

Buddhist Revival in China: Values of the Development of Mount Wutai

by

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Abstract

In China, the Chinese Communist Party (中國共產黨 CCP) has created a complicated administrative system to control religion. The CCP severely regulated and almost eradicated a number of religious groups during the Cultural Revolution (文化大革命). In the early 1980s, however, religion was allowed to slowly revive under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平). The CCP adopted a series of moderate policies on religious affairs and began to exploit the secular values of religion, including Buddhism and Buddhist sacred sites, to serve the Party-state. This thesis explores the Chinese government's approach to the management of religion through the case of Mount Wutai (五臺山), a traditional Buddhist sacred mountain in China. Historically Mount Wutai was an important site for Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhists. Today the Buddhist monasteries are the site of active religious communities, but Mount Wutai also is a UNESCO World Heritage site and a destination for tourists. The thesis explores the ways that Mount Wutai has developed since 1980s under the influence of both Buddhist revivalism and politically-motivated secularization.¹ The thesis demonstrates that the political environment has changed precisely because the government now recognizes Mount Wutai's secular values, and investigates the development of Mount Wutai in light of its economic and political values to the government, the local community, and the local Buddhist community.

Keywords: Mount Wutai, Secularization of religion, Revival of Buddhism, Religious tourism, China

¹ I will use Mount Wutai as the English translation for 五臺山 in this thesis. Scholars have used other translations, including Wutaishan, Wutai Shan, Wu-t'ai Shan, and Mount Wu-t'ai. In addition, Mount Wutai in this thesis particularly refers to the Mount Wutai National Park (五臺山風景名勝區).

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Chunyu Zhang. This research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, under the project name “The Development of Mount Wutai and Its New Meanings to the Local Community and the Society under the Control of the Chinese Community Party,” No. Pro00055079, 3/30/2015.

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² In this thesis, I use “Buddhist practitioners” to describe the assemblage of Buddhist monks and nuns as well as Tibetan Buddhist lamas.

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Introduction

However much fighting there is in the world, however much darkness there is, we must be able to serve as small lamps in that darkness.

---His Holiness the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje, 2009

In this thesis, I examine the secularization of religion under the policies of the Chinese Communist Party (中國共產黨 CCP) in contemporary China. Secularization has influenced the current revival of Buddhism extensively. I use the example of the development of Mount Wutai (五臺山), which is both a famous Buddhist mountain, and a sacred pilgrimage center for Buddhists. Mount Wutai is the second-largest Buddhist center in China, and the site for almost one hundred Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist monasteries. As a sacred religious site for Buddhist practice, however, Mount Wutai's religious importance was weakened during the process of secularization, and its secular values are utilized to serve the CCP.

In China, we often find a difference between theory and reality in the implementation of policy and the day-to-day functioning of the management system. I argue that Mount Wutai is an excellent example to illustrate how the CCP carries out its religious policies. I also explore the development of this Buddhist site under the influence of secularization. Instead of focusing on heritage management, however, I am interested in exploring Mount Wutai as a living Buddhist sacred site, and focus on the revival of Buddhism at this site. The political environment for Buddhism at Mount Wutai has improved during the current political climate. Moreover, Mount Wutai, as an influential Buddhist sacred site, has secular value that the Chinese government views as worthy of developing, not only because the management of Mount Wutai is profitable, but also because the CCP thinks that Buddhism has potential political value. In particular, both

Chinese and Tibetan Buddhists revere Mount Wutai and visit the mountain on pilgrimages, raising hopes that Mount Wutai's revival may promote social cohesion with Tibet.

Secularization of Religion

According to anthropologist Clifford Geertz,

[A] religion is: (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (Geertz 1973: 90).

As a concept that developed from European Christianity, however, “there cannot be a universal definition of religion, not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes” (Asad 1993: 29). Importantly, “socially identifiable forms, preconditions, and effects of what was regarded as religion in the medieval Christian epoch were quite different from those so considered in modern society” (Asad 1993: 29).

Today, scholars have applied the concept of religion to non-Western cultures. In China, Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism are regarded as religions. Nevertheless, “while [these ‘religions’] have existed as major traditions for a very long period, they were not ‘isms’ or ‘religions’ in the modern sense” (Van de Veer 2014: 63). If we must understand the concept of religion differently in China then secularization, which also has its historical roots in the West and Christianity, cannot be understood in the same way either.

The original meaning of secularization refers to “the appropriation of religious properties by the secular state power” (Ji 2008: 235). In other words, religion loses its authority and significance in society due to the separation of church and state. In fact, there is a problem in secularism,

namely “its entrenched Eurocentrism” (Ji 2008: 234). In *Secularization as Religious Restructuring: Statist Institutionalization of Chinese Buddhism and its Paradoxes*, Zhe Ji (2008) points out,

[L]ike the classical theory of secularization, which is principally based on the experiences of European Christianity since the Enlightenment, these new secularization theories are fundamentally conceived in and for the Christian West. That is to say, they remain essentially concerned with Western models of religious change, such as the separation between church and state, the distinction between public and the private spheres, and the tension between religious institutions and individualism. They do not account for situations where there is no “church” to speak of or no received separation between public and private, nor do they address the possibility that, in some places in the world, modernity and secularization might produce a new kind of institutionalization, rather than deinstitutionalization or privatization of religion (Ji 2008: 234).

Compared to Christianity in Europe, “for Buddhism in Communist China, secularization essentially meant *étatization* or politicization. That is to say, the human, material, and spiritual resources of Buddhism were controlled, appropriated, and used by the secular party-state according to its ideology and for its own political purposes” (Ji 2008: 239). Therefore, the classic secularization theory of state-and-church is not appropriate to adopt in this thesis. In my view, I agree with Ji’s argument that secularization is politicization in Communist China rather than deinstitutionalization or privatization, and I focus on the relationship between religion and the secular party-state during the process of secularization.

I view the secularization of religion in China under the CCP as a process by which the state simultaneously institutionalizes and restricts religious groups. In this case, the revival of Buddhism and development of Mount Wutai can be considered the result of secularization where the government explores the secular value of a Buddhist sacred site in order to benefit the secular state. My questions are: How do an atheistic political party and a secular government control religion along with religious site? How did the CCP secularize religion in past decades? And how can a famous Buddhist sacred site contribute to the secular state in different aspects?

Mount Wutai

Geographically, Mount Wutai extends across Shanxi Province (山西省) and Hebei Province (河北省), including Wutai County (五臺縣), Fanshi County (繁峙縣), Dai County (代縣), Yuanping City (原平市), Dingxiang County (定襄縣), and Fuping County (阜平縣), but it is largely situated in Wutai County, Xinzhou City (忻州市), in northeastern Shanxi Province, 230 km away from Taiyuan City (太原市), the capital city of Shanxi Province. In China, there are four Buddhist sacred mountains: Mount Wutai in Shanxi Province, Mount Putuo (普陀山) in Zhejiang Province (浙江省), Mount Emei (峨眉山) in Sichuan Province (四川省), and Mount Jiuhua (九華山) in Anhui Province (安徽省). Among these four sacred mountains, Mount Wutai is the most important. The importance of Mount Wutai in Buddhism can be traced back to several Buddhist scriptures, such as *Avatamsaka Sutra* (《華嚴經》), which notes that Mount Wutai is the home to Bodhisattva Manjusri (文殊菩薩).³ As a result, Mount Wutai became a popular pilgrimage center for Buddhists from Tibet, Mongolia and other parts of Asia. Mount Wutai served not only as a site for cultural exchange, but more importantly as a bridge that connects the Central Government with Tibetans and Mongols during the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD).

Shanxi is an inland province, which is located on the Loess Plateau in northern region of People's Republic of China (Figure 1). The Yellow River (黃河) and Taihang Mountains (太行山) form the western and eastern border of Shanxi with Shaanxi (陝西) and Hebei, respectively.

³ Guillements (《》) are used to indicate a book or album title in Chinese. I will use guillements to indicate Chinese book titles in the thesis.

Shanxi also shares the border with Inner Mongolia (內蒙古) on the north and Henan (河南) on the south.

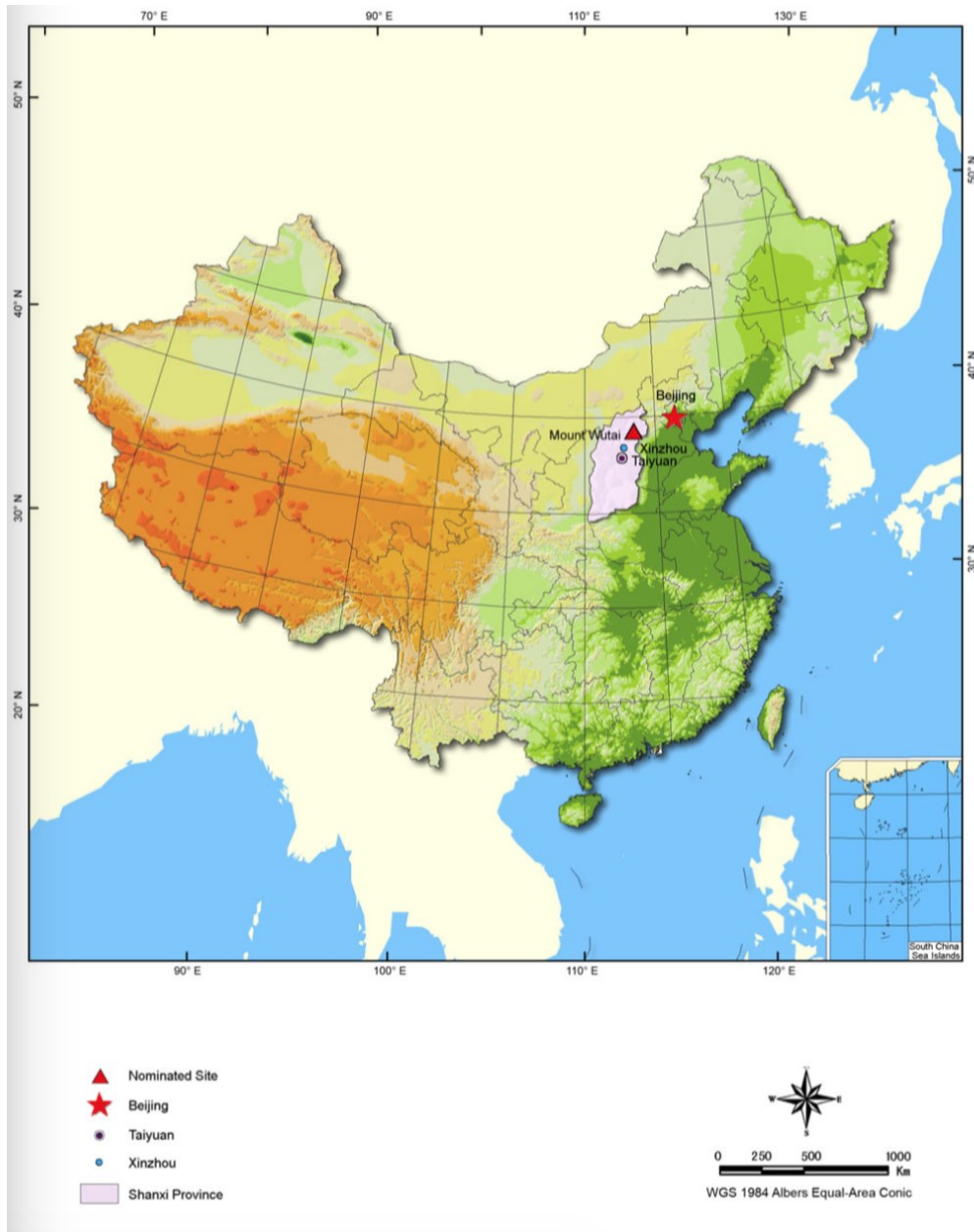


Figure 1: A map of Shanxi (UNESCO Nomination File 2009: 4)

Shanxi literally means “West of the Mountains,” which refers to Shanxi’s location west of the Taihang Mountains. The abbreviation of Shanxi is *Jin* (晉), because the most of Shanxi was historically under the control of the state of Jin (晉國), a major state of the Zhou dynasty

(1046-255 BC). Jin was one of the most powerful states during the Spring and Autumn period (春秋時代) (770-403 BC). It split into three different states in 403 BC.

During the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589 AD), Pingcheng (平城), which is the present Datong (大同), second-largest city of Shanxi, was the capital of the Northern Wei (386-535 AD) from 398 AD to 493 AD. Meanwhile, Mount Wutai served as a Buddhist center and enjoyed its earliest prosperity under the Northern Wei.

During the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD), Shanxi became an influential region and it had a special relation with the royal family since the Tang Empire originated from Jinyang (晉陽 present-day Taiyuan). In addition, the Emperor Wu Zetian (武則天), the only female ruler in the history of China with the title of emperor, revered Buddhism. Under such circumstances, Mount Wutai entered a period of extensive development.

Shanxi became an important region during the period of Mongol rule, the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368 AD). The Yuan Empire divided China into eleven regular provinces and the Central Region. The Central Region made up of Shanxi, Shandong (山東), Hebei, and part of Inner Mongolia and Henan. During the Yuan dynasty, not only did the Mongol rulers convert to Tibetan Buddhism, but also Tibetan Buddhism emerged at Mount Wutai for the first time.

Shanxi obtained its current name and became a regular province during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 AD). During the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD), Shanxi remained as a regular province and was close to the capital of the Qing dynasty, Beijing (北京). Hence, Mount Wutai became a pilgrimage center for the Manchu emperors, who had a strong connection with Tibetan Buddhism. Moreover, Tibetan Buddhism replaced the dominant position of Chinese Buddhism at Mount Wutai. The Manchu emperors gave Tibetan lamas the authority in terms of the

management of religious affairs at Mount Wutai. The development of Tibetan Buddhism at Mount Wutai brought another period of prosperity to Mount Wutai.

In 2013, according to the *Shanxi Statistical Yearbook 2014*, the resident population of Shanxi was 36,298,000.⁴ The majority population is Han Chinese, and minority ethnic groups such as Hui, Manchu as well as Mongol only comprise a small percentage of the total population.⁵

In Shanxi, the language spoken besides Mandarin in most regions is *Jinyu* (晉語), which is sometimes called Shanxinese (山西話). Some linguists propose that *Jinyu* is as different from Mandarin as Cantonese or the Wu dialect of Shanghai. *Jinyu* is also spoken over central Inner Mongolia such as Hohhot (呼和浩特) and Baotou (包頭), part of Hebei such as Zhangjiakou (張家口), Henan such as Jiaozuo (焦作), and Shaanxi such as Yulin (榆林). Three UNESCO world heritage sites are located in Shanxi, including the Ancient City of Ping Yao (平遙古城), the Yungang Grottoes (雲岡石窟), and Mount Wutai.

On the Study of Religion and Revival in Modern China

In China, scholarly research on contemporary religious issue is still a relatively sensitive subject due to the connection with “social stability and government policy” (Yang 2005: 34). Although academic freedom has not yet been fully achieved in this field, the situation has improved over the last few decades. In previous decades, “scholarly research on religion completely ceased to exist, the few scholars who had written about religion in the past were muted, and many of them suffered physical and psychological tortures” (Yang 2005: 23).

⁴ Shanxi Statistical Yearbook 2014 <http://www.stats-sx.gov.cn/tjsj/tjnj/nj2014/html/njcx.htm>.

⁵ <http://www.shanxizjj.gov.cn/newShow/134.html>

Recent scholarship on Chinese religion documents how religion has shaped Chinese society and how Chinese society has shaped religion. Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer (2011)'s work, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, in particular provides a comprehensive overview of religion in China since the late Qing dynasty that gives insight into the relations between religion and the state under the CCP's control.

