

# Northeastern Asia and the Northern Rockies

*Treasures from the Los Angeles  
County Museum of Art and the  
Daryl S. Paulson Collection*

Stephen Little &  
T. Lawrence Larkin





NORTHEASTERN ASIA AND THE NORTHERN ROCKIES



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Fig. 1. Detail from Hieronymus Bosch, *Ship of Fools* (1490–1500)

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All photographs of objects in the Daryl S. Paulson Collection were provided by Sorcha Matisse Photography, Bozeman, including objects 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f, 5g, 5h, 5 k-l-m, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20a, 20b, 22b, 23a, 23b, 23c, 24a-b-c-d-e, 25c, 26a, 26b, 28a, 29b, and 31.

First published in 2022 by punctum books, Earth, Milky Way.  
<https://punctumbooks.com>

ISBN-13: 978-1-68571-116-0 (print)

ISBN-13: 978-1-68571-117-7 (ePDF)

DOI: 10.53288/0383.1.00

LCCN: 2022951249

Library of Congress Cataloging Data is available from the Library of Congress

Book design: Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei

Cover image: *The Daoist Immortal Li Tieguai ("Iron-crutch Li")*. China, Qing dynasty, 19th century. Wood 7.17 × 2.83 × 2.64 in. (18.2 × 7.2 × 6.7 cm). Daryl S. Paulson Collection (MS 02).

This catalog was made possible by a generous Asia Program Grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, New York.



HIC SVNT MONSTRA





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## Acknowledgments

This exhibition, *Northeastern Asia and the Northern Rockies*, brings together objects from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Daryl S. Paulson Collection, Bozeman, in order to explain the philosophies of Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism that played an important role in the government administration, cultural tradition, and religious practice of the inhabitants of the northeastern Asian empires of China, Korea, and Japan over several hundred years and migrants to the western United States over seventy years. The scope of this exhibition was largely determined by three factors: first, the determination of the Henry Luce Foundation's Asia Program committee to subsidize projects on "Northeastern Asia" that reach regional institutions and audiences in the United States; second, the dedication of LACMA's curator, Stephen Little, to present the "foundational philosophies" to a general audience of scholars, students, and citizens; and third, the commitment of Montana State University professor, T. Lawrence Larkin, to trace the prevalence of those philosophies in the art, culture, and ritual of Asian sojourners and settlers in the American West. In selecting objects and images for this exhibition, our primary aim has been to illuminate the tenets of each philosophy and to show how the people of each Asian country and American region absorbed them into official culture and daily life. The result is a concise introduction to artistic manifestations of the three philosophies and an exploratory comparison of shrines, deities, and rituals produced on both sides of the Pacific.

Such a project could not have been realized without the generous assistance of many institutions and professionals. Nearly twenty years ago, Bozeman biotech engineer, Daryl Paulson, showed up at Larkin's lectures on Asian art, and over the years lent his collection to student analysis, discussions, and cataloging exercises; University of California professor Peter Sturman kindly recommended Stephen Little for the task of assessing the scope of the collection; together we hit on the idea of showcasing the strengths of LACMA and Paulson collections in an altruistic endeavor meant to benefit the university museums and art enthusiasts of the Northern Rockies. Henry Luce Foundation program director Helena Kolenda must be credited with being the first to appreciate the benefit of the LACMA-Paulson collaboration to regional audiences within the framework of the "Northeastern Asia" theme years. After an Asia Program Grant was awarded to the Montana State University Foundation in 2019, Kolenda continued to challenge the researchers to address important questions about the organization, scholarship, and logistics of the project, and Donna Lawson assisted in completing annual reports on expenditures.

Early exploratory research for this catalog was underwritten in part by the Luce Foundation, which provided both of us summer stipends to access libraries, universities, and museums across the United States and the Pacific. Special thanks go to Alexis Curry and her staff at the Balch Art Research Library at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and

to Mary Guthmiller and her staff in the Interlibrary Loan department of the Roland E. Renne Library at Montana State University. The main archival research for the fourth section on art and ritual in the Northern Rockies was supported by the MSU Provost's Faculty Excellence Grant, which facilitated Larkin's travel to historical society archives in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado in the summer and fall of 2021. Particular thanks go to Priscilla Wegars and Renae Campbell at the University of Idaho, Moscow; Alisha Graefe at the Boise State University Library; Emily Johnsen at the Lewis Clark State College, Lewiston; and Madeline Lowry and Sarah Phillips at the Idaho State Historical Society Archives, Boise. Gratitude is also expressed to Natasha Hollenbach and Zoe Ann Stoltz at the Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena; Ellen Crain at the Butte-Silver Bow Archives, Butte; and Marjorie Antolik at the Montana Heritage Commission, Virginia City. Suzi Taylor at the Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, also deserves our sincere appreciation. Thanks also go to William Wei at the University of Colorado, Boulder; Bethany Williams, Melissa VanOtterloo, Stefanie Baltzell, Alisa DiGiacomo, and Jason Hanson at the Stephen H. Hart Research Center, History Colorado, Denver. Additional research advice and support were provided by Maggie Leininger and Christie Anderson at DePauw University, Greencastle; and Mark Johnson at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend. The final period of writing was subsidized by the Luce Foundation in the winter of 2021–2022.

Publication of this catalog was likewise underwritten by a Luce Foundation allocation, which covered the cost of original photography, image licensing, design, printing, outreach, and distribution. University of California professor E. Bruce Robertson recommended early correspondence with co-directors Eileen A. Fradenburg Joy and Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei and copyeditor Lily Brewer, of punctum books, Santa Barbara, owing to their exacting publication stand-

ards. Montana State University professor Hua Li recommended correspondence with colleague Philip K. Williams for review of the fourth part of the manuscript on Asian migrants and settlers in the Northern Rockies.

Arrangements for acquisition of stock photography and new digital photography were expertly handled by several individuals. Piper Severance in the Rights and Reproductions department at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art provided digital photos and permissions of that museum's Asian art collection. Sorcha Matisse of Sorcha Matisse Photography, Bozeman, photographed all the loans of Paulson Collection objects for the catalog beautifully. In addition, several photographic archivists and digital collections librarians worked hard to prepare files of historic photos of temples, shrines, and rituals in the Northern Rockies along with permits to publish them in the summer of 2022. A special debt is owed to Emma Hergenrather and Chelsea Boehm at the Idaho State Archives in Boise and to Emily Johnson at the Lewis Clark State College in Lewiston. Thanks also go to Heather Hultman at the Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena; Kendra Newhall at the Montana Historical Society Museum, Helena; and Danielle Grundell at the Boise City Department of Arts & History. Suzi Taylor at the Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, and Kay Rossiter at the Unita County Museum, Evanston, helped supply digital images and photographic dimensions. Gratitude is owed to Jori Johnson at the Stephen H. Hart Research Center, History Colorado, Denver; Kellen Cutsforth at the Denver Public Library; Erinn Barnes at the Pikes Peak Library District, Colorado Springs; and Gregory Ecks and Michael Gaal at Colorado Springs School District II. Additional photographic collection access was furnished by Sara Cordes at the California State Library, Sacramento; Palma You at the Chinese Historical Society of America, San Francisco; Greg Matthews at Washington State University Libraries, Pullman; Michelle Lovejoy at Delta City Library, Utah; and Anna Neatrou

and Kirk Watson at the J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

Finally, this exhibition, like so many collaborative shows, has benefitted from fruitful discussions with directors, curators, assistant curators, registrars, exhibitions managers, and conservators at art museums in California, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado. Senior Deputy Director Nancy Thomas, Registrars Jayne Manuel and Megan Smith, and Conservators Soko Furuhata, John Hirx, and Silviu Boariu at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art have provided invaluable assistance in authorizing and facilitating loans from the permanent collection. Director Chris Dobbs and Exhibitions Manager Scott Williams at the Museum of the Rockies, Montana State University, and Director Nicole Crawford and Curator Michelle Crawford at the Art Museum of the University of Wyoming have taken time not only to share our vision for Northeastern Asia and the Northern Rockies but also to challenge us to utilize their resources to optimize community engagement. For all these interactions we are most grateful.

T. Lawrence Larkin  
Belgrade, 2022

# Chronologies

## *Chronological Table of Periods and Dynasties*

### CHINA

- Shang Dynasty, ca. 1600–1050 BCE
- Zhou Dynasty, ca. 1050–256 BCE
  - Western Zhou, ca. 1050–771 BCE
  - Eastern Zhou, 770–256 BCE
    - Spring and Autumn period, 770–476 BCE
    - Warring States period, 475–221 BCE
- Qin Dynasty, 221–207 BCE
- Han Dynasty, 206 BCE–220 CE
  - Western Han, 206 BCE–8 CE
  - Xin (Wang Mang), 9–23
  - Eastern Han, 25–220
- Three Kingdoms, 220–280
  - Wei kingdom, 220–265
  - Shu kingdom, 221–263
  - Wu kingdom, 222–280
- Jin Dynasty, 265–420
  - Western Jin, 265–316
  - Eastern Jin, 317–420
- Northern and Southern Dynasties, 386–589
  - Northern Dynasties, 386–581
    - Northern Wei, 386–581
    - Eastern Wei, 534–550
    - Western Wei, 535–557
    - Northern Qi, 550–577
    - Northern Zhou, 557–581
  - Southern Dynasties (Six Dynasties), 420–589
    - Liu-Song, 420–479
    - Southern Qi, 479–502
    - Liang, 502–557
    - Chen, 557–589
- Sui Dynasty, 581–618
- Tang Dynasty, 618–906
- Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms, 907–960
- Liao Dynasty, 916–1125
- Song Dynasty, 960–1279
  - Northern Song, 960–1126
  - Southern Song, 1127–1279
- Jin Dynasty, 1115–1234
- Yuan Dynasty, 1260–1368
- Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644
- Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
- Republic, 1912–1949



## KOREA

Gojoseon period, 300 BCE  
Naknang period (Chinese Han Colonies),  
100 BCE–313 CE  
    North: Chinese Commanderies, 108  
    BCE–313 CE  
    South: Samhan Federation, 100 BCE–280  
    CE  
Three Kingdoms, 57 BCE–668 CE  
    Silla Dynasty, 57 BCE–668 CE  
    Goguryo Dynasty, 37 BCE–668 CE  
    Baekche Dynasty, 18 BCE–663 CE  
Gaya Confederacy, 47–562  
Unified Silla Kingdom, 668–936  
Goryeo Dynasty, 918–1392  
Joseon Dynasty, 1392–1897  
Korean Empire Period, 1897–1910  
Japanese Colonial Period, 1910–1945

## JAPAN

Asuka (Suiko) Period, 645–710  
Nara Period, 710–794  
Heian Period, 794–1185  
    Early Heian (Konin and Jogan periods),  
    810–876  
    Late Heian (Fujiwara period), 898–1185  
Kamakura Period, 1185–1333  
Muromachi (Ashikaga) Period, 1333–1568  
    Nambokucho (Northern and Southern  
    Courts), 1333–1392  
Momoyama Period, 1568–1600  
Tokugawa (Edo) Period, 1600–1868  
Meiji period, 1868–1912  
Taishō period, 1912–1926  
Shōwa period, 1926–1989

***Chronological Table of Governments and Heads of State ca. 1850–1918***

**Empire of China**

Reigns of the Qing Dynasty

Daoguang 1821–1850

Xianfeng 1851–1861

Tongzhi 1862–1874

Guangxu 1875–1908

Xuantong 1909–1911

**Republic of China**

Presidents of the Provisional Government

Sun Yat-sen 1912

Yuan Shikai 1912–1913

Presidents of the Beiyang Government

Yuan Shikai 1913–1916

Li Yuanhong 1916–1917

Feng Guozhang 1917–1918

Xu Shichang 1918–1922

**Kingdom of Korea**

Reigns of the Joseon Dynasty

Cheoljong 1849–1864

Gojong 1864–1897

**Empire of Korea**

Reigns of the Joseon Dynasty

Gojong 1897–1907

Sunjong 1907–1910

**Japanese Protectorate**

Governors-General of Chōsen

General Count Terauchi Masatake  
1910–1916

Gensui Count Hasegawa Yoshimichi  
1916–1919

## **Tokugawa Shogunate**

### Shoguns

Ieyoshi 1837–1853

Iesada 1853–1858

Iemochi 1858–1866

Yoshinobu 1866–1867

(Emperor Kōmei 1846–1867)

## **Empire of Japan**

### Emperors

Meiji 1867–1912

Taishō 1912–1926

## **Republic of the United States of America**

### Presidents

Millard Fillmore 1850–1853

Franklin Pierce 1853–1857

James Buchanan 1857–1861

Abraham Lincoln 1861–1865

Andrew Johnson 1865–1869

Ulysses S. Grant 1869–1877

Rutherford B. Hayes 1877–1881

James A. Garfield 1881–1881

Chester A. Arthur 1881–1885

Grover Cleveland 1885–1889

Benjamin Harrison 1889–1893

Grover Cleveland 1893–1897

William McKinley 1897–1901

Theodore Roosevelt 1901–1909

William Howard Taft 1909–1913

Woodrow Wilson 1913–1921

### *Chronology of Northeast Asian Migration ca. 1850–1918*

**1844** The United States and the Chinese Empire sign the Treaty of Wanghia (Treaty of Peace, Amity, and Commerce) whereby the United States received the right to try and punish its citizens abroad, to fix tariffs and purchase land in the five treaty ports, and to enjoy most favored nation status.

**1847** Yung Wing and companions Wong Shing and Wong Foon study at the Monson Academy, Massachusetts; Yung Wing becomes the first Chinese to graduate from an American college, Yale University in 1854.

**1848** Gold is discovered in California. Chinese migrants, hearing about the gold rush and other work opportunities, arrive in San Francisco. It has been estimated that 325 Chinese arrived in 1848, 323 in 1849, and 450 in 1850.

**1850** The Chinese population in the United States is about 4,018. Chinese residing in California form associations for mutual protection. These associations will eventually provide a range of services to Chinese throughout the West.

**1858** The California State Legislature passes a law that makes it illegal for Chinese to enter the state. This law remains in effect until the California Supreme Court strikes it down in 1862.

**1860** The Chinese population in the United States is 34,933.

**1862** The California State Legislature passes the Anti-Coolie Act to protect Euro-American or white labor from competition with Chinese labor by imposing a tax and discouraging Chinese immigration.

**1865** The Central Pacific Railroad recruits its first fifty Chinese immigrant laborers to build the Transcontinental Railroad, which had commenced at Omaha, Nebraska, and Sacramento, California, in 1863 and would be completed at Promontory Summit, Utah in 1869.

**1866** The first Japanese students, brothers Yokoi Saheita and Yokoi Daihei, study at the Rutgers Grammar School, New Brunswick, to prepare for college. Yokoi Saheita would enter the Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1869.

**1868** The United States and the Empire of China ratify the Burlingame-Seward Treaty, which recognizes China's right of eminent domain over its own territory, China's right to appoint consuls at ports in the United States, the citizens of both countries' right to reside in the other's territory, with complete liberty of conscience and freedom of religion. At the same time, the Empire of Japan lessens restrictions on emigration to other nations;

the first Japanese emigrate to the Kingdom of Hawai'i to work in sugarcane fields.

**1870** The Chinese population in the United States is 63,199; the Japanese population is fifty-five. The United States Congress passes the Naturalization Act, which creates a system of controls for naturalization of Chinese yet denies them a path to citizenship. California bans the importation of Chinese and Japanese who will engage in prostitution. Kusakabe Taro is the first Japanese student to graduate from Rutgers University, New Brunswick.

**1871** The Los Angeles anti-Chinese massacre: conflict between rival Non Yung and Hong Chow *tongs* results in the death of a policeman and a rancher, rumors of which spark outrage. Five-hundred Euro- and Hispanic Americans surround Chinatown to harass, assault, and rob Chinese residents, nineteen of whom are killed.

**1875** The United States Congress passes the Page Act, which prohibits the entry of Chinese immigrants considered undesirable, including those intended for forced labor, those considered convicts in their own country, or women engaged in prostitution.

**1880** The Chinese population in the United States is 105,465; the Japanese population is 148. The United States and Empire of China sign the Angell Treaty which limits the

immigration of Chinese laborers. The Anti-Chinese Riot of Denver is instigated by two drunk white men who harass two Chinese men playing pool in a Wazee Street saloon and then lead a mob of 3,000 in ransacking Chinatown, leaving one man dead and dozens severely injured.

**1882** The United States Congress passes the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibits Chinese laborers from immigrating for ten years and prohibits Chinese from becoming naturalized citizens. This commences a period where Euro-Americans force Chinese to relocate elsewhere. Due to the scarcity of Chinese laborers, American industrialists recruit Japanese laborers from the Empire of Japan and Kingdom of Hawai'i.

**1884** The Empire of Japan grants passports to laborers who wish to work in the Kingdom of Hawai'i. The first Japanese with these permits arrive in the Hawai'ian Islands the following year.

**1885** The Rock Springs, Wyoming, massacre occurs. The Union Pacific Coal Department hires Chinese laborers to mine coal throughout southern Wyoming because they work for lower wages than Euro-Americans. Euro-American miners, resentful of the company and racist toward their new employees, confront Chinese miners at the coal pit, assemble 150 armed men at Rock Springs's Chi-

natown, and torch seventy-nine homes, kill twenty-eight and injure fifteen Chinese.

**1886** The Japanese government legalizes emigration, commencing the emigration of more than 400,000 men and women to the United States up to 1912.

**1887** The Snake River, Oregon, massacre occurs. Chea Po and Lee She lead two groups of Chinese miners from Lewiston, Idaho, along the Snake River to Hell's Canyon, Oregon, in search of gold. Bruce Evans, hearing that Chea Po's camp is half a mile upstream, leads a gang of seven white horse thieves in an ambush of the camp, robbing and murdering twenty-one Chinese miners. The gang then travel four miles to the Lee She camp and robs and murders twelve more Chinese miners.

**1890** The Chinese population in the United States is 107,488; the Japanese population is 2,039.

**1891** Pyon Su is the first Korean to graduate from an American college or university, the Maryland Agricultural College.

**1892** The Geary Act written by California Representative Thomas J. Geary and passed by the United States Congress extends the Chinese Exclusion Act for another ten years and requires all Chinese residents to carry resident permits as proof that they entered

the country legally and had the right to remain in the country. Failure to comply results in hard labor or deportation.

**1896–1897** Labor unions in Butte, Montana, fearing white unemployment, organize a boycott of Chinese businesses and Euro-American businesses employing Chinese or contracting for Chinese services to drive them from the city. Although 350 Chinese leave Butte, the boycott fails to close Chinese businesses.

**1900** The Chinese population in the United States is 89,863; the Japanese population is 24,326. Over the next eight years, 127,000 Japanese will enter the United States, settle on the West Coast, and begin to lease land and to sharecrop.

**1902** The Geary Act extends the Chinese Exclusion Act, banning Chinese immigration and requiring Chinese residents to carry resident permits for another ten years.

**1904** The United States Congress votes to extend the Chinese Exclusion Act, banning Chinese immigration indefinitely in response to the Chinese government's abrogation of earlier treaties that failed to protect its subjects from discrimination in the United States.

**1906** The San Francisco Earthquake destroys all records, including Chinese immi-

gration records, which opens the possibility for Chinese to claim that they are United States citizens with the right to invite family to join them in America. The United States Congress passes the Naturalization Act, which creates the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization to administer standardized forms for the naturalization of immigrants.

**1907** To reduce tensions between the United States and Empire of Japan in light of the Pacific Coast race riots, a Gentleman's Agreement (or informal agreement) is drawn up in which the Japanese government agrees to curb further emigration to America by refusing to issue passports to laborers and the United States government agrees not to impose restrictions on Japanese immigrants already living in the country.

**1908** The Gentleman's Agreement permits the emigration of wives of Japanese men living in America, many Japanese men write home to secure wives from comparable backgrounds, verified through the exchange of photographs. Over the next decade, thousands of "picture brides" will undergo marriage ceremonies initially in Japan and then at the port of entry to the United States.

**1910** The Chinese population in the United States is 71,531; the Japanese population is 72,157.

**1913** The California State Legislature passes the Alien Land Law, which prohibits Chinese, Japanese, and Korean immigrant farmers from owning agricultural land or possessing leases over it of more than three years. The law is intended to create an inhospitable environment for Japanese independent farmers in California. Similar laws will be enacted in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and other states over subsequent years.

**1917** The United States Congress passes the Immigration Act aimed at restricting immigration by imposing literacy tests on immigrants, creating new categories of inadmissible persons, and barring immigration from the Asia-Pacific zone, which includes China but not Japan or Korea.

**1918** The United States Congress passes the Alien Naturalization Act which permits Asians serving in the American armed forces during World War I to file petitions for naturalization and become citizens.

**1943** The United States Congress passes the Magnuson Act, thus repealing the Chinese Exclusion Act, which grants undocumented Chinese the right to become naturalized citizens.

**1952** The United States Congress passes the McCarran-Walter Act, granting undocumented Japanese the right to become naturalized citizens.

# Maps



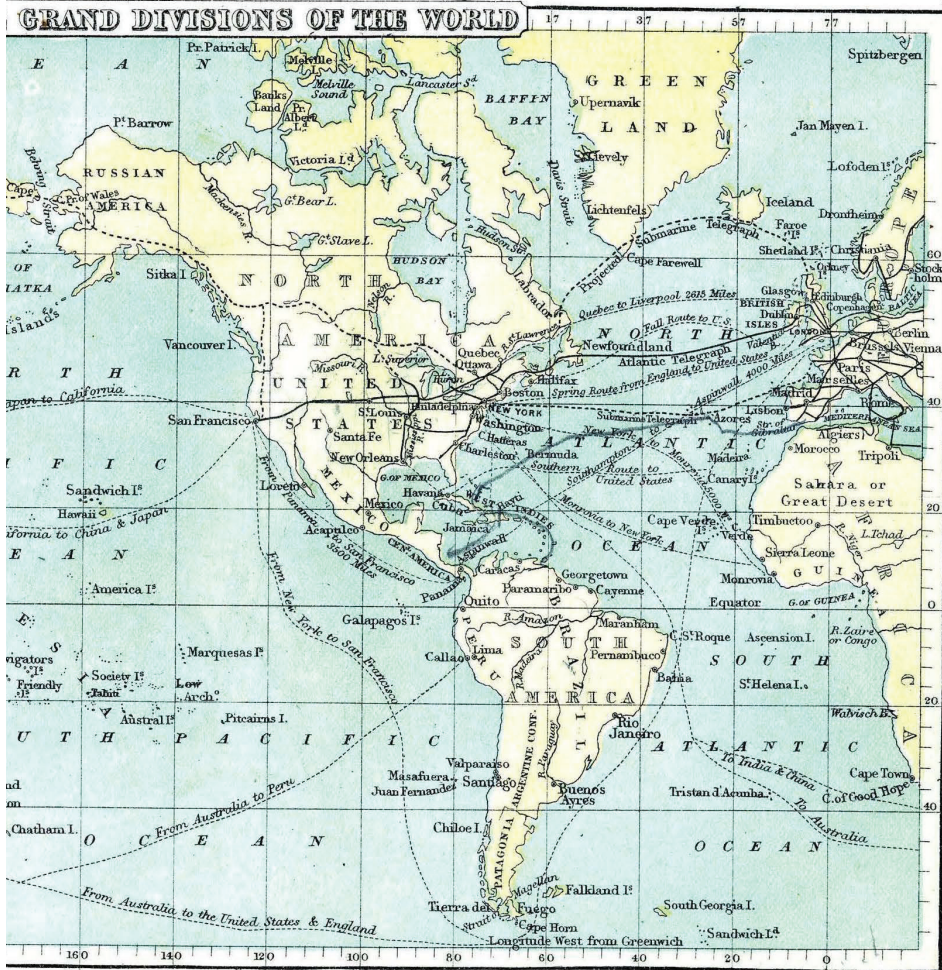


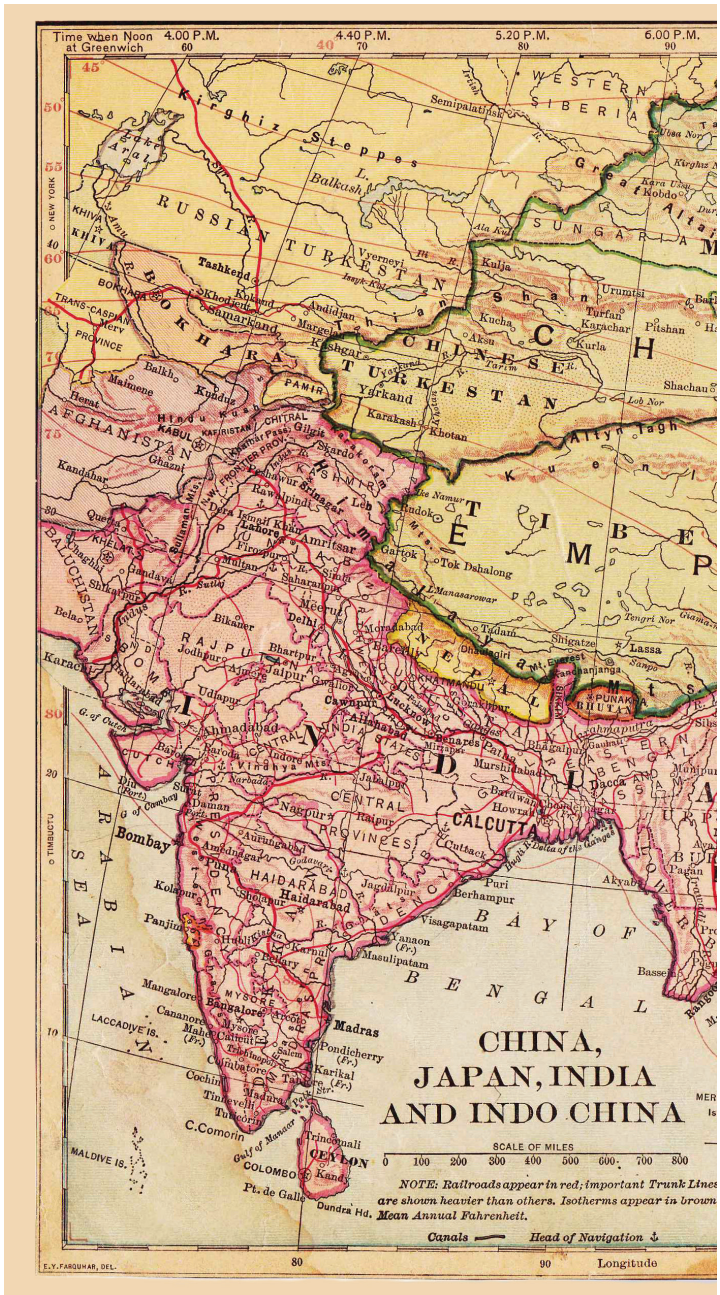
**Map 1.** United States Central Intelligence Agency, *China: Administrative Areas 1948*. Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. G7821.F7 1948 U5 f.





Map 2. [Steamship and Telegraph] Routes Between the Grand Divisions of the World, from S. S. Cornell, *Cornell's Intermediate Geography* (New York: American Book Company, 1888), 63. Courtesy of Roy Winkelman Collection, map #04670, *Maps ETC*, <http://etc.usf.edu/maps>.





**Map 3.** L.L. Poates (after E.Y. Farquhar), *China, Japan, India and Indo China*, 1901. Color lithograph, 24.13 × 30.48 cm. (9.5 × 12 in.). Private Collection.



**Map 4. Mountain, Plateau, and Pacific States and Territories, from Horace S. Tarbell, *The Complete Geography* (New York: American Book Company, 1899), 55. Courtesy of Roy Winkelman Collection, map #04576, *Maps ETC*, <http://etc.usf.edu/maps>.**



# Introduction

## ***Exhibition Theme and Structure***

This exhibition, *Northeastern Asia and the Northern Rockies*, has been conceived as an introduction in four parts that will help visitors to the museum and scholars of the university understand key elements of both traditional and current Northeastern Asian native and migrant cultures. The first three parts of the exhibition introduce fundamental concepts inherent in Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism that provided the underpinnings of traditional Chinese culture and much of later Korean and Japanese culture. The final fourth part analyzes the various ways urban and rural communities of Northeastern Asia adapted the philosophies to seasonal ritual and daily life, which provided a basis for trans-Pacific migrants and settlers to transplant them to the Northern Rockies.

The first section examines fundamental ideas of Daoist cosmology as seen through the prism of unusually shaped stones found in nature and prized in interiors and gardens. Daoism is a spiritual tradition indigenous to China which has also had a profound influence on the cultures of Korea, Japan, Okinawa, Vietnam, and, to a lesser extent, the Himalayas. It is still a major system of belief in China, with clear influences in such realms as cosmology, medicine, and art. The second section introduces Confucianism, an ancient school of thought that became the dominant underpinning of the imperial Chinese state from the second century BCE onward, and the foundation of later royal and imperial culture and government in Korea and Japan.

Confucianism is distinguished from Daoism in its focus on the more secular creation and maintenance of a stable society, through the promulgation of ideal modes and practices of human behavior within society — including many social rituals focused on the individual, the family, and the state. The third section explores the role of Buddhism, an Indian system of belief which first emerged in the fifth century BCE, in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese spiritual, intellectual, and artistic culture. Devotional sculptures in the exhibition enable one to explore those fundamental elements of Buddhism which remained the same regardless of where the religion spread, but also how Buddhism changed and adapted to local, preexisting systems of belief in East Asia — specifically Daoism in China and Shintō in Japan. Key schools of Chinese Buddhism include the Pure Land sect, focused on veneration of Amitabha, Buddha of the Western Paradise, and Chan (Japanese Zen) Buddhism. Elements of all three systems of belief — Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism — continue to play key roles in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese culture, both within these countries and among diasporic East Asian communities around the globe.

The fourth section is a comparative analysis of how the three philosophies were manifested in Northeastern Asian official and folk visual culture and Northwest American migrant and settler visual culture from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century CE. Emperors embraced Neo-Confucianism in Qing China and Shintō in Meiji Japan to consolidate their power and to impress

it on their subjects so that their promulgations would seem to carry divine mandates. Under the Qing dynasty, the Chinese government was dominated by Confucian scholar officials who discouraged all forms of Western learning or development in a bid to uphold traditional values that had seemingly proved their worth as guarantors of peace and stability. Under the Meiji, the Japanese government embraced Shintō and the cult of the deified emperor while seeking the acquisition of Western science and industry to emerge on the world stage as a major military power. First the Chinese, then the Japanese, and much later the Koreans emigrated to the Western United States to find work so they could earn enough money to send home and eventually return to live in comfort. The Chinese formed associations, built temples, and made ritual displays in public while the Japanese erected small shrines and conducted rituals in private. American newspapers were replete with intricate descriptions of Asian customs in the celebration of the New Year or an emperor's birthday and the offerings made to Guan Yu, Suijing Bo, deceased individuals, or ancestors. Despite the prejudice inherent in such press coverage, Chinese and Japanese migrants succeeded in projecting their philosophies and culture on to the geographies and resources they found in the Northern Rockies and thereby preserved their moral values and affirmed their identities.

Drawing from the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and the Daryl S. Paulson Collection (DSPC) in Bozeman, Montana, Stephen Little offers three intriguing spaces that distinguish the philosophies according to their founding values and filled with objects that illustrate, elaborate, and develop those ideals. The Daoist cult of nature and immortality is signified by a series of natural rock formations; the Confucian pursuit of calligraphy and learning is conveyed by an assortment of brushes, ink cakes, and ink stones; and the Buddhist quest for nirvana or *paranirvana* is evoked by a selection of buddhas, bodhisattvas, and

guardians. Mining the file cabinets of the state historical societies of Boise, Helena, Cheyenne, and Denver, T. Lawrence Larkin offers a fourth room that compares religious values and artistic forms on two sides of the Pacific and presents objects and photos that highlight migrant and settler spiritual culture in the Inner West. Daoist religious observances in the Chinese mining community are evoked by a reconstruction of a temple shrine, complete with deity, censer, incense sticks, bouquets, and banners; Buddhist devotions in the Japanese farming community are evoked by a reconstruction of a home niche; and a range of archival photos evidence the spiritual centers that were once prevalent throughout the Northern Rockies. This exhibition has been designed with the goal of making these developments in visual culture accessible to a general audience as well as useful for the scholarly researcher. It is hoped that it will stimulate dialogue and research about a shared history of multicultural encounter, exchange, and assimilation.

### ***Collection Histories and Strengths***

This exhibition showcases the strengths of the LACMA and the DSPC in the area of Asian art. Brief histories of the two collections, largely built in the mid-twentieth century, will underline the unique ways American collectors and curators established important cultural relationships with China, Korea, and Japan.

LACMA opened to the public on Wilshire Boulevard in the Fairfax District of Los Angeles in 1965. Prior to that date the museum's collections were part of the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science and Art, located in Exposition Park in downtown Los Angeles. The museum's collection of East Asian artworks began in 1930, when part of the Chinese collection formed in China by the Norwegian military general and collector Johann Wilhelm Normann Munthe (1864–1935) was purchased. Over the next several decades many of the Munthe Collection acquisitions were deaccessioned, having



been later deemed forgeries or later copies, and today only a few of the finest Chinese ceramics from the Munthe Collection are still part of the museum's permanent collection; a porcelain ewer from the Kangxi reign (1662–1722) and a stoneware brush holder from the nineteenth century, both dating to the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) are included in this exhibition.

It was only in 1947 with the hiring of Henry Trubner (1920–1998), the institution's first academically-trained specialist, that the museum had a proper curator of Asian art. Trubner was born in Berlin and moved to the United States in the late 1930s. Raised in an artistic and art-dealing family, he received both his BA and MA from Harvard University and served as the museum's curator of Asian art from 1947 to 1958, during which he began building the foundation of what would later become a substantial collection of East Asian art. In 1957, for example, with funding from Los Angeles County, he traveled to Japan and acquired many important artworks, including a rare ritual bronze bell (*dōtaku*) dating to the second century CE, a large seated ceramic Haniwa figure dating to circa 500–600 CE, a pair of folding screens representing the famous Willow Bridge at Uji, dating to ca. 1580–1600 in the Momoyama period, another pair of folding screens depicting a snowy landscape by Maruyama Ōkyo (1733–1795), and a Negoro lacquer ewer dating to the eighteenth century. Prior to his departure for the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto in 1958, Trubner was instrumental in negotiating the eventual gift of over one hundred works of Chinese art and over 125 works of Japanese art to the museum from Los Angeles collector Carl Holmes.

The tenure of Japanese American scholar George Kuwayama lasted from 1959 to 1996. During this nearly forty-year period, Kuwayama oversaw the remarkable growth of the Los Angeles museum's permanent collection of Asian art, particularly in the arts of China and Japan. As mentioned previously, the county's art collection split off from the Los

Angeles County Museum of History, Science and Art to become an independent institution named the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1965, with a new campus designed by architect William Pereira (1909–1985). The acquisition of LACMA's first examples of traditional Korean art began with the 1966 visit of Yuk Young-soo (1925–1974), First Lady of South Korea, wife of then President Park Chung-hee, who noticed that the museum had no Korean art on display. This led to the subsequent gift from President Park of a group of Goryeo dynasty (tenth to fourteenth century) celadon-glazed ceramics to LACMA. This group formed the initial core of the museum's collection of Korean art. With a major donation of funds and the promised gift of a collection of three hundred Japanese Edo-period (1610–1872) paintings from donors Joe and Etsuko Price in 1988, LACMA opened the dedicated Pavilion for Japanese Art, designed by architect Bruce Goff (1904–1982), who passed away prior to the building's completion. During the tenure of J. Keith Wilson, Curator of Far Eastern Art from 1996 to 2006, the museum's Korean collection was substantially increased by the purchase of 250 works of art from the Los Angeles-based collector and dealer Robert Moore.

Today LACMA owns nearly 1,500 works of Chinese art, over 800 works of Korean art, over 7,000 works of Japanese art, including over 4,000 woodblock prints, and over forty rare lacquers and textiles from Okinawa. The museum has also been recognized in the past decade for its groundbreaking special exhibitions, including, in the last decade, *Chinese Paintings from Japanese Collections* (2014; an exhibition focused on the history of Japanese collecting of Chinese paintings), *Beyond Line: The Art of Korean Writing* (2019; the first exhibition on the history of Korean calligraphy ever held in the United States), and *Where the Truth Lies: The Art of Qiu Ying* (2020; the first exhibition outside of Asia to focus on the famous Ming dynasty painter Qiu Ying, ca. 1494–1552). LACMA's collection has been augmented in other areas, thanks primarily

to the donations of several important personal collections in and beyond Los Angeles, supplemented by occasional purchases. For example, the institution owns one of the largest and finest collections of Indian, Himalayan, and Southeast Asian art in the United States, which began in earnest with the acquisition in the 1970s of the private collection of the Parsi American art dealer Nasli Heeramaneck (1902–1971). One of the most notable recent areas of growth in the museum’s collection has been contemporary East Asian art, with conferred and promised gifts of major works.

LACMA’s curators have always been responsive to the needs of collectors and communities in southern California and throughout the western United States. In 2013 Larkin contacted Little with the news that a Bozeman war veteran, biotech entrepreneur, and art collector Daryl Paulson was determined to have his collection of Asian artifacts authenticated and catalogued so that it could be lent to the faculty and students at Montana State University. The art historians discovered that Paulson had assembled more than 240 choice works of Asian art as a way of coming to terms with his service in the Vietnam War. Paulson enlisted in the US Marine Corps in 1966 and was transferred to the Defense Language Institute East Coast the following year so that he could learn the Vietnamese language. Of the language course he recollected, “I learned much about the Vietnamese culture and fell in love with the Orient.”<sup>1</sup> Shortly thereafter he was stationed with the First Marine Division, the 5th Marine Regiment, at the An Hòa Combat Base, located near the Thu Bồn River in Quảng Nam Province (Central Republic of Vietnam). The division was assigned to repulse the Vietcong (South Vietnamese Communists) and North Vietnamese Army as they attempted to attack the main American air base outside Đà Nẵng to the northeast. Paul-

son recalled being affected by the culture of the inland villages and the ruins of the rural temples. Vietnamese culture presented an entrée to Asian art, and the sergeant alternated between periods of combat in the Arizona Territory and other areas for thirteen months. Later in his tour, he took rest and recuperation in Singapore, where he met an individual who had connections with art dealers in China sufficient to make the most of that government’s export permits. His service complete, he returned home. In the early 1970s he contacted an acquaintance in Singapore and began collecting Asian art. Every few months a shipment would be dispatched to Montana on approval: “That’s where it began. I started collecting from him and it continued for several years.”<sup>2</sup> Despite the sudden halt on art sales brought on by rapid industrialization in China, Paulson succeeded in amassing a collection of hundreds of works from the Tang dynasty (618–906) to the late Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Most of the objects were consigned to a warehouse at the family farm in Great Falls until they could be divided between home and office in Bozeman.

The collection is strongest in visual and material culture from China and Japan, although there are also some rare pieces from India, Tibet, and Thailand. The Chinese objects arranged in the home are evidence of Paulson’s dedication to studying Buddhist and Daoist religions and literati, gentleman-scholars, and culture. Specialists who have visited the home have expressed feeling overwhelmed by a number of sand-colored stone Chinese buddhas and bodhisattvas, authoritative in aspect, whether standing or seated, fragmentary or whole, and nearly impossible to budge from their various perches around a central fireplace. A hand-carved, rainbow-tinted Tibetan altar with two tiers of niches filled with gilt bronze buddhas takes up an entire wall of a study; cabinets and screens carved or painted with Dakini (sky dancer; a female embodiment of enlightened energy)

1 Daryl S. Paulson, interview with T. Lawrence Larkin in Bozeman, Montana, Spring 2022.

2 Ibid.

and seated Buddhas or Dakini and seated monks demarcate the perimeter; and an impressive oxblood red stand suspends a rotating prayer wheel. Paulson has declared, “[t]his is where I do my meditating.”<sup>3</sup> A broad hall runs the length of the house, interrupted by a maze of full-length and waist-high bookcases screening an occasional antique desk or display case laden with scholar implements, including brushes of wood, glass, and jade and brush holders of bamboo and coral; ink cakes shaped like fruits and leaves and painted with flowers and immortals; ink stones of jade and water droppers of amber and clay; wrist rests of bamboo carved with temples in landscapes; and seals of jade and soapstone carved with figures and pavilions. Diminutive jade carvings of animals, landscapes, bowls, and vases are perhaps the most numerous, while limestone scholar stones resembling “faces” eroded by wind and water seem the most audacious.

There was something more than admiration of Asian art or dogged acquisition of a “representative” collection going on here: there was a kind of “healing-through-acculturation” being manifested through study of language, philosophy, and art. Like many veterans who returned home after the war, Paulson became impatient, itinerant, and even reckless as he sought to come to terms with the emotional pain and suffering inflicted on himself due to a disjunction between combat and civilian modes. As he reflected in his book, *Walking the Point: Male Initiation and the Vietnam Experience* (2005), he felt tremendous guilt about how willing he had been to kill other human beings in the field and, as a result, he remained psychologically in Vietnam while physically in the United States.<sup>4</sup> After several attempts to withdraw into al-

cohol to forget the trauma, he stumbled on a gifted psychoanalyst who helped him use emotional release to confront the past and reconnect with his humanity. He described feeling reconnected to his physical body as a prelude to feeling reconnected to the universe.<sup>5</sup> There followed several years of intense study of the Chinese philosophies of Buddhism and Daoism, informed collection of affiliated art objects, and some publications on the nature of literati culture, contributing to this physical and spiritual healing. To his surprise and delight, Paulson found that the source of inner peace as a businessman was the very culture that he had been trained to despise as a soldier. Following a series of small business ventures, Paulson and his partner, Marsha Brown, founded and successfully ran BioScience Laboratories Inc., a medical-pharmaceutical product research firm, in the Gallatin Valley for thirty years and then sold it to a health conglomerate. Together they are dedicated to bolstering university, museum, and library holdings in Western America.

### ***Exhibition Rationale***

Why pursue this project at this time? There is a lacuna of professionally written texts that introduce students and enthusiasts of Asian visual culture to the three philosophical concepts and associated art forms in China, Korea, and Japan since ancient times and to the manifestation of these concepts and forms in the western United States in the modern era. The combination of these two themes, philosophy and art, is meant to impress upon students, scholars, and travelers different modes of spiritual consciousness, the reach of Pacific Rim culture, and alternative historical perspectives and creative solutions.

To be sure, there are a few viable textbooks on Asian art that introduce the foundational philosophies of Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism and related arts of rock formations, literati painting, and bodhisattva stat-

3 Daryl S. Paulson, tour of home and interview with T. Lawrence Larkin in Bozeman, Montana, 2013.

4 Daryl S. Paulson, *Walking the Point: Male Initiation and the Vietnam Experience* (New York: Paraview, 2005), 42.

5 *Ibid.*, 48.

ues, but they treat the philosophies so summarily that readers emerge with only a vague notion of their import and iconography. There are likewise some standard historical encyclopedias that assess official government initiatives to promote select religious ideas via rituals under Ming, Joseon, and Meiji regimes in China, Korea, and Japan, but they give scant attention to popular or folk religious traditions. There are many studies of Asian migration to the United States, but scholars have concentrated on legal barriers, employment discrimination, and social assimilation in coastal cities San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver rather than consider the religious and cultural traditions that were so important as individual coping mechanisms and community support foci in overcoming hardship. The invaluable work of Bennet Bronson and Chumei Ho has been a notable exception, although their aim to provide comprehensive treatment of the whole of the American Northwest has meant only cursory discussion of settlements in the Mountain West. Little and Larkin propose as a solution a study that combines detailed analysis of the art of the three philosophies of Northeastern Asia and the transference of those sacred art forms and rituals to the Northern Rockies.

The trustees and board of the Henry Luce Foundation, desirous of fostering new research on Asian art and culture and promoting outreach to less densely populated regions of the American West, provided an Asia Program Grant to the Montana State University Foundation to make possible a special collaboration between LACMA and DSPC. The collaborators initially proposed comparing the visual culture of Northeastern Asia to that of the northwest United States (i.e., of China north of the Huang He or Yellow River to the United States north of the Colorado River). However, they soon realized that while the foundational philosophies were communicated to cities and villages throughout China, Korea, and Japan, migratory patterns across the Pacific Ocean

and settlement patterns in the United States did not correspond to this geography, the majority of sojourners departing by ship from Guangdong province in southeastern China and the rural districts of Kyūshū and Honshū of southern Japan in the hope of reaching California's Gold Coast and traveling by rail to inland settlements as far as the Colorado plains. They therefore resolved on an exhibition that posited philosophical or religious ties between what can be delineated as "Northeastern Asia" (loosely configured as China, Korea, and Japan) and the "Northern Rockies" (specifically centered on Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado) by displaying an array of extant art that featured Daoist, Confucian, and Buddhist themes in a native context, a few reconstructions of sacred spaces, and a selection of photographs that evoked ephemeral temples, deities, and rituals in a migratory context. They would encourage a meaningful dialogue of how peoples in the two regions came to terms with topography, education, and metaphysics.

*Northeastern Asia and the Northern Rockies* highlights select works of Asian art from LACMA and DSPC within the art galleries of Montana State University's Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman and the University of Wyoming's Art Museum in Laramie, intent on bringing more historical Asian art to regions saturated with contemporary Western practice, attracting and facilitating exchange with Asian scholars, helping university, museum, and archival staff make sense of their collections, and reaching out to Asian American citizens who have deep roots and important narratives in the American West. Finally, we hope that this project will connect metropolitan and rural centers of higher learning and foster a dialogue about the trans-Pacific migration of people, ideas, and arts in the form of educational programs and scholarly conferences.

### **Cross-Cultural Exchange**

Bridging Los Angeles and Bozeman collections of Asian art in a single show provides the organizers the advantage of coverage of the three foundational philosophies from the seventh to the nineteenth century and assembling Boise, Helena, Cheyenne, and Denver migrant and settler photographs makes it possible to elucidate how the philosophies were adapted to work, leisure, and prayerful activities in the Northern Rockies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Cultures understand themselves better when juxtaposed with others, whether that be appreciation of similar ethical standards or respect for different social values. Displaying ancient objects and historical documents to the citizens of the Mountain West appeals to the best of their nature in acknowledging the foreign sojourner and settler as part of the fabric of a shared trans-Pacific history.

Despite the strange aspect, behavior, and customs Asian sojourners and settlers may have presented to European immigrants in the Western territories during the great migration period, the Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans insisted on holding the United States to its promise as a land providing sanctuary and opportunity to all. Nationalistic American texts that champion the cause of Asian immigration are by no means as numerous as those that promote xenophobia, but they do exist. As Linus Pierpont Brockett observed in *Our Western Empire* (1881): “Our country boasts that it is the refuge and home of the oppressed of all nations, and if some of these objections [regarding types and terms of employment, customs, and habits of living] are to be regarded as valid against the Chinese, it might be well to inquire whether most of them might not be urged with the same propriety against other nationalities, some of which are now the bitterest persecutors of the Orientals.”<sup>6</sup> The author briefly

recognized that all ethnic groups could be scapegoated on the same basis (i.e., of threatening European employment prospects and living standards), which was precisely why they belonged in what he then considered the marvelous “melting pot” of the United States. Brockett wrote at a time assimilation was the national ethos and likely would not have approved of the United States Congress’s passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, which banned Chinese immigration and naturalization, the following year.<sup>7</sup> Asian sojourners and settlers persevered with extraordinary determination — in their work habits, legal challenges, education advancement, and social cohesion — to gain equal rights to the fruits of the American democratic experiment. Congress’s repeal of exclusion acts in the mid-twentieth century and the Asian immigrants’ building of communities in the post-World Wars era encouraged European Americans to seek common community, cultural exchange, and even philosophical understanding with Asian Americans.

What remains to be done? A great deal: appreciation of a convergence of Asian and European ideas and outlooks in the crucible of American democracy has the potential to change the way cultures are studied in the university, museum, and archive. Over the last thirty years, American collectors, artists, and art historians have shifted attention from the European canon of “great masters” (which foregrounded the human

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ley, Garretson & Co., 1881), 621, listed a host of complaints Euro-Americans alleged against the Chinese: that they work for lower wages than other men; that they carry or send back their earnings to China; that they are addicted to opium and other vices; that the women do not migrate; that their habits and modes of life are uncleanly; that they are idolaters; that the six Chinese companies govern and rule them absolutely; and that they cannot nor do they seek to become citizens.

<sup>6</sup> L.P. Brockett, *Our Western Empire, or the New West Beyond the Mississippi* (Philadelphia: Brad-

<sup>7</sup> Refugee worker Emma Lazarus composed “The New Colossus” for the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in 1883.

figure as a conveyor of political meaning and the landscape as a map of spatial organization) to Asian “rules of expression” (which foregrounded spiritual resonance and creative method) in order to suggest a vehicle for grasping the intuitive and metaphysical. In recent times, the growth of temples and shrines dedicated to Daoist folk deities, Confucius, Buddhas and bodhisattvas in the Northern Rockies has added an important dimension to sacred spaces of Western North America, alongside Spanish missions and plazas, Indigenous totem poles, stone circles, and burial grounds. For example, the resurgence of Buddhist metaphysics of extinction of desire and harmony with the universe in the Garden of One Thousand Buddhas in Arlee, Montana complicates Judeo-Christian explanations of worldly suffering redeemed through faith and good works at the Cathedral of Saint Helena in Helena, Montana. Together these trends in diversification ask viewers to foster alternative narratives, written from the standpoint of those traditionally on the periphery of westward expansion and mainstream culture and to query how the presence of ethnic minorities in America has had a transformational effect on cultural expression.

One future area of inquiry would be the manifestation of the three philosophies on the Pacific Rim between 1920 and 2000, a period when religious practices were resumed in China while society became secularized in the United States. Which methods for negotiating the pressures of everyday life and linking peoples through a common humanity are employed today? That such a question can still be posited in an era of global territorial, trade, and technological rivalries suggests that peoples are more receptive than ever to philosophical systems that can address a world of change.

# Daoism

Stephen Little

Of the *Sanjiao* (Three Teachings) of ancient China — Daoism (Taoism), Buddhism, and Confucianism — Daoism is the least understood in the West.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, our understanding of Confucianism, a largely secular philosophy, and Buddhism, a religion originating in India, is much clearer. Unlike Buddhism, Daoism is endemic to China and has a history spanning more than two millennia. Daoism is both a philosophy and religion. Understanding the history of Daoism is key to understanding Chinese culture, as well as elements of Korean and Japanese culture, for in East Asia, Daoism has influenced such varied fields as cosmology, medicine, cooking, calligraphy, painting, military strategy, and even *Chan* (J. Zen) Buddhism.

Dao means a road and is often translated as “the Way.” The Dao is conceived as the void out of which all reality emerges, so vast that it cannot be described in words. Beyond time and space, it has been described as “the structure of being that underlies the universe.”<sup>2</sup> Significantly, Daoism has no supreme be-

ing. Instead, there is the Dao itself, underlying and permeating reality. Simultaneously and paradoxically, religious Daoism evolved many deities and has an enormous pantheon. The highest gods of Daoism, such as Yuanshi-Tianzun (the Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginnings), are mere pneuma who put a recognizable face on the Dao itself.

In the Daoist vision of cosmogenesis, there was first the Dao, empty and still. Then, gradually, *yuan qi* (primal energy) was spontaneously generated out of the Dao. For many cosmic eons this numinous energy swirled in a state of *hundun* (chaos). The Dao then generated the complementary forces known as *yin* and *yang*. The creative interaction of these forces directed the primal energy into patterns of movement and transformation, which in turn generated the machinations of the universe. This process is symbolically expressed in the *Daode jing* (also known as the *Laozi; The Way of the Dao and Its Power*), traditionally attributed to the ancient sage Laozi:

The Way (Dao) gave rise to the one,  
The one gave rise to the two,  
The two gave rise to the three,  
The three gave rise to all the ten thousand things.<sup>3</sup>

These ideas, along with the importance of always being attuned to the Dao, are first ar-

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1 Parts of this essay appeared previously in Stephen Little with Shawn Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 13–31, and Stephen Little, “Immortels, mortels et quête de l’immortalité,” in Jean-Paul Desroches, et al., in *Genèse de l’empire celeste: Dragons, phénix et autres chimères* (Geneva: Fondation Baur, 2020): 176–226. They are reproduced here with permission of the publishers.

2 Michael Loewe, *Chinese Ideas of Life and Death* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), 27–28.

3 *Daode jing*, stanza 42. See Arthur Waley, *The Way and Its Power: A Study of the Tao Te Ching and Its Place in Chinese Thought* (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 195.

tulated in the *Daode jing*. Laozi is believed to have lived in the sixth century BCE, and the *Daode jing* is thought to have achieved its final form in the fourth century BCE. According to Daoist tradition, this text was first revealed to the frontier guardian Yin Xi as Laozi left China for the western regions. In 1993 the earliest known manuscript text of the *Daode jing* was discovered in a late fourth century BCE tomb at Guodian, Hubei province, further extending our knowledge of the text's early history.

Inherent in this understanding of the Dao and its workings is a vision of universal order that gave structure to people's daily lives in traditional China. All natural phenomena were understood in terms of the forces of *yin* and *yang*. The transformations of the seasons, winter being the season of *yin* and summer the season of *yang*, and the differences between genders, *yin* being female and *yang* being male, were explained by the fluctuations of these two forces. In addition, the shifting patterns of energy that characterize such phenomena as the cycles of the *Wu xing* (the Five Phases or Five Elements: wood, fire, earth, metal, and water) were also believed to be governed by the shifting balance between *yin* and *yang*.

From the Daoist point of view, all things are made up of *qi* (vital energy or breath). Matter and energy are thus interchangeable, a basic assumption of even modern nuclear physics. Daoism teaches that to be content as a human being, one must accept that change is the absolute reality, and that all things and transformations are unified in the Dao. The concept of *qi*, for example, lies at the heart of traditional Chinese medicine, which views illness as caused by imbalances of *yin* and *yang*, resulting in blockages of the free movement of *qi* through the body. Acupuncture and other traditional remedies are designed to restore the proper movement of vital energy, thus restoring health.

One of the most complicated aspects of Daoism is its transformation from a philosophy to a religion. The West is just beginning

to become aware of the long history of religious Daoism. Many scholars who are familiar with Laozi and the *Daode jing* are unaware of the later history of religious Daoism from the Eastern Jin (317–420) and Six Dynasties (420–589) periods onward, or of the role of this religion in China's political history. That our increasingly sophisticated knowledge of Daoism is so recent a phenomenon is due in large measure to a tendency among intellectuals in early and mid-twentieth century China to equate Daoism with folk religion and superstition, both seen as obstacles to modernization and social reform. It was not until the 1920s that the *Daozang* (*Repository of the Dao*), a rich compilation of philosophical and ritual texts, became available for study through a photo-lithographic reprint of a fifteenth-century Ming woodblock-printed edition. In contrast, the East Asian Buddhist canon has been accessible to scholars for centuries through the existence of multiple woodblock-printed versions in China, Korea, and Japan. The fact that there is still no comprehensive history of Daoism available in any Western language has only contributed to this lack of awareness. Nonetheless, Daoist studies are proliferating in the West, and the practice of religious Daoism is rebounding in mainland China.

A fundamental cosmological principle of ancient Chinese thought, and one reflected in Daoism, is that all levels of existence correspond to each other. In particular, the microcosm reflects the macrocosm, and vice versa. The structure of the human body, for example, was believed to reflect both the structure of the natural landscape and the structure of the universe. In religious Daoism, the human body is visualized as a landscape, its different parts populated by deities who correspond to gods that dwell in the heavens above. This concept of divine correspondence appears throughout Daoism and is one of many ideas that have remained constant over the course of its historical development. The Five Elements correspond to the *Wu fang* (Five Directions), *Wu yue* (Five Sacred Peaks),



and the *Wu xing* (Five Planets), among other phenomena. The correspondences between the parts of the human body and the structures of the natural world provide the intellectual underpinnings of traditional Chinese physiognomy.<sup>4</sup> Another principle that emerged out of Daoism was the importance of the cultivation of *de* (virtue) and of living in balance with the natural world. Harold Roth has translated *de* as “inner power”: “This inner power can be thought of as a psychological condition of focused and balanced awareness from which the adept is able to respond spontaneously and harmoniously to whatever arises.”<sup>5</sup>

Despite the seemingly elusive nature of Daoism, such arts as painting, sculpture, calligraphy, and textiles have served religious Daoism from its inception. Between the late Zhou (fifth–third century BCE) and Tang (618–906) dynasties, Daoism underwent a profound change from the relatively straightforward philosophy expressed in the *Daode jing* to a complex religion with a vast pantheon of deities and immortals (i.e., adepts), a highly structured church, and the enormous compendium known as the *Daozang*. In the course of this transformation, Daoism absorbed several currents that played important roles in the intellectual and religious life

of the late Bronze Age, including the belief in *yin* and *yang*, the symbolism of the Eight Trigrams from the *Yi jing* (*Classic of Changes*), the cyclical activities of the Five Phases or Elements, the worship of sacred peaks, a belief in a vast realm of star gods, and concepts of afterworlds and heavenly paradises. By the end of the Han dynasty, the sage Laozi had been deified, and from this time onward he was worshipped as a god by both the emperor and common people.<sup>6</sup>

Scholars have traditionally seen the beginning of religious Daoism as occurring in the late Han dynasty (second century) with the formation of *Tianshi dao* (the Way of the Celestial Masters) in Sichuan province. The first Celestial Master, Zhang Daoling, had a vision of the deified Laozi in the year 142, when a new vision of mankind was transmitted to humanity. Two of the central aspects of Celestial Master Daoism were its codes of moral behavior and its rituals of petition in which priests would submit formal requests to the gods, and by extension the Dao, to act benevolently for the benefit of their parish or diocese. However, the term *daojiao* (Daoist teaching or Daoist religion) was not used by Daoists to describe their tradition until the fifth century CE. Although many scholars would argue that religious Daoism began with Zhang Daoling’s vision of the deified Laozi, the actual point at which the Daoist religion began is still a controversial issue. Other scholars see a continuous lineage within religious Daoism that extends to the Bronze Age traditions of the *Daode jing* and the *Zhuangzi*, the book by the eponymous *Zhan guo* (Warring States Period; fourth century BCE) philosopher. Some scholars, among them Anna Seidel, have used the term “proto-Daoist” to describe the Han dynasty

4 One of the most important physiognomic classics, for example, is entitled *Shenxiang quanbian* (*Complete Compilation of Divine Correspondences*), compiled in the 14th century. Large portions of this book are translated and discussed in William A. Lessa, *Chinese Body Divination: Its Forms, Affinities, and Functions* (Los Angeles: United World, 1968). See also Livia Kohn, “A Textbook of Physiognomy: The Tradition of the *Shenxiang quanbian*,” *Asian Folklore Studies* 45 (1986): 227–58, and Richard J. Smith, *Fortune-Tellers and Philosophers: Divination in Traditional Chinese Society* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 187–95.

5 Harold D. Roth, “The Inner Cultivation Tradition of Early Daoism,” in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 128.

6 See Anna Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao Tseu dans le taoïsme des Han* (Paris: Ecole Française d’Extrême Orient, 1969), and also Livia Kohn, *God of the Dao: Lord Lao in History and Myth* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

religions that provided the immediate antecedent to religious Daoism and such works of sacred art as talismans that were used in the service of the Han religion.<sup>7</sup> The study of Warring States and Han religion is still in its relative infancy, however, and the artistic traditions associated with the religious traditions of China in these periods are so rich that they would legitimately constitute the subject of a separate exhibition.<sup>8</sup> The astonishing Chinese archaeological discoveries of recent years have only made this situation more complex.

If one were to trace the history of religious Daoism to its origins, one would find that Daoism is a river into which many streams have flowed. Many of these independent streams can be traced to the Bronze Age, and several predate Laozi, or, if coeval, were independent systems of thought later incorporated into Daoism. Among these disparate traditions are practices of self-cultivation leading to *cheng dao* (obtaining the Dao), the veneration of *xian* (adepts) who attained *zhen* (spiritual perfection, literally “realization”), the worship of such deities as Tai Yi (Supreme Unity — an anthropomorphized stand-in for the Dao) and Xiwangmu (the Queen Mother of the West), the philosophical tradition of the *Daode jing*, the worship of local gods and sophisticated traditions of shamanism in the Warring States Period, the philosophy of the *Yi jing*, which can itself be traced to the Western Zhou dynasty (eleventh to ninth century BCE), and the use of talismans as forms of sacred calligraphy that have the power to

transform reality.<sup>9</sup> By the Six Dynasties Period (420–589) and Tang dynasty (618–906), these streams had fully merged into the Daoist tradition. It should be clear from the sheer variety of these traditions, out of which religious Daoism emerged, that any attempt to generalize about the nature of ancient Chinese religion should be tempered by the need for a profound awareness of the structure and development of each of these streams of belief and practice. Nonetheless, over the long course of its historical development, fundamental aspects of Daoism remained constant.

Forming part of the complex world out of which the later religious tradition developed from the late Zhou dynasty onward, one of the key traditions which pre-date the emergence of religious Daoism was the multivalent image of the mountain.<sup>10</sup> The worship of sacred peaks can be traced as far back as the Shang dynasty in the early Bronze Age (sixteenth to eleventh century BCE). Song Shan (Mount Song; the central of the Five Sacred Peaks), for example, was already worshipped as a god during the late Shang.<sup>11</sup> Mountains were venerated in China as numinous pivots connecting the human and celestial realms. Mountains were also seen as places in the terrestrial landscape where the primordial *qi* that created the world was particularly strong and refined. As a consequence, mountains were places where an adept could meditate,

7 Anna Seidel, “Traces of Han Religion in Funeral Texts Found in Tombs,” in Akuzuki Kan’ei, ed., *Dōkyō to shūkyō bunka [Daoism and Religious Culture]* (Tōkyō: Hirakawa Shuppansha, 1987), 39.

8 For a useful introduction to this subject, see Donald J. Harper, “Warring States Natural Philosophy and Occult Thought,” in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China, From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, eds. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 813–84.

9 On Han dynasty talismans of the first and second centuries, see Wang Yucheng, “Dong Han daofu fanlie” [“Explanation of Some Daoist Talismans of the Eastern Han Dynasty”], *Kaogu* 6 (1993): 45–55, and Wang Yucheng, “Luelun kaogu faxian de zaoqi Daofu” [“Introduction to Early Daoist Talismans from Archaeological Excavations”], *Kaogu* 1 (1998): 75–81.

10 See Thomas Hahn, “The Standard Daoist Mountain and Related Features of Religious Geography,” *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie* 4 (1988): 145–56.

11 Sarah Allen, *The Shape of the Turtle: Myth, Art, and Cosmos in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 99.

experience visions of perfected deities of the celestial realm, and locate the herbs and minerals necessary for the preparation of elixirs that extended one's life. Sacred mountains were also sites where one could find *dongtian* (cavern-heavens), grottoes deep in the earth that functioned as boundaries of the spirit world and gateways to paradise.<sup>12</sup> A system of thirty-six cavern-heavens and seventy-two *fudi* (blessed sites) was formulated during the Tang dynasty, and many of these sites are still venerated in China today. The system of cavern-heavens mirrored the existence of thirty-six heavens in the celestial realm. The image of the sacred peak coursing with *qi* is conveyed with remarkable beauty in a great bronze *boshanlu* (incense burner) excavated in 1968 from the tomb of the Han dynasty prince, Liu Sheng.<sup>13</sup> This extraordinary object points to the deep significance given to mountains during the Han dynasty and earlier, as well as by the fully formed Daoist religion of later times. This imagery extended as well to the popular belief in the sacred islands of the immortals sought as early as the third century BCE by the first emperor, Qin Shihuangdi, and in the succeeding Western Han dynasty by Emperor Wu (Han Wudi, r. 140–87 BCE).

It is especially significant that in religious Daoism, both the human body and the ritual altar are visualized as a mountain.<sup>14</sup> In Daoism, the inner topography of the human body is perceived as populated by gods who, as shown above, correspond to deities in the heavens. This imagery is fundamental to the *neidan* (inner alchemy) tradition of visualization, and its roots can be seen as early as the

*Huangting jing* (*Classic of the Yellow Court*), a text transcribed by the famous calligrapher and Daoist practitioner Wang Xizhi in the fourth century. The structure of the human body thus mirrors the universal order inherent in the Dao. This system of divine correspondences between human microcosm and celestial macrocosm is a fundamental and continuous element to the entire tradition of religious Daoism.

