

12-2016

The Last 100 Years at Beijing's Tanzhe Buddhist Temple in Light of Modern China's Political and Religious Upheavals

Yuxi Yan

Dominican University of California

<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2016.RELG.ST.01>

Survey: Let us know how this paper benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Yan, Yuxi, "The Last 100 Years at Beijing's Tanzhe Buddhist Temple in Light of Modern China's Political and Religious Upheavals" (2016). *Senior Theses*. 60.
<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2016.RELG.ST.01>

This Senior Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at Dominican Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Theses by an authorized administrator of Dominican Scholar. For more information, please contact michael.pujals@dominican.edu.

**The Last 100 Years at Beijing's Tanzhe Buddhist Temple
in Light of Modern China's Political and Religious Upheavals**

By Yuxi Yan

Thesis Advisor: Philip Novak, PhD

Department Chair, Religion: Chase Clow, PhD

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of
the Religion and Philosophy Program
Dominican University of California

San Rafael, CA

December, 2016

Copyright © 2016 by Yuxi Yan
All rights reserved

Table of Contents

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

COPYRIGHT.....i

ABSTRACT.....iii-iv

CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION ABOUT TANZHE TEMPLE.....1-4

2. THE BUILD SCHOOLS WITH TEMPLE'S PROPERTY

MOVEMENT.....4-7

3. TANZHE TEMPLE UNDER THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA.....7-9

4. TANZHE TEMPLE IN THE WARLORD ERA.....9-11

5. TANZHE TEMPLE AND NATIONALIST PARTY.....11-12

6. THE SECOND SINO-JAPANESE WAR ERA.....12-13

7. TANZHE TEMPLE UNDER THE COMMUNIST PARTY.....13-19

8. TANZHE TEMPLE AFTER MAO.....19-27

9. WORKS CITED.....28-29

Abstract

In the last hundred years China has undergone massive cultural upheavals. In politics, the old imperial system gave way to Nationalism, then to strict Communism, and recently to a more moderated Communism that is trying to find a balance between state-controlled and free-market economies.

The cry, “destroy temples to build schools,” was first heard in 1898 as various forms of traditional Chinese religion were opposed by new agendas of modernization. For the next hundred years China witnessed what many historians believe to be the severest attack on religion in history. Ian Johnson writes: “Even before the Communist takeover in 1949, half of the country’s one million temples had been converted to other uses or destroyed. Over the next thirty years virtually all of the rest were wiped out; by 1982, when religious life was permitted to resume after the ouster of radical Maoists, China had just a few score temples, churches, and mosques still in usable condition—in a country that now had one billion people.” (Johnson).

My thesis will focus on the history of Tanzhe, one of Beijing’s oldest temples, during this tumultuous era. First, I will create the background for talking about this particular temple by carefully surveying Chinese political history in the 20th and 21st century. Second, I will closely recount and analyze the history of this particular temple against that larger background. My hope is show and clearly explain why the

history of Tanzhe temple is in some ways typical and in some ways exceptional in relation to the recent fate of religion in China.

The Last 100 Years at Beijing's Tanzhe Buddhist Temple

in Light of Modern China's Political and Religious Upheavals

Introduction

Most scholars believe Buddhism first came to China during the Han dynasty in 67 AD. At that time, Chinese Buddhists started to translate the Buddhist Scriptures, to study Buddhism as it arrived from India, and to spread Buddhism all over China. Most historians believe the Tanzhe Buddhist Temple was built in 307 AD in the Youzhou area, near modern Beijing, during the XiJin dynasty (265-316). It was named "Tanzhe" because of the pool (called Tan in Chinese) on the mountain behind the temple, and because it had many valuable silkworm thorn trees (called Zhe in Chinese) around the temple. Its first name was Jiafu Temple. It is one of the earliest Buddhist temples in China. During the Northern Wei (386-535) and the Northern Zhou (557-581) dynasties, Buddhism was oppressed twice by emperors who saw it as a foreign religion, despite its early success in China. In that period, Jiafu temple was reduced to ruins.

However, in the Tang dynasty (618-907), Wu Zetian, the only female empress in Chinese history, was a Buddhist. During her rule (about 696-697), an Avatamsa (also called HuaYan, a sect of Buddhism) monk, traveled to the ruins of the Jiafu Temple and used Avatamsaka Sutra (also called HuaYan Jing), the sacred text of the sect, to teach people about Buddhism. As a result, more and more people became Buddhists, and the HuaYan monk rebuilt the Jiafu Temple and changed its name to Longquan

Temple. During that time, because of the China's political openness to other countries and its successful economy, people were open and believed in exploring other religions, no matter where they came from.

However, after Wu Zetian died, Buddhism faced another period of political oppression. The new emperor wanted to decrease the influence of Buddhism because it had become the most influential religion. Many Buddhist scriptures were destroyed during that time. But because Zen Buddhist teaching did not rely on scriptures as much as other forms of Buddhism, and because Zen Buddhism had more integrity ~~because~~ since it was based on personal experience and understanding, Longquan Temple soon changed its affiliation from Huayan Buddhism to Zen Buddhism.