Two remarkable scholars in the sociology of religion, Zhe Ji and Fenggang Yang focus on religious issues in contemporary China, have been providing new insights on this subject. Zhe Ji, who is trained in sociology with a focus on Chinese Buddhism, now is a professor at Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (Inalco) in France. One of Ji's interests is the revivalism of Chinese Buddhism in contemporary China. As Ji (2008) argues in *Secularization as Religious Restructuring: Statist Institutionalization of Chinese Buddhism and Its Paradoxes*, secularization in China is a process of social restructuring and a way to keep religion under the state control. Meanwhile, statist institutionalization resulted in three current paradoxes in the relationship between the state and Chinese Buddhism. "First, the ambivalent role of the Buddhist Association of China: between state agency and church... Second, this-worldly Buddhism: from secularized theology to legitimating discourse... Third, the dilemma of state regulation of religion: state corporatism in a reopened field" (Ji 2008: 250, 253, 256).

Ji (2011) once again discusses the secularization of religion in China in *Buddhism in the Reform Era: A secularized Revival*, in which he explores Buddhist revival in a secularized Chinese society. In Ji's view, Chinese Buddhism has revived and even flourished in China, but the Chinese government has modified religion to become more secular, which influences Buddhism itself. Ji's other work (2013), *Chinese Buddhism as a Social Force: Reality and Potential of Thirty Years of Revival*, examines the current situation of Chinese Buddhism revival

after over three decades by measuring the number of lay Buddhists, Buddhist practitioners, and Buddhist monasteries. Moreover, Ji observes the role of Chinese Buddhism as a social force that has an impact on the state, Chinese people, and Chinese society.

Fenggang Yang is a sociologist who is currently teaching at Purdue University in the United States. Unlike Ji, who is interested in Chinese Buddhism, Yang's research is mostly related to Christianity in China. Yang also studies religious change and the relationship between religion and the economy in China. In *Between Secularist Ideology and Desecularizing Reality: the Birth and Growth of Religious Research in Communist China*, Yang views a change of the relations between religion and the state in China since the 1980s, which directly contributes to the development of religious research in China "from nonexistence to a growing, self-sustaining discipline" based on "its own dynamics" (Yang 2005: 36). Religious revival is associated with China's transformation to a market economy, all of which creates space for religious practice and the potential for the development of religion, as Yang (2011) notes in *Market Economy and the Revival of Religions*.

Both Ji and Yang argue that the revival of religion in China has a connection to secularization. In other words, the party-state utilizes religion to achieve economic and political purposes in order to serve the secular state. Ji's (2011) arguments are the most compelling ones among others regarding the explanation of the revival of Buddhism in China. Ji observes the relationship between the revival of Buddhism and the economic benefits as following:

[T]he authoritarian, atheist party-state is undoubtedly the most formidable obstacle for Buddhism's revival. However, the effect of recent state interventions in the Buddhist enterprise has not always been oppressive, but has also been occasionally constructive. Perhaps the most striking example of this constructive contribution has been the role of local governments in supporting, initiating, and even imposing the building or rebuilding of Buddhist sites, a phenomenon which has grown significantly since the 1990s. To be sure, the CCP has no intention of converting itself to Buddhism. What interests its local leaders in these rebuilding projects is not the development of

Buddhism, but the economic benefits that can be extracted from tourism to the Buddhist sites. Regardless of the local government's intentions, however, the reconstruction of temples through tourism has provided the *sangha* with a scope for the promotion of many of its religious activities (Ji 2011: 40).

Besides economic value, the revival of Buddhism in China also has political importance to the party-state. According to Ji,

[A]t the level of central government, the drama directed by the state on the stage built by Buddhism is not economic, but rather political. In fact, if Buddhism can survive the communist regime, one of the most important reasons will remain the central state's concern with its considerable influence in Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and other non-Han Chinese regions as well as in certain Asian countries, with whom China seeks to sustain or improve diplomatic ties (Ji 2011: 42).

Therefore, in Ji's view, "the economic utilization of Buddhism by local authorities accelerates the material reconstruction of the monasteries, the political utilization of Buddhism by the central government creates chances for Buddhism to be legally publicized" (Ji 2011: 44).

On the Study of Mount Wutai

Based on my knowledge, Mount Wutai as a living Buddhist sacred site in contemporary China has not been well studied by anthropologists. Scholars who have done studies on Mount Wutai hitherto have specialized in history, Buddhist studies and art history, all of which are more or less focused on a historical aspect. Zhengsen Cui, who is a co-founder of the Association of Mount Wutai Researches (五臺山研究會) in Shanxi, has made a great contribution to the study of Mount Wutai. One of his important works is *Wutaishan Fojaoshi* (《五臺山佛教史》), which sorts out the history of Buddhism at Mount Wutai area ranging from the beginning to the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD). One of his important arguments in this work is the date of the emergence of Buddhism at Mount Wutai area, which could be as early as the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420 AD).

Western scholars such as Robert Gimello (1992), Raoul Birnbaum (1986, 1989) and Mary Anne Cartelli (2004, 2013), have studied Mount Wutai with a focus on Chinese Buddhism, and their works have contributed to an understanding of the historical significance of Mount Wutai in Chinese Buddhism. Birnbaum is one of the earliest Western scholars who researches on Mount Wutai. In *The Manifestation of a Monastery: Shen-Ying's Experiences on Mount Wu-t'ai in T'ang Context*, Birnbaum (1986) discusses the tradition of Buddhism at Mount Wutai and the practice of Buddhism in the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD) based on Shen-ying's experiences, which was recorded in Yanyi (延一)'s *Extended Records of Mount Clear-and-Cool* (《廣清涼山傳》).⁶ In Birnbaum's view, religion in China has a long history of connection with nature, particularly with mountains. As Birnbaum points out:

[T]he religious life of medieval China was closely tied to the natural world. In this context, mountain traditions were fundamental. Many peaks gained reputations as potent outcroppings imbued with numinous force, and among such peaks several became known as the specific seats of manifestation of exalted deities. The mountains became centers for spiritual studies and practice, as well as sites to which intrepid practitioners would journey in quests for visions...For Buddhists in T'ang China, no natural site was more sacred than the numinous precincts of Mount Wu-t'ai 五臺山 (Five Terrace Mountain), the earthly home of Manjusri Bodhisattva (Birnbaum 1986: 199).

In fact, mountain traditions still play an important role in contemporary Chinese Buddhism.

Scholars in art history also have studied Mount Wutai. Wen-shing Chou (2007, 2011), who is currently teaching at Hunter College in New York, has focused Mount Wutai on religious vision and religious map. In Chou's (2011) dissertation, *The Visionary Landscape of Wutai Shan in Tibetan Buddhism from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century*, Chou takes into account the concept of visual imagination to explore the culture of Tibetan Buddhism at Mount Wutai during

⁶ Shen-ying (神英), who was a learned Buddhist master during the Tang dynasty, made his pilgrimage to Mount Wutai from Mount Heng (衡山), and later founded Fahua Yuan (法華院) at Mount Wutai.

the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD), in a period in which Mount Wutai became an important sacred site for Tibetan Buddhists from Tibet and Mongolia.

I obtained the government published *Records of Wutai Mountain* (《五臺山志》), which is a digest of historical sources relating to Mount Wutai that I draw on in Chapters One to Four. As background for my analysis of Chinese government policy on religious management, I draw on a book that the government published *A Collection of Policies, Laws and Regulations on Religious Affairs* (《宗教政策法規文件選編》). I also refer to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China 1982, and Mount Wutai's UNESCO nomination file, both of which the government published on websites.

Although anthropological studies are few, an American anthropologist, Robert Shepherd, conducted ethnographic research at Mount Wutai. In *Faith in Heritage: Displacement, Development, and Religious Tourism in Contemporary China* (2013), Shepherd used Mount Wutai as an example of both a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a national park to explore the heritage management and preservation in contemporary China. As Shepherd observes, there is a tension between UNESCO's framework of heritage management and preservation and China's understanding on this matter.

Methodology

This thesis makes use of both ethnographic fieldwork and literature reviews. Regarding literature reviews, the source includes works of Western scholars and Chinese scholars, government-published books, and Mount Wutai's UNESCO nomination file.

Although I have been through secular education with a strong focus of atheism in China, I learned knowledge of religion and Buddhism in university in Canada. As a Chinese, I have

advantages to certain degree in terms of fieldwork preparation. First, I speak both Mandarin and Shanxinese, which helped me to communicate with different groups of people at Mount Wutai. Second, I had visited Mount Wutai for several times before fieldwork, so I was familiar with local environment. Third, I am from Shanxi, which means that local residents at Mount Wutai and I have cultural background in common to some degree. More importantly, my Shanxi identity helped me to build relationship with local residents. Fourth, a friend of mine had introduced me to Venerable Master Lobsang Dorje before I conducted the fieldwork.

I carried out my fieldwork at Mount Wutai from April 13, 2015 to April 27, 2015. My participation-observation was mainly in Luohou Monastery (羅喉寺), where Venerable Master Lobsang Dorje generously provided me with accommodation. He also allowed me to have daily meals with lamas in the monastery. I participated in *zaoke* (早課), which starts from five to six thirty every day in the morning. Sometimes lamas of Luohou Monastery allowed me to observe rituals and ceremonies, but they did not allow me to take notes. In July 2015, I returned to Mount Wutai for a week (July 27-August 2) and attended an international conference on studies of Mount Wutai.

During the period of my fieldwork at Mount Wutai, I conducted interviews and had casual conversations with visitors, local residents, local officials, and local Buddhist practitioners as well as Buddhist pilgrims who come from other regions of China or other countries. I took pictures at monasteries after I obtained permission from supervisory Buddhist practitioners, and also photographed the landscape of Mount Wutai.

I visited Mount Wutai's major Buddhist monasteries, including both Tibetan Buddhist ones and Chinese Buddhist ones. Tibetan Buddhist monasteries that I visited include Luohou Monastery, Pusa Ding (菩薩頂), Guangren Monastery (廣仁寺 also known as Shifang Tang 十

方堂), Wanfo Ge (萬佛閣 also known as *Wuyemiao* 五爺廟), Zhenhai Monastery (鎮海寺), Qixian Monastery (棲賢寺 also known as Guanyin Cave 觀音洞), and a retreat cave.

Regarding Chinese Buddhist monasteries, I visited Xiantong Monastery (顯通寺), Tayuan Monastery (塔院寺), Shuxiang Monastery (殊像寺), Bishan Monastery (碧山寺 also known as *Guangjimaopeng* 廣濟茅棚), Dailuo Ding (黛螺頂), Jifu Monastery (集福寺), Fenglin Monastery (鳳林寺), Puhua Monastery (普化寺), Wenshu Cave (文殊洞), Baohua Monastery (寶華寺), and Zhulin Monastery (竹林寺).

Although I went to many monasteries, I found that only a few Buddhist practitioners were willing to talk to me, and most of them declined my interview requests and asked me to verify my identity. Local residents also wanted to know who I was and became willing to talk after I told them that I was from Taiyuan, Shanxi. However, they became cautious after they heard that I studied in Canada. I realized that it is hard to do fieldwork at Mount Wutai without a letter from the local government to prove my identity and the purpose of my research. In addition, Buddhist practitioners were not willing to accept the interview without the permission from the abbot. However, abbots are normally busy with all kinds of affairs and are not easy to access without the connection. For example, the abbot of Bishan Monastery and the abbot of Dailuo Ding were attending the meeting in Beijing. The abbot of Baohua Monastery was on his trip to Guangzhou (廣州). Most importantly, a large number of interviewees, including both Buddhist practitioners and local residents, did not want me to record the interview, even though they were willing to talk to me.

Overview

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter One is a brief historical introduction to Buddhism at Mount Wutai from the beginning (68 AD) to 1949. Mount Wutai, as a sacred Buddhist pilgrimage center, is home to numerous Tibetan Buddhist and Chinese Buddhist monasteries. The history of the introduction of Buddhism to Mount Wutai can be traced back in the Han dynasty (68 AD), the year in which the Great Faith Numinous Vulture Monastery was built at Mount Wutai. Mount Wutai developed greatly during the Northern Wei (386-535 AD) and Tang dynasties (618-907 AD). Tibetan Buddhism was introduced to Mount Wutai during the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368 AD), and the development of Tibetan Buddhism reached its greatest level during the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD). In addition, I provide my observations of Buddhist practitioners' everyday lives at Mount Wutai in 2015.

Chapter Two discusses control of religion under the CCP in China from different aspects: (1) the CCP's ideological understanding of religion; (2) the policy of freedom of religious belief under the CCP; (3) the experience of religion under the CCP; (4) cultural memory and the Cultural Revolution; (5) the administrative institution of religious affairs; and (6) the management of religious affairs at Mount Wutai.

In Chapter Three, I examine the economic utilization of Mount Wutai that developed from religious tourism by the local government. The economic benefits of Mount Wutai's tourism include a great amount of cash income from admission fees for the local government. Meanwhile, the situation in the local economy has improved, since the service industries have grown as the consequence of increased levels of tourism. I also explore the motivations behind different types of visitors seeking to better understand what attracts them to Mount Wutai.

Chapter Four explores the political value of Mount Wutai to the secular state on a national level. First, Mount Wutai can serve as a bridge between the Central Government and Tibet, which reinforces social cohesion with Tibetans. Second, Mount Wutai plays a role in improving China's international relations. Chapter Four also discusses the Manchu court's patronage of Tibetan Buddhism and Mount Wutai, and the relationship of the Dalai Lama with Mount Wutai since the late 19th century. Chapter Five leads to a conclusion.

Chapter 1

A Brief History of Buddhism at Mount Wutai

According to Buddhist sutras, Mount Wutai was the home of the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, Manjusri. Volume 45 of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, for example, describes a mountain where Manjusri lives with his followers:⁷

[T]here is a place in the northeast named Mount Clear-and-Cool. From ancient times till the present, bodhisattva assemblies have dwelt there. At present, there is a bodhisattva named Manjusri who, together with his retinue and assembly of bodhisattvas numbering ten thousand persons, is always in its center, extensively preaching the Dharma (Birnbaum 1986: 124).

In ancient China, Mount Wutai was called Mount Clear-and Cool (清涼山). Therefore, Buddhists have used this source to prove the relation of Mount Wutai with Bodhisattva Manjusri in many contexts.

Another Buddhist sutra, 《佛說文殊師利法寶藏陀羅尼經》,⁸ which is translated as “*the Manjusri-dharma-ratnagarbha-dharani sutra*” (Cartelli 2004: 737) or “*the Scripture on the Dharani of Manjusri’s Precious Treasure of the Dharma*” (Birnbaum 1986: 124), is also considered to be evidence for a connection between Mount Wutai and Bodhisattva Manjusri. This sutra points out that “Sakyamuni Buddha declared after his death that Manjusri will go to a country named Mahacina, to a mountain called Pancasikha (Five Peak) to preach the Buddhist doctrine” (Cartelli 2004: 737). Raoul Birnbaum has translated the specific part of the sutra into English as following:

⁷ 大正新脩大藏經第十冊 No.279: 《華嚴經》卷第四十五《諸菩薩住處品第三十二》記: “東北方有處, 名: 清涼山, 從昔已來, 諸菩薩眾於中止住; 現有菩薩, 名: 文殊師利, 與其眷屬、諸菩薩眾一萬人俱, 常在其中而演說法”。

⁸ 大正新脩大藏經第二十冊 No. 1185A: 《佛說文殊師利法寶藏陀羅尼經》記: “我滅度後於此瞻部洲東北方。有國名大振那。其國中有山號曰五頂。文殊師利童子遊行居住。為諸眾生於中說法”。

[T]hen the Buddha told the bodhisattva Lord of the Vajra's Secret Traces: 'After my final passing, in this Rose Apple Continent in the northeast sector, there is a country named Maha Cina. In its center there is a mountain named Five Peaks. The youth Manjusri shall roam about and dwell there, preaching the Dharma in its center for the sake of all sentient beings (Birnbaum 1986: 124).

Mahacina is commonly understood as Greater China, and importantly, Mount Wutai literally means Mount Five-Peaks in Chinese. According to Wei-Cheng Lin, "Mount Wutai was only the first of four mountains recognized in premodern China as associated with specific Buddhist bodhisattvas, and the pattern by which it was built into a Buddhist sacred site became the model for the later three" (Lin 2014: 2).

