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From Shrine to Monastery in China: In Search of an Untold Story

When in 1956 Jacques Gernet published his magisterial study of the economic aspects of Buddhism in China during the fifth to tenth centuries, Denis Twitchett was one of the very few historians in the West capable of providing the type of substantial review that such a major contribution to our knowledge of the period deserved.¹ His lengthy commentary raised a number of issues, including in passing the penchant of Chinese Buddhists for selecting for their monasteries sites such as mountains of preexisting religious significance.² The matter of development through the reformation or replacement of earlier institutions is an important one, but subsequently it has perhaps been overlooked. One reason would be that most research has quite naturally tended to concentrate on the period when Buddhist monasteries started to have an economic impact on their surroundings, that is, the period covered by the work published by Gernet. Yet some indirect light on the process has been shed by research of a slightly different type, concentrating not on the obvious facts of history but on the developing terminology of early Chinese Buddhism.

Here Tan Shibao 譚世保 in particular has drawn on some elements in earlier scholarship to suggest that the original vocabulary of Buddhism was somewhat different from that we now see in the Buddhist canon as transmitted from the fifth century onward, and that the term now used for monastery, *si* 寺, is amongst those concerned.³ His conclusion is that the text of the canon has been subject to systematic editing,

¹ Jacques Gernet, *Les aspects économiques du bouddhisme dans la société chinoise du V^e au X^e siècle* (Saigon: EFEO, 1956); now in English as Jacques Gernet, trans. Franciscus Verellen *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Century* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1995).

² I have in mind here the discussion on p. 536, and also n. 2 to that page, in D. C. Twitchett, "The Monasteries and China's Economy in Medieval Times," *BSOAS* 19.3 (1957), pp. 526–49.

³ Tan Shibao, *Han Tang Foshi tanzhen* 漢唐佛史探真 (Guangdong: Zhongshan daxue chubanshe, 1991), pp. 255–62.

and that just as after the fourth century some secular texts demonstrably in otherwise parallel examples replaced earlier terms such as *ci* 祠 with the new usage *si*, so the canon as a whole has undergone similar systematic editing.⁴ Thus in his view throughout the entire corpus later copyists took care to remove words like *ci*, which can be used to indicate a non-Buddhist place of sacrifice, either in China or (with reference to analogous Indian practices in Buddhist translations) in India, and to standardize all references to Buddhist monasteries to ensure that Chinese translations of Indian terminology avoid these ambiguous terms in favour of the word *si*. Though this new word was in a sense equally ambiguous in that it indicated from Han times onward a government department, by stressing the links between Buddhism and government authority it gave Buddhist institutions a measure of legitimacy. This view contrasts sharply with the standard account in English by Zürcher, which acknowledges the use of *ci* (translated as “shrine,” below) in some early secular texts, but points to the use of *si* (below, “monastery”) from the second century AD onward in all translations.⁵

There is however more evidence for Tan’s apparently rather bold hypotheses than one might imagine, even though at first sight they would appear to fly in the face of some of the most basic findings of recent scholarship. If Han and other early translations were altered to conform to later usage, how is it now possible to detect so readily the distinctive terminology of early translations at all? And though little has been done to defend what would seem to be simple commonsense, in at least one instance where a purported change of terminology has been postulated in the words chosen to label foreign texts, it has been argued in response that the simultaneous use of both words in question in order to express differences in precise meaning in both early and later texts is much more strongly attested.⁶ Yet on the other hand, the corpus that we now take as the Chinese Buddhist canon may well have been transmitted *in toto* for some time before its appearance in our sources during the Tang, and although major editorial intervention would seem to be precluded by the historical variety of translation terminology that it preserves, Tan is arguing after all for changes relating to a particularly sensitive matter, since the very existence of Buddhism in China depended on its recognition by the state as something apart

⁴ Thus Tan, *ibid.*, p. 260, shows for instance that where the 3d-c. *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 writes *ci*, the 5th-c. *Hou Han shu* writes *si*; see n. 12, below.

