavors? What were the underlying causes of his failure to reform the Chinese Sangha? Can we analyze his successes as well as his failures within a broader perspective? What inferences can we draw from his attempts to blend aspects of Christianity into his ideal of a reformed Buddhism?

When we recall and analyze the background behind the interfaith dialogue that Taixu maintained with Christians during the period in question, we can better our understanding of such efforts at communication among religions. At least we can foster a kind of mutual understanding among people by tracing the significance of the dialogue that took place more than a half century ago.

The present essay attempts to analyze Taixu's attitudes towards Christianity from the four following perspectives: I. The historical background; II. The dialogue advanced by Taixu; III. The need that Westerners have for Buddhism; and IV. Conclusion.

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The late Qing period witnessed profound changes in values, public life, and—ultimately—the collapse of the empire. The Qing Court was repeatedly humiliated by foreign invasions and weakened by peasant uprisings and exhausting wars with for-

eigners. Shocked by the powerful weapons the foreign troops possessed and frustrated by the defeat of the Qing troops, officials and scholars alike tried to find ways of dealing with the critical situation. Zhang Zhidong, the Governor of Hunan Province, suggested that the Chinese could stick to traditional learning for its social content while simultaneously picking out for study those aspects of Western learning that seemed to offer practical benefits. In 1898, he called for the establishment of more schools, going so far as to suggest that the Court issue a decree ordering 70 percent of the nation's temples to be used for educational purposes. There subsequently followed a trend toward the seizure of Buddhist lands and property. This occurred from 1901 to 1906. In practice, the seizure of Buddhist property did not serve the interests of education. Local officials and warlords alike saw the same golden opportunity to gain more money for themselves in support of their military expenses. Things got no better after the downfall of the Qing Court. Yuan Shikai, a typical example, promulgated the Monastery Control Regulations which were directed at confiscating wealth from Buddhist monasteries in order to finance the expansion of his army.⁹ This encroachment upon the Buddhist monastic properties ranged from bad to worse, depending upon the location. Venerable Jing'an, president of the Chinese General Buddhist Association, went to Beijing with the end in view of having Yuan Shikai's government ratify a proposal of his for a new charter. Unfortunately, the officer in charge of religious affairs at the Ministry of the Interior, Du Guan, was a firm supporter of policies aimed at confiscating monastic property. He obstinately refused to listen to the arguments raised by the Venerable Jing'an. He ridiculed and insulted the old man who, as a result of this treatment, became so incensed that he died the next day from anger and humiliation. The martyrdom of Jing'an aroused much anger among Buddhists and prevented, temporarily, further confiscation of Buddhist monastic property.

Taixu passed from childhood to early youth during this turbulent transitional period which we now refer to as the late Qing Dynasty and early Republican era. Taixu was born in 1889 in Congde district, Zhejiang Province. In this place, Buddhism had put down deep roots dating from the time of its introduction from India during the reign of Emperor Ming-di of the Han Dynasty (56 A.D.). Furthermore, the religion has remained intact here in spite of the political changes and social revolutions that have occurred during the past two thousand years.

Taixu's family name was Lü, and his given name Ganlin. His father died when he was still a baby. His grandmother was a pious Buddhist believer who often took him to nearby Buddhist temples. In 1904, he left home seeking something magic having to do with the immortals and gods he had read about in the novels he so admired. At that time, he was still unaware of the differences between Taoism and Buddhism. He eventually found his way to a small temple where he had previously accompanied his grandmother on a visit to pay homage. Subsequent to this, he decided to become a Buddhist monk. Upon his entry into the Order, he was given the Buddhist name Taixu. In the same year, he was taken by his supervisor to visit Venerable Jing'an, the Eight-Fingered Monk,¹⁰ who ordained him in Tiantong Temple, Ningbo, Zhejiang Province. Two years later, he came to realize that Taoist and Buddhist

divinities were not the same. He studied the Tripitaka and practiced meditation under the guidance of Venerable Jing'an, the Eight-Fingered Monk who had a profound impact on him.

In 1908, Taixu met a monk named Hua Shan, who told his young friend about new trends at home and abroad. Hua Shan introduced Taixu to a variety of books, such as Kang Yuwei's *Datongshu* (The Grand Unity), Liang Qichao's *Xinmin congbao* (the name of a journal), Yan Fu's translation of T. H. Huxley's *Evolution*, and Tan Sitong's *Renxue* (On the Study of Humanity). In 1909, he attended a class on Buddhist literature offered by Yang Wenhui. Though he studied only one semester, he was deeply impressed by Yang's class. In the same year, he made friends with a monk who was not only a reformer, but a revolutionary as well. This monk, Qiyun, also a disciple of the Eight-Fingered One, had studied in Japan where he joined the Tong-meng Hui, a revolutionary society organized by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in 1905. He even lent Taixu revolutionary literature such as the *Mingbao* (People's Tribune) and Zou Rong's *Gemingjun* (Revolutionary Army). In 1910, Taixu went to Canton, where he became intimate with revolutionaries. He read books by Bakunin, Proudhon, Kropotkin, and even Marx. He was involved in the secret activities of the Canton Uprising in 1911. He escaped to Shanghai when the uprising was put down. When the Qing government was overthrown, Taixu began his life-long career of Buddhist reform.

He and his friend Renshan were involved in a struggle for national leadership in 1912. Originally, they wanted to set up a modern school at Jinshan Monastery in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province. They told the abbot of Jinshan Monastery that they wished to host the inaugural conference for the Association for the Advancement of Buddhism, but did not tell him about their plan to turn the monastery into a school. The officers of the monastery offered their cooperation and agreed to play host. The participants invited to the conference were close comrades of the Venerable Taixu, and at the end of the gathering; they offered their plan to turn their host's monastery into a school. As the participants were pro-Taixu, the resolution passed. The conference hosts, who were considered conservatives, were shocked to find that they had been tricked. Violent altercations broke out, foreshadowing a long period of conflict and distrust between conservatives and radical reformers in the *Sangha*.¹¹

After his failure to gain control of Jinshan Temple in 1912, Taixu went into three years of seclusion in the sacred island Monastery of Putuo, until 1914. Taixu's aim was to modernize Buddhism by making it more compatible with recent scientific advances. He felt that by doing so, he could make Buddhism more socially acceptable and win the respect of intellectuals and youth alike. He believed that this could only be accomplished, though, if the monastic system was cleansed of its crass commercialism and appeals to superstition. He formulated these ideas in his book *The Reorganization of the Sangha System*, written in 1915. He called for the regeneration of the clergy, the rededication of Buddhist property for the benefit of the people, and the renewed study of Buddhist doctrines. Released from his confinement, he went on a trip to Taiwan and Japan. In 1922, he set up the Wuchang Buddhist Seminary through donations made by lay Buddhists. This seminary later on became the key base for Taixu's attempts to educate young Buddhists.