Today Mount Wutai commonly refers to the present Mount Wutai National Park (五臺山風景名勝區). The park is centered at Taihuai Town (臺懷鎮), where some major Buddhist monasteries are located (Figure 2), and is surrounded by five flat-topped peaks: The Central Peak (*Cuiyan Feng* 翠岩峰), The Eastern Peak (*Wanghai Feng* 望海峰), The Southern Peak (*Jinxiu Feng* 錦繡峰), The Western Peak (*Guayue Feng* 掛月峰), and The Northern Peak (*Yedou Feng* 葉門峰). At 3061.1 meters, the Northern Peak has the distinction of being the highest mountain in northern China. Five Buddhist monasteries were built on five peaks in the Sui dynasty (581-618 AD) to worship five different incarnations of Manjusri, called five-orientation Manjusri (五方文殊). The area within the five flat-topped peaks is commonly known as the inner terrace (*tainei* 臺內), and the rest of Mount Wutai is called the outer terrace (*taiwai* 臺外).



Figure 2: Taihuai seen from Dailuo Ding

Mount Wutai is also a popular summer resort, and was formerly called Mount Clear-and-Cool. A number of Buddhist monasteries are situated along the valley in Taihuai Town. Taihuai Town is the most concentrated area of Buddhist monasteries, and is the center of the Mount Wutai National Park, and the center of Buddhist activities in the area (Hou 2003: 60).

Mount Wutai is an important pilgrimage destination for Tibetan Buddhists from Tibet and Mongolia. “Even today Wu-t’tai is nearly as much a center of Tibetan Buddhism as of Chinese Buddhism, this being evident not least in the great white Tibetan pagoda (*chorten*) that dominates the central valley and that has become the chief visual symbol of the entire complex” (Gimello 1992: 101). In fact, it is the only Buddhist site in China where Chinese Buddhist monasteries and Tibetan Buddhist monasteries coexist. Mount Wutai also is the second-largest

Buddhist center in China, while the Tibet Autonomous Region (西藏自治区 in Figure 3) is the largest.



Figure 3: A map of P.R. China (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_world-regional-geography-people-places-and-globalization/section_13/a84bc086764dac58a8c9c4467677ce79.jpg)

From the Beginning to 1949

Mount Wutai has been an influential Buddhist site for centuries. In addition, the reputation of Mount Wutai has spread to other regions in Asia. According to Wen-shing Chou, “fragments of historical documentation in Chinese, Japanese, Khotanese, Korean, Mongolian, and Tibetan enable us to imagine a vibrant international cult of Wutaishan since at least Eighth Century, when

Wutaishan pictures were brought back either as souvenirs or as surrogate pilgrimages for those who could not go to the site” (Chou 2007: 116).

Moreover, the evidence reveals that Mount Wutai once had a strong connection with political powers in Chinese dynasties. This connection is another factor that contributed to the development of Buddhism at Mount Wutai. For example, there were nine emperors in Chinese history that made in total eighteen pilgrimages to Mount Wutai (Zhou and Li 2007: 5), including Emperor Xiaowen of Northern Wei (北魏孝文帝), Emperor Yang of Sui (隋煬帝), Emperor Taizong of Song (宋太宗), Emperor Chengzong of Yuan (元成宗), Emperor Yingzong of Yuan (元英宗), the Kangxi Emperor (康熙皇帝), the Yongzheng Emperor (雍正皇帝), the Qianlong Emperor (乾隆皇帝), and the Jiaqing Emperor (嘉慶皇帝) (Zhou and Li 2007: 408). According to Zhengsen Cui, Emperor Chengzong of Yuan visited Mount Wutai in 1296 AD and Emperor Yingzong of Yuan traveled to Mount Wutai in June 1322 AD (Cui 2000: 543, 545).

Mount Wutai gained great eminence during the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD). The Manchus practiced Tibetan Buddhism, and the Manchu emperors often made the journey to Mount Wutai. During the Qing dynasty, the Kangxi Emperor visited Mount Wutai five times in February 1683 AD, September 1683 AD, March 1698 AD, February 1702 AD, and February 1710 AD. The Yongzheng Emperor accompanied his father the Kangxi Emperor to Mount Wutai in 1702 AD, while he was still a prince with the title of *beile* (貝勒). The Qianlong Emperor traveled to Mount Wutai six times in total in 1746 AD, 1750 AD, 1761 AD, 1781 AD, 1786 AD, and 1792 AD. The Qianlong Emperor’s son, the Jiaqing Emperor visited Mount Wutai in 1811 AD (Cui 2000: 711, 713, 714, 722, 723, 724, 730).

Mount Wutai was initially “a place of medicinal herbs and Daoist immortals in pre-Buddhist times” (Stevenson 1996: 207). Between Buddhist practitioners and scholars, there

is no agreement yet on the date when Buddhism was introduced to Mount Wutai. According to Zhencheng (鎮澄)'s *Qingliangshanzhi* (《清涼山志》), the 11th year of Yongping of the Eastern Han dynasty (68 AD) was the earliest date of introducing Buddhism to Mount Wutai. This version is the most common because of the influence of *Qingliangshanzhi* (Hou 2003: 2). Buddhists believe that the second Buddhist monastery in China, the Great Faith Numinous Vulture Monastery (大孚靈鷲寺), was built at Mount Wutai following the construction of Baima Monastery (白馬寺 White Horse Monastery) in Luoyang (洛陽), Henan.

This statement has also been adopted in the UNESCO Nomination File, which states that the Great Faith Numinous Vulture Monastery “was built under imperial order at the time Indian Buddhist masters Kashyapamtanga and Dharmaraksha [Dharmaratna] traveled to China to promote Buddhism at invitation of Liu Zhuang, Emperor Mingdi of the Han dynasty in 68 [AD]” (UNESCO Nomination File 2009: 52).⁹ Before traveling to China, Kashyapamtanga (迦葉摩騰) and Dharmaratna (竺法蘭) saw that Mount Wutai was home to the Bodhisattva Manjusri the supernatural power in India. Kashyapamtanga named the monastery as the Numinous Vulture Monastery after they made a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, because Kashyapamtanga declared that there was a peak at Mount Wutai that looked similar to the Numinous Vulture Peak in India. Emperor Ming of Han (漢明帝) added the phrase “Great Faith” in front of the name.¹⁰ Today the Great Faith Numinous Vulture Monastery is known as Xiantong Monastery (in Figure 4).

⁹ UNESCO Nomination File made a mistake here that using a wrong name for one of Indian Buddhist masters. According to *Qingliangshanzhi*, in the Han Dynasty, another Buddhist master came to China along with Kashyapamtanga (迦葉摩騰) was Dharmaratna (竺法蘭) rather than Dharmaraksha (竺法護). Dharmaraksha was a Buddhist monk and an early translator of Mahayana sutras into Chinese who lived in the period of the Western Jin (266 – 316 AD).

¹⁰ 《清涼山志》卷三《摩騰、法蘭傳》記，摩騰、法蘭“於永平十年丁卯十二月至洛陽”。“明年春，禮清涼山迴，奏帝建伽藍。騰以山形若印度靈鷲山，寺依山名也。帝復以始信佛化，乃加「大孚」，孚即信也。始度僧數十居之”。



Figure 4: Xiantong Monastery

Cui proposes, however, that the emergence of Buddhism at Mount Wutai area can be traced to the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420 AD) when Master Daoan (道安法師) introduced Buddhism to the region (Cui 2000: 88). According to Robert Shepherd, Mount Wutai “was transformed into a Buddhist site in the Fifth Century AD when the rulers of the Northern Wei dynasty ordered the construction of temples dedicated to the Bodhisattva Manjusri over the next fifteen centuries” (Shepherd 2013: 11). In addition, Robert Gimello argues, “there were Buddhist monasteries at Wu-t’ai as early as the Northern Wei dynasty” (Gimello 1992: 99).

Therefore, it is fair to conclude that Buddhism was introduced to Mount Wutai in the period of the Northern Wei dynasty (386-535 AD) at the latest. This version states that the Great Faith

Numinous Vulture Monastery was built under the Emperor Xiaowen's order rather than built by Indian master monks in the Han dynasty, and that the twelve subordinate monasteries of the Great Faith Numinous Vulture Monastery were also founded at the same time (Cui 2000: 122).

During the Northern Wei dynasty, Emperor Xiaowen strongly supported the development of Mount Wutai. Many monasteries founded during the Northern Wei dynasty were well preserved and became influential and prestigious monasteries in later ages, including Luohou Monastery and Zhenrong Yuan (真容院) which is present Pusa Ding.

In the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD), Mount Wutai formally became "a center of sacred pilgrimage" to Buddhist devotees after "the steady growth of Buddhism under the Northern Wei dynasty" (Stevenson 1996: 208). The religious importance of Mount Wutai as a Buddhist pilgrimage center was not only highly recognized within China but also in other parts of Asia. As the UNESCO Nomination File describes, "Mount Wutai became a worldly recognized sacred place for Buddhism equivalent to the Vulture Mountain of India" (UNESCO Nomination File 2009: 56).

In addition, some Buddhists held a theory that there were three periods of Buddha's teaching, and that "the period of the Final Dharma had begun, [which] lent an urgency to the medieval Chinese pilgrims' wish to experience the transformation and manifestation of the bodhisattva Manjusri on Mount Wutai" (Cartelli 2004: 735). Chinese Buddhist masters who followed different Buddhist schools came to Mount Wutai to build monasteries for preaching the Dharma. One of the most famous master monks was Master Chengguan (澄觀法師) who is commonly recognized as the 4th patriarch of the Huayan School (華嚴宗).

The Huayan School indeed has a special connection with Mount Wutai. This is because the Huayan School was based on *Avatamsaka Sutra*, which provides foundation to the belief of

Mount Wutai is the abode of Manjusri. As a result, the Huayan School became one of the primary Buddhist schools at Mount Wutai, and Mount Wutai served as a special sacred center for followers of the Huayan School (Cui 2000: 451). Meanwhile, the popularity of Manjusri worship steadily spread across the country during the Tang dynasty. For example, Manjusri became “a popular object of worship in the capital in Ch’ang-an for over a century” (Heine 2000: 149). During the Tang dynasty, Mount Wutai reached the second summit of development. There were around 360 Buddhist monasteries at Mount Wutai (Hou 2003: 2), among which were “seventy-two notable monasteries and temples functioning on the mountain, and several built with extensive support from imperial treasuries” (Birnbau 1986: 119).

In the Thirteenth Century AD, the Mongols took over the control of China and established the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368 AD) in China. During the Yuan dynasty, Tibetan Buddhism was formally introduced at Mount Wutai. The Tibetan Buddhist presence at Mount Wutai can be traced back as early as the arrival of Drogon Chogyal Phagpa (八思巴) in 1257 (Cui 2000: 540). Drogon Chogyal Phagpa was the 5th leader of the Sakya School (薩迦派) of Tibetan Buddhism and also was the guru of Kublai Khan (忽必烈), who was the ruler of the Mongol Empire and the emperor of the Yuan dynasty. Kublai Khan appointed Drogon Chogyal Phagpa as *guoshi* (國師) to take charge of national Buddhist affairs (Cui 2000: 563). The emergence of Tibetan Buddhism at Mount Wutai “transformed Wutai into a major pilgrimage destination for Mongolians and Tibetans” (Shepherd 2013: 69).

During the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 AD), Mount Wutai was tied closely to the great Tibetan Buddhist lamas, and the connection continuously promoted the development of Tibetan Buddhism at Mount Wutai. In 1403 AD, the Yongle Emperor (永樂大帝) invited the 5th Gyalwang Karmapa Deshin Shekpa (第五世噶瑪巴·德新謝巴), the head of the Kagyu School

(噶舉派) of Tibetan Buddhism, to Nanjing (南京), the capital of the Ming dynasty by that time. Deshin Shekpa went on a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai after he left Nanjing in 1407 AD, and he resided at Xiantong Monastery until April 1408 AD (Cui 2000: 622).

Another prestigious master of Tibetan Buddhism, Tsongkhapa (宗喀巴), was also associated with Mount Wutai. As the founder of the Geluk School (格魯派) of Tibetan Buddhism, Tsongkhapa was believed to be an incarnation of Bodhisattva Manjusri, and more notably, it is believed that Tsongkhapa “reformed Tibetan Buddhism through the ‘special methods’ he received from Manjusri” (Chou 2007: 115). In the light of the rapid-growth of Geluk School in Tibet, the Yongle Emperor decided to send a team of officials to invite Tsongkhapa to Nanjing. Although Tsongkhapa declined the request, he appointed one of his disciples, Shakya Yeshe (釋迦也失 also known as Jamchen Choje 大慈法王), to meet the emperor in Nanjing.

Shakya Yeshe arrived at Mount Wutai on his way to Nanjing in the spring of 1414 AD, and resided at Xiantong Monastery until the winter, while he finally left Mount Wutai for Nanjing. In 1415 AD, Shakya Yeshe returned to Mount Wutai from Nanjing and lived there for at least four years (1415-1419 AD) (Cui 2000: 622-23). Shakya Yeshe’s presence established the foundation for future development of the Geluk School at Mount Wutai. Mount Wutai developed into a unique Buddhist sacred center in China in which Chinese Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism coexisted at the same place.

During the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD), the Manchu emperors were mostly devotees of Tibetan Buddhism. Under the Kangxi Emperor’s orders, ten Chinese Buddhist monasteries at Mount Wutai were converted to Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in 1705 (Li, Ma and She 2013:

41).¹¹ The Qing dynasty pursued a relative conciliatory policy towards Mongols and Tibetans. Therefore, the Qing dynasty used Mount Wutai as a place to display imperial support for Tibetan Buddhism as a strategy to strengthen the unity of different ethnic groups and to unify the nation (Cui 2000: 734).

With the support from the Manchu emperors, including the Shunzhi Emperor (順治皇帝), the Kangxi Emperor, the Yongzheng Emperor, the Qianlong Emperor, and the Jiaqing Emperor, Mount Wutai once again had a great opportunity to grow (Cui 2000: 704). During the Qing dynasty, Tibetan Buddhism played a more significant role than Chinese Buddhism at Mount Wutai.

In 1659 AD, the Manchu court gave Tibetan Buddhists control of the major religious sites at Mount Wutai (Shepherd 2013: 70). The Manchu court sent the Jasah Lama (札薩克大喇嘛) to Mount Wutai to manage Buddhist affairs, and later, the Manchu court and the Dalai Lama (達賴喇嘛) jointly appointed Tibetan Buddhist lamas to manage Buddhist affairs at Mount Wutai.

The Manchu emperors appointed the Jasagh Lama who resided at Pusa Ding to administrate most Tibetan Buddhist monasteries at Mount Wutai. “Although the position of Jasagh lamas were also created at the capital in Beijing, Mukden, Hohhot, Jehol, and Dolor, the successive Jasagh lamas at Wutai Shan became especially tied to Tibet, as later regulations specified that they should be drawn from a pool of lamas in Tibet” (Chou 2011: 14). The Changkya Khutukhtu (章嘉呼圖克圖), who was one of the most important lamas of the Geluk School, resided at Zhenhai Monastery (Figure 5), and was placed in charge of the rest of the Tibetan Buddhist monasteries at Mount Wutai.

¹¹ Ten monasteries were Luohou Monastery, Shouning Monastery (壽寧寺), Sanquan Monastery (三泉寺), Yuhua Chi (玉華池), Qifo Monastery (七佛寺), Jingang Ku (金剛窟), Shancai Cave (善財洞), Puan Monastery (普安寺), Tailu Monastery (臺麓寺), and Yongquan Monastery (湧泉寺).



Figure 5: The Changkya Khutukhtu's residence at Zhenhai Monastery

In later years, the Manchu court gave back to Chinese Buddhist monks the control of Chinese Buddhist monasteries, such as Xiantong Monastery, but the Jasagh Lama in practice was the highest ranked administrator of Mount Wutai. As Chou observed, “The development of Tibetan Buddhism at Wutaishan in the Qing dynasty has offered a different vantage point from which to view the making and remaking of a Chinese Buddhist landscape” (Chou 2007: 124).