In the Jin dynasty (1115-1234), the emperor, who was from a nomadic people called the Jurchen, respected the traditional Han Chinese cultures and religions. Therefore, Zen Buddhism quickly developed in Youzhou area. Longquan Temple became the head temple of the Zen sect and produced many masters during that time. In 1141, Emperor Xizong visited Longquan Temple and gave money to expand and improve it. Emperor Xizong was the first emperor in history to visit Tanzhe Temple. During the Jin dynasty, the first stele of Tanzhe Temple was built by crown prince Wanyan Yunyong to enhance the temple's grandiosity. The stele is a major medium of stone inscription in China. Steles are generally rectangular stone tablets that commemorate talented writers and officials, feature poems, portraits, or maps, and frequently contain the calligraphy of famous historical figures.

No matter which Emperor ruled over China—and they changed often—Tanzhe Temple's honor and prestige persisted. In 1260, the Yuan Dynasty replaced the Jin Dynasty. The first emperor of Yuan is Kublai Khan. His daughter Princess Miaoyan became Buddhist and lived in Tanzhe Temple. Princess Miaoyan was so pious that she left two deep knee imprints on the stone brick where she used to pray. People called it the Prayer Stone. The Yuan dynasty was the most open dynasty for religions. Under the empress's leadership, Buddhism spread quickly and was one of China's most influential religions, even though many Chinese still practiced Taoism and, of course Confucianism. There was also some practice of Islam (first arrived to China in 651), Christianity (first arrived to China in 635), and other more obscure religions.

In the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), beginning with the reign of the first emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang, most imperial family members practiced Buddhism. Yao Guangxiao, the councilor of the second emperor, Zhu Di, lived in Tanzhe Temple. Folklore says that emperor Zhu Di built Beijing City and the Forbidden City in 1403 after he was inspired by the layout and design of Tanzhe Temple's buildings. During the Ming dynasty, the emperors extended Tanzhe Temple many times, and built many steles to enhance its beauty and majesty.

Tanzhe Temple kept its royal temple position and large number of believers during the Qing dynasty (1644-1912). Emperors went to Tanzhe temple frequently to practice and study Buddhism. Between 1661-1722, Emperor Kangxi extended and enriched the temple, and he left many inscriptions on the steles and plaques. Emperor

Youngzheng(1722-1735), Emperor Qianlong(1735-1795), Emperor Jiaqing (1795-1820), all visited to Tanzhe Temple and left their poems on the steles. In fact, Emperor Qianlong left more poems in Tanzhe Temple than any other Emperor. They Qing dynasty's heyday ran from the Emperor Kangxi to the first couple years of Emperor Jiaqing. During this period, people were enthusiastic and generous in support of their religious activities. Buddhism gained more and more influence over China. Tanzhe Temple expanded to become the biggest Buddhist temple in Beijing. It had 999 and one-half rooms.

The Build Schools with Temple's Property Movement

Toward the end of the Qing Dynasty, China was facing challenges from the Western world. Western countries not only brought new technology that China had never seen before, but also opium, weapons, different religions, and unfair treaties. Western countries used foreign opium to trade for Chinese silver. The emperor's government was determined to prohibit opium. In 1840, Britain started the First Opium War to maintain opium trading. Within two years, Britain won the war easily with its powerful guns and cannons. After the war, Britain forced China to sign the first unequal of many unfair treaties, the Treaty of Nanking. The treaty demanded that, China had to open five ports for commercial trade, to give Hong Kong to British, and to pay twenty million taels (one tael equals 1.333 ounce) of silver to Britain. After that, the Qing Dynasty was involved in the Second Opium war, the Sino-French War,

the First Sino-Japanese War, the Siege of the International Legations with foreign countries, and the civil war within China between the emperor and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom from 1856-1900. The Chinese people could not understand why their country was suddenly involved in so many wars they couldn't win, and why China had to sign six unfair treaties. People tried to find answers and help through their religion. However, religion didn't make their lives better. At the same time, Christianity's influence began to expand dramatically and people began to convert in large numbers. Some people began to doubt their traditional religions, but others still respected the old ways. It is said that when the last emperor of the Qing dynasty, Emperor Puyi (1908-1912), came to Tanzhe Temple and saw the two giant ginkgo trees, or "Emperor" trees that emperor Qianlong once said indicated the country's prosperity. People said that every time a new emperor ascends the throne, the trees grow a new branch. Emperor Puyi pointed toward a small askew branch on one of them and said: "This little branch is me. I made the tree askew because I don't have the skills to be a good emperor."