For mortal humans there is a fundamental distinction in Daoism between gods and immortals. Daoist gods are of two basic types. The highest gods, such as the Sanqing (Three Purities) — Yuanshi Tianzun (the Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginning), Lingbao Tianzun (the Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure), and Daode Tianzun (the Celestial Worthy of the Dao and its Power, the deified Laozi) — are the Dao's purest emanations, made up of the most refined *qi* or pneuma.<sup>15</sup> Each of the Three Purities rules over their own heaven. These are respectively known as Yuqing (Jade Purity), Shangqing (Highest Purity), and Taiqing (Great Purity). The highest of these is Jade Purity.<sup>16</sup> These deities put a human face on the Dao, and help make visible and comprehensible what cannot easily be perceived or imagined. The pantheon is also replete with lesser gods (including gods of the planets, the twenty-eight lunar mansions, the Chinese zodiac, and the hours of the day), some of whom, like Wenchang (the God of Literature) and Guandi (the deified spirit of the great third century general Guan Yu), are deities of Chinese popular religion who began their existence as animal spirits and human heroes, and were later admitted into the Daoist pantheon. Over time, the Daoist heavens came to be hierarchically ar-

12 Franciscus Verellen, "The Beyond Within: Grotto-Heavens (*Dongtian*) in Daoist Ritual and Cosmology," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 8 (1995): 265–90.

13 Published in Little with Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 148.

14 Kristofer Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, trans. Karen C. Duval (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 91.

15 Of these three deities only the deified Laozi (*Daode tianzun*) has his own hagiography.

16 The Celestial Worthies are simultaneously the patriarchs of the three major divisions of the Daoist Canon (*Daozang*), respectively the Caverns of Perfection, Mystery, and Divinity (*Dongzhen*, *Dongxuan*, and *Dongshen*).

ranged in series of levels populated by a vast pantheon of gods and goddesses who operate in a celestial bureaucracy that mirrors the human bureaucracy on the terrestrial plane. Daoism is thus an extremely flexible system of belief; indeed, it is one in which the only certainty is change.

The presence of several works in this exhibition made of jade, which is both translucent and harder than steel, reflects its importance as a material replete with associations linked to Daoist spiritual liberation. From a purely secular viewpoint, the Han dynasty dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* (*Explication of Written Characters*, second century CE), paraphrasing the sage Confucius, includes the following description of jade, cast in terms of human virtues:

Jade is the fairest of the stones. It is endowed with five virtues. Charity is typified by its luster, bright yet warm; rectitude by its translucency, revealing the color and marking within; wisdom by the purity and penetrating quality of its note when the stone is struck; courage in that it may be broken but cannot be bent; equity in that it has sharp angles which yet injure none.<sup>17</sup>

Notwithstanding the secular association between jade and the worthy Confucian *junzi* (gentleman), it is noteworthy that jade also

played a key role in Chinese spiritual life. In the late Eastern Zhou (770–256 BCE) and Han dynasties, the role of jade in burials of the political and intellectual elites became even more complex, reflecting a different set of symbolic associations focused on transcendence. Archaeological and textual evidence from ancient China amply demonstrates the belief that jades buried in and around the corpse would preserve the body into the afterlife.<sup>18</sup>

Within the Daoist tradition, jade's resonance was extraordinary.<sup>19</sup> This is especially true of the names of heavens (e.g., Jade Purity) and names of deities (e.g., Jade Emperor), the titles of sacred Daoist texts (e.g., *Yushu baojing* [*Precious Scripture of the Jade Pivot*]), and the names of alchemical elixirs (e.g., Jade Frost). Despite their purported origins in the primordial vapors that manifested before the genesis of the world, all Daoist scriptures were at one point or another transcribed or composed by mortals, albeit with divine inspiration. It is important to remember that Daoism began as and, until recent times, remained a system of belief created by political, intellectual, and highly literate elites. Daoism has contributed to Chinese literature a wide range of astonishingly sophisticated and poetic texts, be they concerned with meditation, ritual, alchemy, or other means of transcendence.

In the Daoist cosmos, as in the human body, *yin* and *yang* are balanced, and since these two forces correspond to the female and male genders, it is not surprising that some of the most powerful deities in the Daoist pantheon are female. Xiwangmu (the Queen Mother of the West), for example, is one of the most ancient Chinese goddesses, already mentioned in the "Inner Chapters" of the *Zhuangzi* as a deity who "obtained the

17 Cited in Edward Capon, "Jade: the Stone of Five Virtues," in Liu Yang with Edward Capon, *Translucent World: Chinese Jade from the Forbidden City* (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2007), 13. The *Shuowen jiezi* definition is based on a conversation between Confucius and his student Zigong, recorded in the *Liji* (*Book of Rites*), compiled in the first century CE. For the *Liji* passage, entitled "A Man of True Virtue Treasures Jade" ("*Junzi gui yu*"), from the chapter, "The Significance of the Rite of Friendly Visits between the Feudal Princes," see Xu Chao, ed., *The Book of Rites (Selections)*, ed. and trans. Lao An (Jinan: Shandong Friendship Press, 2000), 416–19.

18 See Jenny F. So, *Early Chinese Jades in the Harvard University Museums* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 199–201, 263–84.

19 For a discussion of jades in Chinese Buddhist contexts, see *ibid.*, 305–6.

Dao.”<sup>20</sup> The Queen Mother ruled over the Kunlun mountain paradise, far to the west of China. A patron deity of mortal women, during the Han dynasty she was worshipped by members of the imperial family, the aristocracy, the literati, and the common people.<sup>21</sup> In addition, Xiwangmu appears in late Han dynasty funerary stelae inscriptions.<sup>22</sup> In the Six Dynasties Period she was adopted into the pantheon of the Shangqing (Highest Purity) school of religious Daoism as the primary divine embodiment of the *yin* force.

In a late Han dynasty (second century CE) Daoist text, *Laozi zhongjing* (Laozi’s Scripture of the Center), Xiwangmu is given an even more exalted name: Xuanguang yunü (Jade Woman of Obscure Brilliance).<sup>23</sup> Later Xiwangmu would also be called Jinmu (Metal Mother), both for her maternal role as a manifestation of *yin*, representing the female gender, and for her correspondence with the western direction, corresponding to the element (phase) jin (metal). In the *neidan* (Daoist Inner Alchemy) visualization tradition, Xiwangmu resides in the practitioner’s right eye, also visualized as the radiant moon, likewise a symbol of *yin*.

The phrase *yunü* (jade woman, or jade maiden) is frequently found in Daoist literature. In Daoist texts the female attendants to Xiwangmu and Chang E, the Moon Goddess, are called Jade Maidens,<sup>24</sup> but these divine fe-

males also appear in many other Daoist contexts. They function as guides to mortal Daoist adepts and alchemists, as dispensers of visions, and as the divine librarians of Daoist arcana.<sup>25</sup> The Northern Song dynasty Daoist encyclopedia *Yunji qiqian* (*Seven Slips from the Satchel of Clouds*), compiled in 1032, describes the genesis of these divine females:

The jade women achieve form by sympathetic reactions to the miraculous pneuma of Spontaneity. In form and substance they are as luminous and clean, as clear and shining as jade.<sup>26</sup>

Another important deity in the Daoist pantheon is Yuhuang shangdi (Jade Emperor), who rules the celestial realm from above the Pole Star. He begins to appear in Daoist texts in the sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>27</sup> That awareness, and possibly worship, of the Jade Emperor extended to the literati of the Tang dynasty is indicated by his mention in poems by the poets Han Yu (768–824), Liu Zongyuan (773–819), and Yuan Zhen (779–831).<sup>28</sup> The Jade Emperor is subservient only to the Three Purities; he is said to have been “given charge of the world when the Three Pure Ones retired after the genesis of the world had been completed.”<sup>29</sup> By the year

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*proaches to the Stars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 132.

25 Ibid., 132, 134, 136.

26 Ibid., 132.

27 The Jade Emperor is mentioned, for example, in *Wushang biyao* (*Supreme Secret Essentials*), an encyclopedia of Daoist ritual compiled in 577 during the Northern Zhou dynasty (557–581); see John Lagerwey, *Wu-shang pi-yao: Somme taoïste du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1981), 126.

28 See H.Y. Feng, “The Origin of Yü Huang,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 1, no. 2 (1936): 245.

29 The Sanqing are the highest gods of the Daoist pantheon. The Jade Emperor is referred to by the title *Tian gong* (Lord of Heaven) in the Daoist scripture entitled, “Scripture of the

20 Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 82.

21 Suzanne E. Cahill, *Transcendence and Divine Passion: The Queen Mother of the West in Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 21–24.

22 See, for example, the inscription on the late Han (second century) stele in memory of the adept Fei Zhi, which mentions that his disciple Xu You met with the Queen Mother of the West on Mount Kunlun; see Little with Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 151.

23 Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, 105.

24 Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void: Tang Ap-*

1013, Yuhuang was worshipped by the Northern Song dynasty Emperor Zhenzong (r. 997–1022), and Emperor Huizong (r. 1100–1025) built a temple to Yuhuang which was dedicated solely to this deity. Huizong furthermore proclaimed that he was a manifestation of a Daoist god who was the Jade Emperor's nephew, Changsheng dadi (the Great Lord of Long Life).<sup>30</sup> From this time onward the Jade Emperor was widely conceived as ruler of the heavenly bureaucracy. Many lesser gods, such as the Daoist Marshals Wen and Wang, and even Zhenwu (Perfected Warrior), also known as Xuantian shangdi (Supreme Emperor of the Dark Heaven), who played key roles in the human realm, were appointed to their positions in the celestial bureaucracy by the Jade Emperor.<sup>31</sup>

The Daoist quest for immortality has a long history, extending well into the Bronze Age. Immortals almost always begin their lives as ordinary human beings who, often with the benefit of a teacher who has transcended the boundaries of *yin* and *yang*, achieved union with the Dao. These figures, both male and female, are revered for their moral purity, spiritual powers, and ability

to work miracles, and they are worshipped as divine saints. They are among the most popular figures in Daoism, and many are still worshipped in China today. Kristofer Schipper has described them as follows:

Who are these immortals? There is no precise way to define them, no method is error-free, no ecclesiastical institution or tradition has even confirmed their quality, no official canonization has ever distinguished the true Immortals from the false ones. Their stories do not allow a distillation of an exact doctrine, for there is no dogma defining how a body can become one with Dao.<sup>32</sup>

Within the Daoist tradition there are many techniques for extending one's life, achieving the Dao, and attaining immortality. There has always been a fluid boundary in China between longevity and immortality, and there has always been a close association between longevity and cultivating one's integrity and vital energy. Long before Daoism was self-identified by its practitioners in the Six Dynasties Period, there was a tradition in the Warring States and Han periods of adepts known as *fangshi* (method-masters), who pursued the arts of longevity, alchemy, ritual, and immortality through a variety of means, including physical exercises, meditation, visions, and the manipulation of *yin* and *yang* energies via *waidan* (outer alchemy, namely chemical or laboratory alchemy) and the visualization practices of *neidan* (inner alchemy) in which the adept uses the *yin* and *yang* energies present in one's own body to create an "inner elixir" which can facilitate spiritual liberation.

The Chinese word most often used to denote an immortal is *xian*, which combines the calligraphic elements of the characters *ren* (person) and *shan* (mountain) [人 + 山 = 仙]. It is true that immortals are most likely to be found residing in mountains such as the Five

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Lord of Heaven for Destroying Demons and Protecting the State," which may date to the mid-Tang dynasty (eighth century); see John Lagerwey's discussion of this text in Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds., *The Daoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1:490. For other examples of Daoist scriptures whose titles refer to the Jade Emperor, see 1:600–601 and 2:719.

30 Patricia Ebrey, "Taoism and Art at the Court of Song Huizong," in Little with Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 104.

31 Marshals Wen and Wang were respectively worshipped for their skill in eradicating plague demons and human villains. The god Zhenwu, who during the Ming dynasty supplanted the deified Laozi in importance, was enfeoffed at Wudang Shan, his sacred mountain in Hubei province, by the Jade Emperor; see Little with Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 264, 266, 292, 296.

32 Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, 164.

Sacred Peaks and other Chinese mountains sacred to Daoism, such as Mao Shan (Mount Mao) in Jiangsu province and Longhu Shan (Dragon-Tiger Mountain) in Jiangxi province, and such mythical realms as Mount Kunlun in the far west and the three island-mountain paradises (Penglai, Fanghu, and Yingzhou) in the Eastern Sea. The association between Daoism and mountains is significant not only because such peaks functioned as numinous pillars connecting heaven and earth, but because such mountains were believed to embody the most refined primordial energies left over from the creation of the world. In such mountains one could find the key ingredients, both herbs and minerals, of alchemical elixirs, encounter gods and immortals, and seek out the cavern-heavens that were gateways to paradise.

The varied disciplines that could lead to immortality are nowhere better illustrated than in the lives of the Ba xian (Eight Immortals), the most famous group of Daoist adepts in Chinese history, who first made their appearance as a coherent group in Chinese art during the Jin dynasty (1115–1234). A product of the Quanzhen (Complete Realization) school of Daoism, the Eight Immortals are superb examples of the saintly role played by these realized adepts. One of the favorites of the Eight Immortals was Lü Dongbin (Lü the cavern-guest), for whom the catalyst for pursuing immortality was a wine-inspired dream, following a seemingly chance meeting with Zhongli Quan, the leader of the Eight Immortals. Lü was believed to have lived in the late Tang dynasty, and was celebrated as a healer, diviner, alchemist, exorcist, and swordsman, and for his skills in poetry, calligraphy, and the connoisseurship of wine.<sup>33</sup> By the Song dynasty (960–1279) he was widely worshipped as a patron saint of merchants, pharmacists, ink-makers, and scholars. The tale of Lü's quest for immortality is told in

the *Huangliang meng* (*Yellow-Millet Dream*), in which he meets Zhongli Quan (also known as Master Cloudchamber) disguised as an old man, who invites Lü to an inn and prepares some millet for a meal. While waiting for the meal to cook, Lü drinks a cup of wine and falls into a deep slumber. He has a dream in which he experiences his entire brilliant official career, which, however, ends in failure and disgrace. As told in a Yuan dynasty (1260–1368) compendium, *Zengxian liexian zhuan* (*Illustrated Immortals' Biographies*), Lü awakens in complete confusion and is challenged by Zhongli Quan:

“In the dream that just came to you,” Master Cloudchamber replied matter-of-factly, “you not only scaled the dizzy heights of splendor but also plumbed the uttermost depths of misery. Fifty years were past and gone in the twinkling of an eye. What you gained was not worth rejoicing over, what you lost was not worth grieving about. Only when people have a great awakening, they know that the world is but one big dream.” Impressed by this incident, Dongbin received spiritual enlightenment. He fell to his knees before the master and entreated him for instruction in the arts of transcending the limitations of this earthly sphere.<sup>34</sup>

There are hundreds of such stories about Daoist immortals. These figures, who have transcended the boundaries of time and space and life and death, have served for centuries as role models for humanity in their cultivation of spiritual perfection. Perhaps most revealing of their lasting influence in Chinese culture is that they are still worshipped by Daoists today, for example, at the Ba xian an (the Eight Immortals Temple) in Xi'an.

33 Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein, “Lü Tung-pin in Northern Sung Literature,” *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 2 (1986): 133, 136.

34 Translated in Livia Kohn, ed., *The Taoist Experience: An Anthology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 126–29, from the Yuan dynasty compilation, *Zengxian liexian zhuan* (*Illustrated Immortals' Biographies*).

Daoism continued to flourish in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), during which the emperors who ruled China were Manchus, an ethnic group from Manchuria and distinct from the Han Chinese over which they ruled. While the Manchus openly favored Tibetan Buddhism over Daoism, Daoist ritual continued both inside and outside the court.<sup>35</sup> This is clear from the astonishingly well-preserved Daoist sculptures and ritual implements of the Qin'an Dian (Palace of Imperial Peace), the principal Daoist temple in the imperial palace known as the Forbidden City in Beijing, most of which date to the Qing dynasty and which demonstrate continuous use of this temple by the imperial Manchu family during the Qing.

Despite its persecution in the twentieth century, particularly between 1949–1976, Daoism has rebounded with astonishing speed in contemporary China. The vitality of the artistic traditions associated with Daoism are revealed in both the reconstructions of temples and Daoist sites in the decades since the 1980s and in the recent attempts to collect and protect historical works of Daoist art in such temples as the Baiyun Guan (White Cloud Monastery) and the Dongyue Miao (Temple of the Eastern [Sacred] Peak) in Beijing. Devotion to religious Daoism, widespread throughout most of the late twentieth century in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and many overseas Chinese communities, is enjoying a renaissance in China today. In the context of this exhibition, it is noteworthy that many early Chinese communities in the northwestern United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries built Daoist temples, several of which still survive today (see the essay “Trans-Pacific Transmissions” by T. Lawrence Larkin in this volume). These temples functioned as focal points for individuals’ spiritual lives and as vital com-

munity centers for Chinese immigrants to the northwestern United States.

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35 Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 271.





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Mirror with the Eight Trigrams Design  
 Korea, Goryeo dynasty, 918–1392  
 Cast bronze  
 5 ¾ × 5 ¾ in. (14.61 × 14.61 cm)  
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
 Purchased with Museum Funds  
 (M.2000.15.185)

The dominant designs cast into the back of this elegant mirror comprise the Eight Trigrams (*bagua*). These are among the best-known images associated with Daoism and are visual symbols which form the basis for the sixty-four hexagrams of the *Zhou Yi* (*The Changes of the Zhou*, also known as the *Book [Classic] of Changes [Yi jing]*).<sup>36</sup> The *Yi jing* is an ancient divination text whose origins can be traced to the early Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 1050–771 BCE), even though it probably did not assume its final form until the late Western Zhou period.<sup>37</sup>

The Eight Trigrams are made up of combinations of broken and unbroken lines, taken to symbolize *yin*, *yang*, and the intermediary stages in the eternal cycle from *yin* to *yang* and back. The *Yi jing* is a text providing a means of assessing the present state of the world and a basis for decision-making. The most important of the Eight Trigrams are *qian* and *kun*, representing *yang* and *yin*, respectively depicted with three unbroken and three broken lines.

The earliest surviving visual evidence for the Eight Trigrams dates to the Western Han Dynasty (2nd century BC). One of the most

important archaeological discoveries of the 20th century was the excavation in 1973 of the earliest known text of the *Zhou Yi*, found in Han tomb #3 at Mawangdui, Changsha, Hunan province, a burial dated to 168 BCE.<sup>38</sup> This complete text includes the sixty-four hexagrams (each a combination of two trigrams) and text with the *Xici* commentary, described by Shaughnessy as “a synthetic explanation of the text, its composition, function and meaning.”<sup>39</sup>

The Eight Trigrams appear in two distinct arrangements. The more symmetrical *Xiantian* (Prior Heaven) sequence of the Eight Trigrams is traditionally derived from the sage Fu Xi (trad. 3rd millennium BCE), one of the Five Emperors of high antiquity, and represents the relationship of the trigrams in the state of *hundun* (primordial chaos), before the emergence of *yin* and *yang* as active agents in the world.<sup>40</sup> The more asymmetrical *Houtian* (Later Heaven) sequence of the Eight Trigrams — the one shown on this Korean mirror — is traditionally derived from the early Western Zhou Dynasty King Wen (Wenwang) and represents the relationship of the trigrams in phenomenal reality (i.e., the universe after creation, and after the emergence of *yin* and *yang*).<sup>41</sup> Such spontane-

36 For an excellent discussion of the textual history of the *Yi jing* or *Zhou Yi*, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, “I Ching (Chou I),” in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China, 1993), 216–28. For a translation of the *Yi jing*, see Richard Wilhelm, *I Ching or Book of Changes*, trans. Cary F. Baynes, 3rd edn. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

37 Shaughnessy, “I Ching (Chou I),” 219.

38 The various silk manuscripts found in this tomb are published in Chen Songchang, *Mawangdui boshu yishu [Art of the Mawangdui Silk Manuscripts]* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 1996).

39 Shaughnessy, “I Ching (Chou I),” 220.

40 On different meanings and contexts of the term *xiantian*, see Isabelle Robinet, “The Place and Meaning of the Notion of Taiji in Taoist Sources Prior to the Ming Dynasty,” trans. Paula A. Wissing, *History of Religions* 29, no. 4 (May 1990): 385.

41 The Fu Xi arrangement of the trigrams is associated with the numerological and talismanic diagram known as the *Hetu* (River Chart) and the Wenwang arrangement is associated with the *Luoshu* (Luo Writing). The *Hetu* and the *Luoshu* are two cosmic diagrams that emerged out of the Yellow and Luo Rivers on the backs



ous revelations of cosmic structures through sacred texts and diagrams is characteristic of the Daoist tradition.

The Eight Trigrams played a vital role in the Daoist alchemical tradition. This was because chemical alchemy entailed manipulating the forces of *yin* and *yang* toward transcendence and immortality. The trigrams and their associated hexagrams were subtle visual symbols of cosmic flux, and were easily adopted by Daoists to help explain cosmological principles of transformation.<sup>42</sup> As Isabelle Robinet has written,

*Qian* and *kun* are, in cosmological terms, Heaven and Earth, south and north; in alchemical terms, the Furnace and the Cauldron; and in human terms, the Spirit and the Body. *Li* and *kan* are, in cosmological terms, the Sun and the Moon, east and west; in alchemical terms, the “ingredients,” Mercury and Lead, Dragon and Tiger. *Qian* and *kun* are the constants in the system (the “completed procedures,” *chengwu*), and *Li* and *kan* are the principles of resonance (*ganying*) and growth and exchanges (*jiaoji*).<sup>43</sup>

The Eight Trigrams have been so thoroughly absorbed into religious Daoism that they are often believed to be Daoist. In fact, they represent an independent tradition of divination that extends into remote antiquity. The Eight Trigrams and their symbolism are one of several Bronze Age traditions that flowed

together in the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) and created what is now called religious Daoism.

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of a dragon-horse and tortoise, and revealed to Fu Xi and Emperor Yu respectively. See Anna Seidel, “Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments: Taoist Roots in the Apocrypha,” in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein*, vol. 2, ed. Michel Strickmann (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1983), 302. See also Michael Saso, “What Is the Ho-t’u?,” *History of Religions* 17 (1978): 399–416.

<sup>42</sup> Isabelle Robinet, *Taoism: Growth of a Religion*, trans. Phyllis Brooks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 234ff.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.



*Star Chart*

China, Southern Song dynasty, 1247  
 Ink rubbing (20th c.) of a stone stele  
 at the Confucian Temple, Suzhou,  
 Jiangsu Province  
 Hanging scroll; ink on paper  
 183 × 100 cm  
 Private collection, Los Angeles

The Chinese have a long history of astronomical observation, going back to at least the Neolithic period. The recent discovery of the foundations of a Neolithic period solar observatory at Taosi, southern Shanxi province and dating to the 21st century BCE, suggests that precise observations of the sun's movements over the course of the year played a key role in Chinese ritual and calendrics long before the invention of writing. Such 2nd-century-BCE texts as the *Huainanzi* (*Prince of Huainan*) and Sima Qian's *Shi ji* (*Records of the Historian*), and surviving star charts found painted on the ceilings of Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) and Six Dynasties Period (420–589) tombs, further illustrate the increasing sophistication of Chinese astronomy in the first centuries of the Common Era. Many celestial bodies were directly associated with (and seen as embodiments of) anthropomorphic and zoomorphic deities. Among these were the five visible planets (correlated with the Five Elements or Phases), the twelve signs of the Chinese zodiac (based on the twelve-year orbit of the planet Jupiter), and the twenty-eight Lunar Mansions, the latter correlated to the twenty-eight day lunar month.

This stone-engraved Southern Song dynasty star chart of 1247 was, in its day, the most advanced celestial map made anywhere in the world. It is labeled at the top, "Chart of Heaven's Patterns" (*Tianwen tu*).<sup>36</sup> The chart

<sup>36</sup> For detailed studies, see W. Carl Rufus and Hsing-chih Tien, *The Szechow Astronomical Chart* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1945) and Pan Nai, "Suzhou Nan Song

is significant in a Daoist context because it depicts the home of a vast number of gods in the Daoist pantheon, centering on the circumpolar region with the Northern Dipper and the Pole Star, the most important stars in the Daoist heavens. In addition to a large number of constellations, the celestial equator and the ecliptic (the apparent path of the sun in the sky during the course of the earth's annual rotation) are shown. The chart includes a total of 1,436 stars. The entire northern celestial hemisphere is shown, in addition to part of the southern sky, up to 50 degrees south of the celestial equator. The lines radiating from the northern celestial pole to the celestial equator mark the location in the heavens of the twenty-eight Lunar Mansions (*xiu*). The star chart was completed in 1193 by Huang Shang (1147–1195), a tutor to Prince Jia, the future Southern Song Emperor Ningzong (r. 1195–1224). In 1247, long after Ningzong's death, it was carved onto a stone stele by Wang Zhiyuan.<sup>37</sup>

The stele's text has been described by Joseph Needham as "one of the shortest (and most authentic) expositions of the Chinese astronomical system."<sup>38</sup> The text states that there are 1,565 named stars (roughly 90% of these are shown on the chart) and mentions the ancient theory correlating cities and provinces to specific parts of the sky and certain celestial bodies. The ancient state of Zhou, for example, was tied to the Jupiter station Quail Fire, comprising the Lunar Mansions Willow (*Liu*), Star (*Xing*), and Spread or Ex-

tianwentu bei di kaoshi yu pipan" ["Examination and critique of a Southern Song astronomical chart on a stone stele at Suzhou"], *Kaogu xuebao* 1 (1976): 47–61.

<sup>37</sup> Xiaochun Sun and Jacob Kistemaker, *The Chinese Sky During the Han* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 31.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph Needham and Wang Ling, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. 3: *Mathematics and the Sciences of the Heavens and the Earth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 278.



tended Net (*Zhang*).<sup>39</sup> The Northern Dipper is presented as a celestial clock and seasonal indicator as it rotates through the Lunar Mansions (as it had been perceived since at least the Han dynasty, 206 BCE–220 CE).

The circumpolar region appears at the center of the chart. Here the Northern Dipper (Ursa major) is clearly visible. It is one of the few constellations in which each component star is named on the chart. The ring around the perimeter is marked with the names of the Jupiter stations, the Lunar Mansions, the terrestrial branches (*dizhi*) corresponding to the Chinese zodiac, the names of the ancient states to which the asterisms corresponded, and the widths of the Lunar Mansions along the celestial equator that are accurate up to half a degree.<sup>40</sup> The boundaries of the twenty-eight Lunar Mansions are indicated by the lines radiating out from the center to the perimeter. The large circle concentric with the inner boundary of the Central Palace (the circumpolar area) is the Celestial Equator; this runs through the Lunar Mansions — for example, the constellation Orion, the belt of which was the mansion known as Triaster (*Shen*), is clearly visible along the Celestial Equator. The offset circle is the Ecliptic, the annual path of the sun, shown here as a circle. The Milky Way is also clearly shown, meandering from one side of the chart to the other.

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39 Sun and Kistemaker, *The Chinese Sky During the Han*, 31.

40 F. Richard Stephenson, “Chinese and Korean Star Maps and Catalogs,” in *The History of Cartography*, vol. 2, book 2: *Cartography in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies*, eds. J.B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 549.





## 3

*Head of a Female Daoist Deity*

China, Ming dynasty, 16th–early 17th c.

Carved stone

13 × 8 × 8 7/8 in. (33.02 × 20.32 × 22.54 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,

Julian C. Wright Bequest (M.79.152.76)

Among the religions of China, Daoism is distinguished by its emphasis on the vital role of the *yin* force — the feminine aspect of the world. In the *Daode Jing*, attributed to Laozi, the Dao itself is described in this light:

The Valley Spirit [i.e., the Dao] never dies.

It is named the Mysterious Female.

And the Doorway of the Mysterious Female

Is the base from which Heaven and Earth sprang.

It is there within us all the while;

Draw upon it as you will, it never runs dry.

*Daode Jing*, chapter 6 (trans. Arthur Waley)

From a cosmological viewpoint, the *yin* force, which as a complement to the *yang* (male) force symbolizes the feminine aspect of reality, has always been a fundamental element in Daoist belief. *Yin* and *yang* are seen as mutually complementary opposite forces whose interaction creates all the mechanisms of the universe; one cannot exist without the other.

There are many female deities in the Daoist pantheon who personify the essence of the *yin* force and have a long history in China as protectors of life and dispensers of longevity. As patron deities of women, goddesses such as the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu, also known as Metal Mother [Jinmu] because the western direction is a *yin* direction and correlates with the *yin* element metal — one of the Five Elements or Phases), the Sovereign of the Clouds of Dawn (Bixia yuanjun,

the Goddess of Mount Tai, the Sacred Peak of the East), Doumu (the Dipper Mother), Houtu (the Earth Goddess), and Tianhou (the Empress of Heaven, or Mazu) continue to be worshipped in China today. During the course of Chinese history, many of the Daoist deities who transmitted secret teachings to human visionaries have been female. During his trances, for example, the 4th-century Shangqing (Highest Clarity) adept Yang Xi, for example, frequently obtained sacred texts from the divine realm through the intercession of the female realized being (*zhenren*) Wei Huacun.

Throughout the history of religious Daoism, female saints have also played a vital role in both popular and elite worship. Such influential figures as Master Geng, active as an alchemist at the Southern Tang court of Li Houzhu in the 10th century, and Tanyangzi, a late-16th-century teacher who had a wide following among many of the leading male literati scholar-officials of the late Ming dynasty in south-central China, are exemplary models of the powerful role of the *yin* aspect of being in daily life and belief. From the time of the first Celestial Master sect (late Han dynasty) onward, both men and women could be ordained into the Daoist clergy. The longevity of this tradition is reflected at the imperial level, at which empresses and princesses were regularly ordained as Daoist priestesses from the Tang dynasty (618–906) onward.

While her precise identity has yet to be understood, the beautiful carved head of this Ming dynasty stone sculpture projects a quiet, meditative presence. The figure wears a crown, at the center of which is a disk which could represent either a celestial body or a sacred jewel.



**4a***Foliated Cup with Dragon Handle*

China, 19th–20th c.

Nephrite jade

2.05 × 5.20 in. (5.2 × 13.2 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (J 24)

the jade in the dragon's body reveal areas of the stone's skin.

The brush holder has a dragon in high relief which wraps its body around the narrow vessel.

**4b***Brush Holder with Dragon*

China, 20th c.

Nephrite jade

3.58 × 1.89 × 1.30 in. (9.1 × 4.8 × 3.3 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (J 01)

Images of dragons in China can be traced back to the Neolithic period.<sup>41</sup> By the third millennium BCE the dragon had become the primary symbol of the *yang* force in the *yin-yang* dichotomy and the tiger the primary symbol of the *yin* force. From the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) onward, emperors were equated with dragons. Given that the dragon is a primary symbol of the *yang* force, in art and architecture it usually appears in clouds or water, as water is a *yin* element; such imagery symbolizes the balance of *yin* and *yang* energies in the world. In Daoist texts the dragon is equated with the Dao itself. Dragons are one of the most popular designs in China, appearing in both religious and secular contexts.

The lobed cup stands on a smaller lobed foot. The handle is in the form of a crouching dragon, its front feet and snout attaching themselves to the cup's lip, while bracing its body with its two hind legs as its tail wraps partially around the cup's surface. The interior is unadorned. The reddish-brown hues of

41 Raymond Dragan, "The Dragon in Chinese Myth and Ritual: Rites of Passage and Sympathetic Magic," in *Sages and Filial Sons: Mythology and Archaeology in Ancient China*, eds. Julia Ching and R.W.L. Guisso (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1991).



4a



4b

5

*Strange Stones (Guai shi)*

Five Scholar's Stones.

**5a** Lingbi-style Stone I. Stone 3.23 × 4.57 × 2.36 in. with stand 1.02 × 4.76 × 2.20 in. (stone 8.2 × 11.6 × 6 cm with stand 2.6 × 12.1 × 5.6 cm)

**5b** "Scholar's Stone." Stone 9.09 × 12.36 × 6.30 in. with stand 4.88 × 9.67 × 4.49 in. (stone 23.1 × 31.4 × 16 cm with stand 12.4 × 24.55 × 11.4 cm)

**5c** "Scholar's Stone." Dimensions unknown

**5d** "Scholar's Stone." Stone 11.14 × 10.71 × 5.77 in. with stand 1.73 × 10.51 × 5.51 in. (stone 28.3 × 27.2 × 14.65 with stand 4.4 × 26.7 × 14 cm)

**5e** Stone with Horizontal Striations. Stone 10.24 × 7.87 × 4.84 in. with stand 1.28 × 6.61 × 4.45 in. (stone 26 × 20 × 12.30 cm with stand 3.25 × 16.8 × 11.30 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (R 10, R 04, R 09, R 12, R 23)

Three Miniature Landscapes with Mountains Ranges

**5f** Miniature Mountain Range. Stone 2.30 × 8.50 × 4.17 in. with stand 0.67 × 9.02 × 4.63 in. (stone 5.85 × 21.6 × 10.6 cm with stand 1.7 × 22.9 × 11.75 cm)

**5g** Miniature Mountain Range. Stone 2.83 × 9.33 × 3.64 in. with stand 0.75 × 10.02 × 4.17 in. (stone 7.2 × 23.7 × 9.25 cm with stand 1.9 × 25.45 × 10.6 cm)

**5h** Green Stone Miniature Mountain Range. Stone 2 × 8.11 × 2.83 in. with stand 0.63 × 8.66 × 3.35 in. (stone 5.1 × 20.6 × 7.2 cm with stand 1.6 × 22 × 8.5 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (R 24)

5i

Fang Yulu

*Nine Flowers in a Vase*, from a facsimile of the book, *Fangshi mopu (Fang Family Ink Compendium)*

Originally published: Ming dynasty, Wanli reign, 1588

Facsimile: Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1991

Woodblock-printed book

5j

Lin Youlin

*Lingbi Stone*, from a facsimile of the book, *Stone Compendium of the Plain Garden (Suyuan shipu)*

Originally published: Ming dynasty, Wanli reign, 1613

Facsimile: Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1997

Woodblock-printed book

Three Wood Burl Facsimiles of Stones.

**5k** Wood 15.24 × 3.70 × 2.28 in. with stand 1.34 × 5.63 × 3.58 in. (wood mountain 38.7 × 9.4 × 5.8 cm with stand 3.4 × 14.3 × 9.1 cm)

**5l** Wood 13.39 × 6.54 × 3 in. with stand 1.73 × 7.52 × 4.33 in. (wood mountain 34 × 16.6 × 7.6 cm with stand 4.4 × 19.1 × 11 cm)

**5m** Wood 14.82 × 4.02 × 1.69 in. with stand 0.73 × 5.39 × 2.72 in. (wood mountain 37.65 × 10.2 × 4.3 cm with stand 1.85 × 13.7 × 6.9 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (R 03a-c)

For many centuries in China strange and marvelous stones were valued on several levels. While they could convey considerable social status merely through their strange beauty, rocks were also seen as reflections of the basic structures underlying reality as understood by Chinese philosophers. Many stones were perceived to be made of the purest energies left over from the creation of the world. As the Song dynasty writer Kong Chuan writes in his preface to Du Wan's

5a



5b



5c



5d







*Stone Catalogue of Cloudy Forest* (12th century), “The purest essence of the energy of the heaven-earth world coalesces into rock.”<sup>42</sup> It is clear from the classical Chinese literature on rocks, dating to as early as the Tang dynasty (618–906), that stones were seen in this light — not as solid, fixed bodies, but as fluid and dynamic, capable of magical, supermundane transformations.<sup>43</sup> Certain stones were believed to have the ability to speak, to emit clouds and rain, to predict the weather, to move about of their own accord, and to heal. Fantastic stones were perceived as mountains in miniature, imbued with the same primordial energies that made up the Five Sacred Peaks (*Wu yue*), the three island mountains of the immortals in the Eastern Sea, and other peaks sacred to both Daoist and Buddhist traditions.<sup>44</sup> Like the human body, stones and mountains were believed to be born, to live, and to die. In strange and wondrous stones the ancient Chinese witnessed the most fundamental structures and processes of the world, and found evidence that all things are in a continuous state of flux. A stone could conjure the presence of a sacred mountain in one’s home, for stones, like sacred peaks, were perceived as pure energies, momentarily (and deceptively) frozen into wondrous shapes.

That such strange stones were celebrated in poetry is exemplified by a famous poem by the late Tang dynasty poet Bai Juyi, inspired

by a stone dredged from the bottom of Lake Tai in Jiangsu province:<sup>45</sup>

*Taihu Stone*

Bai Juyi (722–846)

From afar one sees the crests of old peaks,  
Up close one sees cliffs’ strange ridges.  
Its lofty height—eight to nine feet,  
[Yet] it feels like eighty million feet!  
Its deep, empty valleys like the cave of  
Floriante Yang,  
Layer upon layer, like the peaks of Lofty  
Mount Lu.  
Remote! Separated like the Immortal’s  
Palm,  
Ha! As deep as Sword Gate.  
Its form spans present and past,  
Its vital energy penetrates to the clear sky  
[above].  
When autumn approaches one hears the  
soughing of the wind,  
When rain approaches it becomes heavy.  
Its natural beauty truly extraordinary,  
[Yet] its usefulness cannot be employed.  
Like sharpened knives that are beyond  
whetting,  
Like beaten cloth that is beyond pound-  
ing.  
What does its master think?  
Does he value it at a thousand pieces of  
gold?  
How is it that its Creator  
Alone knows my mind?

Many late Ming dynasty (1368–1644) wood-block-printed books attest to the widespread desire to collect strange and beautiful rocks. Books such as the *Fangshi mopu* (*Fang family ink [cake] compendium*) (1589), a magnificent multi-volume book dedicated to ink cake designs, also include striking images of rocks of various forms and functions: rocks as incense burners, inkstones and brush rests — included here is the page illustrating the stones

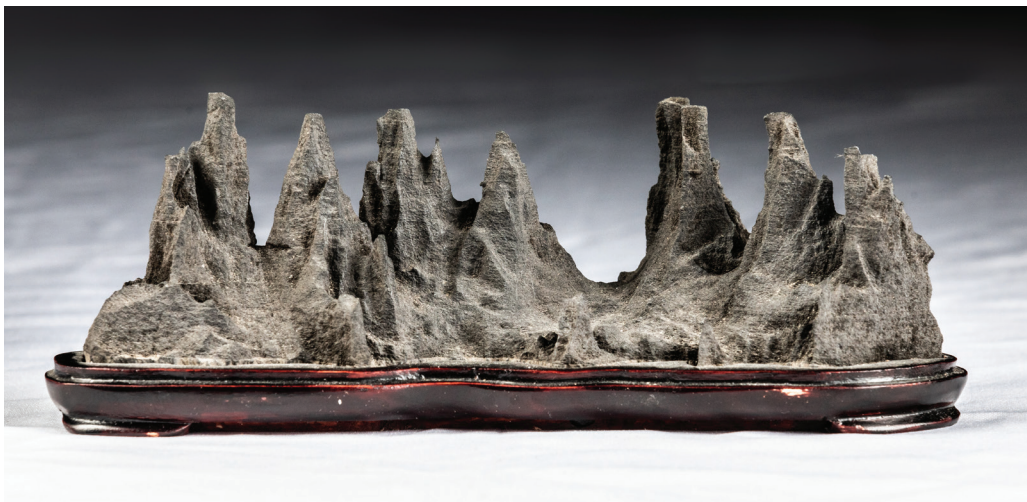
42 See Edward Schafer, *Tu Wan’s Stone Catalogue of Cloudy Forest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 14.

43 The earliest known reference to “strange stones” (*guai shi*) in Chinese literature is a brief mention in the ancient *Book of Documents* (*Shu Jing*), in the chapter entitled “The Tribute of Yu.” There it is recorded that during the time of the mythical sage-emperor Yu, strange stones were brought to his court as tribute gifts.

44 See Stephen Little, *Spirit Stones of China: The Ian and Susan Wilson Collection of Chinese Stones, Paintings, and Related Scholar’s Objects* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1999), 16–17.

45 Translation by Stephen Little, with the assistance of Professor Jonathan Chaves.

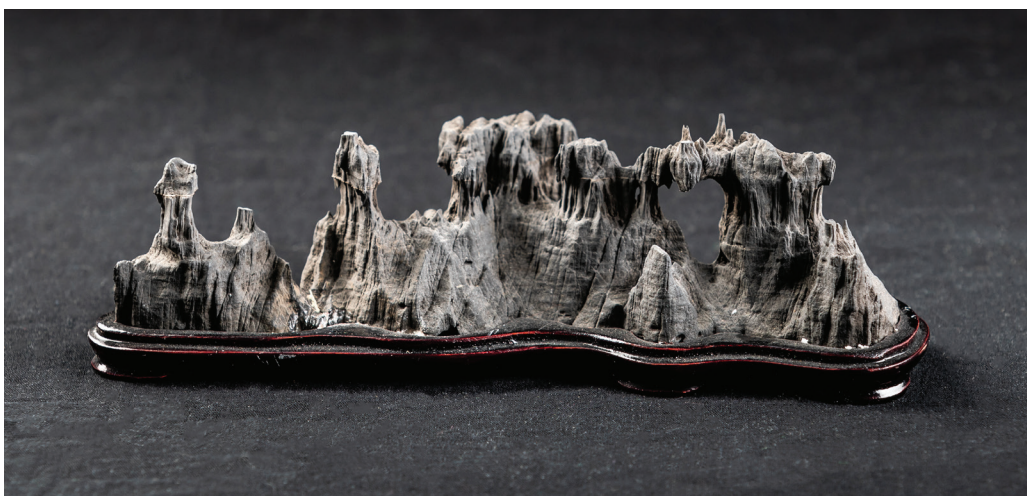
5f



5g



5h



known as “Nine Flowers in a Vase,” a classic *lingbi* stone once owned by the Song dynasty poet Su Dongpo (1037–1101; cat. 5i).<sup>46</sup>

The most comprehensive and richly illustrated study of rocks, however, is Lin Youlin’s *Suyuan shipu* (*Stone Compendium of the Plain Garden*), compiled by Lin Youlin (1578–1647) and published in 1613.<sup>47</sup> The *Suyuan shipu* is noteworthy for its elegant woodcut illustrations, the designs for which were painted by Lin himself. The text describes over one hundred rare stones, including stones Lin himself owned, stones he had seen in other collections, and fabled stones of the past. In the introduction, Lin writes that he created the illustrations shortly after seeing each respective rock (unless it was inaccessible to him). Lin’s descriptions are well-researched, if often fantastical, and the citation of many poems in the entries on the individual rocks makes the *Suyuan shipu* a rich source of Chinese rock lore. One of the most famous stones included in the *Suyuan shipu* is the stone known as the “Inkstone Mountain of the Hall where the Jin [Dynasty] is Treasured” (cat. 5j), or “Inkstone Mountain” for short, which once belonged to the famed artist and stone collector Mi Fu (1051–1107) during the Northern Song dynasty. This Inkstone Mountain in particular loomed large in the imaginations of late Ming scholars; having been lost long ago, its mythos was greatly enhanced by the many colorful tales of its owner’s eccentric worship of stones.

Among other things, Lin Youlin devotes a good deal of space to delineating the concept of “strangeness” (*guai*) as a desirable quality in stones. According to Lin, scholars sought out objects imbued with *guai* for their ability to convey a palpable sense of the primordial and otherworldly. In a sense, the stranger a

stone’s appearance, the better, for it would then more powerfully exude the primordial energies believed to reside within it. This pursuit of strangeness was not exclusive to rock collecting, but applied to all the arts; in the realm of literature, as Judith Zeitlin has shown in her discussion of the early-Qing dynasty ghost story writer Pu Songling (1640–1715),

the strange often results when things are paradoxically affirmed and denied at the same time. In other words, the boundary between the strange and the normal is never fixed but is constantly altered, blurred, erased, multiplied, or redefined. In fact, the power of the strange is sustained only because such boundaries can be endlessly manipulated.<sup>48</sup>

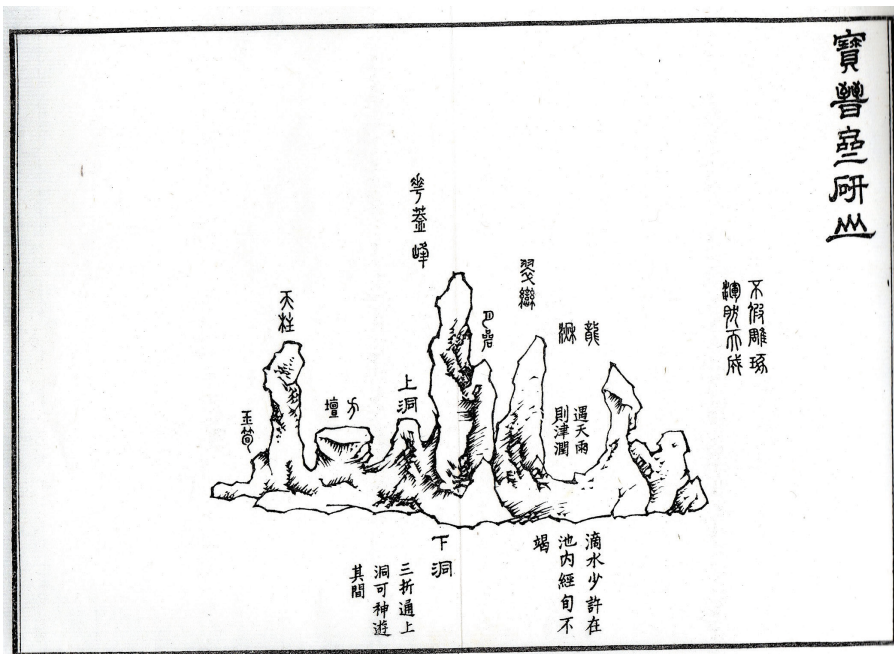
According to Lin Youlin, the best stones too sit on this boundary: simultaneously present in the human world and also unmistakably evocative of a distant, barely knowable realm.

The stones included in this exhibition include examples of several different geological types. The majority of these are limestones, which can exhibit a wide range of colors and textures. Almost all Chinese stones traditionally collected for display (whether for indoors or outdoors) were fitted with custom-made wood bases, as seen in all the examples shown here (cat. 5a–e). The three low stones that resemble mountain ranges beautifully evoke the concept of “landscapes in miniature” long celebrated by Chinese stone collectors (cat. 5f–h). Finally, so powerful was the imagery embodied in strange stones that objects made of other materials which nevertheless looked like strange stones, such as

46 Published in facsimile in Fang Yulu, *Fangshi mopu* [*Family ink (cake) compendium*] (1589; repr. Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1991).

47 Published in facsimile in Lin Youlin, *Su Yuan shipu* (1613; repr. Beijing: Zhongguo shudian chubanshe, 1997).

48 Judith T. Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 81–86. See also Judith T. Zeitlin, “The Secret Life of Rocks: Objects and Collectors in the Ming and Qing Imagination,” *Orientalism* 30, no. 5 (May 1999): 46.



the three wood burl examples included here, were also avidly collected. During both the Ming and Qing dynasties the strange shapes of stones were also often replicated in other materials, such as porcelain.<sup>49</sup>

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49 Parts of this entry appeared previously in Stephen Little, “Wu Bin’s ‘Ten Views of a Lingbi Rock,’” in Marcus Flacks, ed., *Crags and Ravines Make a Marvellous View: A Study of Wu Bin’s Unique 17th Century Scroll Painting “Ten Views of a Lingbi Rock”* (London: Sylph Editions, 2017), 86–100. They are reproduced here with permission of the publisher.



5k  
5l  
5m

## 6

*Two Wood Table Screens with “Dreamstone”  
Panels*

Wood and marble

Small stone 3.78 × 2.22 × 0.20 in. with stand 6.69 × 7.28 × 2.13 in. (small stone 9.6 × 5.65 × 0.5 cm with stand 17 × 18.5 × 5.4 cm). Large stone 6.40 × 2.17 × 0.24 in. with stand 10.33 × 7.32 × 3.19 in. (large stone 16.25 × 5.5 × 0.60 cm with stand 26.25 × 18.6 × 8.1 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (F 07–08)

Native sources of marble are few in China, and are largely limited to the north-central province of Hebei and the far southern province of Yunnan. The finest marble from Yunnan is known as Dali stone, named after the ancient Dali Kingdom which ruled Yunnan from 937–1253. Beginning as early as the Tang dynasty (618–906), thin sheets of this marble were cut to reveal natural patterns resembling landscapes; this practice continued through the subsequent Five Dynasties, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. Among the key features of Dali marble are the black veins that run through the otherwise white stone, which create the illusion of mist-enveloped mountain landscapes.





7

*Double Brush Washer in the Shape of Two Peaches*

China, Qing dynasty, 17th–18th c.

Jade

1.81 × 8.54 × 3.94 in. (4.6 × 21.7 × 10 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (J 26)

This jade brush washer has two receptacles in the shape of peaches, surrounded on several sides by branches bearing peach blossoms. Two bats, symbols of good fortune, sit on the rim of each of the peach-shaped receptacles. The stone has an even, pale green color, with numerous reddish-brown markings.

Peaches are ancient Chinese symbols of immortality and fertility. Among the outstanding features of the Daoist goddess known as the Queen Mother of the West's Kunlun Paradise were the peach trees that blossomed every three thousand years.<sup>50</sup> The earliest association of these transcendent peaches with the Queen Mother is found in the *Monograph on Broad Phemonena (Bowu zhi)* by Zhang Hua (232–300).<sup>51</sup> These peaches were believed to confer immortality on those who ate them. Zhang Hua's text describes the Han Emperor Wu's visit to the Queen Mother's paradise in the far west, said to have occurred in 110 BCE:

The Queen Mother asked her attendants for seven peaches. They were as big as crossbow pellets. Giving five to the thearch [Emperor Wu], the Mother ate two. The thearch ate the peaches, then immediately took their pits and put them in front of his knees. The Mother said,

“Why are you taking these pits?” The thearch replied, “These peaches are so sweet and lovely. I want to plant them.” The Mother laughed and said, “These peaches bear fruit once in three thousand years.” [...] Then Tung-fang Shuo stealthily spied on the Mother from the southern side room of the basilica [the Nine Floriate Basilica], through the Vermillion Bird window lattice. The Mother saw him. She said to the thearch, “This small boy is spying through the window lattice. Formerly he came three times to steal my peaches.” The thearch then greatly marveled at him. On account of this, people of the world say that Tung-fang Shuo is a divine transcendent.<sup>52</sup>

The periodic blossoming of the peaches of longevity in the Kunlun Paradise became a fixed part of the Queen Mother's mythology, and because the Queen Mother had attained immortality, peaches became a widespread symbol of immortality. In addition, during the Han dynasty wands made of peach wood were used to exorcise the imperial palace of malign forces at each lunar New Year festival. Even today priests and priestesses use symbolic swords made of peach wood emblazoned with talismans in Daoist rituals.

<sup>50</sup> Sources differ on the periodicity of the peach trees' blossoming; they range from one thousand to three thousand years. See Suzanne Cahill, *Transcendence and Divine Passion: The Queen Mother of the West in Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 178.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 54–55.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*



*Three Ruyi Scepters*

China, Qing dynasty, 19th c.

Jade and wood

Left: wood, 16.81 × 4.96 × 2.80 in. (42.7 × 12.6 × 7.1 cm) Center: jade, 9.84 × 3.70 × 1.65 in. (25 × 9.4 × 4.2 cm) Right: wood and jade: 21.26 × 4.84 × 2.68 in. (54 × 12.3 × 6.8 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (RUYI 01–03)

The Chinese word *ruyi* means “as you wish” [literally, “as you think”], and is widely used in phrases consisting of wishes for good fortune. A common Chinese birthday greeting, for example, is the phrase, *wan sui ruyi* (“As you wish for ten thousand years!”). The word *ruyi* is also a popular name of a specific type of fungus or mushroom, the *lingzhi*, to which has long been attributed the power to extend one’s life, and even lead to immortality — for those who are worthy.

The earliest *ruyi* scepters to have been archaeologically excavated date to the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), at a time when they were symbols of skill in debating known as a *tanbing* (“discussion stick”).<sup>53</sup> In early 6th-century Buddhist stone carvings the wealthy Indian Buddhist Vimalakīrti (Ch. Weimo), who bested Mañjuśrī (Ch. Wenshu), Bodhisattva of Wisdom, in a debate over the nature of the Ultimate Reality.<sup>54</sup> By the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), when the three examples shown here were made, the *ruyi* had transformed into a symbol of good fortune.

The head or top of the first *ruyi* scepter shown here, carved from a single piece of pale green nephrite jade, is in the shape of a *lingzhi*

mushroom, and both the head and the handle are entwined with smaller *lingzhi* mushrooms and their coiling stems. The connection between the name, shape, and decoration of the jade scepter and the *ruyi* or *lingzhi* mushroom itself is particularly clear in this example, and calls for a closer examination of the role of mushrooms in Daoist culture. Even before the emergence of religious Daoism in the late Han dynasty (2nd century CE), mushrooms are known to have been sought for their magical powers. The first ruler to unify China into one empire, Qin Shihuangdi (r. 221–210 BCE) and the Han dynasty emperor Wudi (r. 147–81 BCE) both sent *fangshi* (magicians) in search of such fungi. Many adepts were said to live on mushrooms; for example, Pengzu, said to have lived over seven hundred years old, ate only mushrooms. According to the *Soushenji* (*In Search of the Supernatural*) of the early 3rd century,

Pengzu was a Yin [Shang] dynasty minister whose surname was Qian and who given name was Jian. He was the grandson of Emperor Zhuanxu and the middle child of Luzhong [“Ends of the Earth”] family. He lived during the Xia dynasty and survived until the end of the Shang dynasty – he is said to have been 700 years old. His regular food was the cinnamon fungus (the *lingzhi*).

As scholar Michel Strickman has shown, the cult of magic mushrooms in China is ancient.<sup>55</sup> Sima Qian’s *Shi ji* (*Records of the Historian*; 1st century BCE) states that mushrooms were believed to be among the sacred plants that grew on Penglai, one of the isles of the immortals in the Eastern Ocean.<sup>56</sup> Since at least the Han dynasty, the appearance of strange and auspicious mushrooms portended the reigns of virtuous emperors:

53 J. Leroy Davidson, “The Origin and Early Use of the Ju-I,” *Artibus Asiae* 13, no. 4 (1950): 242.

54 This debate is recorded in the Vimalakīrti Sutra, a sacred Buddhist text originally written in Sanskrit in India and later translated into Chinese. See Burton Watson, *The Vimalakīrti Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

55 Michel Strickman, “Notes on Mushroom Cults in Ancient China” (unpublished manuscript, Rijksuniversiteit Gent, 1966), 1–22.

56 *Ibid.*, 6.



During the reign of the emperor Wu, in the year 109 BCE, according to the *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, a mushroom with nine stalks from a single root grew in a room of the summer palace. A general amnesty was proclaimed throughout the empire, and the Song of the Mushroom Chamber was composed. The text of this song has been preserved.<sup>57</sup>

The use of mushrooms that enable the adept to see the numinous world is common in many world cultures.<sup>58</sup> By the Six Dynasties Period (420–589), mushrooms (specifically “mushrooms that nourish the divine” or *yangshen zhi*) are mentioned as among the numinous plants that grew on the isles of the immortals (for example, Penglai) in the Eastern Ocean.<sup>59</sup>

One of the earliest discussions of the importance of mushrooms in a Daoist context is in Ge Hong’s *Baopuzi (The Master who Embraces the Uncarved Block)*. In this text, Ge describes several types of mushrooms, including rock, wood, herb, and flesh mushrooms:

The rock ones are semblances of mushrooms in stone. They grow on famous mountains by the sea. Along island streams there are formations of piled rocks resembling flesh. Those seeming to have head, tail, and four feet are the best. They look like something alive. They are attached to boulders, and prefer high, steep spots, which sometimes render them inaccessible. The red ones resemble

coral; the white ones, a slice of fat; the black, wet varnish; the blue, kingfisher feathers; and the yellow, purplish gold. All of them glow in the darkness like ice, being easily visible at night from a distance of three hundred paces.<sup>60</sup>

It is noteworthy that many varieties of mushrooms are in fact luminescent at night, just as described by Ge Hong.

The second *ruyi* scepter shown here is carved from a single piece of a dark hardwood, with raised plaques at the top (again, in the shape of a stylized *lingzhi* mushroom) and at the midpoint and bottom of the handle. The designs overall are carved in low relief, it is likely that the entire scepter’s surface has been covered with a thin coat of lacquer. The plaque at the top depicts an animal known as a *qilin*, a mythical beast whose rare appearance portended auspicious events (for example, a *qilin* is said to have appeared just prior to the birth of the Confucius). The *qilin* is surrounded by symbols of scholarly accomplishment (including a miniature *ruyi* scepter).

57 Ibid., 7.

58 For examples of mushroom cults among the native peoples of Alaska and Mexico, see Richard Rudgley, *The Alchemy of Culture* (London: British Museum Press, 1993), 68–71, 73–74.

59 Joseph Needham et al., *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. 5: *Chemistry and Chemical Technology*, Part II: *Spagyric Discovery and Invention: Magisteries of Gold and Immortality* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 122–23.

60 James R. Ware, trans. and ed., *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion in the China of A.D. 320: The Nei Pien of Ko Hung* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966; repr. New York: Dover, 1981), 179.



9

*The Daoist Immortal Li Tieguai*

China, Qing dynasty, 19th c.

Wood

7.17 × 2.83 × 2.64 in. (18.2 × 7.2 × 6.7 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (MS 02)

This sculpture depicts Li Tieguai (“Iron-crutch Li”), one of the most popular members of the famous group known as the Eight Immortals (*Ba xian*). Here he stands on rocky base, and is shown barefoot with a tattered robe and belt of leaves, and leaning on a crutch. Strapped to his back is a double gourd, a symbol of the joining of Heaven and Earth.

The Ming dynasty compendium *The Complete Biographies of the Assorted Immortals* (*Liexian quanzhuan*; 1598), compiled by Wang Shizhen, contains the following account of Li Tieguai:

Li Tieguai had an eminent disposition. He attained the Dao at an early age. While cultivating realization in a mountain cave, Li Laojun [the deified Laozi] and Master Wenqiu [an adept of the ancient Shang dynasty] often descended [from heaven] to his mountain retreat, where they instructed him in Daoist teachings.

One day he was about to attend a meeting with Laojun on Mount Hua [the sacred peak in Shaanxi province]. Li said to his disciple, “My physical body will remain here — if my ethereal soul [*hun*] does not return in seven days, you may cremate my body.” On the sixth day the disciple’s mother fell ill and he had to rush home, so he cremated Li’s body. On the seventh day Li’s spirit returned, but his body was gone, and he was not pleased. He thereupon possessed the corpse of a man who had starved to death, and rose up. Because of this, his

form is that of a crippled man — but he was not like this originally.<sup>61</sup>

One of the earliest known images of Li Tieguai in Chinese painting appears in a hanging silk scroll created by the early Yuan dynasty painter Yan Hui (act. late 13th–early 14th century), owned by the Chion-in Buddhist temple in Kyōto, Japan.<sup>62</sup> Li also appears crossing the ocean with the other seven of the Eight Immortals in a Yuan dynasty mural at the Daoist Yongle Gong (Temple of Eternal Joy) in southern Shanxi province.<sup>63</sup> Li Tieguai is still worshipped in China today — his image appears, for example, on the altar of the Eight Immortals Temple in Xi’an, Shaanxi Province.

61 Wang Shizhen, comp., *Liexian quanzhuan* [Complete biographies of the assorted immortals] (1598, repr. Shanghai: Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan, 1961), ch. 1:2b.

62 Published in Little with Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 330–31, cat. 124–25.

63 See Jin Weinuo, ed., *Yongle Gong bishua quanji* (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 1997), 246.





10

*Brush Holder with the Three Stars (Gods of Longevity, Good Fortune, and Emolument)*

China, Qing dynasty, 19th c.

Jade

5.94 × 4.13 × 2.05 in. (jade 15.1 × 10.5 × 5.2 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (J 52)

This jade brush holder depicts the gods of Chinese popular religion known as the Three Stars (San xing). Although possibly first conceived during the Yuan dynasty (1260–1368), this triad began to enjoy great popularity in the 15th century, in the early Ming dynasty. These gods are known as Fuxing (Good Fortune Star), Luxing (Emolument [Salary] Star), and Shouxing (Longevity Star). The most ancient of these three gods is Shouxing, the Longevity Star, or God of Longevity (Shoulao), shown here at the center as an old man with a high, domed cranium holding a staff to which is tied a double gourd — a symbol of the joining of heaven and earth. To Shouxing's left (proper right) is Fuxing, the God of Good Fortune, holding a baby boy, and to Shouxing's right (proper left) is Luxing, the God of Salary). In Chinese art Fuxing is often depicted accompanied by little boys, representing a wish for male children. Above these three figures is a pine tree, and to the left is a cluster of peaches. Both are symbols of longevity (and peaches are symbols of fertility).

As scholar Mary Fong has shown, the earliest literary evidence for the Three Stars comes from a play entitled *The Festival of the Immortal Officials Fu, Lu, and Shou* (*Fu Lu Shou xian'guan qinghui*), written by Zhu Youdun (1379–1439), a grandson of the first Ming emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang (r. 1368–1398).<sup>64</sup> In

64 Mary H. Fong, "The Iconography of the Popular Gods of Happiness, Emolument, and Longevity (Fu Lu Shou)," *Artibus Asiae* 44, nos. 2–3 (1983): 185. That this triad of deities may have

this drama, published in 1443, the Three Stars descend to the mortal world for the lunar New Year's festival. In another play by the same author, "The Eight Immortals Convey Wishes for Longevity at the Turquoise Pond," the duties of the Three Stars are enumerated as multiplying happiness (Fuxing), conferring emolument or high salary (Luxing), and increasing longevity (Shouxing).

Although often presented as Daoist deities, the Three Stars are not Daoist gods per se.<sup>65</sup> There are, for example, no texts in the Ming dynasty *Daoist Canon* (*Daozang*) devoted to this triad. The Three Stars appear instead to be gods of Chinese popular religion, possibly instituted at the imperial level in the early Ming dynasty. They also do not appear among the more than three hundred Daoist gods depicted in the early 14th-century murals at the Yongle Gong (Temple of Eternal Joy), a Daoist temple in southern Shanxi province. The Three Stars have remained gods of popular religion up the present day, and their images are among the most commonly encountered of any Chinese gods.

originated in the 14th century is suggested by a painting in the Nezu Museum, Tokyo, published in Stephen Little and Christina Yu, *Chinese Paintings from Japanese Collections* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2014), 87–89, cat. 14.

65 Fong, "The Iconography of the Popular Gods," 196.



*Lidded Ewer in the Form of the Character  
Fu (Good Fortune) with Gods of Good  
Fortune (Fu) and Longevity (Shou)*

China, Qing dynasty, Kangxi reign  
(1662–1722)

Molded porcelain with enamel decoration on the biscuit

11 × 9 × 1 ½ in. (27.94 × 22.86 × 3.81 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Fund (30.2.88a-b)

Since the Yuan dynasty (1260–1368) the city of Jingdezhen in China's Jiangxi Province was the single most important porcelain production center in China. Blue and white porcelains were first made at Jingdezhen in the early years of the 14th century, and it was also at Jingdezhen that the painting of enamels on both glazed and unglazed porcelains was perfected in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). During the early Qing dynasty reign of the Kangxi emperor (r. 1662–1722) there was a proliferation of experimentation in porcelain shapes and designs at Jingdezhen. Among these new shapes were ewers made in the shapes of auspicious Chinese written characters.

This ewer was made in the shape of the cursive form of the Chinese written character *fu*, meaning “good fortune.” Numerous examples of this type are known in museums and private collections around the world. The ewer was first hand-built and then fired in kiln; then it was decorated with green, yellow, aubergine, and clear enamels painted directly on the biscuit, or unglazed porcelain body, and fired again to fix the enamels to the body. The decoration, in the so-called *famille verte* (“green family”) palette, consists of boughs of plum blossoms against a green ground, with the handle and spout painted in a pattern resembling a brick wall. A rectangular cartouche on one side depicts *Fu xing*, the God of Good Fortune, while the corresponding cartouche on the other side depicts *Shou xing* (or *Shou Lao*), the God of Longevity.

Together with the *Lu xing* (the God of Emolument or Salary), who does not appear on the ewer, these deities from the pantheon of Chinese popular religion were known as the *San xing* (Three Stars).<sup>66</sup> The earliest known visual image of the Three Stars appears in an anonymous painting dating the Yuan dynasty (1260–1368) in the collection of the Nezu Museum, Tōkyō.<sup>67</sup> The earliest literary evidence for the Three Stars comes from a play entitled “The Festival of the Immortal Officials *Fu*, *Lu*, and *Shou*” (*Fu Lu Shou xian'guan qinghui*), written by Zhu Youdun (1379–1439), a grandson of the first Ming emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang (r. 1368–1398).<sup>68</sup> In this drama, published in 1443, the Three Stars descend to the mortal world for the lunar New Year's festival. In another play by the same author, “The Eight Immortals Convey Wishes for Longevity at the Turquoise Pond,” the duties of the Three Stars are enumerated as multiplying happiness (*Fu xing*), conferring emolument or high salary (*Lu xing*), and increasing longevity (*Shou xing*). Based on the literary and visual evidence, therefore, it would appear that belief in this group first emerged in the 14th century and proliferated in the early 15th century. As scholar Mary Fong has shown, the gods *Fuxing* and *Luxing* have no mythology of their own, and have no prior history before the early Ming dynasty.<sup>69</sup> The Three Stars are not Taoist gods per se — there are, for example, no texts in the Ming dynasty *Taoist Canon* (*Daozang*) devoted to this triad.