Taixu was on good terms with Chiang Kai-shek whose mother was a devout lay Buddhist. Chiang converted to Christianity after his marriage to Soon Meiling. In 1928, Taixu called on Chiang who offered official backing for Taixu's plan to undertake a world tour. Taixu left Shanghai on August 11 and spent nearly nine months touring France, England, Germany, Belgium, the United States, and Japan.

He was one of those pioneer Buddhists who have traveled abroad in the twentieth century. He had aimed to propagate Buddhism abroad during this journey, especially in Europe and America. If this could be done, he thought that his reputation would greatly increase and that he could thus reduce resistance from conservatives among the Buddhists. He also wanted to see how Westerners studied Buddhism. From his previous tutor, Yang Wenhui, he knew that Westerners, mainly scholars, had made great progress in the studies of Indian and Chinese Buddhism. In Yang's opinion, Chinese Buddhist studies had fallen far, far behind those Western and Japanese scholars alike. This was a painful fact which the Chinese felt reluctant to admit. Taixu himself, to save face, denied this fact even after his return from Europe and America.¹² Very few people in China understood the Sanskrit language or Pali, for that matter. Some understood Tibetan, but they knew nothing about Buddhism. As for those who knew Buddhism, very few understood Tibetan. He met a number of good scholars of Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Pali during his tour of Europe and America. Apparently, he was impressed by the progress that these others had made in their studies.¹³

During his trip, he met Protestants and Catholics and entered into discussions with them. On September 27, he delivered a speech on the similarities and differences that one could notice by comparing Buddhism, science, philosophies, and religions. The next day, he met a French archbishop who was worried about the Chinese revolution which he feared might obstruct the propagation of Catholicism. Taixu's travel notes record the dialogue:

Protestants in China enjoy a more flourishing development than Catholics. Those who receive general education also study Buddhism. . . . The Nationalist Party does not reject religion. It maintains that all people enjoy freedom of religion, but all religions should be regulated in order that they conform to the situation in China. There should be no overt rejection of Catholicism. I asked the Archbishop what attitudes French Catholics adopt when they deal with Communist organizations that reject all religions. The Archbishop said that he hoped that more young Catholics would follow their faith and be able to explain its truths and apply them to the curing of social ills. He also asked me whether Buddhism could incorporate Catholicism in its beliefs. I told him that the teachings of Buddha can accommodate God, but I do not consider Him as the supreme or only One. The Archbishop was curious about my trip, asking whether I came to lecture or propagate Buddhism. I told him that I was on a world tour, but would offer lectures on Buddhism if requested to do so and that should someone later wish to convert I would be more than happy to accommodate them. I asked him whether Catholics would allow such freedom of religion if anyone wanted to convert to Buddhism. He told me that people studied Buddhism in one of the theological schools in the Vatican.

Our meeting lasted about one hour. Then I visited the school. The library had a rich collection of Chinese books. It was a pity that I did not have enough time to have a look at them and had to leave.¹⁴

A number of universities invited Taixu to offer lectures during this tour. His lectures in England and America seemed to be successful. Unfamiliar with the level that Buddhist studies had attained abroad, Taixu did poorly in one lecture in Paris due to the extemporaneous nature of his speech and the fact that the only interpreter he could get was a Chinese student who knew little or nothing about Buddhism. He was unaware that the audience might be more critical and better informed than a similar audience in China.¹⁵

In Paris, he donated 5,000 francs toward the establishment of a World Buddhist Institute, whose intended purpose was to unify Buddhism and science as a basis for missionary work throughout the world. He helped to set up its Paris chapter, which was to serve as its "European headquarters," and he created other chapters from organizations already existing in Nanjing, Singapore, London, and Berlin.¹⁶ When he returned home, he immediately suggested the establishment of the World Buddhist Institute, but owing to a shortage of funds, little progress was made. He went to Beijing to sponsor the preparation for the Institute in 1930. In 1932, Taixu took his first realistic step when he renamed Wuchang Seminary Library as the Library of the World Buddhist Institute. He called for the collection of Buddhist literature in different languages and translations as the second step. When the Institute was well established, he felt that it would be possible to extend its work to the whole country and even the world.

During this trip, Taixu was deeply impressed by the studies of Buddhism made by European scholars. He began to introduce the ways that Christians ran their theological schools. The Wuchang Buddhist Seminary, initiated and guided by Taixu, kept its unique style. The faculty members and students enjoyed freedom of thought and the freedom to study the theories of various sects without prejudice. In fact, they were encouraged to study the doctrines of both Mahāyāna and Theravāda sects, exoteric and esoteric sects, the doctrine of Consciousness-Only, the Emptiness, the Tiantai (T'ien-t'ai) school, and the Avatamsaka school, Pure Land school and Vinaya school. In this way, the students might gain a comprehensive understanding of Buddhism through mastery of relevant materials. At the same time, they also tried to learn modern science, philosophy, and foreign languages. Such education aimed at Buddhist reform and development by absorbing new concepts and adopting new approaches. In practice, they laid emphasis on the importance of the regulations so that the young monks could grow strong and healthy, and active in propagating Buddhism.¹⁷

Now Taixu came to recognize the large gap that existed between Chinese scholars, their European counterparts, and Chinese Buddhists in general. He understood that a group of newly emerging lay scholars of Buddhism looked down upon practicing Buddhists for their ignorance of Buddhist philosophy, scriptural languages, and even basic knowledge of the faith. He also had opportunities to discuss issues of

religion with Catholics and Christians and to discuss Eastern and Western philosophies with experts in those fields. In recollecting this trip, Taixu said:

"I visited Buddhist institutes during my visit to Japan in 1917 and 1925. When I visited European countries and America, I also made field trips to various divinity schools and university departments of religious studies. I came to see the place that religion occupied in the educational systems of America and European countries. There are two kinds of such systems. One involves the training of priests who have already obtained an advanced education in a particular national system. The other is training provided for those priests who have not had the benefit of any advanced education.¹⁸

After his return, he introduced the seminary school system that Christianity had developed in the West. He called for the elimination of superstition and the property inheritance system of monks. He emphasized the importance of changing the funeral service for the dead into one celebrating the well-being of the living. He also introduced new concepts into Buddhism, such as "Humanistic Buddhism." "Your life is sustained by the common people in society. Therefore, you should offer service to the society. You should be committed to any and all beneficial causes, no matter how difficult, if such dedication will benefit the society."¹⁹ His concept of the "human pure land" is no longer the original understanding of "pure land." It is necessary, he believed, for the Buddhists who revere Maitreya to create a "human pure land" and the Buddhists themselves must participate in society and help assure its purification, thus making progress in society. Taixu's concept marked a kind of Buddhists' return to the secular world that was in conformity with life and society. He pointed out: "The Buddhist tradition urges people to be weary of the world. Buddhists attach importance to a kind of endeavor after this birth or seek a kind of birthless nirvāna. These attitudes are divorced from life and therefore cannot produce the result benefits which accrue from adherence to the Dharma. Humanistic Buddhism, which is based on activities in this current existence, can improve the quality of human life and play a role in its purification."²⁰ Taixu's theory aimed at offering benefits to the society and therefore, its functionally lay in its ability to meet the ethical needs of society.

