

AJ Andrea, JH Overfield

The Human Record 3rd ed
vol I

286 Continuity, Change, and Interchange

Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1998

assistant, the Bodhisattva Guanyin, who reigned as the goddess of mercy (Chapter 6, sources 46 and 47). Moreover, Buddhism increasingly merged with folk magic, Daoism, and Confucianism to become part of a uniquely Chinese religious complex.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How does Han Yu imply that emperors who have espoused Buddhism have lost the Mandate of Heaven (Chapter 1, source 5)?
2. What aspect of Buddhism most repels Han Yu?
3. In Han Yu's mind, what are the social, cultural, and political dangers of Buddhism?
4. Exactly what does the imperial proclamation command, and what does it *not* say? For example: Does the proclamation suppress only Buddhist monasteries? Does it forbid people to believe in foreign religions? Does it order the persecution of any individuals?
5. On what ideological basis does it order the suppression of monasteries and temples? Is there any evidence to suggest that maybe there were also political and economic reasons for closing down and confiscating these establishments? Please explain your answer.
6. Is there any evidence to suggest that the person who drafted the imperial proclamation had read or been influenced by Han Yu's *Memorial*? Again, please explain your answer.

MEMORIAL ON BUDDHISM

Your servant submits that Buddhism is but one of the practices of barbarians which has filtered into China since the Later Han. In ancient times there was no such thing. . . . In those times the empire was at peace, and the people, contented and happy, lived out their full complement of years. . . . The Buddhist doctrine had still not reached China, so this could not have been the result of serving the Buddha.

The Buddhist doctrine first appeared in the time of the Emperor Ming¹ of the Han Dynasty, and the Emperor Ming was a scant eighteen years on the throne. Afterwards followed a succession of disorders and revolutions, when dynasties did

not long endure. From the time of the dynasties Song, Qi, Liang, Chen, and Wei,² as they grew more zealous in the service of the Buddha, the reigns of kings became shorter. There was only the Emperor Wu of the Liang who was on the throne for forty-eight years. First and last, he thrice abandoned the world and dedicated himself to the service of the Buddha. He refused to use animals in the sacrifices in his own ancestral temple. His single meal a day was limited to fruits and vegetables. In the end he was driven out and died of hunger. His dynasty likewise came to an untimely end. In serving the Buddha he was seeking good fortune, but the disaster

¹Han Mingdi (58–75 C.E.).

²Five fairly short-lived dynasties of the troubled fourth through sixth centuries. The next document also mentions the Song, Qi, and Liang Dynasties. (See Chapter 5, source

41 for additional information on the Northern Wei Dynasty's patronage of Buddhism.) The Wei, who were foreign conquerors, apparently used Buddhism's universal message as an ideological buttress for their rule.

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that overtook him was only the greater. Viewed in the light of this, it is obvious that the Buddha is not worth serving.

When Gaozu³ first succeeded to the throne of the Sui,⁴ he planned to do away with Buddhism, but his ministers and advisors were short-sighted men incapable of any real understanding of the Way of the Former Kings, or of what is fitting for past and present; they were unable to apply the Emperor's ideas so as to remedy this evil, and the matter subsequently came to naught — many the times your servant has regretted it. I venture to consider that Your Imperial Majesty, shrewd and wise in peace and war, with divine wisdom and heroic courage, is without an equal through the centuries. When first you came to the throne, you would not permit laymen to become monks or nuns or Daoist priests,⁵ nor would you allow the founding of temples or cloisters. It constantly struck me that the intention of Gaozu was to be fulfilled by Your Majesty. Now even though it has not been possible to put it into effect immediately, it is surely not right to remove all restrictions and turn around and actively encourage them.

Now I hear that by Your Majesty's command a troupe of monks went to Fengxiang⁶ to get the Buddha-bone, and that you viewed it from a tower as it was carried into the Imperial Palace; also that you have ordered that it be received and honored in all the temples in turn. Although your servant⁷ is stupid, he cannot help knowing that Your Majesty is not misled by this Buddha, and that you do not perform these devotions to pray for good luck. But just because the harvest has been good and the people are happy, you are complying with the general desire by putting

on for the citizens of the capital this extraordinary spectacle which is nothing more than a sort of theatrical amusement. How could a sublime intelligence like yours consent to believe in this sort of thing?