<sup>66</sup> See Little with Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 270–71, cat. 91.

<sup>67</sup> Stephen Little and Christina Yu Yu, *Chinese Paintings from Japanese Collections* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2014), 87–89, cat. 14.

<sup>68</sup> Fong, “The Iconography of the Popular Gods of Happiness, Emolument, and Longevity (*Fu Lu Shou*),” 185.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.



*Brush Stand with Kuixing*

China, Qing Dynasty, ca. 1800–1911

Shiwan ware, Guangdong province;

stoneware with thick opalescent grayish blue glaze

7 ½ × 5 ¾ × 2 ⅛ in. (19.05 × 14.61 × 5.4 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Fund (30.2.55)

This stoneware brush stand was made during the late Qing dynasty at the Shiwan kilns in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, located not far from the city of Guangzhou (Canton). The Shekwan kilns date to at least the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), but production of such colorfully glazed stoneware objects and sculptures are primarily associated with the late Qing dynasty (1800–1911), and such works are still being produced today.

While the back of the stand has three conical tubes designed to hold calligraphy brushes, the front (shown here) depicts the mythological figure of Kuixing (literally, “Kui star”), an acolyte of Wenchang, the Chinese God of Literature. Wenchang was not originally a Daoist deity per se, but instead a deity of the Chinese popular religion, whose pantheon also includes such figures as Shoulao (the God of Longevity) and Guandi (the God of Loyalty and Strategy).<sup>70</sup> Nonetheless, Wenchang was eventually adopted into the Daoist pantheon, and several texts in the *Daoist Canon (Daozang)* reference this god.<sup>71</sup>

Kuixing is usually depicted as a demonic figure with horns, believed to reside in the Kui constellation, located not far from the

Northern (Big) Dipper and the Wenchang constellation, the latter located just above the bowl of the Northern Dipper, both situated in the northern circumpolar zone of the sky. It was traditionally believed that when one passed the highest of the three civil service examinations, Kuixing would fly down from the heavens to confer the diploma on the successful candidate. This examination was known as the *jinshi* or “presented scholar” because those who passed were then presented to the emperor in the imperial palace, so that he could congratulate them and give them their first job assignments in the imperial bureaucracy. Because of this symbolism, one can surmise that this brush holder was made as a gift to a successful *jinshi* degree candidate.

One of the earliest Chinese ceramics to enter LACMA’s permanent collection, this brush holder was formerly part of an enormous collection of Chinese art assembled by the Norwegian general Johann Wilhelm Normann Munthe (1864–1935), parts of which entered the museum’s collection in 1930.

70 On Wenchang, see Terry F. Kleeman, *A God’s Own Tale: The Book of Transformations of Wenchang, the Divine Lord of Zitong* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994). For a Ming dynasty painting depicting Wenchang with Kuixing, see Little with Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 267, cat. 89.

71 Kleeman, *A God’s Own Tale*, 49–50.







# Confucianism

*Stephen Little*

Traditionally, the late Zhou dynasty, beginning with the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BCE) and ending with the Warring States Period (ca. 475–221 BCE), has been known in China as the “Period of the Hundred Schools of Thought.” It was to this period that Chairman Mao Zedong referred in 1956, at the beginning of the “Hundred Flowers Campaign,” a short-lived encouragement of intellectual criticism of the government’s ideology and bureaucracy which spectacularly backfired: “Let a hundred flowers bloom; let a hundred schools of thought contend.” Despite the eventual reversal of Mao’s campaign, the resonance of the original “Period of the Hundred Schools of Thought” in China’s late Bronze and early Iron Age have always conjured a powerful image of active debate regarding society’s progress. Of the “Three Teachings” that have most deeply informed Chinese thought — Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism — Confucianism has been the one which most closely emphasized the creation and propagation of a stable society. Whereas Daoism and Buddhism have focused deeply on the inner world of the spirit and its manifestations in the phenomenal realm, Confucianism has been focused on human society as an organism, stressing each individual’s responsibility to cultivate harmonious relationships with everyone in their orbit, the goal being a harmonious and productive society. At the same time, as this exhibition demonstrates, all three systems of belief have undergone major changes in the course of their development, with frequent appropriations and adaptations among them.

All three systems of belief have together left lasting impacts on Chinese culture which are still visible today.

Confucius (ca. 551–479 BCE; Ch. Kongzi or Master Kong) was a philosopher born in Qufu in modern Shandong province, who lived during the late Spring and Autumn Period. In his day China was dominated by the rulers of numerous feuding states, with the result that the influence of the Zhou king waned considerably. Treachery and violence increasingly became the norm in government affairs, although not quite on the scale of the succeeding and aptly named Warring States Period. During his lifetime Confucius was an itinerant philosopher and teacher wandering from state to state in search of receptive ears and official employment. He attracted a large group of students and disciples, several of whom also came to be admired as sages in his lineage. Master Kong taught a unique blend of social philosophy, humility, moral integrity, and the promotion of models of upright social behavior from the past to guide the living in the present: “The Master said, he who by reanimating the Old can gain knowledge of the New is fit to be a teacher.” To reiterate, Confucianism put great store on each individual’s responsibility to help maintain social harmony, and in particular placed great emphasis on the respectful treatment of one’s parents, grandparents, and deceased ancestors.

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1 Arthur Waley, trans., *The Analects of Confucius* (London: Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1938; repr. New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 90.

The sage's primary teachings and conversations with his disciples were collected following his death and were compiled in a text known as the *Lunyu*, or *Analects*. Confucius's focus on humility combined with strength and moral integrity is striking and is expressed in these quotations recorded in the *Analects*:

The Master said, "Just as to sacrifice to ancestors other than one's own is presumption, so to see what is right and not do it is cowardice."<sup>2</sup>

The Master said, "He who learns but does not think, is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger."<sup>3</sup>

The Master said, "Incomparable indeed was [his disciple] Hui! A handful of rice to eat, a gourdful of water to drink, living in a mean street — others would have found it unendurably depressing, but to Hui's cheerfulness it made no difference at all. Incomparable indeed was Hui!"<sup>4</sup>

Among other teachings, Confucius stressed the importance of rulers acting humanely in all affairs and the significance of such practical acts as the equitable division of land among the people. Furthermore, on both the individual or societal levels, he taught the importance of maintaining internal and external balance and propriety, also implying a balanced relationship between terrestrial events and celestial powers, and the importance of social rituals and practicality.

Beyond Confucius's many original disciples, several of whom are identified by name in the *Analects*, the sage's most illustrious follower was Mencius (372–ca. 289 BCE; Ch. Mozi). Mencius advocated that human nature was essentially good and stressed the importance of each individual cultivating

their *ren* (humanity) and *yi* (righteousness), the latter explained as "a sense of obligation intimately bound up with social relations."<sup>5</sup>

As Confucian philosophy developed, it was also understood that a celestial power, referred to in Chinese as Tian (Heaven), can impact events on the terrestrial plane, that human actions, particularly in ritual and governance, can resonate on the celestial plane, and that Heaven can bestow its blessing on political regimes. Some of these ideas trace their origins to the earliest known Chinese written texts, the oracle bones of the Shang dynasty, inscribed over five hundred years before Confucius's birth. Dating to the twelfth and eleventh centuries BCE, these divinatory texts were inscribed onto the polished surfaces of cattle scapulae, or shoulder blades, and turtle plastrons, or lower shells.<sup>6</sup> Another ideas that was later incorporated into governance at the imperial level was the fundamental principle of *zheng tong* (legitimate, or orthodox, transfer) of *Tian ming* (Heaven's Mandate) conferred on worthy dynasties, which succeeded prior regimes that had failed due to moral decline. The concept of Heaven's Mandate was first expressed in the ancient *Shu jing*, or *Book (Classic) of Documents*, traditionally believed prior to the discovery of the Shang dynasty oracle bones in 1899 to contain the earliest historical records of history in China.<sup>7</sup>

A clear sense of Heaven's reflection of human society's orderly structure and governance is echoed, with a distinctly Daoist

2 Ibid., 93.

3 Ibid., 91.

4 Ibid., 118.

5 William Theodore de Bary, ed., *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 1:87.

6 See, for example, David N. Keightley, *Sources of Shang History: The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

7 On the *Shu jing*, see James Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), vol. 3, and Clae Waltham, *Shu Ching: Book of History* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1971).

touch, in the writings of Confucius's later follower Xunzi (fl. 298–238 BCE):

Heaven operates with constant regularity. It does not prevail because of [a sage-king like] Yao [traditionally c. 2356–2255 BCE]; nor does it cease to prevail because of [a tyrant like] Jie [traditionally 1728–1675 BCE; the depraved last king of the Xia dynasty]. Respond to it with good government, and blessings will result; respond to it with misgovernment, and misfortune will result. If the staples of livelihood are built up and used economically, then Heaven cannot impoverish the country; if the sustenance of the people is provided for and their energies are employed in keeping with the seasons, then Heaven cannot afflict the people. If the Way [*Dao*] is followed and not deviated from, then Heaven cannot send misfortune.<sup>8</sup>

During the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), key elements of Confucius's philosophy became the underpinning of the imperial state and its government. The year 195 BCE witnessed the first imperial sacrifices to Confucius at the sage's birthplace in Qufu, Shandong province, and in the year 1 CE a long pattern of ennobling the sage's living descendants began.<sup>9</sup> The earliest known images of Confucius appeared during the Western Han dynasty (202 BCE–9 CE): a recently excavated lacquer screen with painted images of Confucius shown with several of his disciples was discovered in the Western Han tomb of Liu He, Marquis of Haihun, in Nanchang, Jiangxi province.<sup>10</sup> Also found in the same

tomb was the earliest known manuscript of the Confucian *Analects*, inscribed in ink on bamboo strips.

Among the key Confucian rituals enacted by early emperors was the *feng* (sealing) sacrifice, performed at the top of Tai Shan (Mount Tai), the easternmost of China's five sacred peaks, located in Shandong province. The purpose of this ritual was to reinforce the emperor's place as the Tian zi (Son of Heaven), a position at the top of the social order and believed to be recognized and legitimized by Heaven through this sacrifice. In the year 56 CE, for example, the Eastern Han Emperor Guangwu (Shining Warrior) ascended Mount Tai and performed the ritual. He was the third ruler to do so.<sup>11</sup>

By the Six Dynasties Period (420–589) Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism were all sufficiently well-established that they became known as the "Three Teachings," also known as the "Three Creeds," loosely viewed as separate paths to the same goal. This concept gained increasing currency during the Song (960–1279) and Jin (1115–1234) dynasties, and by the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) was widely accepted.<sup>12</sup> The fluid boundaries between these three systems of belief is reflected in the fact that by at least the Jin dynasty, which ruled northern China in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, Confucius was absorbed into religious Dao-

Marquis of Haihun"], *Jiangnan Metropolitan Daily*, May 16, 2022, <http://kgzg.cn/a/398163.html?fbclid=IwARoqiRoM-tGLkcEoAsTuEroKmYGUFkr7uPO77zTt3NFwQ02aXbE-GmPxICBc>.

8 de Bary, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 1:101–2.

9 Julia K. Murray, "Illustrations of the Life of Confucius: Their Evolution, Functions, and Significance in Late Ming China," *Artibus Asiae* 57, nos. 1–2 (1997): 74.

10 Li Qiao and Zhang Wenqi, "Jiangxi: Haihun hou mu you you xin faxian" ["Jiangxi Province: New Discoveries in the Tomb of the

11 Stephen Bokenkamp, "Record of the Feng and Shan Sacrifices," in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 251–60.

12 For a discussion of this theme in Japanese painting, see John Rosenfield, "The Unity of the Three Creeds: A Theme in Japanese Ink Painting of the Fifteenth Century," in *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, eds. John Whitney Hall and Toyoda Takeshi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 205–25.

ism as an attendant at the celestial court of Wenchang, the God of Literature. Today, in Wenchang's shrine at the Baiyun Guan, the largest Daoist temple in Beijing, for example, a bronze sculpture of Confucius stands in attendance next to the larger sculpture of Wenchang where a steady stream of students regularly come to pray for success in their examinations.

During the reign of the early Tang dynasty emperor Taizong (r. 626–649), temples dedicated to Confucius, with regular rituals honoring his teachings and accomplishments, were established in major cities and towns throughout China. It was during this period that Confucius began to take on aspects of a deity.<sup>13</sup> It was also during the Tang dynasty (618–906) that sculpted images of Confucius began to appear as icons in Confucian temples, and this remained the norm until the early and middle Ming dynasty when such sculpted images started to be replaced by wooden tablets inscribed with the sage's name. Long narrative handscroll paintings and printed books illustrating key episodes from the life of Confucius began to appear in the fifteenth century and continued to be produced through the end of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911).<sup>14</sup>

One of the primary achievements attributed to Confucius in later times was the editing of the ancient books known as the Six Classics: the *Shu jing* (*Classic of History* or *Book of Documents*), the *Shi jing* (*Classic of Poetry*), the *Yi jing* (*Classic of Changes*), the *Chun qiu* (*Spring and Autumn Annals*), the *Li ji* (*Book of Rites*), and the now-lost *Yue ji* (*Book of Music*).<sup>15</sup> With the loss of the *Book of Music*, this set became known collectively as the

Five Classics. For much of Chinese history, candidates taking the civil service examinations were tested on their knowledge of these texts and their creativity in using the wisdom contained therein to solve practical problems of governance. While the traditional crediting of Confucius with the editing of the Five Classics may be apocryphal, the canonization of these texts is nevertheless significant for Chinese history.

Now long established as a philosophy underlying the imperial state, Confucianism saw significant changes during the Song dynasty (960–1279). These changes coincided with an emerging focus among scholars on science and the need to investigate natural phenomena in detail, a movement known generically as *ge wu* (the investigation of things), resulting, for example, in major advances in astronomy and in the refinement of gunpowder following its invention in the late Tang dynasty.<sup>16</sup> This period witnessed a wholesale revitalization of Confucianism, known as Neo-Confucianism, promoted by a host of important philosophers, the most important of which was Zhu Xi (1130–1200). It was during his period in retreat in the Wuyi Mountains along the border of Fujian and Jiangxi provinces that Zhu Xi founded the Wuyi Hermitage, a leading intellectual center that promoted a revival of Confucian philosophy focused on both the creation of an orderly society and the study of the principles underlying the structure of the cosmos. In this, and in the contemporaneous work of the philosopher Shao Yong (1011–1077), traditional Confucian ideas were merged with centuries-old Daoist cosmological concepts of the creation and mechanics of the universe, explained through the prism of the six-

13 Murray, "Illustrations of the Life of Confucius," 74.

14 These are discussed at length in Murray's article, *ibid.*

15 On the *Yue Ji*, see Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two: Music and the Concept of Art in Early China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1982), 53n25.

16 See, for example, cat. 2 in this volume – the extraordinary star chart of 1247, at its time the most advanced and accurate celestial map ever produced, published in Stephen Little with Shawn Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 144, cat. 19.

ty-four hexagrams of the *Classic of Changes*.<sup>17</sup> Ultimately the Neo-Confucian cosmology articulated by Shao Yong and other Northern Song philosophers was appropriated from a much earlier cosmology, ultimately originating in the Neolithic period and fully articulated during the early Han dynasty in the imperial prince Liu An's Daoist text, *Huainan zi* (*The Prince of Huainan*), in which reality is conditioned by the invisible and omnipresent Dao, the source of all things, paradoxically nothing yet embodying everything. In this vision, the empty yet pregnant Dao spontaneously gave birth to *qi* (energy) which for eons swirled in a state of *hundun* (chaos). After many eons, from the Dao emerged the cosmic forces of *yin* and *yang*, whose interactions caused energy to begin to move in patterns that were regular and predictable, such as the seasons. This cosmology inspired a complex series of correspondences between different levels of being, among them the Five Elements (or Five Phases): wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. Thus, in a worldview conceiving of five directions — north, south, east, west, and center — the east, where the sun rises, is associated with the *yang* force, the dragon, the element fire, the color green, and the planet Jupiter; while the west, where the sun sets, is associated with the *yin* force, the tiger, the element metal, the color white, and the planet Venus. The north is also associated with the *yin* force, the element water, the color black, and the planet Mercury; while the south is associated with the *yang* force, the phoenix, the element wood, the color red, and the planet Mars. The center, an important fifth direction in almost all Asian cultures, is neutral. Associated with neither *yin* nor *yang*, its color is yellow and its planet, Saturn. The male gender was associated with

the *yang* force, and the female gender with the *yin* force. Thus, in the Daoist pantheon, Xiwangmu, the goddess Queen Mother of the West and patron deity of women for over two millennia, is a symbol of the *yin* force. She rides a tiger and is known as Metal Mother. Using the symbolism of the *Classic of Changes*, the Neo-Confucian cosmology used the *yin* and *yang* symbolism of the sixty-four hexagrams, each made up of two of the *Ba gua* (Eight Trigrams), made up of combinations of *yin* (broken) and *yang* (unbroken) lines, symbolizing the cyclical flux of energies.

Like the earlier forms of Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism placed great emphasis on the veneration of one's ancestors, both living and deceased, and the individual's responsibility to cultivate harmony in all of their relationships. Even before the Han dynasty, these human relationships had been codified into a key set of five, known as *Wu lun* (the Five Relationships): those between prince and minister, father and son, husband and wife, friends, and elder and younger brothers.<sup>18</sup> These relationships, the harmonious maintenance of which was seen as critical for the overall harmony of society, are outlined in both the Mencius and the Confucian text known as the *Zhong yong* (*Doctrine of the Mean*).<sup>19</sup> By the Northern Song dynasty, such Neo-Confucian philosophers as Zhu Xi had associated these five relationships with particular goals of human endeavor: prince and minister with propriety, father and son with family loyalty, husband and wife with distinctions of function, friends with trust, and elder and younger brothers with orderly sequence. By at least the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), if not earlier, these ideal relationships were symbolized in paintings by five types of birds: prince and minister by the phoenix, father and son by cranes, husband and wife

17 On Shao Yong, see Knud Lundbaek, *Shao Yong: Dialogue Between a Fisherman and a Wood-Cutter* (Hamburg: C. Bell Verlag, 1986), and Anne D. Birdwhistell, *Transition to Neo-Confucianism: Shao Yong on Knowledge and Symbols of Reality* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

18 Hsü Dau-lin, "The Myth of the 'Five Human Relations' of Confucius," *Monumenta Serica* 29, no. 1 (1970): 27–37.

19 *Ibid.*, 28–29.

by Mandarin ducks, friends by wagtails, and elder and younger brothers by orioles.<sup>20</sup>

In the late thirteenth century, China was invaded by the Mongols, who established the Yuan dynasty (1260–1368). During the Mongol occupation, many intellectuals faced an often difficult choice between their duty to serve the emperor, now a foreigner, and preserving their moral and political integrity by retiring from or refusing official government service. The difficulty in making such choices had a long history in China, articulated in Chinese literature as early as the Warring States Period of the late Bronze Age, in the poem entitled *Li sao* (*On Encountering Sorrows*) by Qu Yuan (fourth century BCE).<sup>21</sup> As in the case of earlier, foreign-ruled dynasties in China, the Mongol emperors appropriated Confucianism as a key philosophical underpinning of governance, and this remained the case in the succeeding Chinese-ruled Ming and Manchu-ruled Qing (1644–1911) dynasties.

The Ming dynasty was a period that witnessed an unprecedented degree of social mobility in China, as has been demonstrated in the scholarship of Ho Ping-ti and Yoshikawa Kōjirō, among others.<sup>22</sup> The late intel-

lectual historian Yü Ying-shih similarly demonstrated that by the sixteenth century, due to increased social mobility, the distinctions between the traditional four social classes comprising scholars, farmers, workers, and merchants had become increasingly fluid. Nonetheless, in both the Ming and Qing periods, the primary ladder of success for educated males remained the civil service examination system, which until its abolition in 1905 remained firmly grounded in mastery of the Confucian classics. The Manchu-ruled Qing dynasty witnessed even more commentaries published on the Confucian classics, a trend that had begun as early as the Han dynasty.

Significantly, the works of all the major Confucian and Neo-Confucian philosophers were transmitted to Korea and Japan. In both countries, from at least the Three Kingdoms period (18 BCE–660 CE) in Korea and the Nara (710–794) and Heian (794–1185) periods in Japan, Confucianism formed the intellectual backbone of royal and imperial governments, and in both countries, Confucius was revered as a sage. This reached a high point during Korea's Joseon dynasty (1362–1897) and Japan's Edo period (1603–1867), when academies were established to train scholar-officials in Confucian texts and ideology. In Korea, Zhu Xi's brand of Neo-Confucianism reigned paramount during the Joseon dynasty, to the extent that even Korean landscape paintings depicting the Wuyi River in southeastern China were widely understood as symbols of Neo-Confucian philosophy.<sup>23</sup>

20 For a classic Chinese explanation of this symbolism, see Zhou Jin, Liu Zhiyuan, and Jin Yanzheng, *Jixiang tu'an tujie* [*Explanations of the Symbols of Good Fortune*] (Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1988), 358–59. For an illustration of this subject in a Ming dynasty painting, see Hou-mei Sung, *Decoded Messages: The Symbolic Language of Chinese Animal Painting* (Cincinnati: Cincinnati Art Museum, 2010), 112, cat. 43.

21 See the translation by David Hawkes, ed. and trans., *Ch'u Tz'u: The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 21–34.

22 Ho Ping-ti, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 57, and Yoshikawa Kōjirō, *Five Hundred Years of Chinese Poetry, 1150–1650*, trans. John Timothy Wixted (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 132. As Yoshikawa has shown, the middle Ming dynasty in particular

was a period in which many talented individuals of humble origins rose to positions of power and influence. See, for example, Yoshikawa's discussion of the poets He Jingming (1483–1521) and Kang Hai (1475–1540), both followers of the Prime Minister, poet, and calligrapher Li Dongyang (1447–1516), in Yoshikawa, *Five Hundred Years of Chinese Poetry*, 149, 151.

23 See, for example, the handscroll painting, *The Nine-bend Stream of Mount Wuyi*, by Yi Seonggil, dated 1592 (National Museum of Korea). Such

Today Confucianism is widely practiced and its ideals observed in China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and among many parts of the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. While Confucius's teachings were discouraged and even banned during Mao Zedong's tenure as Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, since his death in 1976, and particularly since the tenure of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1997), Confucianism has enjoyed a renaissance in mainland China, and today shrines and academies dedicated to Confucius and his teachings can be found throughout China.

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works functioned as symbols in Korea of Neo-Confucian thought and celebrations of the stunning Chinese landscape in which Zhu Xi had lived and taught; published in Yi Song-mi, *Korean Landscape Painting: Continuity and Innovation Through the Ages* (Elizabeth: Hollym International, 2006), 18–19, fig. 7.

## 13–17

**Introduction: Calligraphy as an Art of Confucian Self-cultivation**

Confucianism was a philosophy aimed at achieving a harmonious society, with tremendous responsibility placed on the ruler, members of the imperial family, members of the official bureaucracy, and ultimately all members of society to adhere to upright codes of behavior articulated in such ancient texts as the Confucian *Lunyu* (*Analects*), the Five Classics (the *Shi jing* [*Classic of Poetry*], the *Yi jing* [*Classic of Changes*], the *Chun qiu* [*Spring and Autumn Annals*], and the *Li ji* [*Book of Rites*]) and the dynastic histories. Given the vast textual underpinnings of Confucian society, it is no surprise that great emphasis was placed on the quality of the written word. With its system of ideographic characters (not a phonetic system) in which each character represents a word, the Chinese developed a complex and subtle art of brushed calligraphy combining communication with self-expression.

For many centuries calligraphy has been considered the highest art form in East Asia, surpassing both painting and sculpture. Although a full appreciation of Chinese calligraphy — and Korean or Japanese texts written using Chinese characters — necessarily requires understanding the text, there is no question that this art form can be appreciated for its purely abstract values. Traditional writers on the art of calligraphy focused their remarks on the composition of the page, the formal structures of the characters, and specific brush techniques that best allowed an artist to express their inner self through the movements of the brush. One's calligraphy was seen as a mirror of one's moral character; this held for both style and content. Calligraphy played a key role in defining one's persona. Rulers in particular were expected to be masters of calligraphy. Calligraphy was also a performance art. Almost all calligraphy in East Asia has a performative dimension, with impressive and daring displays of skill

recorded and extolled by poets and connoisseurs who were often themselves master calligraphers.

In East Asia written characters, besides giving form to words, were seen as approaching the forces of nature itself. Thus, the Tang dynasty writer Sun Guoting, in his *Shupu* (*Discussion of Calligraphy*) written in 687 CE, described the calligraphic characters of the great fourth-century masters Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi as follows:

They are like the forms of urgent thunder and falling rocks, the appearance of the Roc [bird] flying or terrified wild beasts, like the bearing of the dancing Luan bird or startled snakes, the power of a collapsed peak on a deserted shore, the appearance of one of the brink of danger grasping onto a rotten vine, heavy like furious clouds or light as a cicada's wing, leading on like flowering water from a spring, still as a peaceful mountain, delicate as the moon first appearing on the horizon, or scattered like the myriad stars arranged in the Milky Way.

It is noteworthy that some of the earliest texts on the rules of brush writing compare the creation of calligraphic forms to a battle. *Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush*, for example, attributed to the female calligrapher Wei Furen, includes concise sets of instructions on the use and movements of the brush.<sup>24</sup>

Chinese calligraphy has five basic forms:

Seal script 篆書

This is one of the most ancient known forms of Chinese writing, found in the inscriptions cast into ancient ritual bronze vessels of the late Shang dynasty (c. 1600–c. 1045 BCE). Versions of this

<sup>24</sup> See Richard M. Barnhart, "Wei Fu-jen's Pi Chen T'u and the Early Texts on Calligraphy," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 18 (1964): 13–25.





script is still widely used for the legends (inscriptions) of Chinese seals.

#### Clerical script 隸書

Devised by scribes at the Han-dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) court for the transcription of official records, this script was recognized for its elegant flourishes of the brush.

#### Standard script 楷書

A script form in which each brushstroke is clearly visible and legible, and individual characters are neatly composed. This is the script most widely used in Chinese printing today.

#### Semi-cursive (“Running”) script 行書

This is an abbreviated form of standard script, using fewer brushstrokes to write a given character, with frequent variations in character size, and in the speed and momentum of the brush.

#### Cursive (“Grass”) script 草書

A highly abbreviated calligraphic form, in which entire characters are sometimes written in a single brushstroke. Despite their free-form appearance, the structures and brushstroke sequences of cursive-script characters are governed by strict rules.

### 13

Attributed to Weng Tonghe (1830–1904)

*Plaque with Seal Script Calligraphy*

China, Qing dynasty, 1903

Nephrite jade

Plaque: 3.13 × 6.18 × 0.35 in. / with stand:

4.17 × 6.61 × 3.23 in. (plaque 7.95 × 15.7 × 0.9 cm / with stand 10.6 × 16.8 × 8.2 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (J 08)

Weng Tonghe was a late Qing dynasty scholar-official, artist, and collector who served in the Forbidden City, Beijing, as tutor to the

imperial heir-apparent Pu Yi, the future Xu-antong emperor, who would be the last emperor of the Qing dynasty.<sup>25</sup>

This jade plaque, set into a wood frame, has copied an ancient inscription in large seal script characters. This is followed at the left by a note by Weng Tonghe written in standard script dated to the first lunar month of 1903. Seal script characters represent some of the oldest known forms of Chinese writing and have a bold, architectonic quality. During the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties it was expected that serious calligraphers would have mastered all five classical script forms — seal, clerical, standard, running, and cursive.

### 14

Traditionally attributed to Yue Fei

(1103–1142)

*Memorial on Going into Battle (Chushibiao)*

by Zhuge Liang (181–234) (detail)

China, Qing dynasty, 19th century

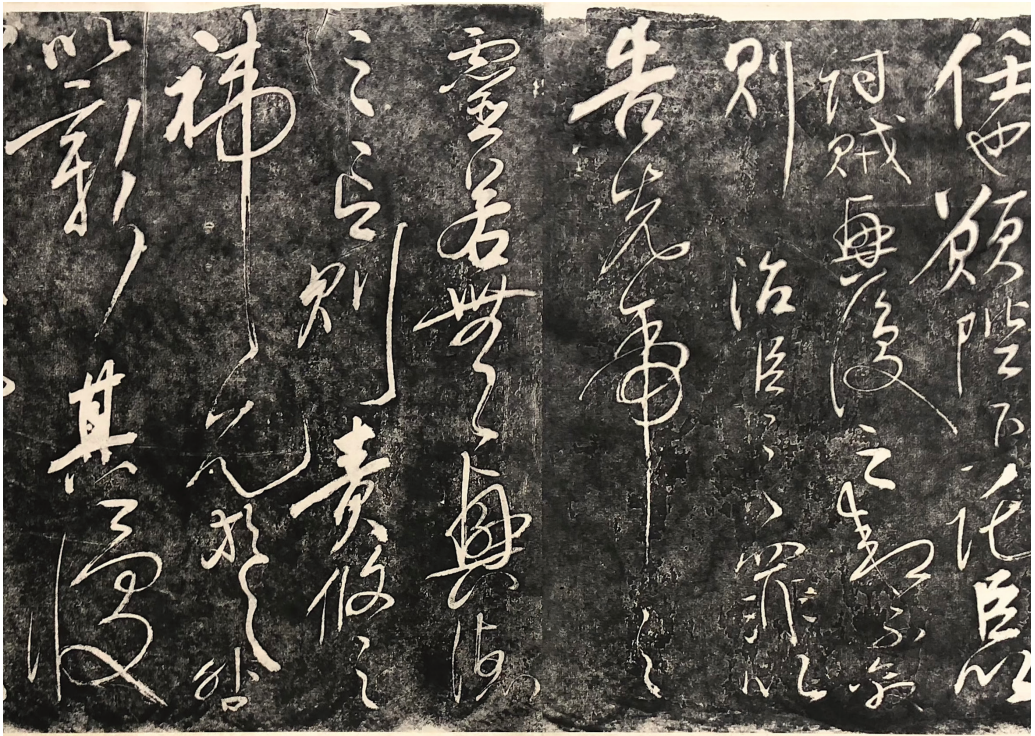
Handscroll; ink rubbing, ink on paper

21 3/4 × 884 3/4 in. (55.25 × 2247.27 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Mei-Lee Ney (M.91.189)

Zhugue Liang (181–234) was one of the most celebrated military strategists in Chinese history. Active during the Three Kingdoms Period in the 3rd century CE, he served as an Imperial Chancellor and military commander under Liu Bei and his son Liu Shan, distant relatives of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) ruling house, in the Shu Han kingdom in southern China. Zhugue Liang was both a Confucian scholar and a Daoist practitioner. A prolific author, he composed the *Memorial on Going into Battle (Chushibiao)* in the year 227, on the eve of the first of his military expeditions against the rival kingdom of Wei

<sup>25</sup> For a biography of Weng Tonghe, see A.W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ching Period*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), 860–61.



in northern China. This essay, which includes advice to the ruler on ideal governance, is also a model expression of loyalty to the emperor, and was widely studied in later dynasties.<sup>26</sup>

This long handscroll in the form of an ink rubbing is taken from a series of limestone panels into which the text of Zhuge Liang's *Memorial on Going into Battle* was carved in the Qing dynasty, and is a superb example of bold and powerful "wild cursive" script. While attributed to the Southern Song dynasty general Yue Fei (1103–1142), this transcription has been shown in recent years to date to the 19th century. Versions of this stone-carved inscription can be found today at Yue Fei's tomb on the banks of West Lake in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, and at Mount Qingcheng, a sacred Daoist mountain near Chengdu in Sichuan province.

## 15

Ji Yun (1724–1805)  
*Brush Holder, Inscribed in Standard Script  
 with a Section of Zhuge Liang's Chush-  
 ibiao (Preparations for Going into Battle)*

China, Qing dynasty, 1779  
 Huang huali wood  
 5.31 × 5.08 in. (13.5 × 12.9 cm)  
 Signed: Xiaolan  
 Seal: Ji Yun  
 Daryl S. Paulson Collection (BH 02)

Ji Yun was a high-ranking official and scholar who worked at the imperial court in Beijing during the Qing dynasty reigns of Qianlong (1736–1795) and Jiaqing (1796–1820). He is best known for being the head of the enormous literary project which resulted in the largest anthology of Chinese literature ever compiled — the *Siku quanshu (Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature)*, completed in 1782.

<sup>26</sup> For a complete English translation of this text see David Pollard, trans., *The Chinese Essay* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 25–27.

The calligraphy on this brush holder, made of *huang huali* rosewood, transcribes the first two paragraphs of Zhuge Liang's *Chushibiao (Preparations for Going into Battle)*, which discuss the need for the emperor to be impartial and to cultivate the loyalty of his ministers. At the end of the transcribed text is a short note, reading, "On a summer day in the [cyclical year] *jimao* [1779], Xiaolan [Ji Yun's nickname]." This is followed by a carved square seal with the artist's given name "Ji Yun." The neat, legible standard script of the incised, gold-filled characters, contrasts with the wild cursive script version of the same text (cat. 14).

## 16

*Pictorial Screen with the Eight Confucian  
 Virtues*

Korea, Joseon dynasty, 19th century  
 Ten-panel screen, ink and color on silk  
 23 ½ × 130 in. (59.69 × 330.2 cm)  
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift  
 of Ann and Jack Levine (M.87.267)

A distinct type of Korean folk art of the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910) is known as *Munjado* (Pictorial Ideographs) of the traditional Eight Confucian Virtues celebrated in China, Korea, and Japan. In Korea these calligraphic characters were often integrated on folding screens with images that related to the characters' meaning. Always appearing in the same order, the eight Confucian virtues are, from right to left, filial piety (*xiao* 孝), brotherly love (*di* 弟), loyalty (*zhong* 忠), trust (*xin* 信), propriety (*li* 禮), righteousness (*yi* 義), integrity (*lian* 廉), and sensibility (*chi* 恥). These sets of screens reflect the deep influence of Confucian philosophy and culture in Joseon-dynasty Korea.

15



16



17

*Hinged Book with Su Shi's "Prose-poem on  
the Red Cliff" in Clerical Script*

China, Qing dynasty, 1889

Bamboo

11.81 × 49.70 × 1.26 in. (30 × 126.25 × 3.2 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (BAM 02)

This series of hinged bamboo panels is carved with a transcription of a poem by the Song dynasty poet Su Shi (1036–1101), *Recalling Antiquity at the Red Cliff* (*Chibi huaigu*). The Red Cliff was a famous site on the Yangzi River where a famous naval battle took place in the third century CE, made especially famous from Su Shi's *First and Second Prose-poems on the Red Cliff*, which describe his two visits to the Red Cliff in a boat.

Reading from left to right, the panels begin with the title of Su Shi's poem, *Chibi huaigu*, inscribed in large cursive script characters, followed by the poem itself inscribed in elegant antique clerical script. Su Shi's poem reads:

The Great River flows east,  
Waves washing clean away  
The heroes of a thousand antiquities.  
The western edge of the ancient rampart,  
People say,  
Is the Red Cliff of Young Zhou of the  
Three Kingdoms.<sup>27</sup>  
Chaotic stones crumble clouds;  
Startled waves split the bank,  
Rolling up a thousand mounds of snow.  
River and mountains like a painting —  
So many young braves in that one time.

Pondering far back, to the days of  
Gongjin [Zhou Yu],  
Just after he married Younger Qiao,  
His vigorous form like a flower  
bursting—

<sup>27</sup> Zhou Yu (175–210), the general who defeated Cao Cao (155–220) at the Battle of the Red Cliff on the Yangzi River in Hubei in 208.

A feathered fan, black headscarf —  
In a moment of laughing banter  
His powerful enemy flew away in ash,  
disappeared in smoke.  
Such spiritual roaming in an ancient  
state —  
So full of sentiment — they should laugh  
at me  
Turning gray so early.  
Human life is like a dream.  
With one flagon I will pour out a libation  
to the River's moon.<sup>28</sup>

This is followed by a note inscribed in semi-cursive script, which includes the date, "In the second month of winter in the [cyclical year] *jichou* [1889]," and a note indicating that it was made at the Banhu Tang [Half Jar Hall], a yet-unidentified studio name.

<sup>28</sup> Translated in Wilt L. Idema and Stephen H. West, ed. & trans., *Battles, Betrayals, and Brotherhood: Early Chinese Plays on the Three Kingdoms* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2012), 239–40.



18–21

**The Four Treasures of the Scholar's Studio**

The basic materials and tools of East Asian calligraphy are brushes, ink, inkstones, and paper; since the Song dynasty (960–1279) in China these were known as the “Four Treasures of the Scholar's Studio” (*Wenfang sibao*).<sup>24</sup>

skin glue. Sometimes other materials, such as incense, are added as well. Such ink cakes were often molded with beautiful designs, and once dry, can last for several centuries.

18

*Assorted Calligraphy Brushes*

China, 19th–20th c.

Smallest 11.22 × 1.26 in.; largest 15.87 × 2.36 in. (smallest 28.5 × 3.2 cm; largest 40.3 × 6.0 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (B 01–07)

Brushes are usually made of animal fur attached to bamboo or wooden handles. From the Tang dynasty onward the finest brushes were made using the fur of rabbits living in the Yellow Mountains of Anhui province; other materials included the fur of deer, goats, and sable.

19

*Set of Eight Ink Cakes with Images of Elegant Women*

China, Qing dynasty, 19th c.

Ink

Box closed 11.46 × 7.48 × 0.79 in.; smallest single cake 2.87 × 2.32 × 0.35 in.; largest single cake 4.72 × 1.93 × 0.35 in. (box closed 29.1 × 19 × 2 cm; smallest single cake 7.3 × 5.9 × 0.90 cm, largest single cake 12 × 4.9 × 0.90 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (INK 09–16)

Ink is generally made into ink cakes in a mold, from pine soot mixed with an animal-

<sup>24</sup> For an excellent introduction to these materials, see R.H. van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958).



18



19



**20a**

*Rectangular Inkstone (with wooden case)*

China, Qing dynasty, 19th c.

Nephrite jade

5.55 × 3.78 × 0.39 in. (14.1 × 9.6 × 1 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (IS 02)

**20b**

*Inkstone with Moon-shaped Reservoir and  
Mushrooms of Immortality*

China, Qing dynasty, 19th c.

Nephrite jade

4.45 × 6.10 × 1.26 in. (11.3 × 15.5 × 3.2 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (J 20)

Inkstones are the palettes on which molded cakes or sticks of ink are ground into small pools of water. They were often made from fine-grained volcanic tuff or from slate, as well as various types of ceramic or jade.

**21**

*Four Sheets of Decorative Paper*

China, Qing dynasty, Xuantong reign,

1910

Handmade dyed mulberry paper with  
sprinkled gold leaf

Dimensions variable

Private collection

Throughout East Asia (China, Korea, and Japan) paper is usually made from the inner bark of the mulberry tree, although other materials including bamboo fibers were used as well. These sheets of handmade paper were dyed with natural materials and then decorated with tiny pieces of gold leaf. The top sheet of this set, made in 1910 (the second to the last year of the Qing dynasty), bears a seal mark reading, *gongting yu yong* (“for imperial use in the palace”).



20a



20b



21

22–26

**Scholar's Desk Objects**

In addition to the implements used to create calligraphy, writers and artists also collected various adjunct types of objects used on the scholar's desk, including water droppers, brush holders, seals, seal paste boxes, and wrist rests. Examples of each of these types are described below.

22a

*Lidded Water Dropper (Shuidi) in the Form of a Fantastic Animal (Qilin) and Cub and a Branch of the Fungus of Immortality (Lingzhi)*

China, Qing dynasty, c. 1800–1911

Jade

2 ½ × 4 ¾ × 3 ¾ in. (6.35 × 12.07 × 9.53 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Manheim  
(M.68.65.23a-b)

Water droppers are containers holding the water used to make ink. Generally water is poured from a water dropper's receptacle onto an inkstone, and then an ink stick is ground into the water against the stone. In this way the artists can control both the density of the ink, and vary the degree to which the ink is wet or dry. This water dropper takes the form of a mythical beast called a *qilin* (K. *girin*; J. *kirin*), an animal made of composite animal parts and whose appearance was taken as an auspicious omen. The *qilin* holds the stem of a *lingzhi* mushroom (symbolizing immortality) in its mouth.

22b

Xu Subai (1909–1976)

*Water Dropper with Four Lions*

China, 20th c.

Amber

1.50 × 3.54 in. (3.8 × 9 cm)

Inscribed: Xu Subai ke (Carved by Xu Subai)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (A 01)

This water dropper was carved from a single block of amber (fossilized tree sap) in the shape of a large jar with four lions attached to the sides. The small vessel bears an inscription reading “Xu Subai ke” (“carved by Xu Subai”), indicating that it was made by the same 20th-century artist who carved the *Wrist Rest with Dragonfly and Roses* (cat. 25a).

22a



22b



**23a**

*Ovoid Brush Holder with Pine Tree and  
Rocks*

China, Qing dynasty, 19th c.

Nephrite jade

3 × 1.65 × 1.46 in. (7.6 × 4.2 × 3.7 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (J 51)

The decoration of this brush holder focuses on pine trees, which are ancient Chinese symbols of longevity and, by extension, immortality. In addition, pine trees flourish in remote mountain forests that were the traditional haunts of both Buddhist ascetics and Daoist hermits.

**23b**

*Brush Holder with Shoulao, God of Longevity*

China, Qing dynasty, 19th–20th c.

Carved bamboo

5.08 × 3.21 in. (12.9 × 8.15 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (BAM 05)

Figures of Shoulao, the God of Longevity, were popular among Daoists, Buddhists, and Confucians, for throughout East Asia longevity was considered a reflection of having lived a virtuous life (see also cat. **10**).

23a



23b



## 23c

*Brush Holder with Buddhist Monk Budai*

China, 20th c.

Bamboo

7.32 × 4.84 × 4.65 in. (18.6 × 12.3 × 11.8 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (BAM 07)

This bamboo brush holder depicts the Chinese Chan (K. Seon; J. Zen) monk Budai (K. Podae; J. Hōtei) sitting in front of a simple pavilion. Budai lived in the city of Hangzhou, in China's Zhejiang province, in the early 10th century. An enlightened and eccentric figure, he generally refused to talk, and would respond to people's questions by laughing. As such he was often called the "Laughing Buddha." After he died, it was said that he was a manifestation of Maitreya (K. Mireuk; J. Miroku), Buddha of the Future (see cat. 29a). He is often shown in East Asian art as a monk holding or sitting on a large bag that contains all his earthly possessions (his name, Budai, means "bag"). In Japan Hōtei became one of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune (*Shichi fukujin*), a combination of Shintō, Buddhist, and (originally) Hindu deities. Budai is shown on this brush holder accompanied by two young boys, one of whom mischievously pulls at the sash of Budai's robe. The appearance of the boys signals a wish addressed to Budai for male children.

## 23d

*Brush Holder with Openwork Sides*

Korea, Joseon dynasty, 18th c.

Slab-built and pierced porcelain with  
cobalt and copper painted decoration  
under clear glaze

3 1/2 × 2 1/4 × 2 1/4 in. (8.89 × 5.72 × 5.72 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift  
of Dr. Michael Moon Ki Chang and  
family (M.2003.177.16)

the early Tang dynasty (618–906). This brush holder was hand-built, and painted with blue (cobalt oxide) and red (copper oxide) underglaze designs. The openwork shape is unique to the late Joseon dynasty.

By the early 17th century, Korean potters had mastered the art of making and firing porcelain, an art originally discovered in China in



23c



23d



23e

*Cylindrical Brush Holder with Waves*

Japan, 19th c.

Hirado Mikawachi ware

Porcelain with blue underglaze decoration

5 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 3 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (13.65 × 9.84 cm)Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
Gift of Allan and Maxine Kurtzman  
(AC1997.273.16)

The Hirado porcelains made at Mikawachi kilns on the Japan's southern island of Kyūshū were among the finest porcelains made during the Edo period (1615–1868). These kilns were founded in the early 17th century by Korean potters working for feudal lords (*daimyō*) of the Hirado domain. In the 18th century descendants of these Korean potters elevated Hirado wares' designs and techniques to astonishing levels, having discovered an exceptionally fine source of white *kaolin* clay on the nearby Amakusa islands, off Kyūshū's west coast. The technical perfections and ingenious designs of these porcelains led to their continuing popularity in the Meiji period (1868–1912) and beyond. This brush holder's understated shape and clear glaze contrast with the elegant underglaze blue of the surging waves.



**24a**

*Seal with Pine Tree & Figures in landscape*

China, 19th–20th c.

Jade

3.31 × 1.77 × 1.18 in. (8.4 × 4.5 × 3 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (Seal 01)

paintings and works of calligraphy are often stamped with seals of the artist, and can also bear the seal impressions of their later owners. Seals functioned as marks of authenticity, and also (in the case of official seals) as marks of authority.

**24b**

*Seal with Pine Tree & Figure in a Landscape*

China, 20th c.

Soapstone

2.17 × 1.54 × 1.28 in. (5.5 × 3.9 × 3.25 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection

**24c**

*Seal with Pine Tree & Figure in a Landscape*

China, 20th c.

Soapstone

3.58 × 1.97 × 0.79 in. (9.1 × 5 × 2 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection

**24d**

*Seal with Pine Tree & Pavilion in Landscape*

China, 20th c.

Soapstone

4.37 × 4.02 × 1.61 in. (11.1 × 10.2 × 4.1 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection

**24e**

*Seal with Figures and Bridge in Landscape*

China, 20th c.

Soapstone

2.70 × 2.09 × 1.22 in. (6.85 × 5.3 × 3.1 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection

Seals have a long history in China, extended back into the early Bronze Age. Most seals are made of stone, although seals of other materials such as bronze, wood, and coral are also known. Seals are usually markers of personal names, but also of official titles. They are also sometimes carved with quotations from classical texts, or from famous poems. East Asian



24a  
24b  
24c  
24d  
24e

25a

*Seal Paste Box (Yinnihe)*

China, Jiangxi Province, Jingdezhen

Qing dynasty, Kangxi mark and period,  
1662–1722

Wheel-thrown porcelain with mottled  
peach-bloom glaze

1 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 2 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (4.12 × 7.3 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift  
of Mrs. James E. Bentley in memory of  
Jack G. Kuhrts (M.71.65.1a-b)

25b

*Seal Paste Box (Yinnihe) with Lotus Blossoms  
and Floral Scrolls*

China, Qing dynasty, Qianlong mark and  
period, 1736–1795

Cast bronze with cloisonné enamel  
decoration

1 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 3 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (4.1 × 9.5 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
Douglas Honnold Memorial Fund  
and Far Eastern Art Council Fund  
(M.75.18a-b)

25c

*Round Seal Paste Box*

China, Qing dynasty, Guangxu mark and  
period (1875–1907)

Blue-and-white porcelain

2.19 × 4.15 in. (5.55 × 10.55 cm )

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (C 01)

These boxes were designed to hold the red paste used for applying the impressions of seal onto paper or silk. The paste is usually made of a mixture of clay, oil, and wormwood or mugwort, while higher quality paste could have added to the mix crushed herbs, pearls, gold, and silk fibers. The intense red color of seal paste comes from the addition of cinnabar, the ore of mercury.



25a



25b



25c

## 26a

Xu Subai (1909–1976)  
*Wrist Rest with Dragonfly and Roses*  
 China, 20th c. (with spurious date corresponding to 1869)  
 Carved bamboo  
 9.84 × 3.11 × 0.94 in. (25 × 7.9 × 2.4 cm)  
 Daryl S. Paulson Collection (BAM 01)

Brush rests of this type were often carved from curved sections of hollow bamboo trunks; their function was to support an artist's wrist while painting or doing calligraphy. This example is carved in shallow incisions through the bamboo skin with a design of a dragonfly on a rose bush. The wrist rest bears the signature of the 20th-century Chinese artist Xu Subai (1909–1976). Xu was born in Changzhou, Jiangsu province, but when he was seventeen moved to nearby Shanghai. There he became part of an artistic circle that included such esteemed artists as the calligrapher Shen Yinmo (1883–1971) and the painters Feng Chaoran (1882–1954) and Cheng Shifa (1921–2007). While Xu was best known as a bamboo carver, he was also a recognized painter and calligrapher.

## 26b

Xu Xiaomu (1916–1999)  
*Wrist Rest with Riverside Pavilion*  
 China, 1989  
 Carved bamboo  
 10.93 × 3 × 0.59 in. (27.75 × 7.55 × 1.5 cm)  
 Signed: Zhushi zhai (Bamboo and Stone Studio)  
 Inscribed: Gaoqing ge (Pavilion of Noble Calm)  
 Daryl S. Paulson Collection (BAM 04)

This elegant wrist rest is carved in low relief with a river landscape and an elaborate multi-storied pavilion, with swirling clouds in the distant sky. An inscription at the upper right bears the title, “Pavilion of Noble Calm” (*Gaoqing ge*) in clerical script, and a

note in running script reads, “In the eighth year of the Tongzhi reign [1869], [made in the] Bamboo and Stone Studio [*Zhushi zhai*].” Despite the inscribed Qing dynasty date, “Bamboo and Stone Studio” was the artistic nickname of the 20th-century bamboo carver Xu Xiaomu (1916–1999), who was born in Wujin, Jiangsu province, and like Xu Subai worked for most of his life in Shanghai. This brush rest may have been carved as a copy of an earlier Qing dynasty brush rest depicting the same scene, or the carving may have replicated a Tongzhi-era painting depicting this pavilion. The detailed depiction of the pavilion recalls similar depictions in Ming and Qing dynasty paintings of the Yueyang Tower (*Yueyang lou*) overlooking Lake Dongting in China's Hunan province. This tower, originally built during the early Tang dynasty, became famous through an essay written by Fan Zhongyan (989–1052), *The Yueyang Pavilion*.<sup>24</sup> This pavilion was closely linked to the Daoist alchemist, poet, and swordsman Lü Dongbin, one of the most popular members of the group known as the Eight Immortals (*Ba xian*). Lü was often said to have visited the tower to drink wine, and the association of Lü with the Yueyang Tower became even more widespread from the Yuan dynasty (1260–1368) onward, with the publication of Ma Zhiyuan's play, *Lü Dongbin Thrice Intoxicated at the Yueyang Tower*.

<sup>24</sup> Translated in Richard E. Strassberg, *Inscribed Landscapes: Travel Writing from Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 158–59.



26a



26b



Ōbaku Taihō (1691–1774)

*Bamboo in Moonlight*

Japan, 18th c.

Hanging scroll; ink on silk

43 × 14 1/8 in. (109.22 × 35.88 cm);

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,

Gift of George and Lillian Kuwayama

(M.2002.157.2)

The Japanese Ōbaku (Ch. Huangbo) sect of Chan (J. Zen) Buddhism originated in China at the Wanfu si (Ten Thousand Good Fortunes Temple) on Mount Huangbo in Fujian Province. Many Chinese Huangbo Buddhist monks fled to Japan after the Manchu conquest of China in 1644, and a branch of the Huangbo sect was established by the Chinese monk Yinyuan (J. Ingen), who arrived in Japan in 1654, accompanied by thirty-three Chinese monks. The sect's headquarters temple, the Manpuku-ji in Uji, south of Kyōto, was founded in 1661, and the Ōbaku sect has flourished ever since.

The painter of this scroll, Ōbaku Taihō, was born in China but emigrated to Japan in 1722. Bamboo is a subject much loved by artists throughout East Asia, for it symbolizes the human virtues of strength and flexibility — it bends in a strong wind, but does not break. In addition, its green leaves symbolize vitality. These themes resonated deeply with Confucians, Buddhists, and Daoists alike for many centuries, and continues to do so today.





# Buddhism

*Stephen Little*

This essay presents a brief history of Buddhism, beginning in India and following the religion's gradual movement to China, Korea, and Japan.<sup>1</sup> While its basic tenets have remained unchanged throughout its history, as Buddhism expanded throughout Asia it went through many changes as it encountered pre-existing, non-Indian cultural traditions and systems of belief. Among these were Chinese Daoism, Korean Shamanism, and Japanese Shintō. This essay highlights both the continuities and changes that occurred as Buddhism spread from India to northeast Asia.

## ***Introduction to Buddhism***

The historical Buddha Shakyamuni (Sage of the *Shakya* [clan], also known as Gautama Siddhartha) lived in India during the sixth century BCE. Buddhists believe that during his lifetime Siddhartha discovered a means of escaping the endless cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth determined by karma (the accumulated weight of one's thoughts and actions). Through meditation he attained a state known as *samadhi* (profound mental concentration), leading to his enlightenment. The site of the Buddha's enlightenment is commemorated at the Mahābodhi temple

in Bōdh Gayā, in the modern Indian state of Bihar.

At the moment of his enlightenment, the Buddha fully experienced the illusory nature of existence, the fundamental impermanence and transience of all things, the characteristics of cause and effect, and the notion that nothing originates independently of other things, that is, the concept of interdependent origination. The Buddha taught that by cultivating mindfulness of the illusion of duality through meditation and a heightened sensitivity to these fundamental truths that define the nature of being, one could attain the state of Nirvana, literally “blowing out” and analogous to the extinguishing of a candle flame. The attainment of Nirvana signified the merging of a sentient being's inner spirit with the void out of which all reality emerges and escaping from the wheel of *saṃsāra* (the endless cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth, or the web of existence).

The Buddha taught the doctrine of the Catvāri āryasatyāni (Four Noble Truths): Duḥkha (that all life is inevitably sorrowful); Samudaya (that sorrow is due to craving and delusion); Nirodha (that sorrow can only be relieved by the cessation of craving and transcending dualistic thinking); and Mārga (that this result can only be achieved through carefully disciplined and moral conduct, culminating in a life of concentration and meditation). By dualistic thinking Buddhists mean perceiving the world in terms of illusory categories of opposing qualities (e.g., dark and light), rather than in terms of holistic unities.

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<sup>1</sup> Parts of this essay originally appeared in Stephen Little, *Visions of the Dharma: Japanese Buddhist Paintings and Prints in the Honolulu Academy of Arts* (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 1991), 13–16, and appear here with the permission of the Honolulu Museum of Art.

According to the Buddha, the bonds of this mundane existence could be transcended through self-discipline and by following the Āryaṣṭāṅgamārga (Eightfold Noble Path), consisting of Samyakdṛṣṭi (Right Views), Samyaksamkalpa (Right Resolve), Samyagvāc (Right Speech), Samyakkarmānta (Right Conduct), Samyagājīva (Right Livelihood), Samyagvyāyāma (Right Effort), Samyaksmr̥ti (Right Mindfulness), and Samyaksamādhi (Right Concentration). These doctrines became the basis of Theravāda Buddhism, the teachings of the elders, the earliest school of Buddhist belief and practice, which focused on monastic practice as the most direct means to enlightenment. Today, the Theravāda tradition is the dominant form of Buddhism in Southeast Asia. The Buddha's teachings, and the concepts on which they were based, became known as the dharma (law or doctrine and the natural order of things).

Several hundred years after the Buddha's death and entrance into Nirvana, or *parinirvāṇa*, Buddhism in India developed a new and more complex form known as Mahāyāna (the Great Vehicle). This tradition emerged in the first and second centuries and was the form of Buddhism ultimately transmitted to Gandhara in modern Pakistan and Afghanistan, Central Asia, the Himalayas, and East Asia in China, Korea, and Japan.

Mahāyāna Buddhism taught that all sentient beings could become enlightened through their faith, the cultivation of good karma, and the assistance of bodhisattvas. In the Buddhist world bodhisattvas are beings who have attained enlightenment, but who vow to defer their entry into Nirvana in order to help all other beings attain enlightenment. In Mahayana Buddhism a complex system of multiple universes and *kalpas* (cosmic time-cycles) evolved, along with a pantheon of innumerable Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Every time-cycle and universe had its own Buddha. The Mahāyāna system focused on the presence of Five Jina Buddhas, cosmic beings who inhabit and embody the five directions: east, west, north, south, and the center.

These Buddhas are respectively Akṣobhya, Amitābha, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi, and Vairocana. The historical Buddha Shakyamuni was believed to be an emanation of the central of the Five Cosmic Buddhas, Vairocana. Among the key texts of the Mahāyāna tradition are the *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sūtra*), the *Prajñāpāramitā* (*Supreme Wisdom*) *Sūtras*, and the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (*Sūtra of Vimalakīrti*).

### India

Part of Buddhism's appeal was its compassionate teaching that enlightenment was open to all sentient beings, including all humans regardless of their class or caste. Buddhism in India developed slowly in the first several centuries after the Buddha's death but achieved a great prominence during the reign of the Maurya king Ashoka (304–232 BCE), who propagated the new faith throughout his vast kingdom in northern and central India. Among the symbols appropriated by Ashoka, and visible at the top of several of the commemorative stone columns he erected throughout his realm, were the lion representing the Shakya clan into which the Buddha was born and *dharmachakra* (the wheel of the dharma).

During the succeeding Shunga dynasty (185–75 BCE), Buddhism continued to spread and gain adherents, especially in northern India. This period witnessed the creation of several enormous stupas, or reliquary mounds, housing relics of the Buddha's physical body. As seen from the surviving and reconstructed examples at Sanchi, northeast of Bhopal in the modern state of Madhya Pradesh, early Indian stupas consisted of a hemispherical earthen mound faced with stone, surrounded by stone fences and *torana* (elaborate gateways), the latter often carved with narrative scenes depicting *Jātaka* tales (stories of the Buddha's previous rebirths) and scenes from the life of the historic Buddha. The Great Stupa of Sanchi, one of several at the Sanchi site, is said to have originally been built by

King Ashoka in the third century BCE, with the existing balustrades and gateways dating to one or two centuries later.

Another important early example of a Buddhist stupa was the Bharhut Stupa, dating to the second century BCE and located in the Satna district of Madhya Pradesh. This monumental stupa, whose balustrades and gates were extensively carved with symbolic and narrative scenes, was excavated in 1874 under the direction of Sir Alexander Cunningham, founder of the Archaeological Survey of India. Although discovered in ruins, the remarkable balustrades and gates were reconstructed in the late nineteenth century, major parts of which are now in the Indian Museum in Kolkata. These carved scenes, like those on the gateways of the Great Stupa of Sanchi, are among the first surviving masterpieces of Buddhist narrative sculpture.

In addition to the extensive literary evidence found in the south Indian Pali language canon of Buddhist texts, architectural evidence of Buddhism's spread to southern India is found in ruins and stone bas-relief sculptures from such monuments as the Great Stupa of Amaravati, located in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, dating from the second century BCE to the second century CE. Although only the stupa's foundation survives, the myriad narrative sculptures that once covered the structure's sides are now kept at the Government Museum, Chennai, and the British Museum, London.<sup>2</sup> The Shunga dynasty also saw the widespread carving of *chaitya* (large temples) directly out of rock cliffs, dating from the first century BCE to second century CE. These large-scale sacred sites, for example at Karli and Bhaja in Maharashtra state, are evidence of the increasing material patronage of Buddhist tem-

ples and monasteries, funded by both aristocratic and non-aristocratic patrons.

The Kushan dynasty (first century BCE–fourth century CE) was a period of the widespread practice of Buddhism in both north-central and northwest India. The Kushan Empire, which stretched deep into what is now modern Pakistan and Afghanistan, had two capitals: one at Mathura in north-central India and one at Bagram in Afghanistan. This period witnessed extensive trade and the exchange of ideas and artistic practices between India and both China and the Mediterranean world. This was a period that witnessed the emergence of the Mahayana doctrine and widespread belief in the concept of the enlightened bodhisattva. This concept is well articulated in the *Lotus Sūtra*, written in several stages between the first century BCE and the second century CE.<sup>3</sup> Eventually, many bodhisattvas, believed to be manifestations of the cosmic Jina Buddhas, emerged within Mahāyāna Buddhism. Thus Avalokiteśvara (Bodhisattva of Compassion) is a manifestation of Amitābha (Buddha of the West), and Mañjuśrī (Bodhisattva of Wisdom) is a manifestation of the historical Buddha Śakyamuni, who is himself a manifestation of Vairocana.

While no known Buddhist paintings survive from the Kushan dynasty, both painting and sculpture flourished, and hundreds of Kushan-period Buddhist sculptures survive, mostly in stone and terracotta. Whereas the overall manner and techniques of the characteristic red sandstone Mathura-style Buddhist sculptures closely resemble those of their contemporaneous Hindu counterparts in north-central India, those of the northwest Kushan areas of Gandhara more closely favor Hellenistic sculptures. This is

2 See C. Sivaramamurti, *Amaravati Sculptures in the Chennai Government Museum* (Chennai: Thiru S. Rangamani, 1998), and Robert Knox, *Amaravati: Buddhist Sculpture from the Great Stūpa* (London: British Museum Press, 1992).

3 For English translations of the *Lotus Sūtra*, see Leon Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma (The Lotus Sutra)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), and Burton Watson, trans., *The Lotus Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

not surprising given that parts of the north-west Kushan empire overlapped parts of the empire of Alexander the Great and the Hellenized kingdoms that followed, particularly in Gandhara and Bactria. Thus, Gandharan sculptures embody distinctly Hellenistic and Roman features, most clearly visible in the realistic style of depicting figures' bodies and faces, and the use of robes closely resembling the togas seen in ancient sculptures of the Mediterranean world.

It was during the Gupta dynasty (320–550) and its immediate successors that the branch of Buddhism known as Vajrayāna, Tantric (also known as Esoteric) Buddhism came to fruition. Vajrayāna (Diamond or Thunderbolt Vehicle) signifies the indestructible nature of the Buddhist dharma. Although the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna paths had both public and private practices, Vajrayāna Buddhism presented a far more complex series of meditation and visualization practices created largely for use by individual practitioners. Thus, while Vajrayāna Buddhism always had an important public face, with rituals geared toward the needs of the community, it was within the realm of private devotional practice that Vajrayāna made its greatest contribution.

In essence, Vajrayāna Buddhism taught that enlightenment could be achieved through an understanding of the absolute teachings of the Cosmic Buddha Vairocana, which transcend all sects of Buddhism. These esoteric, thus secret, teachings were transmitted orally from master to student. Vajrayāna Buddhist practice brought with it the uses of several important tools. These include the mantra (a sacred syllable or sound embodying the spiritual energy of a Buddha or other deity), the mudra (a sacred gesture indicating a particular state of being or symbolizing a particular Buddha or deity), and the mandala (a sacred diagram and, simultaneously, a map of cosmic space and a diagram of human consciousness). Today, Vajrayāna Buddhism is practiced primarily in the Himalayas and in Japan, although in the past century its

practice has also spread to Europe and the Americas.

The earliest surviving Buddhist paintings in India date to the late Gupta period (fifth century) and are found on the walls of the spectacular Ajanta caves, not far from Aurangabad in Maharashtra state. These depict both *Jātaka* tales and scenes from the historical Buddha's life and are astonishing for their sophisticated and elegant figural rendering and harmonious colors. Gupta sculpture, brilliantly manifested in statues made at both Sarnath and Mathura, evidences a style in which the human body is completely realized in a manner that carefully balances realism and depth of spiritual understanding. The mature Gupta style of Buddhist sculpture had a profound influence throughout Southeast Asia and as far away as China, Korea, and Japan during the Tang (618–906), Unified Silla (668–935), and Heian (794–1185) periods, respectively.

The last great flourishing of Buddhism in India occurred during the Pala dynasty, which ruled northeast India and parts of modern Bangladesh from the eighth through twelfth centuries. Vajrayāna Buddhism proliferated during this period, leaving a substantial artistic legacy of painting and sculpture. It is particularly evident from both surviving texts and works of art that the Vajrayāna pantheon was well established during the Pala period, with the widespread depiction of female deities, such as the goddesses Tara and Prajñāpāramitā; of multiarmed or multi-headed deities, such as the wrathful protectors Hevajra and Mahākāla; and of Tantric forms of such bodhisattvas as Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī, respectively the bodhisattvas of compassion and wisdom. Many Pala sculptures bear inscriptions, sometimes dated. The vast majority of surviving Pala-period Buddhist paintings comprise small-scale manuscript pages from a variety of sutras, written and illuminated on dried palm leaves. The combined visual evidence of Pala paintings and sculptures demonstrates that the practice of Vajrayāna Buddhism reached a new



zenith in this period. Buddhist universities, such as the one at Nalanda in Bihar, India, flourished and attracted students from as far away as Tibet, Central Asia, China, Korea, and Indonesia.

The widespread practice of Buddhism in India largely came to an end with the invasions by Muslim warriors from Afghanistan and Central Asia in the late twelfth century. These invaders, who established the Mamluk dynasty, the first of five dynasties to rule during the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526), shut down and destroyed most Buddhist temples and monasteries, including such famed centers of Buddhist learning as Nalanda and Vikramashila in Bihar, and Taxila in north-west Pakistan. Monks and nuns were ordered to return to lay life. Many Buddhist adepts who survived this onslaught fled north, to Nepal's Kathmandu Valley and even farther into Tibet, taking with them sophisticated knowledge of Buddhist practices, in addition to examples of Indian illuminated palm-leaf sutras. Due to this exodus, many Pala-period painted manuscripts survived destruction in the Himalayas.<sup>4</sup> The spiritual and artistic impact of Pala Buddhism is especially visible in the Buddhist painting and sculpture of Nepal and Tibet. This is clear from comparison of the figures of Buddhas and bodhisattvas in early Newari *paubha* and Tibetan *thangka* (Himalayan paintings) with their counterparts in surviving Pala-period illuminated manuscripts.