Because of the impact of the Western invasion, the Chinese realized the power of Western technology, and they wondered if Chinese traditional teachings were too pedantic and held them back. At the same time, Buddhism was on the wane. At this point, the Chinese wanted less religion and traditional education and more emphasis on practical knowledge and application. In 1898, the emperor Guangxu started the Hundred Days' Reform to try to learn from the West, and to change Chinese

government to a constitutional monarchy. During this time, the Build Schools with Temple Property movement first appeared, along with Zhang Zhidong's Essay Advocating (the Construction of) Schools. The Essay Advocating Schools persuaded the emperor's government to develop education. They believed the schools should not only teach traditional Chinese theory, but also Western technology. Every village should have its own schools, and education should be popularized.

But because of the unfair treaties signed by the Qing dynasty, China owed about 3 billion taels of silver, and all customs duties were taken over by Westerns countries. There was little government money to support the needed educational reforms. Also, the Qing dynasty needed to develop military and industry at same time. Zhang Zhidong's solution was Build Schools with Temple Property. The article focused on temples connected to Taoism and Buddhism, which were the traditional religions in China and which owned many properties. Those temples were not only the center of religion, but also the center of politics and property in each village in ancient China. Therefore, China could quickly popularize education in each of its villages by radically transforming or destroying the old temples. According to Katz, the article "stipulated that at most 70 percent of a temple's assets were to be used for [schools], with the rest being left in the hands of those religious specialists who owned or resided at the temple. Other campaigns focused on extracting revenue from the temples via taxes and fees" (32).

However, the Hundred Days' Reform only lasted a hundred days, and it was stopped by Empress Dowager Cixi. This period was too short to produce significant educational reform, and it only depressed Buddhism and traditional cultural development. The idea to develop education was good, but local governments and armies didn't want to use the temples' money to pay for it because this just gave people who wanted property an excuse to confiscate properties from the temples. Many people didn't care about education or religion; they just wanted benefits. Many temples were damaged and robbed of everything, and many monks were even killed because of the people's and the local army's violence. Tanzhe was able to escape from this violence because Tanzhe's head monk, Ciyun, was a friend of Prince Gong Yixin. Yixin came to Tanzhe Temple many times to study Buddhism with Ciyun. He also made a contribution to restore a building in Tanzhe, and he wrote many poems to praise Tanzhe. Chunyue, the head monk after Ciyun, also had a good relationship with the emperor's family. As an emperor's temple, Tanzhe could avoid this revolution without further damage.

The Tanzhe Temple Under the Republic of China

Because the Hundred Days' Reform failed, many scholars lost faith in the Qing dynasty's policies, and realized the dynasty could not possibly change from despotic to constitutional rule. Many supporters of the constitutional monarchy changed to support building a republic. Sun Yet-sen was the head leader of republic supporters.

In 1894, Sun Yet-sen left China and founded the Revive China Society in Hawaii to oppose the Qing dynasty. Beginning in 1895, the Revive China Society rose up all over the China to oppose Qing. In 1908, Emperor Guangxu and Empress Dowager Cixi died, and Prince Chun Zaifeng, appointed his two-year-old son, Puyi, to be the new emperor. In 1911, the Revive China Society earned the support of fifteen of eighteen provinces. In Dec, 1911, Prince Chun asked the ex Beiyang Minister/ex viceroy of Zhili, in charge of trade relations and foreign affairs, Yuan Shikai, for help in opposing the Revive China Society. Meanwhile, the Republic of China was founded on Jan 1st, 1912. The Chinese Nationalist Party persuaded Yuan to make Emperor Puyi abdicate peacefully, and promised Yuan the position of president. Yuan succeeded in persuading young emperor Puyi to abdicate, and Yuan became the first official president of the Republic of China in 1913.

Within the new Republic of China, more than eighty temples combined to establish the first countrywide Buddhist Association in April, 1912. The Republic of China's government admitted that the Buddhist Association was a legally non-government and non-profit association. Because many temples had already suffered because of the Build Schools with Temple Property revolution, the Buddhist Association didn't have enough power to help most of them. However, the Buddhist Association tried to help revive Buddhism, protect the remaining temples' assets, and prohibit further damages.

Yuan was a powerful leader for the new China, but he was also ambitious and greedy. As soon as he became the president, he started to kill his opponents, to change laws, and to plunder money. Yuan forced Sun to leave China, and he oppressed the Chinese Nationalist Party. In October 1915, Yuan promulgated the Regulation on Religious Affairs. The regulation provided that all Buddhist and Taoist temple properties would be ruled by the local government. Yuan also dismissed the Buddhist Association and declared it illegal. The Regulation on Religious Affairs provided a legal basis for local landlords and warlords to plunder temple property.

The Republic of China was broken into pieces, and the political landscape was turbulent. Yuan was persuaded to become the emperor instead of the president. After he announced that he had acceded to the emperor of China in Dec 1915, his opponents and even most of his supporters opposed him. Yuan's emperor dream failed, and he died mysteriously in June, 1916 after losing most of his army and his power.