The Xinhai Revolution (辛亥革命) overthrew the last imperial dynasty of China—the Qing dynasty—while the last Manchu emperor Puyi (溥儀) abdicated on February 12, 1912 AD. Under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen (孫中山), the Republic of China (中華民國) was founded on January 1, 1912 AD in Nanjing. In the 25th year of the Republic of China (1936 AD), there

were 130 monasteries in total at Mount Wutai, and around 2,200 Buddhist practitioners, among which were nearly 800 lamas (Hou 2003: 130).

The Japanese army occupied Mount Wutai during the Second Sino-Japanese War. During that time, Buddhist practitioners refused to cooperate, and some fought against the Japanese invaders. Before the Luogouqiao Incident (盧溝橋事變) in 1937 AD, the total number of Buddhist practitioners at Mount Wutai was 1,434, among which 889 were Chinese Buddhists and 545 were Tibetan Buddhists. According to statistics that the Japanese collected in 1939 AD, there were 908 Chinese Buddhists and 471 Tibetan Buddhists which made the number become 1,379 in total (Fang 1999: 16).

In 1946 AD, China entered a state of civil war between the Kuomintang (國民黨 KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) after the Japanese surrendered. In 1949 AD, the KMT lost the most part of Mainland China and fled to Taiwan. The CCP eventually came to power and established its regime in Mainland China. Since then, Mount Wutai entered an era where the CCP controlled it.

Daily Life of Buddhist Practitioners at Mount Wutai in Present

Although I do not have information on everyday practices in the monasteries of Mount Wutai from the historical period, as an anthropologist I can provide my observations of how Buddhist practitioners at Mount Wutai lived their everyday lives in 2015. I also address the general information from *Records of Wutai Mountain*.

Zaoke (早課) and *wanke* (晚課) are two major activities in daily life for both Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist practitioners at Mount Wutai. *Zaoke* refers to the early morning religious activity in which Buddhist practitioners of a monastery gather together in the Main Hall

(*daxiongbaodian* 大雄寶殿 in Figure 6) to chant Buddhist sutras (usually starting between four AM to six AM). *Wanke* is a similar activity as *zaoke*, but in the night (usually starting between five PM to six PM).

At Mount Wutai, it is common to see that Buddhist believers who temporarily reside in the monastery participate in *zaoke* and *wanke* with Buddhist practitioners. Luohou Monastery normally does not accept visitors to reside at the monastery. However, Mongols and visitors who have a personal connection with lamas of Luohou Monastery are able to reside. There are two types of accommodation at Luohou Monastery. Most of rooms are dormitory for eight people, and only two are hotel-like standard rooms with two single beds. Only the hotel-like standard room has the heating and bathroom, which means that those who stay in the dormitory need to use public washroom and cannot take shower. The dormitory costs 30 Yuan (6 Canadian dollars) per night for each person, and the standard room charges 150 Yuan (30 Canadian dollars) per night. Men and women are assigned in separate rooms unless they are family.



Figure 6: The Main Hall of Luohou Monastery

Buddhist sutras that are chanted at different monasteries during *zaoke* normally include *Shurangama Mantra* (《楞嚴咒》), *Nilakantha Dharani* (《大悲咒》), ten mantras (十小咒), and *Prajnaparamitahrdaya* (《般若波羅蜜心經》 the Heart Sutra), but the schedule is different among monasteries. For example, *zaoke* at Luohou Monastery starts at five in the morning, and it ends around six thirty. Dailuo Ding's *zaoke* starts at four thirty. In contrast, Zhenhai Monastery's lamas started their *zaoke* around eight thirty in the morning on the day that I visited. *Zaoke* and *wanke* at Chinese Buddhist monasteries are led by *karmadana* (維那). Tibetan Buddhist monasteries' *zaoke* and *wanke* such as Luohou Monastery are led by *dbu mdzad* (翁則).

Buddhist practitioners gather together again at the Dining Hall (*wuguantang* 五觀堂) for breakfast after *zaoke*. During the fieldwork, I had my breakfast at Luohou Monastery with Mongolian lamas. Breakfast at Luohou Monastery starts at seven. Lamas and Buddhist believers sit on benches in a row, but in two separate areas. Everyone has two bowls and a pair of chopsticks on the table in front of them. Breakfast begins with sutra chanting by lamas, and meanwhile, Buddhist believers put their hands together in salute. When the ritual ends, three to four lamas enter the room and have a pail in their hands, and then they walk between the tables to fill the bowl one by one. Breakfast commonly serves *mantou* (饅頭) or vegetable *baozi* (包子), soup or congee, and a few types of *xiancai* (鹹菜). Everyone needs to clean the table and place their bowls and chopsticks in a big stainless steel basin. Talking is not allowed during the breakfast.

Eleven thirty is the time for lunch at Luohou Monastery. The ritual and rules remain as same as breakfast, but food is different sometimes. Two or three types of vegetable dishes along with rice replace the morning menu. Lamas gather together at five in the Main Hall for *wanke* before the supper. Supper is at six thirty and food is usually same as breakfast. Interestingly, different types of Chinese pickles are always there and popular among lamas and believers.¹²

The time between *zaoke* and *wanke* is free time for most of lamas at Luohou Monastery, except those who have daily duties. For instance, Lama Haichun and Lama Jargal Gala are responsible for reception work in the Reception Hall (*ketang* 客堂). Lama Xuesong, Lama Jamyang Phelgye and Lama Jamyang Shegyal take charge of the Hall of the Heavenly Kings (*tianwangdian* 天王殿), the Manjusri Hall (*wenshudian* 文殊大殿) and the Samgharama Hall (*qielandian* 伽藍殿), respectively. For most of time, they sit in the hall and memorize Buddhist

¹² The containers for *xiancai* (Chinese pickles) are plastic basins with plastic lids. Common Chinese pickles at Luohou Monastery include pickled kohlrabi, pickled daikon, pickled radishes, pickled carrot, and pickled mustard plant.

sutras. The rest of lamas who do not have daily duties enjoy their free time in activities such as learning sutras, doing the laundry, drinking tea and chatting. Junior lamas such as Lama Jamyang Shegyal memorize assigned Buddhist sutras in daytime and have a quiz in the night.

According to Venerable Master Lobsang Dorje,

Currently, there are thirty-five lamas at Luohou Monastery. Besides a local Han Chinese lama, the rest of lamas are all Mongols from Qinghai, Liaoning and Inner Mongolia [Lama Xiaoyang is half Mongol and half Han Chinese]. The majority comes from Inner Mongolia, and only one comes from Qinghai and two are from Liaoning (Interview via Internet April 25 2016).

Most Mongolian lamas along with Venerable Master Lobsang Dorje come from Tongliao (通遼), Inner Mongolia. Another lama from Luohou Monastery told me, “only three Mongolian lamas are not from Tongliao, and they come from Hinggan League [興安盟], Chifeng [赤峰] and Hulunbuir [呼倫貝爾].” All thirty-five lamas at Luohou Monastery are male in a wide age range, and most of lamas are in their twenties. For example, Lama Jamyang Shegyal is twenty-five years old and Lama Jamyang Phelgye is twenty-seven years old. The abbot of Luohou Monastery, Venerable Master Lobsang Dorje, is forty-one years old. The oldest is Lama Yangdungen, who is eight-five years old. None of lamas at Luohou Monastery has a post-secondary degree except Lama Haichun, who went to a college in his hometown (Tongliao, Inner Mongolia).

The languages spoken at Luohou Monastery are Mongolian, Tibetan and Mandarin. I observed that lamas speak Mongolian to each other and other Mongolian visitors, but they speak Mandarin to non-Mongols. They only speak Tibetan for religious matters such as rituals and chanting Buddhist sutras.

Another Tibetan Buddhist monastery, Pusa Ding, has a notable number of Han Chinese lamas. I think the reason is that Venerable Master Jamyang is Han Chinese, who is from a local

village of Wutai County. The similar situation also exists in Shifang Tang. Venerable Master Kelsang is Tibetan from Gansu, and most lamas at Shifang Tang are Tibetan from Gansu as well. Notably, Shifang Tang is the only monastery where I saw school-age (around seven years old to twelve years old) lamas.

At Mount Wutai, Buddha's Birthday (浴佛節) on the 8th day of 4th lunar month is one of the most important Buddhist festivals in a year (Hou 2003: 152). Buddhist believers light incense and bring offerings for Buddha and Buddhist practitioners. The bathing of the Buddha statue is the major ritual at Buddha's Birthday (Hou 2003: 153). On the 8th day of the 12th lunar month, Buddhist monasteries hold the festival to commemorate the day of the Buddha's enlightenment (Hou 2003: 153). The day is also known as Laba Festival (臘八節), which is a traditional Chinese holiday. On the night of the 7th, Buddhist monasteries cook Laba Congee (臘八粥).¹³ Next morning, Buddhist practitioners prepare Laba Congee as the offering for Buddha and hold the ceremony. Monasteries also provide free Laba Congee for all visitors (Hou 2003: 153).

Buddhist monasteries at Mount Wutai also hold festivals to commemorate the bodhisattvas' birthdays, the pravrajana day of bodhisattvas and the day of bodhisattvas' enlightenment. There are fifteen festivals in a year that monasteries hold the ceremony for commemoration (Hou 2003: 153). For example, Manjusri's Birthday (the 4th day of 4th lunar month).

Buddhist monasteries also provide other ceremony services for believers, but the type and scale of the ceremonies are varied. Believers provide different offerings for different ceremonies, but money is a major part of the offerings in most situations. Normally, the ceremony is a private service that only involves the providers. The ceremony service becomes an important way to make cash income for monasteries.

¹³ Laba Congee is a traditional Chinese sweet congee, but the ingredients are varied in different regions. It is commonly made of millet, glutinous millet, adzuki beans, peanuts, lotus seeds, red dates, walnuts and raisins.

At Mount Wutai, *qiansengzhai* (千僧齋), also known as *dazhai* (大齋), is the biggest ceremony with thousands of Buddhist practitioners involved at the same time. Only few large monasteries are able to hold *qiansengzhai* such as Xiantong Monastery. All Buddhist practitioners at Mount Wutai are welcome to join the ceremony.

During the fieldwork, I observed *qiansengzhai* once at Xiantong Monastery (Figure 7). The ceremony was for an extended family. At eight in the morning, Buddhist practitioners began to come to Xiantong Monastery. Master monks of Xiantong Monastery and senior monks from other monasteries gathered together in the Main Hall. Other monks and nuns sat outside in front of the Main Hall, and lamas sat behind the Main Hall. Interestingly, I saw a group of Daoist practitioners who sat with monks and participated in the ceremony all the while. A group of young monks were in charge of keeping order. All Buddhist practitioners began to chant sutras while the ceremony started. However, Chinese Buddhists and Tibetan Buddhists conducted the ritual differently, and used different language to chant sutras. The entire ceremony lasted around three hours. During the ceremony, many believers offered money for Buddhist practitioners. By the end, five female members of the extended family began to offer a red envelope for participating Buddhist practitioners outside of the Main Hall.



Figure 7: Tibetan Buddhist practitioners (up) and Chinese Buddhist practitioners (down) at *qiansengzhai* in Xiantong Monastery

I had a short conversation with a young monk who is in charge of keeping order. I consulted with him about Daoist practitioners in the ceremony. According to him, “Daoist practitioners are religious practitioners as well, so they are free to join in the ceremony.” He also said, “there is one arhat among five hundred of Buddhist practitioners and one bodhisattva among one thousand of Buddhist practitioners. Therefore, the practice of providing offerings for the participating Buddhist practitioners is indeed providing offerings for arhats and bodhisattvas.”

Chapter 2

Control of Religion under the CCP

In 1912 AD, the Republic of China was founded. “The provisional constitution of the Republic of China, proclaimed on March 11, 1912, stipulated the ‘freedom of religious belief’” (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 57). Nevertheless, “this text did not guarantee protection against destructions and violence in temples, and elites saw no contradiction between protecting the freedom of religious belief on the one hand, and eradicating superstition and destroying temples on the other” (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 57). It was understood that “destroying the religion of the old regime and inventing a new place for religion in the nation-state were important components of all the modernizing projects that reshaped China as it moved from empire to Republic, warlordism, and nationalism” (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 43).

In fact, Chinese intellectuals criticized some forms of religion and religious practices, popular religion in particular. Intellectuals, as an important social force, along with social elites were anxious to build a developed and modern China, and they influenced the government to reshape Chinese society. Among other religions, popular religion was the main target of criticism and attack as a symbol of feudal superstition. The movement against popular religion focused on “the opposition between a developmental state and a ‘superstitious’ populace” (Van der Veer 2014: 64). For example, the Republican government launched “the anti-superstition campaigns, including the ‘destroy temples to build schools’ movements (1912-1927)” (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 55). The situation for religious groups did not improve after the Republican government fled to Taiwan in 1949 AD. In contrast, the control of religion became even more harsh and

restrictive under the CCP during the process of secularization.

The CCP's Ideological Understanding on Religion

In general, the CCP understands religion through the lens of Marxist atheism that describes religion as an opiate of spirit for people but it will fade away eventually. According to Fenggang Yang, there are two types of atheism in the ideological lexicon of the CCP:

Scientific atheism, as an offspring of the European Enlightenment movement, regards religion as illusory of false consciousness, non-scientific and backwards; thus atheist propaganda is necessary to expunge religion. In contrast, militant atheism, as advocated by Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks, treats religion as the dangerous opium and narcotic of the people, a wrong political ideology serving the interests of the antievolutionary forces; thus counter-force may be necessary to control or eliminate religion. Scientific atheism is the theoretical basis for tolerating religion while carrying out atheist propaganda, whereas militant atheism leads to anti-religious measures (Yang 2005: 20).

In Maoist China, the CCP “followed the hard line of militant atheism” after took power in 1949 (Yang 2005: 21). The CCP also held that religion is “a domination tool of the reactionary ruling classes and an evil legacy of the presocialist societies” (Ji 2008: 237). As a result, “a fundamental ideological opposition to religion, and the goal of its elimination, remained central to the CCP doctrine” (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 152). It led to an idea that socialist reform movements would remove religion in a short time. As such, the CCP used political force to carry out a series of socialist reform movements in order to restrict religious belief and practices. The aim of these programs was to both restrict and eventually eliminate religion from Chinese society.

In post-Mao's China, the CCP claims that religion is a historical phenomenon that goes through the process of emergence, development, and extinction. The CCP claims the ultimate fate of religion is to go extinct, but now it will exist in Chinese society for a long time while the society advances to achieve real communism. Religion will naturally die out one day in the future when all objective conditions obtain. The reason is that, in the CCP's view, with the

fall-down of both the exploiting system and the exploiting class in the Communist society, the root of existence of religion will be practically eliminated (The State Administration for Religious Affairs 2012: 13).

The CCP summarized five characteristics of religion in the socialist China “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” (Yang 2012: 50). These five characteristics could be understood as a response to the failure of previous socialist reform programs, which involved religious groups. These five characteristics became significant considerations for when the CCP deals with religious issues. First, the CCP made an official declaration that China still remained at the early stage of socialism rather than approaching to communism. Therefore, religion will continue to exist in the society for a long time and political forces cannot abolish religion.

Second, the CCP and the Chinese government cannot ignore the influence of a large number of religious believers. The CCP has deeply noticed incredible power of the masses, and knew that the masses could be rapidly united together by religious belief. According to data that provides by Human Right Watch, “a figure used by the late Premier Zhou and still being used today. That figure, combined with those who worship at home, amounts to roughly 100 million. Based on the estimate, the present number would be more than 100 million” (Human Rights Watch/Asia 1997: 125). Zhe Ji also points out, “Buddhism has become the largest institutionalized religion in China, with at least 100 million believers and practitioners” (Ji 2011: 32). According to the most recent deduction, “Han Buddhists, solely, might actually count above 130 million practitioners” (Ji 2013: 11). Moreover, “there should be 200 to 300 million Chinese who are more or less sensitive to (some elements of) the Buddhist cosmology and at least occasionally participate in festivals and rituals of Buddhism” (Ji 2013: 12).