### Central Asia

From the first through fourteenth centuries, the Silk Road linking the Mediterranean world to China and East Asia was not only a conduit for trade in silk and other precious

materials and objects, but also a channel for philosophies and religions, among them Nestorian Christianity, Buddhism, and, later, Islam. In particular, during the Chinese Northern and Southern Dynasties Period (220–589) and the Tang dynasty (618–906), the Silk Road provided a highway between India, Gandhara, and China. A series of city-states and oases along the Silk Road provided opportunities for trade for merchants and a haven for pilgrims. These city-states were centers of Buddhist worship, as well as centers of production of Buddhist art. Those situated on the northern Silk Road running north of the vast Taklamakan Desert included Kucha and Turfan, while those on the southern Silk Road included Khotan, and at the eastern end Dunhuang. Several of these Central Asian oasis states played key roles in the development of the Buddhist pantheon. The cult of Vaiśravaṇa, Guardian King of the North, for example, originated in Khotan and later spread to China and Tibet. Similarly, the cult of the Ten Kings of Hell, widely venerated in East Asia as judges of an individual's fate after death, began along the Silk Road and was imported into China during the Tang dynasty.<sup>5</sup>

The primary artistic remains of Buddhist practice along these Silk Road oases are a series of magnificent cave-temples decorated with wall paintings and sculptures. Among the most important of these is Dunhuang, in China's far western Gansu province, where several hundred caves with brilliant murals still survive, and the Bezeklik Caves near Turfan, whose murals exist largely as fragments found both in situ and in museum collections.

4 For examples of Pala dynasty Buddhist texts that were preserved in the Himalayas, see Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Painting: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1993), cats. 6, 8.

5 See Stephen F. Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994).

## China

The first Buddhist temple in China was established in 68 CE in Luoyang, Henan province, then the capital of the Eastern Han dynasty. Because Buddhism arrived in China at a time of increasing political conflict, the Indian religion, open to all sentient beings, quickly spread among aristocrats, merchants, scholars, and peasants alike during the fragmentation of the following Northern and Southern Dynasties period (220–589). The form of Buddhism that came to China was the Mahayana school, with its belief in both Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Once translated into Chinese, the Mahayana texts that had the greatest impact in China were the *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sūtra*), the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (*Flower Garland Sūtra*), the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (*Sūtra of Vimalakīrti*), the *Lañkāvatāra Sūtra* (*Sūtra the Descent into Lañka*), the *Sukhāvātīvyūha Sūtra* (*Sūtra of Infinite Life*), the *Amitābha Sūtra* (*Sūtra of [the Buddha] Amitābha*), and the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* (*Sūtras of Supreme Wisdom*). It is significant that even in Korea and Japan, classical Chinese remained the lingua franca of all Buddhist texts and commentaries.

In China Buddhism encountered the indigenous Chinese belief in Daoism, a philosophy that by the fourth and fifth centuries had transformed itself into a full-fledged religion with an astonishing pantheon of gods and goddesses, but, paradoxically, no supreme being.<sup>6</sup> While vying for imperial patronage during the Northern and Southern Dynasties period, Buddhists and Daoists frequently debated each other before both Chinese and non-Chinese emperors. In the long term these two systems of belief ended up co-existing, along with the secular belief in Confucianism, a philosophy focused on how best to create and maintain a harmonious society.

The earliest known Buddhist images from China date to the late Han and Three Kingdoms period (220–280) and depict seated Buddhas. These appear in Han dynasty stone tomb carvings in Sichuan province and on third- and fourth-century ceramics from Zhejiang province. The first surviving dated Chinese Buddhist sculpture dates to 338.<sup>7</sup> This work's close stylistic relationship to Gandharan sculptures suggests close artistic and trade ties between northern China and the regions of modern Afghanistan and Pakistan from the third century onward. Imperial patronage of Buddhist art and architecture reached its first high point in China during the Northern and Southern Dynasties period, with the commissioning of important cave-temple sites by emperors of the Northern Wei (386–534) and Northern Qi (550–557) dynasties. Substantial levels of imperial sponsorship of Buddhist structures continued into the Tang dynasty, only briefly interrupted by the anti-Buddhist persecution promulgated in 845 by the Tang emperor Wuzong. The great Six Dynasties and Tang-period Buddhist cave-temple sites of Yungang, Longmen, Gongxian, Xiangtang Shan, and Tianlong Shan mirror the devotion to Buddhism among many social classes.<sup>8</sup>

In China and elsewhere in East Asia, the Buddhist stupa was transformed into the multistoried tower known as a pagoda. Pagodas can take many different shapes, but they all function as reliquaries, with the sacred relics buried within the pagoda's foundation. The oldest surviving pagoda in China is the twelve-sided brick pagoda at the base of Mount Song, built in 523 during the Northern Wei dynasty.

Several courageous Chinese monks traveled to India in the first millennium of Buddhism's presence in China, both to gain a

6 For a general introduction to Daoism and Daoist art, see Stephen Little with Shawn Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000).

7 See René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé, ed., *Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Sculpture: The Avery Brundage Collection* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1974).

8 This is known from surviving dedicatory inscriptions on many of the cave-chapel walls.

deeper understanding of Buddhism and to bring back sacred texts that had been previously unavailable in China. Several of these pilgrims, listed here with the dates of their travels, left extensive written records of their journeys: Faxian (399–414), Xuanzang (629–645), and Yijing (689–695). Of these Xuanzang was also a brilliant translator; he translated many Sanskrit sutras into Chinese including the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*Great Sūtras of Supreme Wisdom*) and the *Bhaiṣajyaguru Sūtra* (*Sūtra of Bhaiṣajyaguru [Buddha of Healing]*).

The school of Buddhism best known by its Japanese name, Zen, is known in China as *Chan* (meditation; Sk. *dhyana*). The Chan school originated in the sixth century. According to tradition, an enlightened monk from India named Bodhidharma came to China during the late Northern and Southern Dynasties Period. He first visited the court of Emperor Wudi of the Liang dynasty in Jinkang (the modern-day Nanjing in Jiangsu province), but after a disastrous interview, he headed north, crossed the Yangzi River, and was welcomed at the court of the Northern Tuoba Wei emperor in Luoyang, the non-Chinese ruler of northern China. Just to the west of Luoyang, he established a hermitage on the upper slopes of Mount Song, the central of China's Five Sacred Peaks.

Chan Buddhism was in many ways a revolutionary new system of belief. While grounded in traditional Mahayana practice, this new teaching emphasized that human beings had the chance to attain enlightenment in this lifetime. This ran counter to the prevalent view that it took many, perhaps thousands, of rebirths to attain enlightenment. In this, Chan and Vajrayāna Buddhism share a belief. Both schools engage deeply with the nature of consciousness and developed specific techniques to accelerate the attainment of enlightenment. Although it makes use of written texts, Chan Buddhism often takes an anti-intellectual approach to enlightenment; for example, encouraging manual labor and emphasizing the illusory nature of dualistic

thinking. Several quotes from the Tang dynasty Chan master Huangbo Xiyun (d. 850) succinctly convey the flavor of Chan thinking:

All the Buddhas and all sentient beings are nothing but the One Mind, beside which nothing exists. [...] The One Mind alone is the Buddha, and there is no distinction between the Buddha and sentient things.

If you would only rid yourselves of the concepts of ordinary and Enlightened, you would find that there is no other Buddha than the Buddha in your own Mind. The arising and the elimination of illusion are both illusory. Illusion is not something rooted in Reality; it exists because of your dualistic thinking. If you will only cease to indulge in opposed concepts such as “ordinary” and “Enlightened,” illusion will cease of itself.<sup>9</sup>

Among the great Chinese Chan texts are the *Liuzu tanjing* (*Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*), the *Biyān lu* (*Blue Cliff Record*), and the *Chuandeng lu* (*Transmission of the Lamp*), which record the sayings and actions of the most renowned Chan monks.

The Tang dynasty witnessed the brief ascension and practice of Vajrayāna Buddhism in China, where it was known as *Mijiao* (hidden or secret teaching). An erudite series of Vajrayāna masters brought this school from India to China. Perhaps the most important of these was Amoghavajra (705–774), born in Samarqand of an Indian father and a Sogdian mother. After arriving in China, he translated many Vajrayāna texts from Sanskrit into Chinese. He was the spiritual master of the monk Huiguo (746–805), who in turn was the teacher of the Japanese monk Kūkai (774–835) who brought Vajrayāna Buddhism from China to Japan.

9 Translated by John Blofeld in *The Zen Teachings of Huang Po: On the Transmission of Mind* (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 29, 58–59.

Many members of the Tang imperial family and aristocracy practiced Vajrayana Buddhism in part because its pantheon included powerful, often wrathful yet enlightened deities who could protect one's family or the entire nation from harm. While Tang dynasty Vajrayāna Buddhist paintings are extremely rare — only a handful, both murals and portable scrolls on silk, from the Dunhuang cave-temples survive — several Tang Vajrayāna Buddhist sculptures are extant, among them rare marble examples of bodhisattvas and wrathful Wisdom Kings, the latter a group of deities whose skill is the transformation of such human emotions into energies that accelerate enlightenment.<sup>10</sup>

One of the most popular Mahāyāna practices in China was the veneration of Guanyin, Bodhisattva of Compassion. An entire chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* is devoted to the miracles performed by Guanyin, and this figure was and continues to be widely worshipped in Korea and Japan as well as China. The hugely popular Pure Land sect taught that mere recitation of the bodhisattva's name was sufficient to guarantee rebirth in the Western Paradise, home of the Buddha Amitābha and the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, also known as Guanyin.

During the Tang and Song (960–1279) dynasties, Buddhism continued to grow, and experience increased imperial patronage, a pattern which, with rare exceptions, continued through the remaining imperial dynasties Yuan (1260–1368), Ming (1368–1644), and Qing (1644–1911). Many schools of Buddhism evolved in China, of which the most widespread were the Pure Land School, focused on the Buddha Amitābha and salvation in the Western Paradise, and the Chan school. After the Tang dynasty, the Vajrayāna school gradually lost adherents, though it continued to be supported by the imperial families of the Yuan, Ming, and Qing periods.

The peak of imperial patronage of Chan Buddhism occurred during the Song dynasty, particularly during the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1378). During this period the most important Chan temples were located in and around Zhejiang province. So significant were these temples, especially those known as the *Wu shan* (Five Mountains), that in the Southern Song and Yuan dynasties, many Japanese monks visited these temples for extended stays, to study and practice Chan with the leading Chinese masters of the day. A particular style of abbreviated Chan ink painting emerged in this environment, alongside traditional images of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other sacred beings used in temple rituals. Many of the spare and abbreviated ink paintings created by Chinese Chan painters were either purchased by or gifted to visiting Japanese monks in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. It is for this reason that the majority of surviving works by such Chinese masters of Chan ink painting as Fachang Muqi, Liang Kai, Yujian, and Yintuoluo are found in Japanese museum and temple collections, having been brought to Japan many centuries ago.<sup>11</sup>

China was occupied by the Mongols between 1260 and 1368. The first Mongol emperor was Khubilai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan. Khubilai was a devotee of Tibetan Vajrayāna Buddhism, and while other schools of Buddhism flourished in China at the same time, Tibetan Buddhism was dominant at the imperial court in Dadu (now Beijing). Khubilai Khan invited the Newari Buddhist monk Anige, originally from the Kathmandu Valley, to direct all imperially commissioned works of art and architecture in China, and from this point onward the Buddhist arts of Nepal and Tibet played vital roles as models for the production of imperial Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasty Buddhist art.

10 For a later Japanese depiction of the Wisdom King Ragaraja Vidyaraja (Aizen Myō-ō), see Little, *Visions of the Dharma*, 66–67, cat. 15.

11 See, for example, *Mokkei [Muqi]* (Tokyo: Gotoh Museum, 1996).

## Korea

Buddhism was first introduced into Korea from China in the year 372. The earliest Buddhist art in Korea dates to the Three Kingdoms Period (57–668). At this time the Korean peninsula was divided into three states: Silla in the southeast, Baekje in the southwest, and Goguryeo in the north. The leaders of all three commissioned significant works of Buddhist architecture and sculpture. Those that survive present a uniquely Korean interpretation of the representation of sacred Buddhist images. Several local styles developed into a more unified, Tang dynasty-inspired style when the peninsula was brought under unified control by the Unified Silla dynasty (668–935).

The greatest Buddhist cave-temples site in Korea is the Seokguram Cave, built near the city of Gyeongju in the eighth century. What appears to be a cave is in fact a construction made of large granite blocks, subsequently covered with an enormous mound of dirt to create a man-made cavern. This cave-temple contains a large freestanding image of Buddha Shakyamuni surrounded by bas relief carvings of bodhisattvas, disciples, the Hindu gods Brahmā and Indra, and four *lokapala* (Guardian Kings).

Royal and governmental support for Buddhism reached previously unparalleled heights of sophistication in Korea during the Goryeo dynasty (918–1392). This period saw the development of a uniquely Korean style of Buddhist figure painting characterized by extreme delicacy of line, the use of extensive gold as highlights for the depiction of textiles, and diaphanous renderings of textiles.

The greatest single Buddhist monument in Korea is widely considered to be the Tripitaka Koreana, a set of over 81,000 wooden blocks for printing the entire Buddhist canon, carved between 1236 and 1251 to replace an earlier set of blocks destroyed by the Mongol invasion of 1234. This set of over 1,500 texts was based on an earlier canon carved onto wooden printing blocks during

the Liao dynasty (907–1125) in China. Kept today at the Haein-sa temple in South Gyeongsang province, the miraculously preserved Tripitaka Koreana was designated a UNESCO Memory of the World National Treasure in 1962.

Although official governmental patronage of Buddhism decreased significantly during the Joseon dynasty (1392–1897), owing to overwhelming official support for Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, Buddhist art flourished nonetheless. Patrons of Buddhist paintings and sculpture included members of the Joseon royal family as well as many lay practitioners throughout the country. Active Korean Buddhist temples remain among the most important repositories of surviving Buddhist paintings, sculptures, and manuscripts from the Joseon dynasty. The most widespread school of Buddhism in Korea today is the Jogye Order, a Seon (J. Zen) sect.

## Japan

Buddhism was introduced to Japan from Korea in the year 552, when the king of Baekje in southeastern Korea sent sculpted images and sutras to the Japanese Emperor Kinmei (r. 539–571), along with a suggestion that the Japanese monarch begin practicing Buddhism. Within two hundred years, largely through the support of such imperial figures as Prince Shōtoku (574–622) and the eighth-century rulers Emperor Shōmu and Empress Shōtoku, Buddhist temples and ideology spread throughout Japan. Today Buddhism is the dominant religion in Japan, practiced alongside the indigenous Shintō veneration of *kami* (nature deities). By the Heian period (794–1185), a syncretic accommodation with Shintō had occurred. It is noteworthy that through most of later Japanese history, Buddhism and Shintō were simultaneously patronized by the imperial family. While the Japanese emperors were traditionally believed to be descended from Amaterasu Ōmikami, the Shintō Sun goddess, they be-

came the primary patrons of Buddhism in Japan.

Several key changes characterized the development of Japanese Buddhism during the Heian period, an era of great cultural richness. During those four centuries, Buddhism witnessed the introduction into Japan of the Vajrayāna school, brought from China by the monk Kūkai (774–835; posthumously called Kōbō Daishi). Kūkai is venerated today as the founder of the Japanese Shingon (“Mantra”) sect of Buddhism. Among other things, Vajrayāna Buddhism introduced the mandala into Japanese Buddhist practice. It is significant that Kūkai, like his Chinese master Huiguo, stressed the efficacy of art in religious teaching, and Kūkai was himself a gifted artist and calligrapher. In his *Shōrai mokuroku* (*Memorial on the Presentation of the List of Newly Imported Sutras*), Kūkai wrote:

The law [dharma] has no speech, but without speech it cannot be expressed. Eternal truth [Sk. *tathātā*] transcends form, but only by means of form can it be understood. Mistakes will be made in the effort to point at the truth, for there is no clearly defined method of teaching, but even when art does not excite admiration by its unusual quality, it is a treasure which protects the country and benefits the people.

In truth, the esoteric doctrines are so profound as to defy their enunciation in writing. With the help of painting, however, their obscurities may be understood. The various attitudes and mudrās of the holy images all have their source in Buddha’s love, and one may attain Buddhahood at the sight of them. Thus the secrets of the sutras and commentaries can be depicted in art, and the essential truths of the esoteric teachings are all set forth therein. Neither teachers nor students can dispense with it. Art is what reveals to us the state of perfection.<sup>12</sup>

12 William Theodore de Bary, ed., *The Buddhist*

One of the most significant developments within Japanese Buddhism was the accommodation of Buddhism and Shintō known as *honji-suijaku*. This theory, in which Shintō deities were seen as *suijaku* (manifestations) of *honji* (Buddhist deities), was developed as early as the ninth century in the Heian period.<sup>13</sup> *Honji-suijaku* concepts can be tied to beliefs that correlated sacred places in Japan with the divine paradises associated with Buddhist deities. During the Heian period, many Shintō shrines and Buddhist temples were equated with Buddhist paradises, a practice that had its earlier precedents in China.<sup>14</sup> The *honji-suijaku* theory led to the harmonious co-existence in Japan of Shintō and Buddhist deities and beliefs, which still continues to this day. It is significant that the Shintō *kami* were first depicted in anthropomorphic form only after the arrival in Japan of images of Buddhist deities.

In the Kamakura (1185–1333) and Muromachi (1336–1573) periods, Zen emerged as a leading school of Japanese Buddhism. As seen above, one of Zen’s primary teachings is that enlightenment can occur suddenly without the intervention of sutras, rituals, or bodhisattvas. The Zen school emphasized that all creatures had the fundamental Buddha-nature within themselves. Through discipline, physical labor, and the use of special techniques such as the *kōan* (metaphysical riddle with no logical answer), the individual could attain a state that transcended the boundaries of quotidian thought and the obscurations of mind which are obstacles to enlightenment.

*Tradition in India, China, and Japan* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 292.

13 Alicia Matsunaga, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation: The Historical Development of the Honji-Suijaku Theory* (Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle, 1969).

14 For example, the identification of Putuo Shan, an island off the coast of Ningbo, Zhejiang province, with the Potalaka paradise of Avalokiteśvara, or Guanyin.



## 28a

## Stele with Multiple Buddhas

China, Tang dynasty (618–906) or later  
Sandstone

11.81 × 9.92 × 3.29 in. (30 × 25.2 × 8.35 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (S 08)

This stele depicts a central seated Buddha surrounded by eleven smaller seated Buddhas. Two Buddhist angels (Sk. *apsaras*), their hands folded in prayer, are shown flying on either side of the large Buddha's head. The central Buddha represents the historical Buddha Shakyamuni (known prior to his enlightenment as Siddhartha), who lived in India in the fifth century BCE. He wears a simple monk's robe, its pleats falling in symmetrical folds. On his head is the ushnisha, a cranial bump signifying the Buddha's enlightenment. The Buddha's right hand forms the sacred gesture known as *abhaya mudrā*, meaning "have no fear," while the left hand forms the gesture known as *varada mudrā*, the gesture of charity. A mandorla of stylized flames appears behind the Buddha, on the back of the niche in which he sits.

The multiple Buddhas surrounding the larger central figure represent the concept inherent in Mahāyāna Buddhism that there exist multiple universes (often called Buddha-fields), each of which has its own Buddha. A corollary to this is that Buddha's teaching (Sk. *dharma*) extends infinitely into space in all directions and throughout time. Similar compositions of multiple Buddhas in bas-relief stone carvings began to appear in China during the Northern Wei dynasty, and can be seen in the cave-chapels at the Yungang (Cloud Hill) caves near Datong in northern Shanxi province, carved during the late fifth and early sixth centuries CE.

## 28b

## Seated Buddha Shakyamuni

Korea, Goryeo dynasty, 13th–14th c.

Cast silver with gilding

4 × 2 ¼ × 2 in. (10.16 × 5.71 × 5.08 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,

Purchased with Museum Funds

(M.2000.15.130)

This gilded silver Korean sculpture depicts the Buddha Shakyamuni in meditation; this is indicated by the two hands folded in the lap, a sacred gesture known as *dhyāna mudrā* (mudra of meditation). Throughout Asia many small-scale images of the Buddha were made of cast metal — usually copper or bronze, but also of cast silver and gold. One of the advantages of such small images is that they were easily transported by both land and sea, and were thus instrumental in transmitting different forms and styles of Buddhist sculpture over long distances between cultures. For example, early bronze sculptures of the Buddha cast in Sri Lanka have been excavated on the Indonesian islands of Sulawesi and Kalimantan. Similarly, when Buddhism was introduced to Japan from Korea in the year 552, the king of the Korean kingdom of Baekje sent to the Japanese emperor sculpted images of the Buddha as well as written sutras, or sacred texts.



28a



28b



## 29a

*Maitreya (Mile), the Buddha of the Future*  
China, late Northern Wei dynasty, ca.

525–535

Cast bronze

5 ½ in. (13.97 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Eric Lidow  
(AC1998.251.67)

## 29b

*Seated Buddha Maitreya*

China, 20th c.

Stone

26.18 × 9.84 × 9.65 in. (66.5 × 25 × 24.5 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (S 06)

The Buddha Maitreya (Ch. Mile; K. Miruk; J. Miroku), whose name means “The Benevolent One,” is one of the most important Buddhas in the Mahayana pantheon after the historical Buddha Shakyamuni. He is often referred to as the Buddha of the Future, because it is believed that he will function as the primary Buddha in the next *kalpa*, or cosmic eon of time. Until that time it is thought that Maitreya exists as a bodhisattva, but will eventually descend to earth from the Tushita Heaven where he currently resides, undergo his final rebirth, and become a Buddha.<sup>15</sup> Sculpted and painted images of Maitreya are known throughout the Buddhist world, for he is a sign of the continuing presence of the Dharma throughout time, extending far into the future. In Buddhist art Maitreya can thus appear as either a bodhisattva and a Buddha,

as seen in the two examples in this exhibition.

The small bronze image of Maitreya from the early Northern Wei dynasty depicts him standing on a lotus flower. He wears a flowing robe, has an elaborate crown, and holds a vase (*kundika*, or holy water container) in his left hand — the vase being one of Maitreya’s attributes. Behind the figure is a mandorla decorated with flames, while attached to the outer edges of the mandorla are five flying *apsaras* (Buddhist angels) and four flower-shaped ornaments. Similar features decorate the mandorla of a large Northern Wei gilt bronze shrine dated 524 CE in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in which Maitreya appears as a central Buddha flanked by two bodhisattvas.<sup>16</sup>

The much larger stone image of Maitreya depicts the deity seated on a platform in the so-called “European pose” with both legs pendant. Shown here as a Buddha wearing a simple monk’s robe, Maitreya raises his right hand in the gesture of “having no fear” (*abhaya mudrā*), while the left hand rests on the left knee. While this sculpture’s style resembles that of the early and mid-Tang dynasty (618–906), it is likely a later work replicating the Tang style.

<sup>15</sup> For a general introduction to Maitreya, see Robert E. Buswell, Jr. and Donald S. Lopez, Jr., eds., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 517–18. For an exhibition devoted to Maitreya, see Nandana Chutiwongs and Denise Patry Leidy, *Buddha of the Future: An Early Maitreya from Thailand* (New York: The Asia Society, 1994).

<sup>16</sup> Denise Patry Leidy and Donna Strahan, *Wisdom Embodied: Chinese Buddhist and Daoist Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 66, cat. 7a.

29a



29b



## 30a

*Amida (Sk. Amitābha) Buddha*

Japan, Kamakura period, 1185–1334

Bronze with traces of gilding

19 ¼ × 5 ⅝ × 4 ⅜ in. (48.8 × 14.2 × 11 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
The William T. Sesnon, Jr. Bequest  
(M.81.62.2)

## 30b

*Frontispiece of the “Rules for Repenting and Rebirth in the Pure Land” (Wangsheng Jingtū Chanyuan Yikuei) with Amitābha (Omituo) Flanked by Two Bodhisattvas and Reborn Souls on Lotus Blossoms*

China, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, 1718

Paper with woodblock-printed text and illustration

13 ⅜ × 380 ¼ in. (33.97 × 965.84 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Herbert R. Cole (M.74.91.2)

Belief in the Buddha Amitābha (Ch. Omituo; K. Amita; J. Amida) and his Pure Land in the west can be traced to the Six Dynasties Period in China (4th–6th centuries), and since the Tang dynasty (618–906) images of Amitābha have proliferated in China, Korea, and Japan. The cult of Amitābha and the associated belief in easy rebirth in the Western Paradise found its visual expression in such early Chinese Buddhist cave-temple sites as Xiangtang Shan in Shanxi province.

In East Asian Buddhist art Amitābha is often flanked by Avalokiteśvara, Bodhisattva of Compassion, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Bodhisattva of Benevolence, as seen in the illustrated frontispiece of the Chinese woodblock-printed sutra shown here, in which Amitābha is shown seated on a lotus throne between Avalokiteśvara (to the right) and Mahāsthāmaprāpta (to the left). Further to the left a group of new-born souls, including monks, scholars, and high-ranking officials, are shown being reborn out of lotus flowers which grow in the pond in the Western Par-

adise. Belief in the Pure Land of Amitābha spread in later centuries, with the simple belief that repeated chanting of the Buddha of the West’s name would guarantee rebirth in the Western Paradise.

Part of the flourishing of belief in Amitābha and the Western Paradise in East Asia can be accounted for by the fact that even prior to Buddhism’s arrival in China, the western direction (where the sun sets) had long been associated in Daoism with both death and rebirth. This is reflected in the ancient Daoist belief in the goddess known as the Queen Mother of the West, who ruled the Kunlun Paradise far to the west of China and who was believed to control the length of individuals’ lifespans.

30a



30b



*Bhaiṣajyaguru, the Buddha of Healing*

Seated Buddha

China, Qing dynasty, 18th–19th c.

Stone

17.13 × 11.7 × 8.7 in. (43.5 × 29.7 × 22 cm)

Daryl S. Paulson Collection (S 04)

Worship of Bhaiṣajyaguru, Buddha of Healing, began to spread in China during the Tang dynasty (618–906), when the *Bhaiṣajyaguru Sūtra* was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese. Worship of this Buddha was (and is still widely) believed to ensure good health and the overcoming of illness. Early evidence of his cult is known from before the 7th century in the ancient Buddhist kingdom of Ghandara, which ruled what is now Pakistan and Afghanistan. He is usually shown in the guise of a seated or standing monk, wearing a simple robe, and holding either a medicine bowl or the fruit of the medicinal Myrobalan fruit in one hand. The primary text associated with this Buddha is the *Sutra of the Vows of the Medicine Buddha of Lapis Lazuli Crystal Radiance*, and in paintings Bhaiṣajyaguru is usually depicted with blue skin. In Buddhist paintings Bhaiṣajyaguru is also often accompanied by two attendants representing the Sun and the Moon — respectively Sūryaprabha and Chandraprabha.



32

*Tejaprabhā Buddha (Buddha of Blazing Light) with the God of Longevity and the Seven Star Gods of the Northern Dipper*

Korea, Joseon dynasty, late 19th-early 20th c.

Panel; ink and colors on paper

44 1/2 × 29 1/2 in. (113.03 × 74.93 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,

Purchased with Museum Funds

(M.2000.15.5)

As with the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru, worship of the Buddha Tejaprabhā (Buddha of Blazing Light) first appeared in China during the Tang dynasty (618–906) and spread to Korea and Japan with the eastward movement of Buddhism. In East Asian Buddhism, Tejaprabhā is the Buddha who controls such celestial bodies as the Sun and Moon, the five visible planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn), the twelve Chinese zodiac constellations (different from the twelve Western zodiac constellations, which are based on the annual movements of the sun, being based instead on the twelve-year orbit of Jupiter), and the twenty-eight constellations known as the lunar mansions. It is possible that this Buddha's cult began along the Central Asian Silk Road, which led from China across the Taklamakan Desert to what is now Afghanistan, and further west to the Mediterranean world. The earliest known painted images of Tejaprabhā have been found at the Dunhuang caves in China's western province of Gansu and at the ruined city of Khara-Khoto in Inner Mongolia.

It is significant that Tejaprabhā, a Buddha of the celestial realm, rules over deities who are Daoist in origin — deities of the sun, moon, planets, and myriad constellations. This represents an attempt to subsume these important Daoist deities under the umbrella of Buddhism, and further indicates the harmonious accord of Buddhist and Daoist deities in East Asia, analogous to the merging of Buddhism and shamanism which occurred

in Korea, and Buddhism and Shintō in Japan. This is visible in both Korean and Japanese images of Tejaprabhā, in which he is also accompanied by the same planetary and constellation deities, the latter usually depicted in the guise of Daoist priests.

In this painting Tejaprabhā is accompanied by Shoulao, the Chinese popular God of Longevity (identifiable by his high, domed cranium), and the Gods of the Seven Stars of the Northern (Big) Dipper, the most powerful constellation in the East Asian sky. So important was the Northern Dipper on both the personal and national levels that cults specific to the seven Dipper stars evolved in China, Korea, and Japan. The great Japanese painter and woodblock print artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849), for example, belonged to a cult of the Northern Dipper stars.





## 33a

*Seated Gwanseum, Bodhisattva of Compassion*

Korea, Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), 15th–early 16th c.

Cast bronze with gilding

6 ¼ × 4 × 3 in. (15.87 × 10.16 × 7.62 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,

Purchased with Museum Funds

(M.2000.15.128)

## 33b

*Gwanseum (Sk. Avalokiteśvara) Bodhisattva*

Korea, Joseon dynasty, late 19th–early 20th c.

Hanging scroll; ink, colors, and gold on cotton

34 ¾ × 34 in. (88.27 × 86.36 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,

Purchased with Museum Funds

(M.2000.15.4)

the Korean painting is the presence of a vase holding a branch of the willow tree on the rocky ledge next to Gwanseum; this symbol alludes to Gwanseum specific ability to head and cure illness.

In the upper left corner, floating on clouds, is a group of figures centered on the historical Buddha Shakyamuni accompanied by the Bodhisattvas of Wisdom (Mañjuśrī) and Benevolence (Samantabhadra), along with the Buddha's favorite disciples, the young monk Ānanda and the elderly monk Kaśyapa. In the upper right corner, also floating on clouds, is a group of figures centered on the Amitābha, Buddha of the Western Paradise (of whom the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is an emanation), accompanied by Avalokiteśvara and the bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta, along with two unidentified bodhisattvas.

The most popular of the many bodhisattvas worshipped in East Asia was Avalokiteśvara (Ch. Guanyin; K. Gwanseum; J. Kannon), Bodhisattva of Compassion. An entire section of the seminal *Lotus Sutra* is devoted to Avalokiteśvara, where thirty-three manifestations of the bodhisattva are described. Avalokiteśvara or Gwanseum is the Buddhist savior par excellence.

In both the sculpture and the painting the Bodhisattva of Compassion is seated in the position known as “royal ease” (Sk. *mahārājatilāsana*; K. *yunwangjwa*) on a flat rocky outcropping next to the eastern sea. This suggests that the scene depicts Avalokiteśvara's paradise of Mount Potalaka (K. Botarak), the bodhisattva's traditional abode. At the lower left the Dragon King who rules the oceans emerges from the waves, while at the lower right the child Sudhana floats on a single lotus petal. Sudhana's search for enlightenment is described in the final chapter of the *Flower Garland Sutra* (Sk. *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*). A noteworthy detail of

33a



33b



34

*Jizō (Earth Matrix), Bodhisattva of the Underworld, Accompanied by Six Bodhisattvas, the Monk Daoming, and the Demon King No-poison*

Japan, late Edo or Meiji period, late 19th c.

Hanging scroll (framed); ink, colors, and gold on silk

66 × 42 ½ in. (167.64 × 107.95 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Drs. Chester Chang and Cameron C. Chang M.D.

The name Kṣitigarbha (Ch. Dizang; K. Jijang; J. Jizō) means “Matrix of the Earth.” The origins of this deity, which became one of the most popular bodhisattvas in East Asian Buddhism, can be traced to the Indian goddess Pṛthvī, a personification of the earth. The earliest text to describe Kṣitigarbha was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in the early 5th century. Since the Tang dynasty the primary text associated with Kṣitigarbha has been the *Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva Prañidhāna Sūtra* (*Sutra of the Past Vows of the Earth Matrix Bodhisattva*; Ch. *Dizang pusa benyuan jing*). This text comprises thirteen chapters and includes a sermon given by the Buddha at the request of Mañjuśrī, Bodhisattva of Wisdom, in which the vow taken by Kṣitigarbha is quoted:

Throughout immeasurable eons until the very boundaries of the future, I will establish many expedient devices for the sake of suffering and criminal beings in the Six Paths [Realms]. When they have all been liberated I myself will perfect the Buddha Way.<sup>15</sup>

In this Japanese painting Jizō (Sk. Kṣitigarbha), whose special skill is rescuing souls suffering in hell, sits at the center of an entourage of four bodhisattvas, the Buddhist monk Daomin, and a figure known only as Lord Min. Jizō wears a cowl over this head — an iconographical feature first seen in late Tang and Five Dynasties Period (9th–10th century) from Dunhuang, along the eastern Silk Road. This large painting is a close copy of an earlier 17th-century Korean hanging scroll with a nearly identical composition, owned by the Yoda-ji, an esoteric Shingon sect temple in Higashikagawa City, Shikoku.

<sup>15</sup> Translated in Heng Ching, *Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva* (New York: Institute for Advanced Study of World Religions, 1974), 74.



## 35

Kōmokuten (Virūpākṣa), Guardian of the  
West

Japan, Heian period, 782–1185

Gilt bronze

Height: 7 ⅞ in. (18.1 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The  
Phil Berg Collection (M.71.73.123)

Kōmokuten (Sk. Virūpākṣa) is one of the guardian kings (Sk. Lokapāla; Ch. Tianwang; K. Cheonwang; J. Tennō) of the four cardinal directions. Belief in these four spatial guardians emerged in early Mahāyāna (Great Vehicle) Buddhism in India, and eventually their imagery spread to China, Korea, Japan, and the Himalayas (e.g., Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, and Ladakh), where they function as guardians of cosmic space, nations, and individual temples. This Japanese sculpture of the Guardian King of the West would originally have been part of a group comprising all four kings. They also serve the king of the gods, Indra, and in Buddhist mythology inhabit the summit of Mount Sumeru, the Buddhist axis mundi. The other three of the Heavenly Kings are Dhṛtarāṣṭra (east), Virūḍhaka (south), and Vaiśravaṇa (north). As warriors of the spirit world they are almost always depicted as armed and clothed in armor, with fierce countenances.



**36a**

*Incense Burner with Trigram Design in  
Openwork*

Korea, Joseon dynasty, 18th c.

Wheel-thrown porcelain with pierced  
and applied decoration and clear glaze

7 ¼ × 6 ½ in. (18.41 × 15.55 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,

Purchased with Museum Funds

(M.2000.15.119a-b)

The one ritual implement needed for Buddhist rituals is the incense burner, for the function of incense to both purify the sacred space in which rituals are conducted, and to carry the prayers of the officiants and participants to the heavenly sphere. This Korean example is decorated with four of the Eight Daoist Trigrams, and could have been used for either Daoist or Buddhist rituals.

**36b**

*Kundika*

Korea, Goryeo dynasty, 12th c.

Cast bronze

Height: 4 ½ × 14 in. (11.43 × 35.56 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,

Purchased with Museum Funds

(M.2000.15.172)

The *kundika* is a container of holy water whose origins lie in India. Usually made of ceramic or metal, *kundika* are found throughout the Buddhist world (including in both East Asia and Southeast Asia), and is a key attribute of Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. In Buddhist rituals in China, Korea, and Japan, the *kundika* was used to hold and sprinkle holy water as a form of purification.



36a



36b



37c

*Vase (Ping) in the Form of an Ancient Ritual  
Wine Cup (Gu) with the Eight Buddhist  
Symbols (Bajixiang) and Floral Scrolls*

China, Jiangxi Province, Jingdezhen  
Qing dynasty, Jiaqing mark and period  
(1796–1820)

Wheel-thrown porcelain with clear glaze,  
overglaze painted enamel decoration  
(fencai), and gilding

14  $\frac{7}{16}$  × 7  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (36.67 × 19.05 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
Purchased with funds provided by Mr.  
and Mrs. Harvey S. Dye (M.72.16)

Vessels of this type were specifically made for use on the altars of Buddhist temples during rituals, and would have originally formed part of a garniture set of five vessels, comprising a central incense burner flanked by two trumpet-mouthed beaker vases (to hold flowers) and two candlesticks. This elegant vessel bears the imperial reign mark of the Qing-dynasty Emperor Jiaqing (r. 1796–1820). The shape is based on that of an ancient bronze ritual zun beaker vase of the Shang dynasty (16th–11th century BCE).

Below the mouth of the vase are painted the Eight Buddhist Symbols. These are shown among flowers, and are painted in similar hues against the white porcelain glaze. The Eight Buddhist Symbols first appear during the Yuan dynasty (1260–1368), the period of the Mongol occupation of China. They consist of the following emblems: a conch shell (symbolizing the Buddha's voice), an endless knot (symbolizing the intertwining of wisdom and compassion), fish (symbolizing the spiritual freedom), lotus (symbolizing purity), a parasol (symbolizing respect and protection), a vase (symbolizing truth and longevity), the wheel of the dharma (symbolizing the Buddhist law or doctrine), and a banner (symbolizing righteousness).





# Trans-Pacific Transmissions: The Three Philosophies Manifested in the Art and Ritual of Asian Migrants and Settlers in the Northern Rockies, ca. 1850–1918

*T. Lawrence Larkin*

This essay will consider the development of the three philosophies of pantheistic worship: (Daoism or Shintō), Confucianism, and Buddhism and their artistic manifestations in Northeast Asia under the Qing, Joseon, and Meiji Dynasties and their related expression in Northwestern America under mostly Republican and a few Democratic presidencies. Tracing the transference of the three philosophies and art forms is complicated by the scarcity of firsthand written accounts by Chinese, Korean, and Japanese sojourners. However, archival documents and images of temples, shrines, deities, and worshipers lend support to the thesis presented in this exhibition that pantheistic worship (Daoism or Shintō), Confucianism, and Buddhism were largely represented as separate, discrete philosophies that played an aggregate role in the lives of Asian migrants as they sought to transfer the customs of their ancient homeland to their new and unfamiliar workplace.

Photographic technologies available to Pacific Rim peoples in the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries made possible the collection, ordering, rearrangement, and misplacement of valuable visual data in family collections, public libraries, and state historical society archives. Though rare, images of Asian migrants, settlers, or immigrants visiting, guarding, worshiping, or officiating

at shrines and temples in the Northern Rockies provide a sense of how members of the community imaged veneration of a philosopher-, hero-, or nature-deity. For example, a photograph in the Wyoming State Archives represents Chinese businessman Ah Say and an unidentified woman, perhaps his wife, in formal Western-style dress of the 1890s standing to either side of a small altar covered with an elaborately embroidered cloth and supporting floral bouquets and fruit offerings to the folk stellar deity Fu Xing (God of Good Fortune), represented in court dress holding a *ruyi* scepter and inclining his head toward an attendant offering an ancient *jue* (ritual wine vessel) to signify an auspicious occasion for offerings (fig. 1). One of the deity's strengths as one of three attributes of a good life — the others being wealth and longevity — was helping to ensure the birth and success of male children, which makes this Chinese popular figure a product of the cult of patriarchal authority. The space, traditionally identified as a corner of the temple, or "Joss House," in Evanston, Wyoming, is hung with hexagonal lanterns bearing bird and floral motifs. Another photo, this time from the Idaho State Historical Archives, shows two Chinese parishioners, Quon Lee and Owen Eng, in 1950s casual attire standing before an elaborately carved and gilded altar super-



**Fig. 1.** Unknown, *Ah Say (and His Wife?) Standing Beside an Altar Dedicated to Fu Xing in the Joss House, Evanston, ca. 1890s.* Photographic negative, dimensions unknown. Collection: Historical Photograph Collection, Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources, Cheyenne. Image number: Sub Neg 11823.

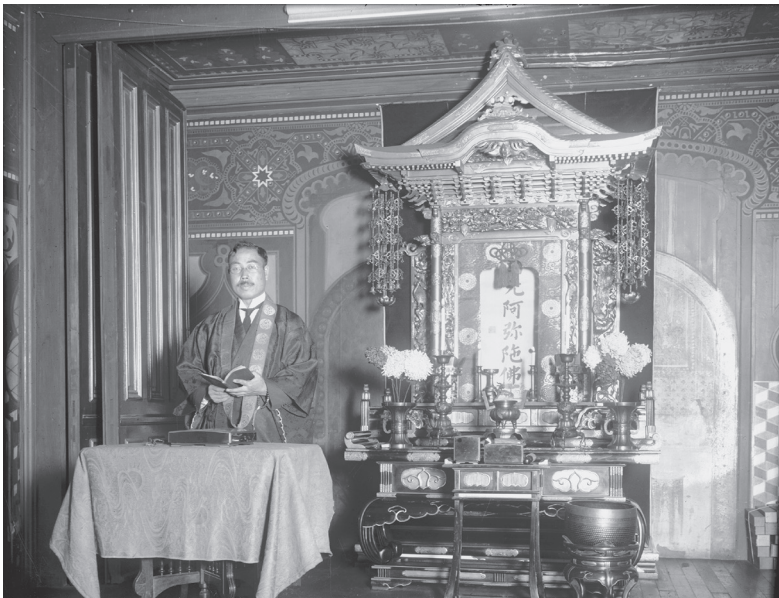
structure nesting a tablet inscribed with the names of mostly Daoist folk deities, preceded by a pair of tables for displaying food and floral tributes and lighting incense sticks to send a message to the heavens (fig. 2). This chamber of the Beuk Aie (North God) Temple in Lewiston, Idaho, offered hope of abundant yields and protection against misfortune. A final image from the History Colorado Center incorporates Japanese priest Tessho Ono in a plain suit of the 1920s overlaid with a silk ministerial gown presiding over a service to the left of an elaborately carved altar and superstructure suggestive of an otherworldly temple framing the name of Amida Buddha (fig. 3). This expansive living room of a masonry house in Denver, Colorado, presented a comfortable place for meditation on the next incarnation or progress toward enlightenment. Although the photographic technology and the structural surroundings were Western affairs, the spaces were appropriated, the settings redecored by their occupants to accommodate an Asian community respectful of the teachings of Confucius, Laozi, and Amitābha.

The important point is that these photographers, in associating these specific individ-

uals with the artistic and cultural incidence of the three philosophies, made it possible for the contemporary art and cultural historian to probe the degree to which priests, superintendents, devotees, and visitors of these shrines/temples/sacred precincts distinguished one philosophy from another, thus permitting an expostulation of manifestations of pantheistic worship (Daoism or Shintō), Confucianism, and Buddhism in the Northern Rockies. The development and transmission of the three philosophies from Northeast Asia — the countries of China, Korea, and Japan — to the American Northwest — the states of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, and Colorado in the United States — in the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries resulted in a vibrant religious life that is largely forgotten today. Far from a direct transference of moral values from one continent to another, this phenomenon of evolving philosophies and affirming rituals was sufficiently complex to warrant examination: first of the court and popular practices under the Qing Dynasty in China, the Joseon Dynasty in Korea, and the Meiji period in Japan, and second, the workers' migratory transplantation of native values to northwestern



**Fig. 2.** Unknown, *Parishioners Quon Lee and Owen Eng Standing Before an Altar Inscribed with the Names of Daoist Folk Deities, Beuk Aie Temple in Lewiston, Idaho, 1950s.* Photo: Browsing File: "Chinese," Idaho State Historical Archives, Boise. Image number: 2965.



**Fig. 3.** Unknown, *Interior of the Tri-State Buddhist Temple with Rev. Tessho Ono Officiating, ca. 1920-1930.* Glass negative, 5 × 7 in. (12.7 × 17.78 cm). Collection: Hart Research Library, History Colorado Center. Image number: 99.270.158.

territories governed by a succession of Republican and Democratic administrations of the United States.

***Religious Life and Culture in China during the Final Decades of the Qing Dynasty***

Between 1850 and 1911 China was a vast empire encompassing a variety of religions and devotional practices. The Manchu rulers acknowledged the prominence of Confucianism and Buddhism, and to a lesser degree Daoism, as pillars of the Qing state while absorbing other trends partly out of respect for local tradition and partly out of desire to consolidate territories. The vast majority of Chinese defined themselves in terms of the rituals demanded to address a particular challenge the community was facing or to celebrate an annual festival rather than in terms of adherence to a sectarian belief or membership in a denomination. Awareness of being affiliated with a set of religious values came during the performance of various public rituals year-round (e.g., New Year's celebrations, the Qingming festival, and burial practices). Mark Meulenbeld has usefully identified four main trends in religious observance: the imperial court's adoption of Confucianism to address administrative or political exigencies; the monastic establishment's devotion to Buddhism or Daoism as a wellspring for public interaction; the community's turn to local deities and national heroes to gratify a desire for health and protection; and the public's eclectic borrowing from various traditions to suit the occasion.<sup>1</sup> He warns against a scholarly tendency to treat the three philosophies in monotheistic terms and to conflate them with other philosophies as part of a broad "syncretic" trend, which assumes tolerance of or dialogue with

one another rather than resistance or reaction to one another and ignores the roles of political pressure, social demand, theological patterns, or cultural change played in their development.<sup>2</sup> Within this framework, we can follow threads of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism in official Chinese culture and acknowledge variegated patterns of rituals performed in village communities. The tendency of the Manchus to politicize rival factions by bestowing patronage on one and denying or scapegoating the other resulted in applying some monolithic stereotypes that scholars are only now trying to break down — or example, the distinction between popular folk gods and Daoist deities in a local village.

**Confucianism.** The Manchus, great appropriators of the philosophies and traditions of earlier dynasties, were eager to embrace scholar-officials so that the central government could be set on a firm bureaucratic foundation. Scholar-officials of the mid-nineteenth century believed that Confucius and Zhu Xi had issued guidelines sufficient to yield continuous benefits to Chinese society, which made their thinking somewhat insular and resistant to challenges from outside. Teaching his students of moral philosophy during the final decades of the Zhou dynasty's Spring and Autumn Period (770–481 BCE) when rival feudal lords convulsed the numerous dukedoms of China, Confucius upheld a doctrine of social stratification in which every member of the court, government, and family needed to accept his or her place in a great chain of being, foremost by demonstrating exemplary filial devotion to older relatives and loyalty to those of superior rank. He had also advocated the primacy of education and ethics for aspiring government officials. Although the Confucian civil service examination system that first emerged more than a millennium later during the Tang dynasty (618–907) offered local talent a chance at upward mobil-

1 Mark Meulenbeld, "Chinese Religion in the Ming and Qing Dynasties," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Chinese Religions*, ed. Randall L. Nadeau (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 125–44.

2 Ibid., 136.



ity, financial and educational resources were often the most important factor in permitting certain families to reap the greatest rewards and dominate entire sectors. Zhu Xi, writing during the subsequent Song Dynasty (960–1276) when Neo-Confucianists looked to shape elements of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism into a universal system of relationships, had admired the Buddhist idea of “enlightenment” and Daoist ideas about “the Way” and “Heaven” as probing the relation of the individual to the cosmos. He believed that these metaphysical ideas were expressed in *li* (the order or principle in life), but that it was sheathed in *qi* (material or vital energy). *Li* is pure and perfect, but with the addition of *qi*, base emotions and conflicts arise. Human nature is essentially good, but not pure unless action is taken to purify it. Human beings must therefore constantly work to purify their *qi* in order to curb selfishness and profligacy, thereby achieving a harmonious family and benevolent government. Although Zhu Xi pared down readings to those that stressed the humane and socially responsible aspects of behavior, various factions had various ideas about how human nature was to be purified. By the time the Tongzhi emperor acceded to the throne during the late Qing dynasty, these ideas seemed old fashioned, especially among progressive intellectuals. As Cho-Yun Hsu has observed, the examination system “recruited officials on the basis of their recitation of Zhu Xi’s version of Neo-Confucian doctrine as the only repository of orthodox ideas, and this produced an ossified mode of thinking among the intellectual stratum of society. As a result, the culture of the upper strata of Qing society was characterized by a rigid ideology resistant to change.”<sup>3</sup> The formal bureaucratic structure, combined with an ethos of loyalty to the ruling dynasty from the court minister at Beijing to the local

magistrate in Guangdong province, ensured a self-sufficiency that made the government mostly resistant to new political concepts or technological innovations.<sup>4</sup>

The Manchus and their scholar-officials viewed state rituals as an essential mechanism of the late imperial Chinese state, a means of both legitimizing political power and exerting administrative control. Since Confucianism emphasized hierarchy in political and social relations in the court, palace, community, and home, it could extend the custom of obeisance to the spirit or heavenly realm (i.e., divine will, cosmic order). The faith of the Confucians included a recognition of Tian (Heaven), the supreme ruling force of the world, and the emperor as his Tianzi (Son of Heaven), the sacred interlocutor who commanded the people to coordinate their lives with the divine order of the universe and offered yearly sacrifices at a Tian Tan (Temple of Heaven). According to Richard Smith, the emperor sanctioned three levels of state sacrifice — *dasi* (great sacrifices), *zhongsi* (middle sacrifices), and *qunsi* or *xiaosi* (common sacrifices) — all requiring designated officials to perform elaborate rituals in concert with the

3 Cho-Yun Hsu, *China: A New Cultural History*, trans. Timothy D. Baker, Jr. and Michael S. Duke (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 502.

4 John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 10: *Late Ch’ing, 1800–1911* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 27–28, has stated the dynasty’s drive for peace, order, and cohesion within the empire was bound up with the ideology of Confucianism: “the central power of a dynasty [...] sat on top of its territorial bureaucratic administration and beneath this level maintained local control through the loyalty of the lineage structure and gentry leadership. [...] Originally, the teachings of classical Confucianism had stressed the power of virtuous example and right conduct to influence all beholders and so keep the social hierarchy of status intact. But as early as the former Han period, the imperial state had added to this [...] elements of ‘Legalism.’ These included both a stress on penal law and rewards and punishments to keep the common people in order and a stress on administrative methods to guide the power-holder.”

emperor, the Tianwen ju (Imperial Bureau of Astronomy), the Libu (Board of Rites), and the Tai Chang Si (Court of Sacrificial Worship) on auspicious days promulgated to civil and military officials throughout the land.<sup>5</sup> Great sacrifices included the emperor's offerings to Heaven incorporating a procession of princes, officials, functionaries, prayers, and offerings before the circular *yang* altar facing north (fig. 4) at the Tian Tan (Temple of Heaven) complex at Chongwenmen, and music and hymns during the winter solstice and on New Year's Day. The emperor's worship of Earth involved a similar ritual before a square, *yin* altar facing south at the Fangzi Tan (Temple of Earth) complex at Andingmen during the summer solstice.<sup>6</sup> Middle sacrifices included ceremonies in honor of emperors of earlier dynasties, Confucius and various sages, meritorious officials, and wise men and virtuous women. There were also ceremonies to honor the god of agriculture, spirits of land and grain, mountains and rivers, clouds, wind, rain, and thunder, sun and moon. Common sacrifices included ceremonies dedicated to local protective deities like Guandi or Guan Yu (God of War), Wenchang (God of Literature), Sanhuang (Three Sovereigns), Huoshen (Fire God), Longshen (Dragon God), Chenghuang (City God), as well as *li* (the unhappy dead) whose unsettled spirits had to be placated. All these rituals entailed participants engaging in bathing, fasting, prostrations, prayers, and offerings to purify the mind and body and please the gods.<sup>7</sup> Over the centuries a series of imperial decrees gradually raised Confucius practically to the level of a deity. Periodically, the emperor and his officials offered sacrifices to his spirit, teachers placed inscribed tablets in schools, and magistrates erected Kongmiao (temples of Confucius) in cities. These ritu-

als affirmed the emperor's place within the cosmic order, reinforced distinctions of status for those invested in the social order, and strengthened the authority of the state.<sup>8</sup>

The average subject likely approached Confucianism less as an official ideology than as a system of ethics encoded in *li* (rules of propriety). Wendy Rouse Jorae has stated the nature of this system most clearly: Confucianism prescribed that an orderly society resulted from a clear vision of an individual's place in society and attendance to moral obligations to one's social betters throughout life.<sup>9</sup> The social order depended on the prioritization of five different relations: sovereign to subject, father to son, husband to wife, elder brother to younger brother (the eldest acknowledged as future head of the family), and friend to friend (seniors respected by juniors). Confucianism has been called a moral code so stable and strong that it maintained social order and discipline despite periodic fluctuations in state politics and changes in political regimes. An endless chain of reproduction centering on male offspring perpetuated the patriarchal household that worked the fields and tended the home. Men were pressured to marry healthy women by the age of thirty, with the groom encouraged to be fruitful and assertive and the bride chaste and obedient and to conceive and rear large families that could maintain the family property and thus become a credit to the family, village, and emperor. The father was

5 Richard J. Smith, *The Qing Dynasty and Traditional Chinese Culture* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2015), 242.

6 *Ibid.*, 243–44.

7 *Ibid.*, 245.

8 *Ibid.*, 242. Fairbank, *The Cambridge History of China*, 10:564, has observed that “[t]he gentry were schooled from early childhood in the tradition and values of Confucianism, and their social position and prestige rested, to a very considerable extent, on active support for and participation in many of the rituals.”

9 Wendy L. Rouse, “What We Didn't Understand: A History of Chinese Death Ritual in China and California,” in *Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors*, eds. Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars (Lanham: Altamira Press / Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 21.



**Fig. 4.** Circular Mound Altar with Center Marked with a Stone Called the Supreme Yang, rebuilt 1740. Marble three-level circular platform, Temple of Heaven Complex, Chongwenmen (southern urban Beijing). Andrew Benton / Alamy Stock Photo 2ANDGG9.

a powerful figure who maintained a distance between himself and his wife and children, determining their living spaces, duties, and destinies. He never sacrificed his authority to family consensus because the state expected him to maintain home discipline as the best assurance of social order. Rituals were staged throughout the year to validate the social order: ordinary families honored the emperor and Heaven by celebrating Chinese New Year with parades and firecrackers, the newly departed by participating in mortuary rituals involving parade and burial, annual grave sweepings and food offerings, and their ancestors by making reverences before an altar laden with food and drink, flanked by inscribed funerary tablets, and surmounted by portrait paintings or photographs.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the father had a special responsibility under the terms of filial piety to pay tribute

to his parents and illustrious male ancestors through ritual obeisance at shrines, which could be a small table in a home, a room filled with funerary tablets in a community *tong* or temple or a ceremonial platform at a cemetery or burial site.<sup>11</sup> Proper ritual to honor the dead ensured a strong connection between the physical and spiritual worlds to guarantee the spirit of the deceased could rest and thereby ensure good fortune and longevity for the living, but neglect of ritual could result in a restless spirit who would bring about misfortune and illness.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Paul Carus, "Confucianism and Ancestor Worship," in *Chinese Life and Customs* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1907), 34–35; Rouse, "What We Didn't Understand," 21; and Fairbank, *The Cambridge History of China*, 10:29. Also see Nancy Berliner, *Yin Yu Tang: The Architecture and Daily Life of a Chinese House* (Rutland: Tuttle Publishing, 2003), 148.

<sup>11</sup> See Berliner, *Yin Yu Tang*, 17, 33–34, 148, with regard to ancestral altars in the home or the ancestral hall in the village. See Benner Bronson and Chuimei Ho, *Coming Home in Gold Brocade: Chinese in Early Northwest America* (Seattle: Chinese in Northwest America Research Committee, 2015), 222–23, on individual and collective spirit tablets in the *tong* or clan association.

<sup>12</sup> Patricia Bik, "China Row," A Report on the Chinese Burial Ground at Forestvale Cemetery [Helena], for the Forestvale Cemetery Board of Lewis and Clark County, December 1993, 9, in Vertical Files: "Chinese in Montana I," Montana Historical Society, Helena. Li-hua Yu, *Chinese Immigrants in Idaho* (PhD

**Buddhism.** The Manchus supported traditional Chinese Buddhism as well as Tibetan Buddhism in the knowledge that they comprised a large clergy and appealed to the populace. They subsidized monastic orders and built or renovated monasteries and temples not only in Beijing but also in outposts stretching from Mongolia to Tibet.<sup>13</sup> There were four main schools in the Mahayana or “Greater Vehicle” tradition, where enlightenment or nirvana was believed to be accessible to all people of faith and good works: Fahua (the Tiantai or Lotus), Huayan (Huayan or Flower Garden), Jingtū (Pure Land), and

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dissertation, Bowling Green State University, 1991), 171, has explained the purposes and functions of ancestor worship among Chinese immigrants to the United States as follows: “[i]n the first place, they believed that they owed their fortunes or misfortunes to their ancestors. [...] Secondly, they thought that their ancestors had the same daily needs as living people on the earth, so it was their duty and responsibility to provide ancestors with the necessities of food, money, clothing, and shelter. [...] The third notion was that one’s ancestor was always able to lend a hand to the living descendants [so that their lives would be improved].”

13 Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 271–72, has observed that “a large number of temples received regular subsidies from the palace. One document from 1854 shows that the court spent 126.7 taels of silver supporting religious activities of 1,516 Tibetan Buddhist monks for one month. Within the inner court, lamas — some of them eunuchs trained for this purpose — chanted sutras in the Zhongzhengdian and the neighboring Yuhuage, a Tibetan Buddhist chapel erected by the Qianlong emperor. Together, the two chapels employed 1,106 lamas in these rites and had the lion’s share of these funds. Other recitations took place in the Yong’ansi, located in Beihai, Tangshan, lying north of the capital, the Zhaomiao, a temple in the Western Hills erected by the Qianlong emperor, the Yanshousi, and the Sumeru land.”

Chan (Meditation) schools. The Qing emperors, while claiming to preside over all of them, occasionally withheld sanction from those that challenged the notion of worldly authority or questioned major tenets of the cosmic balance, including Pure Land’s Bailianjiao (White Lotus) sect.<sup>14</sup> The four schools also shared a belief in the tenets of the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama (563–483 BCE) and that there were Four Noble Truths:

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14 Lars Peter Laamann, “Christianity, Magic and Politics in Qing and Republican China,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 58, nos. 1–2 (2015): 94, has stated: “Usually derivatives of Pure Land Buddhism, popular circles devoted to the end of all realms worldly became a major preoccupation for the Qing. Mystified by the inability of its officials and soldiers to eradicate the erroneous thought of simple peasants, the state waged war after war against groups embodying perceived ‘heresy.’ [...] This War against Heresy would be remembered as one where the Qing defended the moral integrity of its people against the threat emanating from the ‘White Lotus,’ [a popular religion in the belt of provinces reaching from Szechwan in the west to Shantung in the east].” Hsu, *China: A New Cultural History*, 453, has stated that between 1796 and 1804 the government worked hard to repress the White Lotus Society, which believed Maitreya Buddha would return and the forces of light would conquer the forces of darkness, very different from the traditional Chinese view of complementarity between *yin* and *yang*, dark and light forces. Fairbank, *The Cambridge History of China*, 10:136–37, has reflected that “[t]o its original Amidist doctrine, the White Lotus added the creation myths and carobiotic regiments of folk Taoism, as well as the millenarian doctrines of Maitreya Buddhism and Manichaeism. These last two components seem to have been the means by which the sects became involved in rebellion. The descent of the ‘future’ Buddha, Maitreya (Mi-le-fo), was to usher in the final stage of world history and establish a regime of peace and plenty. And an incarnate Manichaeist deity, the ‘prince of light’ (ming-wang), was to bring about the triumph of light over darkness in an ultimate world cataclysm.”

first, everything in life is connected to suffering; second, the origin of suffering is desire; third, the elimination of suffering comes from nirvana (the extinction of desire); and fourth, the extinction of desire comes from following the dharma (Noble Eightfold Path; Wheel of the Law) of right views, right attitudes, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right perception, and right contemplation. These lead to the acquisition of the moral and mental discipline necessary to achieve enlightenment and stop the endless cycle of death and rebirth to which life in the material world is bound and to reach a state of *paranirvana* (cosmic consciousness). Far from viewing Buddhism as philosophical competition with Confucianism, court intellectuals and regional scholars usually found ways to interface with it. Some attempted to highlight the core question of the individual's relationship to the community and to the cosmos, the use of natural symbols and fantastic metaphors in teachings and writings, and the alignment of Buddhist metaphysics with Confucian reverence for ancestors, so that previous incarnations could be linked with deceased family members.<sup>15</sup> Some bureaucrats exchanged their court robes for those of the priesthood late in life to become effective proselytizers of Buddhism in their community.

The Manchus sanctioned Buddhism, participated in various rituals, and disseminated sutras and laws because they believed the religion gave them the illusion of transcendent and perennial political powers.<sup>16</sup> Evelyn Rawski, who has made a study of Qing imperial institutions, has observed that Buddhism offered two models of kingship attractive to those who would control large territories or populations. The first is that of the *dharmaraja*,

a devout king who upholds the Buddhist law within his state, and the second is that of the *cakravartin*, a universal king who rules ethically and benevolently over the whole world, to which was eventually joined the Tibetan notion of "reincarnated lines of spiritual descent," where each hierarch was said to be reborn in the person of his successor with the power to select or foretell the circumstances of his rebirth.<sup>17</sup> In adopting both models, the Manchu emperors of Qing dynasty China were able to combine secular and religious authority, to act as guardians of the Buddhist faith and manifestations of a deity, and the embodiments of all of their previous lives.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the Manchu emperors patronized Tibetan Buddhism in a bid for legitimacy as they sought hegemony over Tibet and Mongolia, where the Mongol khans were adherents. To validate this religious-political authority, the Qing dynasty government coopted existing altars or built new ones at various imperial palaces and temples in Beijing, Chengde, and other urban areas as settings for offerings, devotions, and chants on festival days. On New Year's Day in particular the emperor dispatched princes and officials to a dozen temples around Beijing to light incense while priests recited sutras and made images of deities at the Zhongzheng Dian (Hall of Rectitude) in the Zijincheng (Forbidden City) (fig. 5) or the Yonghe Temple northeast of the Forbidden City.<sup>19</sup> Incense was lit and sutras were recited at various altars throughout the realm on a regular basis, including birth and death days.<sup>20</sup>

17 Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, 247–48.

18 *Ibid.*, 247–49.

19 *Ibid.*, 271.

20 *Ibid.*, 270, has observed: "A ritual schedule for the Guangxu reign lists six altars, with the eastern and western Buddha halls of the Yangxin-dian receiving the greatest attention. Incense was lit on these altars seven times during the twelfth month, six times during the first month, and from four to five times a month the rest of the year." Moreover, "the court ordered the chanting of sutras at many

15 Smith, *The Qing Dynasty and Traditional Chinese Culture*, 252–53.

16 See Laamann, "Christianity, Magic and Politics," 94, for information on Qing publication of the Buddhist canon in the scripts of Chinese, Tibetan, Mongol, and Manchu.



**Fig. 5.** Xiangyunting (Pavilion of Fragrant Clouds) in the Zhongzheng Dian (Hall of Rectitude Complex), burned 1923, restored 2006–2012. Forbidden City, Beijing. Inge Johnsson / Alamy Stock Photo RCoRB9.

Nearly all people who lived in market towns or farming villages knew the emperor only as a distant symbol, for his decrees were transmitted by imperial court officials who tended to delegate their responsibilities to local magistrates. John K. Fairbank

has suggested that the central government's insistence on decentralized power in the provinces, with neither rival lords nor bureaucracy monitoring the life of the village community or impressing upon it a particular religious cult, was a circumstance favorable to the people developing their own variations of worship and rituals in honor of the Buddha.<sup>21</sup> He describes the existence of "a variety of temple fairs, religious observances, holidays and festivals."<sup>22</sup> Clearly community worship and ritual would have been enhanced by close proximity to an ancient

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of these sites. During the twelfth month, Tibetan dignitaries and monks chanted sutras for four days in the Baohuadian, a hall in the northwestern compound dedicated to Buddhist images. In the Nanyuan, the large hunting park south of Peking, stood the Yongmusi, where a high lama and forty priests chanted sutras for twenty-one days during the last month of the year."