During World War II, Taixu played an active role in politics. He was involved in two kinds of activities: He organized a Chinese Buddhist delegation to Burma, India, Ceylon, Singapore, Malay, and Vietnam. During this visit, he tried to explain the Chinese government's policies against Japanese aggression. He refuted fallacies propounded by the Japanese to the effect that invasion of China was only aimed at saving Chinese Buddhism. Thus he won sympathy from these Southeast Asian countries regarding the Chinese people's cause against Japan. Furthermore, he organized Buddhist rescue teams for soldiers who had been wounded by the Japanese invaders. He held that Buddhists are also citizens of the country. It was their obligation, Taixu felt, to offer service to their country. As Buddhists, they should propagate their doctrines. Taixu urged the authorities to allow the Buddhist rescue members to wear their cassocks so that their participation in the service could be noticed. This was a good way to propagate Buddhism, he believed, and through the active participation

of Buddhists in the Anti-Japanese War, the Chinese people would be impressed by their service to the country.²¹ Before, many people looked down upon Chinese Buddhists because they did not earn bread by the sweat of their brow, but were mere parasites who consumed without producing. The Buddhists were thus able to change common people's view by their concrete actions.

After the War against Japan, the Nationalist Government awarded the "Medal of Victory Taixu for Leaders of Religions." He died in Yufo Si, Shanghai, at the age of 59, on March 17, 1947.

After his death, Taixu's influence spread widely. One of his disciples, Yinshun, went on to become the most respected and influential Chinese Buddhist scholar for contemporary Buddhist intellectuals in Taiwan. (A collection of Yinshun's writings is currently being prepared for publication in English by Wisdom Press.) Another student, Xingyun, also went to Taiwan and established the Fo-kuang Shan Buddhist movement, which is the most successful propagator of Chinese Buddhism worldwide with centers in Southeast Asia, America, Australia, and Europe. Xingyun has also established a Buddhist high school and college in Taiwan and a Buddhist university in Los Angeles, namely, Hsi Lai University. His temple in Los Angeles, also called Hsi Lai Temple, is the largest Buddhist temple in America and was the host of the 1989 Cobb-Abe Theological Encounter with Buddhism Conference involving the leading Christian theologians in the West. The reputation of the same temple was smeared in 1997 as a result of the U.S. Senate's investigation of its use by the Democratic Party for fund-raising activities involving Vice-President Al Gore, who had visited Fo-kuang Shan in Taiwan in 1990.²²

II. THE DIALOGUE ADVANCED BY TAIXU

In his youth, Taixu did not agree with Christianity. With the outbreak of World War I, many Chinese scholars began to doubt the advantages of Western culture, and even Western scholars became pessimistic about it. Taixu and many others believed in the bankruptcy of Western culture. He insisted that Christianity would not be accepted in China. He said: "Buddhism represents Oriental civilization. Christianity represents Western civilization. Now Christianity has lost its religious functions in Europe and America. Many Europeans have lost their land as the Great War broke out. We Buddhists should keep to the peaceful virtues of Oriental civilization and spread them all over the world. In this way, we may alter their warring nature and save the masses from catastrophe."²³

During his self-confinement in Putuo Monastery (1912–1914), Taixu read books and wrote an essay criticizing the doctrines of Christianity, especially the existence of God. He argued:

Who is God? Is He made of matter or not? . . . If He exists in the heart only, then his existence is legendary, similar to such non-existent things as "turtle hair" and "hare horn." Thus, we should not believe that God created all things in the world. . . . How did He create the Universe? If the Holy Father is part of the universe, it is unreasonable that He created the world. I challenge the

existence of God. Show me the evidence of the birth of God. What was He before His birth? Does He exist because He possesses an inherent nature? It is not rational to claim that all things exist before His birth. If there is a birth, or a beginning, there should be an end. It is unreasonable to say that He is almighty. . . . If, with knowledge, God created man and all things at His will, then did He create man blindly or ignorantly? How could He create sinful things, crimes, ignorance, and even blasphemers? This would be unreasonable. If He did all these things, it would be unreasonable that God sent people into exile, to make them suffer, rather than allowing them to stay in Paradise. How could God create men who do not respect Him?²⁴

As mentioned at the beginning of this essay, Taixu was invited to deliver a speech at West China Union University in Chengdu. It was at this Methodist school run by Americans and Canadians that Taixu called for Christianity in China, and Buddhism in Europe. He did not make these suggestions out of mere politeness. In fact, his attitudes towards interfaith dialogue were sincere and constant. He wrote a letter to a meeting of world religion leaders in Shanghai, and expressed his sincere wishes for the unity of all religions. He hoped that each sect would learn from other's strengths and overcome their weaknesses.²⁵

Chinese scholars have mainly focused on Taixu's thought and his activities in terms of the reorganization of the *Sangha* system that he proposed to accomplish. His call for a dialogue between Chinese Buddhism and Christianity has been generally neglected. Now, as this speech was delivered at a Christian university in Chengdu, one might ask: What was the response? Professor Holmes Welch asked a missionary who heard Taixu's speech about his impression of it. This record is not available in other Chinese sources.

People who attended his lectures at Chunghua University in Wuchang and West China Union University in Chengdu recall that the students were intrigued by the novelty of listening to a Buddhist monk, particularly on a Christian campus. "He held the students spellbound," one missionary told me.²⁶

Taixu often experienced an inner conflict. On the one hand, as a Buddhist leader, he had to follow his belief in Buddhism. Seeing the corruption and idleness that were prevalent among Buddhists, he felt a pain in his heart. He devoted his efforts to the education of the young monks while hoping that these young men would shoulder the responsibilities of the reorganization of the *Sangha* by the Buddhists themselves. He also wished to reform Buddhism so that it might be accepted by secular society and hoped that this might check its decline. Knowing Chinese weaknesses, Taixu often emphasized Mahāyāna Buddhism because he considered it to be capable of accepting outside influences, including the work of academics from all countries, and the heritage of Chinese culture over the past thousand years. He thought it necessary to attach equal importance to all doctrines arising from the eight sects of Chinese Buddhism. He also held that Chinese Buddhism should not only absorb Chinese Confucianism and Taoism, but should also learn from Christianity. This was where the differences lay between Taixu and Yuan-ying²⁷ in regard to their respective views as how best to absorb things from other schools of thought.