Tanzhe Temple in the Warlord Era

After Yuan died, China entered the Warlord Era. Yuan's Beiyang Army split into three cliques: Duan Qirui's Anhui clique, Feng Ruixiang's Zhili clique, and Zhang Zuolin's Fengtian clique. These three cliques struggled against each other from 1916 till 1928. During the Warlord Era, the cliques needed money for the war. They used the temples' property, citing education as their excuse, and they used Yuan's illegal

Regulation on Religious Affairs as their legal base. According to Paul Katz, social historian of modern China:

Recent research by Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer reveals that in Dingxian (central Hebei) the number of active temples belonging to a cluster of 62 villages dropped from 432 in 1900 to just 116 in 1915. In Changli County (northern Hebei), 34 of 42 temples possessing landed endowments had these assets expropriated by 1933, with 17 becoming the property of the village government, 17 being converted to schools, and 8 properties continuing to be used by the temples. In Liangxiang County (near Beijing), most temples were turned into schools by 1923, with all temple lands being confiscated by village assemblies (33).

In this chaotic warlord era, Beijing was the center of power struggles. The Tanzhe Temple, as one of the most famous temples in Beijing, could not avoid these struggles. Despite the conflicts between the cliques, Chunyue, Tanzhe Temple's head monk, was able to maintain close ties with whichever leader occupied Beijing. Sometimes, Wu Peifu, the leader of Zhili clique, would visit Tanzhe and he lived there to pray for couple of days. Wu Peifu's wife lived in Tanzhe for years to study Buddhism and to pray for her husband. Tanzhe also gave a birthday present to Wu Peifu every year. Even after Wu Peifu died in 1939, the new head Monk, Maolin, hosted a huge puja for him in Tanzhe. Zhang Zuolin, the leader of Fengtian clique, also visited Tanzhe Temple and was a good friend of Tanzhe's head monk, Chunyue.

Lian Nanhu, the old officer of Qing dynasty, and also a supporter of Sun Yet-sun, also lived in Tanzhe Temple to avoid the war. Lian invited many Japanese friends to visit Tanzhe and to study Buddhism. Lian Nanhu's collection of poems, *Tanzhe Temple Travel Poem Collection* was sent to Japan, and these poems made Tanzhe Temple famous in Japan. Because of Chunyue's social relationships with different power groups, Tanzhe Temple remained unscathed in this era, and it benefitted from the Beiyang government. In 1921, one of the Beiyang government leaders built a road to Tanzhe Temple. In 1922, the Beiyang government prohibited coal mining around Tanzhe area, and built a stele to remind visitors of its importance.

Tanzhe Temple and Nationalist Party

With help from the Soviets, the Nationalist Party united with the Communist Party and took over the Chinese government. Most leaders of the Nationalist Party were influenced by Western education. Chiang himself grew up in a Buddhist family, but he became a Christian when he married Soong May-ling. They believed Christianity was a true religion and that Buddhism was more of a "superstition" or a "philosophy." According to Katz the "Regulations for Registering Temples (1928), Regulations for Managing Temples (1929), and "Regulations for Overseeing Temples (1929)" are the three policies that the government passed concerning temple property. "These policies were most notable for advocating the establishment of civic

committees to oversee temple property, as well as for allowing temples to be declared “abandoned” and then taken over by the state” (23).

As a result, Buddhist Temples suffered from another Build Schools with Temple Property movement. This moment was even more serious than the first. According to Katz “As Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer have observed, the most thorough state effort to destroy temple cults occurred during the decade from 1928 to 1938, when the Nationalist government had reached the acme of its power following the Northern Expedition.”

Meanwhile, Tanzhe Temple maintained a close relationship with the Nationalist Party. In 1929, Chiang visited Tanzhe Temple, and head monk Chunyue led hundreds of monks and elementary students to welcome Chiang. Chiang appointed the local police, and provided guns for monks, to protect Tanzhe.

The Second Sino-Japanese War Era

In 1931, the Japanese took over the Dongbei area, then Beijing in 1937, and soon they tried to conquer all of China in the Second Sino-Japanese war. Japan eventually surrendered to China after America dropped atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

During this war, Chinese Buddhists also fought against Japan. Buddhism usually taught peace and rejected killing. However, during that time of

extraordinary foreign aggression, many monks picked up weapons and refused to surrender to Japan. Many more of the still-existing temples were destroyed and plundered during the war because of the Japanese. However, Tanzhe Temple again remained undisturbed. Tanzhe Temple was famous in both China and Japan, and the new head monk, Maolin, was a friend of Japanese army leaders. Japan allowed Tanzhe Temple to keep its own army and weapons, and the Japanese didn't plunder the Temple. People said that most villages and other temples near Tanzhe were destroyed by Japanese bombs, yet Tanzhe remained intact. Maolin offered no help with the Japanese aggression, but he helped to keep Tanzhe Temple safe during the war.