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<sup>21</sup> Fairbank, *The Cambridge History of China*, 10:27.  
<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

temple or monastic establishment and a commitment by the priestly class to interface more directly with the faithful. In her study of Chinese funerary rituals, Rouse Jorae has noted that Buddhist priests chanted incantations over the body during the wake, joined Daoist priests for the transport of the body to the cemetery, and performed burial rites at the grave, calling upon deities to guide *hun* (the heavenly soul) “through the spirit realm and on into the next incarnation,” while the faithful attempted to appease *po* (the earthly soul) with regular offerings.<sup>23</sup> However, there was always a chance that rituals and observances could take a populist turn at odds with official prescriptions, which could be suppressed as competitive and subversive (e.g., observances that incorporated themes of violence or sexuality could be perceived as being at odds with those of loyalty and filiality). In the late 1890s, the Guangxu emperor responded affirmatively to increasing demands for political reform and socio-cultural change by questioning the effectiveness of the government’s Confucian bureaucratic structure and considering the ameliorative capacities of Buddhist metaphysical philosophies. For a short time, the popular religious spirit enjoyed a resurgence at the expense of the official secular spirit, thereby showing that provincial traditions were still palpable.

**Daoism.** The Manchus did not support Daoism on a level comparable to Buddhism, an organized religion with a distinct clergy, temples, symbols, and rituals, although they did continue providing imperial support for some Daoist traditions.<sup>24</sup> Associated with mountain roaming, elixir preparation, and immortality cults of the Six Dynasties period (220–589), Daoism promoted daily regimens and rituals to achieve “a special kind of transcendence, manifest in the ability to know

and manipulate the supernatural environment [...] to acquire a form of cosmic power,” which in turn would ensure “longevity, invulnerability, and perhaps immortality” for the Qing.<sup>25</sup> There were two important schools: the Quanzhen (Complete Reality) sect of the north and the Zhengyi (True Unity) sect of the south, the one embracing an abstemious monastic life in relative seclusion and the other enjoying a conventional family existence with occasional magical or divination demonstrations among the people. Although Laozi’s *Daode Jing* (*The Way of Integrity*) was admired for its noble sentiments, the *Daozang* (*Repository of the Dao*) served as the canon for the religion. The latter offers a cosmogony and cosmology where Dao (the Prime Mover) gives birth to the One (Supreme Ultimate or Primordial Chaos), which in turn gives birth to the *yang* and *yin* forces, the three encompassing *qi* (the life-giving primordial breath), *shen* (the spirit of human beings), and *jing* (the vital essence in people), which in turn generate the five agents that give rise to all things found in nature.<sup>26</sup> Since the human body was viewed as a microcosm of the universe, knowledge of these cosmic origins, the practice of meditation and use of natural agents was thought to produce physical strength, chemical balance, and longevity. The growth of the Buddhist pantheon led to the development of various Daoist protective deities, not only the Three Pure Ones and Five Rulers already mentioned, but also Yuhuang (the Jade Emperor), Wenchang (the God of Literature), Xiwang mu (the Queen Mother of the West), Ba xian (the Eight Immortals), and a host of others.<sup>27</sup>

23 Rouse, “‘What We Didn’t Understand,’” 23, 27, 34.

24 Smith, *The Qing Dynasty and Traditional Chinese Culture*, 251.

25 Ibid., 259. The Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi (late fourth century BCE) emphasized the desire to prolong the life of flesh on earth as long as possible. Some Daoist sects relied on alchemy, meditation, and ritual to achieve long life.

26 Ibid., 260.

27 Ibid., 262.

The Manchus included Daoist cosmology within their seasonal blend of rituals, especially when festivals required variegated activities and displays of pomp and natural disasters exhausted the emperor's patience with other philosophies. On New Year's Day the emperor worshiped at the Daoist altar within the Tianqiong baodian (Hall of Heavenly Sky) in the Forbidden City and authorized priests to perform Daoist rites at the Yuanmingyuan (Old Summer Palace) and Guangming dian (Imperial Audience Hall) nearby.<sup>28</sup> Facing a disastrous drought, the emperor ordered priests to perform Daoist rites before the Jade Emperor, revered as a nature god who could bring rain and snow, in the Dagao dian (Hall of High Heaven) north of the palace complex, in the southwestern corner of Jingshan.<sup>29</sup> On the emperor's death, priests also recited sutras and presided over services in various temples.

It was Daoist clerics who interacted with the public most often and in a myriad of mystical ways, from the orientation of structures and graves in the landscape, to the preparation of medicinal cures and chants, to the offering of petitions and talismans to Heavens. Daoists developed the idea of *fengshui* (wind and water), the siting and orientation of structures in a manner favorable to maintaining a balance of *yin* and *yang* currents of *qi* in every geographic area to influence the living and the dead in a positive manner. Aristocrats and commoners alike believed *fengshui* had to be considered when siting temples, houses, businesses, or graves, and a geomancer was brought on site to mark a favorable position based on a number of topographical and astrological variables.<sup>30</sup> Structures were generally placed with a southern orientation, and with due regard for the capacity of mountains (*yang*) to block the wind and streams (*yin*) to veer away from dwell-

ings. Rouse has remarked of cemeteries that "[h]ills and mountains provided a barrier to dangerous winds that might carry evil spirits while allowing beneficial winds to pass. Water balanced the *yang* influence of the mountains and carried along *yin* energy with it. [...] People generally believed that evil spirits traveled in straight lines; therefore, a watercourse could not run straight to a grave or dwelling lest evil accumulate on that spot."<sup>31</sup> Once a structure or grave was situated, families often had second thoughts and gave orders to reorient or relocate it. Mark Johnson has opined that Chinese most sensitive to *fengshui* principles attempted to situate graves "on a rise with a high mountain to the right, lower mountains to the left, and water below."<sup>32</sup>

Daoists contributed to medicine by preparing elixirs and provided reassurance by chanting passages from holy books to the heavens. In dire cases the priests would conduct special ceremonies for three days and nights, as one account specified:

A temporary altar is erected. On this are placed images, candlesticks, censers, and sometimes meat and vegetables. The weird and anemic-looking priests, with heads shaven (if Buddhists), or with a "top-knot" of hair protruding through a hole in their cap [if Daoists] [...] clothed in long flowing gowns of dirty grey or yellow, for hours chant their liturgies, wail forth their dirges, ring tinkling bells, and march round the altar to the accompaniment of exploding crackers.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Rouse, "What We Didn't Understand," 26.

<sup>32</sup> Mark T. Johnson, *The Middle Kingdom under the Big Sky: A History of the Chinese Experience in Montana* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022), 139.

<sup>33</sup> W.A. Tatchell, *Medical Missions in China in Connexion with the Wesleyan Methodist Church* (London: Culley, 1909), 29–30, quoted in Laamann, "Christianity, Magic and Politics," 97.

<sup>28</sup> Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, 271.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 225, 269.

<sup>30</sup> Smith, *The Qing Dynasty and Traditional Chinese Culture*, 266.



Those who got better seemed to be cured by magic, and those who succumbed seemed to be blessed for the afterlife. Terry Kleeman has observed that Daoists perfected special rites of petition to make the needs of the supplicant known to the heavens. Members of the religious community who wished to achieve a goal of health, fortune, longevity, or salvation contacted a libationer, who presided over

the composition and ritual submission of *zhang* (petitions) to the Tianwen ju (Heavenly Bureau). The crafting of a petition took considerable expertise, some of it technical knowledge, such as which gods to petition and how to write the document, but also the social skills needed to discover the root cause of misfortune or disharmony in the home of someone who came to the libationer in need.<sup>34</sup>

Most petitions had to do with the progress of an illness or a grudge held by a member of the dead, both attributed to supernatural causes. Once he crafted the paragraph beseeching a cure or a fine, the libationer visualized his ascent to Heaven to deliver the petition, following a yellow path, bejeweled trees, and bowing before the Most High. At the conclusion of the ritual, he burned or stored the paper.<sup>35</sup> Petitions were believed to be particularly effective when accompanied by a *fu* (talisman), a magical secret symbol drawn by a calligrapher and charged with divine energy through the priest's recitation of a spell, thereby linking the earthly and heavenly realms.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, Daoist priests were active in performing funeral rites for villagers intended to guide the two elements of the human soul, the *hun* or spiritual-intellectual energy

of the individual destined to join the realm of immortal beings and the *po* or enabler of physical action destined to remain with the earthly body, the one appeased through regular rituals for the ancestors and the other through regular offerings of fake money, edible food, and material possessions.<sup>37</sup> Immediately after the death of an individual, Daoist and Buddhist ritual specialists were called in.<sup>38</sup> Daoist priests purified the home from the destabilizing forces of death and presided over the funeral ceremony (i.e., procession, grave rites, memorial service) to ensure the deceased's comfort and passage through the spirit realm. The priest would begin by announcing the death to an authority in the underworld, whether Tudi (earth god), Chenghuang (city god), or Wudao (god of five roads), so that upon arrival in the underworld, the soul would be judged by the authorities, the righteous few ascending to heaven to enjoy pleasures and the evil-doers descending to hell to atone or suffer punishment. A gathering of priests accompanied by their Buddhist counterparts would then chant incantations and lead a procession consisting of family members and friends wailing, a band playing loudly, and a wagon carrying the deceased's belongings (e.g., pipe, clothing, and bedding) to the cemetery. Mourners typically in white attire knelt, wept and sang, placed food and liquor before an auspiciously located grave, and witnessed personal effects being consumed by fire nearby.<sup>39</sup> A community that believed

37 Rouse, "What We Didn't Understand," 22.

38 Meulenbeld, "Chinese Religion in the Ming and Qing Dynasties," 141.

39 Rouse, "What We Didn't Understand," 27.

34. Kathryn Gin Lum, "Religion on the Road: How Chinese Migrants Adapted Popular Religion to an American Context," in *The Chinese and the Iron Road: Building the Transcontinental Railroad*, eds. Gordon H. Chang, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Hilton Obenzinger, and Roland Hsu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), 160, has noted that "[f]eng shui (wind and water), growing out of Daoist

34 Terry F. Kleeman, *Celestial Masters: History and Ritual in Early Daoist Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2016), 353.

35 *Ibid.*, 366, 369.

36 *Ibid.*, 376.

in the essential goodness of its forebearers erected an ancestral temple and filled it with ancestral tablets inscribed with the names of the departed in the hope that the *hun* or soul might inhabit it and maintain a presence in the lives of the descendants.<sup>40</sup> A community that feared retribution (e.g., poor health, early cataclysm, wandering *gui* [ghosts]) from invisible forces memorialized the dead in annual ceremonies such as the Chinese Lunar New Year, the spring Qingming (Pure Brightness) festival and the late summer Zhongyuan (Hungry Ghosts) festival, by paying visits to graves, carefully sweeping them, leaving offerings of food and liquor, and burning paper money and incense.<sup>41</sup>

Notwithstanding the popularity of deities associated with institutionalized Buddhism and Daoism, the Chinese people lived in small communities whose impulse was to observe the two religions in their own way and to turn to local deities. This meant that the religious experience of the masses was less denominational than it was layered according to national, regional, and local proclivities. A fluid network developed by which people

attended to one deity on a particular occasion (e.g., feast day) and attended to another to meet a particular objective (e.g., health, protection).<sup>42</sup> Although popular religion was permeated with concepts and terms derived from official culture, it was only a version of that culture; for example, whereas the elite version of nature and the cosmos — the interaction of *yin* and *yang* — emphasized harmony and order, the popular emphasis was far more on conflict and chaos, a struggle between uplifting *shen* [*yang* spirits] and malevolent *gui* [*yin* spirits] which could be avoided by geomancy, assuaged by rituals, or appeased with offerings.<sup>43</sup> The Chinese eclectically called upon deities — individuals, objects, or forces of nature — represented by painted or sculpted images or inscribed tablets. In addition to the ancestral altar in the main hall, the traditional Chinese home incorporated a host of guardian figures, whether an altar to Tudi Gong (the Lord of the Earth) surmounted by a niche for Tianguan (the Heavenly Official) outside the door, a statue of a god of wealth or Guanyin (Goddess of Compassion) in the hall, or an image of Zaoshen (the God of the Hearth) near the kitchen stove.<sup>44</sup> The choice of deities could depend on clan or regional preference; for example, a fishing village might be partial to Haishen or Mazu (the Sea God) and a firecracker manufacturer to Zhurong (Fire God). To some degree, the central government had a stake in ensuring that most community temples were devoted to the preservation of the political, social, and moral order; however, the remainder offered the possibility of meditation on issues such as work, health, and good fortune.<sup>45</sup>

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beliefs about natural harmony and energy (*qi*), sought to determine auspicious locations for everything from dwelling places to gravesites [...] migrants sought to interact with their natural surroundings and to bury their dead according to feng shui principles.”

<sup>40</sup> Rouse, “What We Didn’t Understand,” 22.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 29. Berliner, *Yin Yu Tang*, 18, has written: “The rituals traditionally involved offerings to the deceased in the form of food, incense, and symbolic houses, servants, clothes, money, and various home appliances made of paper and bamboo to make life more comfortable for those in the netherworld. Beyond proffering objects to the deceased ancestors, the living members of the family also impart verbal praise and verbal requests to the powerful spirits”; additionally, family genealogies often “prescribed entreaties [and prayers] for family members to make to their deceased ancestors [and mountain deities presiding over the graves] on specific ceremonial days,” including both the New Year and Qingming festivals.

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<sup>42</sup> Smith, *The Qing Dynasty and Traditional Chinese Culture*, 262.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 267.

<sup>45</sup> See *ibid.*, 262–63.

***Chinese Religious Life and Culture in the Northern Rockies in the Postbellum Period***

The inhabitants of the Northern Rockies witnessed considerable economic, social, and political development in the interval between Chinese debarkation at San Francisco to venture out and seek fortune in the Colorado Gold Rush of 1858 and congressional enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act to suspend immigration to the United States in 1882, which encouraged those who remained to congregate in Chinatowns for fellowship, sustenance, and protection.<sup>46</sup> By 1900, the oldest residents could reflect on a vast mountainous region initially overlaid by political boundaries of the Midwest and West in alternation (i.e., “Nebraska Territory,” “Dakota Territory,” “Oregon Territory,” and “Washington Territory”), gradually subdivided into the organized territories of Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming in the 1860s, and finally admitted to the Union in 1876, 1889, and 1890. Attracted by the promise of mineral riches and railroad jobs, Euro-American settlers and Asian migrants quickly occupied

the region and encouraged the development of a community and support infrastructure: hewn log and milled clapboard towns with the most essential authorities, businesses, and civic organizations. As the population of Chinese in each territory grew steadily from a few dozen, to a few hundred, to a few thousand, at least in Idaho and Montana, by 1870, Chinese migrants adapted their philosophies and observances to the new land, which made an indelible impression upon the dominant Euro-American constituency steeped in their own traditions.<sup>47</sup> Although the Chinese built tight-knit communities and largely kept to themselves during the workday, they periodically staged festivals and conducted rituals in the towns, parading colorful costumes, hosting banquets, gifting charms, handing out treats, and setting off firecrackers that attracted the attention of the broader community. Far from home, the Cantonese continued to prescribe Confucian codes of conduct to ensure just and equitable treatment, to appeal to Daoist folk deities to receive divine help for health and protection, and to follow the lunar calendar to mark important festivals. The point of these observances was not to initiate North Americans in “Chinese ways,” but to hold on to a few facets of home life that would sustain them through a difficult job, a cutthroat competitor, a hostile community, or an indifferent judicial system.<sup>48</sup>

46 Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *China and the Overseas Chinese in the United States, 1868–1911* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1983), 60, 65–66, 72–73, has discussed the US Congress’s passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which suspended the immigration of Chinese laborers; he has pointed out that while “the Chinese population in the United States decreased steadily” after 1882, those Chinese who “remained in America tended to congregate in Chinatowns more than they had previously done,” presumably for community and protection. Stanford M. Lyman, *The Asian in North America* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, Inc., 1977), 47, has stated: “It was in Chinatown that the lonely Chinese laborer could find fellowship, companions, social familiarity and solace. [...] Chinatown included the offices and hostels of the various Chinese benevolent and protective associations, places where one could get a bunk for the night, some food, a stake, and a knowledge of the number, kinds and conditions of available jobs.”

47 Tsai, *China and the Overseas Chinese in the United States*, 23, has assessed the “[d]istribution of the Chinese by State” from US Census figures for 1870 and 1880: between 4,274 to 3,379 in Idaho, 1,949 to 1,765 in Montana, 143 to 914 in Wyoming, and 7 to 612 in Colorado.

48 Lyman, *The Asian in North America*, 15, has characterized the Chinese sojourner or migrant as an impassive man who concentrated on work: “[t]he special psychological characteristic of the sojourner is manifested in his clinging to the culture and style of the country from which he has come. Despite having been transplanted, he retains the outlook of a Chinese villager, loyal to his fam-

**Confucianism Adapted.** Confucius's central prescription was that everyone's behavior should be appropriate to his or her gender, status, and position in Chinese society, and the result would be peaceful coexistence. The family was the basic unit of social organization: the patriarch served as a moral exemplar, honoring the elders and ancestors, expressing himself with sincerity and justice, demonstrating correct behavior on all occasions, mentoring his eldest son, and guiding the other children to fulfill supporting roles and obligations.<sup>49</sup> The children would in turn

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ily, nostalgic for the Cantonese countryside, friendly to the members of his *hui kuan* [i.e. regional guildhall, which renders assistance to travelers], and distant, aloof, and 'objective' toward the peoples in the host society. [...] The overseas society exists for him as a job and an opportunity. [...] To the sojourner his own primary group — kin and friends in China — are the center of things. It is for them that he labors so long abroad. It is to them that he owes whatever his work may bring. It is by them that he will be honored and remembered. The sojourner is a man who remains in an alien country for a very long period of time without being assimilated by it."

- 49 Huping Ling, *Surviving on the Gold Mountain: A History of Chinese American Women and their Lives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 22, has observed that "[t]he ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius firmly believed that the family was the basic and fundamental unit of social organization and that family integrity and harmony was essential for a functioning society. Only if family bonds and socialization were developed properly throughout China could social harmony reign. A passage from the Great Learning, one of the 'Four Books' that formed the core of Confucian learning, conveys this set of assumptions: '[b]y enquiring into all things, understanding is made complete; with complete understanding, thought is made sincere; when thought is sincere, the mind is as it should be; when the mind is as it should be, the individual is morally cultivated; when the individual is morally cultivated, the family is well regulated; when the family is well

practice filial piety by attending carefully to the example and instructions of their elders. The Confucian classic *Liji* (Book of Rites) defines *li* (ritual or rites) as all traditional forms that provide a standard of conduct, and rules of conduct and ceremonial observances had the potential to promote a spirit of piety and respect for others. Confucians would ordinarily identify "four rites" as indispensable to the life of an individual: *Guanli* (the celebration of attainment of maturity; capping ceremony at 18–20 years), *Hunli* (the wedding at 20–25 years), *Zangli* (the funeral), and *Zuxian chongbai* (ancestor worship). However, this family-based order and the rituals that validated it could be tested or compromised when resources, whether land, income, or food, were in short supply due to overpopulation, natural disaster, incapacitation, or famine; for example, sons could be compelled to look for work far from home and daughters could be sold into unpleasant living and working arrangements. The dire economic conditions of Guangdong province during the mid- to late nineteenth century compelled many bachelor sons to look for work and investment opportunities abroad, deferring the responsibilities of marriage, child rearing, elder care, and grave tending.

Although the seafaring provinces of southeastern China had a long history of sons engaged in shipborne commerce with neighboring states, sons' prolonged absence from home raised moral questions about how to demonstrate filial piety. Shin-Shan Henry Tsai has stated that inland peasants "observed Confucian filial duties as binding restrictions: 'While father and mother are alive, a good son does not wander far afield.' Emigration was generally looked upon as banishment, a severe punishment next only to death."<sup>50</sup> The necessity of looking for work

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regulated, the state is properly governed, the world is at peace.' This Confucian ideology affected most Chinese families."

- 50 Shin-Shan Henry Tsai, "The Chinese Experience in Nineteenth-Century America," in *The*

abroad soon gave rise to the concept of “sojourning, an idea that stressed the temporary nature of one’s absence from home” and thus the possibility of venerating one’s parents in absentia without any stigma of disrespect.<sup>51</sup> The dutiful son would traverse the Pacific to look for labor or business opportunities in North America and, once he had accumulated a tidy sum, would return home to settle family debts, care for parents, tend the ancestral graves, and live out the rest of his life in comfort.<sup>52</sup> A characteristic of Chinese sojourners or migrants in the Western United States was that nearly all were young, unmarried men who had travelled widely, from the initial port of entry at San Francisco, to the Northern Pacific Railway in Montana, or to the mining towns of Colorado, in search of work.

While he was abroad, the migrant was guided in his conduct by Confucian ethics, textual or visual reminders of which could be found at *kongsi* (Chinese clan or family associations formed by people who shared a common ancestor or surname and were determined to perpetuate ancestor reverence and family interconnectedness); *huiguans* (organizations that united people of a common dialect or geography); *tongs* (secret societies; found among Chinese migrants who met in a *tong* or “hall” and later called Ma-

sonic lodges to avoid the stigma of the internecine “*tong wars*” of the 1880s to 1910s); and *gongs* (temples, usually dedicated to a single or multiple Daoist folk deities, sometimes called “joss houses” or “god houses” and phonetically derived from a Portuguese translation).<sup>53</sup> Lyman has observed that there were plenty of Chinese organizations — family associations, dialectical associations, and secret societies — to ensure that patriarchal authority was imposed wherever Chinese sojourners gathered in great numbers: “the central characteristic of early Chinese community life that impressed itself on Americans was the immigrants’ adherence to a system of *kadi* justice, traditional law, and patrimonial power. Clans, *huiguans*, and *tongs* governed the lives of the immigrants, dispensed justice, adjudicated quarrels, settled disputes, levied fines, punished wrongdoers, and on occasion, meted out capital punishment.”<sup>54</sup>

Confucian ethics pervaded a temple in Butte, Montana, where inscriptions reminded Chinese miners to moderate their behavior. As George Everett has pointed out, “[i]nside [the temple] rules of conduct for the Chinese were kept on a banner. These rules included ‘do not occupy by force the property of your brethren,’ ‘do not deceive your brethren by fast talking,’ and ‘do not bully your brethren with your might.’”<sup>55</sup> Chinatown

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*Chinese*, ed. C.J. Shane (Farmington: Thomson Gale, 2005), 45.

51 Tsai, “The Chinese Experience in Nineteenth-Century America,” 45.

52 Lyman, *The Asian in North America*, 13, has observed that the migrations of the Chinese “were not motivated by plans for colonization, settlement, or permanent residence abroad. Rather they sought the overseas areas as places where, because of accidents of opportunity, a chance was offered to enhance their status when they returned to China. A trip abroad, a few years of work in a foreign land, and a stoic acceptance of the alien land’s prejudices and discrimination could, with luck, earn a Chinese sufficient wealth to return to his village in splendor.”

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53 Fern Coble Trull, “The History of the Chinese in Idaho from 1884 to 1910” (MA thesis, University of Oregon, 1946), 114, has noted:

“In Leesburg the Joss house was a log building eighteen by thirty feet containing emblematic urns of metal with pictures of Confucius and other Chinese.” Yu, “Chinese Immigrants in Idaho,” 169–70, has observed that the joss house in Leesburg, Idaho, was a long building eighteen by thirty feet containing emblematic metal urns with pictures of Confucius and his disciples, who were meant to impart wisdom and knowledge to believers.

54 Lyman, *The Asian in North America*, 14, 47–49.

55 George Everett, *The Butte Chinese: A Brief History of Chinese Immigrants in Southwest Montana* (Butte: The Mai Wah Society, Inc., n.d.), 7.

could be rife with internecine strife when a mining stake, profit distribution, card wager, or prostitute's services were at issue, thus prescriptions for calm deliberation rather than fiery revenge were important. In addition, the Chinese migrant probably carried photographic portraits of parents or loved ones with him, extending the idea of the household hall with family portraits to the mining shack, gardener's cottage, or parlor above the store. Such images would have preserved the memory of the bearer's place within the family hierarchy and obligations to communicate with and forward money to elders in China.

**Daoism Adapted.** Both Laozi and Sakyamuni believed in the primacy of the human spirit, the illusory nature of the world, and the corruption that made peaceable existence impossible, although the two philosophers went about it in different ways. The former sought to explain the cosmic order by reference to *yin* and *yang* relationships underpinning all creation and the five agents of natural phenomena working in balance in the *Daode jing*, and the latter sought to extinguish human desire by acknowledging the Four Noble Truths and following the Noble Eight-Fold Path to nirvana in the *Lotus Sūtra*. The development of their philosophies into the organized religions of Daoism and Buddhism can be explained in part by common perception of their usefulness in yielding physical benefits, such as discipline, protection, and healing. Indeed, Chinese religious practice revolved around temples in communities, whether urban districts, regional market towns, or rural villages, which displayed a vast number of protective deities, whether the three pure ones, five rulers, and eight immortals of Daoism, or the twenty devas, naga kings, and vajra-holders of Buddhism. Richard Smith has observed that the Chinese drew eclectically on them: “[a]lthough some deities were clearly identified in the popular mind with either Buddhism or Daoism (or both) and others were patronized heavily by the elitist system of official religion, they all remained

part of a gigantic, fluid network of national, regional, and local gods, each of whom could be supplicated by lay worshippers with no sense of disloyalty to the others.”<sup>56</sup> Their spiritual cults were invoked as often as chants, herbs, and medicines in protecting the traveler, growing a crop, and healing the injured. However, this eclecticism seems to have fed particular trends among the laboring classes of Guangdong, including a taste for ancient Daoist folk or martial heroes such as deified general Guan Yu while keeping in view the compassionate bodhisattva, Guanyin.

The Chinese men who left their communities in search of work abroad could not expect to find comparable temples, shrines, or icons on the other side of the Pacific, so they carried with them statuettes, talismans or amulets, pieces of sacred calligraphy or deity drawings, and small books.<sup>57</sup> As Kathryn Gin Lum has stated, “the [Chinese who became] railroad workers likely brought portable objects of devotion with them as they journeyed into the interior [West].” One thinks of the protective and healing deities already mentioned. She has also hypothesized that “they celebrated occurrences like the Qingming Festival by burning [mock] paper money and

<sup>56</sup> Smith, *The Qing Dynasty and Traditional Chinese Culture*, 262.

<sup>57</sup> Lum, “Religion on the Road,” 168, has explained the Chinese practice of bringing crudely drawn deities on paper with them to the United States: “In bowing to these rough, portable images, they were not worshipping the actual pieces of paper, as white observers sometimes accused, but rather making do, paying respect to representations of real spiritual forces, and also bringing to themselves, and to the American landscape, the power that those forces held. [...] Burning ritual objects wafted them to the gods and spirits, whether incense, food, paper money, paper clothes, or [...] an ancestor or deity whose representation oversaw the migrants during the year and could now be sent to the spirit realm to report on their doings in this strange new land.”

incense and by providing offerings of food to the ancestral representations that they may have tucked into their knapsacks. They could have restocked their supply of devotional materials [incense sticks, mock money, tapers] at Chinese stores they came across along the way.”<sup>58</sup> The idea gains credence on inspection of old work camps in the northwest, where fragments of small ceramic incense burners, oil lamp stands, and oil lamp dishes traditionally used in home altars to make offerings to ancestors and deities have been found. For Barbara Voss the presence of such religious objects among the workers’ personal effects “points to the importance of home-based spiritual practices amid the canvas tents, dugouts, and shanties in work camps.”<sup>59</sup> In other words, Chinese sojourners probably drew upon personal possessions and local resources to recreate the shrines of their homeland.

Once a Chinese migratory community reached a few hundred residents, it tended to have resources sufficient to raise and maintain a temple or joss house, nearly always built with local materials and techniques yet centered on an imported text or statue commemorating a Daoist folk deity.<sup>60</sup> In its most

mature form, the timber truss and clapboard shack of the western American mining town was less impressive than the interlocking post, lintel, and bracket structure of southeastern China. However, the Chinese adapted remarkably well to the construction techniques of the Northern Rockies to produce sanctuaries of various sizes and imported trappings from Hong Kong and Shanghai to ensure it was equipped for ritual. The temple served as a place to congregate for religious and civic purposes — not only to offer sacrifices to the gods, pray to the ancestors, and practice divination, but also to exchange news, hold meetings, offer arbitration, serve as temporary lodging, and dispense charity.<sup>61</sup> In their survey of temples built throughout the Northwest, Bennet Bronson and Chuimei Ho have identified three main ritual spaces frequented by Chinese: first, independent temples constructed or controlled by an individual or congregation and dedicated to a single god or *lieshen gong* (multiple deities or multi-deity temple); second, affiliated temples within buildings or meeting rooms with shrines maintained by an organization such as a *kongsi* (clan association) or *tong* (secret society) and dedicated to a specific deity; and third, private shrines that were restricted to members and about which little is known.<sup>62</sup> Whereas the congregations of the first two ritual spaces permitted some public access and brought deities to the balconies or parades on special feast days, the members of the third type worshipped in seclusion. The physical appearance of the temple could therefore vary according to the nature of the

58 Lum, “Religion on the Road,” 167–68.

59 Barbara L. Voss, “Living between Misery and Triumph: The Material Practices of Chinese Railroad Workers in North America,” in *The Chinese and the Iron Road: Building the Transcontinental Railroad*, eds. Gordon H. Chang, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Hilton Obenzinger, and Roland Hsu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), 123.

60 Lum, “Religion on the Road,” 174, has noted that temples survived in California towns with high Chinese populations to sustain them. Priscilla Wegars, *Chinese at the Confluence: Lewiston’s Beuk Aie Temple* (Lewiston: Confluence Press in association with Lewis-Clark Center for Arts & History, 2000), 8, has noted that the Chinese communities in Idaho that could afford to build a temple were those of Boise, Centerville, Idaho City, Lewiston, Pierce, and Silver City.

61 Ellen Baumler, “Forgotten Pioneers: The Chinese in Montana,” *Montana The Magazine of Western History* 65, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 54, 55, has observed that “[t]emples [in Chinatowns] not only provided a place to worship and socialize, but also offered sanctuary from racism, a network of support, and moral guidance.”

62 Bronson and Ho, *Coming Home in Gold Brocade*, 155–56, and Tsai, *China and the Overseas Chinese in the United States*, 12.

host and use, whether an altar and altarpiece raised against the back wall of a free-standing log or clapboard structure, or a small table or niche tucked at the back of a meeting room on the second floor of a brick association building.

Fortunately, these free-standing temples attracted attention at the local level and articles were written and photographs taken, providing a sense of the original architecture and interior decoration. Rose Hum Lee found newspaper evidence that the first Chinese temple of Butte was a one-story log structure constructed at the junction of Maryland Avenue and Main Street almost as soon as sojourners arrived and before roads were paved in the 1860s and '70s. The temple was eventually moved to another location, repurposed as a cabin for Chinese gardeners, to make room for the expansion of the business district and rebuilt as a timber truss and wood slat structure on the north side of Galena Street, near Main Street.<sup>63</sup> Philip Williams has observed that the Chinese temple built at the eastern end of Wallace Street in Virginia City in the 1860s was originally a single-story building, and a second story was added by 1885, which permitted the community to hold meetings downstairs and conduct services upstairs (fig. 6).<sup>64</sup> Whether single- or double-story, it had a rough-hewn quality suggestive of the challenge of felling and interlocking similarly sized trees, filling the crevices, and securing a door. Extant images of the Chinese temple on Idaho and Seventh Streets in Boise (fig. 7) and the temple at First and B Streets (fig. 8) in Lewiston, Idaho, suggest that one-story,

rectangular-plan, timber truss and wood slat structures entered from one side under a deep eave or from one end beneath a canopy were the norm in the 1870s to '90s. Their appearance as precision-built clapboard structures is well documented in print media and photographic archives, which underline how well they blended in with the other wood constructions in town, the greetings inscribed in Chinese on red boards around the door alone marking them for a special function. The little documentation that exists on the Chinese temple originally located at Tenth and Front Streets — a busy train stop — in Evanston, Wyoming, indicates a broad, one-story clapboard structure entered at one end, whose gable is obscured by a stepped false front and a columned porch of equal width (fig. 9) dating to the 1890s. Although entryways may have been guarded by a raised threshold or deflective screen, Euro-American visitors to such temples noted that they served a dual function for Chinese as a place for relaxing on mats and conversing with friends and offering prayers for ancestors and bowing before the altar.<sup>65</sup>

For the interiors, Chinese migrants preferred to adapt locally available tables to display votives or serve as altars and to import painted statues, carved and gilded niches, silk curtains, carved canopies, embroidered banners, together with metal ritual objects (i.e.,

<sup>63</sup> Rose Hum Lee, *The Growth and Decline of Chinese Communities in the Rocky Mountain Region* (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1947; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1978), 262.

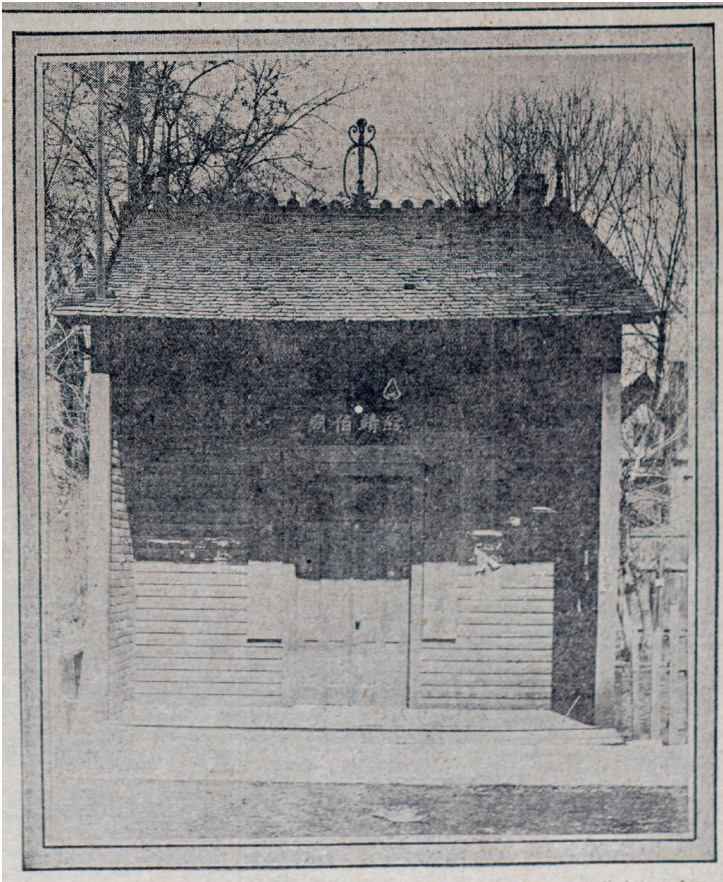
<sup>64</sup> Philip F. Williams, "The Vanished Chinese Community of Virginia City, Montana," in *The Poet as Scholar: Essays and Translations in Honor of Jonathan Chaves*, ed. David K. Schneider, *Sino-Platonic Papers*, no. 272 (October 2017): 410.

<sup>65</sup> Lum, "Religion on the Road," 164, 174, has included San Francisco lawyer Daniel Cleveland's rare account of visiting a local temple where he saw immigrants alternating poses of relaxation and devotion. Lum has observed that California temples like that at Oroville installed a doorframe with a high floorboard or a wooded barrier as obstacles to demons and evil spirits, although some scholars have argued that they served primarily "for privacy, not spirit deflection," and has concluded that either way, the sealed doors may indicate the desire of the temple's builders to keep someone or something out, whether hostile spirits or the prying eyes of neighboring non-Chinese.





**Fig. 6.** Unknown, *Exterior of the Chinese Temple with Pedestrian, Virginia City, ca. 1870.* Photographic print,  $3\frac{7}{8} \times 5$  in. (9.84 × 12.7 cm). Collection: Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena. Image number: 956-183a.



**Fig. 7.** Johnson and Son, *Exterior of the Joss House dedicated to Suijing Bo, 1917.* Newsprint, dimensions unknown. "Boise at Last Has Real Tong War After Many Fights Over Chinese Women," *The Idaho Sunday Statesman*, April 8, 1917. Collection: Boise State University Library, in Vertical Files: "Chinese 1910ff," Idaho State Historical Archives, Boise.



**Fig. 8.** Unknown, *Facade of the Beuk Aie Temple, Lewiston, 1956.* Photographic negative, 4 × 5 in. (10.16 × 12.7 cm). Collection: "Photographs: Browsing Collection: Chinese," Idaho State Historical Archives, Boise. Image number: P2964a.



**Fig. 9.** Unknown, *Exterior of the Joss House, Evanston, n.d. [ca. 1890].* Photograph, 5.19 × 7.09 in. (13 × 18 cm). Collection: © 2003 Beckwith Family, Delta City Library, Utah. Image number: 124108. Image supplied by J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

burners, vessels, and bells) from Hong Kong or Shanghai.<sup>66</sup> Sue Fawn Chung has suggested that religious paraphernalia were caught up in robust trade between the two countries:

The cost of transporting goods from China to the Pacific Coast towns and cities was very reasonable because the ships carrying heavy loads like lumber to China did not want to return to the United States empty or with light loads, so items like altars and deities for temples and association headquarters, clothing, foodstuffs, dishware, and wooden rocker boxes used by miners were inexpensively shipped to Chinese American stores.<sup>67</sup>

Sacred images, ritual instruments, and ornate furnishings were unloaded in San Francisco and brought overland by a clan association, secret society, or merchant supply company and delivered to a purchaser in the Inland West who would display them as centerpieces.

What deities were in greatest demand, how were they displayed, and to what effect?

66 Bronson and Ho, *Coming Home in Gold Brocade*, 158, have observed that “[r]epresentations of deities took the form of three-dimensional statues, paintings, or simply names written on paper or carved on a wooden spirit tablet. Imported shrine enclosures, screens, and altars often formed the showy centerpieces of temples of all sorts. Most such furnishings, usually of carved and gilded wood, were specially ordered from well-known temple carvers in or near Guangzhou. Of almost equal importance were hangings and covers made of embroidered silk and ritual equipment of metal such as censers, ornamental weapons, bells, and wu-gong altar sets. Like the wooden temple carvings, these were generally imported and, because of their cost as well as their beauty, must often have been objects of pride to worshippers.”

67 Sue Fawn Chung, *In Pursuit of Gold: Chinese American Miners and Merchants in the American West* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2011), xviii.

Bronson and Ho have observed that most of the wood statues, painted portraits, and inscribed boards in the temples of Northwestern America referred to sages in “the folk Daoist pantheon” rather than to the orthodox Daoist founder Laozi and three Daoist patriarchs, Yuanshi Tianzun, Lingbao Tianzun, and Daode Tianzun. Guan Yu, (the Perfected Warrior, God of War and brotherhood), was the most popular because he connoted integrity, fraternity, and protection; Beuk Aie (or Bei Di, God of the North) was important to people dwelling in regions prone to fires or flooding; Tian Hou (the Empress of Heaven) was recognized as goddess of the sea and thus an aid to mariners; Cai Shen (the God of Wealth), and Hua Tuo (the God of Medicine), were secondary deities thought to bolster the health of Chinese miners.<sup>68</sup> Evidence gleaned from the temples of Chinese communities in the Northern Rockies support this trend toward folk Daoist deities, with a decided preference for images of Guan Yu, Beuk Aie, and Suijing Bo (the Pacifying Duke, a thirteenth-century fighter of bandits and protector against disease).

For example, communities at Helena, Butte, and possibly Virginia City, Montana raised temples to Guan Yu. Although all three structures were dismantled in the early twentieth century, the altar superstructure of the first (1885) and the imported figural sculpture of the second (1905) survive in

68 Bronson and Ho, *Coming Home in Gold Brocade*, 157. Lum, “Religion on the Road,” 159, 162, has observed that Guan Yu (God of War and Brotherhood), was known for his honesty, bravery, and dedication; he served as an example of “right action,” “social stability, and peace,” as well as “protector from all forms of evil,” helping the Chinese workers endure the hardships of migration, close quarters, hard labor, and racism, and was thus suitable for members of fraternal organizations. Tian Hou (Empress of Heaven and Goddess of the Sea) was thought to have helped fishermen survive storms at sea but was also responsive to anyone who needed her help.

state historical collections. The framework formerly at the Helena temple is remarkable in the illusion of several registers of pierced carvings that suggest a proscenium framed by inscriptions in green, and paired fish, birds, flowers, moths, and bats, all picked out in gold. Ellen Baumler has remarked that “The center characters pay homage to Guan Yu [...] while the characters along the sides form poetry in his honor: ‘Throughout the ages, his Firmness and Loyalty Shine bright as the Moon and Sun / For eons, his Bravery and Sincerity with the hills and rivers is one’” (fig. 10).<sup>69</sup> Given the shallowness of the niche, an inscribed tablet rather than a sculpted figure could have been displayed to signify the deity. The statue of the Chinese general formerly at the Butte temple is notable for being carved from two blocks of wood, the reddish elongated head affixed with a gold crown and tripartite black beard, and the body overlaid with a robe of variegated green, blue, red, and gold pattern (fig. 11). Lee, who saw the sculpture in its shrine before the temple was removed, noted that the general was accompanied by “his seal, black flags of war against evil spirits, incense urns, candlesticks and the bamboo fortune-telling paraphernalia, as well as josh [*sic*, joss] sticks [*i.e.*, incense], candles, paper money, and oil lamps and wicks.”<sup>70</sup> He was also likely positioned in an elaborate wooden framework that served as a ceremonial canopy or protective niche. Deities were not always signified by elegant inscriptions or robust statuary. One photograph of the main altar of the temple at Virginia City features a mid-sized painting of a figure in stylized armor and an imperial robe — possibly Guan Yu or Zhenwu (the Perfected Warrior), a Daoist martial deity who took on anthropomorphic form — flanked by curtains, inscribed tablets, and lanterns (fig. 12). But representations of martial deities did not stop there. Devotion to Guan Yu in particu-

lar extended far beyond the Montana temple to the Western *tong*, whose members erected a shrine to identify with his attributes of loyalty, integrity, and courage.<sup>71</sup>

Johnson has observed that Chinese priests were exceedingly rare in Montana, which made it necessary for temple keepers to assist in religious observances such as burning incense sticks, lighting candles, and leaving offerings in exchange for a small stipend borne by the community of faithful.<sup>72</sup> The same situation seems to have prevailed in settlements throughout the Northern Rockies, especially after Congress imposed restrictions on immigration. A Chinese sojourner typically visited a temple or shrine in order to perform a divination ritual that would yield insight and advice about the future, whether the state of health, security of employment, profitability of a mine, yield of a crop, or wisdom of a business undertaking. The devotee directed questions in person or by letter to a faithful local, usually the temple keeper or the owner of a general store possessing a small altar of his own, who in turn engaged in augury. The divination proceeded as follows: a question was offered on a slip of paper, then a bamboo tube containing numbered “fortune sticks”

69 Baumler, “Forgotten Pioneers,” 55.

70 Lee, *The Growth and Decline of Chinese Communities in the Rocky Mountain Region*, 263.

71 Bronson and Ho, *Coming Home in Gold Brocade*, 164, have pointed out that “[e]very *tong*, including the Chee Kung Tong, Bing Kung Tong, Hip Sing Tong, etc., housed a shrine dedicated to Guandi [*i.e.* Guan Yu]. Like the churches and cathedrals in the eastern US built by European immigrant groups, such shrines became showcases of the wealth and numerical strength of their membership.” Tsai, *China and the Overseas Chinese in the United States*, 126, has written that “[t]he *tong* members idolized the heroic deeds of Kuan Kung [*i.e.*, Guan Yu], a man of tremendous loyalty and integrity from the Three Kingdoms, A.D. 220–280, and proudly identified themselves with other Chinese folk heroes.”

72 Johnson, *The Middle Kingdom under the Big Sky*, 125, has observed that the 1880 census listed only two Chinese priests in Montana and that after 1892 priests were categorized as laborers in an effort to curb immigration from China.



**Fig. 10.** Unknown, *Altar Superstructure Dedicated to Guan Yu from the Chinese Temple, Helena*, ca. 1885. Carved and painted wood superstructure, 62 × 47.32 × 15.39 in. (157.48 × 120.19 × 39.09 cm). Collection: Gift of Doris Marshall, 1973, Montana Historical Society Museum, Helena. Image number: 1973.17.01.



**Fig. 11.** Unknown, *Statue of Guan Yu*, exhibited at the Mai Wah Museum, Butte, 1905. Carved and assembled wood with attachments, 40 × 18 in. (101.6 × 45.72 cm). Collection: Private Collection (image); Montana Heritage Commission, Virginia City (statue).

was shaken until one fell out and the number on the stick was matched to a number associated with a particular legend in the *Yi jing* (*Classic of Changes*), and finally the augurer attempted to reconcile the petitioner's present circumstances with the old narrative.<sup>73</sup> If the devotee wanted his question to be answered with a simple "yes" or "no," the oracle could cast a set of *gau boi* (curved hardwood blocks) on the table, and their resulting orientation would determine the heavenly response: rounded sides up signified "yes," flat sides up signified "no," and one side up with the other side down meant "maybe."

**Buddhist Traces.** Although scholars have found no evidence that the Chinese raised a Buddhist temple in the Northern Rockies, they have uncovered memoirs and inscriptions suggesting that Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha, and Guanyin, the most compassionate of bodhisattvas, were incorporated to varying degrees in folk Daoist temples. For example, resident Wiley Davis recollected that in the early part of the twentieth century Chinese residents ascended to the second floor of their temple at Virginia City "to pray to their Buddha. As I remember there was one in the center of the room and two on the north wall and a kneeling pad before each one, and a platform stage for their orchestra which always played for their New Years [*sic*] services."<sup>74</sup> Although Davis probably mistook the painting of the militant figure of Guan Yu over the altar for Buddha, Williams has cited evidence of "a finely carved wooden altar, a few large Buddhist figurines to whom believers prayed, and a small stage where a small Chinese musical en-

semble would generate a din."<sup>75</sup> This suggests that there were a few sculptures of Buddhist deities in the chamber. Another example is the Palace of Many Gods, familiarly known as the Beuk Aie Temple, erected in Lewiston, Idaho, in the 1870s. Among a Daoist folk pantheon could be found Guanyin: an elaborate altar surround decorated with dragons, phoenixes, and pomegranates showcased an urn-shaped tablet inscribed with the names of Cai Shen, Beuk Aie, Guanyin, Guan Yu, and Hua Tuo embraced by two floral bouquets (fig. 13).<sup>76</sup> In assembling this pantheon, the Chinese community was likely preserving memory of the beloved gods of southeast China and assembling an efficacious force to address problems encountered in the American West. Lum has observed that because Guanyin was transformed from a male to a female deity beginning in the tenth century, the bodhisattva combines masculine and feminine qualities, fierce and bellicose as well as virginal and self-sacrificing, that may have

75 Williams, "The Vanished Chinese Community of Virginia City, Montana," 410.

76 Wegars, *Chinese at the Confluence*, 35, has described the altar crest as follows: "Auspicious designs and symbols decorate the main altar and altar crest. The dragons are benevolent and denote strength, goodness, peace, prosperity, vigilance, and protection. The birds are probably phoenixes, emblems of sun and warmth, while the pomegranates' numerous seeds represent many children." Ibid., 37, has also observed that the "[s]ign above the entry, loaned by Nez Perce County Historical Society, Inc. reads from right to left, 'Liet Sing Gung,' or 'Palace of Many Gods,' the formal name of the temple. Its more familiar name was the Beuk Aie Temple, in honor of Beuk Aie, the principal god housed there." A pair of signs on right and left of doorway dated to 1889 are inscribed to form a couplet, "Gods possess very high character and their kindness is spread abroad" and "Gods often make their power felt; their illustrious brilliance illuminates this distant land."

73 See Wegars, *Chinese at the Confluence*, 9.

74 Wiley Davis, "Chinese in Virginia City, Montana 1863–1898," Meeting of the Montana Institute of the Arts History Group, January 1967, in Vertical Files: "Chinese in Montana I," 1, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena.



**Fig. 12.** Unknown, *Interior of the Chinese Temple, Virginia City, ca. 1875-1900.* Photographic negative, 4 × 5 in. (10.16 × 12.7 cm). Collection: "Photographs: Browsing Collection: Chinese," Idaho Historical Society Archives, Boise. Image number: P1973-15-0.



**Fig. 13.** Unknown, *Interior of the Beuk Aie Temple with Altar, 1956.* Photographic negative 5 × 4 in. (12.7 × 10.6 cm). Collection: "Photographs: Browsing Collection: Chinese," Idaho State Historical Archives, Boise. Donor: Sister M. Alfreda Elsensohn. Image number: P1975-288-20e.

been appropriate for migrant men who left the women behind in search of work.<sup>77</sup>

It is important to note that the folk Daoist and mixed Daoist-Buddhist deity temple functioned not only as a sanctuary for worship and receiving moral guidance, but also as a meeting house for socializing and building a network of support. Devotees visited the temple regularly to light a candle or stick of incense before an effigy or inscription signifying single or multiple gods, to place food or drink on an altar, and to recite or burn a prayer that the heavenly powers might bestow good fortune and health. Prayers that were answered were repaid with notes of gratitude or gifts.<sup>78</sup> The Chinese temple thus occupied an important position in the culture of the migrant community, straddling private devotions and public celebrations.

**Mixed Blessings.** Perhaps due to the absence of a central Chinese authority or priestly class in the American West and the manipulation of rival religious factions, Chinese art and culture produced for the New Year celebration and the funeral ceremony defy easy categorization as Confucian, Daoist, or Buddhist in nature. The Lunar New Year Festival, which fell about thirty days after the

Euro-American holiday and lasted from ten days to two weeks, was the calendar year's most important Chinese feast day, involving thoughtful reflection and joyous festivities in the dwelling, temple, ancestral, or community hall. Because Chinese New Year was marked with prayers for the family, emperor, and ancestors, it became an occasion for quoting Confucius on patriarchy and demonstrating filial piety. Because the holiday entailed a parade, firecrackers, and games before the local temple, it inevitably drew attention to the folk Daoist deity, the guardian, and pledges needed for its upkeep.

While in China homes were protected by a host of deities and guardian figures, including Tudi Gong (Lord of the Earth) outside the entry, wealth gods in the central hall or main room, and Zaoshen (Kitchen God or God of the Hearth) near the stove, in the United States household deities were generally confined indoors.<sup>79</sup> A man or his family set before the image of the kitchen god offerings of meat, fruit, and wine in the hope that he would provide an abundance of food and drink in the year ahead. The real action unfolded at the temple, where the guardian laid wine, oranges, tangerines, chicken, pork, bowls of rice, and melon seeds on the altar, assisted locals with donating money, burning spirit paper or joss sticks, lighting candles, or pouring wine before the deity, and welcomed people from miles around intent on making offerings to ensure the prosperity of their families in China and businesses in the Northern Rockies in the coming months.<sup>80</sup>

77 Lum, "Religion on the Road," 162–63, has observed that Guanyin combines feminine and masculine qualities, including "fierce, war-like attributes capable of powerful defence of territories" as well as virginal virtue and self-sacrifice. Guanyin was sometimes seen as a patron of seafarers, as well as of the sick and disabled, the poor and the desperate. Because sojourning men left the women at home, these female deities may have been particularly welcome abroad.

78 Wegars, *Chinese at the Confluence*, 18, has noted that at the Beuk Aie Temple in Lewiston, Idaho, there were "four horizontal wooden donor lists with hundreds of contributors' names [for the construction or repair of the temple]; and four horizontal wooden plaques with auspicious sayings, gifts of temple supporters in gratitude for answered prayers."

79 Smith, *The Qing Dynasty and Traditional Chinese Culture*, 267.

80 Lee, *The Growth and Decline of Chinese Communities in the Rocky Mountain Region*, 276. *Ibid.*, 263, has observed that "[t]he Temple in Butte differed in one respect from its prototype in a village in China, in that it was for all the members of Butte's Chinatown, as well as those who lived in neighboring cities. The latter either sent their offerings by mail, came in person, or made suitable arrangements with the guardian of the Temple for inclusion in





**Fig. 14.** Unknown, *Profile View of the Chinese Dragon at Rock Springs, 1899*. Photographic print, 5 × 7 in. (12.7 × 17.78 cm). Collection: “Photo Subject File: Ethnic Group Chinese,” History Colorado Archives, Denver. Image number: Neg. no. F-4.

As a writer for *The Uintah Chieftain* reported goings on around Myton, Utah, “[t]he elaborately carved and gilded Joss House is open, where roast pigs and bowls of fragrant liquors are set before Joss as an offering, and numerous censers and small tapers are kept slowly burning on the altar.”<sup>81</sup> Outside the temple, the Chinese community orchestrated a raucous parade whose main feature was a loud band followed by a human chain supporting a grotesque mask and several yards of fabric, as in Evanston and Rock Springs, Wyoming (fig. 14), which gave the illusion that a dragon

had descended from the sky, its movements accented with the sparks and smoke of innumerable firecrackers. The dragon bowed first to the temple altar and then proceeded down Chinatown’s main street, inclining its head before various businesses along the way. Thereafter, the guardian of the temple would entertain games that culminated in the firing of a great rocket carrying a wooden ball skyward, the catcher of which became honorary keeper of the temple for the ensuing year, or the suspension of large firecrackers from a pole which released bamboo rings or sticks, the catcher of which would receive a prize, an image of the deity, or the honor of providing temple revenue.<sup>82</sup> Men might gather at the lo-

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periodical religious observances conducted by the members of Butte. When the Chinatown flourished, the Temple remained constantly open for worship and for consultations with the oracle Kwan Ti (the God of War[, i.e. Guan Yu]). Decisions regarding dates for burial of a member of the community; auspicious dates for undertaking new business enterprises; news about family members in China where letters have been delayed; and periodical offerings to deceased relatives in the home village were made.”

<sup>81</sup> *The Uintah Chieftain* 4, no. 43 (February 10, 1883), 3.

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<sup>82</sup> “The Joss House...,” *Ghost Town News* (Evanston, WY), 16, Subject Collections: Ethnic Groups: Chinese, in “Uncatalogued dossier box: Ethnic Groups: Asians,” History Colorado Archives, Denver; Lum, “Religion on the Road,” 166. A writer for *The Wyoming Times* 4, no. 18 (June 8, 1911): 13, Wyoming Digital Newspaper Collection, observed: “At the time of the New Year’s celebration of the subjects of the emperor of the ‘Flowery Kingdom,’ hundreds of Chinese come to Evanston from

cal store to “relax, smoke, reminisce upon old times at home, discuss their families, their business enterprises, and their hopes for the coming year” and women might pay a visit to a neighbor to exchange news about daily life, the development of the family, and the prospect of returning to China.<sup>83</sup>

Euro-Americans took great interest in these festivities, following Chinese preparation of food, ordering of firecrackers, and application for parade permits in the local newspaper, and were often welcomed to witness rituals in the temple or invited to share a banquet at the *tong*.<sup>84</sup> An article announcing “The Chinese New Year Commenced at Midnight,” which appeared in *The Butte Miner* on February 7, 1902, eschewed an earlier generation’s racist remarks about fireworks delivered or temple repainted to stress the progressive aspects of Chinese philosophy: a line drawing of Confucius appeared alongside a portrait of the reformist Guangxu emperor (fig. 15) to show that, in addition to performing “the honored custom of ushering in their

gladsome [...] New Year” by “making offerings to the josh [or god],” the Chinese “petitioned the emperor to give the people the right of suffrage, and to organize a congress such as the United States has, with a senate and house [of representatives].”<sup>85</sup> Decades of Chinese efforts to demonstrate a friendly regard for American families and institutions were finally being reciprocated in some positive news coverage. Tsai has pointed out that by 1900 Baohuang Hui (the Chinese Empire Reform Association) was particularly strong in the United States, with membership at over one hundred thousand, of which four thousand were in Idaho and Montana.<sup>86</sup>

Fortunes were rarely made, labor was rife with hazards, and life spans were often short in the mining and railroad economy of the Inner West, necessitating that Chinese migrants attend the funerals and tend the graves of their compatriots.<sup>87</sup> In China, the eldest son was responsible for the burial of his parents in accordance with the obligations of filial piety and was the chief mourner and provider of regular offerings.<sup>88</sup> The majority of men who sojourned or settled in America were single wage-earners who sent money back home to help support the family. Therefore, when a member of this com-

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Rock Springs, Green River, Park City, Salt Lake, Ogden and Boise to participate in the various ceremonies appropriate to the occasion and to join in the bomb throwing, which contest decides who shall watch over the Joss House for the ensuing twelve months.”

83 Lee, *The Growth and Decline of Chinese Communities*, 275.

84 See, for example, “Celestials are Celebrating,” *The Wyoming Press* 7, no. 24 (January 31, 1903): 1, “Chinese New Year was ushered in Wednesday with an increase of ‘hop’ smoking, incessant praying to ‘Old Josh’ and a bursting of fire-crackers which is only heard on such occasions. [...] The feature of the celebration this year will be the fireworks, imported from China for the occasion. These fire-works are set pieces and contain strange and wonderful figures representing the thousand or two gods of the celestials and scenes in China. Four large boxes of this class of fireworks have arrived in Evanston and on the middle of the next month a great Joss newly imported from China, will be placed in their meeting house with much ceremony.”

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85 “The Chinese New Year Commenced at Midnight,” *The Butte Miner*, February 7, 1902, n.p., in Vertical Files 1060: “Chinese Miscellaneous Articles,” Butte-Silver Bow Archives, Butte.

86 Tsai, *China and the Overseas Chinese in the United States*, 131–32, has laid out the number of Reform Party members recorded by Liang Ch’i-ch’ao during his tour of North America between March 4 and November 30, 1903.

87 Lyman, *The Asian in North America*, 13, has observed that “the dream of an honorable return did not usually match the reality of their [the Chinese] overseas existence. In alien lands Chinese watched helplessly as the years of toil stretched out over nearly the whole of their lives. The Chinese came as strangers, desired to be homegoers, and all too often lived, and died, as permanent sojourners.”

88 Rouse, “What We Didn’t Understand,” 31.

# THE CHINESE NEW YEAR COMMENCED AT MIDNIGHT

It Began at an Midnight, and Will Last for Two Days.

## PROGRESS IN CHINESE EMPIRE

Before reaching this point, progress in the Chinese Empire has been slow, but it is now making rapid strides.

When the hour has passed to receive the New Year, the Chinese people are busy with their preparations for the festival.



KUANG HSU  
Governor of China.

The Chinese New Year is celebrated with much pomp and circumstance. The festival is a time of joy and merriment.

The duration of the Chinese New Year is longer than that of any other festival. It lasts for two full days.

The many hundreds of years of Chinese history have been a record of progress and achievement.



HONG YOU WEI  
Chief Reformer.

into the country in such a way that the majority of the Chinese people are now enjoying a higher standard of living.

As an evidence of the progress of the Chinese people, the Chinese government has taken many steps to improve the lives of its citizens.

The Chinese people are now enjoying a higher standard of living than ever before. This is due to the progress of the Chinese Empire.

The Chinese people are now enjoying a higher standard of living than ever before. This is due to the progress of the Chinese Empire.



QUON'S LUY-LUY-LUY  
Leader of the Hsin-Hsin Reformers.

The Chinese people are now enjoying a higher standard of living than ever before. This is due to the progress of the Chinese Empire.



LOUIN HUI TIN  
Prominent Reformer of Chicago.

and progress that the Chinese people are now enjoying a higher standard of living than ever before.

The Chinese people are now enjoying a higher standard of living than ever before. This is due to the progress of the Chinese Empire.

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CONFUCIUS  
The Great Chinese Philosopher.

Confucius was a Chinese philosopher, teacher, and politician. He lived from 551 to 479 BC.



HOW SEE  
State Lecturer.

How See was a Chinese philosopher and politician. He lived from 551 to 479 BC.



LOUIN HUI TIN  
Prominent Reformer of Chicago.

The Chinese people are now enjoying a higher standard of living than ever before. This is due to the progress of the Chinese Empire.

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For This Week Only  
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Fig. 15. "The Chinese New Year Commenced at Midnight," The Butte Miner (February 7, 1902), 6. Newspaper images, dimensions unknown. In Vertical Files 1060: "Chinese Miscellaneous Articles," Butte-Silver Bow Archives, Butte.

munity met an untimely end, his association, tong, employer, associate, or friend usually approached the temple guardian, rarely a priest but commonly a lay keeper, to make burial arrangements, which usually involved summoning those familiar with Buddhist and Daoist rites, preparing the corpse, organizing a procession, burying the body locally, and repatriating the bones to China. In the event that the deceased was poor and insular, the guardian gathered the community to discuss resources available for sending him off in a respectable fashion.

Rouse has described funeral preparations in California in some detail. After a death occurred, a relative or friend posted a calligraphic announcement on the deceased's door while another announced the death to the gods at the local temple or shrine and placed an obituary in the local newspaper. The body was then dressed and wrapped in a shroud and placed in a carriage where it formed the center of a procession that included Daoist and Buddhist priests chanting incantations, brass bands and wailers clad in white hired to make loud noises to frighten away evil spirits, a wagon filled with the deceased's worldly belongings, and several strips of red paper or fake money punctured with holes scattered to distract the devil, who attempted to pass through them to catch the soul of the deceased. Upon reaching the cemetery, the priests performed burial rites over the body while mourners wept and burned the deceased's belongings and paper replicas of belongings in a brick incinerator to make his life in the next world as comfortable as possible, and the body was consigned to a relatively shallow pit. Finally, friends placed offerings of food and liquor on a slab before the grave.<sup>89</sup> Johnson has qualified that this

process was adjusted according to local resources; for example, Chinese fear of "contamination" through proximity to the corpse resulted in their contracting out the work of preparing the body and playing music to a local Euro-American funeral home and band.<sup>90</sup> Location of the oldest graves is made difficult today by the removal of tomb markers dating before 1920, which would no longer have been necessary had the body been exhumed

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*cal Archaeology at Centerville, Idaho, Once the "Handsome Town in the Basin,"* Series Idaho Cultural Resources, no. 5 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 2001), 36, has described a service for a member of a Chinese secret society in Centerville, Idaho: "a lengthy ceremony included a table [...] spread with a roast pig, a roast chicken, roast heart, boiled rice, tea, etc. Wax candles were lighted, and various kinds of reeds and sticks were kept burning. A priest dressed in a saffron-colored robe that came nearly to his heels, with a scarlet scarf wound round his head, first stood up and addressed a short speech [...] after which he kneeled and bowed a great many times, continuing to repeat invocations accompanied with various gesticulations. [...] The several other Chinese joined in and went through with certain maneuvers, after which the whole audience (of men) bowed and kneeled and rose again. The priest after this had each article of food on the table presented to him, over which he went through with a ceremony that looked as if he were blessing it. After this the men came forward by twos and bowed several times, kneeled down, rose up and bowed again before the table. More invocations or incantations followed; after which three small torpedoes were lighted, thrown in the air and exploded over the graves. Burning of fire-crackers followed and then all the men took a drink of brandy, poured from a demijohn, which closed the ceremony. During the whole of this ceremony the wife of deceased was in a crouching position on a mat near the coffin, with head bowed to the ground, and kept up a most piteous lamentation."

<sup>90</sup> Johnson, *The Middle Kingdom under the Big Sky*, 129.

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<sup>89</sup> Rouse, "What We Didn't Understand," 33–34. Also see William Wei, *Asians in Colorado: A History of Persecution and Perseverance in the Centennial State* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), 88–89. Priscilla Wegars, *Uncovering a Chinese Legacy: Histori-*

and the bones repatriated. Judging from extant later examples in Lewiston, Idaho, these markers were probably made of wood or stone inscribed with a few lines of vertical characters signifying the name of the deceased, his home village, and the date of his death.<sup>91</sup>

After burial, the grave had to be regularly tended and set with offerings — usually an abundance of fake money, food, and paper clothing — to show respect for the *hun* (heavenly soul) and to appease the *po* (earthly soul) that remained with the body. The Qingming (Pure Brightness) festival of early April, the Zhongyuan (Hungry Ghost) festival in late August, and the Chongyang (Double-Ninth) festival of October were suitable occasions for family and friends to descend on the cemetery, put memorials in order, and leave tributes.<sup>92</sup> As the *Montana Herald* reported on April 8, 1869:

[T]o-day is the [Chinese] annual Josh Day [*sic*, Qingming festival], on which occasion their custom is to visit the burial places [... to] burn incense and innumerable small wax candles about the head stones or boards of the graves, deposit a liberal lunch of choice eatables and drinkables, designed for the spirits of the departed; recite propitiatory prayers [...] and otherwise show themselves sacredly mindful of the welfare of their dead.<sup>93</sup>

In a few years, after the body had decomposed, the shallow grave would be dug up, the bones cleaned, packed, and loaded on a train headed for a Pacific port. Overseeing this lengthy process of grave tending, offering placement, body disinterment, and bone shipment was either the *huiguan* (Chinese regional clan association) or the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, formerly the Chinese Six Companies, headquartered in San Francisco. Fearing that he might die in the United States and not have sufficient funds to have his body shipped back to Chi-

91 Bronson and Ho, *Coming Home in Gold Brocade*, 221.

92 Chung, *In Pursuit of Gold*, 166, has distinguished the Qingming Festival from the Chongyang Festival as follows: “The former festival involved cleaning the grave site and offering prayers and food for the spirits of departed relatives and close friends, while the latter was observed to pacify the ghosts of strangers and the uncared-for dead.” Wendy L. Rouse, *The Children of Chinatown: Growing Up Chinese American in San Francisco, 1850–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 66–67, has elaborated: “For the Chinese, reverence for ancestors was an integral part of daily life, and at least two annual festivals specifically honored deceased relatives. In the spring, during the Pure Brightness Festival (Ch’ing Ming), families visited the local cemetery to clean the graves. Sweeping a grave with a willow branch was believed to repel evil spirits. Relatives laid offerings of food and drink before the graves and burned paper clothing and incense. Firecrackers created a distraction to prevent evil spirits from harming both the living and the dead. During the [late] summer, the family again visited the graves to present offerings to

the deceased. On this day, sometimes referred to as the Feast of the Hungry Ghosts, the Chinese believed that the gates of the underworld opened to permit the spirits of the discontented deceased to wander the earth. These ‘hungry ghosts’ did not have any living family to provide them with offerings of food and clothing. In their effort to find consolation, they wandered the earth, attempting to find sustenance. Families prepared platforms of cooked food for the ghosts, who returned to earth to feast. The living also offered miniature paper garments (representing clothing) and burned paper money to provide the deceased with earthly necessities in the underworld.”