Taixu met with Chinese Christians at least seven times. The first time was in the winter of 1926 in Shanghai where he gave lectures to both Christians and Buddhists.²⁸ The second took place in May of 1931 when he delivered a speech at a meeting of the Association for Young Christians in Nanjing.²⁹ The third meeting took place in the summer of the same year when he visited Union Medical School in Beijing. Fourth was when he made a speech, on November 17, 1931 during a visit to West China Union University in Chengdu. The next took place on April 6, 1935 when he met an education delegation of East China Christians in Shanghai. The sixth took place on June 21, 1938; he delivered a speech calling for the propagation of Christianity in China at West China Union University. The seventh occasion occurred on January 14, 1943 when Yu Bing (representing Catholics), Feng Yuxiang (representing Christians), Bai Congxi (representing Muslims)³⁰ and Taixu sponsored the Union for Chinese Religions in Chongqing. Taixu and representatives of Christians held a discussion on the issues of Christianity and Buddhism in his fourth meeting with the Christians. On the question of the relations between Buddhism and Christianity, he replied:

Regarding the relations between commerce, industry, and agriculture, Buddhism and Christianity have shared relations. Each religion has, as its essence, a belief in the supremacy of man's thinking and behavior. Through their beliefs, people repent of their sins and thereby enhance their virtue. Buddhism and Christianity share this point. As far as details of their doctrines are concerned, however, they differ in certain regards. But they also may be complementary in some respects. The altruism of the Bodhisattva of Mahāyāna Buddhism can save and enlighten all beings at [his] own expense, just as Jesus Christ sacrificed himself to save others. Nowadays, many wise Christians are reading Buddhist scriptures in order to understand the Chinese mentality. They do this in order to make a comprehensive study of Buddhist doctrines.³¹

Taixu admired the following features of Christianity:

1) Christians attached importance to education. The missionaries opened schools wherever they began their propagation in China. They achieved great success by doing this. In 1903, Monk Liyun first started his school in Kaifu Monastery in Hunan Province. The lay Buddhist scholar, Yang Wenhui, opened his school in Nanjing where Taixu attended courses for one semester. Taixu himself set up his Wuchang Seminary in 1922. The aim of this seminary was to encourage students to revive Buddhism and preach the "law of salvation" in such a way that they could meet the needs of the new China. The students were also urged to study Christianity, which was thought to have some very good and helpful ideas, especially with regard to true compassion and self-denial. On the other hand, it was always pointed out that, in regard to the solution of the great metaphysical questions, Christianity was very much inferior to Buddhism.³² Taixu became the Proctor of Minnan Seminary in the summer of 1927. He imitated the courses offered by Christian missionaries. A variety of courses was offered, including Western philosophies, ethics, psychology, and an introduction to various religions of the world.³³

On the whole, Christians were far more successful in their educational endeavors, although the Chinese felt that education had also been one of their strongest traditions. But modern education in China started only during the period that spanned the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. Owing to the shortage of funds, Chinese Buddhists could not expand their secular education. Their schools, even Buddhist seminaries, failed to develop and were even forced to close because of the money shortage. What was more obvious was that many of them did not have a sense of what education meant for their survival. Had they recognized this earlier and taken measures to remedy the situation, they would not have suffered repeatedly from the confiscation of their property.

2) Christians set up hospitals around their churches, offering humane care for those people in need of medical attention. In the past, Chinese Buddhists had stayed away from society. They claimed to live in another realm far beyond the confines of this mundane world. That is why they were criticized and looked down upon by modern intellectuals. Seeing what Christians had done, Taixu pointed out that "Buddhists should not only fulfill their obligations as persons, but they also should do something to benefit the public. The Christians devote themselves to advancing the general social welfare. They propagate their teachings by practicing altruism. This is something of significance and we may adopt it."³⁴

As a reformer, Taixu wanted to change the status of the old Buddhism in China. He accepted new things and was willing to change. Even before his tour of Europe and America in 1927, Taixu presided over a so-called Buddhist wedding ceremony for Zhang Xinhai and Wang Shenpu at his Fayuan (Dharma Institute) in Shanghai. The bride and groom wore Western ceremonial garments, with beads held in their left hands. In the middle of the hall, a jade Avalokitesvara was on the table. The word "Buddha" was woven in gold on the tablecloth. Six new monks in their cassocks sang praises accompanied by drums, with Taixu standing in the middle as the wedding ceremony's chief witness. This new style, obviously an imitation of a Christian wedding, aroused strong opposition from the conservative Buddhists. They even accused Fayuan of being a tool of the Communists. As a result, his sources of income were greatly reduced.³⁵ Taixu expressed his sorrow that the only service Chinese Buddhism offered to society was the funeral ceremony. He told his colleagues that other services, such as offering biscuits to children, the opening of school for children, the weddings, the birthday celebrations, and the commemoration of the dead might all be conducted in China as they were commonly practiced in Japan, Ceylon, and Thailand.³⁶ These services, offered by Buddhists, might be considered as a clear imitation of those performed by Christians.

The Buddhists were criticized for their indifference to secular life. It was said that they offered little to society. They were generally looked down upon because of the few recognizable social contributions they made. When comparing what Buddhist monks offer to society and what Christians offer to society, it was noted that Christians have done more. This can be observed in funeral services. When someone dies, a Christian priest comes and leads in the reading of the Bible and in the singing of hymns that praise the departed and console the living. The priest or minister prays

for the deceased so that he may enter peacefully into paradise. The Buddhists do the same thing. But they are treated differently. The priest is respected because he comes to the dead as an obligation whereas a Buddhist service is considered a paid job. How much the deceased's family pays depends on what reputation the monk enjoys.

Regarding Buddhist services to the country, the records speak somewhat more flatteringly of them. In 1937, the Sino-Japanese War broke out. The Military Commission of the Chinese Government issued an order that all young monks and nuns old enough to join the army be subject to conscription. Taixu called on the Nationalist Party and requested that all monks and nuns in the prime of life be trained to take care of soldiers wounded at the front in conformity with the spirit of Buddhism. The authorities insisted that they enlist in the army. Taixu repeatedly appealed to authorities and, at last, they agreed. Taixu advocated three ways to support the Anti-Japanese War: a) following Buddhist Dharma and praying for the invading countries to stop their criminal activities; b) preparing against the war in defense of the country; and c) organizing field rescue teams for the wounded, taking care of the refugees and burying the dead, helping to maintain social order, teaching the public protective measures during war, such as how to avoid poisonous substances, etc. The Buddhist branches answered his call in a positive way.³⁷

3) Christians have good organizational abilities. Taixu said:

Christianity and Buddhism are similar in their views on religion. My great efforts to reform Chinese Buddhism in the past thirty years have been due to the influence of Christianity in China. It has exerted a tremendous impact on Chinese life in such areas as modern culture, social benefits, and human spirituality. Chinese Buddhism, however, has made few contributions to our society, though it has a long history and has been very popular in China. It does have profound doctrines. Therefore, I feel the need to reform Chinese Buddhism by learning from Christianity. I assume that there is a strong need for the improvement of Chinese secular society through the spirit of Christianity. I visited Europe previously and I was able to observe European societies. The Europeans are very good at their organizational activities. Because of their good organizational ability, they set up various organizations in academics to further make progress in scientific invention, social causes, artful decoration, and general prosperity. As they introduce this organizational ability to politics in the state, their countries become strong. Many European countries are neither very large nor have large populations, but they are strong due to their organizational ability. Comparatively speaking, this organizational ability is something the Chinese need.³⁸

Taixu greatly admired the organizational ability of European Christians. He held that it was necessary to introduce the organizational ability that Christianity had demonstrated into Buddhism in order that the latter might achieve a spiritual impetus.

