

REVIEW



Erik Schicketanz エリック・シッケタンツ, *Daraku to fukkō no kindai Chūkoku Bukkyō: Nihon Bukkyō to no kaikō to so no rekishizō no kōchiku* 墮落と復興の近代中国仏教—日本仏教との邂逅とその歴史像の構築 [Between Decline and Revival: Historical Discourse and Modern Chinese Buddhism's Encounter with Japan]

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THE NARRATIVE of decline and revival has dominated the discussion of modern Chinese Buddhism. There has been persistent scholarly effort to problematize this master narrative since Holmes Welch's seminal work *The Buddhist Revival in Modern China* (Harvard University Press, 1968). However, recently proposed alternatives such as Buddhist awakening or Buddhist expansionism often unwittingly reify it further (97). The central problem is that modern Buddhist communities themselves employed narratives such as the age of the dharma decline and revival quite extensively. Therefore, the thorny issue for scholars becomes the following: how to see beyond the emic narratives without dismissing the agency of the historical actors themselves?

Erik Schicketanz's monograph offers a fresh perspective to reexamine this research question. The key word in this monograph is *shūha* 宗派, commonly translated as "sect." By focusing on the shifting meaning of this term and its evolving relations with the decline and revival narratives, Schicketanz narrates an engaging story of how religious actors themselves took up various conceptions of sect and modified them to serve their own agenda. By tracing the rise and spread of this master narrative through the flow of people, texts, and ideas between China and Japan, Schicketanz successfully reveals to us the complex history of different Buddhist groups jockeying for social capital in different national and transnational contexts, who in the meanwhile transformed Chinese Buddhism.

Although sect as a term has a long history in Chinese Buddhism, modern travels between Japan and China engendered new nuances in the social function of sectarian consciousness. In chapter 1, Schicketanz traces the rise of the decline narrative by mining Meiji-era travel writings by Japanese Buddhists such as Mizuno Baigyō 水野梅暁 and D. T. Suzuki. Schicketanz argues that the sense of Chinese Buddhism in decline arose out of a dissonance between what Japanese travelers imagined and

what they encountered during their visits to China (25–26). He further illustrates that the Japanese imagination of Chinese Buddhism was grounded in Japanese sectarian consciousness, which presumed an independent and mutually exclusive institutional lineage. When these Meiji-era travelers arrived in China, what they encountered were Chinese Buddhist monasteries devastated by the Taiping Civil War (1850–1864). Because this war was inspired by Christian theology, the Buddhist establishment became the major target. However, in the eyes of Japanese travelers who did not understand this recent Chinese history, the ruins of temples, the dilapidated architecture, the lack of ancient Buddhist texts, and seemingly uneducated monks all became powerful symbols of Chinese Buddhism in decline. The formation of this image fundamentally changed Japanese Buddhist self-perception. Out of their prevailing disappointment arose a sense of mission: the mission of renewing Chinese Buddhism that must be undertaken by Japanese Buddhists who have preserved “true” Buddhism (52). The heightened Japanese nationalist superiority, the urgency to “resist” Western imperialism, and the Bodhisattva ideal all fueled this redefinition of Sino-Japanese relations, where Japanese Buddhists saw themselves as having the ineluctable responsibility to revive Chinese Buddhism. Schicketanz further reveals to us that for these Japanese Buddhists, “revival” meant to remake Chinese Buddhism in their own image. This was how the Japanese-institutionalized sectarian consciousness was superscribed onto the reality of China (70).

While Japanese travelers may have intensified this sense of Buddhist decline in China, the narrative itself certainly had its domestic origins. Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (1837–1911) was well known for his contribution to the Chinese Buddhist revival through importing lost Buddhist texts from Japan. However, Yang was not the only one who used this narrative of decline and revival. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both the reformists (such as Monk Taixu 太虛 and Monk Zongyang 宗仰) and the conservatives (such as Monk Yinguang 印光 and Monk Jing’an 敬安) offered their own analyses of decline and paths of revival. In chapter 2, Schicketanz examines various narratives advocated by Chinese Buddhists themselves. In particular, he articulates how the age of dharma decline became intertwined with the Chinese sense of national crisis (116). The birth of “Buddhist Learning for Administering this World” (經世弘學) was an outgrowth of this entanglement (123). Yang Wenhui, as a key figure in importing Japanese institutionalized sectarian consciousness, profoundly impacted ensuing Buddhist development in China (145).