Third, religion has a long history in China. It has already become a part of Chinese culture. It is impossible to treat religion separately from Chinese society and culture. Fourth, a number of ethnic groups, such as Tibetans in China, are strongly tied to religion. For the CCP and the Chinese government, the situation would become even more complicated while religious issue combines with ethnic issues. Finally, religion is not just a domestic issue. It has a multitude of international connections.

Fenggang Yang and Dedong Wei observe, “[i]n spite of the fact that the Chinese Communist Party insistently claims to adhere to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, in fact pragmatism has dominated the process of its policy-making in most social spheres, including religious affairs” (Yang and Wei 2005: 83). In the light of religious affairs are usually associated with national stability and national unity, the development of international diplomacy, and the construction of socialist ideology, the CCP and the government must take religion carefully and guarantee the policy of freedom of religion.

The Policy of Freedom of Religious Belief under the CCP

In China, although freedom of religious belief (宗教信仰自由), and practices are guaranteed by the Constitution, religion is extremely restricted under numbers of polices in practice as part of secularization. According the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China (the 1982 Constitution), Article 36 states:

Citizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. No State organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion. The State protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the State. Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination (The Constitution of the People’s Republic China December 4, 1982).

In this case, religion only refers to the five officially approved religions: Daoism, Buddhism, Islam, Roman Catholicism (羅馬天主教), and Protestant Christianity (基督新教). Under the CCP's regime, "the protection of the five religions take place on the condition that they conform to state-approved principles and organizations, and cooperate with the state in its political goals" (Xie 2006: 83). Any forms of religious belief besides these five, however, are not tolerated or protected by the Chinese government, and could be labeled as evil cult (邪教) or illegal organization.

One famous example is Falun Gong (法輪功), which was founded by Li Hongzhi (李洪志) in the 1990s in Northeast China. Falun Gong became a perceived threat to the CCP and the Chinese government, mostly because of its tremendous size and its independence. In 1999, the Chinese government initiated a nationwide crackdown on Falun Gong after a gathering of a large number of Falun Gong practitioners near Zhongnanhai (中南海) in Beijing. Although the Chinese government never officially categorizes Falun Gong as an evil cut, the Chinese government announced that Falun Gong was an illegal organization in 1999.¹⁴

Although the Constitution claims that all citizens of the People's Republic of China have rights to enjoy freedom of religious belief, the freedom of religious belief has not yet become the reality in contemporary China. Yang points out, "until today, the Constitution has never served as the basis of law under Communist rule" (Yang 2012: 74). In reality, the CCP and the Chinese government have always supervised and regulated religion.

Religion-related laws and regulations in China are flexible enough to adjust and could be revised according to different demands. From the official perspective, "religion should be respected and integrated in a patriotic alliance to fight imperialism and help the Party advance

¹⁴ <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/channel1/10/20000706/132286.html>

the cause of socialism, an approach known as the United Front policy” (Laliberte 2011: 194). In other words, the CCP adopted a cooperative strategy in order to use religion to achieve its political goals.

For example, in 1949, the CCP confronted many thorny and challenging issues: to stabilize social order, to reinforce the relation with ethnic groups, to launch socialist reform movements, and to eradicate the enemy. The CCP realized that religion was politically useful for achieving its own purposes. Therefore, the basic policy by that time was:

- (1) constitutional guarantees for “freedom of religion” limited to the freedom of private belief, with restrictions on the social expression and organization of religion
- (2) co-optation of religious leaders through the United Front policy
- (3) establishment of state-sponsored national associations to manage the affairs of the five recognized religions, and
- (4) eradication of popular religion branded as “feudal superstition” and of redemptive societies branded as “reactionary secret societies” (Laliberte 2011: 194).

In 1982, the CCP issued the Document NO.19 *The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Affairs during the Socialist Period of Our Country* (Document No. 19 《關於我國社會主義時期宗教問題的基本觀點和基本政策》). This important document sets the basis for future religious policy in China, which reaffirms that “the CCP’s fundamental religious policy is to respect and protect freedom of religious belief” (The State Administration for Religious Affairs 2012: 16). In general, “since the mid-1990s, the policy of passive toleration has been replaced by ‘actively guiding religions to adapt to the socialist society,’ which in reality means that religious believers must follow the Party line” (Yang and Wei 2005: 84).

There is a contradiction. As mentioned above, the Constitution ensures that all Chinese citizens have rights to enjoy freedom of religious belief. The reality is, however, that members of the CCP are excluded. According to the Document NO. 19,

[T]he CCP’s policy of freedom of religious belief is designed for all Chinese citizens, but not apply to members of the CCP. A member of the CCP is not simply

an ordinary Chinese citizen, but most importantly, is a member of the Marxist Party [馬克思主義政黨], so that members of the CCP undoubtedly must be atheist rather than theist (The State Administration for Religious Affairs 2012: 22).

This not only violates the human rights of all members of the CCP as Chinese citizens, but it also violates the authority of the Chinese Constitution that Chinese citizens have rights to enjoy freedom of religious belief.

In fact, the issue of how to correctly treat and deal with religion is now challenging the CCP after decades of secularization, and it has become one of the crucial subjects to the construction of Chinese-featured socialism. As a result, the CCP ensures the implementation of freedom of religion, and manages religious affairs based on regulations in order to improve the situation. As Zuoan Wang argues, the CCP and the government need to carry out religious policy carefully and also to respect religious beliefs (Wang 2002: 4). Wang also states that the movement of eradicating religion did not reach its goal. Rather, the aftermath of these efforts caused terrible outcomes, which have wrecked the relationship of the CCP with religious groups as well as religious believers (Wang 2002: 100).

The Experience of Religion under the CCP

The CCP's political ideology regarding religion is reflected in policy-making on religious affairs. As the expression of the CCP's political ideology, religious policy plays a role in creating social and political environment for religion at different periods. The experience of religion can be understood as the result of secularization, which divide into three periods since 1949: (1) from 1949 to 1966, religion was extremely restricted and conditionally tolerated; (2) the period of brutal eradication and repression during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976; and (3) in the late 1970s, the CCP turned to adopt moderate policy instead of repressive policy to regulate religion, so that religion finally began to revive under numbers of regulations.

From 1949 to 1966, the CCP implemented a series of severe regulations and religious policies to restrict religious groups, while religious practitioners cooperated with the CCP under certain conditions. “After 1949, the Party issued new regulations that severely restricted all religions, including Buddhism, except when religion suited state purposes” (Ashiwa 2009: 57). By that time, one of the CCP’s primary tasks was to unify the entire nation and reestablish social order. In Chinese society, a large number of Chinese people were religious believers, and some ethnic groups have a long history of associating with religion. Therefore, the CCP formulated restrictive regulations toward religion, because religion is the “ideological enemy and reverse political power” (Yang 2012: 66). For example, “the party-state banned the cultic or heterodox sects of Chinese tradition” (Yang 2012:66).

In contrast, “religious buildings at Wutai were initially protected by government authorities as historical sites while religious practice was discouraged” (Shepherd 2013: 11). As Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer note, “‘superstitious’ activities such as divination, fortune-telling, and holding exorcist rites—an important source of income for monks were banned both inside and outside temple precincts” in China (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 160). Meanwhile, the CCP used religion as a propaganda tool in order to reinforce the relation with ethnic groups and solidify religious believers. Indeed, “the party-state adopted a more tactical and careful approach to the major religions, because these religions had massive number of followers, and most of them had international connections” (Yang 2012: 66).

Since 1949, the CCP carried out a series of socialist reform movements to reshape society in order to transform China to a Communist nation. According to a Buddhist master, in 1952, Buddhist monasteries permanently lost the ownership of land that was the main source of income for the monasteries with the completion of the Land Reform Movement (土地改革運動), and Ji

observes that the socialist reform regarding the means of production was “more fatal for Buddhism” than other government actions (Ji 2008: 243). During the movement, property belonging to Buddhist monasteries “were expropriated and redistributed to landless peasants,” and Buddhist practitioners “were at the same time required to engage in productive labor, either by doing farmwork or working in small factories or temple enterprises” (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 160).

At Mount Wutai, the local government carried out a large-scale socialist movement of land reform. The local peasants categorized a few monasteries as the target of criticism, such as Pusa Ding, Xiantong Monastery and Zhenhai Monastery. As the result, the CCP distributed the monastery’s land along with house property to impoverished peasants and ordinary Buddhist practitioners. The government also launched the movement of religious reform at Mount Wutai in later years, which aimed to abolish feudal religious practices and traditions (Hou 2003: 130).

From 1958 to 1960, the Great Leap Forward (大躍進), an economic and social campaign, took place nationwide in China under the leadership of Mao Zedong (毛澤東). During this period, “the policy of respecting the institutions of minority religions was abandoned: it was decided that they were the last remaining bastion of feudalism, so campaigns were launched to reform them, notably Tibetan Buddhism and Islam” (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 162). Mao launched the Socialist Education Campaign (社會主義教育運動) from 1963 to 1966. In 1964, “over a million cadres organized into thousands of work teams were sent to the villages to eradicate capitalistic practices as well as religion, superstition, and lavish life-cycle rituals” (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 165). Overall, the growth of religion in China remained stagnant and even shrank under the influence of socialist reform movements throughout 1950s and early 1960s, which caused a decrease in the number of places of religious activities (He 2006: 43).

The second period was from 1966 to 1976, while the Cultural Revolution (文化大革命) took place in China. It is the most chaotic and dark ten years since 1949, in which the CCP tried to forcibly eliminate religion by political power on a national level under Mao. It “was a period when Buddhism witnessed a scale of total devastation never seen before” (Ji 2013: 18). During the movement, the Red Guards (紅衛兵) were “following Chairman Mao’s instructions, aimed to eradicate all remnants of China’s feudal past” (Fisher 2011: 514). Religion was unfortunately classified under the category of *sijiu* (四舊 the Four Olds), which includes Old Ideas (舊思想), Old Habits (舊習慣), Old Customs (舊風俗), and Old Culture (舊文化). In order to realize communism in China, *sijiu* had to be smashed.

The government shut down monasteries, churches and mosques throughout the country and forbade all religious activities and practices. The authorities forced religious practitioners to return to lay life. A large number of religious leaders were beaten and imprisoned, and some were even killed during that period. Religious believers were involved in the movement as well. For example, religious believers were “forced to make public renunciation or be sent to prisons or *laojiao* (勞教 reeducation through camps)” (Yang 2012: 127). The government either demolished or seized religious buildings to “convert into schools, factories or residences” (Overmyer 2003: 5). The Red Guards not only destroyed religious statues but also burned religious scriptures.

The Red Guards brutally attacked Mount Wutai during that period. For example, “monks at the various temples in and around Wutai were beaten, evicted, and in some cases killed, and the temples and monasteries were attacked and damaged by Red Guards” (Shepherd 2013: 70). According to the statement of local residents, they maintain that they “prevented marauding Red Guards from looting and destroying most of these buildings” during the Cultural Revolution

(Shepherd 2013: 12).

Based on my interviews, however, I draw a different conclusion. The information I obtained from both local residents and local Buddhist practitioners and scholars reveals that the local residents did not actively participate in protecting Buddhist buildings from the Red Guards' attack because no one would risk their lives to fight against the Red Guards at that time. That said, the local residents were not involved in looting and destroying Buddhist monasteries and property with the Red Guards either. A local resident told me the following story:

A few Red Guards burned the statue of Black Dragon King (also known as *Wuyue*) at the beginning of the movement, but those participating Red Guards died of strange disease one by one in following years. Because of this unexpected outcome, no one has been willing to damage any Buddhist statues since then.

The local government took over the control of monasteries in order to better serve revolutionary movement of the Cultural Revolution. The local government occupied and converted numerous monasteries into government offices, schools, and even military bases. Today, the Bureau of Religion and Cultural Heritage of the Mount Wutai National Park is still using a part of buildings of Xiantong Monastery as offices (Figure 8), and the Buddhist Association of Mount Wutai also shares this section with the bureau.¹⁵

¹⁵ I had a chance to meet and interview the vice-secretary general of the Buddhist Association of Mount Wutai, Master Miaorong (妙榮法師). Master Miaorong stated, “the Buddhist association has been trying to negotiate with the local government for years that the association wants to move out of Xiantong Monastery, but the local government has not yet approved their land request for building new offices.”



Figure 8: The Bureau of Religion and Cultural Heritage of the Mount Wutai National Park in Xiantong Monastery

During the Cultural Revolution, a number of monasteries collapsed because of severe damage, and some were demolished and looted on purpose. For example, under Lin Biao's (林彪) order, Taipingxingguo Monastery (太平興國寺), Bore Monastery (般若寺) and Jingang Ku (金剛窟) were bombed for "military use" in 1970 (Hou 2003: 132). The real purpose, however, was to build a personal villa for Lin Biao rather than for the military. In addition, the Red Guards destroyed a large number of village temples. In 1977, the Cultural Revolution resulted in the number of Buddhist monasteries decreasing to 63 in Wutai County and around 10 monasteries relatively remained in the original appearance in the inner terrace (Hou 2003: 132).

This catastrophe both damaged Buddhist buildings and statues and traumatized Buddhist practitioners. According to the *Records of Wutai Mountain*, a local official record published by the government in 2003, the Red Guards at the beginning of the movement publicly denounced forty-six Buddhist practitioners. Afterwards, seven of them were sent to production teams, nine were forced by the Red Guards to do labor work and confess their past, and the rest were sent back to monasteries to continue receiving criticism.

The Red Guards also searched the dwellings of twenty-four Buddhist practitioners and confiscated personal property. During that period, religion-related institutions and departments in the government were shut down and the local Buddhist association was disbanded. Buddhist practitioners either joined local production teams or were forced to return to their hometowns. In addition, one monk was beaten to disability, two monks were killed, including Master Nenghai (能海法師), and five monks committed suicide. By that time, there were only around 60 Buddhist practitioners at Mount Wutai. The total number even shrunk to around 30 in 1970 and they were moved forcibly to Nanchan Monastery (南禪寺). In 1972, the number decreased to 25 in total when they were allowed to return to Mount Wutai (Hou 2003: 132).

Master Nenghai was one of the most influential and prestigious Buddhist masters during that period. His death shocked the Buddhist community at Mount Wutai and the entire country. A senior nun who has lived at Mount Wutai for decades told me a story about Master Nenghai:

A monk was appointed to throw away Master Nenghai's corpse to feed wolves in the mountain. He did carry the corpse up to the mountain, but he buried it in secret. For many years, he kept silent and did not tell the secret to anyone until the CCP's religious policy relaxed. No one believed him, when he did finally reveal his secret because of a drinking problem he developed during Cultural Revolution. He eventually decided to take people to the burying location, and the remains of Master Nenghai were excavated.

As the outcome of the Cultural Revolution, religious communities and public religious activities

ceased to exist in China during that period, but “many believers went underground-keeping one’s faith to oneself or gathering in homes amidst vigilant secrecy. Instead of declining, religion persisted and resurfaced as soon as suppression policy relaxed” (Yang 2005: 23).

Since the late 1970s, religion began to revive slowly under Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平), who “initiated an unprecedented period of religious tolerance” (Wickeri and Tam 2011: 53). For example, while the Cultural Revolution ended, Buddhist practitioners gradually returned to Mount Wutai, and the government allocated funds to repair and reconstruct major Buddhist monasteries that had been destroyed in the movement. The number of Buddhist practitioners at Mount Wutai increased to 94 in 1984, and the government gave back most of the occupied buildings to monasteries (Hou 2003: 132). Nevertheless, Deng “himself had little to say about religion, except mentioning it in passing when addressing ethnic relations, such as Tibetan problems, or international relations, such as Buddhist exchanges with Japan (in order to win investments and loans)” (Yang 2005: 23).