Modern Europe and America have made great progress. We cannot necessarily ascribe every success to Christianity. Their civilizations are the achievements of scientific invention and industrial progress. But the basic reason for their successes lies

in their organizational ability which has been fostered by the dissemination of Christianity in the Middle Ages. The Christians believe in the only God as their sole object of belief and they have been influenced by the unitary spirit. That is why their actions are in conformity with their thoughts. Since Christianity has long been the universal belief in Europe, the people have kept the good virtues of tidiness and solemnity, mentally and habitually. On Sunday, people of different classes and professions gather in churches and perform Sunday services. Differing people sing praises to God in the same manner, employing the same music and rites. Often having such collective activities in their spiritual life will exert profound impact on their families. When the harmonic music in church on Sundays, the solemn rites, and the spirit of rites and music pour into the family life, they foster their organizational ability.³⁹

As a Buddhist leader, Taixu considered the theory of Buddhism much higher and deeper. In his speech at West China Union University in Chengdu, he told his Christian audience:

As for personal cultivation and social service, Mahāyāna Buddhism attaches great importance to the latter. Theravāda Buddhism emphasizes personal cultivation. The services prescribed by Christianity, as well as the sincerity, the righteousness and cultivation demanded by Confucianism, etc., are similar to that of personal cultivation in Buddhism. It is noticed that Buddhism is characterized by prescribing many more ways of obtaining this cultivation. As for social services, I have been particularly impressed by the great enthusiasm of Christians when they offer their services to society. I am sorry to see that Buddhism and other religions fall far, far behind Christianity in this respect. I think that the reason why the social causes in Europe and America are so well developed lies in the fact that Christians devote themselves to society. A few Chinese students who returned from abroad claimed that the majority of people in Europe and America have given up the spirit of religion. This is, however, not true. Except for a few scholars who make studies of philosophies, the majority of the people believe in Christianity. This is why Christians dedicate themselves to social service. If Buddhists could follow the Six Pāramitās, they could apply theories to reach perfection and Buddhism might become the new faith of the whole world. That is how I have practiced Mahāyāna Buddhism for the past twenty years. I have always encouraged Buddhists to work for the interests of the majority of the people. I consider it our duty. This is also in conformity with the spirit of Buddha.⁴⁰

Taixu wanted to see an increase in Buddhism's influence. He kept a close eye on what Christians were doing. In the early 1920s, Taixu noticed how Christians propagated their doctrines by visiting Chinese prisons and preaching the gospel. Prisoners were converted and later discharged as new men. "Why should not Buddhists do the same?" thought Taixu, and so the monks studying under him at the Wuchang Seminary began a program of prison visits. The idea spread to Beijing and later to Shanghai, where a city magistrate arranged for lectures to be given to convicts in the hope that they would become Buddhists and reform. In the 1930s this work was carried on by both the Pure Karma Society and the Chinese Buddhist Association.⁴¹ In

September 1934, Taixu visited Prison No. 1 in Hubei Province and delivered a speech there. He lectured at Prison No. 2 in Shanghai in April⁴² and Prison No. 1 in Jiangsu in June 1935.⁴³

In his *Religious Trends in Modern China*, Professor Wing-tsit Chan made a comment about Chinese Buddhists who got involved in the social activities. He said:

In the field of social service, trends have been more encouraging. There have been lectures, study groups, scripture classes, libraries, museums, evangelistic meetings, Young Men's Buddhist Associations, Red Cross work, first aid during the war, hospitals, orphanages, famine and flood relief, collecting and distributing clothing, visits to prisons, caring for and liberating living creatures and so forth. Much of this has been stimulated by Christian churches, and the Buddhist program has faithfully followed the Christian pattern. In terms of monks and nuns available, though, and in terms of real need, the actual service has been meager. The important point, however, is that Chinese Buddhism has gained a strangely new conviction and has assumed a noble social responsibility. It is worth recording that when the Chinese Buddhist Society met in Nanjing in May, 1947, in which some seventy delegates from China Proper, Tibet, and Sinkiang participated, one of the four projects decided upon was the realization of a program of public welfare and social relief.⁴⁴

In 1931, Taixu visited the Union Medical School in Beijing. This was his second recorded meeting with Christians. He delivered a speech on the contributions that religions have made to mankind in the contemporary world. Speaking about religious unity, Taixu held that Buddhism and Christianity are the two greatest religions in the world. Those who study religions should focus on the issue of religious contributions to the betterment of modern mankind.⁴⁵

III. WESTERNERS NEED BUDDHISM

The twentieth century has witnessed two world wars. As a Buddhist, Taixu felt grief for the millions of victims in these wars. He said sadly:

The source of unrest in the world today comes from the West. If the unrest in the West stops, the unrest in the whole world ceases. The values of benevolence and virtue shared by all Oriental cultures—if without the fully-fledged wisdom, sincerity, and boldness of Buddhism—cannot remedy the wild intellect and vigorous bravery which are the root cause of the unrest that lies in the West. The oriental medicine of compassion, forbearance, benevolence and righteousness can be the medicine for wildness. First, it is necessary to establish an international Buddhist organization that transcends all the states in the world. When the westerners are convinced of the essential wisdom of Buddhist compassion, they will overcome their arrogance and taste for fighting. They will join the international organization and make it a world of paradise for all mankind.⁴⁶ Westerners are calling for conquering Nature every day. Now they have constructed innumerable weapons to kill people and the result is that

they are conquering human beings. Why? This is because they do not have "eyes." But it is not so easy for us to fix "an eye" on them. We must first make our ideas correct and then can correct others' wrong ideas. That is why I say that the Buddha Dharma can serve as the "eyes" of mankind.⁴⁷

In his speech to the teachers and students of West China Union University, Taixu reiterated his view that we can find a thorough knowledge of science in the outlook of human life and the outlook of the world of Buddhism. Buddha is the supreme model and can be the only belief. Buddhism could also embrace scientific thinking and thereby become the supreme belief. This extended form of Buddhism was what Taixu felt Westerners needed.⁴⁸ Some scholars might disagree with Taixu's explanation of science and Buddhism. Professor Welch cited examples of disapproval of Taixu's lectures in France.⁴⁹ Generally, Chinese Buddhist monks did not receive a good formal education. Taixu's understanding of science may have been shallow, for he acquired only a little knowledge by self-study. He did not know English or any other foreign language by means of which he might learn the latest information about science. What little he learned was from translations of popular science books. It would not be surprising to find that he simply clung to the theory of cause-and-effect to explain science and nature, even claiming that Buddhism is a rational and scientific religion.⁵⁰ He thought that the theory of cause-and-effect might meet the intellectual needs of belief for the whole of mankind.⁵¹ Thus, these views of his may have failed to satisfy the demand for critical scrutiny that characterizes the intellectual community. In some cases, his views on the relations between science and Buddhism were just not rigorous enough to convince people.