93 *Montana Herald*, quoted in Robert R. Swartout, Jr., “From Kwangtung to the Big Sky: The Chinese Experience in Frontier Montana, 1864–1900,” in *An Anthology of Historical Essays: The Montana Heritage*, eds. Robert R. Swartout, Jr. and Harry W. Fritz (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1992), 75.

na to rest with parents and ancestors, the migrant paid the *huiguan* to ensure that his grave was tended and bones repatriated.<sup>94</sup> Those migrants who were wealthy paid more so that the needy could be buried, exhumed, and repatriated.<sup>95</sup> In the event that a deceased Chinese originated in a village where emigration was uncommon and therefore was not represented by a company or clan association abroad, he or she was likely to be buried in an American cemetery and to remain there.<sup>96</sup> From mainland China, it was often believed that a son who died abroad with nobody to tend his grave assumed the existence of a “homeless ghost” wandering in the netherworld.<sup>97</sup> The same could be said of working women, especially prostitutes.

New Year’s and funerary rituals enabled Chinese laboring men and women to infuse the Northern Rockies with the traditions of mainland China. As Lum has put it brilliantly:

They claimed aural and olfactory space, as they unabashedly paraded down streets with music and mourners and burned fragrant incense and paper goods. They claimed space in the ground for the flesh of their dead. And they claimed space on roads and transit vehicles to ship the bones of their dead from the interior

94 Lum, “Religion on the Road,” 171.

95 Johnson, *The Middle Kingdom under the Big Sky*, 140.

96 Chung, *In Pursuit of Gold*, 166.

97 Samuel L. Couch, “Topophilia and Chinese Miners: Place Attachment in North Central Idaho” (PhD diss., University of Idaho, 1996), 44, 137–38, has written: “Individual Chinese believed ‘that if his body was buried in a strange land, untended by his family, his soul would never stop wandering in the darkness of the other world.’ [...] Spirits could not rest until properly buried in the ancestral graves. If a body were left to rest abroad no relatives could ‘tend the graves and placate the spirits.’”

back to San Francisco, and from San Francisco back to China.<sup>98</sup>

In other words, the Chinese did not intend to arrive or depart quietly.

### ***Religious Life and Culture in Japan during the Meiji Era***

The resignation of the last of a series of shōguns from the Tokugawa clan in the autumn of 1867 and the end to economic isolation from the West ushered in a new era which saw the restoration of the imperial house to executive power under Emperor Meiji (r. 1867–1912) and the modernization and Westernization of Japan. To strengthen the emperor’s grasp on matters of state, the new autocratic government declared Shintō the nation’s preeminent philosophy (reviving the ancient idea of divine monarchy), acknowledged Confucianism as an ideal value system necessary for maintaining social order (through filial piety and ethical conduct), and encouraged the acquisition of new ideas, technologies, and industries from the West.<sup>99</sup> Thus, unlike the Manchus of China, who supported Confucianism and Buddhism out of pragmatism and devotion, and absorbed Daoist and other trends partly out of respect for local tradition and partly out of desire to consolidate territories of diverse faiths, the Meiji sought to use Shintō heritage to condition a population long accustomed to Buddhist ritual and community into acceptance

98 Lum, “Religion on the Road,” 172.

99 See W.G. Beasley, “Meiji Political Institutions,” in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 5, *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 5:620–21. The emperor proclaimed a Five Charter Oath whose final provision announced that “[k]nowledge shall be sought throughout the world in order to strengthen the foundations of imperial rule,” manifested in encouraging students to study abroad, women to be educated, and all subjects to learn Western ways.

of imperial dictates. Joseph Kitagawa has pointed out that the Meiji regime advocated a fusion of government and religion, and to this end quickly elevated Shintō above Buddhism as the only true indigenous Japanese religious tradition, placed the Department of Shintō just above the Grand Council of State, and issued a proclamation that stated *kan-nagara* (the way of the kami) would be the guiding principle for the nation.<sup>100</sup> Instead of requiring all families to register at their local Buddhist temples as they had done during the Tokugawa regime, the Meiji government ordered them to submit to *ujiko-shirabe* (register at the nearest Shintō shrine), and the government likewise ordered Shintō rites to replace Buddhist rituals at funerals.<sup>101</sup> Popular resistance to imperial edicts on religious matters was so great that the government was forced to terminate the Shintō registration program within a few years (1871) and to formulate a new “state Shintō,” as distinct from “folk Shintō,” which all Japanese were expected to follow as a matter of patriotic devotion.

**Shintō.** Shintō, translated as “the way or path of the *kami*,” describes the law of the natural order. *Kami* refers to the spirit residing in a living individual or once residing in a deceased person which has moved on to take up residence in natural phenomena such as mountains, waterfalls, and trees. When a person is alive, he or she embodies or represents the *kami*. When he or she has died, the spirit remains a force in the world as the *kami* represents him or her. The main philosophy of Shintō is reverence for and loyalty to the imperial ancestors and founding gods, reverence for the spirits and memory of great persons of the past, the communal cult of clan ancestors, and the spirits or memory of the ancestors of a family. There is a sense

of communion with ancestors, of solacing or pleasing them, and of receiving moral support in return. Although each clan conceived of its own protector *kami* or founder spirit, to whom they offered prayers for successful plantings and harvests, they claimed no moral or cosmic theory to explain the mysteries of the universe, no elaborate ritual or special priesthood, and no ornate edifice or figural art to represent spirits or deities. Instead, they attempted to ensure *harae* (spiritual purity) through purification rites (e.g., abstinence, bathing, sprinkling salt, building fires) and raised *torii* (tall, double-lintel gateways) that suggested the entrance to the emperor’s palace or the spiritual realm. For example, the Ise Jingū (Grand Shrine of Ise) is dedicated to Amaterasu (the Goddess of the Sun) and the Meiji Shrine of Tōkyō is dedicated to the deified spirits of imperial spouses Meiji and Shōken (fig. 16), a three-chamber gabled cypress structure with deep eaves situated in an evergreen forest. They also built modest wood structures along several country paths, left offerings of incense, flowers, fruit, or grain to sustain imperial and ancestor spirits, and hung white strips of paper to symbolize purity. Shintō encouraged the most ostentatious emperor no less than the humblest family to constantly keep the past in view to appreciate the benefits of living dutifully and conscientiously.

The political advantage of wedding the mythical origins (ca. 300) of the imperial house to the Bronze Age cult of ancestral spirits and nature deities was readily appreciated by a small group of royalists who formulated government policies, as legitimacy could be given to his control over the state and spiritual force could be attributed to political pronouncements. The principle of “immanent theocracy” was promoted whereby the divine essence was said to be manifested in the physical world, principally in the form of divine guidance permeating the mind and body of the emperor so that he managed the day-to-day affairs of the court and government with wisdom. The emperor, his court

<sup>100</sup> Joseph M. Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 201.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*



**Fig. 16.** Shinto shrine dedicated to the spirits of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken, 1915–1921. Shibuya District, Tokyo. Nattee Chalermtiragool / Alamy Stock Photo GoC1AP.

bureaucracy, and royalist supporters sought to legitimate the principle in ceremonial, religion, and education. The emperor abolished all Buddhist ceremonies at court and distanced the priests, which triggered Confucian scholars and Shintō clerics to use this as a pretext for scapegoating, looting, and destruction. Displaced from power, Buddhists feared that Christian evangelism and other features of Western civilization would spread throughout Japan. Government edicts required the separation of Shintō from Buddhism as contrary to ancient Japanese ways (1868) and declared that restoring the “way of the *kami*” would be the guiding principle of the nation (1870).<sup>102</sup> In place of compulsory registration of families at Buddhist temples and performance of funeral rites by Buddhist priests, there was compulsory registration at Shintō temples and rites recited by Shintō priests. A shrine was erected in the imperial palace to honor both the ancestors of the imperial house and the *kami* of the Shintō pantheon, presided over by the sun goddess

Amateratsu Ōmikami on special occasions.<sup>103</sup> The emperor or his representative addressed petitions to his divine progenitor seven times a year and offered special prayers when the nation was embarking on the conquest of territories. The emperor’s birthday was proclaimed a national holiday, and on that day he was honored not only for his official rank or charisma as an effective leader but also for his quasi-divinity or aura as an embodiment of all the *kami* who came before him. The state bureaucracy used such occasions to encourage responsible parties to affirm loyalty to the government, to read out imperial edicts, and to encourage the modernization of Japan.

To his chagrin, the Meiji emperor found in due course that his plan to impose Shintō-laced mandates on the Japanese was regarded by the clergy, literati, and commons as an executive overreach.<sup>104</sup> Under the previous, Tokugawa regime, the masses had been permitted to erect a plethora of shrines and to consult shrine guardians, town healers, and mountain ascetics as needed. In addition to leaving regular food offerings for ances-

<sup>102</sup> Joseph M. Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 167.

<sup>103</sup> Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History*, 203.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.



tor spirits at *kamidana* (modest household shrines) for the new year and attending *matsumi* (local public festivals) to give thanks for seasonal abundance, the commons employed Shintō rituals to mark various life events, such as birth, marriage, and death. At the *hatsumiyamairi* (first shrine visit for newborns), for example, the baby was taken for its first visit to the local shrine about a month after his or her birth, and the *saiten-sai* or *seijin shiki* (coming of age ritual) and the *shinzen kekkon* (wedding before the *kami*) also took place at the shrine. Although funerals tended to be observed at Buddhist temples, ancestors were revered at Shintō shrines. The government's consolidation or displacement of these resources to promote the imperial family and national festivals threatened to divest the people of important mechanisms for coping with the pressures of everyday life.<sup>105</sup> Could not the emperor's faithful subjects, religious leaders, and secular intellectuals queried, retain their religious freedom and show loyalty to the emperor?

The emperor and his ministers underestimated not only the appeal of the Confucian scholars, Buddhist priests, and folk Shintō ascetics to the commons but also the usefulness of their intellectual and moral authority in consolidating the dynasty's power. As Kitagawa has stated:

The government leaders realized [...] that Shinto, important though it was as the foundation of the new Japan, lacked the intellectual and moral content that was necessary for the nation. Thus, they

<sup>105</sup>Kenneth B. Pyle, "Meiji Conservatism," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 5, ed. Jansen, 714, has observed that Japan's Home Ministry sought to merge Shintō shrines at the local level into a single central shrine per community (1906), shifting their function from absorbing the daily concerns of local inhabitants (e.g., weather, harvests, offspring) to promoting the imperial family and national festivals.

soft-pedaled anti-Buddhist measures and sought the alliance of Confucian scholars. Conversely, both Buddhist and Confucian leaders, alarmed at the penetration of "foreign" influence [especially Christianity], rallied behind Shinto and the government leaders in their attempt to preserve and strengthen the principle of "immanent theocracy" in the new Japan.<sup>106</sup>

One senses a discomfort on the part of the marginalized old school scholars and clerics to question the dictates of the emperor, and thus to formulate a compromise position. Ever pragmatic, the architects of the Meiji government created "state Shintō," a secular cult of national morality and patriotism distinct from "folk Shintō" and all other religions, and thus did not pose any philosophical, moral, or cultural conflict with established cults. Kitagawa describes how state Shintō "appropriated Confucian ethics for its moral basis" so that even the Imperial Rescript on Education promulgated in 1890 declared "subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety" and a teaching course designed to inculcate ethics "to strengthen faith in the national polity" was made compulsory, reforms that students felt at the primary and secondary levels.<sup>107</sup> Thus, the government's stated objective of achieving a modern state through adoption of many Western ideas and innovations was done in service of a cult of the emperor in service of nationalism.

**Confucianism.** The Meiji regime needed Confucianism, a largely secular philosophy originating in China, to strengthen its political hold on the country, to codify social relations, and to advance industry. In general, the philosophy of Confucianism is characterized as rationalist and humanist, forwarding the

<sup>106</sup>Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History*, 255, and Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 216.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*, 168.

belief that the universe can be understood through reason and that therefore humans can build a harmonious relationship with the universe. Its ethical, epistemological, metaphysical, political, and aesthetic teachings are typically understood in relation to “the socio-political world of humanity, beginning with the individual and his [or] her pursuit of moral and intellectual perfection, the family and its pursuit of harmony and order, and the polity and its pursuit of peace and prosperity throughout the world at large.”<sup>108</sup> Three main trends in “Neo-Confucianism” had developed in Japan during the Tokugawa period. The first was the Shushigaku, based on the Chinese school of the philosopher Zhu Xi, which became the cornerstone of education, teaching the cardinal virtues of filial piety, loyalty, obedience, and indebtedness. The second was the Oyomeigaku, centered upon the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Wang Yangming, who held self-knowledge to be the highest form of learning and placed great emphasis on intuitive perception of truth. The third was Kokugaku, which advanced that the ancient Japanese were better representatives of Confucian virtues than the Chinese, apart from Confucius and Mencius, and that there should be more intellectual focus on Shintō and nativist classics than on imported Buddhism and foreign writings. Because all the major Neo-Confucian philosophers of the Tokugawa period died in the first twenty-five years of the Meiji period, a few minor disciples remained to carry on the teachings. As a result, Japanese society imbibed only a general sense of hierarchy, duty, and filial piety; national harmony guaranteed by ethics and education; and international influence founded on industrial and military might. The Confucian patriarchal or dynastic-familial ethos has already been considered under Chinese developments. However, Confucian ethics and their application

to national improvement and international cooperation can be considered here.

Under the Meiji, Neo-Confucianism brimmed with high-minded ideals that challenged families to reach the highest state of ethical behavior. Scholars developed a method for interpreting elements of the Confucian tradition in such a way as to render them applicable to upholding the social order, instilling moral virtues and educational improvement in the populace. The emperor was encouraged to appreciate the benefits of self-cultivation, first by making his mind correct and his thoughts sincere, and second by extending his understanding of things by studying and investigating them. The ruling class followed the emperor’s example, believing that their families would be well ordered, their states well governed, and the empire united in peace as a result. These interpretations filtered down to the general populace, from the children of *daimyō-samurai* elite at home, to the boys and girls of well-to-do farmers and merchants in *terakoya* (private schools), to the general populace consuming entertainment and news media.<sup>109</sup> Loyalty and trustworthiness were integral to the Neo-Confucian ethic, but ethical prescriptions such as *jin* (humaneness) were equally important. Humaneness was described variously, but was most often associated with the injunction not to do to others what one would not want done to oneself. Being humane led one to become mystically one with everything in existence. There was also unity in a cognitive grasp of the rational principles defining human nature’s goodness and the core ethical goodness of all things and their limitless becoming. Neo-Confucian philosophy emerged in opposition to the Christian religion insofar as the latter was regarded an instrument of foreign domination. Without crediting the philosophy, the Meiji promoted its tenets as the foundation of Japanese ethics. The Constitution (1889) and the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890) invoked

108 *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. “Japanese Confucian Philosophy,” <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/japanese-confucian/>

109 Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History*, 249–50.

respect for the emperor and the practice of filial piety based on the virtuous example set by “the imperial ancestors” alone.

Neo-Confucian scholars viewed learning as one of the most basic methods of self-cultivation, one that contributed to the realization of a person’s moral sense. Scholars emphasized broad learning in the ancient classics and historical literature and specifically extolled studying the Confucian Four Books (ca. 300 BCE) and Zhu Xi’s commentaries on them (ca. 1170 CE). The first of the Four Books, the *Great Learning*, outlines the series of investigative methods to be mastered for a person to undertake further learning and to manifest sincere thoughts or *ming mingde* (luminous virtue). Scholars also promoted national advancement among the industrialized nations of the world. For example, Uchimura Kanzo wrote in *Daihyōteki nihonjin* (*Representative Men of Japan: Essays*) (1908) that Wang Yangming’s philosophy freed the Japanese people from fear or loathing of Western values so that they could finally work to achieve technological modernization. Scholars were likewise persuaded that the *li* (reason or principle) and the aim of Western science were one and the same, and since both cultures were after an expansion of knowledge, it was acceptable for the Japanese to welcome foreigners and to send Japanese students abroad to learn about Western ideas. However, the Meiji regime intended to steer the next generation away from traditional Confucian moral teachings so that they could attain utilitarian skills that would contribute to the nation’s economy. As Kenneth Pyle has observed, the Gakusei (Education System Ordinance) of 1872 “stated that the purpose of education was to enable a student to ‘make his way in the world, employ his wealth wisely, make his business prosper, and thus attain the goal of life.’”<sup>110</sup> He continued that those values that emphasized ambition, hard work, educational worth, and scientific utility clearly have a basis in Japa-

<sup>110</sup> Pyle, “Meiji Conservatism,” 680.

nese experience. However, those values that emphasized human rights, individual freedom, and women’s rights were drawn from the Western liberal tradition and therefore had no relevance to Japan. Beginning in the 1860s, a steady stream of students at first drawn from the diplomatic corps, and then from the mercantile class, were sent abroad to the United States and Europe to experience Western ways and were expected to return to Japan as advanced professionals ready to lead the nation to greatness. As the Meiji advisors came to realize the superiority of Western weaponry, they shifted their emphasis from knowledge about medicine, biology, manufacturing, and economics to knowledge of military science and technology.<sup>111</sup> The Gakusei also required all youths to be educated within a school district system, with an emphasis on Western learning that would ensure the modernization of Japan, and the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1892 required that all subjects unquestioningly obey the laws, promote the public good, and defer to the imperial will in the event of a national emergency. This attempt to instill a patriotic cult of the emperor in the school and university was largely successful in a domestic social setting, though it would be tested in times of international armed conflict.

How might Eastern ethics be combined with Western science to yield results beneficial to the nation and the balance of global powers? It was believed that Japan could absorb foreign ideas safely because it had retained substantial cultural autonomy.<sup>112</sup> As the intellectual Hashimoto Sanai put it during the late stage of the Tokugawa regime, Japan should “adopt mechanical devices and

<sup>111</sup> Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History*, 251–52.

<sup>112</sup> Lyman, *The Asian in North America*, 161, has written: “The modernization of Japan, actually begun in the Tokugawa Period, was achieved not by over-turning the old cultural order but rather by adapting western industrial, educational and military forms to the framework of that order.”

techniques from the West but retain the benevolence, righteousness, loyalty and filial piety of Japan."<sup>113</sup> Confucian ethics had served the Japanese well in family and public interactions and cosmopolitan knowledge would provide the government a foundation for prosperity and defense. These high ideals were certainly cultivated by the emperor, diplomatic corps, and the mercantile and farming elites, but they probably were beyond the ken of most Japanese who went to the West to engage in hard labor. John Tucker has made a case for knowledge of new Western developments among a broad demographic of Japanese due to increased literacy made possible by the revolution in mass printing, the institution of schools, and the rise of educational movements in the late nineteenth century.<sup>114</sup> He concludes that basic political concepts inevitably filtered down to the peasantry, who in turn developed expectations about humane government, including the notion that the best rulers provided for the interests of society as a whole or were met by remonstrations, protests, and uprisings.

**Buddhism.** The primacy of Shintō in validating the political authority and the necessity of Confucianism in encouraging social cohesion meant that these two beneficiaries of state patronage could push Buddhism as an ethical code to the margins. As Kitagawa has observed, the Meiji emperor wished to see Buddhism severed from the establishment:

In 1871 all temple lands were confiscated by government order, and all Buddhist ceremonies that had been performed in the imperial household were abolished. In the following year all the ranks and privileges previously bestowed upon the

Buddhist hierarchy were revoked, and the Order of Mountain Ascetics was abrogated.<sup>115</sup>

Buddhist priests and nuns were returned to secular life unless they were willing to be reinstated in a Shintō capacity. Buddhist temples were destroyed, consolidated, or repurposed in order to shrink their vast numbers of adherents. Paintings and statues were looted and sold. If Buddhists wished to practice their faith, they would have to do so in secret. It was in the self-interest of Shintō priests and Confucian officials to bad-mouth Buddhist clergy as a former protectorate of the "antiquated" Tokugawa regime and to stir up anti-Buddhist feelings among a people tired of the corrupt priests and heavy-handed tactics. Powerless to resist the emperor's directive and the public's scorn, devotees endured privations in seclusion and pursued scholarship on Theravada, Mahayana, and Tibetan practices, undertook a critical examination of Japanese Buddhism, and questioned the degree to which Christian proselytizing and Western ideas may have contributed to their alienation from the nation.<sup>116</sup> Indeed, it was much safer to blame foreign influences than to protest native conspiracies.

In 1890 the Meiji government, taken aback by renewed calls for political and social reform, decided to tolerate Buddhism for its usefulness in promoting the principles of "immanent theocracy" and "ethnocentric nationalism" against the elements of "Western democracy" and "modernity."<sup>117</sup> This presented the priests and faithful an opportunity to open some of the temples and revive certain rituals. John Bolton Farish, an American mining engineer and speculator headquartered in Denver, observed during a stop in Tōkyō in 1905 that although "the majority of the shrines about the city [...] are Shintō," one of the most popular temples was

<sup>113</sup> Hashimoto Sanai, quoted in Hirakawa Sukehiro, "Japan's Turn to the West," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 5, ed. Jansen, 444.

<sup>114</sup> *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. "Japanese Confucian Philosophy."

<sup>115</sup> Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History*, 202.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.

<sup>117</sup> See *ibid.*, 230.

dedicated to Kwannon (Guanyin, Goddess of Compassion), and “a perfect stream of worshippers were going and coming during the entire stay.”<sup>118</sup> In particular the people were drawn to a statue of a seated Buddha, whose features seemed to be heavily worn due to visitors rubbing their hands on parts corresponding to their bodily ailments and then on the afflicted parts of their bodies. Farish also visited the Jodo Shinshu temple, which was destroyed by the Great Kanto earthquake of 1923, located in the Tsukiji Monzeki district, known for artifacts of Prince Shōtoku (Buddhism) and monks Shinran Shonin and Shonyo Shonin (Tendai Lotus School). Passing through a high stone fence, he admired “sacred groves, a number of shrines, and a great many stone lanterns [...] erected [...] over the graves of leading men” converging on an 150-foot square temple with long eaves. Wooden screens were slid back to reveal a columned hall supporting a ceiling carved with “dragons and other imaginary animals colored in brilliant reds, blues and whites,” at the center of which a “high altar” stood bearing “a [bronze] statue of the goddess” measuring about three feet high, flanked by huge gilt bronze lanterns.<sup>119</sup> Given his previous visits to a Buddhist temple, he probably mistook a full-length standing sculpture of Amida Buddha (fig. 17) for Guanyin, atop an ornate altar amid rather spartan columned and screened surroundings. Followers of True Pure Land Buddhism had little difficulty reviving their temple in grand style.

### ***Japanese Religious Life and Culture in the Northern Rockies in the Postbellum Period***

Most Japanese who left the southwestern prefectures of Kyūshū and Honshū in search of fortune in the American West between 1890 and 1910 did so more than thirty years after

the Chinese. They arrived in the Northern Rockies at a time when Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado were full-fledged states of the federal union with functioning civic and legal institutions. There were, of course, earlier arrivals: Japanese nobles, diplomats, and manufacturers had sent their sons to industrial cities and university towns in the Northeast from 1870 onward to study Western technology, business, and manufacturing. To this it may be added Japanese farmers who were dispossessed of their lands through the government’s tax reforms of 1885, which was a growing population suffering from land scarcity and food shortages and forced to seek employment as agricultural laborers in the Hawai’ian Islands.<sup>120</sup> Lured by labor contractors, the first migrant Japanese to reach the American mainland tended to be young single men who lived in groups in workcamps and found jobs on farms in the temperate, fertile fields of Central California and the second wave followed the rails inland to the city of Denver, Colorado.<sup>121</sup> They turned their labor not only to farming and gardening but also to railroad, road, and dam building; felling trees, raising poles, and stringing power lines; canning vegetables and packing meat; processing salt and selling dry goods.<sup>122</sup> As

<sup>120</sup> Harry H.L. Kitano, *Japanese Americans: The Evolution of a Subculture* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), 10, has stated that “most of these immigrants came from the southern prefectures of Hiroshima, Kumamoto, Wakayama, Fukuoka, and Yamaguchi.” See also Wei, *Asians in Colorado*, 151.

<sup>121</sup> Lyman, *The Asian in North America*, 146, has observed that the majority of Japanese migrants were single males, even more so than Chinese migrants: “In 1910, 65.1% of the male Japanese 25 to 44 years old reported themselves single, or 15,500 out of an age group of 23,820. Of 3,095 female Japanese in California aged 25-44, only 275 or 8.9% reported themselves single. Chinese show a higher percentage married and lower percentage single for the same year.”

<sup>122</sup> See Noel L. Leathers, *The Japanese in America*,

<sup>118</sup> John Bolton Farish, *Reminiscences*, 31, Mss.

Collection 227, History Colorado Archives, Denver.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.



**Fig. 17.** Tsukiji Honganji Temple, Tokyo, from *The Century Album of Tokyo Views, Japan* (Tokyo: Kojima Mataichi, 1909), 15, National Diet Library Digital Collections, Call no. 407-42. Public Domain.

急を者信し行學を講恩報に俗息山開りよ日一十月一十年毎りた標燦碧金堂殿め極を嚴壯も最造構表廣域寺てしに四年長慶は寺開  
 予絶を躍暮朝女善男の仰信てしに所む刻らか自の手太德徳は佛陀彌阿尊本る係に立創の年七和元し稱と跡門の地築に一は圖上ス

with the Chinese, the earliest Japanese sojourners attempted to amass a few thousand dollars so that they could return home, buy land, and start a family.<sup>123</sup> Physical exertion

was exhausting, working conditions were poor, and wages were low, showing little evidence of progress toward the dream. Cut off from their families for several years, many workers found it expedient to appeal to parents and a *nakōdo* (matchmaker) back home for the dispatch of “picture brides” from similar family backgrounds and strained financial circumstances.<sup>124</sup> Although life in

rev. edn. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company, 1974), 14–15. *Ibid.*, 18–19, 34, has emphasized Japanese immigrants’ desire to farm and become landholders and American legislators’ interest in curtailing that: “By 1920, the new immigrants owned nearly 75,000 acres and leased more than 383,000 acres. The average immigrant farm consisted of only 56 acres compared to 320 acres of the average west coast farm. Despite smaller farms, Japanese immigrants contributed 13 percent of the total agricultural produce of California.” Although they formed local associations to promote their economic interests, the California legislature passed the Alien Land Law in 1913, prohibiting Japanese from owning land and from leasing it for more than three years. Washington followed with its own act in 1921, and then Oregon and Idaho in 1923.

<sup>123</sup> Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1969), 129, and Bill Hosokawa, *Colorado’s Japanese Americans: From 1886 to the Present* (Denver: University Press of Colorado, 2005),

2.  
<sup>124</sup> Leathers, *The Japanese in America*, 16, has described the process of arranging marriages in Japan: “The young immigrant would write a letter back home to his parents telling them that he would like to marry a suitable young Japanese girl. Many times he would ask his parents to make the proposal to a girl in his hometown whom he had known before coming to the United States. His parents took this responsibility very seriously. They made extensive inquiries into the family, training, manners, and general character of the girl. [...] If everything turned out to be satisfactory [to both families], the marriage ceremony would be performed in Japan with the bride dressed in her finest and the groom’s family representing the young immigrant in America.” The

relative seclusion on small farms permitted some traditional Shintō, Confucian, and Buddhist practices to continue undisturbed, the settlers' desire for social interaction, formal instruction, and regional assimilation was great, and they became involved in established Christian churches in the near term and improvised new Buddhist temples in the long term. American politicians, roused by the arrival of 72,000 Japanese immigrants by 1910, pushed through an Asian Exclusion Law in 1924, prohibiting the entry of further laborers from Japan so that farming and manufacturing opportunities could fall to European immigrants.<sup>125</sup> Occasionally the Japanese community interfaced with the European community to share the Western new year or gather at the shrine or temple for seasonal *matsuri* (festivals).

**Shintō Adapted.** Most Japanese were raised in patriarchal households founded on ancestor veneration and filial piety consistent with Shintō and Confucian principles. What the sojourner brought from popular or folk Shintō was memory of natural landscape features, the worship of clan and village *kami*, and perhaps the example of clean living. From general Confucian principles he imbibed the hierarchical relations of official to civilian, boss to worker, master to apprentice, and perhaps a code of ethical behavior when dealing with friends and colleagues. For a single male worker in a foreign land Shintō was adaptable to meditation at secluded spots in

the landscape, a tree or stream near the workplace might recall personal or ancestral *kami*, and natural features in the landscape might communicate moral support and personal integrity. A community of Japanese workers permitted the assertion of the national ideology and culture in the form of State Shintō on special occasions. For example, the Meiji emperor's birthday had been proclaimed a national holiday on September 22, 1868 (November 3, 1868 in the Western calendar) and was celebrated with readings of his official promulgations, singing of the national anthem, organization of banquets, and toasts to his eternal longevity. Judging from a surviving program, one birthday celebration that took place at the community hall in Denver on October 31, 1913 included the unveiling of the emperor's portrait, the reading of the Imperial Edict for that year, and the covering of the portrait. A coronation celebration that involved the Consulate-General of Japan in the same city on November 10, 1915 elaborated the ritual to include the reading of the *Kyōiku ni Kansuru Chokugo* or Imperial Rescript on Education in both Japanese and English and the singing of the coronation anthem by Sunday school children.<sup>126</sup> On

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Japanese government would then permit her to join her husband in the United States; the young immigrant usually met his bride at the dock and then went through another marriage ceremony in accordance with the custom of his new homeland. The Japanese government discontinued issuing passports to "picture brides" in 1920 because of anti-Japanese sentiment in the United States.

125 Wei, *Asians in Colorado*, 152; Kitano, *Japanese Americans*, 15; and Hosokawa, *Colorado's Japanese Americans*, 2–5. Also see Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 324–25.

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126 Eric Walz, "Japanese Immigration and Community Building in the Interior West 1882–1945" (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 1998), 150–51, 166, has discussed Japanese tributes paid to the emperor on his birthday in Arizona. "Loyal Japs of Dillon Give Bounteous Banquet," *Anaconda Standard*, November 6, 1911, n.p., in Vertical Files: "Japanese in Montana," Montana Historical Society, Helena, announced a banquet in honor of the emperor's sixty-ninth birthday in Dillon, Montana, where Japanese invited American friends to witness the unveiling of the emperor's picture, the reading of the imperial edict (on education?) in both languages, and the singing of the national hymns of Japan and the United States. See Unidentified, Program: Celebration of the Coronation Ceremony of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Japan, Denver, November 10, 1915 (which includes a portrait unveiling and a decree reading) and



**Fig. 18.** Unknown, *Emperor Taisho in Full Dress Uniform*, 1912. Photograph. History/Woodbury & Page / Bridgeman Images. Image number: PFH2562665.

both occasions, the photograph or engraving of the new emperor Taishō in voluminous Japanese coronation robes or Western military uniform (fig. 18) was utilized to promote his actual presence while the edicts were being read, suggesting that imperial mandates could indeed be carried across the ocean and homeward longings could keep the migrants faithful to the dynasty.

**Confucianism Adapted.** There was not much opportunity for the single Japanese male migrant to adhere to Confucian ideals in the West, except perhaps by deferring to senior workers and labor bosses, and those who did not earn enough money to return to Japan

toughed it out in mining, railroad, or agricultural work. Self-preservation through bonding with the collective for the purposes of mutual subsistence, defense, and support was the priority. Although the Gentlemen's Agreement (1907) between the United States and Japan stopped the influx of laborers into America, a loophole permitted the immigration of wives and children of current residents. A long-distance marriage could be arranged by a matchmaker and a "picture bride," known only through written assurances of health and fertility and an exchange of photos, was imported. The arrival of a bride, wife, or mother and child immediately changed the situation to one where the male laborer enjoyed patriarchal rights over his young family. Raised on Confucian ideals of duty and unquestioned obedience to husbands, Issei wives were not surprised by a continuance of patriarchal codes in America.

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Invitation to Banquet, Subject Collections: Ethnic Groups: Japanese, in Uncatalogued dossier box: Ethnic Groups: Asians, History Colorado Archives, Denver.



However, they were shocked by the rusticity and harshness of life in the Northwest, as many assisted their husbands in endless field toil along with completing constant household chores without basic amenities such as running water, plumbing, and electricity. Wives knew that husbands could not succeed without their labor. In some Denver photos the wife's challenging gaze and unconventional pose suggest a level of independent speech and movement only acceptable in the West.

There were plenty of occasions in the patriarchal household for husband and wife, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, to demonstrate obedience in the interest of preserving family harmony.<sup>127</sup> A line of authority extended down from the father through the mother to the first-born, second-born, third-born and so on, and a line of obligation extended upward from the youngest to the eldest.<sup>128</sup> Within the household, *oyakoko* (filial piety) was best expressed in reciprocity between parent and child. Just as the parents supplied the child with the best possible food, housing, and shelter and regulated the child's activities until he or she reached adulthood, so the child was required to reciprocate when the parents were too old to care for themselves — a custom that was challenged by American values, where individualism or career obligations were at the forefront.<sup>129</sup> Lyman has located this arrangement within a unique set of social circumstances in which samurai ideals were nationalized through public education in Japan. A samurai ethic of elite ethical training developed under the Tokugawa period was democratized through the implementation of universal education under the Meiji, with the result that even a farming family learned to make regular demonstrations of authority, attendance to duties, and control of the emotions central to the preservation of the

family and household.<sup>130</sup> In public, the family was to show an exemplary face, performing optimally at school and work, helping each other, and behaving virtuously to guarantee the dignity of the family name. Dwelling in rooming houses or farmhouses, the family was the bedrock of the Japanese colony and formed alliances with other families, associations, and churches to create a community profile. Conversely, the community exerted pressure to settle disputes with each other as well as with outsiders amicably.

**Buddhism Adapted.** Most sojourners who departed from Japan in the late 1880s were familiar with the Buddhist devotions and ceremonies that punctuated village life during the last years of the Tokugawa regime. As Walz has stated, the Tokugawa government embraced Buddhism as a religious and organizational mechanism, presuming community support of the local temple lent itself well to registration of every household there so that directives could be efficiently disseminated with the force of divine mandates.<sup>131</sup> Buddhist observances permeated family and village life to the extent that a man who went abroad in search of work naturally experienced other faiths and cultures through the lens of his largely Buddhist upbringing. Despite the Meiji regime's recognition of Shintō as the preeminent faith, most Japanese households and villages continued to identify as Buddhist, finding the latter to be flexible enough to incorporate or accommodate other ideals and doctrines. Thus, the *issei* (the first generation of Japanese to emigrate to the United States) adhered to the Buddhist quest to achieve nirvana (extinction of all worldly desire), modeled ethical behavior towards parents, friends, and strangers, and preserved special ceremonies for births, wed-

127 See Kitano, *Japanese Americans*, 61–63.

128 Lyman, *The Asian in North America*, 163.

129 Kitano, *Japanese Americans*, 66, 162.

130 Lyman, *The Asian in North America*, 161–63.

131 Eric Walz, *Nikkei in the Interior West: Japanese Immigration and Community Building, 1882–1945* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012), 129.

dings, and deaths.<sup>132</sup> Jōdo Shinshū or Pure Land Buddhism with its message of salvation for all through chanting the name of Amida easily secured a dominant position in the Northern Rockies in the late 1890s, while the Nichiren, Shingon, and Zen sects took root in various places throughout the West in the 1910s and beyond.<sup>133</sup> Yamato Ichihashi has suggested that the Jodo Shinshu sect took root so effectively in the West because the Jōdo Shinshū Hongwangji-ha, a Buddhist organization, had pioneered missionary work in Korea, Manchuria, and Southern China as early as 1884, and the Jōdo Shinsū Hongwanji-ha adapted well to accommodating Japanese migrants and settlers residing abroad, particularly in California, where they established temples and young men's and women's associations.<sup>134</sup> It has been estimated that of the 55,000 Japanese Buddhists in the United States by 1940, eighty percent were members of the Jōdo Shinshū Hongwangji-ha.<sup>135</sup> In the early years of Japanese migration, the worker was compelled by financial need and remote locale to limit signs and instruments of worship to his own person and dwelling.

Perhaps because religion was always a private individual or family concern for the Japanese rather than a public denomination-

al or community covenant, Buddhist worship tended to take place in screened areas of the home. A *butsudan* (small altar shelf with the image of the Buddha or bodhisattva) set on a table or hung on the wall of a dwelling might recall a life of sacrifice and striving or a transcended state receptive to the yearnings of ordinary mortals. The seventeen-inch-high lacquer and gilt niche containing a carved standing figure of Amida Nyorai (Buddha of Limitless Light) presents the illusion of a heavenly temple containing a deity perched on a lotus pedestal with a flaming mandorla offering reassuring mudras (fig. 19). A dichotomy exists between the plain exterior case and opulent interior statuette that seems to be born out in the privacy of Japanese worship. Ties between the old world and the new were strong. Walz, speaking of Japanese settlements in the inner West, has observed that "about half the people had Butsudans (or small religious shrines) in their homes" and at various times of the year a Buddhist minister was dispatched from Salt Lake City or Ogden, Utah, to hold services far afield.<sup>136</sup> One wonders whether sojourners and settlers brought the small altars with them from Japan, imported religious paraphernalia in the Chinese tradition, or fashioned them on premises. In any case, devotional objects in the home would have focused the devotee's attention on the spiritual journeys of current and previous generations.

Japanese sojourners were eager to learn and adapt to the Euro-American ways of their host country, in accordance with Meiji prescriptions for absorbing knowledge from foreigners and generating wealth abroad. Hosokawa has noted that young immigrants crowded Christian churches, ambitious to learn English, to find jobs, and thus to make their way in American society and to rise in economic status. For them the churches were employment agencies.<sup>137</sup> Those Euro-Americans who directed government and religious

132 Kitano, *Japanese Americans*, 85.

133 Gail Dubrow, "The Architectural Legacy of Japanese America," in *Finding a Path Forward: Asian American Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks Theme Study* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, October 2017), 171; Hosokawa, *Nisei*, 131; 100th Anniversary Committee and Members of the TSDBT Sangha, *Oneness in the Nembutsu: 100 Years of the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple 1916–2016* (Denver: Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple 2016), 3; and Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 325–26.

134 Yamato Ichihashi, *Japanese in the United States* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1932; repr. New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), 222–23.

135 Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 325–26.

136 Walz, *Nikkei in the Interior West*, 138.

137 Hosokawa, *Nisei*, 129.



**Fig. 19.** Unknown, *Butsudan (Amida Nyorai)*, 19th century (Meiji Period). Carved wood with lacquer and gilding, 13.3 × 17.3 in. (33.9 × 43.8 cm). Oriental Antiques UK / Alamy Stock Photo. Image number: 2HCCCHG.

institutions made little accommodation for Asian values but were eager to offer lessons in “social improvement” under the auspices of Protestantism and democracy. For example, Methodist ministers offered sojourners instruction in the English language within the context of a religious service, including recitations of the creed and singing of hymns. It has been said of Japanese immigrants that their first English class was offered in San Francisco in 1897 in a climate of white prejudice and suspicion, while a curriculum was introduced in Denver in 1907 in an atmosphere of comparative tolerance.<sup>138</sup> This is

<sup>138</sup> Russell Endo, “Japanese of Colorado: A Sociohistorical Portrait,” *Journal of Social and Behavioral Sciences* 31, no. 4 (Fall 1985): 102, 104, Subject Collections: Ethnic Groups: Japanese, in Uncatalogued dossier box: Ethnic Groups:

difficult to verify. However, the appearance of Japanese conversion to Christianity and attendance at Sunday services would have defused the potential for Euro-American animosity throughout the Northern Rockies. A public meeting on the question of whether Japanese immigrants should be treated fairly was held at the First Congregation Church in Boise, Idaho on January 23, 1921. Speaker Colonel John Powell Irish warned that local journalists were spreading anti-Japanese rhetoric from California. To the question of whether the Japanese insisted on maintaining their own language, customs, and churches in California, the colonel responded reassuringly that the Japanese maintained a half-dozen Methodist churches, a Congregational church, and an Episcopal church in the area;

Asians, History Colorado Archives, Denver.

furthermore, “[t]hey have some Buddhist churches there and I don’t think the Buddhist churches are doing them any hurt.”<sup>139</sup> He continued that while the children have learned English, the mothers and fathers have “a very inefficient control” of the language. In other words, the availability of English instruction at Protestant churches did not mean that the *issei* as first-generation immigrants embraced the foreign language or religion as easily as their offspring, or *nisei*, did.

How did Japanese migrants preserve their Buddhist faith and customs amid such pressure to adopt Christian ways? By 1900 the first wave of migrants had returned to Japan and a second wave of immigrants expressed a desire to settle in the Western United States and for this they needed organizations to facilitate the establishment of a community, to maintain connections with the homeland, and to negotiate problems with the larger adopted society. When a Japanese community grew large enough, an association would be formed to ensure mutual aid and protection among members.<sup>140</sup> Harry Kitano has described some of its functions:

It established and maintained graveyards, provided translators, placed people in contact with legal and other necessary services, and policed the activities of the Japanese community. For instance, the Japanese Association would try to curtail

prostitution, gambling, and other activities which might “give a bad name” to the Japanese. They also sponsored picnics and gave backing to youth groups and youth services.<sup>141</sup>

The Japanese community relied on the association to avoid becoming entangled with American authorities likely to ignore their complaints of mistreatment or to punish them inequitably. The association also looked after the welfare of the poor and indigent to avoid relying on government social services, as Hosokawa has observed: “The ill and destitute were taken care of locally if they had no families or [they were] helped to go home to Japan. The dead were buried with proper rites.”<sup>142</sup> The Japanese associations represented the needs of its members by appealing to the consulate in San Francisco to intervene on their behalf and the consulate often sent a delegate to one of the principal cities in the Northern Rockies with the expectation of being received or entertained by the local association branch. The most visible demonstrations of cultural activity revolved around the organization of the New Year’s celebration, recognized as January 1st after 1872, which included at least three days of feasting, where the women prepared meals and the men roamed among several homes eating them. There were traditional dances, large banquets, toasts to the emperor’s health, and singing of the national hymn.<sup>143</sup> Thus, the association helped the *issei* preserve what they remembered from Japan, perpetuating a sense of community through shared experience. Over the years, the association came to be regarded as a bastion of cultural con-

<sup>139</sup> Citizens of Idaho, “Shall Japanese-Americans in Idaho Be Treated With Fairness and Justice or Not?” Addresses and Proceedings at Mass Meeting. Citizens of Idaho. Auditorium First Congregational Church, Boise, Idaho, January 23, 1921, 13, in Vertical Files: “Japanese in Idaho,” Idaho State Historical Archives.

<sup>140</sup> Hosokawa, *Colorado’s Japanese Americans*, 76, has noted that the Japanese scholar Fumio Ozawa reported that the first association of Japanese in Colorado was formed in 1907: “The Association, which had a membership of 639 in 1909, was organized in 1907 when the anti-Japanese feeling grew stronger among the labor unions.”

<sup>141</sup> Kitano, *Japanese Americans*, 81.

<sup>142</sup> Hosokawa, *Colorado’s Japanese Americans*, 78.

<sup>143</sup> Hosokawa, *Nisei*, 155, has described the role of the Kenjin-kai (i.e., an association made up of people born in the same prefecture in Japan) in staging grand New Year’s parties which took on the spirit of a clan reunion, with feasting, singing, dancing, and drinking.

servatism as elders warned young members to adhere to tradition and avoid adopting American values and customs.

The first Japanese temples were built in major cities of the West only after the Japanese associations had gained a foothold sufficient to ascertain the religious needs of a growing community of immigrant families.<sup>144</sup> Since the Japanese were not “congregational” or “publicly demonstrative” by nature, their establishment of Buddhist temples in the Northern Rockies may have been in reaction to the multiplication of Christian churches. Many Japanese immigrants were pressured by Christian missionaries to attend Sunday services and to participate in youth programs at the local church. This pressure would have been alleviated by commitment to regular meetings at the temple, thereby retaining aspects of Japanese tradition while conforming to American prescriptions for moral congregation. In 1898 Japanese immigrants in California sent a missive to Japan requesting that the Buddhist church be extended to America. In reply, the Nishi Hompa Hongwanji temple of Kyōto sent two representatives to visit Japanese communities residing in the mainland United States to determine the religious needs of the Japanese community and to explore the possibility of establishing a Buddhist mission on the mainland.<sup>145</sup> The feedback was positive, so the following year the temple sent ministers S. Sonoda and K. Nishijima to form the Buddhist Mission of North America in San Francisco and to spread the teachings of Jōdo Shinshū to the Japanese community. Over the next twenty

years, inland temples and congregations were formed in Salt Lake City, Phoenix, and Denver.

The Denver Buddhist Temple, which served the tri-state area of Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska with Pure Land Buddhism, was the earliest in the Northern Rockies. The Buddhist Mission dispatched Reverend Tessho Ono and two other priests to Colorado in 1915 to assess Japanese settlements in Pueblo, Rocky Ford, Denver, Brighton, and Fort Lupton and to determine the level of support for a priest to provide spiritual guidance and to conduct traditional services for adherents.<sup>146</sup> Ono was assigned to the new Denver parish the following year and his parishioners collected funds throughout the state to lease a building to serve as a temple.<sup>147</sup> They settled on the People’s Tabernacle

<sup>144</sup>Walz, *Nikkei in the Interior West*, 134, has observed that “frequently the first churches appeared after the organization of Japanese Associations. While European immigrant groups often brought their religious institutions with them, this was hardly ever the case with Japanese immigrants.”

<sup>145</sup>100th Anniversary Committee and Members of the TSDBT Sangha, *Oneness in the Nembutsu*, 4–5.

<sup>146</sup>Hosokawa, *Colorado’s Japanese Americans*, 65. 100th Anniversary Committee and Members of the TSDBT Sangha, *Oneness in the Nembutsu*, 4, has described the origins of the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple in 1915 somewhat differently: “three Buddhist ministers traveled to Colorado to visit and minister to the Japanese immigrants in Denver and Rocky Ford. Rev. Banryu Yatsuburo traveled from the Hompa Hongwanji in Japan, while Rev. Tessho Ono and Rev. Manjo Ichimura traveled from San Francisco and Ogden, Utah, respectively. They performed graveside services in Rocky Ford and a memorial service for the dead at Riverside Cemetery in Denver.”

<sup>147</sup>100th Anniversary Committee and Members of the TSDBT Sangha, *Oneness in the Nembutsu*, 5, has noted that “[v]olunteers conducted membership drives in Ault, Brighton, Denver, Eaton, Fort Lupton, Henderson, Pueblo, Wattenburg, and locations in Nebraska to reach the fundraising goal [of \$300 to establish a temple].” Walz, *Nikkei in the Interior West*, 135, has stated that “[i]n the early days of settlement in the San Luis valley [sic] of Colorado, the nearest place of worship for Japanese Buddhists, the Tri-State Buddhist Temple, was located 250 miles away in Denver, where a church had been founded in 1916. Despite the distance, Buddhists in the San Luis valley



**Fig. 20.** Unknown, *Exterior Elevation of the Tri-State Buddhist Temple, Denver*, n.d. Photograph, 10 × 8 in. (25.4 × 20.32 cm). Collection: MSS.1881 F1339, Box 23, Fred M. Mazzulla Collection, Hart Research Library, History Colorado Archives, Denver. Image number: 10037400.

at 1950 Lawrence Street, where 250 people attended the first service on April 16th and several organized a ceremony to commemorate 100 names of deceased residing in largely unmarked graves at Riverside Cemetery on May 30th.<sup>148</sup> By the summer of 1917, Ono had moved the temple to new quarters at 1917 Market Street, and membership of local and state residents had climbed to 850.<sup>149</sup> Unfortunately, because the rented quarters on Lawrence and Market Streets have not survived, the appearance of the interior disposition of those “temples” must remain speculative — perhaps there was an altar along one wall. However, the appearance of one sanctuary has been preserved in a photo of the converted parlor of the house at 1942 Market Street. In 1899 William Quayle had designed

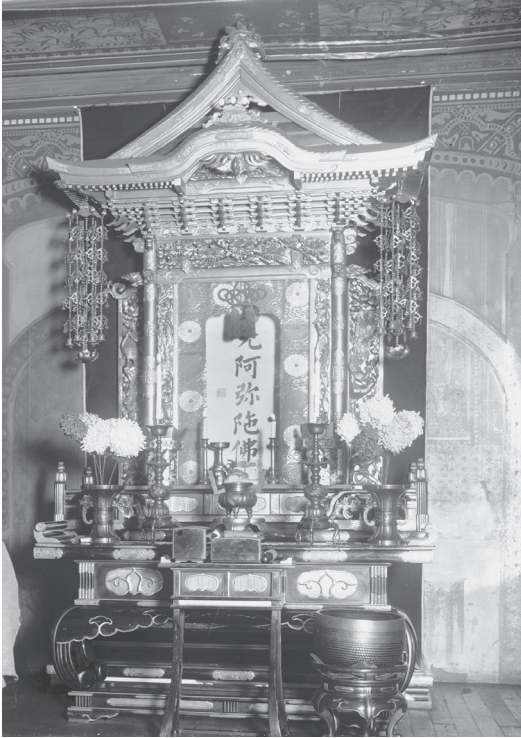
this two-story stone and brick edifice in the Romanesque style (fig. 20) for Jennie Rogers to serve as a “hospitality house” for local legislators and businessmen. The Buddhist Temple purchased it for \$10,000 in 1919. An elaborate gilded altarpiece inscribed with the name of Amitabha and set with matching candle holders, floral bouquets, and an urn appears against the back wall of the former parlor (fig. 21), stressing the interior’s transformation from a place of conversation and intimacy into a place of meditation and worship.

The Pure Land Buddhists who gathered in the Denver temple under the auspices of a priest would have realized many benefits. In addition to gaining a sense of community through the exchange of news and participation in services, they would have been taught the principal teachings of Sakyamuni, including the Four Noble Truths necessary for overcoming desire, and the Eightfold Path necessary for obtaining nirvana; the promise of salvation of Jōdo Shinshū founder Shinran Shonin, which entailed appealing to the

strongly supported the Denver temple and contributed financially to support it.”

<sup>148</sup>Hosokawa, *Colorado’s Japanese Americans*, 66.

<sup>149</sup>See 100th Anniversary Committee and Members of the TSDBT Sangha, *Oneness in the Nembutsu*, 5.



**Fig. 21.** Unknown, *Interior of the Tri-State Buddhist Temple with Rev. Tessho Ono Officiating (detail)*, ca. 1920–1930. Glass negative, 12.7 × 17.78 cm. (5 × 7 in.). Collection: Hart Research Library, History Colorado Archives, Denver. Image number: 99.270.158.

infinite wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha so that they could be reborn in the Western Pure Land and have a more optimal chance to attain enlightenment. The faithful could enter the temple individually any day of the week or collectively on Sunday, clear the mind of all worldly concerns, and bow their heads in reverence before an altar adorned with a scroll or tablet bearing the characters *Namu Amida Butsu* (“I place my faith in Amida Buddha”), a small, gilded statue or large, colored picture of the deity, repeatedly chanting the name several times.<sup>150</sup> The splen-

dor of the altar and its carved superstructure suspending jeweled garlands may well have suggested the delights of the Pure Land Paradise, including golden temples floating atop a garden planted with flowering trees and set with lotus ponds, the whole inhabited by thousands of bodhisattvas. The devotee could place offerings in the central bronze *gui*, light incense to purify the space, or burn inscribed papers to ensure messages reached heaven. There may also have been scrolls or images signifying Shinran or his ministerial successors who contributed to the sect’s teachings. The temple would have received attention around Japanese holidays such as New Year’s and festivals like the mid-summer Bon Matsuri, where people visited the graves of their deceased and employed white lanterns to light the way for them to return home.<sup>151</sup> Those in sparsely populated rural districts who could not journey to the temple might

<sup>150</sup> “Buddhist Altar Features Symbols,” in *Argus Observer* (Ontario, Oregon) dedicated to the Oban Festival, July 13, 1989, 2, supplement to the *Independent-Enterprise*, Fayette, Idaho, in Vertical Files: “Japanese in Idaho,” Idaho State Historical Archives. See Walz, *Nikkei in the Interior West*, 132, on Japanese Buddhists’ regularization of Sunday worship and Sunday school for the Nisei.

<sup>151</sup> See Walz, *Nikkei in the Interior West*, 131.

be visited by a traveling Buddhist priest or local support groups.<sup>152</sup>

The temple and its priest were particularly effective in providing comfort to those bereaved by the loss of a husband, child, or sibling through the promise of Amida's universal sympathy and understanding, and the natural cycle of rebirth to a higher level of consciousness. The death of a Japanese family member of the Buddhist faith meant rebirth into another life or a higher consciousness, so the priest had to see that bodily purification rites were performed and the soul directed to its ultimate destination. The body was cleaned, the orifices plugged with linen or gauze, and the whole dressed in a kimono or suit. At the wake the coffin was oriented so that the head faced north (for the soul to exit the world) or west (so that the devotee would find Amida Buddha). A photograph of the deceased was typically perched on the altar in the community temple or on the *but-sudan* in the private home. Members of the immediate family sat before the coffin and offered incense three times, while friends and colleagues followed suit in other parts of the room. The priest chanted a passage from a sutra. The following day, the deceased received a new *kaimyō* (Buddhist name) written in ancient kanji, to prevent the return of the deceased to the mortal world if his or her birth name happened to be uttered, and the casket was sealed for burial in the cemetery. The grave plot was selected for its harmony in the *kankyō* (environment) and the headstone for its simplicity and respect for natural or rough texture. The priest presided at the head of the floral-laden casket, the family gathered to either side, to read another sutra. After the ceremony ended and the casket buried, the grave was marked with a broad stone base supporting an upright slab with

a curved or pointed top. This was engraved with the name of the deceased, dates of birth and death, prefecture of origin, and perhaps a declaration of faith — all in vertical kanji writing. The English equivalent sometimes appeared at the base. Such a monument was meant to represent the whole family, and space was made for floral decoration, incense sticks and water offerings. Because the Japanese calendar incorporated a few holidays to honor the dead, the grave never appeared untidy or neglected. Sometimes a separate narrow *sotoba* (wooden plank engraved with name of deceased), a Buddhist prayer, and date of death would be set behind or beside the stone on important anniversaries, such as the seventh and forty-ninth days after death. The mid-summer Obon festival, which derived from the Chinese Zhongyuan Jie (Ghost Festival), provided relations ample opportunity to welcome the return of ancestors to household altars and visit the ancestors' graves to clean, adorn, and place food on them. The Japanese held to such observances in the belief that the boundary between this world and the next was fluid and dynamic.

### ***Religious Life and Culture in Korea and the Northern Rockies under the Joseon Dynasty***

Although much has been written about the tumultuous final years of the Joseon dynasty of Korea, little has been written about Korean migrants and settlers who made their way to the Northern Rockies. The first wave, desirous of escaping the Japanese occupation of the Korean Peninsula, arrived in the 1910s. Like Chinese and Japanese migrants before them, they tended to adhere to Confucian ideals prescribing a patriarchal family structure. Statistics show that Koreans were just as likely to practice nativist or Buddhist devotions in the home as they were to participate in Christian services at the local church. Cultural manifestations of traditional Korean home life, worship, and celebration prior to World War I are elusive.

<sup>152</sup> See Hosokawa, *Colorado's Japanese Americans*, 66, 68; Walz, *Nikkei in the Interior West*, 136, 138; 100th Anniversary Committee and Members of the TSDBT Sangha, *Oneness in the Nembutsu*, 5–6.



**Confucianism.** In his capacities first as King of Joseon and later as Emperor of Korea, a beleaguered Gojong (r. 1864–1907) sought an alliance with Russia and obtained European military technology to prevent his nation from being made a vassal of Japan or China. Gojong inherited a traditional Neo-Confucian system of government in which scholar-officials administered state religious rituals, prescribed government reforms, and advocated social isolation from the Christian West conducive to acquisition of practical knowledge. Under the late Joseon Dynasty, scholar-officials were trained to cultivate personal virtue, honor a strict social hierarchy, and adhere to ritual practices. Virtue was demonstrated by humble service to the state and filial piety to one's superiors, parents, and ancestors. Respect for superiors was demonstrated by strict observance of the four-class divisions, including a minority of civil and military officials constituting the nobility; perhaps twenty-five percent of professional court painters, physicians, and other skilled people constituting the middle class; about fifty percent of farmers constituting a respectable majority; and perhaps fifteen percent of butchers, potters, and slaves comprising the lower class. Ritual devolved upon the three Confucian relationships of ruler and subject, husband and wife, and parent and child, where Joseon kings presided over state ceremonies that honored the long line of deceased rulers in public, while families worshiped ancestors in their homes and at tomb sites in private. The performance of these rites was thought to ensure an ethically sound government, society, and family.

The elaborate ceremonies could cover up enormous social and economic inequities: intrigue within the court led to Japanese infiltration of the government; only men of the noble and middle classes could afford to take time to study and complete the exams necessary to obtain a government position, and oppressive tax and unremunerated labor obligations triggered several peasant revolts. So entrenched were the scholar-officials that

they were able to convince the ruler to distance himself from religious interests. For example, Neo-Confucianists, distrusting the Buddhists for their metaphysical beliefs, popular appeal, and wealth, had them suppressed so that their monasteries and temples were reduced in number from several hundred to thirty-six. Their clergy were prohibited from entering cities to proselytize, beg, or conduct funerals, and their lands and possessions were often confiscated. What was left to them was the observance of rituals at temples and purchase of devotional art for the interior. Prohibitions on their activities would only be rescinded and their roles expanded during the Japanese occupation that got underway in 1905.

**Christian Services, Buddhist Devotions.** After the Joseon regime ratified the Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce and Navigation with the United States in 1884, visitors from the West — mostly American diplomats and Protestant missionaries — began to arrive in Korea and to introduce new languages, ideas, and inventions. Jane Hong has identified three major periods of Korean migration or immigration. The first period saw a few dozen Korean diplomats, students, merchants, and political exiles visited the United States from 1883 to 1910. The second period saw thousands of Korean farmers and other laborers were transported to Hawai'i to work on pineapple and sugar plantations beginning in 1902. This trend was stalled after a few years due to Japanese designation of the Korean peninsula as a protectorate in 1905 and its absorption of the nation into their empire and culture in 1910. The third period saw a few thousand Korean students desirous of enrolling at universities, "picture brides" intended for laboring plantation men, and political refugees seeking independence from Japan undertook semi-official emigration to Hawai'i, the West Coast, and the Northeast from 1905 to 1944, despite Congressional bans on immigration of Koreans in search

of work opportunities.<sup>153</sup> Thus, Korean migrants and immigrants arrived in the United States later than the Chinese and Japanese immigrants, and their numbers were much smaller. But they worked just as hard. Erika Lee has pointed out that

most Koreans on the US mainland were farm laborers who, like other Asian immigrants, helped to turn California agriculture into a multi-million-dollar business in the 20th century. They often worked together in cooperative Korean “gangs,” following the crops or working in light industry. Many of them became tenant farmers and truck farmers and worked alongside California’s multiracial arm-laboring populations.<sup>154</sup>

It has been stated that several Koreans sought refuge in Montana to escape political persecution by the Japanese in the 1910s and that they made new lives as vegetable farmers around Butte.<sup>155</sup>

Did a new life in a foreign land rekindle traditional social and religious observances, including respect for the patriarchal succession and participation in Buddhist rituals?

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<sup>153</sup> Jane Hong, “The Origins and Construction of Korean America: Immigration before 1965,” in *A Companion to Korean American Studies*, eds. Rachael Miyung Joo and Shelley Sang-Hee Lee (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 5–11. The United States made a “Gentlemen’s Agreement” with Japan in 1908 to restrain Japanese and Koreans from migrating or immigrating to the United States in search of work. Congress’s Immigration Act of 1924 severely limited immigration of Koreans to the US.

<sup>154</sup> Erika Lee, “Immigration, Exclusion, and Resistance, 1800s–1940s,” in *Finding a Path Forward: Asian American Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks Theme Study* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, October 2017), 92.

<sup>155</sup> Anthony F. Beltramo, *Language Profile of a State: Montana*, n.d., in Vertical Files: “Chinese in Montana I,” Montana Historical Society.

Because Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries were active in the Incheon Area of Korea from the mid-1880s, as many as fifty percent of the Korean migrants identified as Christians and set up their own businesses and attended local church services. Huping Ling has added that most Korean women led lives comparable to their Chinese counterparts in the sense that they adhered to Confucian norms: “They, too, were subjected to the male control of their fathers, husbands, and sons. Their roles primarily consisted of reproduction, nurturing, caretaking, and homemaking.”<sup>156</sup> They learned to repress their own desires in the patriarchal household. A slight majority of Korean immigrants may well have looked to community Christian churches as places of religious and cultural asylum as well as social outreach and economic assimilation. However, others may well have followed rural custom in performing rites before a small altar or image in the privacy of their homes. Those Korean political exiles who sought refuge in Montana would certainly have had access to Christian churches, and at least one in Butte offered English lessons to Chinese migrants, but they may have found linguistic barriers frustrating and improvised a shrine at home until such a time as their community was large enough to sustain a temple or church. It is a history that has yet to be written.

\* \* \*

In summary, this essay has compared trends in the performance of Confucian, Daoist or Shintō, and Buddhist art and ritual in North-east Asia to manifestations of those philosophies in the culture of Northwest America between 1850 and 1918 and emphasized the role of the Asian migrant or settler as the main vehicle of transference. It became immediately evident that all three of the imperial regimes of China, Korea, and Japan depended on a loyal bureaucracy of Confucian

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<sup>156</sup> Ling, *Surviving on the Gold Mountain*, 19.

scholar-officials to implicate imported Buddhist or nativist Shintō cults in a legitimization of autocratic power for the consolidation of conquered territories, which involved suppression of folk Daoist or Buddhist cults that nevertheless survived in small communities, especially among those laboring classes most likely to migrate to the western United States. Because the migrant class was initially dominated by single males desirous of making money to send back to their families or reestablish themselves on farmland, Confucian filial piety — a set of intra-generational obligations to the living and the dead — was probably the principal motivator and structural system for behavior in American work and social environments. However, in general, Chinese and Japanese sojourners followed different popular religious practices. Whereas the former adapted local Daoist practices to the West with an emphasis on folk deities Guan Yu, Suijing Bo, or Beuk Aie at a temple or shrine in town, the latter adapted traditional Buddhist practices, especially Jōdo Shinshū's devotion to Amida, in the form of regular chants before a small shrine at home in the country. While the Chinese tended to form associations, build temples, and make ritual displays in public, the Japanese tended to erect small shrines and conduct rituals in private, and Koreans sought acceptance by local Methodist chapters or pursued their native cults in private. The introduction of women into the working environment meant that men could contemplate, in addition to honoring parental obligations back in Asia, the possibility of making a home and family in the United States. In the short term, this perpetuated the patriarchal model, though in the long term this would be challenged as women entered the workforce, pursued higher education, and realized social liberties.

There is a sense that American residents of towns and cities throughout the West, while familiar with signs of Asian religious practice, did not work very hard to understand them as signifiers of a deeply meaningful culture, dismissing them in racist or

satirical diatribes as so much superstition or exoticism. This is rather strange given the prevailing national myth of the United States as a land of immigrants who escaped religious persecution to find haven in a virgin land of plenty. Indeed, a more empathetic press could have made the argument that Chinese folk Daoist practices and Japanese popular Buddhist devotions, then marginalized by autocratic regimes in Asia, thrived or were successfully manifested in America due to a rare national ethos of religious freedom. But they did not. The outbreak of World War I in Europe raised the unpleasant prospect that the advocates of “Western civilization” could no longer be trusted to guarantee progress of the global economy due to their brutal competition over colonial, industrial, and military spheres of influence. For the first time, Americans began to doubt that Asian migrants and immigrants were ever a threat to their peace and prosperity. Attempts were made by goodwill committees on both side of the Pacific to show that Asian businesses had learned several Western manufacturing techniques and thereby contributed to the global economy. What residual role were Confucianism, Daoism or Shintō, and Buddhism supposed to play in this modern paradigm? Their artistic and cultural manifestations would be employed as so many “exotic wrappers” for modern technologies, cheap goods, and improved services.