After the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Nationalist party and the Communist party no longer shared a common enemy, and the contradiction between the two parties began to resurface. In 1947, the Communist Party started to hold the advantage. In 1948, the Nationalist Party army quickly crumbled. In 1949, the Nationalist Party began retreating to Taiwan. During the Civil War, Tanzhe Temple had stood with the Nationalist Party. As soon as the Communist Party controlled Beijing, Maolin was forced to leave Tanzhe because he supported the Nationalist Party. Meanwhile, the Communists took over Tanzhe's land and distributed it to local poor farmers.

Tanzhe Temple Under the Communist Party

The Chinese Revolution, directed by Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China, led to the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The Communist Party of China had been founded in 1921, and it was influenced by the May Fourth movement and New Culture movement in 1919. According to Fenggang Yang, Professor of Sociology, and founding Director of the Center on Religion and Chinese Society at Purdue University, those movements' main proposal was

Adopting democracy and science in Chinese society and iconoclastic antitraditionalism... Influenced by the Enlightenment and modern Western philosophies, many leading intellectuals engaged in fierce attacks on religion and the traditional culture, and some leading thinkers recommended replacing religion with science, ethics, or aesthetic education (47).

Therefore, the People's Republic of China was unlike other dynasties that preceded it. Earlier dynasties held to one religion, or, like the Republic of China, had many Christian leaders within the party. The People's Republic of China's government encouraged atheism and logic and science over religion. However, the government did not prohibit all religious practices; the government respected different religious beliefs, and believers could practice their own religions as long as their religions didn't interfere with the Party's agenda. In the first Constitution of the People's Republic of China in 1954, rule #88, states that People have the freedom to have religious beliefs. However, the government's public policies still imposed many pressures upon Buddhism and other religions. They had to conform to the party to survive in the new

China. In other words, people could be Buddhists, but they had to be “communist Buddhists” first.

In 1950, the government succeeded in accomplishing the Land Reform Revolution (which began in 1946) all over China. This was to have significant consequences for the many Chinese temples including Tanzhe. The main idea of the Land Reform Revolution was to take over the land from landlords and distribute it equally among all poor farmers. Many temples still had surpluses of land and money because of believers’ donations. This land and money was also confiscated by the government and redistributed among the people. As a result, many monks left their temples and started farming on the land they received. Because of the emperors’ gifts and the believers’ donations during the dynasties, Tanzhe temple owned large sections of property and lands in Beijing. In 1950, all of Tanzhe Temple’s surrounding lands and properties were confiscated. Tanzhe Temple itself was taken over by the Beijing Bureau of Parks and Woods and opened to visitors as one of the first seven national parks.

The Land Reform Revolution benefitted poor farmers and the development of agriculture, but it was also a bloody revolution. Poor people killed rich “enemies” simply because of their wealth. Many of the wealthy had never squeezed the poor and had earned their property through hard work, though many others were just born rich. However, it did not matter what they did; they were shamed, abused, and killed in the Land Reform Revolution. The head monk of Tanzhe Temple, Maolin, was persecuted and forced to leave the Temple before the Land Reform Revolution because he owned

so many of the Temple's properties. People spread the rumor that Maolin was corrupt, and they ejected him from Tanzhe Temple. After the Beijing Bureau of Parks and Woods took over Tanzhe Temple, Maolin was finally allowed to return to the temple where he had lived since he was nine, but he no longer owned any of the Temple.

When Tanzhe Temple was opened as a park, many of its rooms were converted into a tuberculosis healthcare facility. In 1956, Zhu De, the chairman of the standing committee of the National People's Congress, went to Tanzhe Temple to ask the Beijing Bureau of Parks to protect Tanzhe's historic relics. He also asked the Bureau to build a road to Tanzhe Temple and to provide a bus for visitors. The Bureau approved and built the road, and a year later, Tanzhe Temple became one of the first key cultural relic protection units. Like some other temples during the period, Tanzhe Temple was protected and treated as a cultural relic, but it was no longer used as a religious place.

In 1958, Mao started the Great Leap Forward movement and built up communes all over the China to develop the economy. Mao set many impossible goals for the Chinese; and China, instead of leaping forward, experienced great famine. The next three years, most Chinese suffered from severe hunger. Even the great Tanzhe Temple could do nothing to help the famine. Whereas poor people once came to Tanzhe to pray and be fed, now the Temple functioned only as a park and tourist attraction. Tanzhe Temple once had three giant copper pots: one for cooking rice, one for cooking vegetables, and one for cooking porridge. The one for cooking porridge was three meters wide and two meters deep. In the Tanzhe temple's heyday, those

three pots could feed three thousand monks and many pilgrims every day. According to the ideals of the Chinese Buddhist tradition, temples should be philanthropic, and they should somehow reciprocate for believers' donations. Every winter, monks in Tanzhe Temple would serve porridge cooked with more than ten different grains to visitors and the monks would wish good luck to them. In the past, when people were facing famine or disaster, Tanzhe Temple would never fail to serve porridge to people in need. However, Tanzhe Temple could no longer afford this service after the famines resulting from the Great Leap Forward. Only a couple of monks remained in Tanzhe Temple, but they didn't have their own land, they didn't have donations from believers, and they didn't have the ability to fill the pots again.