In 1943, an American reporter went to visit Taixu at Jinyun Mountain, Chongqing, the warring capital. He asked Taixu what would be needed for Europeans after the War. "Buddhism," Taixu replied:

Science and technology are very advanced in Europe and people are strong believers in religion. Their religious belief, however, is divorced from science. They are engaged in scientific enterprises. When they go to church on Sundays, they cut off all links and association with science. This is because their religion does not seem related to science, nor can science enrich their religion. Buddhism is the only religion that is a combination of the two. . . . Nothing more than Buddhism can make both science and religion link each other. Buddha is not the Creator, nor does he control the world. He is the Enlightened One. Enlightened, he knows all the truths that permeate the universal life. The so-called 'enlightenment' is the truth of the universe and human life. The practice of this 'enlightenment' marks the sincerity of the Buddhists who are willing to save the suffering people. They bear in mind the spirit of "Who would enter hell but I would enter it also to emancipate all the suffering people there."⁵²

Taixu was one of the few monks who accepted things new and Western. He saw the great impact Western culture was to have upon the world. He thought that West-

erners need Buddhism. He only advances an outline of what they need, however, not the detailed analysis when he says: "Westerners have changed the life patterns of the oriental people by their material force whereas we Oriental people should change them by our spiritual morality. Mankind may enjoy peace and countries feel secure only when both Oriental and Western peoples make changes. One cannot persuade the Westerners to change their ideas except through the spiritual and moral teaching of the Buddha."⁵³

The intellectuals criticized Buddhists for their superstitions in their religious ceremonies. To refute their criticisms, Taixu tried to absorb new knowledge in science and adapt it to the doctrines of Buddhism. He held that the doctrines of Buddhism combined science and philosophy into a kind of rational belief. He said:

Buddhism is the only religion that may explore the origin of universe and the origin of mankind today when human beings have made rapid progress in science. Buddhism is the only religion that is badly needed in [the] modern world. It is the religion that marks by reason and wisdom. It is generally acknowledged as a religion of philosophy and also a religion of science. . . . There are many aspects in which the doctrines of Buddhism are in conformity with the intelligence and belief in science and philosophy. The most important doctrine lies in the concept of '*hetu-pratyaya*' (cause-and-effect). Everything in the universe comes into being 'conditioned by' something else in a magical way. Therefore, everything is considered equally created, and is not a creation or domination by Almighty God. This principle of cause-and-effect is considered to be the realization of universe and human life. It is, therefore, realistic and free—we do not have to rely on outer forces. When applying this principle to the world, we may make the world peaceful. When applying this principle to China, we can make it a motive force for the revival of national spirit.⁵⁴

Taixu added that this *hetu-pratyaya* is the key to the creation of the universe. It is realistic, free, and does not rely on outer forces.⁵⁵ Professor Wing-tsit Chan, however, did not agree with Taixu's claim. He wrote:

T'ai-hsu claimed that modern astronomy agreed with the Buddhist theory of many vast universes, that Buddhism is entirely harmonious with science, and that Einstein's theory of relativity confirms the Buddhist philosophy of Weishih. T'ai-hsu did not know much about science or Einstein. It is true that Th. Stcherbatsky interprets the Buddhist concept of the Void (Sunya) as Relativity, but he uses the terms in the generalized sense of 'non-reality,' meaning 'a thing can be identified only by mentioning its relations to something else.' However, T'ai-hsu's claim about the scientific character of Buddhism is not unfounded. Pratt has pointed out many parallels between Buddhist concepts and some of the dominant ideas of contemporary science: the great Void embracing numerous universes; time in terms of millions of years; things as aggregates of elements; elements being analyzable into ultimate Reality, which is not hard matter but energy; existence as events; the theory of cause and effect; no substance, no permanence, no duration, no externality, and so on.⁵⁶

The Second World War was much more destructive than World War One. Many factors were involved in the root causes of these wars. Taixu held that these wars occurred due to the imperfections in Western culture. Seeking power was the principal aim. The personalities of the leaders and state policies indicated their avarice for power. Taixu criticized this tendency "to survive at the expense of others," which gave rise to the inequalities inherent in capitalist society and the resultant class conflicts. The wars between nations escalated into world wars. In what ways could people prevent wars and build an everlasting peace? Taixu placed his hope on a Chinese Buddhism that was in his own words "full of superb ways beneficial to all people." He urged his disciples to deepen their understanding of Chinese Buddhism and introduce peaceful Chinese culture to Europe, so that the Europeans could share in the happiness of peace. Japanese culture bore a close resemblance to that of Europe, Taixu felt. Their constant and long-running invasion of China was doomed to failure, he believed. In his opinion, everlasting world peace could become a reality if everyone practiced benevolence towards all; an important doctrine of Buddhist Dharma, the so-called "anātman" (selflessness).⁵⁷

IV. CONCLUSION

Taixu has been considered a political monk because he was constantly involved in politics. He played an active role in Buddhist reform movements. Had he strictly confined himself to the doctrines of Buddhism, i.e., abandoning the world, "to be a lodger beyond the earthly world," he would not have made great efforts to engage himself in the reform of the Sangha system. According to the doctrines of Buddhism, if one really wants to become a bodhisattva, one should not give up the secular life and abandon social activities. The Buddha and other Enlightened Ones were certainly a part of the world. A stanza in *The Platform Sutra of the Six Patriarch* says,

Buddhism is in the world;
It is not realized apart from the world.
Seeking enlightenment apart from the world
Is like looking for horns on a hare.⁵⁸

Another paragraph says: "Good friends, if you want to put this into practice, you can do it at home—it doesn't depend on being in a monastery. Being able to practice at home is like someone of the East whose mind is good."⁵⁹ Professor Lai Yonghai points out that such a style is different from the ways of the previous five patriarchs in their reclusive practice. Venerable Xuanjue⁶⁰ had a clear understanding of this: "I have traveled many mountains and rivers, visiting masters in quest of Buddhist truth. Ever since I was familiar with Caoqi,⁶¹ I have understood that life and death are irrelevant." After Hui-neng, the concepts of life and death, Nirvāna, this world, and the world beyond gradually lost their demarcation lines. This is the beginning of "Humanistic Buddhism."⁶²

Taixu understood that a monk could not truly be a lodger beyond the earthly world as long as he lived in this secular world. If a person could contribute nothing

to the relief of ordinary people by becoming divorced from them, one could not enter the state of Nirvāna. That was perhaps why he was highly motivated to call for a reform within Buddhism. It was for these views, and activities in support of them, that he was considered a political monk.