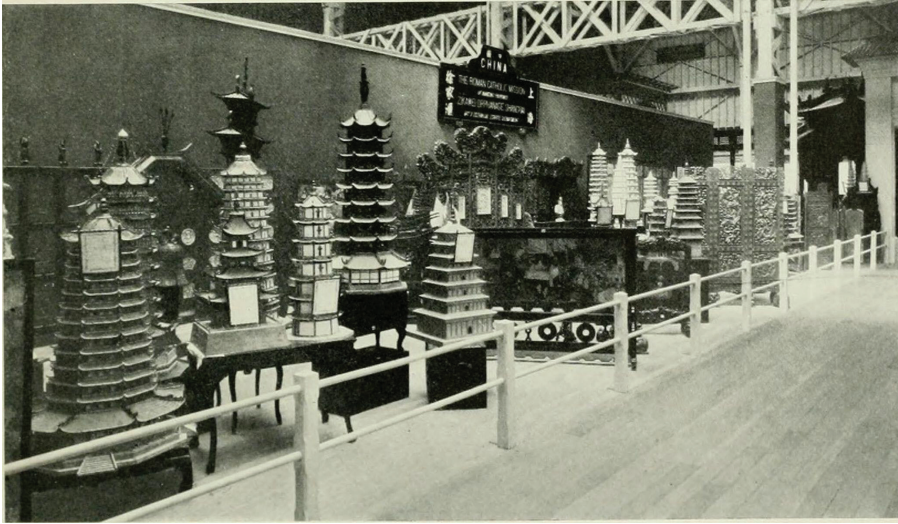
For example, the international organizers of the Panama-Pacific International Exhibition of 1915 in San Francisco supported the inclusion of Chinese and Japanese pavilions among the Euro-American commercial halls as evidence that Asian nations were modernizing at such a rate to share in the benefits of global progress. In her discussion of the many competing goals and agendas brought to bear on the construction of a positive image of China and Japan at the fair, particularly in light of California's historical anti-Asian politics and laws, Abigail Markwyn has pointed out that the exhibits on Western reforms made in education, health, trans-

portation, and manufacturing promoted a sense that both China and Japan wished to assert their equality on the world stage and to counter racial stereotypes but did so in different ways. On one hand, the Chinese emphasized reform and modernization appropriate to their nation's identity as a new republic while, on the other, the Japanese acknowledged tradition and invention as wellsprings for their nation's identity as a constitutional monarchy.<sup>157</sup> Nevertheless, city advertisements recycled several Orientalist tropes designed to lure people to the fair with the promise of "exotic" or "bizarre" spectacles. Religious forms were appropriated and repurposed for the curious to engage in leisure. Rows of miniature pagodas formerly devoted to the display of Buddhist relics now underscored the ingenuity of Chinese buildings with curved roofs supported on tiers of interlocking brackets (fig. 22), and a double-lintel gateway formerly dedicated to the crossing from worldly to spiritual realms in Shintō now led to Japanese shops and tea houses liberally populated with geishas (fig. 23).<sup>158</sup> It would be decades before Americans, witnessing the expansion of the Japanese empire based on advanced technology and the decline of the Chinese republic due to widespread internecine conflict and corruption, would be prepared to permit those cultures to speak for themselves about the role traditional religious philosophies played or still had the potential to play in coming to terms with their own identities as trans-Pacific citizens.

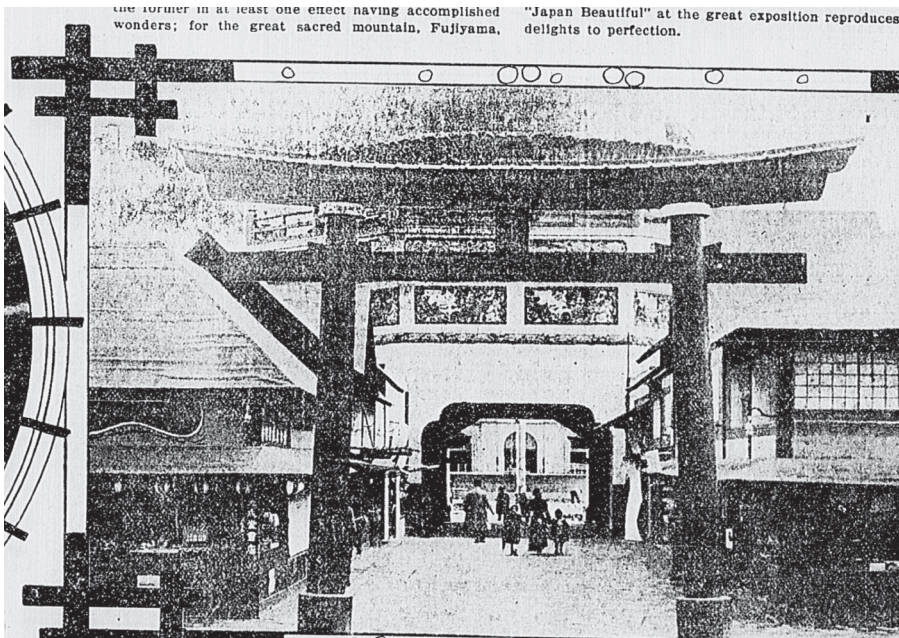
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157 Abigail Markwyn, "Economic Partner and Exotic Other: China and Japan at San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition," *Western Historical Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 441, 457.

158 *Ibid.*, 460, 464.



**Fig. 22.** Unknown, *Entrance to the Chinese Educational Exhibit: Pagodas and Carved Screens*, from Frank Morton Todd, *The Story of the Exposition: Being the Official History of the International Celebration Held at San Francisco in 1915 to Commemorate the Discovery of the Pacific Ocean and the Construction of the Panama Canal*, 5 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1921). Reading Room 2020 / Alamy Stock Photo. Image number: 2CEMPT4.



**Fig. 23.** Unknown, *Shinto Gateway to the Shops and Tea Houses of the Japan Beautiful Exhibition, Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco, 1915*. From *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 13, 1915. Wikimedia Commons and Library of Congress, Washington D.C., Public Domain.

## IDAHO

## 37a

Unknown  
*Exterior View of the Beuk Aie Temple and  
Masonic Lodge, Lewiston*

October 21, 1956

Photographic negative, 4 × 5 in. (10.16 ×  
12.7 cm)

Collection: "Photographs: Browsing Col-  
lection: Chinese," Idaho State Histori-  
cal Archives, Boise

Donor: Sister M. Alfreda Elsensohn

Image number: P1975-288-20e

## 37b

Unknown  
*Façade of the Beuk Aie Temple, Lewiston*

1956

Photographic negative, 4 × 5 in. (10.16 ×  
12.7 cm)

Collection: "Photographs: Browsing Col-  
lection: Chinese," Idaho State Histori-  
cal Archives, Boise

Image number: P2964a

## 37c

Unknown  
*Entrance to the Beuk Aie Temple with View  
Towards Altar*

Ca. 1950s

Photographic negative, 5 × 4 in. (12.7 ×  
10.16 cm)

Collection: "Photographs: Browsing Col-  
lection: Chinese," Idaho State Histori-  
cal Archives, Boise

Image number: P2965a

## 37d

Unknown  
*Interior View of the Beuk Aie Temple with  
Altar*

1956

Photographic negative 5 × 4 in. (12.7 × 10.6  
cm)

Collection: "Photographs: Browsing Col-  
lection: Chinese," Idaho State Histori-  
cal Archives, Boise

Donor: Sister M. Alfreda Elsensohn

Image number: P1975-288-20e

## 37e

Unknown

*Altar of the Beuk Aie Temple, Lewiston, as  
Reconstructed at Lewis-Clark State Col-  
lege, Lewiston*

Ca. 1890

Wood platform or altar 43 × 62 × 36 in.  
(109.22 × 157.48 × 91.44 cm), including  
superstructure or niche 71 × 58 ¼ ×  
34 ¼ in. (180.34 × 147.96 × 87 cm)

Digital image

Collection: Center for Arts and History,  
Lewis-Clark State College, Lewiston

These photographs represent the exterior and interior of the Beuk Aie or Leisheng Temple, originally erected at 1st and B Streets in Lewiston, Idaho around 1870, then destroyed by fire and quickly rebuilt in 1875, and finally abandoned for a new structure at 513 C Street in 1890. The single-story timber truss and clapboard structure typical of Western towns was photographed from various angles before being dismantled to make way for another building in 1959 (cat. **37a** and **37b**). Although the low protective fence and shallow barrel awning appear to be in a dilapidated state, the main structure is square, the boards and shingles align, and the brick chimney with corbeled termination is intact. Typical of Chinese village temples, the building is entered from the southern end through double doors flanked by boards inscribed with the name of Lieshen Gong (or "Palace of the Gods") and invocations to right mindfulness and good conduct ("Gods possess very high character, and their kindness is spread abroad" and "Gods often make their power felt; their illustrious brilliance illuminates



37a



37b

this distant land”). With the doors thrown open, the interior presents a direct view of the altar rising against the back wall, the approach to which is slowed by two intervening tables. The first table (cat. 37c) encountered is covered by a large red tapestry embroidered with golden cranes and floral elements and set with pewter cups holding bamboo fortune-telling sticks plus a book for looking up fortunes (the *Yi Ching* or *Book of Changes*) and candlesticks holding unlighted “everlasting” candles, augmented with a central bronze incense burner for special occasions. The second table (cat. 37d) is covered with a plain cloth and laid with a large wooden rack designed to display various sticks of incense and white earthenware bowls with sand for holding lit incense, occasionally crowded with teacups and chopsticks for tea and food offerings. The altar table supports an elaborately carved and painted niche decorated with dragons (prosperity, protection), phoenixes (sun, warmth), and pomegranates (many children), and is inscribed with the function of the temple (“Palace of Many Gods”), its contents (“Treasure Hall”), and capacities (“The kindness of gods pervades,” and “Their virtue is broad and great”). Four tasseled lanterns painted with floral motifs and four banners inscribed with expressions of heavenly benevolence cover the walls (“kindness and charity extended by the gods”) and hang from the rafters (“benevolence pervades” by Zhang Heng, 78–139 CE). The whole arrangement is illuminated by a brass oil lamp with a glass dome.

In terms of function, Bennet Bronson and Chumei Ho have pointed out that the Lieshen Gong temple in Boise was one of at least seven independently subsidized temples devoted to multiple deities erected in the Pacific Northwest. The urn-shaped tablet that rests on the altar bears the characters of Beuk Aie (God of the North), Cai Shen (celestial God of Wealth), Guanyin (celestial Goddess of Mercy), Guan Yu (3rd-century warrior, defender against bandits and rewarder of loyalty), and Hua Tuo (3rd-century physician,

protector against disease). This suggests that the spiritual customs or life predicaments of the Chinese dwelling in the vicinity were so varied that a panoply of deities was invoked. However, the temple was known locally as the Beuk Aie temple, after the God of the North who had the power to control fire and water, perhaps because the Chinese summoned him repeatedly for protection against conflagration in winter and flooding in spring. In assembling this pantheon at Lewiston, Chinese migrants preserved memories of gods and shrines of southeast China and assembled a formidable pantheon to address problems they encountered in the American West in the 1870s. In addition, sojourners came to expect that the temple’s priest or keeper would take in the weary traveler, care for the afflicted, host social gatherings, and arbitrate financial disputes. There seems to have been community buy-in at all levels: a set of four donor boards lists nearly 550 people — including nineteen businesses and ninety-seven individuals — whose contributions to the reconstruction of the temple in 1890 amounted to \$925.75. The Beuk Aie temple survived as an independent entity by private donations until about 1910, when the local Hip Sing Tong absorbed the cost of upkeep into its larger franchise.

Four black-and-white photos of the Beuk Aie temple conserved at the Idaho State Historical Archives are marked in a manner that suggests a budding movement in historic preservation in the 1950s. M. Alfreda Elsensohn, a Benedictine nun in Cottonwood, obtained photographs of the site, which she eventually donated to the state archive and published a study, *Idaho Chinese Lore* (1970), in which she attempted to assess the breadth of Chinese settlement culture throughout the state. Notations on the first pair of photos point out that Eli Thomas Eng, Asian American keeper of the temple, was on site to protect the furnishings and that the block was also occupied by a two-story Chinese *tong* (or masonic lodge), the keeper lodged on the ground floor and the *tong* members meeting





37c



37d

above, in view of a smaller secondary altar comprised of calligraphic boards. Writing on the second pair of photos indicates that the temple was torn down in 1959 to make way for the Lewiston Tribune Building. The photos serve as a reminder of what was lost in the development of the city. A final color photo (cat. 37e) shows how the altar and its superstructure have been preserved at the Lewis-Clark State College.

### Sources

Bennet Bronson and Chuimei Ho, *Coming Home in Gold Brocade: Chinese in Early Northwest America* (Seattle: Chinese in Northwest America Research Committee, 2015), 158–59, 161–62.

Priscilla Wegars, *Chinese at the Confluence: Lewiston's Beuk Aie Temple* (Lewiston: Confluence Press in association with Lewis-Clark Center for Arts & History, 2000), 9, 11, 14–18, 37.



38a

Johnson and Son, *Idaho Statesman* staff photographers  
*Exterior View of the Joss House*  
 Caption: Inside this humble building are examples of pewter, brass and embroidery worth hundreds of dollars, all part of the equipment formerly used by the Boise Chinese in paying homage to their ancestors and their gods. At the left a portion of the flagpole is discernible. From this pole waved for years, on feast days, the old flag of the kingdom of China. From it now flies the new flag of the Chinese republic, surmounted by the American flag.

1917  
 Newsprint, dimensions unknown  
 “Boise at Last Has Real Tong War After Many Fights Over Chinese Women,” *The Idaho Sunday Statesman*, April 8, 1917.  
 Collection: Boise State University Library, in Vertical Files: “Chinese 1910ff,” Idaho State Historical Archives, Boise

38b

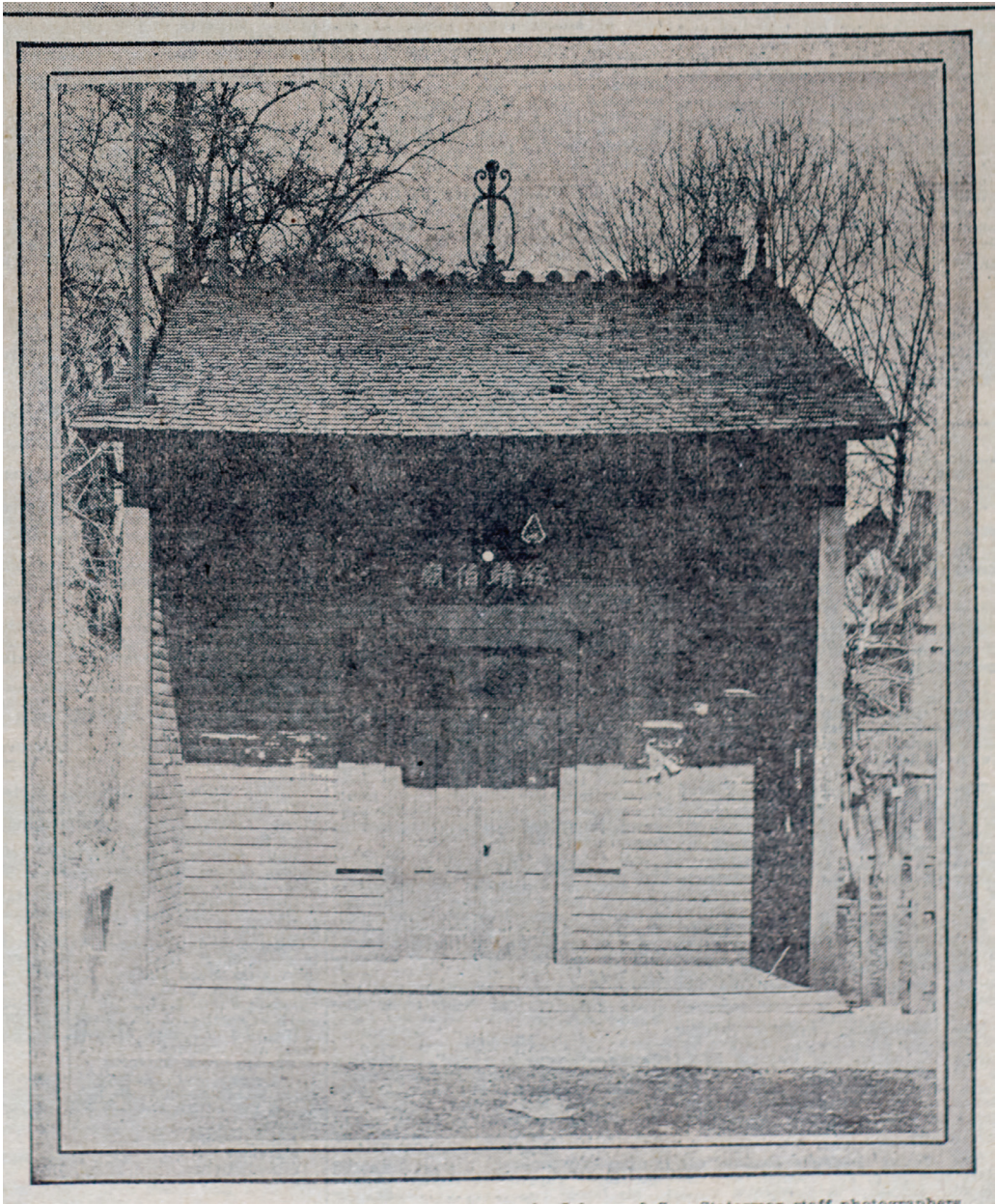
Johnson and Son, *Idaho Statesman* staff photographers  
*Boise Joss House, Where Peace Pact Was Made*  
 Caption: Interior of the joss house of Boise’s Chinese colony, photographed for the first time in the history of the colony, by *The Statesman* staff photographer. It was here that the two warring tongs met several weeks ago and agreed not to take up the war of their societies on the coast. The image of the joss himself is not discernible in the photograph, but it is in the black space back of the pewter urn. The embroidered banners on each side of the altar are exquisite pieces of Chinese handiwork and cost several hundred

dollars. The brass jardiniere holds the punk sticks which burn in front of the altar.

1917  
 Newsprint, dimensions unknown  
 “Boise at Last Has Real Tong War After Many Fights Over Chinese Women,” *The Idaho Sunday Statesman*, April 8, 1917.  
 Collection: Boise State University Library, in Vertical Files: “Chinese 1910ff,” Idaho State Historical Archives, Boise

These two newspaper images encapsule the only known documentary evidence of the exterior and interior of the Suijing Bo Temple or Joss House, originally built at Idaho and 7th Streets in Boise in 1897 and then moved to 7th and Front Streets. The exterior elevation presents the prospect of a simple timber truss structure covered with plain, vertically aligned milled boards with the façade slightly recessed to form a porch to protect the visitor from sun, rain, or snow. The central double doors are surmounted by a plaque inscribed “Temple of Suijing Bo” and flanked by signs that beckon visitors to purify their thoughts upon entering. The shingled roof is pierced with a flagpole at the left eave and punctuated with three pinnacles (the central resembling a *trishula*) linked by dentils at the ridge. The interior view suggests a room filled with devotional, ritual, and festival paraphernalia. Opposite the entry, the sacred altar impresses with a canopy of giltwood, floral bouquets, and fringe and a pedestal laden with a ritual bronze *hu* (traditionally for wine offerings, but for incense here), paired *jinhua* (lit. “golden flourishing” flower vases), and candleholders (with unburnt tapers). On this occasion, a special figural icon has been placed to the left and beaded palette-like *jinhua* abound (perhaps in thanksgiving for prayers answered). Before the altar is a subsidiary table draped with an embroidered cloth set with a bronze *gui* (traditionally for rice or grain) and two sand pots for holding incense sticks. Embroi-

38a



dered silk banners raised on poles await the next ritual or festival parade at left and right. The walls are covered with patterned paper and the rafters suspend calligraphic placards, the central one reading “Bounties granted all over China.” A door at back right permitted the priest to retire or the keeper to service the temple.

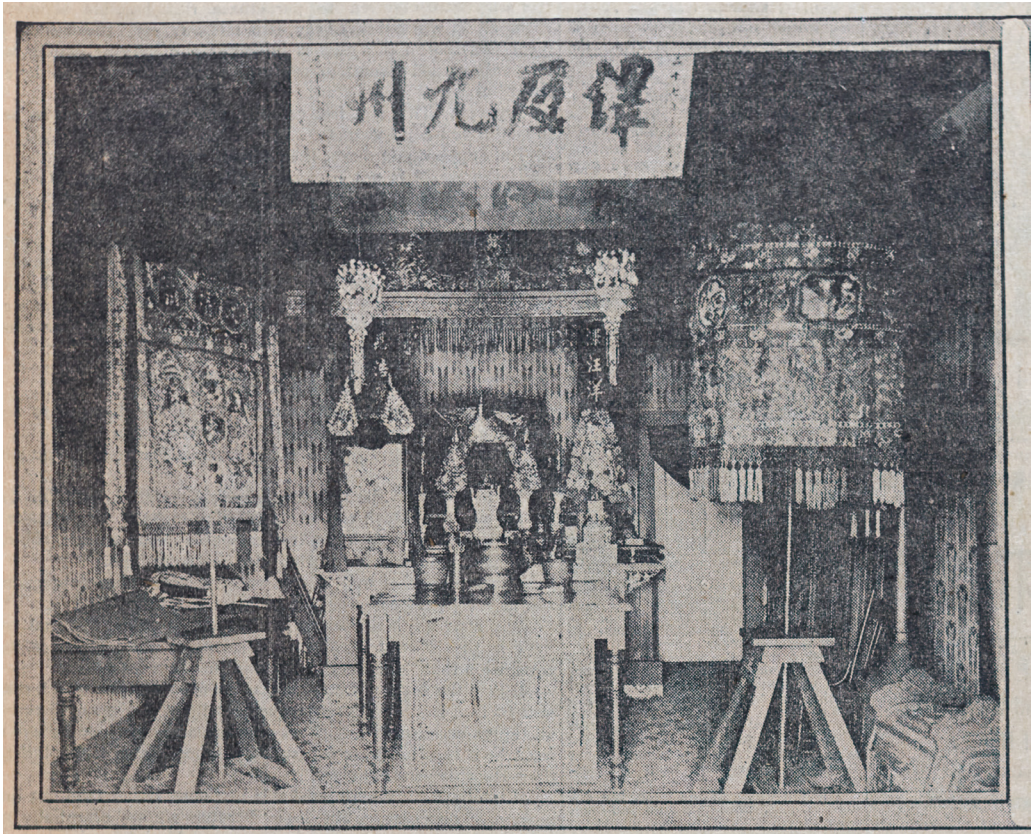
Suijing Bo (or Chen Laoguan, the Pacifying Duke) was a thirteenth-century fighter of bandits from Taishan County in the Pearl River Delta, later deified and acknowledged protector against epidemics or disease. His painted or sculpted image was probably situated in the curtained niche at the back of the altar. Chumei Ho and Bennet Bronson recently observed that Suijing Bo was a relatively obscure deity for Chinese migrants compared to the more prevalent Guan Yu, Bei Di, Cai Shen, Tian Hou, or Guanyin. From the 1820s he began to be associated with medicine and healing in China, which may explain the popularity of his cult in the Pacific Northwest, where there were recurrent fears of plague or pestilence around 1900. Indeed, the cities of John Day (Oregon) and Boise (189 miles to the southeast) had independently subsidized temples dedicated to Suijing Bo, and the respective herbal doctors of both those places, Doc Hay and Ah Fong, may have appealed to the gods for medical advice on behalf of their afflicted patients. It can therefore be surmised that the Boise temple, in addition to making migrants feel more at home by referencing a familiar Guangdong hero-deity, functioned as a sanctuary from robbers and disease — the twin threats to gold miners intent on protecting their earnings in a rugged terrain dotted with hostile citizens and treacherous companions. Worshipers arrived at the temple at all times of day to bow, pray, light incense, and practice augury before the altar. The temple was also a community center for Chinese migrants and settlers, the social focal point throughout the Boise Basin during celebrations for the Chinese New Year, the Qingming (Tomb Sweeping) Festival, the Garment Burning Rite

(Ghost Festival), the Mid-Autumn Festival, and the deity’s birthday.

The Suijing Bo Temple was mentioned routinely in newspapers in relation to these festivities, a source of cultural pride for many Chinese and a source of exotic wonder for many Euro-Americans. Why did the editor of the April 8, 1917 edition of the *Idaho Sunday Statesman* include images of the Joss House in an article about the tong wars — violent quarrels between Chinese immigrant gangs or societies — that convulsed Chinatowns on the West Coast between the 1880s and 1920s? The article mentions that representatives of rival tongs, the Hip Sing Tong and Hop Sing Tong, in Boise had met at the temple a few weeks earlier and agreed not to take up the feud begun by their associates in San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle. The Chinese who settled in Boise, it maintained, had always been regarded as among the most peaceable citizens, contributing to the local economy in the form of placer mining, cooking, and gardening, and sharing their culture with the community in the form of New Year’s parades, firecracker pyrotechnics, and banquets; the local citizenry therefore had no reason to fear an escalation in violence. This narrative overpowers the larger spiritual and communal purposes the temple served.

### Sources

- Bennet Bronson and Chuimei Ho, *Coming Home in Gold Brocade: Chinese in Early Northwest America* (Seattle: Chinese in Northwest America Research Committee, 2015), 163
- Chuimei Ho and Bennet Bronson, “Protected by Suijing Bo, the ‘Pacifying Duke,’” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 122, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 39, 45, 48–50.



**39a**

Unknown  
*Chinese New Year in Boise, Idaho*  
 Caption: Chinese New Year in Boise,  
 Idaho  
 Ca. 1900  
 Photograph, 4 ½ × 7 in. (11.43 × 17.78 cm)  
 Collection: Photograph Browsing Collec-  
 tion: "Chinese," Idaho State Historical  
 Society Archives, Boise  
 Image number: P1977-139-3

**39b**

Unknown  
*Parade Banners Ready for Use in Parade*  
 Ca. 1900  
 Photograph, 3 ½ × 5 ½ in. (8.89 × 13.97 cm)  
 Collection: Photograph Browsing Collec-  
 tion: "Chinese," Idaho State Historical  
 Society Archives, Boise  
 Image number: P1960-52-385

**39c**

Unknown  
*Celebrating Chinese New Year with Cymbals,  
 Centerville*  
 Ca. 1905  
 Photographic negative, 4 × 5 in. (10.16 ×  
 12.7 cm)  
 Collection: Photograph Browsing Collec-  
 tion: "Chinese," Idaho State Historical  
 Society Archives, Boise  
 Image number: P1976-138-59

**39d**

Unknown  
*Chinese New Year's Parade along Capitol  
 Boulevard, Boise*  
 Caption: Chinese New Year's Feb. 1911.  
 Boise, Ida.  
 February 1911  
 Photograph, 3 × 5 ¼ in. (7.62 × 13.34 cm)

Collection: Photograph Browsing Collec-  
 tion: "Chinese," Idaho State Historical  
 Society Archives, Boise  
 Image number: D1034a

**39e**

Unknown  
*Chinese New Year Parade at 7th Avenue and  
 Capitol Boulevard, Boise*  
 February 1911  
 Photograph, 3 × 5 ¼ in. (7.62 × 13.34 cm)  
 Collection: Photograph Browsing Collec-  
 tion: "Chinese," Idaho State Historical  
 Society Archives, Boise  
 Image number: D1035d

**39f**

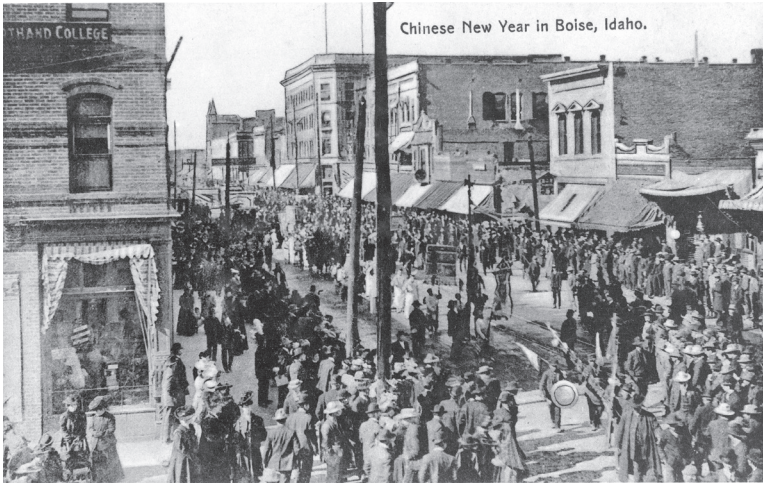
Unknown  
*Chinese Dragon in New Year Parade at the  
 corner of Capitol Boulevard and Main  
 Street, Boise*  
 Ca. 1907  
 Photographic negative, 4 × 5 in. (10.16 ×  
 12.7 cm)  
 Collection: Photograph Browsing Collec-  
 tion: "Chinese," Idaho State Historical  
 Society Archives, Boise  
 Image number: P1972-201-117

**39g**

Unknown  
*Chinese Dragon in New Year's Parade in  
 Boise on North 10th Avenue between  
 Main Street and Idaho Street, Boise*  
 Caption: Chinese Dragon Chinese New  
 Year's, 1911. Boise, Ida.  
 February 1911  
 Photograph, 3 × 5 ¼ in. (7.62 × 13.34 cm)  
 Collection: Photograph Browsing Collec-  
 tion: "Chinese," Idaho State Historical  
 Society Archives, Boise  
 Image number: D1035a

This group of images is meant to showcase  
 the orderly yet boisterous parade the Chi-





Chinese New Year in Boise, Idaho.

39a



39b



39c

nese organized in downtown Boise to bid farewell to the old Lunar New Year and to welcome the new moon (that appears between late January to mid-February) during the first decade of the twentieth century. The parade nearly always formed at the Suijing Bo Temple (or Joss House) on the corner of Seventh Street and Idaho Street (the temple was later moved to Seventh and Front Streets) in the shadow of the state Capitol and wound slowly down Seventh to cover the length of Chinatown before heading over to Main Street. The day began with a solemn rite at the temple, where the faithful honored the memory of a great warrior and gave thanks for blessings received. A procession then formed comprised of a line of men on foot, the first two with gong, cymbals, or drums, two more pairs bearing inscribed temple standards and United States and Chinese Empire flags, several men in white *changshan* (formal long gown, worn on special occasions) holding staffs or maces, a few men holding richly embroidered temple banners, a half dozen young men shouldering a green and yellow dragon comprised of a snarling *papier-maché* head and long scaly cloth membrane, several dancers goading it on, a band of flutes, clarinets, strings, and drums playing traditional music, and carriages bearing women in traditional finery and priests bearing images of temple gods. Those who animated the dragon with a swaying head and writhing body performed amidst a constant chorus of traditional tunes and firecrackers. After the parade, the participants returned to their homes and refreshed themselves for afternoon visits and games, followed by evening feasting and revelry. Although New Year's celebrations continued for two weeks in China, they lasted for only a few days in the Mountain West.

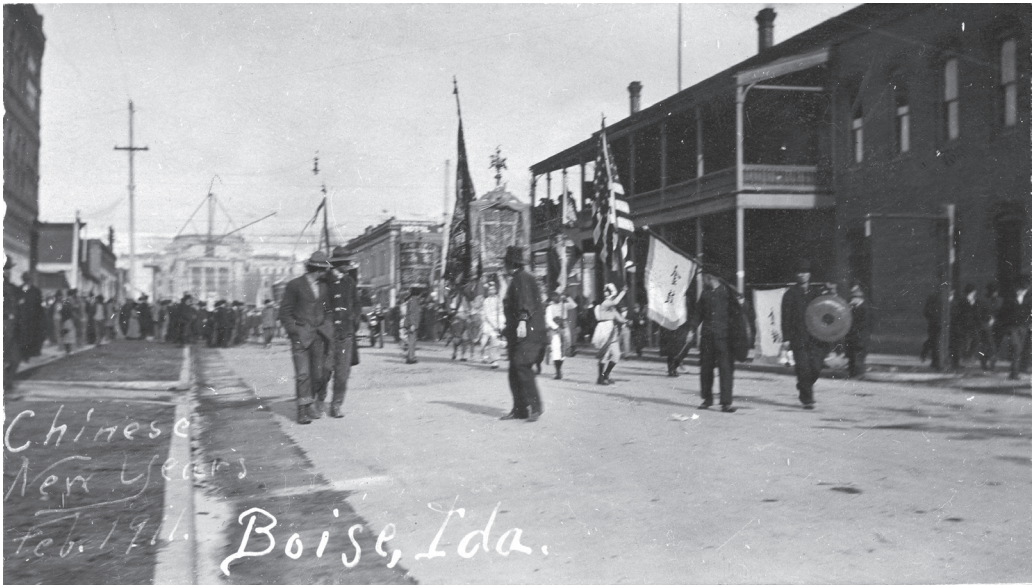
The parade was one manifestation of the Chinese custom of ushering in the New Year with a big bang and expressing hope in the future. The *long* (sky dragon), which appeared in the parade in both physical and emblematic guises, is one of the most ancient and

benevolent forms in Chinese culture, folklore, and symbolism. The dragon has long been depicted as a scaly snake with a ridged head, sprouting horns, whiskers, and beard, and four legs with talons. As a physical manifestation, the creature was once thought to dwell in inaccessible mountains and clouds. As an emblematic manifestation, it represents power, strength, good luck, and health for worthy individuals. Since the Han Dynasty, the throne, flag, and umbrella of the emperor bore the device of a silver or gray dragon in profile on a gold field, alluding to the emperor's power and strength. While the dragon standard was carried at the front of the parade as a sign of Chinese nationality under the Qing dynasty until the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, the great "dragon puppet" was the climax of the parade as a sign of benevolence and good fortune and endured long afterward. Chinese migrants from all over the region were attracted to the festivities by the prospect of seeing a dragon, and parallel manifestations unfolded in communities like Idaho City, Centerville, Warren, and Lewiston.

Lunar New Year was the festival most valued by Chinese migrants and immigrants in the Inner West, not only because it reminded them of the old world and provided an occasion for a reunion of living and dead souls but also because it served as a reminder of personal responsibilities that had to be met and social hospitality to be extended in order to ensure harmony in the individual and community. For example, lodgings and businesses were cleaned, debts were paid, bodies were washed, fine clothes were donned, gifts of curios were given to business contacts, and lichee nuts and candied fruit to children. Priscilla Wegars has cited an account of New Year's Eve in nearby Centerville in 1872:

All of the Chinese merchants and heads of companies kept open house, and their tables, uniquely decorated, were covered with sweetmeats, nuts, and con-ff[i]ts generally, of Chinese production.

39d



39e



Some of them, upon receiving calls from their American friends, produced other refreshments, including champagne and cigars, and appeared much pleased at receiving visits from their Caucasian acquaintances. [...] they [the Chinese] take pleasure in presenting their friends among the Whites with boxes of tea, cigars, silk handkerchiefs, China nuts, baskets, etc., and are very liberal in their gifts to those with whom they have business relations, and in whom they have confidence.

Li-hua Yu, "Chinese Immigrants in Idaho," PhD dissertation, Bowling Green State University, May 1991, 214–28.

It was a way to declare a Chinese presence in the city and to remind Euro-Americans that their labor and customs mattered and that those who treated them honestly would share in their happiness and good fortune.

Some of the photos have an anthropological bent to them, as if recording a rarely seen event in a Chinatown of the West. Others seem to cater to Euro-American interest in the annual Lunar New Year's festivities, a curiosity gratified by production of labeled postcards in Boise. Between these two genres, there exists a curious tension between isolation of the Chinese as exotic specimen and acceptance of them as a regular component of city life.

### Sources

Arthur Baker, "Chinese Living in Boise Maintained Traditions," *Idaho Statesman*, October 2, 1978, Vertical Files: "Chinese Ah Fong Family," Idaho State Historical Archives, Boise.

Priscilla Wegars, Uncovering a Chinese Legacy: Historical Archaeology at Centerville, Idaho, Once the "Handsome Town in the Basin," *Series Idaho Cultural Resources* 5 (U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 2001), 30, Idaho State Historical Archives, Boise.



**40a**

Johnson and Son, *Idaho Statesman* staff  
photographers  
*Where the Chinese Masons Perform their  
Rites*

Caption: This is the first photograph ever taken of the interior of the Masonic temple of the Chinese of Boise. The altar is stationed at one end of a room about 100 feet long. The accessories of this altar are the most elaborate and expensive of any on the coast. Across the front, protected by a fine wire screen, is an elaborate piece of bas relief carving covered with gold leaf, representing the early history of China. This panel alone is said to have cost \$1000. The article to the left of the altar is the drum used in the temple service. In the center pewter urn are the punk sticks, in the urns next are the sacred candles, and in the outside urns the good luck bouquets.

1917

Newsprint, dimensions unknown

"Boise at Last Has Real Tong War After  
Many Fights Over Chinese Women,"  
*The Idaho Sunday Statesman*, April 8,  
1917.

Collection: Vertical Files: "Chinese  
1910ff," Idaho State Historical Society  
Archives, Boise

**40b**

Unknown  
*Exterior of the Hop Sing Building on 7th  
Street and Front Street, Boise (detail)*

Ca. 1930

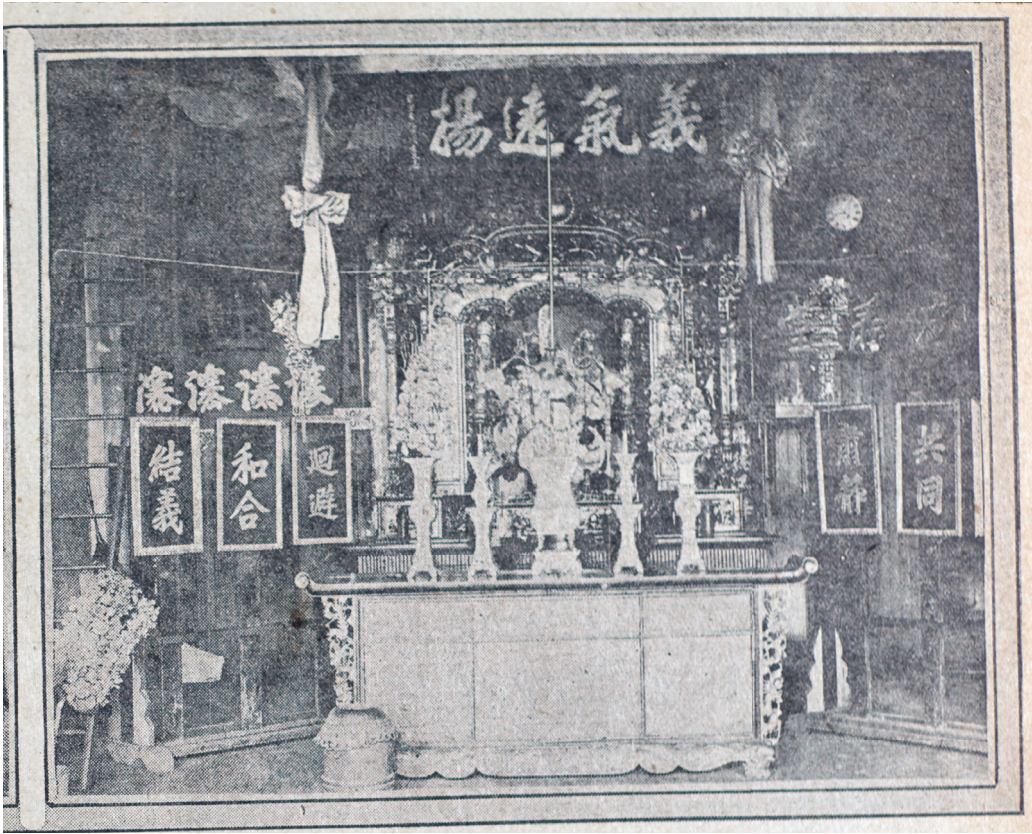
Photographic negative (safety film), 3 ¼ ×  
5 ¼ in. (8.26 × 13.34 cm)

Collection: Ashley Sign Company Col-  
lection, Boise City Archives

Image number: MS007

This newspaper image (cat. **40a**) is a rarity as it refers to the only known documentary

photo of the interior of the Hop Sing Tong or Masonic Lodge on Seventh Street in Boise in 1917. The elaborate shrine was originally built for the Chee Kung Tong on Idaho Street in 1902 and, after a forceful push for preeminence from the Hop Sing Tong in the mid-1910s, was appropriated by the latter for its headquarters at some point prior to 1917. The interior view suggests an elaborately carved and gilded altar with trellis wings supporting calligraphic plaques set up at one end of a 100-foot-long room, probably on the second floor of a brick building. Unlike most regional altars which consist of simple tables or credenzas supporting carved and painted superstructures, this altar is an elaborate import — a three-paneled rectangular narrative in low relief framed by curvaceous supports in openwork at the extremities. Resting on the altar is a central pewter urn for special incense, flanked by holders for "everlasting" candles and vases for auspicious bouquets (*jinhua*). The elaborate columned and arched superstructure is punctured by a curtained niche holding a painting of a warrior deity (Guan Yu?) and companions, with subsidiary narrative panels below. To either side of the altar free-standing lattices bear plaques containing expressions of brotherhood, read from right to left, "Togetherness," "Silence," "Avoidance," "Harmony," and "Become Sworn Brothers." A large banner suspended from the rafters is inscribed "Loyalty Spreads Far and Wide" and a ceremonial drum sitting on the floor was beaten on special occasions. The appearance of the exterior of the Hop Sing Tong around 1917 is unknown; however, a few photographs of the organization's new two-story building raised at Seventh Street (Capitol Boulevard) and Front Street in 1924 have been located (cat. **40b**). A plaque under the eave is inscribed "Hall of Joint Success." While the lower floor was let to businesses (e.g., Hai Yuen & Co., a Chinese merchandise store), the upper floor served as a meeting place for tong members, with plenty of light entering from a broad demilune window. Following the custom maintained at sev-



eral tongs, the altar and lanterns were likely placed in a private recess, perhaps against the back wall.

Although the identities of the painted shrine deity and his companions have not yet been identified, it seems logical that a Chinese secret society or association formed for mutual protection in the Western United States would select a militant deity such as Guan Yu (or Guan Di) to encourage common cause (loyalty, brotherhood) among its members. Bennet Bronson and Chumei Ho have observed that every tong housed a shrine dedicated to Guan Yu, the 3rd-century Chinese general known for military skills, loyalty to his overlord Liu Bei, and leadership inspiring his comrades. Chee Kung tongs displayed not only an image of Guan Yu to symbolize war and brotherhood, but also images of the five Patriarchs of the Tiandi Hui (the Heaven and Earth Society or Triads), a secret fraternal organization which traced its origins to the White Lotus Sect of the Ming Dynasty. These patriarchs may be featured in the carved frieze at the base of the niche.

Members of the Chee Kung Tong, and then of the Hop Sing Tong, would have benefited from having a shrine on premises to remind them of their fraternal bonds and shared spiritual values and ethical standards. In addition to praying, making offerings, and practicing augury on a regular basis, the members would have welcomed Chinese visitors from affiliated tongs in San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver and would have offered hospitality to local Euro-American elected officials on occasions such as Lunar New Year's, the emperor's birthday, and other holidays. The local temple(s) may have counted on neighboring tongs to help finance or augment festivities in the city as a source of cultural pride.

The editor of the *Idaho Sunday Statesman* included this image of the Hop Sing Tong altar in an article about the tong wars to assure the Euro-American readership that the Hip Sing and Hop Sing factions in Boise not only practiced religion but also coexisted

peaceably, as evidenced by an agreement not to perpetuate the war begun by members of Chinese secret societies in San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle. The editor proposed that because the Boise Chinese had always been peaceable, they would continue to go about their usual business. About a week later, a reporter for the *Evening Capital News* declared that the presidents of the two tongs signed a treaty in which "the [tong] members [...] agree not to carry arms, to give information to the police if any Chinese come to the city whose mission may not be peaceful, and not to participate in any unlawful acts and to discourage such acts among others of their race." The entente apparently allayed fears on the part of Chinese businessmen that their daily affairs would be disturbed, and the mayor was able to order security guards removed from the quarter. Did the readership miss the irony of highlighting unlawful acts among the Chinese when overt discrimination on the part of Euro-American organizations was prevalent?

#### Sources

- Bennet Bronson and Chumei Ho, *Coming Home in Gold Brocade: Chinese in Early Northwest America* (Seattle: Chinese in Northwest America Research Committee, 2015), 164, 166.
- "Peace Pact Signed by Leaders of the Chinese Societies," *Evening Capital News*, April 13, 1917, 6.





**41a**

Unknown *Denver Post* staff photographer  
*Chinese Funeral Procession with Marching  
 Band on Wazee Street, Denver*

Ca. 1875–1885

Negative, 5 × 7 in. (13 × 18 cm); Photo-  
 graphic image 2 ½ × 6 ½ in. (7 × 17 cm)  
 on sheet 5 × 7 in. (13 × 18 cm)

Collection: Special Collections, Denver  
 Public Library

Image call number X-21496, Image file  
 ZZR710021496

Collection: California Historical Society  
 Collection, 1860–1960 / Title Insur-  
 ance and Trust and C.C. Pierce Pho-  
 tography Collection, 1860–1960, CH  
 Collection / Alamy Stock Photo  
 Image number: Image ID DT094C

**41b**

Unknown San Diego View Co. photog-  
 rapher

*Chinese Funeral Procession with Musicians  
 and Lantern Bearers, San Diego*

1887

Photographic print mounted on card-  
 board, 5 ⅛ × 8 ½ in. (13.02 × 21.59 cm)

Collection: California History Room,  
 California State Library, Sacramento

Image number: Negative 6207

The Chinese men who migrated to the Inland West in the second half of the nineteenth century did so in the hope of locating work sufficient to save a few thousand dollars, return to Guangdong Province, settle family debts, and purchase a house and some land. Unfortunately, shifts could be long, the work difficult, and the pay meagre, prolonging their stay in the Northern Rockies by several years and increasing the chances of illness, disability, or death. Over the last fifteen years or so, scholars have examined accounts of Chinese death rituals in detail, although images of funeral processions, burial services, and graves have been elusive. The first two photos by unidentified news or trade photographers (cat. **41a** and **41b**) represent a Chinese funeral procession on Wazee Street (a block east of Union Station) in Denver and on Market Street (the Gaslamp Quarter, the northern edge of Chinatown) in San Diego, respectively. Both processions feature a hired Euro-American band with trombones, trumpets, and clarinets in the advance, trumpets, clarinets, and snare and base drums just behind, then a tall, colorful temple banner with a toothed or serrated fringe leading a group bearing two white banners on poles and several placards inscribed with calligraphic text. They differ in the display of lanterns on poles in the San Diego parade and a view of the black funerary carriage bearing the coffin in the Denver parade. Pedestrians observe the cortège from the sides of an unpaved thoroughfare bracketed by mostly two-story structures of stone, brick, or wood. The second pair of photos evoke the rituals that transpired while the deceased was being laid in a shallow grave at the Morris Hill Cemetery, southwest of Boise's Seventh Street Chinatown, or the Evergreen Cemetery, southeast of Los Angeles's

**41c**

Unknown  
*Chinese Burner at Morris Hill Cemetery,  
 Boise*

August 1980

Photographic print taken from a nega-  
 tive, 1 ½ × 1 in. (3.81 × 2.54 cm).

Collection: Idaho State Historical Society  
 Archives, Boise

Image number: P1980-2-78

**41d**

Unknown  
*Chinese Grave Marker with Altar and Burner  
 at Evergreen Cemetery, Los Angeles*

Ca. 1900

Glass photonegative, 5.12 × 7.87 in. (13 ×  
 20 cm)



41a



41b

North Broadway Chinatown, around 1900. Both accord a prominent place to a large brick or stone furnace for safely burning the personal belongings or the fake (i.e., paper) clothing and money so that the deceased could carry them in smoky essence to the next world. They differ in that Morris Hill's burner (cat. 41d), a brick cell fed through a keyhole-shaped opening and punctured by cruciform outlets capped by a hipped roof (and missing chimney?) is flanked by orderly rows of tombstones whereas Evergreen's burner (cat. 41c), a masonry box fed through two iron side doors, capped by a dome and vented through a chimney (ca. 1888), works with a (defunct) second burner to frame an altar platform and memorial stele (originally fenced off from the rest of the cemetery). Items such as firewood, table, food, and drink would have been brought from some distance to complete the service.

The Chinese migrant community insisted that a proper burial, preferably in the homeland near ancestors, allowed the soul to rest in peace. Immediately after the death of a member of the Chinese migrant community, the nearest relation or friend would appeal to representatives of the local temple or association to have specialists prepare the body for burial. Ideally, a Daoist priest would arrive at the home of the deceased and purify it from the destabilizing forces of death, presiding over the public procession and grave rites to ensure the deceased's passage through the spirit realm. More often, a member of the community familiar with the rites of southern China stepped in as master of ceremonies and contracted with a local funeral home. The matter was complicated by the fact that the individual's soul was believed to be comprised of two parts, a *hun* or spiritual energy destined to join the realm of immortal beings and a *po* or physical force destined to remain with the earthly body. The priest or layman would begin the funeral rites by having the body placed on spirit boards or in a coffin, covering the body with a white cloth of purification, surrounding it with food to sustain

it on its journey and real or fake money to appease unfriendly spirits, and announcing the death to an authority in the underworld, whether Tudi (Earth God), Chenghuang (City God), or Wudao (God of Five Roads), so that upon arrival in the underworld the soul could be judged. A righteous being would pass to heaven to enjoy pleasures and an evil being would pass to hell to atone or suffer punishment. After a midday feast of roast pig and chicken, steamed rice and tea, priests or laymen would then chant incantations and lead a procession consisting of a band playing loudly, mourners dressed in white carrying banners, a hearse displaying the coffin, more mourners with banners, a wagon displaying a portrait and belongings (i.e., pipe, clothing, bedding), a carriage conveying family and friends, and mourners in ordinary dress. Chinese who had bought imitation paper money punctured with holes from the local Joss House would throw it into the air along the route to distract all evil spirits that might wish to interfere with the transport of the good spirit. By about 3 p.m., the cemetery was in view and the body would be placed before the grave, surrounded with burning candles and incense sticks. A secondary banquet for the spirit of the deceased would be spread over a table. A few actual possessions and lots of paper clothing, livestock, money, etc., would be offered by friends and relatives to be burned in a furnace and thus transmitted to the spirit realm for use by the departed. After several prayers and acts of devotion, the body and a few possessions would be deposited in the grave and mourners would kneel, weep, sing, and drink a farewell toast.

Long after the funeral was over, the dual soul had to be satisfied on a regular basis, the spiritual *hun* appeased through regular rituals for the ancestors and the physical *po* through regular offerings of uncooked food, material possessions, and mock paper money before the gravestone. In southern and central China, a village community commonly erected an ancestral temple and filled it with



ancestral tablets inscribed with the names of the departed in the hope that the *hun* soul might inhabit it and maintain a presence in the lives of the descendants. However, Chinese workers did not have such temples in the Northern Rockies, although well-connected members might prevail on regional and clan associations as well as tongs or masonic lodges to inscribe the name of the deceased on an individual or collective spirit tablet. In China a community remembered the dead in annual ceremonies such as the Chinese Lunar New Year, the Qingming (Pure Brightness) Festival in April, the Zhongyuan (Hungry Ghosts) festival in August, and the Zhongyang (Double-Ninth) Festival in October, by paying visits to graves, carefully sweeping them, leaving offerings of food and liquor, and burning paper money and incense. Few Chinese workers had direct or extended relatives to perform such rituals and leave such offerings in the Rockies. Accordingly, many early Chinese migrants arranged with local representatives of the *huiguan* (Chinese regional clan association) or Consolidated Benevolent Association (formerly the Chinese Six Companies) to deduct a modest amount from their wages to cover the cost of exhumation, cleaning, packing, and repatriation of bones to China, a phenomenon that generated a great deal of curiosity and some criticism among the Euro-American citizenry who were shocked to see graves disturbed. Evidence of disinterment of Chinese burials can still be found in many cemeteries in Idaho and Montana in the form of ground depressions at plots and strewn metal parts from disassembled caskets.

Although most of the photographers seemed to aim for documentary content, the *Denver Post* photographer managed to foreground the breadth of the mostly Euro-American musicians at the expense of the Chinese mourners, while the San Diego View Co. photographer seemed intent to capitalize on the image of exotically attired Chinese mourners passing under the windows of the Young Men's Christian Association. Why

did the camera operator focus on that part of the parade, or that part of the route? Perhaps they are part of a comprehensive series of photos, the others of which have not survived.

### Sources

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- Edith E. Erickson and Eddy Ng, *From Sojourner to Citizen: Chinese of the Inland Empire* (Colfax: University Printing, 1989), 136, Idaho State Historical Archives, Boise.
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- Wendy L. Rouse, "'What We Didn't Understand': A History of Chinese Death Ritual in China and California," in *Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors*, eds. Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars (Lanham: Altamira Press/Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 22, 27, 29, 34.

41d



**MONTANA****42a**

Unknown Zubick Art Studio photographer

*Chinese Couple, Butte*

Caption: Glance into the past – A remembrance of the large Chinese population that once comprised Butte’s ethnic mix is seen in this undated, unidentified photograph, taken by the Zubick [Art] Studio. According to the Standard’s news files, Butte’s first influx of Chinese came from [the] gold mining town of Bannack. The Chinese prospectors arrived to work the digging at Silver Bow. By 1886, they built their first buildings in Butte, including stores, noodle parlors and some gambling halls.

Ca. 1890 (1988 reprint)

Newsprint, dimensions unknown

Photo printed in “Butte’s Oriental Influence,” *The Montana Standard*, Butte, July 3, 1988, 20

Collection: VF 1060: Chinese Misc. Articles, Butte Silver Bow Archives, Butte

**42b**

Unknown

*Chinese Family, Butte*

Ca. 1890

Photographic print, 3  $\frac{5}{8}$  × 5  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (9.21 × 13.65 cm)

Collection: Montana Historical Society Research Center Photograph Archives, Helena

Image number: Lot 25 B1 F2 03

The majority of Chinese migrants who crossed the Pacific in the 1860s and 1870s were young men seeking work in mines and desirous of amassing a fortune in the western territories and returning to Guangdong Province to settle family debts, purchase land, and raise children. The slow pace and arduous nature of work prompted some of

these men to seek out marriageable women in the area or to send for a partner in China who could serve as an assistant, companion, spouse, and eventually mother. These two black-and-white photographs, likely taken at studios in Butte, Montana, illustrate how Chinese ideals of marriage and the family were situated within Euro-American representational conventions. In the newspaper image (cat. 42a), a young married couple is seated amid Chinese furnishings, the husband, wearing a *guapi mao* (sexpartite half-melon or skull cap) and a *changshan* (formal long gown) overlaid with a *magua* (silk jacket), is assuming an expansive pose while grasping a fan and a scroll. The wife, wearing a silk *mang ao* (wedding or ceremonial coat) with fruit and floral motifs over a *ru* (short jacket) and *qun* (sectional skirt), is assuming a self-contained pose while displaying her wedding ring. Both avert their gaze from the camera as if to suggest discomfort at submitting to the formalities of the occasion or technology. The small table they share embraces a stack of paper and an urn (for inscribing and burning messages to the gods?) and supports a vase of artificial flowers (with camellias to signify union between lovers) and a pair of ceramic covered rice bowls on plates (to signify plenty). The second photographic image (cat. 42b) shows two women some years apart but united by a vase of roses (signifying eternal spring and longevity), two covered tea bowls (respect for old age and hospitality to strangers), and two young children (the girl with braids and the boy holding lesson books). Their apparel is modest, the woman wearing an embroidered silk blouse over coordinating pants (usually reserved for unmarried women but worn here perhaps as a gesture of submission to a mother or mother-in-law) and the children repeating this fashion in practical linen or cotton smock and leggings. All of them look directly at the camera as if intent on presenting a display of family unity, three hands converging on the mother’s lap, within a fanciful neo-rococo setting.



42a



These photographs were likely taken to commemorate a specific moment in the family's life, to affirm clan continuity via an impending pregnancy, and to apply the principle of filial piety. The ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius proposed that the family was the basic and fundamental unit of social organization, and that family harmony and integrity were essential for a functioning society, from village farmers all the way through provincial lords and imperial government. Everyone should behave appropriate to gender, status, and position in Chinese society, and the result would be peaceful coexistence. The senior male was the patriarch of the family and in this capacity demonstrated correct behavior always, expressed himself with sincerity and justice, and enmeshed the children in a carefully graded scale of existence. He and his wife operated on a united front before the children, understanding that each had important roles to play that could not be compromised. They privileged the eldest son and heir and expected him to determine supporting roles for the younger children. Limits on family resources, whether land or income, threatened to erode the family as junior sons were forced to look for work far from home and daughters were exchanged or sold into unpleasant living arrangements. In order to promote respect and piety, the Confucian *Book of Rites (Liji)* defined four rituals or rites (*li*) — the male capping ceremony (at 18–20 years), the wedding (at 20–25 years), the funeral, and ancestor worship. Because most young Chinese males made their way in the United States without the help of wife or family (between 1850 and 1882, 100,000 Chinese men and 8,848 Chinese women arrived in the United States, and by 1900 the number of women had fallen to 3,868), these photographs are unusual for suggesting rare instances in which Chinese marital and family life could continue in the Northern Rockies.

Notable is the Chinese mother-in-law who rests a hand on the table as a gesture of confidence in family continuity and filial piety. According to immigration records, of

the thousands of women (from merchant and laboring classes) who were admitted to the United States between 1898 and 1908, more than ninety percent were joining their husbands or fathers. How did wives and daughters cope with Confucian prescriptions for behavior in the American West? The “Four Virtues” of Chinese womanhood prescribed that she should know her place in the universe, be reticent in words, be clean of person and habits, and fulfill her household duties. Most women, following these prescriptions, remained indoors and tended to cooking, laundry, and other domestic chores. A Butte merchant wife recalled that strictures placed on women's movements in America prior to China's revolution of 1911:

I was allowed out of the house but once a year. That was during New Year's when families exchanged...calls and feasts....The father of my children hired a closed carriage to take me and the children calling [...]. Before we went out of the house, we sent the children to see if the streets were clear of men. It was considered impolite to meet them. If we did have to walk out when men were on the streets, we hid our faces behind our silk fans and hurried by [...]. Sometimes we went to a feast when a baby born into a family association was a month old.

Occasional festivals and birthdays permitted her to venture outside accompanied by another woman or protective male. But for the most part her life was one of isolation and therefore loneliness. The birth of children triggered a reenactment of dependencies as the eldest son conditioned his siblings to accept his scolding and correction.

The editor of the Sunday edition of *The Montana Standard*, Butte has deliberately decontextualized the photo of the young Chinese couple meant for private family viewing. Despite the exoticization apparent in the headline “Butte's Oriental Influence,” the caption reminds the reader of “the large

42b



Chinese population that once comprised Butte's ethnic mix" of laborers and entrepreneurs. The names of the individuals or their progeny have been lost, making an authentic narrative of the Chinese experience amid the mostly Euro-American community elusive.

**Sources**

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- Stanford M. Lyman, *The Asian in North America* (1970; repr. Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, Inc., 1977), 49.



**43a**

Unknown  
*Chinese Joss House, No. 17 West Galena Street, Butte*  
 May 3, 1902  
 Newsprint, dimensions unknown  
 Photo reprinted in *The Butte Inter Mountain*, May 3, 1902, 7, newspaperarchive.com, Roland E. Renne Library, Montana State University, Bozeman

**43b**

C. Owen Smithers (Kalispell, Montana 1893–Butte, Montana 1973)  
*Shrine of Guan Yu, from Chinese temple located on the first block of Mercy Street, Butte*  
 Ca. 1920 (1976 reprint)  
 Newsprint, dimensions unknown  
 Photo reprinted in *The Montana Standard*, July 5, 1976, 16, in Vertical Files 1060.1: “Chinese Families,” Butte-Silver Bow Archives, Butte  
 Collection: C. Owen Smithers Photograph Collection, Butte-Silver Bow Archives, Butte  
 Image number: Smithers.02.002.06-07

**43c**

Unknown  
*Statue of Guan Yu, exhibited at the Mai Wah Museum, Butte*  
 Statue ca. 1905; image 2021  
 Digital image; carved and assembled wood with attachments, 40 × 18 in. (101.6 × 45.72 cm)  
 Collection: Private Collection (image); Montana Heritage Commission, Virginia City (statue)

This black-and-white photograph (cat. **43a**) is the only known record of the appearance of the Guan Yu shrine fashioned in the Chinese temple (or joss house) on West Mercury Street in the heart of Butte’s Chinatown.

Originally a log cabin erected at the junction of Maryland Avenue and Main Street (now Kaw Avenue) in the 1860s, the temple was displaced by business development so that a new structure had to be built at 17 West Galena Street in the 1880s and then moved to West Mercury Street after a 1902 robbery and desecration. Although a newspaper image survives of the exterior of the West Galena structure, nothing has been located that shows the West Mercury structure, condemned by the fire department and set alight by vandals in December 1945. Despite the poor quality, the newspaper image suggests a two-story timber truss and wood slat structure with the end gable covered entirely with a broad false front: a central door is flanked by windows opening onto a wooden sidewalk at the lower level and the same fenestration is repeated at the upper level but opening onto a broad veranda supported by brackets.

The first interior of the 1860s may well have incorporated an improvised altar and deity, the second of the 1880s a more polished handmade shrine. As temple keeper Wong Ken Chung reflected in 1899, “at first we had a little joss [i.e., deity], just the head made of log. Next we made a larger one with arms and no legs. Ten years ago we made this fine big joss with outstretched arms, beautiful face and legs.” The Smithers photo of the principal shrine (cat. **43b**) dates from around 1920 and thus suggests how the main elements may have been refined after 1902. Typical of improvised shrines, a four-legged table serves as a support for a large wood superstructure inscribed “Hall of Heroes” and containing a wooden Guan Yu statue. This quizzical deity has a long reddish face, exaggeratedly slanted (phoenix) eyes, and tripartite beard resting atop a lavish green robe integrating blue, red, and gold designs. Articulated with precision machine-cut arches and a delicate railing, the altar was nevertheless thought to require elaboration, and to this end the deity is flanked by vases bearing sacred bouquets (*jinhua*) and scrolls inscribed “Happy New Year” and “May you have good fortune,” and

43a



CHINESE JOSS HOUSE, NO. 17 WEST GALENA STREET.

barricaded with pewter and ceramic bowls “Offered with respect by Kwok Bun Kwan” intended to support lit incense sticks. Elaborately carved and painted glass lanterns flank the shrine and a subsidiary table laden with dishes, chopsticks, and teapot as well as a selection of incense and augury sticks has been drawn up before it. Rose Hum Lee, who viewed or heard accounts of the temple before it burned down, noted the presence of “the Kwen Ti [Guan Yu or Guan Di] idol, his seal, black flags of war against evil spirits, incense urns, candlesticks and the bamboo fortune-telling paraphernalia, as well as josh [joss] sticks, candles, paper money, and oil lamps and wicks.” The photograph suggests that these standard items were far more densely packed near the main altar than they were at the Beuk Aie Temple in Lewiston, Idaho, perhaps because the temple interior was smaller.

The name of Guan Yu, a third-century warrior of the late Han Dynasty who was revered as a guardian deity exemplifying the qualities of bravery, loyalty, and brotherhood ever since the Sui Dynasty, is inscribed in Chinese on a plaque near the apex of the shrine, just above the niche containing his sculpted and painted form. Guan Yu was the most prevalent deity in temples and shrines throughout the Northern Rockies, placed in temples and tongs alike (cat. 43c), which can be explained by the necessity of an exemplar for men banding together for mutual protection and benefit and upholding the strongest ethical standards of conduct far from home. The Chinese migrants of Butte established a reputation for celebrating Guan Yu’s birthday around June 22 by decorating the temple, flying the Chinese flag, playing music, and lighting firecrackers in the afternoon.

As a new shrine imported directly from China around 1905, the Guan Yu altar configuration in Butte was based on older folk Daoist spiritual fare in Guangdong Province. Lee has observed that the urban temple differed from its village prototype in that it serviced not only residents of Chinatown

but also many migrants and immigrants who lived in neighboring communities of southwestern Montana. Locals entered the temple daily to worship, leave offerings, or to consult the warrior-oracle about weather patterns, business enterprises, or the welfare of distant relations. Faithful living farther away from town made long treks to the temple, mailed monetary offerings to the keeper, sent him questions to be placed before the oracle, or wrote him detailed instructions for festivals, weddings, and funerals. The temple guardian played a central role in assisting the supplicant with religious offerings and oracular interpretations. He also arbitrated disputes between workers and solicited funds to maintain the temple or to stage festivals (e.g., New Year, Qingming, Dragon Boat, Moon, and Winter Solstice).