Chapter 3 analyzes the complex power play centered around the revival narrative and sectarian consciousness. As demonstrated by Schicketanz, Japanese Buddhist scholars in the early twentieth century played a key role in reifying the institutionalized sectarian consciousness through their historical and philosophical studies of Chinese Buddhism. Thanks to the increasing popularity of Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy since the 1919 May Fourth Movement in China, Japanese Buddhology

became increasingly influential in Chinese Buddhist self-perception. Under the sway of Japanese scholarship, the traditional Chinese understanding of “sect” was gradually inflected by Japanese scholarly taxonomy (177). While the meaning of sect in premodern China can range loosely from doctrinal commitment to transmission lineage, during the Republican era, “sect” increasingly adopted the meaning of self-consistent doctrinal system and institutional independence (233). Schicketanz outlines the detailed contour of this nuanced shift, starting from Yang Wenhui’s 1913 introduction of Japanese monk Gyōnen’s 凝然 (1240–1321) writing on the eight sects of Chinese Buddhism and its later adoption by both leading Buddhist practitioners such as Monk Taixu (1890–1947) and secular scholars of Buddhism such as Tang Yongtong 湯用彤 (1893–1964). Closely related to this new interpretation of sect was the image of a complete Buddhism that included all mutually independent sects. While the actual number of sects in a classification system varied, with eight, ten, and thirteen sects among the most popular, the idea of reviving all Buddhist sects became a powerful rallying point (181, 226). More importantly, despite the Chinese Buddhists’ adoption of this new sectarian consciousness, what comes through strongly in Schicketanz’s monograph is their conviction of renewing Buddhism through their own endeavor.

Chapter 4 offers a case study of how this new sectarian consciousness contributed to the reverse importation of Japanese esoteric Buddhism from the 1920s to the 1940s. This case study focuses on Wang Hongyuan 王弘願 (1876–1937) and his Association for the Revival of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism (震旦密教重興會). Due to the imported conception of complete Buddhism as containing all sects, the lack of an esoteric sect in China caught the attention of many Buddhist revivalists. The reverse importation of Japanese esoteric sects was only one branch of the wide-ranging effort of filling this perceived lacuna. Other experiments included Sino-Tibetan and Sino-Mongolian Buddhist exchange. Wang Hongyuan was not the only one hoping to introduce the Japanese esoteric tradition back to China. Yang Wenhui’s followers Gui Baihua 桂柏華 and Mei Guanxi 梅光羲 also studied Japanese esoteric Buddhism. Similarly, the father of Humanistic Buddhism, Monk Taixu, also hoped to import Japanese esoteric Buddhism in order to revive Chinese Buddhism. There were also a wide range of translations and other textual productions devoted to this effort (268). In 1924, Wang Hongyuan invited Japanese Shingon master Gonda Raifu 權田雷斧 (1847–1934) to China and received consecration (Skt. *abhiṣeka*; Ch. 灌頂) from Gonda. Afterwards, Wang established his association in Chaozhou 潮州, Guangdong 廣東, promoting Shingon teachings. While Gonda’s doctrine of attaining Buddhahood in this very body influenced Wang’s thought, it is also undeniable that Wang further developed this concept to adapt to Chinese reality. In particular, Wang broadened this concept to include children, females, and animals, claiming that all could attain Buddhahood irrelevant of the particularities of one’s body (295). This broadening was meant to make esoteric Buddhism

a natural source of social equality. This reframing of esoteric Buddhism as socially progressive was not unique. It echoed Taixu's effort to justify the existence of Buddhist monasticism based on its contribution to social progress (299). Both Schicketanz's historical analysis and case study demonstrate a consistent sensitivity to the religious actors' agency in selecting, adopting, and further developing imported ideas and practices.

While a skeleton version of both chapters 3 and 4 was published previously, one in an edited volume and the other as a journal article, it is essential to read the book chapters themselves. In these chapters, Schicketanz provides careful translations of representative texts written by historical actors themselves and analyzes the complex interrelations among various texts, ideas, and activities. Therefore, these chapters provide crucial information to aid the readers' understanding of the rich dynamics, lived experiences, and surprising twists and turns in the ways that these actors took up imported concepts and narratives. In addition to thorough investigations of a wide range of Japanese and Chinese primary materials, this monograph also skillfully integrates secondary literature from Chinese, Japanese, and English academia. At the same time, this historical study also carefully integrates doctrinal analysis when necessary. Scholars interested in historical and religious change in modern East Asia would benefit a lot from this monograph.

This study also raises further research questions. While new forms of esoteric Buddhism were boosted by this imported sectarian consciousness, whether and how other Buddhist schools such as the Pure Land, Chan, Vinaya, and Huayan 華嚴 schools benefitted from this institutionalization of sectarian consciousness warrants further study. Further research questions include: How has this concept intersected with the nonsectarian movements in Republican China (239)? And how has it intersected with other emic narratives such as Humanistic Buddhism or the later development of socially-engaged Buddhism? These questions certainly could not be answered by one monograph. This study has opened further research venues to understand socioreligious changes in modern East Asia beyond narratives of decline and revival.

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