Ever since Buddhism took root in China during the Period of Disunity (220–550 A.D.), the ruling authorities have tried to bring Buddhists under their control by isolating them from the public. To do this, they began referring to them as lodgers beyond the secular world. Monks stayed away from politics and occupied the beautiful mountains. Many of them lived on donations, doing nothing at all. As the Chinese proverb says: go on tolling the bell as long as one is a monk—to idle away the time. The rulers have always found it in their interest to keep Buddhists away from state affairs, restricting meditation to their temples in high mountains. Thus, the rulers were able to use Buddhism as their instrument. Many Confucian scholars criticized Buddhist monks as social parasites. Repeatedly in this century there was a demand to turn Buddhist temples and property into schools. Among those who wished to do this were intellectuals who truly wanted to make China strong by popularizing education. Then again, there were certainly corrupt officials who coveted the property of Buddhist monks for their own benefits.

Taixu perhaps had seen through the nature of this secular world. In order to defend a declining Buddhism, he showed his courage by daring to enter into the hell of secular life. He went against the tide and got involved in secular affairs without any hesitation. That is why he advanced the idea of reorganizing the *Sangha* system, taking education as the first priority of Buddhist reform. He actively participated in social charity, service, and even in the war against Japanese aggression. That perhaps may explain why he was so greatly respected after his death.

Starting from the nineteenth century, Christianity rapidly developed in China. The Chinese Buddhists had mixed feelings when they saw this rapid development. On the one hand, they envied Christian success in propagation by relying on foreign influence and by offering services to the public. On the other hand, they felt strong competitive pressure from their counterparts. We notice that Chinese Buddhists were flexible in regard to their relations with Christians. A policy of peaceful coexistence was adopted when they wanted to deal with the policies of the Chinese government.⁶³ This was true when they established the Union of Chinese Religions on January 17, 1943. This organization was sponsored by Taixu, Feng Yuxiang (representing Protestants), Yu Bing (Catholics), and Pai Congxi (Muslims) in Chongqing. It formally announced its establishment on May 22, 1943. The union aimed at full support for the fight against Japanese invasion. It also called for respect for religious freedom. The leaders of religions emphasized the importance of spiritual growth, social services, and world peace.⁶⁴

Under some circumstances, Chinese Buddhists tried to coordinate with Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhists, Christians, and other religions when they wanted to seek their equal and legitimate rights and interests. Moreover, the Buddhists imitated Christians in establishing hospitals, orphanages, and schools. In this way, they could more easily propagate their doctrines. Chinese Buddhists tried to explain the differ-

ences between them and Christians when facing criticism from Chinese intellectuals. Taixu even claimed, "All other religions must worship one god and take it as the belief of ordinary people. Buddhism does not establish a god for people to believe in, and it is, therefore, not a religion."⁶⁵

This interfaith dialogue between Christianity and Chinese Buddhism offers us insights into the understanding of those values religions share as well as differences between them. In recent years, Christians and Buddhists have enjoyed a flourishing development in their interactive associations. The former has become more popular in urban areas, while the latter has much influence in rural areas. Many missionaries are looking forward to broader prospects in their missions. They, perhaps, also expect a dialogue with other Chinese religions, such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Islam. Certainly, Christians have gained much experience and drawn many conclusions as a result of their past missions. They have had to prepare a new dialogue. How about Buddhists? A new generation is coming upon the scene. How far can they go in reform? Any reform will meet with resistance from Conservatives. Do they accept Taixu's call for the acceptance of Christianity? To what extent? Or, do Christians agree with Taixu's call for acceptance of Buddhism? These questions are still unanswered.

Entering the twenty-first century, we will see further communication between various religions. More interfaith dialogues will provide rich sources for scholars to better their understanding of the world's religions.

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NOTES

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2. Dr. Zhang Linggao (1890–1955) was a Methodist. He became vice-president of West China Union University in the spring of 1927 and president in 1933. See Liu Jiexi et al.: *Sichuan jituojiao* (Christianity in Sichuan) (Chengdu: Bashu Shushe, 1992), pp. 579–581.

3. See *Haichaoyin*, volume 19, No. 8, noted down by You Longjing. Also Huang Xia-nian, *Taixu ji* (Collected works by Taixu) (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1995), pp. 437–441. Taixu was invited to deliver speeches at West China Union University twice. The first time he went there was on November 17, 1930. I also found a picture of Taixu taken during his first visit with the faculty members of West China Union University. This picture was published in *Haichaoyin*, volume 12, No. 2, March 15, 1931 (see Illustration 1). The present paper focuses on the speech he delivered during his second visit.

4. *Sangha* is a Sanskrit word, meaning the society, association, or community. Here it refers to whole Buddhist community.

5. Xinde, "Wo wei Taixu dashi he fojiao de qiantu tongku" (I am weeping for the Venerable Taixu and for the Future of Buddhism), in Ma Tianxiang, *Wan qing foxue yu jindai shehui sichao* (Buddhist thoughts in the Late Qing and contemporary society) (Taipei: Wenjin Chubanshe, 1992), volume 2, p. 244.

6. Deng Zimei, *Chuantong fojiao yu zhongguo jindaibhua* (Buddhist tradition and China's modernity), (Shanghai: Huadong Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1994); Gao Zhenhong, *Fojiao wenhua yu jindai zhongguo* (Buddhist culture and modern China) (Shanghai: Shanghai Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1992); and Guo Peng, *Taixu dashi sixiang yanjiu* (Studies on Venerable Taixu's thinking) (Taipei: Yuanming Chubanshe, 1996). Guo Peng was republished in 1997 in Beijing. The title is slightly changed: *Taixu sixiang yanjiu* (Studies on Taixu's thinking) (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1997). Professor Guo wrote two more books on modern Chinese Buddhism: *Zhongguo jindai foxue sixiang shi kao* (A history of mod-

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7. Professor Holmes Welch wrote a series of books about Chinese religions, such as *Buddhism and Taoism*. To some extent, he was very pessimistic about Chinese religions. This could be seen in his book *Buddhism under Mao*.

8. Deng Zimei, *Chuantong fojiao yu zhongguo jindaihua* (Buddhist tradition and China's modernity) (Shanghai: Huadong Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1994), p. 162.

9. Yang Hui-nan, *Dangdai fojiao sixiang zhanwang* (On contemporary Buddhist thoughts) (Taipei: Dongda Tushu Gongsu, 1991), pp. 130–131.

10. A detailed description of Venerable Jing'an can be found in Professor Holmes Welch's book. See his *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 35–38.

11. This record of Jinshan Invasion was recorded by Chinese scholars. None of them describes how Taixu and his colleagues first hid their intention to transform this monastery into a school and then suddenly proposed it at the meeting, like a surprise attack. Professor Holmes Welch has a detailed description of the incident, which, to great extent, is different from what Chinese scholars say. See Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 28–33.