⁵ Compare Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), pp. 38–39.

⁶ Daniel Boucher, “On *Hu* and *Fan* Again: The Transmission of “Barbarian” Manuscripts to China,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 23.1 (2000), pp. 7–27.

from the unstable and hence potentially subversive world of Chinese sacrificial cults. A study of the glosses indicating the Chinese meaning of certain transcribed words would also appear to suggest a certain amount of editorial activity going back to the late-fourth century at least.⁷ The period indicated by Tan for the onset of editorial change would furthermore seem to be one in which state relations with Buddhism became more purposeful, and terminological innovation seems to have taken place.⁸

But unfortunately the whole question of the transmission of the Chinese Buddhist canon raises so many questions that no speedy solution to these issues of terminological revision are yet in sight. Even where we have materials in Indian languages that allow us to check the terminology of Chinese translations quite closely, due allowance has to be made for the preference of many translators – including early translators – for a degree of stylistic variation that makes the search for mechanically consistent translation terminology effectively pointless.⁹ Since in any case Buddhism had close ties with the court in Han times, it is certainly not beyond the bounds of possibility that the term adopted for “monastery,” redolent as it is of government connections, goes back to Han times.

Nevertheless we may still hesitate to assume that the coinage for “monastery,” even if we allow it to be more ancient than Tan supposes, managed to impose itself universally from the start. For most of the territories where Chinese was used (if that is what China was in the wake of the Han collapse) into which Buddhism spread in the third and fourth centuries, imperial precedent would have weighed for little, and the process of adaptation alluded to by Denis Twitchett would no doubt have been far from uniform. The problem comes with trying to demonstrate this, for once we abandon the Chinese Buddhist canon as a category of material the history of which is still insufficiently clear,

⁷ See T. H. Barrett, “Preliminary Considerations in the Search for a Daoist *Dhammapada*,” in Benjamin Penny, ed., *Daoism in History: Essays in Honour of Liu Ts'un-yan* (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2006), pp. 41–55. Note that on pp. 46–48, the contention made in Boucher’s article is somewhat called into question by reference to actual examples of textual change in editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon.

⁸ T. H. Barrett, “The Fate of Buddhist Political Thought in China: The Rajah Dons a Disguise,” in T. Skorupski, ed., *The Buddhist Forum IV* (London: SOAS, 1996), pp. 1–7. The specific etymology proposed in this article is not at all confirmed by the digitized version of the Chinese Buddhist canon now available (CBETA), but in the materials revealed by a search for the Chinese term *yuezhong* 悦眾 in translated texts an original Buddhist preference for consensual leadership distinctly at variance with Chinese norms would still seem to be in view.

⁹ I owe this observation, prompted by an earlier version of this essay, to Stefano Zacchetti, who is, however, in no way responsible for anything in the current version.

we find that we are little better off even with equally obvious and ostensibly even better known sources. For example, no definitive collection of secular documents on early Buddhism has ever been compiled; the best that can be said is that in a series of articles which appeared over the course of his career the Japanese scholar Kasuga Akitomo 春日禮智 did attempt to compile a draft collection of such materials, though beyond the third century it is easy to point to a number of oversights.¹⁰ Scanning these articles, however, immediately alerts the reader to the importance of fixing the chronological sequence of such materials according to their dates of compilation, rather than the dates from which the materials may originally have derived, precisely because there is no way to be sure that editorial revisions updating the terminology in question have not been silently incorporated.