Before the people could recover from the great famine, another revolution soon came, the Cultural Revolution of 1966. Mao believed in a communist society, and that artists, scholars, and religious leaders would instead gravitate in the opposite direction toward capitalism. Therefore, one of Mao's main instructions was to "beat all monsters and freaks down." During that period, "monsters and freaks" referred to all scholars, masters, artists, and all supporters of religious and traditional culture.

Historical relics and artifacts were destroyed. Cultural and religious sites were ransacked during the Elimination of the Four Stereotypes. All traditional culture was totally destroyed. People who wanted to protect their culture would be reported by their neighbors, friends or even families, and they would have to face punishment. From the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, all traditional cultural behaviors were

totally prohibited, and people stopped all religious practices. People were terrified to be associated with any religion, including Buddhism. People stopped praying to the Buddha, they destroyed all Buddhist items, and they feared anyone who would mention that they were Buddhist. All people could say was “Long live Chairman Mao!” Because of Mao’s personality cult and power, no one could oppose him. All of China had fallen into a crazy, blind, and inhumane time.

People had to forget about Tanzhe after the Great Leap Forward movement. People worried about their own lives; they did not have the time to think about religion when their children were hungry and their own lives were in danger. In these ten chaotic years, Tanzhe Temple was nearly destroyed. In 1965, even one of the most important temples in Tanzhe was dismantled because of damage caused by neglect. In the next year, the elimination of the four stereotypes (customs, cultures, habits, and ideas)—a revolution within the Cultural Revolution—reminded people that the ancient temple was a threat to the current system. Hundreds of Red guards and students went to Tanzhe Temple and destroyed everything in the temple. All the Buddha statues were broken up, all religious and historic plaques were slashed, and all steles were pulled down. People were eager to show their loyalty to the communist system by destroying as many old feudalist relics as they could. If they did not destroy the relics, they would be arrested and tortured. People went crazy destroying the temple. Princess Miaoyan’s Prayer Stone was broken apart, two of the three giant pots were smashed, and more than a hundred steles were pulled down to the ground.

Within days, nothing was left in the temple, and Monk Maolin had also been forced leave the Tanzhe Temple for a second time. He was forced to be a farmer, and he never returned to Tanzhe Temple. In 1968, Tanzhe Temple was closed, and no one cared about the ruins anymore. In 1972, 50 years after the Republic of China had prohibited coal mining near the Temple, waste from a nearby coal mine dammed up Tanzhe Temple's spring.

Mao officially declared an end to the Cultural Revolution in 1969, but its violent activities lasted until the death of military leader Lin Biao in 1971. After Mao's death in 1976, Mao's successor, Prime Minister Hua Guofeng arrested the Gang of Four, which profited from the revolution. According to Hsu, in 1981, the Party declared that the Cultural Revolution was "responsible for the most severe setback and the heaviest losses suffered by the Party, the country, and the people since the founding of the People's Republic"(826). According to Hsu, "In retrospect, the Cultural Revolution ushered in a decade of turmoil and civil strife that drove the country to utter chaos and the brink of bankruptcy" (703). Buddhism had undergone unprecedented pression during the Cultural Revolution. Temples were destroyed, scriptures were burned, and monks were killed and tortured. Buddhism almost disappeared. Tanzhe temple was almost totally ruined in this period. Finally, the Cultural Revolution ended with Mao's death. China could finally have a rest from revolutions to develop its economy and repair its society.

Tanzhe Temple After Mao

After Mao's death, the new leaders of the Party were free of Mao's tyranny. With Mao gone, the party could give a just evaluation of Mao's era. The new party gradually began removing all Mao's cultural influences, allowing the Chinese people to slowly demystify Mao, but not like Khrushchev's government totally overturned Stalin in Russia. First, people brought both Eastern and Western cultural and artistic products back to their lives. According to Hsu,

The first year after Mao's death witnessed a growing sense of relief and a movement toward a new beginning. The structural references introduced by Mao or the Gang apparently no longer fit the realities of life where stability, unity, discipline, and economic progress were the new order. The revolutionary rhetoric and cultural intolerance which had rendered China an intellectual desert of artistic insipidity gave way to some degree of relaxation and freedom of expression. The cultural straightjacket dictated by the Gang was now condemned as absurd and counterproductive. Beethoven, Mozart, and Shakespeare, once symbols of "bourgeois decadence and running dogs of imperialism," reappeared in mid 1977; so did the works of the great Tang poets Li Bai and Du Fu, which had once been called "products of the feudal past (779).