During Deng’s period, “controls on religion were relaxed, religious organizations were reopened, and public religious practice began to slowly revive” (Fisher 2011: 514). In addition, “the state established an ideological and administrative space of religion in the early 1980s for the purpose of promoting religious activities within limits” (Ashiwa 2009: 58). All indications show that a new political environment for religion was formed in the 1980s. As Ji points out, “the CCP adopted a policy of constricting, remolding, and using Buddhism rather than either leaving it in the private sphere or suppressing it” (Ji 2008: 239). Under a numbers of regulations, religion finally began to recover. Since the 1980s, the support of Buddhist revival was mainly from Chinese living overseas, financially in particular. As Goossaert and Palmer point out, “with the gradual relaxing of restrictions in the post-Mao PRC from the 1980s onward, reverse flows of

money, specialists, and ritual knowledge penetrated the mainland, with overseas Chinese building temples and sponsoring festivals in their native coastal provinces” (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 220).

Because of poverty and a lack of stable income, a large number of Buddhist monasteries began to sell entrance tickets to raise funds, while Mount Wutai officially opened to the public in 1985. With the rapid growth of tourism in the 1990s, Buddhist monasteries no longer just served as places of religious activities, but also as tourist sites. I encountered an elderly nun at Mount Wutai, and she pointed out, “the CCP’s current religious policy contributes to create a good environment for Buddhism to develop in the society. For example, the local government of Mount Wutai is currently involving the reconstruction of Buddhist monasteries.” According to Lama Haichun, “the government is giving financial support to reconstruct destroyed monasteries at Mount Wutai.”

According to a tourist guidebook, there are totally 192 monasteries at Mount Wutai area. Of these monasteries, 145 are located in the area of the outer terrace and 47 are in the inner terrace, among which 40 are Chinese Buddhist monasteries and 7 are Tibetan Buddhist monasteries. In recent years, the number of Buddhist practitioners at Mount Wutai normally stays around 1,100, and this number usually grows to over 3,000 in summer (Cui, Bai, Zhou, and Dong 2009: 60). Unfortunately, it is impossible for me to obtain information on the current number of Buddhist practitioners at Mount Wutai, because I do not have access to the official archive of residence registration system. Nonetheless, I confirmed the current number of monasteries at Mount Wutai with a senior official from the local Bureau of Religion and Cultural Heritage. He said, “within the area of Mount Wutai National Park, the most recent number of monasteries has increased to 82 in total, among which 9 of them are still in the process of being rebuilt, including Yuhua

Monastery (玉華寺 in Figure 9).” In other words, these 82 monasteries are officially registered and under the management of the local bureau.



Figure 9: Yuhua Monastery is under reconstruction

While the government does support the reconstruction of Buddhist monasteries in China, “the quantity of Buddhist clerics and monasteries still cannot regain the situation of the pre-Communist period” (Ji 2013: 17). More importantly, religious belief unfortunately is still discouraged in Chinese society. For example, the CCP puts much effort into indoctrinating Communist atheism through education system and mass media.

Religious policy has changed and the political environment has improved, but the CCP still owes an official apology for what they have done to religion in the past. One monk claimed after

we talked about the Cultural Revolution, “the CCP and the government should draw lessons from the previous experience, because the movement that attacked religion in the Cultural Revolution was ignorant.” The Cultural Revolution can be understood as a symbol that “Chinese Buddhism is a victim of Communist totalitarianism” (Ji 2013: 18).

Cultural Memory and the Cultural Revolution

The experience of the Cultural Revolution is best explained through the work of anthropologists, such as Paul Connerton, on the concept of cultural memory. Connerton investigates different types of forgetting. According to Connerton, there are seven types of forgetting that one can distinguish: “prescriptive forgetting;” “constitutive in the formation of a new identity;” “annulment;” “repressive erasure;” “structural amnesia;” “planned obsolescence;” and “humiliated silence” (Connerton 2011: 34, 36, 38, 41, 45, 46). This schema can also be used in the context of Mount Wutai, and explores how the different parties involved view the experience of the Cultural Revolution in different ways.

After almost thirty years of revival, the Buddhist community and its religious activities were restored at Mount Wutai. Meanwhile, Mount Wutai has successfully become a UNESCO World Heritage Site and it attracts countless tourists from all over the world. All parties have benefited greatly from the development of Mount Wutai, including the Buddhist practitioners, the local community, and the government. In fact, the local government made a great effort to promote Mount Wutai to become a living historical museum that displays China’s history rather than religious practice. As a result, people led by the government’s promotion think that Mount Wutai is a heritage site of Chinese ancient civilization rather than an active place of worship.

In contrast, the history of the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath are barely discussed at Mount Wutai. As Connerton argues, “when a new identity is in process of formation some of

these older narratives may fall in to abeyance” (Connerton 2011: 37). People seem to forget the experiences of the Cultural Revolution when the government attacked and repressed Buddhism. According to Connerton, this type of forgetting is “precipitated by an act of state and is believed to be in the interests of all the parties to the previous dispute; it can be therefore be acknowledged publicly. Its aim is to prevent a chain of retribution for earlier acts from running on endlessly” (Connerton 2011: 34).

Although forgetting the history of the Cultural Revolution is impossible for the local Buddhist community, both the local Buddhist practitioners and the local government are pretending to forget this unforgettable dark historical experience. For Buddhist practitioners, they do not want to destroy the current peaceful and thriving situation for developing Buddhism and for their religious life. For the local government, forgetting serves political purposes that prevent retribution and reinforce relationships with the local Buddhist community.

Connerton notes that repressive erasure “appears in its most brutal form, of course, in the history of totalitarian regimes” (Connerton 2011: 41). During the Cultural Revolution, the entire Buddhist community almost ceased to exist and Buddhist practitioners were forced to return to lay life. The government adopted repressive methods that aimed to eliminate religion and to force believers to give up their religious belief. The purpose is to cast memories of old China, including religion, entirely into oblivion.

It was more severe than the cases that Connerton mentioned in his work where’ “images of them were destroyed, statues of them were razed to the ground, and their names were removed from inscriptions, with the explicit purpose of casting all memory of them into oblivion.” Nonetheless, “the requirement to forget ends in reinforcing memory” (Connerton 2011: 41). In this case, many Buddhist believers went underground and carefully carried out religious practices

at home, “instead of declining, religions persisted and resurfaced as soon as suppression policy relaxed” (Yang 2005: 23).

Connerton’s last type of forgetting is humiliated silence, which “is manifest in a widespread pattern of behaviour in civil society, and it is covert, unmarked and unacknowledged” (Connerton 2011: 46). Regarding the humiliated experience of the Cultural Revolution, silence is commonly found within the local Buddhist community at Mount Wutai. Local residents, however, sometimes talk about this unspeakable history in private. As surviving victims, Buddhist practitioners are not willing to speak the traumatic past and their personal stories. In fact, they usually avoid talking about the Cultural Revolution at all. In contrast, as witnesses, local residents who lived through that period tend to talk about the past, and younger generations sometimes retell stories about the Cultural Revolution that they have heard from the seniors. On the one hand, the experience of the Cultural Revolution causes Buddhist practitioners to stay silent because of humiliation. On the other, the humiliated experience of history is stored in the memory of local residents.

The Administrative Institution of Religious Affairs

The Party-state has developed a complex administrative system in order to control the state and the Chinese people. The administrative system includes the Central Government, the provincial governments, the municipal governments, county governments, and the village committees. Theoretically, the CCP manages ideological affairs while the government is in charge of administrative affairs. Compared to Mao’s regime, “the current Chinese government’s treatment of religion tends to be pragmatic. It does not encourage religion or attempt to eliminate it, but requires religion to cooperate with the government” (Xie 2006: 82). Under such circumstances, the five officially recognized religions enjoy a very limited freedom in

contemporary China.

Under the CCP's regime, both the Party and the government control religious affairs at different administrative levels from national to county in order to better institutionalize religion. The current administrative system contains two major organs: the United Front Work Department (統一戰線工作部) in the party and the Administration for Religious Affairs (宗教事務局) in the government. The United Front Work Department, as an organ in the system of the CCP, is responsible for dealing with non-CCP organizations and non-CCP individuals, such as religious communities and practitioners. Moreover, it "is charged with detailed policy formulation and enforcement, subject to general Party policy directives" (Potter 2003: 13). At the national level, the State Administration for Religious Affairs is a functioning department under the State Council that "has responsibility for regulatory initiatives and supervision aimed at implementing Party policy" (Potter 2003: 13).¹⁶

Officials who work at the United Front Work Department are all members of the CCP. In contrast, the CCP's membership is not necessarily required for those who work at the State Administration for Religious Affairs. It is common, however, to find that one of the deputy head of the United Front Work Department would also take the position in the government as the director of the Bureau of Religious Affairs at the lower level. For example, Gao Jian (高鍵) holds two positions simultaneously, one in the CCP and the other in the Shanxi provincial government. Currently, one of his titles is a deputy head of the United Front Work Department of the CCP Shanxi Province Committee. In addition, he is also the director of the Shanxi Provincial

¹⁶ The State Administration for Religious Affairs has went through a series of changes. In 1951, the CCP decided to establish the Religious Affairs Office (宗教事務處) under the Culture and Education Committee (文化教育委員會), and then in 1954, it was replaced by an independent bureau named the State Council's Religious Affairs Bureau (SRAB 國務院宗教事務局) that was directly attached to the State Council (國務院). In 1961, the Religion Office (宗教處) was set up in the system of the United Front Work Department. The CCP repealed the SRAB officially in 1975. The situation did not change until 1979, while the SRAB were reinstated by the State Council. In 1998, the Chinese government renamed the SRAB to the State Administration for Religious Affairs, and it is still being used now.

Administration of Religious Affairs.

The CCP and the Chinese government allow the five government-approved religions to establish their own associations that are considered as “the instruments of governmental management of religious activities” (Xie 2006: 82). Religious practitioners who are elected from religious communities hold most positions in religious associations. The Buddhist Association of China (BAC 中國佛教協會) was founded in Beijing in 1953. “Although the BAC was not directly a part of the state bureaucracy, its internal rules and objectives were adjusted according to the deep penetration of state power into the whole of society” (Ji 2008: 247).

The BAC also founded subordinate associations at different administrative levels. The main role of religious associations is to coordinate the relationships within their own community and with the CCP and the government. For example, the evidence reveals, “the BAC has begun to negotiate with political authorities for Buddhist community on the legal and policy level” (Ji 2008: 251). In order to “gain the support or favor of the state, all religions would claim that they were truly peace-loving, ready to protect the state from being divided and to promote harmony and order against disorder” (Yao and Zhao 2010: 141).

In addition, it is necessary for religious associations to organize religious practitioners to accept patriotic education, which was “implemented in all religious communities from 1994 onward” (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 331). The purpose is to ensure that religious leaders and practitioners “remained loyal to principles of Party leadership, socialism, and national and ethnic unity” (Potter 2003: 14). Religious associations play a role in guaranteeing the implement of the CCP’s religious regulations and the normalization of religious activities (Wang 2002: 291).

Religious practitioners have the authority to manage daily affairs and regular religious activities. For instance, “administrative responsibility of a major monastery or temple was

normally in the hands of the abbot or master, who although being elected by the monks or priests, would have to be confirmed in the office by the government, which indicated the state's close supervision of religious institutions" (Yao and Zhao 2010: 137). The abbot (住持) of a Buddhist monastery usually has the authority to appoint senior monks to manage specific duties such as finance, internal affairs, and rear-service and so on. In addition, religious leaders are normally appointed to political positions "by the United Front Department for election to these bodies, such as People's Congresses at local and national level or join the People's Political Consultative Conference Committees" (Laliberte 2011: 198). The political positions "gave the leading clerics a higher social status than they could have ever hoped for in the previous political regime, and integrated them into the socialist political culture" (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 153). In most cases, religious leaders have the authority to manage religious activities and affairs within their communities, but large-scale activities must be reported to the relevant departments of the government.

The Management of Religious Affairs at Mount Wutai

At Mount Wutai, in order to reinforce the relationship with religious communities, religious affairs and activities were directly controlled by the United Front Work Department of the CCP Wutai County Committee for a few years after 1949. The Government of Wutai County also set up a committee to take charge of repairing Buddhist monasteries at Mount Wutai, and this committee was renamed the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee of Mount Wutai (五臺山民族宗教事務委員會) in 1952. The following year, the People's Government of Shanxi Province decided to establish the Office of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee at Mount Wutai (民族宗教事務委員會駐五台山辦事處) to supervise religious affairs under the Department of

Civil Affairs of Shanxi Province (山西省民政廳). During the Cultural Revolution, the Revolutionary Committee of Mount Wutai County (五臺縣革命委員會) took over the government of Wutai County, and then founded the Office of the Minority and Religion of Mount Wutai (五臺山民族宗教辦事處) to manage religious and ethnic issues in 1971.

In 1983, the Mount Wutai Administration (五臺山管理局) was established, and the Office of the Minority and Religion of Mount Wutai was renamed to the Office of Ethnic and Religious Affairs of Wutai County (五臺縣民族宗教事務處). The Mount Wutai Administration set up the Office of Ethnic and Religious Affairs (民族宗教事務處) at Mount Wutai in 1984. The People's Government of the Mount Wutai National Park (五臺山風景名勝區人民政府) was established in 1989, which was affiliated with the People's Government of Wutai County (五臺縣人民政府), to preside over Taihuai Town and Jingangku Township (金崗庫鄉). In 1990, the Branch Office of Religion of Mount Wutai (五臺山宗教分局) replaced the Office of Ethnic and Religious Affairs. The Bureau of Religion and Cultural Heritage (宗教文物局) was founded to govern religious activities and cultural heritage, while the People's Government of the Mount Wutai National Park adjusted to nine departments (Hou 2003: 500).

The Bureau of Religion and Cultural Heritage exclusively supervises religious activities within the Mount Wutai National Park, and the Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Affairs of Wutai County (五臺縣民族宗教事務局) is in charge of the rest of Wutai County. Nevertheless, “the above two governing organizations are subordinate to the Shanxi Provincial Administration of Religious Affairs” (UNESCO Nomination File 2009: 241).

During my fieldwork, I visited the Bureau of Religion and Cultural Heritage of Mount Wutai National Park three times, but I did not meet many officials in the office. The last time, I

asked an official about his colleagues. He said, “other officials normally go to monasteries (下廟) rather than working in the office.” I then asked him what officials actually do when they go to monasteries. He answered, “to work (做工作).” I did not continue the interview to ask more questions because he said that he was new to the bureau and that he does not know much of what is going on. During my stay in the office, I met a few individuals who come to the office for signing paperwork, including a senior monk and a group of designers, who were in charge of rebuilding a monastery.

Later on, a senior official walked into the office and explained what “to work” means: “the bureau sends officials to monasteries to communicate with Buddhist practitioners as well as to explain policies and regulations. It provides an opportunity for the Buddhist community to report problems.” According to Lama Haichun, “the relationship between the local government and the Buddhist community at Mount Wutai is relatively harmonious. The problem is that the local government usually makes decisions that involve the Buddhist community without consulting with the Buddhist community.” Another local Buddhist monk noted, “Officials in the bureau are supposed to have a basic understanding and knowledge of Buddhism. Otherwise, it becomes possible for officials to unintentionally do something or say something that creates conflicts between the government and the Buddhist community or offends the Buddhist practitioners.”

I met a young man who came into the room with prayer beads in his hands when I was chatting with a monk in the Buddhist association, and the monk introduced this young man to me. The young man said that he graduated from a Chinese university with a bachelor degree in religious studies, and started working at the Bureau of Religion and Cultural Heritage at Mount Wutai few months ago. I asked him how many officials have a background in religious studies or something similarly relevant in the bureau. He responded that he is the only one. He cautiously

listened to our conversation on purpose rather than joining us, and he was keeping his eyes on my notebook. His behaviors made me very uncomfortable, so I said good-bye to the monk and left the Buddhist association.