Particularly germane to our inquiry is the case of Zhai Rong 翟融, a minor warlord of the late-second century, who seems to have tried to press Buddhism into service to provide for his regime a sectarian religious base to rival that of the contemporary Yellow Turban rebels.¹¹ In the *History of the Later Han*, included by Kasuga in his second-century materials, this potentate is said to have established a *si*, “monastery”; it is only in the third-century *Wei lue* 魏略 that the structure is termed a *ci*, “shrine,” thus apparently confounding Tan’s argument completely.¹² We should, however, observe that Fan Ye 范曄, editor of the *History of the Later Han*, was a man of the fifth century, and that he may easily have been influenced by prevailing Buddhist practice. An allusion to this episode in a Buddhist source in the intervening period certainly reads “monastery” rather than “shrine,” at least as transmitted today.¹³ True, one might hope that a collection of secular materials, transmitted separately and not as part of an organized corpus like the Buddhist canon, might have yielded some kind of useful pattern of terminology. But many of the sources marshaled by Kasuga may well in their current form date to a time when Buddhists had managed to impose their

¹⁰ Kasuga Akitomo (Reichi), “Kandai Bukkyō no gaiten shiryō ni tsuite” 漢代佛教の外典資料について, *Nikka Bukkyō kenkyūkai nempō* 日華佛教研究會年報 3 (1938), pp. 281–307; “Sangoku jidai no Bukkyō gaiten shiryō ni tsuite” 三國時代の佛教外典資料について, *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究 17.1 (1968), pp. 148–49; “Shindai Bukkyō no gaiten shiryō ni tsuite” 晉代佛教の外典資料について, *Nantō Bukkyō* 南都佛教 34 (1975), pp. 69–94.

¹¹ On Zhai Rong, his “monastery” (or shrine), and his career in English, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 27–28, and n. 49, p. 327.

¹² Tan, however, *Han Tang Foshi*, p. 260, naturally makes the point concerning the date of editing that is made here.

¹³ See *Zhengwu lun* 正誣論, in Sengyou 僧友, comp., *Hongming ji* 弘明集 1, p. 8c14 (*T*, vol. 52), and for the date of this source, Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China*, p. 15; although we should bear in mind that this source too may have been subject to editing.

own standard usages on society at large. Without knowing a great deal more about the transmission of all the information that he compiled there is perhaps very little that can for our present purposes be derived from his work.

The same alas holds true also for another type of material concerning Buddhism, namely that preserved by the Daoist religion. For example two sources of the mid-fourth century that would seem to take us back into the third century AD, the *Baopuzi* 抱樸子 and the *Zhengao* 真誥, both use the word monastery to refer to Buddhist establishments, but the transmission of the former text is unclear, and the second was certainly edited at the end of the fifth century.¹⁴ Moreover, the Taoist canon has been shown to have subjected a large number of its references to Buddhism to considerable editing at some point, so unfortunately not much can be determined from passages such as these in any case.¹⁵

The obvious solution to such problems is to turn therefore to truly contemporary data: manuscripts of the epoch, or epigraphic material, which even when transmitted via rubbings and copies was often preserved for its calligraphic value, and so was less prone to editing. But here no one at all has even ventured the type of work undertaken by Kasuga for secular sources, largely because the information of this type covering the early Buddhist presence before the fifth century seems to be extremely thin and very widely scattered. Just one exception may be found: Ikeda On 池田温 has compiled a scrupulously careful collection of colophons to manuscripts, with full indications of dates, sources, earlier scholarship and so forth. It is this invaluable research aid that allows a little further light to be thrown on Tan's hypothesis.¹⁶

The evidence assembled is actually quite startling. No manuscript in Ikeda's definitive list prior to number 103, dated to 484, describes itself as having issued from a "monastery," though thereafter the term is common enough and no other term seems to be used.¹⁷ Of the half dozen or so manuscripts that state their institutional place of origin prior

¹⁴ Note Ge Hong 葛洪, *Baopuzi waipian* 25, p. 148 (Zhuzi jicheng 諸子集成 edn.); Yoshikawa Tadao 吉川忠夫 and Mugitani Kunio 麥谷邦夫, eds., *Zhengao jiaozhu* 真誥校註 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2006) 9, p. 218; and *ibid.* 13, p. 425.