At the 1978 party conference, Deng became paramount to the party. He believed China would have to get its mind off class struggle and dedicate itself to liberating people's minds. Deng wanted China to develop economically and allow more people to have a better life first. He started economic reforms to raise China out of poverty. Also at this party conference, the party made the key decisions to accelerate economic development and to open their door to the outside world. Deng promised to lift China out of developmental stagnation. Deng also assured Chinese people that the new Open Door policy would not be the start of a capitalistic China. The country would keep its main communistic economic pattern and control key industrial production.

In 1979, the government redirected its emphasis toward farming and small business. Farmers would now be able to keep their land's output after paying their rent. This change increased the farmers' enthusiasm for production, which also increased their living standards. Now, more people could avoid starvation. Moreover, the new Industrial Responsibility System allowed individuals and groups to manage their own enterprises. This was the first time that private businesses were allowed under the Communist rule. Soon after, light industry developed quickly in cities and increased people's living standards many times over. Deng also created a series of special economic cities for foreign investment that were relatively free of many government limits. Foreign investment soon helped those special economic cities develop the industrial and service industry as the leader of other cities.

Due to economic and educational development, people could spend more time and energy on cultural development, including religion. Tanzhe temple, as a landmark of Beijing's Buddhist temples, also experienced a rebirth as a result of China's new political beginning.

Starting in 1978, Tanzhe temple underwent its largest repair in more than hundred years, courtesy of Beijing government investment. From 1978 to 1980, the government spent 3.3 million yuan to renovate the temple's main hall and ancillary buildings, to reshape the Buddha, and to improve the Buddhist facilities. The total construction area was 13,480 square meters, including a 9,400 square meter restoration of the ancient building. The government also built a new well so the temple could access fresh water. On August 1st, 1980, Tanzhe temple reopened to visitors. According to the old staff, cars had already lined up 3 or 4 kilometers away by 10am, and about 40 thousand people visited Tanzhe Temple on the first day. Twelve years after it had closed because of the Cultural Revolution, Tanzhe temple was reborn.

In 1982, the government renovated Tanzhe Temple's tower garden and other small buildings. The government also planted many new trees and flowers, while protecting the old trees and plants. Tanzhe temple had become a beautiful and dynamic temple again. Regrettably, Tanzhe temple was still a national park and not an active religious temple. No monks lived in the temple, and few of the visitors came

for religious reasons. One of my interviewees, Mr. Fang, has lived near Tanzhe temple since 1968. He told me he used to play in Tanzhe temple when he was young. He remembered the first time he came to Tanzhe with his family in 1982. Tanzhe was a quiet park during that time, and it had few visitors and no monks. Another interviewee, Ms. Ren, first visited Tanzhe in 1984. She lived in Beijing, but far away from Tanzhe Temple. However, her family decided to visit Tanzhe because it was famous for being one of the first national parks in Beijing.

During that period, the Chinese government started focusing on the importance of religion, and it began to reform the rules about religion, assigning five characteristics to religion in socialist China. According to Yang,

Commonly known as Document No. 19 of 1982, this CCP circular has served as the foundation of religious policy from that time forth. It states that religion in socialist China has five characteristics: it (1) will exist for a long time, (2) has masses of believers, (3) is complex, (4) entwines with ethnicity, and (5) affects international relations. In addition to its roots in social classes, as asserted by the-then-understood Marxism-Leninism, Document No. 19 concedes, without elaboration, that religion may have psychological and social roots. The Chinese Communist document, while providing the basis for the limited tolerance policy, set off debates among Marxist theoreticians on the nature and roots of religion (51).

According to Yang, Chinese religion was divided into three markets under the government's tight control:

- A red market of religion consists of all legal (officially permitted) religious organizations, believers, and religious activities.
- A black market of religion consists of all illegal (officially banned) religious organizations, believers, and religious activities.
- A gray market of religion consists of all religious and spiritual organizations, practitioners, and activities with ambiguous legal status (86).

At the same time, the late Vice Chairman of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) / Chairman of Chinese Buddhist Association Zhao Puchu wrote a poem, “气摄太行半, 地辟幽州先,” to praise Tanzhe Temple's beauty. This established Tanzhe Temple as a red market religious place, thus providing it with a good foundation for development under the Communist party.

In 1986, after almost 10 years of economic reform, the Chinese economy developed quickly. Chinese GDP grew from about 175 billion dollars per year to 300 billion dollars per year. However, the weaknesses and the dangers of economic reform slowly appeared. According to Hsu, “As the decade of reform and opening drew to a close, there were ominous signs of ideological confusion, economic imbalance, social unrest, and moral degradation. Serious challenges, as well as new opportunities, waited to test the leadership” (869).

In December, 1986, more than one hundred thousand students from 150 colleges and universities held a great demonstration in 15 major cities of China. They demanded freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of press, and free democratic elections. Their goal was clear: Chinese youth wanted political liberalization. The General Secretary, Hu Yaobang, was open-minded toward the student demonstration, and believed those students were patriotic. They had the right to voice their opinions, as long as they did not damage the economy. However, Deng's group believed this was a sign that Chinese youth were being corrupted by capitalist theory. Soon after, Hu had to resign his job and leave the party. Zhao Ziyang replaced Hu. According to Hsu, the People's Daily editorialized as follows:

It's time to wake up. Bourgeois liberalism is indeed an ideological trend. It is in the process of poisoning our youth, imperiling our social stability and unity, interfering with our reforms and opening-up policy, and obstructing modernization's, move forward. Can we afford to do nothing about it? (876).