But the people are stupid and ignorant; they are easily deceived and with difficulty enlightened. If they see Your Majesty behaving in this fashion, they are going to think you serve the Buddha in all sincerity. All will say, "The Emperor is wisest of all, and yet he is a sincere believer. What are we common people that we still should grudge our lives?" Burning heads and searing fingers by the tens and hundreds, throwing away their clothes and scattering their money, from morning to night emulating one another and fearing only to be last, old and young rush about, abandoning their work and place; and if restrictions are not immediately imposed, they will increasingly make the rounds of temples and some will inevitably cut off their arms and slice their flesh in the way of offerings. Thus to violate decency and draw the ridicule of the whole world is no light matter.

Now the Buddha was of barbarian origin. His language differed from Chinese speech; his clothes were of a different cut; his mouth did not pronounce the prescribed words of the Former Kings,⁸ his body was not clad in the garments prescribed by the Former Kings. He did not recognize the relationship between prince and subject, nor the sentiments of father and son. Let us suppose him to be living today, and that he come to court at the capital as an emissary of his country. Your Majesty would receive him courteously. But only one interview in the audience chamber, one banquet in his honor, one gift of

³Literally "high (or great) ancestor," an honorific title bestowed posthumously on several Chinese emperors. This high ancestor was Li Yuan (r. 618–626), the first Tang emperor (see source 69, note 3).

⁴The Sui Dynasty (581–618) reunited China in 589.

⁵By the second century C.E. a polytheistic Daoist Church, which practiced congregational worship, preached immortality, and utilized drugs and magic, had emerged as a significant force.

⁶A western city.

⁷Han Yu.

⁸The legendary Sage Emperors, who supposedly laid the basis of Chinese civilization before the rise of the Xia Dynasty (Chapter 1, source 5).

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clothing, and he would be escorted under guard to the border that he might not mislead the masses.

How much the less, now that he has long been dead, is it fitting that his decayed and rotten bone, his ill-omened and filthy remains, should be allowed to enter in the forbidden precincts of the Palace? Confucius said, "Respect ghosts and spirits, but keep away from them."⁹ The feudal lords of ancient times, when they went to pay a visit of condolence in their states, made it their practice to have exorcists go before with rush-brooms and peachwood branches to dispel unlucky influences. Only after such precautions did they make their visit of condolence. Now without reason you have taken up an unclean thing and examined it in person when no exorcist had gone before, when neither rush-broom nor peachwood branch had been employed. But your ministers did not speak of the wrong nor did the censors call attention to the impropriety; I am in truth ashamed of them. I pray that Your Majesty will turn this bone over to the officials that it may be cast into water or fire, cutting off for all time the root and so dispelling the suspicions of the empire and preventing the befuddlement of later generations. Thereby men may know in what manner a great sage acts who a million times surpasses ordinary men. Could this be anything but ground for prosperity? Could it be anything but a cause for rejoicing?

If the Buddha has supernatural power and can wreak harm and evil, may any blame or retribution fittingly fall on my person. Heaven be my witness: I will not regret it. Unbearably disturbed and with the utmost sincerity I respectfully present my petition that these things may be known.

Your servant is truly alarmed, truly afraid.

PROCLAMATION ORDERING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BUDDHIST MONASTERIES

We learn that there was no such thing as Buddhism prior to the Three Dynasties, i.e., Xia, Yin, and Zhou.¹⁰ After the dynasties of Han and Wei, the Image-Teaching¹¹ gradually began to flourish. And once established in that degenerate age, this strange custom prevailed far and wide, and now the people are soaked to the bone with it. Just now the national spirit begins to be spoiled unconsciously by it; and, leading the heart of the people astray, it has put the public in worse condition than ever. In the country — throughout the nine provinces, and among the mountains and fields as well as in both the capitals — the number of priests is daily increasing and the Buddhist temples are constantly winning support.