¹⁵ Maeda Shigeki 前田繁樹, "'Tonkō-bon' to 'Dōzō-bon' no sa'i ni tsuite" 敦煌本と道藏本の差異について, *TS* 84 (1995), pp. 1–19, has recently used the Dunhuang manuscripts of Taoist texts to confirm the observations of a number of earlier scholars concerning the systematic removal of traces of Buddhist terminology from the Lingbao Scriptures.

¹⁶ Ikeda On, ed., *Chūgoku kodai shahon shikigo shūroku* 中国古代寫本識語集録 (Tokyo: Daizō shuppansha, 1990).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 94, and so on; I have not looked for exceptions to the term "monastery" beyond the sixth century.

to that point, at least five, dated to between 416 and 457, use the term “shrine,” while the earliest, datable to 359, uses a term I have found nowhere else.¹⁸ This would seem at first glance to provide incontrovertible proof of the persistence of what Tan takes to be the original term for an even longer period than he suggests. Such a conclusion, however, would be somewhat rash, as becomes apparent as soon as the places named in these documents are checked on a map.

For every single one of these manuscripts comes from the far northwest of China, and owes its preservation to the remarkable aridity of the climate there: colophons numbers 64, 77, and 84, for example, are now in the Dunhuang manuscript collections of Beijing (0868), St. Petersburg (Φ320, from Turfan) and London (S.2925) respectively.¹⁹ With the exception of number 74, a more recent find published in 1972, the rest – and indeed the bulk of the earliest manuscripts used by Ikeda – derive from Japanese collections based on discoveries stemming from the same early-twentieth-century era of Inner Asian exploration. Thus number 74, from Xinjiang Provincial Museum, as it happens, is even from beyond what was Chinese territory at the time, from Gaochang 高昌. Number 89 (457 AD), in the Museum of Calligraphy, Tokyo, founded by Nakamura Fusetsu 中村不折 (1866–1943), for that matter, describes itself as copied under the “Northern Liang” 北凉 dynasty, which sounds Chinese (or as Chinese as any dynasty in the area, given the actual ethnic composition of regimes at this time in history). But this state had been extinguished in China, nominally in 439, by the Northern Wei, and the use of the dynastic designation is consistent with the sponsorship recorded on it from a refugee ruler who had fled westward at this point beyond the original territory of the Northern Liang to inhabit the area of Gaochang too.²⁰ Though there is no manuscript evidence from elsewhere in China to clinch the matter, it is quite possible that during the period covered by Ikeda’s evidence “shrine” as a term for a Buddhist institution staffed by monks (and number 89 appears to mention a “chief monk” or abbot) was an expression already outdated throughout the territories of the main northern and southern regimes – an expres-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, numbers 64, 74, 77 (with 81, held by Kyoto Museum, marked suspect, though it conforms in all ways to the pattern of the rest), 84, and 89, on pp. 82–87. Colophon 37 on p. 76, dated to 359, will be dealt with below.

¹⁹ Since the last named manuscript, S.2925, has puzzled scholars in the past, it is worth pointing out that its historical origins have been authenticated by Hélène Vetch on pp. 227–30 of her study “Discrepancies between Manuscripts and Printed Sources,” in Susan Whitfield, ed., *Dunhuang Manuscript Forgeries* (London: The British Museum, 2002), pp. 227–35; she revises its date as the result of her studies to 450.

²⁰ For the historical background to this document, see Shimonaka Kunihiko 下中邦彦, ed., *Shodō zenshū* 書道全集 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1959) 3, pp. 190–91.

sion, in other words, which survived only in the particular peripheral, semi-Chinese area where our sources were discovered.