12. After his return, Taixu delivered a speech about his tour, saying that Western scholars mainly relied on texts in the Pali language and incomplete Sanskrit texts. The former was connected to the Theravāda School, and the latter belonged to the Mahāyāna School. See *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 55, part 18, II, pp. 242–243, pp. 256–258. Years later, he came to see the similarities and differences between Theravāda and Mahāyāna schools and no longer showed his negative attitudes toward the Theravāda sect in Ceylon, Thailand, and Burma after his visit in these countries. See *Taixu dashi quanshu*, volume 35, part 10, pp. 24–30.

13. *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 58, pp. 358–442.

14. *Ibid.*, volume 58, pp. 371–372.

15. Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 59–60.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

17. Gao Zhenrong, *Fojiao wenhua yu jindai zhongguo* (Buddhist culture and modern China) (Shanghai: Shanghai Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1992), p. 78.

18. *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 34, part 9, II, p. 490.

19. Deng Zimei, *Chuantong fojiao yu zhongguo jindaihua* (Buddhist tradition and China's modernity) (Shanghai: Huadong Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1994), p. 250.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 249–254; p. 273; pp. 281–283.

22. Thanks are due for Professor David Chappell's kind suggestions regarding the information in this paragraph.

23. *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 58, pp. 333–334.

24. *Ibid.*, volume 41, pp. 296–310.

25. The date is given, but the year is missing. See *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 54, part 18, pp. 44–45.

26. Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 68.

27. Yuan Ying (1878–1953) was also a Buddhist leader. He was a dozen years older than Taixu. They had close ties, but later on represented two factions in Chinese Buddhists. Taixu was a radical reformer; Yuan Ying was inclined to be more conservative.

28. *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 41, part 13, p. 331.
29. *Ibid.*, volume 43, pp. 988–1002.
30. Feng Yuxiang and Bai Congxi were both high-ranking generals in the Nationalist Government.
31. *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 52, part 17, pp. 485–486.
32. Karl Ludvig Reichelt, *Truth and Tradition in Chinese Buddhism* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1927), pp. 301–302.
33. *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 34, part 9, II, pp. 555, 559, 563.
34. “Taixu fashi jiang foxue ji,” in *Haichaoyin wenku shehui xue*, p. 85; see Zhou Xuenong, “Chushi,” “rushi” *yu qili qiji—Taixu fashi de “renjian fojiao” sixiang yanjiu* (A study on “Buddhism in this world” by Venerable Taixu) (Beijing: Beijing University, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1996), p. 22.
35. Yinshun, *Taixu fashi nianpu* (A Chronicle of Venerable Taixu’s life) (Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua Chubanshe, 1995), p. 126.
36. *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 34, part 9, II, p. 520.
37. Deng Zimei, *Chuantong fojiao yu zhongguo jindaibhua* (Buddhist tradition and China’s modernity) (Shanghai: Huadong Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1994), p. 273.
38. *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 41, part 13, II, pp. 336.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 336–337.
40. *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 55, pp. 331–333.
41. Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 129.
42. *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 55, part 18, II, p. 427.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 443.
44. Wing-tsit Chan, *Religious Trends in Modern China* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), pp. 82–83.
45. *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 41, part 13, II, pp. 275–276.
46. *Ibid.*, volume 48, part 15, p. 326.
47. *Ibid.*, volume 53, part 17, III, pp. 633–634.
48. *Ibid.*, volume 41, part 13, II, p. 341.
49. Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 60.
50. *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 56, part 18, III, p. 681. He even claims, “Buddhist is best suited for science. Recently, some Europeans consider Buddhism to be the religion of science, because its doctrines can be tested by science and dharma teachings are rationale. Other religions are accepted by sentiments.” His viewpoints are likely to cause disagreement.
51. *Ibid.*, volume 52, part 17, II, p. 487.
52. *Ibid.*, volume 56, part 18, III, pp. 657–658.
53. *Ibid.*, volume 53, part 17, II, p. 741.
54. *Ibid.*, volume 55, part 18, II, pp. 441–442.
55. *Ibid.*, volume 55, part 18, II, p. 442.
56. Wing-tsit Chan, *Religious Trends in Modern China* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), p. 88–89.
57. *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete works of Venerable Taixu), volume 56, part 18, III, pp. 656–657.

58. *The Sutra of Hui-neng: Grand Master of Zen with Hui-neng's Commentary on the Diamond Sutra*, translated by Thomas Cleary (Boston: Shambhala, 1998), p. 23. The same book of Dunhuang manuscript says:

If only they know sentient beings,
deluded people of later generations will be able to see the Buddha.
If they do not know sentient beings,
even though they seek the Buddha,
they will not be able to see him in ten thousand kalpas.

See *The Platform Sutra of the Six Patriarchs: The text of the Tun-huang Manuscript*, translated, with notes, by Philip B. Yampolsky (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 179.

59. *The Sutra of Hui-neng: Grand Master of Zen with Hui-neng's Commentary on the Diamond Sutra*, translated by Thomas Cleary (Boston: Shambhala, 1998), pp. 28–29. The same book of Dunhuang manuscript says: “Good friends, if you wish to practice, it is all right to do so as laymen; you don't have to be in a temple. If you are in a temple but do not practice, you are like the evil-minded people of the West. If you are a layman but do practice, you are practicing the good of the people of the East. Only I beg of you, practice purity yourselves; this then is the Western Land.” See Yampolsky (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 159.

60. Xuanjue (665–713) first studied the doctrines of Tiantai (T'ien-t'ai) School. When he heard of the teachings of Hui-neng, he converted to the Chan School represented by Hui-neng. He wrote this *Yongjia zhengdao ge* (song to the enlightenment) which contains 247 verses. It is one of the best poems describing the enlightenment.

61. Caoxi is a name of a place situated in Shaozhou, in present Qujiang County, Guangdong Province, China. It is famous because the Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng preached there. The word “Caoxi” implies that one has inherited the correct teachings of the Sixth Patriarch.

62. Lai Yonghai, *Foxue yu ruxue* (Buddhist studies and Confucian studies) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1992), p. 219.

63. Zhou Xuenong, “*Chushi*,” “*rushi*” *yu qili qiji—Taixu fashi de “renjian fojiao” sixiang yanjiu* (A study of “Buddhism in this world” by Venerable Taixu) (Beijing: Beijing University unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1996), p. 9.

64. Yinshun, *Taixu fashi nianpu* (A chronicle of Venerable Taixu's life) (Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua Chubanshe, 1995), pp. 273–275.

65. Zhou Xuenong, “*Chushi*,” “*rushi*” *yu qili qiji—Taixu fashi de “renjian fojiao” sixiang yanjiu* (A study of “Buddhism in this world” by Venerable Taixu) (Beijing: Beijing University unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1996), p. 9.