Wasting human labor in building, plundering the people's purse by golden decorations, neglecting both husband and wife by their vigil-keeping, no teaching is more harmful than this Buddhism. In breaking the laws of the country and injuring the people, none can surpass this Buddhism. Moreover, if a farmer neglects his field, many suffer the pangs of starvation from his negligence; if a woman neglects her silk-worm culture, many suffer the calamity of being frozen to death through her negligence. Now there are at present so many monks and nuns that to count them is almost impossible. They all depend on farming for their food, and upon silk-worms for their clothing!

"The public monasteries and temples, as well as private chapels and shrines, are innumerable; and all of them so gigantic and imposing that they vie with the Imperial Palace in splendor! In

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⁹From *The Analects*. (See Chapter 4, source 24, for similar Confucian aphorisms.)

¹⁰China's first three dynasties (Chapter 1, source 5). *Yin* is another name for the Late Shang Dynasty.

¹¹Buddhism, which used statues and paintings of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas for veneration and instruction.

Dynasties Jin (317–420 C.E.) and Song (420–476 C.E.), Qi (479–501 C.E.), and Liang (502–557 C.E.), the resources of this Empire were exhausted and the country gradually declined, while its manners and customs became flippant and insincere, solely because of this Buddhism.

"Our Imperial ancestor Taizong¹² put an end to confusion and disorder by his arms, and built up the glorious Middle Kingdom and governed his people by his accomplished learning and culture. The right of 'the pen' (i.e., peaceful rule or civic administration) and 'the sword' (i.e., war) belongs to the State, and they are the two weapons wherewith to govern the Empire. How dare the insignificant Teaching of the Western Lands compete with ours? During the periods of Zhenguan and Gaiyuan,¹³ things were bettered once for all, but the remnants were smouldering, and poverty began to grow bigger and wider and threatened to set the country ablaze!

"After closely examining the examples set by our Imperial predecessors, We have finally decided to put an end to such conspicuous evils. Do you, Our subjects at home and abroad, obey and conform to Our sincere will. If you send in a Memorial suggesting how to exterminate these evils which have beset Us for many Dynasties, We shall do all We can to carry out the plan. Know that We yield to none in fulfilling the

laws of Our predecessors and in trying to be helpful to Our people and beneficial to the public.

"Those 4,600 monasteries supported by the Government shall be confiscated and, at the same time, 260,500 nuns and priests shall return to the secular life so that they may be able to pay the taxes. We shall also confiscate 40,000 private temples with the fertile and good lands amounting to several tens of millions of acres; and emancipate 150,000 slaves and make them into free, tax-paying people. Examining into the teaching from the foreign lands in the Empire, We have discovered that there are over 3,000 monks from Daqin¹⁴ and Muhufu;¹⁵ and these monks also shall return to the lay life. They shall not mingle and interfere with the manners and customs of the Middle Kingdom.

"More than a hundred thousand idle, lazy people and busy bodies have been driven away, and numberless beautifully decorated useless temples have been completely swept away. Hereafter, purity of life shall rule Our people and simple and non-assertive rules prevail, and the people of all quarters shall bask in the sunshine of Our Imperial Influence. But this is only the beginning of the reforms. Let time be given for all, and let Our will be made known to every one of Our subjects lest the people misunderstand Our wish."

¹²See source 69.

¹³The official names of the reigns of Emperor Tang Taizong (r. 626–649) and Emperor Tang Xuanzong (r. 712–756), the dynasty's two greatest rulers.

¹⁴From Syria. A reference to Nestorian Christianity (see source 69).

¹⁵A reference to Zoroastrians from Persia (see Chapter 3, source 21).

Zen Buddhism in Japan



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Whereas Pure Land Buddhism's mass popularity survived Late Tang's assault on the Teaching of the Western Lands, *Chan* (meditation) Buddhism remained popular with the educated elite. Chan was introduced into China from India in the early sixth century. There it fused with Daoism to become a thoroughly sinicized Buddhist sect by the late seventh century. For Chan practitioners, meditation was not an avenue to insight; it *was* insight. Disdaining all learning and logic,