But the “shrines” mentioned in these colophons are distinctive in one other respect also: none of them appears to have a name, or at least not a name of the type normally associated with Buddhist monasteries, that is, two-character slogans like the “Eternal Joy Monastery 長樂寺” eventually mentioned in 484, in colophon 103. Rather, in keeping with the contemporary names of non-Buddhist shrines mentioned in epigraphic sources, they are named after a person, as “Liu Ju’s Shrine 劉居祠” (number 71), or yet more simply by location, as the “Shrine South of Yiwu 伊吾南祠” (number 84).²¹ There is something archaic about this, too: in our standard sources, nearly all the reputedly oldest monasteries have similarly simple descriptive names, like the famous “White Horse Monastery 白馬寺.” Sometimes it is alleged that a slogan type of name originated at an early date, as in the case of the “Established Inception Monastery 建初寺,” which was reputedly the oldest in the southern capital of Jiankang 建康, but here one suspects that this official designation was projected back in time to cover the early days of what was commonly and probably more anciently known as the “Great Market Monastery 大市寺.”²²

Or might this not have been, when it was founded in the third century, the “Great Market Shrine”? And what should we think about the possibility of “White Horse Shrine” as an original name? Indeed, in speaking of an “ancient” phase of Chinese Buddhism, perhaps deliberately left behind by later developments as educated monks allied themselves with secular authorities in order to impose higher standards, are we not conceivably dealing with a form of religion centered on shrine worship very different from the form of religion laying down doctrinal norms such as might later be found in the “courts” of state recognized monasteries? Leaving aside current problems in the interpretation of early art historical evidence concerning the nature of Han varieties of belief in Buddhism, all are agreed that the funerary cults in Gaochang that seem to have generated several of the colophons under discussion remained – for all the apparent occasional involvement of Buddhist monks – distinctly *sui generis* even in somewhat later times.²³

²¹ For a piece of epigraphy related to a non-Buddhist shrine exhibiting this nomenclature, see *ibid.*, p. 180, text 101.

²² Liu Shixing 劉世珩, *Nanchao si kao* 南朝寺考 (Shanghai: Puhui canon edn., 1944; rpt. Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1987), p. 4.

²³ On the traces of Gaochang funerary religion, see for example Meng Xianshi 孟憲實, *Han Tang wenhua yu Gaochang lishi* 漢唐文化與高昌歷史 (Jinan: Jilu shushe, 2004), pp. 235–53.

In this regard it is perhaps useful to consider briefly the one early colophon we have so far laid aside, number 37 of 359 AD. Tokiwa Daijō 常盤大定 established this exact date on the basis of transmitted materials, since it describes the text to which it is attached (a portion of the *Dhammapada*) as having been copied out for the benefit of the victims of a massacre of some two hundred people. This turns out to refer to the deaths of an entire powerful family and its dependents, the head of which was suspected of using his position as local governor to prepare for a revolt.²⁴ We can make a very good guess at the purpose of the deed: the sponsor of the copyist, presumably the suppressor of the anticipated revolt, needed to ensure that ghosts with no surviving family members to take care of them would not as a result of their marginalized position in the world of the dead cause harm to any of the living, especially to himself, but come under the oversight of the Buddha. In the disordered times following the collapse of the Han dynasty similar events – to say nothing of the total extinction of more humble families by disease or famine – were not uncommon, so the need for the living to call on higher powers in the spirit world, such as the hierarchy of Daoist divinities or the Buddha, so as to restrain deracinated elements in the unseen world must have been particularly acutely felt.

Yet the colophon itself, with its accompanying text, already at this date bespeaks not a dimly understood alien religion perceived simply as a funerary cult, but a religion governed by textual norms with a standardized vocabulary of religious concepts already largely in place. “In the first ten days of this month up to two hundred Chinese and mixed race persons were executed. May they gain the blessing of release from suffering, in life after life trusting and respecting the Three Jewels, and never experiencing any retrogression... .” While the earliness of this manuscript makes it difficult to be sure what older precedents there may have been for adding dedications of this type to texts not particularly concerned with the transfer of merit, as was certainly routine later, and whatever the meaning of *zhaicong* 齋叢, literally “Abstinence Thickets,” in the city of Jiuquan 酒泉, which is the term used for the place of copying, the situation is immediately recognizable as one reiterated constantly throughout subsequent East Asian Buddhist history into the present, and one which has always been regarded as orthodox.²⁵

²⁴ Tokiwa Daijō, *Go Kan yori Sō Sei ni itaru yakkyō sōroku* 後漢より宋齊に至る譯經總錄 (Tokyo: Tōhō bunka gakuin, 1938), pp. 681–82. For the historical incident involved, see Sima Guang 司馬光, *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1957) 100, p. 3175.