In China, regional Buddhist associations began to be established after the BAC was founded in 1953. The Buddhist Association of Mount Wutai was established in December 1957 under the Buddhist Association of Shanxi Province (Figure 10). The association is “a civil group formed by representatives from different temples of Mount Wutai, serves as a bridge between the administrative agencies and the professional and secular Buddhism devotees” (UNESCO Nomination File 2009: 242).¹⁷ The main aim of the association was to solidify the Buddhist community along with practitioners and believers at Mount Wutai, and to assist the local government in carrying out religious policies. The Buddhist association also organizes Buddhist activities and relevant studies in order to propel the development of Buddhism. The Buddhist association has responsibilities to take care of cultural heritages that belong to different monasteries (Hou 2003: 147). The association ceased to function during the Cultural Revolution, and was reinstated in the late 1970s.

¹⁷ The first president of Buddhist Association of Mount Wutai was Master Nenghai, who was also one the vice-presidents of BAC by that time. The current president is Master Changshan (昌善法師), the abbot of Dailuo Ding. Master Miaojiang (妙江法師), the abbot of Bishan Monastery, was the previous president of the Buddhist Association of Mount Wutai, but now he is the president of Buddhist Association of Shanxi Province and one of the vice-presidents of the BAC.



Figure 10: The Buddhist Association of Mount Wutai

One of current routines of the Buddhist association is to organize the fortnightly meetings that call together representatives of each monastery to study the CCP's principles and policies as well as government documents (Hou 2003: 148). Fortunately, a local official allowed me to attend one of the meetings. The Buddhist association organized the meeting, but officials from the Bureau of Religion and Cultural Heritage led it. Four government officials gave speeches one by one according to their political positions from high to low. One of them read a few recent government documents. None of the attending Buddhist practitioners were taking notes except a very few officials and myself. In fact, some Buddhist practitioners were chatting or looking at the cell phone sometimes. Interestingly, an elderly monk was meditating once he sat down

throughout the meeting.

The speeches and government documents were focused on creating a better environment for tourism. Following issues were emphasized: first, as a popular tourist site, hygienic, environmental, and safety issues must be solved. Second, all pit latrines without a flushing attachment in monasteries must be renovated to flushing toilets. Third, it declared a ban on village temples (村廟). For example, the local government has shut down *Wuyeguli* (五爺故里) as shown in Figure 11.¹⁸ Village temples are very popular and can easily be found in many villages. These village temples are associated with popular religions rather than Buddhism. A large number of visitors, however, do not know this fact. Some local residents had taken advantage of this situation to encourage visitors to donate money.



Figure 11: *Wuyeguli*

¹⁸ *Wuyeguli* is a village temple and the name literally means “the hometown of *Wuye* (the Black Dragon King).”

Fourth, construction in monasteries without permission or official documents must be shut down. Any kinds of unauthorized constructions are not allowed. In fact, the local government intends to “restrict and guide the expansion and reconstruction of the temple buildings” (UNESCO Nomination File 2009: 233) in order to keep the ancient appearance of monasteries as much as possible. According to the nomination file, “management requirements of significant temples: only maintenance and conservation of cultural relics is allowed, while new construction, expansion and renovation are prohibited” (UNESCO Nomination File 2009: 239).

Fifth, monasteries are responsible for raising their own maintenance costs. One official claimed that the bureau will try their best to ask help from the government for fundraising, and then he proposed that monasteries seek financial donation from wealthy believers. Sixth, monasteries have the responsibility to take off prayer flags (經幡) that had been placed outside of the monasteries. Last, all large-scale religious activities have to be reported to relevant government departments, such as the Bureau of Religion and Cultural Heritage, the police, and fire departments. The entire meeting lasted around 2 hours. Some journalists recorded the meeting with cameras, and they post news and videos regularly at Sohu.com.

Chapter 3

Economic Value of Mount Wutai: Religious Tourism

The CCP and the Chinese government have clearly realized that “religion and other cultural practices are economically useful” (McCarthy 2010: 159). As the result, the Party-state discovered the economic value of religion and used religious resources to contribute economy. In China, religious tourism has become a significant economic resource to the Chinese government, which is one of results of secularization. The recent evidence shows that “the Communist Government has come to recognize that many Buddhist works of arts, books, and some buildings are in fact national treasures” (Chamberlayne 1993: 61). In fact, Buddhist sacred sites, such as Mount Wutai, are identified with famous mountains, and it helps the local government to transform Mount Wutai to become a popular tourist destination in order to serve the purpose of improving the local economy.

From the perspective of the local government, Mount Wutai is considered as a living cultural museum to display China’s long history. Mount Wutai also serves as a symbol of the local and national identity. According to Cuma Ozkan, “the state’s intervention in restoring and promoting religious sites to unite the local and national identity lead to collapse the borders of pilgrimage and tourism” (Ozkan 2013: 119). The successful transformation of Mount Wutai from a Buddhist sacred site to a tourist site creates a series of economic benefits for the local government, including the profit of an admission fee, the potential investment from overseas Chinese, and the tax income from local businesses. The development of tourism also spurs the local service industry, which improves the economic situation for the local residents.

The Economic Benefit of Religious Tourism

In China, “local officials are eager to promote the restoration, expansion, or new construction of Buddhist temples in the hope that they will attract economic development to their areas in the form of fee-paying tourists and pilgrims and, in the most lucrative cases, overseas investors with signified access to capital” (Fisher 2011: 514). The secular value of the development of Mount Wutai is in line with the CCP’s propaganda, “religion building the stage and the economy doing the performance” (Ji 2011: 42). The reason is that “religion can be a big business, which a great deal of cash coming in, and the government wants its cut” (Borchert 2005: 101).

In fact, the CCP is focusing more on the growth of the market economy in China, which suggests that “the move to a market economy and the need for new sources of revenue has encouraged the development of tourism” (McCarthy 2010: 177). As an important part of secularization, the local government made great effort to transform Mount Wutai to become a popular tourist site in order to boost the local economy.

In contrast to the park admission fee (168 Yuan), several Buddhist monasteries at Mount Wutai charge a few Yuan (usually under 1 Canadian dollar) as an entry fee. For example, Xiantong Monastery and Pusai Ding charge 10 Yuan. Tayuan Monastery charges 5 Yuan, but Dailuo Ding only charges 2 Yuan. Most of the monasteries such as Luohou Monastery and Wanfo Ge are free.

Although the entry fee at each monastery does little to support the local economy, the admission fee of Mount Wutai is the important source of income for the local government, which the government does not share with the Buddhist community as one monk noted. According to local scholars, the total number of domestic and international visitors increased from around

600,000 in 1997 to around 850,000 in 2000. The income from tourism rose from 145,000,000 Yuan in 1997 to 250,000,000 Yuan in 2000, which directly contributed to the fiscal revenue 13,820,000 Yuan in 1997 and 33,000,000 Yuan in 2000 (Zhao etc. 2001: 161).

In 2001, Mount Wutai received over 1 million visitors, of whom 15,000 were international visitors. In addition, the total income reached 350,000,000 Yuan (Hou 2003: 11). The UNESCO Nomination File points out, “the number of visitors to Mount Wutai marked 1,947,700 in 2004; 2,472,800 in 2005; 3,358,100 in 2006; and 3,301,600 in 2007” (UNESCO Nomination File 2009: 233). “The daily maximum number of visitors reached to 113,000 per day (May 3 2007), while the monthly maximum number of visitors increased to 595,000 (August 2007)” (UNESCO Nomination File 2009: 233). The above data is obviously outdated, but it still shows the economic benefits to the local government of Mount Wutai that made by religious tourism.

The local government also works on building economic relationships with overseas Chinese businesspersons. The Chinese government believes that “the visible presence of religion would impress overseas Chinese with the openness of Chinese society, spurring them to invest” (Ashiwa 2009: 63). Therefore, local government officials are participating in reconstructing monasteries and restoring religious activities: “Many temples or religious festivals are now being promoted as folklore, museums, charitable organizations, tourists destinations, local ‘landmarks’, or ‘cultural festivals’” (Chau 2011: 6).

The local government proposed the idea of holding Buddhist festivals at Mount Wutai. For example, “in 2004, the Xinzhou city government in Shanxi Province decided to sponsor a Festival of Buddhist Culture on Mount Wutai” (Ji 2011: 41). Officials participate actively in this event, but they are not seeking to promote the development of Buddhism. Besides the economic benefit, local officials often desire to obtain personal political achievements to aid them when

they seek future promotions.

The local government also seeks to use Mount Wutai to attract overseas Chinese Buddhists to help bring investments and business opportunities to the area. As Yoshiko Ashiwa notes, “expectations were especially high for Buddhism due to officials’ assumption that many overseas Chinese businesspersons were Buddhists” (Ashiwa 2009: 63). Furthermore, holding festivals is another method to spread the reputation of Mount Wutai to help attract more tourists.

The rapid development of tourism at Mount Wutai led the emergence of a local service industry that has had a great economic impact on both the local government and community. The service industry provides a stable source of taxation for the local government, and it has become “one of the major factors of increasing local fiscal income” (Hou 2003: 492). More importantly, the local government encourages individuals to establish private businesses to serve tourism, such as souvenir shops and guesthouses. In order to increase local economy and the income for local residents, the government organized Taihuai Town and Jingangku Township to establish businesses, including a local-products processing factory, a travel bag processing factory and an incense factory (Zhao etc. 2001: 161).

The owner of a local souvenir shop told me, “those local factories are private businesses and the profit is very poor. The local government requires that all local souvenir shops must purchase the incense product from the local factory in terms of centralization of management. Otherwise, souvenir shops would be forbidden to sell any incense products purchased from other factories.”

According to Wenzheng Hou, the total number of hotels, restaurants and guesthouses were seventy-six and there were 1,235 private enterprises in 2000 (Hou 2003: 10). In addition, 786 households ran a small private business (Hou 2003: 482). Compared to the traditional farm work, local residents have opportunities to establish their own businesses that brought more income to

families and improved the structure of the local economy. As Hou notes, in 2000, per capita income of a local peasant in Taihuai Town reached to 2,200 Yuan and 1,102 Yuan for a peasant in Jingangku Township (Hou 2003: 492). Moreover, a large number of people who have come from the surrounding areas and even other provinces have settled down and established their businesses at Mount Wutai. For example, it is common to see Tibetan souvenir shops around Shuxiang Monastery and the most of owners are Tibetans from Gansu and Qinghai. Overall, the phenomenon of making Mount Wutai as a tourist site to improve the growth of economy can be linked with “the government’s current ideology of ‘economic construction as the focal point’” (Ji 2011: 41).

The Transformation to a Tourist Site

During the process of secularization, the Chinese government designated Mount Wutai as a national tourist site in 1982, and “a master plan for development was issued by Shanxi provincial authorities in 1987. In 1992, the valley was designated a national forest preserve” (Shepherd, Yu and Gu 2012: 146). In 1999, the local government proposed the idea that the potential of Mount Wutai to apply for UNESCO World Heritage Site. After five years of preparation, the government of Shanxi Province along with the government of Mount Wutai submitted the application to the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (住房城鄉和建設部). In 2006, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development added Mount Wutai to the list of China’s National Natural and Cultural Heritage Sites. Mount Wutai later became an AAAAAA tourist site (AAAAAA 旅遊景區) in 2007.

In 2008, the formal application of Mount Wutai was finally submitted to UNESCO World Heritage Center. In the same year, UNESCO World Heritage Center appointed a group of

international experts to Mount Wutai to do an investigation and assessment. The boundaries of the nominated site were:

Composed of 2 parts, namely, the Taihuai Proposed Core Zone and the Foguang Temple Proposed Core Zone with a total area of 18415 ha. The Taihuai Proposed Core Zone refers to the area centered around the temple ensemble at the Taihuai Town and the five terrace tops of Mount Wutai, whose boundaries extend to the southwest of the mountain ridge at an altitude of 2000m-2100m above sea level in the southwest; to the north of the mountain ridge at an altitude of 2400m-2600m above sea level and the highway line at certain points in the north; to the west verge of Shida Road in the northeast; to the ridges of the Dailuoding and neighboring mountain peaks in the southeast. The Foguang Temple Proposed Core Zone refers to the area that encloses the Foguang Temple and the geological sections in its north, whose boundaries are marked by the mountain ridge at an altitude of 1400m-1500m above sea level in the west and the north and by the mountain ridge at an altitude of 1300m-1500m above sea level in the east and the south (UNESCO Nomination File 2009: 193).

In June 26, 2009, Mount Wutai was officially inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List as a cultural landscape at the meeting of the 33rd Session of the World Heritage Committee in Seville, Spain. The Committee declared that Mount Wutai met the four UNESCO criteria as follows:

Criterion (ii): The overall religious temple landscape of Mount Wutai, with its Buddhist architecture, statues and pagodas reflects a profound interchange of ideas, in terms of the way the mountain became a sacred Buddhist place, endowed with temples that reflected ideas from Nepal and Mongolia and which then influenced Buddhist temples across China. **Criterion (iii):** Mount Wutai is an exceptional testimony to the cultural tradition of religious mountains that are developed with monasteries. It became the focus of pilgrimages from across a wide area of Asia, a cultural tradition that is still living. **Criterion (iv):** The landscape and building ensemble of Mount Wutai as a whole illustrates the exceptional effect of imperial patronage over a 1,000 years in the way the mountain landscape was adorned with buildings, statuary, paintings and steles to celebrate its sanctity for Buddhists. **Criterion (vi):** Mount Wutai reflects perfectly the fusion between the natural landscape and Buddhist culture, religious belief in the natural landscape and Chinese philosophical thinking on the harmony between man and nature. The mountain has had far-reaching influence: mountains similar to Wutai were named after it in Korea and Japan, and also in other parts of China such as Gansu, Shanxi, Hebei and Guandong provinces (UNESCO World Heritage Center-Mount Wutai).

Unfortunately, the religious significance of Mount Wutai and its initial role as a Buddhist pilgrimage center was ignored. "What has value is the material cultural of Buddhism" (Shepherd

2013: 89). Therefore, “for UNESCO and the Chinese Communist Party, these buildings and temples are worthy of special status because they are first of all historical, not religious” (Shepherd 2013: 89). In fact, “religious worship was not mentioned at all” in Mount Wutai’s UNESCO nomination file (Shepherd 2013: 71).

In Taihuai, “a local market economy centered on religion and tourism” emerged in the 1990s (Shepherd 2013: 99). For example, “individuals and families signed contracts with local authorities for land plots in town and built shops, restaurants, and hostels that catered to visitors, monks, and nuns” (Shepherd 2013: 99). During that period, the intention of the local government’s use of tourism was to “create a sustainable source of economic development for a relatively isolated and marginalized area” (Shepherd 2013: 12). I interviewed a young man, who comes from a nearby town and runs a small bookstore in Taihuai. “Taihuai’s economy was terrible and local people were too poor,” he said, “no women from other towns wanted to marry a man from Taihuai.” The transformation of Mount Wutai to a tourist site changed the economic situation in Taihuai.

In order to attract more tourists, the government carried out a series of plans to transform Mount Wutai to a successful tourist site. The plan includes the construction of tourist facilities such as visitor center and a shopping plaza, the construction of highway and airport and the removal of the residential community in the core zone of Taihuai.

Since 2006, the local government has removed 110 houses, which involves 166 households with 583 individuals (Han 2014: 38). This was part of the UNESCO plan to move many residents living in Taihuai Town “to a new Jingangku Township, 16 km away where new dwellings and tourist facilities have been built.” The plan affected 395 households from six villages [Taihuai, Yanglin, Taipingjie, Yingfang, Wayao, and Xigou] as well as the residents of

the settlements of Dongzhuang and Guizicun and 36 hotels and 108 shops (UNESCO World Heritage Center-Mount Wutai) (Figure 12). According to Shepherd, “[d]uring the first stage of displacement, houses and shops below Ta Yuan, Wofu [Wanfo Ge], and Guangren [also known as Shifang Tang] temples were demolished and farmland north of town confiscated to build parkland” (Shepherd 2013: 102). In following years, the government planned to replace local residents’ homes, shops, and farm land with “green space and park lands, designed to accentuate the importance of the temples and monasteries listed as heritage sites” (Shepherd 2013: 12).