When Hu passed away in April 1989, many students wanted to cherish his memory, and hoped the government would give more political freedom to people. More than one million students gathered on Tian An Men square. Like Hu, Zhao was also open-minded toward student demonstration. But the Deng group believed this student demonstration was an "organized, planned, and premeditated anti-party, anti-socialist activity." On the following day Deng declared that the demonstrations

constituted a “conspiracy” or “turmoil” that must be suppressed. On June 4, two weeks after the government declared martial law, there were still have about fifty thousand students from all over the China occupying Tian An Men square and had to face the national army’s tanks. After that, it was clear that China could develop only under the communist party’s dictatorship.

It was the same for Tanzhe Temple. After it reopened in 1982, it developed as a national park under Communist party control as a red market religion. The temple had to serve a political purpose. My interviewee, Mr. Jin, came to Tanzhe Temple to become a tour guide after he retired from the army in 1987. His job is entertaining many leaders of the communist party from all over the China. Tanzhe Temple had become a retreat for communist party leaders and important guests, regardless of their interest or lack of interest in religion.

In 1997, Deng passed away. People now remember what he did to improve Chinese lives. At the same time that he helped to improve China’s economy, he also allowed religion to rebuild itself under Communist rule. Because of government pressure, no one mentions the Tian An Men Square protests any more. According to Yang, “on average, in 1997, there were 6.5 government-approved religious sites for every 100,000 Chinese” (152). This stands in sharp contrast to the Cultural Revolution period, during which, in 1972, an American visitor observed: “During our visit we saw almost no evidence of

surviving religious practice... We saw no functioning Buddhist temples. Some of those we visited had been converted to use as tea house, hostels or assembly halls; others were maintained as museums... ”(Preface, viii).

Religion was slowly reappearing in Chinese life. Also in 1997, the Chinese Buddhist Association invited monks from Shanxi, the most important Buddhist province in China, to live in Tanzhe Temple. Today, these Shanxi monks and other Buddhist groups are widely visible in China. Because of Deng’s policies, Tanzhe temple has held regular Buddhist services ever since his reign.

Despite China’s turbulent history, Tanzhe Temple and its Buddhist message have survived for almost 2000 years. Various rulers and regimes have taken control of the temple and tried to change and reform Tanzhe’s central Buddhist message. They’ve forced monks to take up arms and to protect themselves, they’ve used Tanzhe as a national landmark and a public park, they’ve used Tanzhe as a hospital, they’ve forced the monks to leave Tanzhe, and they’ve even forced the monks to alter their message to fit their government. While these rulers and regimes have come and gone, the Tanzhe Temple, its Buddhist monks, and their message of peace and contentment continue to endure.

Work Cited

Yang, Fenggang. *Religion in China: Survival and Revival Under Communist*

Rule:

Survival and Revival Under Communist Rule. Oxford Scholarship Online,
2011. Web. 13 April 2016.

Katz, Paul R.. *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate*. Waltham, US: Brandeis, 2014.

ProQuest ebrary. Web. 13 April 2016.

Hsü, Immanuel C. Y. *The Rise of Modern China*. New York: Oxford University
Press,

1970. Print.

张云涛. *潭柘寺碑记*. 北京: 中国文史出版社, 2010. Print.

门头沟区档案史志局. *潭柘寺戒台寺*. 北京. 门头沟区档案史志局, 2006.

Print.

许晓正. “历史直击: 清末民初的庙产兴学风潮与僧界保寺运动.”

Fo.ifeng.com. 凤凰佛教, 19 Jun. 2015. Web. 7 Dec. 2016.

黄运喜. *民国时期寺庙管理法规的剖析*. 普世社会科学研究网, 2014. Web. 7

Dec. 2016.

张之洞. *张之洞劝学篇*. Douban. Douban, 7 July 2008. Web. 7 Dec. 2016.

王冠. “中国佛教界在抗日战争中所发挥的积极作用.” *bodhi.takunngpao.com*.

大公佛教, 2 Sept. 2015. Web. 7 Dec. 2016.

王雷泉. “对中国近代两次庙产兴学风潮的反思.” *显密文库*.

Read.goodweb.cn, n.d. Web. 7 Dec. 2016.

Johnson, Ian. "China Gets Religion." ChinaFile. *chinafile.com*, 33 Dec, 2011.

Web. 7 Dec 2016.

方剑. Personal interviews. 12 Jun. 2016

仁芳. Personal interviews. 12 Jun. 2016

周金山. Personal interviews. 13 Jun. 2016