²⁵ A CBETA search reveals no other instance of the term “Abstinence Thicket” in early (or later) Chinese Buddhist sources. Stephen Teiser, to whose comments on this manuscript, now in the Museum of Calligraphy, Tokyo, I am much indebted, remarks that to judge from

If we return now to the transmitted materials with which this investigation started, references to any “White Horse Shrines” or the like are simply not attested anywhere in secular or Buddhist transmitted literature.²⁶ Even in the relevant chapters of the *Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏集記, compiled by Sengyou early in the sixth century, the work which provides the collection of colophons normally taken to constitute our best source for reliable transmitted versions early Chinese Buddhist documents, we find only “White Horse Monastery” and other similar forms. We may look with some suspicion on the use of this name at least by the late-third-century translator Dharmarakṣa from Dunhuang, who must have been familiar with the “shrine” terminology of that area (except in the very unlikely case that its fifth-century survival was based on the recrudescence of a term at one point earlier almost obsolete in the region), but we have no immediate means of proving systematic editorial emendation, even though as we have noted above there are traces of some editing before the bulk of this collection reached Sengyou himself.²⁷

The situation is, however, considerably clarified by the accidental survival amongst transmitted materials of two sources that use both “shrine” and “monastery” in the same text, pointing if not to a distinction in religious function then quite conceivably to a transitional phase. One of these is included in the *Chu sanzang ji ji*, towards the end of the documentary collection, perhaps indicating a source that reached Sengyou as an independent piece rather than as incorporated in a pre-edited collection.²⁸ It consists of three colophons originally attached to a dossier of materials on the introduction of monastic regulations for nuns from Kucha. Sylvain Lévi summarized these pieces already as long ago as 1913 in an account of that country; Tokiwa shows that

plate 2 on p. 11 of the plates attached to Ikeda’s catalogue, the second character in this expression is far from clear. But neither Tokiwa nor Ikeda – nor any other source known to me – suggests an alternative; nor despite some doubts over the authenticity of some supposedly early manuscripts of this type do I know of any scholarship that would dismiss this colophon as a forgery.

²⁶ For a particularly thorough study of materials relating to the White Horse Monasteries mentioned in early materials, see Antonello Palumbo, “Dharmarakṣa and Kaiṭhaka: White Horse Monasteries in Early Medieval China,” in Giovanni Verardi and Silvio Vita, eds., *Buddhist Asia 1* (Kyoto: Italian School of East Asian Studies, 2003), pp. 167–216.

²⁷ See n. 6, above, and, e.g., Sengyou, *Chu sanzang ji ji* 7, p. 50B7–9 (*T*, vol. 55). In following convention here and taking the sources that Sengyou presents on trust I do not believe that I have used any materials injudiciously, though I am aware that the current research of Antonello Palumbo suggests that we should take a more nuanced approach to the reliability of the materials in Sengyou’s collection.

²⁸ For these documents, see *Chu sanzang ji ji* 11, following p. 81B, especially pp. 81C18–82A17.

the collection, dated to 379, stems from the translator Zhu Fatai 竺法汰 (320–387).²⁹ Here the final colophon, in contrast to the second, which uses the “new” terminology once, uses “shrine” several times to describe the substantial monastic communities of Kucha, perhaps through an understandable hesitation (which was then in the process of being overcome) to project the new Chinese relations between Buddhism and the state onto Buddhism outside China. But the ultimate willingness shown in these documents to apply the word “shrine” to an entire monastic complex does mean that whatever religious distinctions may have dictated the choice of the words “shrine” and “monastery” originally, the latter term was not necessarily exclusively chosen to refer to larger communal structures. We cannot therefore assume that the one reference in a Han translation to the Buddha entering the room of a “monastery” precludes the possibility that the passage in question at the time of its translation might have contained the term for “shrine” instead.³⁰