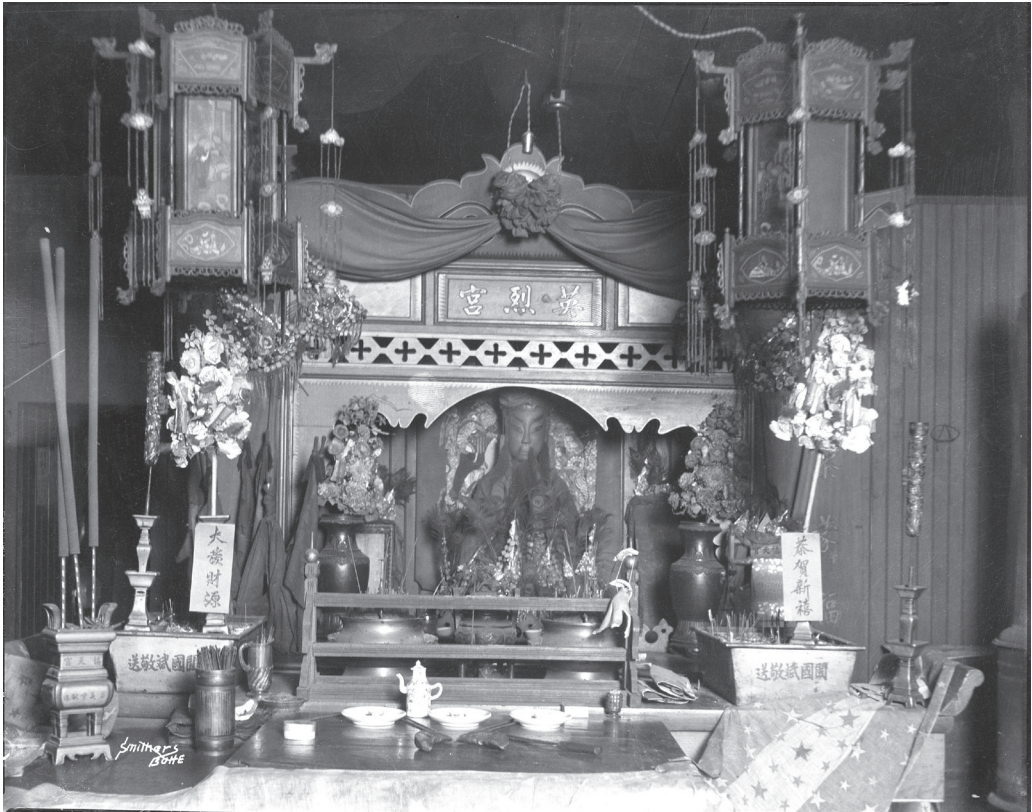
Smithers’ photograph of the Guan Yu altar was featured in the July 5, 1976 issue of the *Montana Standard* with a slightly problematic subtitle: while the editor correctly acknowledged the photo as a rarity, he misattributed it to reporter Frank Quinn, whom he believed intended to commemorate the police department’s successful effort to defuse “a tong uprising” in 1933. And while he correctly interpreted some of the inscriptions (“hero” and “Happy New Year”), he identified the deity only as a “Buddha-type figure” who “represents a founder of one of the Chinese brotherhoods.” Thirty years after the razing of the temple, there seemed to be few Chinese remaining in Butte to explain what the cult of Guan Yu meant to the early migrants and settlers.

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**44a**

Unknown  
*Wallace Street Looking East with the Chinese Temple in the Middle Foreground, Virginia City*  
 After 1875  
 Photographic print, 4 ½ × 7 ⅞ in. print on a 8 × 10 in. board mount (11.43 × 20 cm print on a 20.32 × 25.4 cm board mount)  
 Collection: Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena  
 Image number: 956-065a

**44b**

Unknown  
*Exterior of the Chinese Temple with Pedestrian, Virginia City*  
 Ca. 1870  
 Photographic print, 3 ⅞ × 5 in. (9.84 × 12.7 cm)  
 Collection: Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena  
 Image number: 956-183a

**44c**

Unknown  
*Exterior of the Chinese Temple, Virginia City*  
 Ca. 1900  
 Photographic negative (safety copy), 5 × 7 in. (12.7 × 17.78 cm)  
 Collection: Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena  
 Image number: 956-184

**44d**

Unknown  
*Interior of the Chinese Temple, Virginia City*  
 Caption: Interior Chinese Temple, Virginia City, Montana. Copied from picture loaned by: Charles A. Bovey, February 1970  
 Ca. 1875–1900

Photographic negative, 4 × 5 in. (10.16 × 12.7 cm)

Collection: Photographic Browsing  
 Collection: Chinese, Idaho Historical Society Archives, Boise  
 Image number: P1973-15-0

These unattributed black-and-white photographs are meant to situate the Chinese Temple at the west end of Wallace Street in Virginia City, Montana, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century (cat. **44a**). Originally a single-story log structure erected in the 1860s, the temple was rebuilt as a two-story rough-hewn timber and plaster structure by 1875. In a gesture toward architectural refinement, the newer model was faced with narrow gauge horizontal wooden slats overhung with a porch, the upper level screened with awning and railing (cat. **44b** and **44c**). The temple was designed to interface with the community: the Wallace Street sidewalk (i.e., boardwalk) passes through the temple porch, an exterior staircase joins the passageway to the balcony, and a great flagpole (or festival tower) ascends parallel to the porch at left. The roof is pierced with a brick chimney with a narrow termination just left of the gable. On the inside, the lower floor measured about twenty-five by thirty feet and was given over to gambling, sheltering sojourners, gathering the community, and hosting elaborate banquets. Long-time resident Wiley Davis recollected that the space was hung with a red glass oil lamp and edged with booths or bunks where a Chinese man could “lie down and enjoy his pipe,” the red glow frightening away “evil spirits” and the opium transporting him to “dream land.” The upper floor was more sumptuous: an altar was placed against a plank wall directly opposite the fenestration, a narrow-arched doorway to either side (cat. **44d**). The altar consisted of two improvised consoles, superimposed to provide a stepped surface for deploying an assortment of incense sticks and sand pots, augury instruments and cosmological books, and a five-piece ensemble of incense burner,

44a



44b



everlasting candles, and sacred bouquets (*jinhua*) before a silk painting of a Chinese deity in military attire, perhaps Guan Yu, god of war and rewarder of loyalty, or Zhenwu, god of war and protector of the emperor. The shrine was draped with banners and scrolls and flanked by glass lanterns with tassels: the banner over the altar reads “righteousness pervades” and the scroll to the left of the flower vase says in part “bless the ancestors.” Small tables were positioned to receive daily offerings for the gods and ancestors or to provide spirited responses from them. At least one memorialist recalled seeing Chinese hangings on the walls and a pattern of circles and fish on the ceiling. The lower part of an ornate brass chandelier can be seen at upper right, illuminating the proceedings.

The presence of the painting of a warrior deity above the altar indicates that Chinese migrants and immigrants in Virginia City followed the general trend of protector deities that promoted hierarchy and camaraderie. However, at least one Euro-American visitor was inclined to recognize a central Buddha or subsidiary statues of Buddhas or bodhisattvas in the room. As Wiley Davis recalled in 1967, “there was one [Buddha] in the center of the room and two on the north wall and a kneeling pad before each one.” Could he have been mistaken? Guan Yu was prevalent in temples and shrines throughout the American West, which can be explained by the necessity of laboring men banding together for mutual protection and benefit and to uphold the strongest ethical standards of conduct far from home. A statue of the Buddha in whatever earthly or cosmological manifestation would have been unusual, although an image of Guanyin, the most compassionate and benevolent of bodhisattvas, would not have been, for the Guanyin cult had been elided with folk Daoist worship centuries earlier. Indeed, the presence of Guanyin, often venerated as a female deity renowned for regard for mothers and children, may indicate that the temple changed its emphasis as Chinese

wives and daughters joined their husbands and fathers in the Mountain West.

In the 1870s hundreds of Chinese miners worked claims in Alder Gulch under the auspices of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (Chung Wah Kung Saw), a guild-like organization for laborers with representatives from six districts of Guangdong Province (i.e., the Chinese Six Companies). The first floor of the temple was reserved for these miners to socialize over games, smokes, and feasts. A banner listed rules of conduct in the valley, including “do not occupy by force the property of your brethren,” “do not deceive your brethren by fast talking,” and “do not bully your brethren with your might.” Self-regulation was indispensable to surviving in a region where racism often weighed heavily with the citizenry and persuaded the police to intervene forcefully. The second floor was reserved for Chinese prayer, augury, and music making. The largest temple in southwest Montana, it became the most important destination for Chinese during the annual New Year’s festival in early February, entertaining about 600. The migrants opened the shrine to the curious on special feast days such as New Year’s. As Davis reflected, “every Chinaman went into the temple and prayed before the New Year’s [three-week festival] was over. You [i.e., Euro-Americans] were welcome to sit in the temple and watch and listen to them pray.” Perhaps the greatest spectacle took place on a small stage: an ensemble of musicians played tunes that were so raucous that they could be heard by men working the Alder Gulch mines.

As the number of Chinese residents decreased from 272 in 1870 to 10 in 1910, there was no sizable constituency to advocate preserving the temple and the state used this “apparent neglect” as a pretext to tear it down in the late 1930s to straighten the juncture of the highway with the western edge of the town. Photos of the temple sometimes appear in articles to affirm the vibrant Chinese presence that existed in Virginia City in the late nineteenth century.



**Sources**

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44d



## 45a

Unknown

*Exterior Overdoor of Chinese Temple, Helena*

Inscriptions: “We rely heavily on your generous favor” (center). “Reverently donated by grateful disciple Chen Chung-yuan” and “Vows sealed with spit” (left). “On an auspicious day of Winter 1898” (right).

1898

Painted and gilded wooden sign, 12 × 26 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 1 in. (30.48 × 67.95 × 2.54 cm)

Collection: Montana Historical Society Museum, Helena

Image number: X1980.16.03

## 45b

Unknown

*Altar Superstructure Dedicated to Guan Yu from Chinese Temple, Helena*

Inscriptions: “Xietian Temple,” a shrine dedicated to Guan Yu (top), “Throughout the ages, his firmness and loyalty last as long as the sun and the moon” (right), “For eons, his courage and justice spread far and wide” (left), “206 Clore [Street],” Helena (underside)

Ca. 1885

Carved and painted wood superstructure, 62 × 47.32 × 15.39 in. (157.48 × 120.19 × 39.09 cm)

Collection: Gift of Doris Marshall, 1973, Montana Historical Society Museum, Helena

Image number: 1973.17.01

A few components remain from the Guan Yu temple or shrine that was in the vicinity of Clore Street (now Park Avenue) and Main Street, Helena, around 1880: an overdoor plaque and an altar niche. Although the niche is inscribed on the underside “206 Clore Street,” one of several small one-story log cabins designated for Chinese bathing and habitation in the 1870s and 1880s, it may

well have been moved to a larger timber truss or rectangular brick building on Main Street that could accommodate the growing Chinese population in the 1890s. Unfortunately, Chinatown’s many one- and two-story timber truss and wooden slat buildings with overhangs or porches of the 1880s to the 1920s were destroyed in the urban renewal programs of the early 1970s — and no photos of the exterior of a structure have been located.

An article describing the explosive thrill occasioned by Chinese firecrackers and other fireworks at New Year’s in *The Helena Independent* on February 6, 1889, suggested that a Chinese tong was the principal location of a shrine:

The Helena Chinamen have no regularly appointed joss house, and the joss on exhibition [at the gaming house] differs considerably from that seen in other places, it being simply a picture, but it is very fine work. A portion of the gambling room is set aside for the joss’s quarters, while a few feet away at any hour in the evening a motley crowd may be seen clambering over each other at the gambling table.

Chinatown would not have gone without a joss house for long.

The entrance was likely accentuated with a horizontal inscribed board above the main door and vertical calligraphic tablets along the jambs: the overdoor featured here (cat. 45a) was painted red with heavy gold Chinese characters that read “We rely heavily on your generous favor” and was dated “Winter 1898.” The cold climate may have driven Chinese miners or tradesmen to the temple in search of shelter, sustenance, commiseration, or guidance. The interior of the temple was probably similar to that of many in the Northern Rockies, in the sense that an altar — or plain rectangular table supporting an ornately carved, painted, and gilded superstructure — was set against a principal

45a



wall: the wooden framework or niche conserved at the historical society is crested with geometric fields set with flowers and attentive pairs of gilded birds (day), and bats and moths (night), culminating in a green ribbon bearing the name of Guan Yu, which descends the length of the structure to proclaim his chief virtues, including resolve, loyalty, courage, and justice. The niche is capped with a carved openwork lintel of a different style incorporating paired fish among currents and water plants, perhaps referring to the typical diet of migrants from the Pearl River Delta of Guangdong Province. It is a mystery whether the niche was meant to hold an inscribed tablet (as at Lewiston), a figural painting (Virginia City), or a wooden sculpture (Butte). What is certain is that the altar would have accommodated a censer flanked by candleholders and flower vases; the tables before it plates, chopsticks, and teacups for food and drink offerings; a range of incense sticks and sand bowls to keep them upright; and cups of bamboo fortune-telling sticks plus the *Yi jing* (or *Book of Changes*) to interpret the numbers. A pair of tasseled lanterns, a central oil lamp, and banners inscribed with declarations of righteousness or thanksgiving would also have been appropriate.

Because the name of Guan Yu (or Guan Di) is inscribed in Chinese on a ribbon near the apex of the niche, his painted or sculpted form must have been displayed there. A third-century warrior of the late Han Dynasty who had been revered as a guardian deity ever since the Sui Dynasty, Guan Yu exemplified the qualities of bravery, loyalty, and brotherhood. He was the most prevalent deity for shrines throughout the Northern Rockies, placed in temples and tongs alike, which can be explained by the necessity of single laboring men seeking mystical sanction to band together for mutual protection and to uphold the highest standards of conduct far from home. The selection of complementary colors provides a rare indication of collective aspirations, as red is associated with happiness and good fortune, green with

health and healing, and yellow or gold with divinity.

Many Chinese migrants who landed at West Coast ports and made the journey inland in the late 1850s and 1860s to the territories eventually comprising Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming labored at gold mining or railroad building; the Chinese also pursued business interests essential to town development in the 1880s and 1890s, whether overseeing farms, grocery stores, restaurants, tailor shops, and laundries or accepting employment in private homes. Robert Swartout, Jr. has pointed out that by 1890, Lewis and Clark County had 602 Chinese residents and Helena had one of the state's largest Chinatowns along Main Street. Whether erected around 1880 or 1898, the Guan Yu temple would have been the ceremonial heart of the Chinese community, the center of seasonal festivals as well as the touchstone for occasional birthdays and funerals. However, the local gaming house had an advantage in terms of considerable funds, expending \$2000 on elaborate fireworks displays.

There is still much research to be done on the two versions of the Chinese temple, including the location of period photographs of the temple itself, artifacts that were displayed there, and accounts of ceremonies and festivals. In carrying out such research, scholars must be careful to distinguish the function and appearance of a temple or joss house from that of a tong or masonic lodge — a tricky business because both temple and tong could house altars, and tongs could acquire independent temples that fell into debt or disrepair (as at Lewiston) or appropriate the ritual objects of a rival or declining tong (as at Boise). Recently, an attempt has been made by local Chinese history enthusiasts to associate the sign and niche illustrated here (cat. 45b) with the Chinese Masonic Lodge (or Chee Kung Tong) that took up residence in the Chinese laundry in the 300 block of West Main Street between 1897 and 1920. So far, this enterprise has been dubious in light of a surviving photograph of the exte-

45b



rior (dated 1899, Library of Congress) with signage completely different from the sample here; perhaps a photograph or inventory will surface that includes the carved altarpiece *in situ*. For now, prudence dictates that the two sacred objects be associated with Chinatown, whether the cabin structure on Clore Street or a subsequent clapboard structure on Main Street.

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"They Can Raise Thunder," *The Helena Independent*, February 6, 1889, n.p.



**WYOMING****46a**

Unknown  
*Ah Say (and His Wife?) Standing Beside an Altar Dedicated to Fu Xing in the Joss House, Evanston*  
 Ca. 1890s  
 Photographic negative, dimensions unknown  
 Collection: Historical Photograph Collection, Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources, Cheyenne  
 Image number: Sub Neg 11823

**46b**

William Henry Jackson (Keeseville, New York 1843–New York City 1942)  
*Law-Ark-Fawn Standing Beside an Altar Dedicated to Fu Xing in His Office, Los Angeles*  
 1899  
 Glass negative, 8 × 10 in. (20.32 × 25.4 cm)  
 Collection: Photo Subject File: Ethnic Group Chinese, History Colorado Archives, Denver  
 Image number: Object 86.200.3640

Images of Chinese businessmen standing beside altars reveal an understudied religious trend that cannot be easily associated with “Confucian,” “Daoist,” or “Buddhist” philosophies. Although the parties represented in these two images lived nearly 750 miles apart — the couple in Evanston, Wyoming, and the single man in Los Angeles, California — they were devotees of the Chinese popular religion of the Sanxing (or gods of the three astronomical bodies Jupiter, Ursa Major, and Canopus). Labor contractor, cultural patron, and Chinese consul Ah Say (1844/7–1899) and likely his wife wear typical western-style clothes and flank a small altar dedicated to Fu Xing, who presides over Jupiter and is the embodiment of good for-

tune, in the temple or tong at Evanston (cat. **46a**). The shrine was evidently set up in one corner of a timber truss structure and was dominated by a long scroll measuring about six feet high and three feet wide bearing the traditional bearded human form of Fu, represented at full length in a winged cap and voluminous robe, holding a *ruyi* (talisman symbolic of good fortune) and inclining to the right to acknowledge one of two devotees offering a small *jue* (ancient ritual wine vessel) on a platter. Just below the painting there was an altar covered with an elaborate floral embroidery and supporting a censer flanked by candle holders, artificial bouquets, and fringed lanterns, and to this was added offerings of oranges, melon, and two pots of narcissus. A representative of the Pacific States Savings and Building Company, Law-Ark-Fawn wears the skull cap and quilted jacket typical of Chinese businessmen and stands to one side of a Fu altar bearing a placard inscribed “Lu De Kuan Office Building” along with piles of fake money to be scattered or burned (cat. **46b**). To either side of the figural scroll, calligraphic banners promise “Red apricots in the woods and green peaches all over the trees” and “Birds in tranquility chasing each other, chirping birds close one to the other” — abundance and harmony to come. The scene is brightly lit, perhaps due to a window opposite, the actions of those passing on the street reflected in a hanging mirror at upper left.

Shrines dedicated to the Sanxing — Fu Xing (Good Fortune), Lu Xing (Prosperity), and Shou Xing (Longevity) — generally took the form of a single altar with statues of three bearded men in long scholars’ robes. The presence of three large scroll paintings in a mountain temple or tong would have been impressive, a cosmology traced in portraits. However, these photographs suggest that small, improvised shrines dedicated to Fu or one of his companions could have been set up in a temple, tong, or business on a seasonal basis — perhaps to celebrate New Year’s (Spring Festival), as suggested by the



46a



presence of a pot or two of daffodils (“joss flowers”), symbolizing good fortune, purity, and prosperity in the coming year. Fu in particular was associated with the birth and success of male children and was sometimes represented holding a child or surrounded by children. Is it possible that Ah Say and Law-Ark-Fawn were revered in their respective towns for family and community support?

Little is known about their families, but both men seem to have found ways to bridge Chinese folk culture and American business within their respective communities. Ah Say was known to use his negotiating skills to defuse tensions between laborers and the mining company in southwest Wyoming and to share his wealth, underwriting the expense of Evanston festivals, which included the importation of dragon parade costumes from China for the New Year’s parade. He was thus exemplary in showing that he could foster harmony by using his head and his heart. Law-Ark-Fawn seems to have stressed honesty, integrity, and fairness in providing banking services and spirit money to the Chinese community. of Los Angeles The tight skull cap and quilted jacket speak to an industrious but sedentary life keeping account books and negotiating with clients. Both men are part of a larger “Chinatown culture” of the West that involved pooling resources and solving disputes internally to achieve peaceable co-existence with the financial and legal systems of the United States.

The photographer seems to have accommodated a request on the part of Ah Say to be represented with his companion and the brilliantly painted figure of Fu Xing, a pyramidal composition that effectively ties earthly concerns to cosmological destiny. Although the businessman rests one hand on the altar in a gesture of pride in the display or concurrence with folk beliefs, the mortal forms seem diminutive in relation to the divine form, as if validating a belief in higher powers.

## Sources

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**47a**

Unknown  
*View of Depot Square, Evanston*  
 Inscription: Joss House in ChinaTown /  
 Evanston, Wyo.  
 n.d. [ca. 1900]  
 Postcard, 5 ½ in. wide (13.97 cm wide)  
 Collection: Chinese Historical Society of  
 America, San Francisco  
 Image number: Object ID CHSA-04807

**47b**

Unknown  
*Exterior of the Joss House, Evanston*  
 Inscription: "Josh" House Evanston  
 Wyoming  
 n.d. [ca. 1890]  
 Photograph, 5.19 × 7.09 in. (13 × 18 cm)  
 Collection: © 2003 Beckwith Family,  
 Delta City Library, Utah. Image cour-  
 tesy of J. Willard Marriott Library,  
 University of Utah  
 Image number: Object ID 124108

**47c**

Unknown  
*People Gathered in Front of the Joss House,  
 Evanston*  
 n.d.  
 Photographic negative, dimensions  
 unknown  
 Collection: Historic Photograph Col-  
 lection, Wyoming State Archives,  
 Cheyenne  
 Image number: Sub Neg 21553

**47d**

Unknown  
*Interior of the Joss House, Facing the Altar*  
 Ca. 1900  
 Nitrate negative, 5 ½ × 3 ¼ in. (13.97 × 8.26  
 cm)

Collection: Historic Photograph Col-  
 lection, Wyoming State Archives,  
 Cheyenne  
 Image number: Sub Neg 10474

**47e**

Unknown  
*Canopy and Carving Over the Altar*  
 Ca. 1890  
 Nitrate negative, 5 ½ × 3 ¼ in. (13.97 × 8.26  
 cm)  
 Collection: Historic Photograph Col-  
 lection, Wyoming State Archives,  
 Cheyenne  
 Image number: Sub Neg 10475

These five monochrome photographs are meant to evoke the experience of approaching the Sanxing Temple or Joss House, erected at 10th and Front Streets (Train Depot Square) in Evanston, Wyoming in 1874 and destroyed by fire in 1922. The structure dominated a square otherwise lined with small cabin and clapboard homes and offices. The building's exterior suggested a single-story timber truss and milled plank structure whose façade was extended with a false stepped front and matching porch with low railing and shallow curved vault (cat. **47a**, **47b**, and **47c**). The roof was pierced by a pair of brick chimneys about partway down the slopes. About fifteen feet from the structure, a large flag pole rose from a square pedestal for displaying the Chinese national colors on feast days. On entering the temple through double doors surmounted by a demilune window, visitors were faced with fortune sticks for divination, a broad table covered with an embroidered cloth, and a wood framework supporting an altar laden with the requisite censer (for special occasions), candleholders (whose tapers were never lit), and flower vases (with silk blooms replaced yearly), plus pewter cups filled with incense sticks, fortune sticks, and inscribed "flags" (used on a regular basis). Visitors also saw an an elaborately carved and curtained niche containing a devotional

47a



47b



figure, and a canopy embroidered with three Chinese characters (Good Fortune, Prosperity, and Longevity) and trimmed with fringe. The canopy was made to seem more impressive with the addition of an ornate crown-shaped panel carved with five narratives (the five Patriarchs?) and at least four decorative lanterns plus a functional central glass oil lamp (and later light bulb) (cat. 47d and 47e). A reporter for the *Wyoming Semi-Weekly Tribune* described the temple in 1910 as “an object of beauty and wonder to all who see it. The imported silk and gold embroidery and the Oriental carving is both unique and beautiful, estimated to be worth thousands of dollars.”

For many years, archivists assumed that the Joss House at Evanston was dedicated to Guan Yu, in keeping with devotional trends in Idaho and Montana and a notable gift — a statue of the deity — from the Chinese Historical Society of America in 1990. However, translation of the Chinese characters stitched to the altar canopy, combined with an 1884 account of preparations for Chinese New Year, suggest that the temple was dedicated to the Sanxing, three astronomical deities Fu Xing (Good Fortune), Lu Xing (Prosperity), and Shou Xing (Longevity). The character at upper right has been translated as “Longevity” and *The Democratic Leader* observed that “the merchants are doing a lively business in divinities. The latest joss introduced is in the shape of a scroll of parchment 2 ½ by 1 ½ feet, upon which is painted in bright colors the figures of three Chinamen in ancient custom.” Although the reporter went on to identify “this trinity” as “Gwang Kung [Guan Yu]...the war and fortune joss” (with companions Liu Bei and Zhang Fei?), an extant photograph of Ah Say standing beside an image of Fu Xing in the same temple suggests that it was probably dedicated to the Sanxing. Indeed, the central altar could well have contained paintings or statues of the three bearded men — Fu, Lu, and Shou — in long scholars’ robes to testify to the importance of leading a good life. Evidently the importa-

tion of a variety of deity images for the home, business, temple, and tong was common: a 1903 account of New Year’s preparations in *The Wyoming Press* included mention that “Four large boxes have arrived in Evanston and in the middle of the next month [i.e., February] a great Joss newly imported from China, will be placed in their meeting house with much ceremony.”

Evanston differed from other towns in the Northern Rockies in that it was formed purely as a railroad hub. Contractors for the Union Pacific Railroad recruited Chinese migrants participating in California’s gold and silver bonanza to join Nevada’s rail lines to those in Nebraska. By 1868 the railroad extended to Evanston, and some Chinese remained there to be trained as rail inspectors and repairmen, while others learned to mine coal to fuel locomotives and heat homes. A robust transportation and mineral extraction economy developed that permitted Chinese to develop amenities such as mercantile stores, laundries, a barbershop, an herb vendor, and a temple. The temple in particular was built by the community, as everybody contributed money or labor to the construction, decoration, furnishing, and ritual. Local newspapers provided regular reports on new furnishings acquired, marriages and births solemnized, and festivals celebrated, with special attention given to Chinese New Year, which featured a flag ceremony, dragon parade, fireworks displays, and outdoor games attended by hundreds of Chinese arriving by coach and rail. The celebration climaxed with “the bomb”: several rockets carrying prizes and a ball were fired into the sky and the men scrambled to catch them on their descent; the person who caught the ball was recognized as keeper of the temple for the ensuing year.

In addition to serving as a place for worship, remembrance, conviviality, and celebration, the Evanston Joss House must have provided Chinese migrants with a sense that their ancient customs were transferable to the Inner West and that settlers in their com-



47c



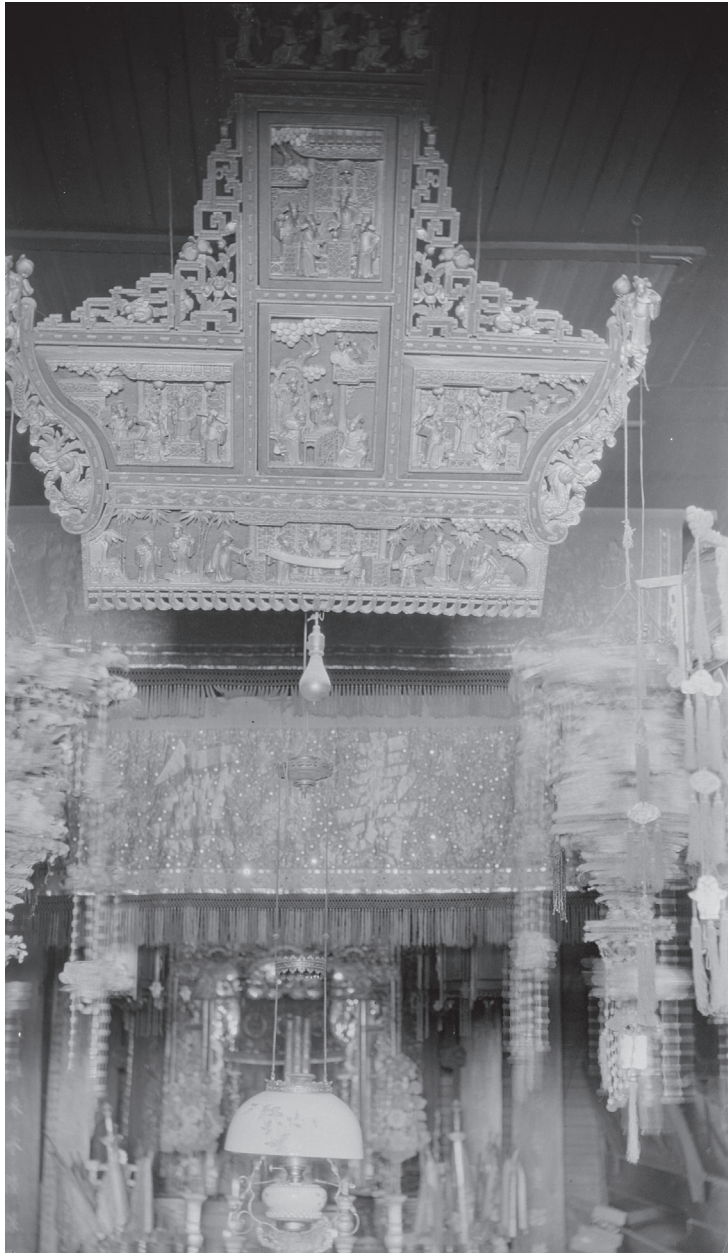
47d

munity had permanent status in the United States. However, as Kay Rossiter of the Unita County Museum has pointed out, barriers to assimilation were ever present wherever Euro-Americans perceived the Chinese as a threat to their work opportunities or pay scale. Occasionally these perceptions and fears moved beyond discrimination to persecution and even outright murder, as when a group of white miners massacred twenty-eight Chinese miners at nearby Rock Springs in 1885. News of such incidents would have encouraged ever more migrants to congregate at the Evanston temple to draw up plans for their mutual defense.

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**48a**

Unknown  
*Chinese Dragon Supported on Sawhorses in  
 Front of the Joss House, Evanston*  
 1890  
 Photograph, 5.19 × 7.09 in. (13 × 18 cm)  
 Collection: © 2003 Beckwith Family  
 Collection, Delta City Library, Utah  
 Image courtesy of J. Willard Marriott  
 Library, University of Utah  
 Image number: Object ID 124077

**48b**

Unknown  
*Chinese Dragon Supported on Sawhorses  
 before the Parade, Evanston*  
 Ca. 1890s  
 Photographic print, 5 × 7 in. (12.7 × 17.78  
 cm)  
 Collection: Rosen Collection, Historic  
 Photograph Collection, Wyoming  
 State Archives, Cheyenne  
 Image number: P72-26/11A

**48c**

Unknown  
*Dragon in the Chinese New Year Parade,  
 Evanston*  
 March 1898  
 Photographic print, 3 ½ × 3 ½ in. (8.89 ×  
 8.89 cm)  
 Collection: Historic Photograph Col-  
 lection, Wyoming State Archives,  
 Cheyenne  
 Image number: Sub Neg 12911

**48d**

Unknown  
*Dragon Paraded before the Joss House,  
 Evanston*  
 1890  
 Photographic negative, dimensions  
 unknown

Collection: Historic Photograph Col-  
 lection, Wyoming State Archives,  
 Cheyenne  
 Image number: Sub Neg 17491

**48e**

Unknown  
*Profile View of the Chinese Dragon at Rock  
 Springs*  
 1899  
 Photographic print, 5 × 7 in. (12.7 × 17.78  
 cm)  
 Collection: Photo Subject File: Ethnic  
 Group Chinese, History Colorado  
 Archives, Denver  
 Image number: Neg. No. F-4579

**48f**

Unknown  
*Head of the Dragon in Profile during the New  
 Year's Parade, Rock Springs*  
 1899  
 Photographic print, 5 × 7 in. (12.7 × 17.78  
 cm)  
 Collection: Historic Photograph Col-  
 lection, Wyoming State Archives,  
 Cheyenne  
 Image number: Sub Neg 20388

Young Chinese men often sheathed them-  
 selves in the skin of a magnificent dragon  
 to mark the end of the old Lunar Year and  
 the start of the new. In the 1890s the Chinese  
 of Evanston and Rock Springs, Wyoming,  
 shared a hundred-foot dragon parade cos-  
 tume, animated by a team of thirty or forty.  
 The first pair of images (cat. **48a** and **48b**)  
 points up the magnificence of the dragon, a  
 beady-eyed, drop-jawed, broad-horned cre-  
 ature trailing yards of scaly silk resting on a  
 sequence of sawhorses like a stalled loco-  
 motive. The second pair of images (cat. **48c**  
 and **48d**) shows participants carefully posi-  
 tioned to form a line to support the dragon  
 before the Sanxing Temple on Depot Square  
 (10th and Front Streets), where preliminary



48a



48b

prayers and offerings were made that morning. Despite the inclement winter weather, which has created many puddles and a great deal of mud, Euro-Americans have come out of their homes and offices to watch the spectacle. The third pair of images (cat. 48e and 48f) emphasizes the scale and impact of the dragon, silhouetted against an open field to highlight the long, serpentine body and propelled along a snowy promontory to activate its jagged, menacing profile. In the context of the festival, the dancing head and writhing body borne by young men served as an entreaty for health and prosperity in the future, though the animated puppet was also a symbol of cultural pride. Missing from these photos is a sense of the larger body of people involved in such a procession, whether musicians, standard bearers, or community and temple dignitaries, and the illusion of sparks and smoke emitted by firecrackers.

Each year from late January to mid-February Chinese arrived by train in southwestern Wyoming to celebrate the Lunar New Year, which included tying up loose ends from the past and jotting down intentions for the future, socializing with friends and business partners, and witnessing the dragon spectacle.

As a reporter for *The Wyoming Press* noted of the 1902 festivities, about 300 visitors “from various points in Utah, Idaho and Wyoming” arrived in Evanston to celebrate. Despite the fearsome aspect of contorted head and writhing body, the *long* (dragon) was not dreaded as a monster dwelling in the mountain mists but welcomed as a harbinger of protection, health, and abundance throughout China. Several accounts relate that the massive head was maneuvered from side to side, the body stretched into a line or s-curve through careful manipulation of poles supporting a wooden interior framework. The dragon was made to pause and bow before homes and businesses as if granting good fortune in return for hard work. The model employed at Evanston and Rock Springs was probably acquired from a purveyor at San Francisco and

retained with minor adjustments and repairs for a decade.

Although the scaly creature was the main attraction of a parade, it is worth acknowledging that it was but one part of a sequence of events that unfolded before the temple to mark the New Year’s holiday. The Chinese converged on the temple around midnight to witness the performance of sacred rites and the following morning to attend a ceremony of thanksgiving. The sanctuary was festively decorated with red banners, peacock feathers, and artificial flowers converging on the deity or deities with a burning censer. When the parade was formed, the dragon would usually make obeisance before the altar before moving along its circuit. The Chinese and their guests participated in games throughout the day, including the firing of a great rocket, which carried a wooden ball skyward about fifty feet; the man who succeeded in catching the ball on its descent became keeper of the temple for the ensuing year. Other games were put in motion to ensure the temple had monetary pledges sufficient to meet future needs. It is clear from the images circulated that parade day quickly became a highlight of the winter calendar in southwestern Wyoming, increasingly promoted by the Euro-American community — perhaps because of perceived similarities with church processions, pageants, and picnics.

In such photos the recycled dragon in particular and the parade more generally emerge as colorful and raucous vehicles for rejoicing or letting off steam in a township during the bleak winter. The photographer’s viewpoint is that of the spectator taking pleasure in the exotic demonstration from the sidelines — or that of the observer registering the work behind the scenes. There is even a sense of migrant connection or collaboration with the photographer to represent the participants as a line of troops or an advance guard honorably serving the broader community.

48c



48d



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48e



48f



## COLORADO

49a

Unknown

*Wedding Portrait of Toshiko Shibata and Matsusaburo Yokoyama*

Caption: Toshiko and Matsu, Wedding Picture

Ca. 1921–1922

Photograph reproduced in [Sylvia] Inez [Whitaker] Hunt, *A Story from the Land of Cherry Blossoms* (Colorado Springs: Colorado Springs Public Schools, 1974), 15 (cited as part of the collection of C.E. Taylor). Reproduced by permission of the Superintendent of Colorado Springs School District II.

49b

Oliver Eugene Aultman (Morgan County, Missouri, 1866–Trinidad, Colorado, 1953)

*Portrait of the Owaki Family*

1915

Photograph from a glass plate negative, dimensions unknown

Collection: Aultman Studio Photograph Collection, History Colorado Archives, Denver

Image number: Photo 2001.41.625

During the 1910s in the Northern Rockies many Japanese marked important milestones, such as the attainment of a college degree, arrangement of a marriage, and birth of the first child. The wedding photograph (cat. 49a) represents bride Toshiko Shibata, daughter of a prosperous banker and silk merchant in Tōkyō, in a white Shintō head-dress (*tsunokakushi*) symbolizing modesty and obedience and variegated silk kimono (*hiki furisode*) strewn with butterflies, birds, and flowers, along with the groom, Matsusaburo Yokoyama, the son of a successful silkworm cultivator in Ibaraki Prefecture, in

a sober black kimono overlaid with a jacket (*haori*) tied with a white silk cord (*haorihimo*). Both wear white socks (*tabi*) and sandals (*zori*) and hold fans (*ogi*) as signs of leisure. More than a nod to traditional attire, the frontally posed couple wearing garments secured through parental connections, advertised successful silk businesses. The precise carpet pattern in the foreground combined with the blurriness of the grand pavilion in the background suggest that the photo was taken in a Tōkyō-area studio. Their marriage arranged, the couple present the illusion of a reassuringly auspicious union of compatible families. The christening photo (cat. 49b) represents T. Owaki, a member of the Japanese immigrant community in southern Colorado, wearing an altered western-style wool suit and worn leather shoes while holding a newborn in a long satin and lace christening robe. A woman stands resolutely at his side in a white linen blouse and long skirt offset by a dark plumed hat, her large worn hands hanging down at her side. The figures stand perpendicular to each other, the man's near-profile body echoed by a wicker chair behind him, and the woman's twenty-degree stance reversed in the chair beside her, suggesting different characters. The background is extended by means of a painted backcloth — the corner of a stately drawing room with a large leaded glass window. Aultman shows his compositional prowess, for while the woman is positioned at the conjunction of walls to anchor the room, the man's head is subtly lit at three-quarters against an empty expanse that brings his facial features into relief. The small family is committed to adopt European conventions and make the best of their new lives in America.

Nearly all Japanese marriages of the late nineteenth to early twentieth century were solemnized according to Buddhist rites at the local village temple, where generations of families had been registered. That of Matsusaburo and Toshiko Yokoyama was different due to their educational and family loyalties: they agreed to integrate customs from three





different religions — those of state Shinto to satisfy his Keio University employers, Catholicism to gratify her convent school nuns, and Buddhism to please their parents and ancestors — which required three weekends to complete. Not all Japanese male laborers who migrated to the Mountain West in search of work opportunities earned enough money to return to Japan; some decided to tough it out with the help of a spouse and organizers at the local Methodist church, which often resulted in permanent residency. Mr. Owaki, indefinitely tied to an area known for coal mining, rail transport, and trading posts, may well have sent a portrait to a matchmaker back home to be paired with that of a woman of the same age and condition so that a marriage could be arranged, vows exchanged (first in the family temple, then on the foreign dock), and a household established near Trinidad. If the couple was not married according to Christian rites, the child seems to have been anointed in that faith.

The Meiji government encouraged its subjects to learn Western languages, technology, and customs through study abroad opportunities or attendance at imported parochial schools and church services. Absorption of Western ideas was thus thought patriotic, wise, and beneficial for the progress of the Japanese nation. The Yokoyamas' attire ties them to traditional religious practices, although the husband's spectacles suggest concentration on studies in psychology, honed as a student in the American educational system and applied as a professor at a Japanese university. Matsusaburo had taken a steamship to San Francisco around 1905 and, with help of the Japanese Association, made his way to Colorado Springs, where he graduated first from the local high school and then from Colorado College in 1917, and finally to Worcester, Massachusetts, where he took a degree in psychology at Clark University in 1921. Although the Gentlemen's Agreement (1907) between the United States and Japan stopped the influx of Japanese laborers into America, a loophole permitted the

immigration of wives and children of current residents, so that most new immigrants were in fact "picture brides." Far from home, Japanese women were expected to adhere to Confucian prescriptions for dutiful wives and mothers despite the endless grind of agricultural labor and household chores. Adoption of Western-style dress and Christian worship would have demonstrated a desire to assimilate. Mrs. Owaki's challenging gaze and unconventional pose suggest a level of independence of speech and movement available in America.

Both photographers trade on the fiction of an appropriate immersive environment, the first on the dream of solemn rites exchanged at a Buddhist temple with terraces and interlocking railings and the second on the dream of a family in possession of a bourgeois conservatory replete with stained glass windows and comfortable seating. In this way, the studios were able to offer clients the prospect of a real presence within an elusive fantasy.

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Object Photo Report, 12, prepared by Alisa DiGiacomo, March 15, 2019, History Colorado Archives, Denver.

49b



**50a**

Unknown

*Butsudan (Amida Buddha in Meditation)*

16th century (Edo Period)

Carved, gilded, and lacquered wood,

11 ½ × 5 × 4 ½ in. (29.21 × 12.7 × 11.43 cm) overall; figure 7.75 in. (19.69 cm).

Collection: Gift of Sennosuke Ogata,  
Richard E. Peeler Art Center, DePauw  
University

Image number: Photo 1885.1.1

**50b**

Unknown

*Butsudan (Amida Nyorai)*

19th century (Meiji Period)

Carved, gilded, and lacquered wood,

13.3 × 17.3 in. (33.9 × 43.8 cm)

Collection: Oriental Antiques UK /  
Alamy Stock Photo

Image number: 2HCCCHG

**50c**George Hirahara (Japan, 1905 – Anaheim,  
California, 2000)*Portrait of the Yumibe Family with a But-  
sudan at the Heart Mountain Relocation  
Center, Wyoming*

Ca. 1943–45

Photographic negative, 2 × 3 in. (5.08 ×  
7.62 cm)Collection: George and Frank C. Hira-  
hara Photograph Collection, Manu-  
scripts, Archives, and Special Collec-  
tions, Washington State University  
Libraries

Image number: sc14bo1fo428no1

A *Butsudan* (lit. “Buddhist altar”) is a small Buddhist shrine commonly found in homes of Japanese families or in temples and pagodas of Japanese monks. It is usually comprised of a simple wooden cabinet with doors that enclose a statue, painting, or calligraphic scroll representing or signifying a Buddha or

bodhisattva; however, it can also be an open cabinet with shelves or a simple table or plinth supporting a deity. It is accessorized with food offerings, flowers, candles, and incense sticks. Although the *Butsudan* varies in size, from a six-foot high cabinet to a wall bracket supporting a one-foot canister, it is portable and thus can be situated in a variety of religious contexts, whether a festival parade, a family mourning ceremony, or a farmer’s humble abode. The two *Butsudans* included here (cat. **50a** and **50b**) are meant to evoke the many twelve- to twenty-inch *Butsudans* Japanese migrants and immigrants brought with them to the American West or replicated with local materials. Professionally crafted late nineteenth-century examples possess a cylindrical case, lacquered black on the exterior, with paired doors that open to reveal an exquisitely carved and gilded Amida Buddha, seated in an attitude of meditation with *dhyāna mudrā* or standing with amended *abhaya mudrā* (wisdom accessible to all) and *varada mudrā* (compassion for lowest beings), supported on a multi-layered lotus plinth and backed by a flaming mandorla. Amateur early twentieth-century examples tend to resemble a cubical wood box with a rough-hewn deity or shelf-like partitions with texts and emblems.

The principal function of a *Butsudan* is to serve as an iconic focal point for the faithful to direct prayers to the Buddha and make devotions to deceased family members, whether parents or ancestors represented by an accompanying photograph or inscribed paper. Amida (Skt. Amitābha) is the principal buddha of Pure Land Buddhism. As a monk, Dharmākara (Amitābha) made a vow that any being who desired to be reborn into his western pure land should repeatedly and sincerely invoke his name and would consequently be guaranteed rebirth there. He also promised that those who called upon him on their deathbeds would see Amitābha appear before them, together with bodhisattvas and righteous followers. The Jōdo Shinshū sect of Pure Land Buddhism (founded by Japa-

50a



nese monk Shinran Shonin, who advocated appealing to the infinite wisdom and compassion of Amida to have a better chance to obtain enlightenment) easily secured a dominant position in the Northern Rockies in the 1890s, while the Nichiren, Shingon, and Zen sects took root in various places throughout the West starting in the 1920s. Individuals could approach the Butsudān at any time, clear the mind of all worldly concerns, bow heads in reverence before an altar adorned with the small statue or a tablet bearing the words “Namu Amida Butsu” (“I place my faith in Amida Buddha”), and chant the name several times.

A typical feature in Japanese homes, this small religious shrine was seen as an essential part of Japanese family life in dealing with the deaths of parents and reflecting on the lives of ancestors. Eric Walz has surmised that Butsudān were found in about half the Japanese American dwellings of the Inner West. An argument could be made on this basis that Pure Land Buddhism was discretely carried across the Pacific to help migrants continue to live full lives in the Northern Rockies. Nor did this worship happen in isolation, for satellite spiritual communities were established by a Buddhist priest who traveled from Ogden or Salt Lake City in the early days, and Denver later, to far-flung homes to hold services and lead ceremonies. The inclusion of George Hirahara’s photo of the members of the Yumibe family gathered around a Butsudān resting on a cloth bearing the Seal of the United States (cat. 50c) suggests not only the central place accorded the shrine in the Japanese American home but also how it continued to serve an important function in affirming faith and identity for families interned at Heart Mountain Relocation Center during World War II.

The Butsudān currently in the art collection of DePauw University had been in the Ogata family of Japan for more than three hundred years when Sennosuke Ogata (1854–1942) decided to convert to Christianity (1873), to study at and graduate from DePauw

University (1885), to become a Methodist missionary in the vicinity of Tōkyō, and to gift the object to the university. It therefore has a rich interpretative history within the Ogata family, Japanese study abroad and religious exchange initiatives of the 1870s, and the DePauw collection. Such contexts can be obscured by museum displays and photos that isolate shrines so that they become museum pieces. How were they situated in Japanese homes, lodgings, and temples in the Northern Rockies during the 1890s to 1910s? More research should be done to bring these contexts to light and thereby gain a more complete impression of migrant devotional culture.

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50b



50c



## 51a

Unknown *Denver Post* staff photographer  
*View of the Tri-State Buddhist Temple on  
 Market Street, Denver*

Ca. 1920–30

Glass negative, 5 × 7 in. (12.7 × 17.78 cm)

Collection: Hart Research Library, History Colorado Archives, Denver

Image number: Object 99.270.159

## 51b

Unknown  
*Exterior Elevation of the Tri-State Buddhist  
 Temple, Denver*

n.d.

Photographic print, 10 × 8 in. (25.4 × 20.32 cm)

Collection: MSS.1881 F1339, Box 23,  
 Fred M. Mazzulla Collection, Hart  
 Research Library, History Colorado  
 Archives, Denver

Image number: 10037400

## 51c

Unknown  
*Interior of the Tri-State Buddhist Temple,  
 Denver*

Caption: “Mattie Silks’ famed mirrored parlor just before it was dismantled. Birdseye maple and mahogany panels now grace Sigma Chi house, Denver University.” Note: Jennie Rogers had the structure built as a “hospitality house” in 1889, and Mattie Silks purchased it from the former’s estate in 1911.

Ca. 1919–20 (reprinted with caption on  
 June 10, 1951)

Gelatin silver print, 4.63 × 5.76 in. (11.76 × 14.63 cm)

Collection: Hart Research Library, History Colorado Archives, Denver.

Image number: Object 86.296.4505

## 51d

Unknown *Denver Post* staff photographer  
*Interior of the Tri-State Buddhist Temple  
 with Rev. Tesho Ono Officiating*

Ca. 1920–1930

Glass negative, 5 × 7 in. (12.7 × 17.78 cm)

Collection: Hart Research Library, History Colorado Archives, Denver

Image number: Object 99.270.158

Two photographs taken by employees of the *Denver Post* and two taken by unidentified cameramen represent the exterior (cat. 51a and 51b) and interior of the Tri-State Buddhist Temple at 1942 Market Street, Denver, between 1919 and 1945. Designed by prominent architect William Quayle as a neo-Romanesque “hospitality house” for local procuress Jennie Rogers in 1889, the brick and limestone building expressed the confidence of a New York brownstone dwelling among rows of Victorian woodframes that constituted Denver’s redlight district. The plan suggests a large rectangular block with all the windows deployed to the short end overlooking the street. The first level is dominated by an immense arched window, flanked by two recessed units: a half dozen steps leading to double doors with glazing and a half bay set with a narrow window. The second level is demarcated by a series of stringcourses that align three gently arced windows to repeat the rhythm. The attic level provides a medieval flourish with a pointed gable flanked by a parapet and half parapet, tied together with rusticated stone accented with a woman’s bust, gargoyles, and acanthus. The sign on the window, identifying the building as a “Buddhist Church,” seems at variance with the fortress-like quality of the structure. The disposition of rooms on the inside largely corresponds to the volumes of the façade, except that these interiors are much more delicate and neoclassical in style. For example, the parlor was accessed via a pedimented door and encased in rectilinear paneling inset with full-length mirrors be-





51a



51b

neath a coffered ceiling (cat. 51c). The largest room in the building, the parlor was reconfigured and refurbished to be conducive to Buddhist worship. Folding doors were drawn back to reveal a smaller chamber dominated by a *shumidan* (standalone altar) about eight feet tall intervening between two halves of a painted screen. Likely imported from Japan and assembled on site, the elaborate gilded altarpiece resembled a heavenly palace with interlocking brackets and winged-like rafters centering on the characters “Namo Amitābha” (i.e., the body of Amitābha Buddha, filled with boundless kindness and compassion). The console itself is set with a bronze censer, matching candle holders, and chrysanthemum bouquets. Then there is a black lacquer table with curved legs and stylized cloud patterns laden with boxes of incense sticks and ceramic bowls for holding them. A kneeler is placed beside a brass pot so that devotees can offer inscribed prayers to the heavens by means of setting them alight. The room was illuminated by an electric chandelier. The priest read sutras and led the congregation in chants.

Within the Mahāyāna tradition of Buddhism, the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple is dedicated to Shin, or Pure Land, Buddhism. Within the Shin tradition of Buddhism, the temple belongs to the Jōdo Shinshū, or “True Pure Land Teaching,” sect. True Pure Land Buddhists who gathered in the Denver temple under the auspices of a priest attended to spiritual needs. They honored the principal teachings of Shakyamuni, including the Four Noble Truths necessary for overcoming desire and the Eightfold Path necessary for obtaining nirvana. They also sought the promise of salvation of Shinran Shonin, which entailed appealing to the infinite wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha so that they could be reborn in the Western Pure Land and have a better chance to attain enlightenment. Faithful could enter the temple individually any day of the week or collectively on Sunday, exchange news with other members of the community, clear the

mind of all worldly concerns, and bow heads in reverence before an altar adorned with a tablet bearing the characters “Namu Amida Butsu” (“I place my faith in Amida Buddha”) as seen here or a gilded statue of the deity as seen in the current Denver temple, repeatedly chanting the name several times.

In general, the Japanese mostly practiced Buddhist devotions privately, in the home, before a Butsudan, while visiting the local temple with its shumidan or the monastery with its Daibutsuden, only on special occasions. Since Japanese migrants were neither “congregational” nor “publicly demonstrative,” their establishment of Buddhist temples in the Northern Rockies may have been in reaction to the multiplication of Christian churches. Many Japanese immigrants were pressured by Christian missionaries to attend Sunday services and to participate in women’s groups and youth organizations at the local church; this pressure would have been alleviated by commitment to regular meetings at a Buddhist temple, thereby retaining aspects of Japanese tradition while conforming to American prescriptions for religious congregation. The temple received much attention around holidays such as New Year’s and festivals like the mid-summer Bon Matsuri, where people visited the graves of their deceased and employed white lanterns to point the way home. The priest and parishioners extended comfort to those bereaved by the loss of a spouse, child, or sibling through the promise of Amida’s universal sympathy and understanding. The local press was eager to report any unusual ceremonial activity among the Japanese community, as a reporter for *The Colorado Statesman* on August 17, 1918 declared, “A Japanese funeral service was conducted in true Oriental fashion at the Buddhist church in Denver. The services were conducted for Mrs. Suoe Jitajima, wife of a Sedgwick farmer.”

The history of the Buddhist Temple on Market Street is bound up with the True Pure Land congregation’s search for an appropriate structure for worship and the City



Mattie Silks' famed mirrored parlor just before it was dismantled. Birds-eye maple and mahogany panels now grace Sigma Chi house, Denver university.

of Denver's regulation of crime and morals. Having rented spaces at 1950 Lawrence Street and 1917 Market Street for services, Reverend Ono (cat. 51d) was persuaded to purchase the building located at 1942 Market Street and to remodel the opulent interior for \$10,000. Shortly thereafter, he learned that the "House of Mirrors" had formerly been frequented by members of the legislature from 1889 as an upscale bordello and closed by the mayor in 1913 as a danger to the city's morals. The splendor of the altar and its superstructure suspending jeweled garlands may well have alluded to the delights of the Pure Land Paradise — golden temples floating atop a garden planted with flowering trees and set with lotus ponds — which transcended mundane earthly existence.

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## 52a

Frank Ellsworth Dean (Le Grand, Iowa,  
1864–Grand Junction, Colorado, 1947)  
*Japanese Funeral in Grand Junction, Colo-  
rado*  
Ca. 1910–20  
Gelatin silver print, 6 × 10 in. (15.24 × 25.4  
cm)  
Collection: History Colorado Archives,  
Denver  
Image number: Object 86.363.463

## 52b

Unknown Rocky Mountain Photograph  
Co. photographer  
*Funeral of James Saburo Takumi in Denver*  
Inscription: 4201 Rocky Mt. Photo Co.  
Denver  
March 20, 1920  
Photonegative, 4 × 5 in. (10.16 × 12.7 cm);  
photoprint, 8 × 10 in. (20.32 × 25.4 cm)  
Collection: Special Collections, Denver  
Public Library  
Image number: X-21647

## 52c

Oliver Eugene Aultman (Missouri,  
1867–Trinidad, Colorado, 1953)  
*A Gathering at the Grave of Tsuruchi Naka-  
moto, near Trinidad, Colorado*  
1913  
Gelatin silver print, dimensions un-  
known  
Collection: History Colorado Archives,  
Denver  
Image number: 2001.41.744

From the 1890s through the 1910s, thousands of Japanese migrants who had ventured inland via newly laid rail lines found work as gardeners or farmers in the Mountain West, and perhaps no more so than in Colorado, along the transportation corridors connecting Denver in the north to Grand Junction in the west and Trinidad in the south. Encoun-

tering less prejudice or discrimination from Euro-Americans there, the Japanese settlers and their progeny preserved traditional rituals and customs in the home, adapted to many local institutions and holidays, and put down roots in communities. These rare images of funeral services and a grave visit produced by well-known photographic firms are meant to underline how Japanese residents managed a compromise between traditional Buddhist and dominant Christian burial customs. The funerals at Grand Junction and Denver share a similarity in representing mourners dressed in black, the men with hats removed, solemnly gathered around a full-length casket laden with floral tributes to pay respect to the deceased just before the body is lowered into the grave. However, there are significant differences: the first ceremony (cat. 52a) is a grand affair involving at least fifty mourners lined up on an open promontory equidistant from at least two ground memorials. The second (cat. 52b) is an intimate gathering of a few dozen presided over by a Buddhist priest alongside the visibly distraught family of James Saburo Takumi amid the leafless trees and kanji-inscribed monuments comprising a densely packed cemetery. The family outing at Trinidad underlines the importance of paying respects to the deceased, sweeping the grave, and leaving floral or other offerings. It is possible that the three men kneeling with their hands on the stone of Tsuruchi Nakamoto have a more immediate blood relationship to the deceased or preside over family affairs than the other four standing behind. In all three group photos, Japanese entomb the body of a relation, friend, or associate in an American plot of land — and thus identify with other settlers and immigrants.

Colorado cemeteries generally reserved a section for Japanese to bury the remains of loved ones and to stage homages to them on New Year's, birthdays, and the Day of the Dead (i.e., the mid-summer Obon festival). Tombstones and cemeteries were never neglected. After an eldest son or trusted friend ensured that the body was prepared for buri-

52a



al, he would contact the local Buddhist temple or summon a traveling priest to preside at a wake over the open wooden casket in the evening and the funeral the following day. At the wake, the priest chanted a passage from a sutra, family members offered incense before the deceased three times, and guests did the same at alternate locations behind the family. During the funeral, the deceased received a new Buddhist name (*kaimyō*) written in ancient Kanji (to prevent the return of the deceased to the mortal world if his or her birth name happens to be uttered) and the casket was sealed (sometimes with a stone and nails) for burial in the cemetery. The gravestone, a broad base supporting a column of stone with a curved or pointed top, was engraved with the name of the deceased primarily, dates of death and birth, prefecture of origin, and declaration of faith in a particular Buddhist sect secondarily, in vertical kanji writing. Thus, the text on the foreground stone in the third photo (cat. 52c) translates “Tomb of Nakamoto” and “Namo Amitābha.” Such a monument was meant to represent the whole family, and space was reserved for floral decoration, incense sticks, and water offerings.

The death of a Japanese practicing the Buddhist faith meant reincarnation into another life or a higher consciousness, so bodily purification rites had to be performed and the soul directed to its ultimate destination. The body was cleaned, the orifices plugged with linen or gauze, and the whole dressed in a suit or kimono. Placement was paramount; the coffin was oriented at the wake so that the head faced north (for the soul to exit the world) or west (in the case of an Amida Buddha devotee). The grave plot was selected for its harmony in the environment (*kanso*) and the headstone for its simplicity and respect for natural or rough texture. Sometimes a separate narrow wooden plank (*sotoba*) engraved with name of the deceased, a Buddhist prayer, and the date of death would be added behind or beside the stone on important anniversaries (e.g., the seventh and forty-ninth days after death and the Obon

festival in honor of the dead). Japanese Obon or Bon Matsuri, which originated from the Chinese Ghost Festival, is an event that commemorates and honors the spirits of ancestors: families return to cemeteries to clean their ancestors’ graves and they believe the ancestral spirits revisit the household altars. It commences on the fifteenth day of the ninth month of the lunar calendar and lasts for three days. As Eric Walz has observed of the Interior West,

During the annual three-day event held in midsummer, people visited and adorned the graves of departed friends. They suspended white lanterns to light the way for spirits returning to the scenes of their earthly life. In addition, they formed figures of steeds from straw, launched paper boats on lakes, and reserved food from household feasts for the unseen.

The festival ended with a dance (*Bon Odori*) to express appreciation for the ancestors and their sacrifices. Such practices and observances reminded them that the boundary between this world and the next was fluid and dynamic.

The Dean and Aultman photographic studios in Grand Junction and Trinidad, respectively, were commercial enterprises suited to providing group commemorative photographs such as these. However, their work did tend to reverse the Japanese funerary tradition by which a photograph of the deceased was perched upon the altar in the community temple or upon the butsudān in the private home in favor of a photograph of the living presiding over the deceased obscured or cursorily emblemized below. Perhaps this explains why photos of wakes, funerals, and tomb sweeping are so rare in Japan and why these images seem akin to the mid-nineteenth-century European trade in images of death, mourning, and memory. Formal organized Buddhist practice came fairly late to the Northern Rockies (i.e., 1910s), per-



52b



mitting Christian religious institutions (e.g., Methodists) to form ethnic churches that appealed to the isolated Japanese family's needs for social interaction, which may have had something to do with this grafting of photographic technology to religious practice.

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## 53a

Charles D. Kirkland (1851–1926)  
*Chinese Procession at the Mountain and  
 Plain Festival, Denver*  
 Ca. 1896  
 Collodion print, 5 × 7 in. (12.7 × 17.78 cm)  
 Collection: Special Collections, Denver  
 Public Library  
 Image number: X-25050

## 53b

James B. Brown (active in Denver and  
 Colorado Springs 1880–1910)  
*Chinese Carrying Banners in Procession at  
 the Mountain and Plain Festival, Denver*  
 Ca. 1900  
 Photograph, 4 × 5 in. (10.16 × 12.7 cm) on  
 album page, 6 × 9 in. (15.24 × 22.86 cm)  
 Collection: Special Collections, Denver  
 Public Library  
 Image number: X-18263

## 53c

Unknown  
*Silver Serpent at the Mountain and Plain  
 Festival, Denver*  
 Ca. 1896  
 Photographs, 4 × 4 ½ in. (10.16 × 11.43 cm)  
 and 4 ½ × 6 in. (11.43 × 15.24 cm)  
 Collection: Special Collections, Denver  
 Public Library  
 Image number: X-22071

## 53d

James B. Brown (active in Denver and  
 Colorado Springs 1880–1910)  
*Chinese Men Escorting Dragon at the Moun-  
 tain and Plain Festival, Denver*  
 Ca. 1900  
 Photograph, 3 ½ × 5 in. (8.89 × 12.7 cm) on  
 album page 6 × 9 in. (15.24 × 22.86 cm)  
 Collection: Special Collections, Denver  
 Public Library  
 Image number: X-18242

Chinese migrants brought a series of traditional festivals to the Northern Rockies, including the New Year's (Lunar New Year) in late January or early February, Qingming (Tomb Sweeping) in early April, Dragon Boat (Illness Protection) in late May or early June, Zhongyuan (Ghosts of Deceased) in mid-August, Moon (Autumn Lantern) in early September, and Winter Solstice (Winter's Arrival) on December 20–21. These provided inhabitants occasions to pray at the temple, participate in ritual, and exchange news. While the Chinese migrant community initiated these festivals for reflection and revelry, Euro-Americans occasionally signaled tolerance of ethnic minorities by inviting them to participate in civic events. The committee responsible for organizing the Festival of Mountain and Plain, a celebration of the "pioneer days" of the "Old West," in Denver every October between 1895 and 1902, and then again in 1912, reached out to Chinatown residents. William Byers, festival president, advocated for a public dance — a masquerade ball on Broadway — and four parades — for state history, masked revelry, military might, and silver mining — in his newspaper, *Rocky Mountain News*. The Chinese were enjoined to adapt their knowledge of New Year's parade dragons, a horned head and scaly skin worked by multiple men, to the fabrication of a gigantic silver serpent, with a finned head and slithery sheath that touched the ground, to emblemize their participation in the state's silver mining industry. The first two photographs (cat. 53a and 53b) suggest that the Chinese incorporated many of the New Year's parade trappings, such as formal long gowns, embroidered banners, and the imperial flag, into the Mountain and Plain parade that traversed Broadway at 14th and 16th Street (i.e., the area near the present-day Civic Center).

William Wei has observed that the Chinese contributed "a long Chinese dragon made of phosphorescent silver cloth" to the parade that was only later dubbed a serpent "in honor of Colorado's silver mines." How-



53a



53b

ever, the form of the parade creature is so formally different from that of the Chinese dragon, particularly the integration of fins at the head and the concealment of the feet along the length (cat. 53c), that the Chinese must have conceived and engineered something new in conformity with the “silver serpent” theme to impress the Denver audience with the benefits of not only their labor but also their creativity. Wei has affirmed that the Chinese committee for the parade of 1897, headed by local businessman Chin Poo, allocated a large sum of “over twenty thousand dollars” for floats and costumes for the three hundred participants and that their participation in the festival was “a statement of their commitment to Colorado,” “an expression of pride in their Chinese origins,” and “a desire to have their cultural heritage recognized by the public.”

The Mountain and Plain Festival, which drew Euro-American settler families throughout the West, had the effect of eliding all cultures into one demonstration of regional pride. The Chinese showed that they could impress upon their Euro-American neighbors their resources, ingenuity, and creativity by coming up with a splendid display that realized Byers’s metaphor of the silver serpent in Chinese terms. It was a bold gesture of commitment to shared civic values and national goals over the long term. The brilliant creature slithering along the parade route (cat. 53d) asked viewers to recollect or imagine what it meant to be “slaves of the silver serpent” — that is, to burrow deep underground in search of an elusive vein of gold, silver, or copper that could alter the fortunes of themselves and their families. It also challenged onlookers to recall brutal battles for ownership or control of the mines, rights to land and minerals, and the various provisions, equipment, and service a mining town had to furnish. In short, the silver streak became an emblem of all their struggles and rewards as a community.

These photos of the Chinese contribution are also interesting for the way their

authors engaged the Mountain and Plain parade anthropologically, as if from the vantage of a documentary or newsreel director, and participatorily, as if from the standpoint of a marcher or onlooker. This suggests a dichotomy between the ways in which Chinese and Euro-American settlers interacted in festivals and the ways that interaction was represented back to them in art and media.

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53c



53d



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