And there is one further piece of evidence that this substantial shift in monastic nomenclature perhaps took place not as late as Tan would have it, but in the middle of the fourth century. The biography of Shan Daokai 單道開, who left northern China in 349, is preserved both in the Buddhist *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 and the standard history of the period, the *Jin shu* 晉書, apparently on the basis of a work of hagiography by a contemporary, a lay disciple, which existed separately for several centuries after his death.³¹ Both sources therefore note that when he first came to Ye 鄴, capital of the Later Zhao dynasty in the north, he stayed at the “shrine” of the monk Falin 法綝 west of the city; later he transferred to the Bright Virtue Monastery 昭德寺.³² Since the date of his arrival is given as the end of 345, it would seem that the change in nomenclature – assuming that in this context too no differentiation in religious status or function between his two homes is implied – in some parts of north China at least, got under way during the late 340s. For this reason, although I have conducted a cursory check of those

²⁹ The summary of these “precious documents” may be found on pp. 338–40 of Sylvain Lévi, “Le ‘Tokharien B,’ langue de Koutcha,” *JA* 2 (1913), pp. 309–80. Tokiwa, *Yakkyō sōroku*, pp. 804–9, examines the documents at some length; for their authorship, see p. 806.

³⁰ An Shigao 安世高, trans., *Sidi jing* 四諦經 1, p. 814B (*T* no. 32, vol. 1): 佛已說如是從坐起入寺室。

³¹ Arthur Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1990), p. 41, provides a summary account of his life in English; n. 231 on p. 170 covers his hagiography.

³² For these two sources, see Huijiao 慧皎, *Gaoseng zhuan* 9, pp. 387B–C (*T*, vol. 50), with precise dates; *Jin shu* 95 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), pp. 2491–92 (a briefer synopsis).

published materials mentioned by Ikeda naming shrines in their colophons with an eye to detecting any anomalies – without finding any immediately obvious references to either shrines or monasteries – the occurrence of the latter term in these manuscripts would not necessarily invalidate Tan’s argument, in that by the time that the materials concerned were created, copies emanating from a metropolitan area might easily have contained innovative terminology, which would, one imagines, have been quite readily transcribed without the substitution of the older term.

In conclusion, the materials surveyed above do not allow us as yet either to confirm or to deny the hypotheses advanced by Tan concerning the systematic editing of the Chinese Buddhist canon. Nor is it possible to confirm or deny that a distinction in nomenclature between shrine (in a Buddhist context) and monastery at some point in the history of early Chinese Buddhism reflected distinctions in practice. But there is good evidence for a change in nomenclature from the late fourth-century onward, if not from somewhat before, that – whatever the situation elsewhere – took some time to extend outward from the capitals of north China into those adjacent regions of Inner Asia in which Chinese writing was used. In short, not long before the time of the later monastic system of the fifth to tenth centuries surveyed by historians like Jacques Gernet and Denis Twitchett, whatever other processes of adaptation to existing and evolving religious conditions took place in the creation of the monastic communities revealed by their research, a process of spreading standardization in the terminology applied to monasteries can certainly be detected. While the reason for this process is not immediately apparent, it would seem in context most likely that it reflects an adjustment in the relationship between Buddhism and secular power within the Chinese-speaking world. The sources used here – and especially those retrieved by archaeology – have however been by no means comprehensive, and it is to be hoped that future research using a more extended range of evidence will be able to refine the sketch provided in this brief essay, and to explore more effectively the reasons for the change described. For the moment, however, the foregoing remarks may serve to underline the need to deepen our understanding of the processes of editorial change that – as the evidence presented here does make unambiguously clear – affected the current state of transmitted texts of the second to fifth centuries, and the need to seek that understanding through a close comparison of these sources with the non-transmitted materials provided by manuscripts and by epigraphy.