Figure 12: New dwellings for relocated families from Taihuai in Jingangku Township

Although the area near Tayuan Monastery, Wanfo Ge and Shuxiang Monastery is now a park with planted trees and lawn and stone pathways, the removal project seems to be at a standstill after almost ten years (Figure 13). In contrast, the construction of visitor center and a shopping plaza has completed. The plan aims to separate Taihuai into different functional areas such as a shopping area, an area for entertainment and an area for visiting monasteries. Besides the construction in Taihuai, “building a communications infrastructure” is also important since it “permits millions of tourists to come by air and road” (Sutton and Kang 2010: 103). In this case, the government has built a highway that connects Mount Wutai with major cities such as Taiyuan and Beijing. In addition, Mount Wutai’s airport came into use in December 2015. The entire master plan of Mount Wutai is expected to be complete in 2020.



Figure 13: The removal project in the core zone of Taihuai is still in the process

The current main entrance of the park is located on the south side, where visitors pay an admission fee at the visitor center (Figure 14). The most recent regulation came into force since 1st of July 2015 that replaced the previous admission standard. According to the current standard, the admission fee is flexible depending upon seasons, ranging from 145 Yuan (around 29 Canadian dollars) to 120 (around 24 Canadian dollars) Yuan. Nonetheless, visitors needed to pay a mandatory transportation fee (50 Yuan, which is around 10 Canadian dollars) at the visitor center before the current regulation was carried out. According to the previous regulation, during the peak season (1st of April to 31st of October), vehicles without the local license plates had to be parked at the public parking lot, as only government-approved public transportation or government-owned vehicles were allowed to enter Mount Wutai. “During non-peak season (1st of November to 31st of March) the group and private-car visitors can choose to take their own traveling method under proper management” (UNESCO Nomination File 2009: 277).



Figure 14: The visitor center at southern gate

In practice, the staff would allow visitors' vehicles to enter the park in certain situations. For example, if drivers hold a note from government officials, or local residents are seated in the vehicles, they are allowed special access. This green policy was initially aimed to “guide the visitors to use the shuttle bus system with convenient service economic incentives and policy to lower the negative impact on the environment and promote the balanced space-time distribution of visitors” (UNESCO Nomination File 2009: 277).

In order to collect books from a local bookstore in Taihuai, I went to Mount Wutai in December 2014. At the visitor center, I paid 136 Yuan for admission fee and 50 Yuan for the public transportation, but the staff said to me that I was allowed to drive my car in the park. This statement confused me. Thus, I asked him why I have to pay extra money for the public transportation if I would be driving my car in the park. He did not explain the situation at all, and only said, “It is policy.” The answer did not make any sense to me, but I had to go along with it.

The second time was on April 13, 2015, while I only paid 148 Yuan for admission fee and I was allowed to drive car in the park. About a week ahead my trip to Mount Wutai, a few friends and my mother informed me that the local government had restricted private vehicles from driving in the park since March 5, 2015.

Nevertheless, things changed on April 2, 2015, when the National Tourism Administration (國家旅遊局) gave a warning to nine AAAAA tourist sites, including the Mount Wutai National Park. A few days later, the local government put in place a new regulation to replace the previous one with the result that private vehicles once again were allowed to enter the park as of April 10, 2015. In addition, the new regulation canceled the mandatory fee for the public transportation. Later on, a rumor spread at Mount Wutai that a local official and his family owned the public transportation company and had benefited from the business for almost five years. Although I

tried to confirm the reliability of this rumor, no one I spoke with could explain situation.

I have visited many popular Buddhist monasteries in China, and I noticed that many monasteries have souvenir shops and restaurants for visitors inside of the monastery such as Lingyin Monastery (靈隱寺) in Zhejiang, Shaolin Monastery (少林寺) in Henan and Yonghe Monastery (also known as Lama Temple 雍和宮) in Beijing. At Mount Wutai, I did not see any restaurants for visitors in monasteries that I visited.

Shifang Tang is the only monastery that I saw a shop inside of the monastery. The shop sells all kinds of items that made in either Tibet or Nepal with the unique identity of Tibetan Buddhism. For example, they sell Tibetan prayer beads, amulets, jewelry, incense, prayer wheels (轉經筒), prayer flags (經幡), tingsha cymbals, singing bowls, bells and vajras (金剛鈴和金剛杵), and Tibetan Buddhist statues.¹⁹ The items are relatively expensive compared to other souvenir shops. I visited the shop three times, but I did not see the owner. Two Tibetan young men worked there and took care of the shop every day. I tried to interview them but only told me that they were Tibetans from Gansu.

At Mount Wutai, most of shops, hotels and restaurants are located on the main street (S205). The area between Wanfo Ge and Shuxiang Monastery is also an assembled area for many shops and restaurants. The type of accommodation in Taihuai is varied for tourists. For example, hostels, family-run guesthouses, resorts, and star hotels (including 5-star hotels). Tourists can buy different kinds of souvenirs such as prayer beads and Buddhist statues in souvenir shops, and there are also shops that sell traditional Chinese clothes and local food products such as mushrooms.

¹⁹ Bells and vajras are ritual objects of Tibetan Buddhism.

The new designed shopping plaza (Figure 15) is located in Yangbaiyu Village (杨栢峪村), 2.5 kilometers away from Wanfo Ge. I walked about thirty minutes along the main street from Wanfo Ge to the plaza. Shops and restaurants occupied the plaza, and the open space at the center had been turned into a huge parking lot. A night the souvenir shops were closed and the plaza was transformed into a night market for street food, where many tourists enjoyed Chinese barbecue and beer. Places for entertainment such as sauna centers and karaoke bars are also located near the plaza and popular with tourists.



Figure 15: New shopping plaza

I interviewed a friendly man, who runs a souvenir shop with his parents near Wanfo Ge. His shop should have been demolished a few years ago according to the removal plan.

Me: Why didn't the government demolish your shop?

Man: We do not own the house and we pay 200,000 Yuan to the landlord every year. I do not know the reason why this house remained. My landlord disagreed to demolish this house, but the government demolished my landlord's other houses. This situation also happened in Xigou Village [西溝村]. The removal plan includes Xigou Village, but until now it is still there.

Me: Did the government say anything to local resident regarding the suspension of the removal plan?

Man: The government has not yet given any further information regarding the removal plan. We [local residents] do not really know the government's policy, and the government does not explain the policy to us before they launch it.

Me: Do you and your family still own farmland?

Man: We returned our farmland to the government for Returning Farmland to Forestry Program years ago. The government promised financial compensation, but it has not been received in recent years. I think that running a shop is much better than farming financially for my family and me. People who have no farmland are largely relying on the rental or running small businesses for a living. However, people who do not have houses near the street or monasteries and live in the mountain are very poor.

Me: Does the construction at Mount Wutai attract more tourists?

Man: No, I do not think so. The admission is too expensive. People came to Mount Wutai twice a year before, but now they come to Mount Wutai only once in two years.

Me: What do you think about the new designed shopping plaza? And are you willing to move your shop to the plaza?

Man: I am not going to move my shop to there. The plaza is far away from monasteries, and no one goes there. Tour buses usually stop at the parking lot near Shuxiang Monastery and another one near Dailuo Ding, and tourists only stay around monasteries.

Another designed shopping area for tourists is near Dailuo Ding as the man mentioned above. Visitors have three options to go up to the Dailuo Ding, including taking the cable car, riding a horse and climbing 1080 stairs. There are two rows of stalls on sides of the way to the stairs from the parking lot (Figure 16). These stalls mostly sell Buddhist souvenirs, and some stalls also sell antiques. A few of stalls sell local food products such as dried fruits and mushrooms. When I was looking for interesting items on the stalls, I saw a small book of *chungongtu* (春宮圖). It was a collection of erotic paintings in an ancient Chinese style. I would never have expected to find *chungongtu* at a Buddhist sacred site.



Figure 16: Stalls on the way up to Dailuo Ding

The contractor owns all of stalls in the area near Dailuo Ding, and stall keepers sign contracts with the contractor. The rental is greatly different according to the location of the stall. The most expensive stalls are next to the parking lot, which is around 20,000 Yuan (4,000 Canadian dollars) a year. In contrast, stalls near the stairs are the cheapest, from 2,000 Yuan to 3,000 Yuan (400-600 Canadian dollars) a year. The average of rental is from 5,000 Yuan to 7,000 Yuan (1,000-1,200 Canadian dollars) a year.

Despite the fact that vendors were supposed to shift to the new plaza, two other shopping areas still exist in the center of Taihuai. The center of Taihuai has large parking lots and is close to major monasteries, which makes it a convenient and central area for tourists. The popular travel plan for tourists that the travel agency provides is a two-day trip, which includes visits to major monasteries in the center of Taihuai such as Wanfo Ge, Tayuan Monastery, Xiantong Monastery, Shuxiang Monastery, Pusa Ding, and Dailuo Ding. In some cases, tourists' experience "is often as cursory as that of the tourists who arrive by coach and leave two hours later" (Oakes and Sutton 2010: 10). For example, I met a group of foreign tourists from Singapore at the parking lot in front of Shuxiang Monastery. They arrived in the morning by coach, and then visited Shuxiang Monastery, Xiantong Monastery, Tayuan Monastery, and Pusa Ding. They left for Pingyao (平遙) after lunch around two in the afternoon.

Tourist guidebooks also influence tourists on their travel route. Many tourist guidebooks only list and introduce major monasteries in the center of Taihuai as the representative of monasteries at Mount Wutai. For example, Pusa Ding is one of the most popular monasteries among tourists. The reason includes: (1) it has a long history that built during the Northern Wei dynasty (386-535 AD); (2) it was a royal monastery in the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD) and the Manchu emperors resided at Pusa Ding when they visited Mount Wutai; (3) it is a Tibetan

Buddhist monastery with a Mongolian background; and (4) it is close to the parking lot.

Moreover, I noticed that many tourist books mainly focus on the natural beauty of Mount Wutai and the historical importance of the monastery as a historic site, but ignored the value of monasteries to Buddhism. When tourist guidebooks describe a monastery, it addresses “the size of temples, the dates of renovations, and unique architecture features” (Dott 2010: 40).

Foguang Monastery (佛光寺), as one of the most important monasteries, is not a popular destination for tourists. It was established during the Northern Wei dynasty (386-535 AD). The major hall is the Great East Hall (東大殿), which was built in 857 AD. The Great East Hall is the third earliest preserved wooden architecture in China. Because of this feature, Foguang Monastery along with Taihuai Proposed Core Zone was inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List in 2009. Its disadvantage as a popular tourist destination is the location. The monastery is located in Foguang Village (佛光村), Doucun Town (豆村鎮), around thirty kilometers from Taihuai, which takes almost an hour to drive to the monastery from Taihuai.

Although the development of tourism improves the economy, it violates religious space as a Buddhist sacred site. All Buddhist practitioners that I interviewed agree that tourism to some degree has a negative impact on the development of Buddhism. Lama Haichun told me, “tourism causes the commercialization of monasteries, and many monasteries are relying on tourism for cash income. Buddhist practitioners spend more energy and time on reception work instead of religious cultivation.” In short, tourism violates Buddhist practitioners’ time and space for religious cultivation. In addition, Master Miaorong said during the interview, “the government uses Buddhism as an attraction for tourism and takes advantage of the position of Mount Wutai in Buddhism to grow the economy. However, the government does not share the income from tourism with monasteries.”

The transformation of Mount Wutai to a tourist site is a part of secularization. The government intends to emphasize the importance of Mount Wutai as a historic site. Moreover, the government categorizes Mount Wutai's Buddhism as an indispensable part of traditional culture that makes up China's long history. During the process of transformation, the government aims to reduce religious importance of Mount Wutai as a Buddhist sacred site. As Shepherd observes, for the government, "these buildings and temples are worthy of special status because they are first of all historical, not religious" (Shepherd 2013: 89).

In addition, the religious value of Buddhist items such as statues and mural paintings is faded. Buddhist monasteries now serve as living historic and cultural museums for tourism. Buildings, statues and mural paintings are represented as great ancient achievements of Chinese people, which display Chinese ancient techniques and the Chinese peoples' genius in art. Tibetan Buddhist monasteries at Mount Wutai are also an attraction for Han tourists. For them, Mount Wutai offers a rare opportunity to encounter ethnic cultures in Shanxi.

The Visitors and Their Motivations

In Chinese culture, sacred mountains are commonly associated with supernatural power, and "there is some mysterious quality about the configurations of the landscape such that it is particularly easy for spirits to manifest there" (Birnbaum 1986: 137). In some cases, people believe a sacred mountain to be "the center of the universe" (Baumer 2011: 127). Mount Wutai was viewed as "Mount Sumeru, the mountain of Indian mythology that represents the axis of the world" (Cartelli 2013: 13).

Sacred mountains were believed to be the homes of deities because the mountain peak is the closest place to the heaven in ancient Chinese cosmology. Therefore, sacred mountains have attracted countless visitors. As Shepherd argues, "Wutai Shan is a tourism attraction because

visitors feel it has been marked as sacred space for centuries” (Shepherd 2013: 143). Those who visit Mount Wutai can be classified into Buddhist pilgrims, temporary Buddhists, and common tourists. In other words, the motivations behind those who visit Mount Wutai are varied.

Known as a famous Buddhist sacred mountain for hundreds years, Mount Wutai has always been a popular pilgrimage center for Buddhists from China, Tibet, Mongolia, Japan, Korea, and India. According to Chun-fang Yu,

[T]he belief arose that by going to these pilgrimage centers, one could create merit, fulfill vows, and even obtain a divine vision of a specific bodhisattva without going to India, pilgrims not only from China but also from Tibet, Korea, Japan, and other parts of Asia began to flock to these sites, first to Mount Wutai... (Yu 2010: 25).

Indeed, “to the medieval Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, it was unnecessary to travel to India to encounter the Buddhist doctrine, the experience could be obtained firsthand at Mount Wutai” (Cartelli 2013: 48).

In China, the term *chaoshanjinxiang* (朝山進香) is used traditionally to describe the practice of pilgrimage. *Chaoshanjinxiang* literally means, “to pay one’s respect to the mountains and offer incense.” As “one of these shared, popular religious practices,” pilgrimage could be made by “all kinds of people” (Naquin and Yu 1992: 10). In this case, Buddhist practitioners and devotees, who make the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, “would similarly see, hear and even smell the transformation and manifestations of the bodhisattva Manjusri, resulting in a higher awareness, or even enlightenment” (Cartelli 2013: 195). The pilgrimage to Mount Wutai consists of going to five different monasteries to worship Bodhisattva Manjusri on the five peaks. This particular practice is called *chaotai* (朝臺), which “normally takes four days for a distance of 75 km” as shown in Figure 17 (UNESCO Nomination File 2009: 27).



Figure 17: A map of routine of *chaotai*

(http://www.seelvyou.com/html/2013/wutaishan_0424/951.html)

Besides obtaining awareness and enlightenment, the pilgrims deem that sacred sites are “uniquely different from the secular world,” because they have “extraordinary spiritual significance” (Stoddard 2010: 2). It has made Mount Wutai a hidden place to “withdraw from the corrupt and dusty world of human society” (Cartelli 2013: 198). Buddhists believe that Mount Wutai has special spiritual access with which one communicate with Manjusri or see the spiritual manifestation of Manjusri.

Manjusri was historically described in stories that suggest he “often revealed himself either in a majestic way as a blazing ball of light or a youthful prince riding astride a flying golden-haired lion amid multicolored cloud, or in convert fashion as a beggar or old man mysteriously wandering the slopes” (Heine 2000: 137). In fact, “the appearance of auspicious colors was yet another common phenomenon of Mount Wutai” that “were usually seen at a

manifestation of Manjusri, or the other bodhisattvas or buddhas” (Cartelli 2004: 744).

During my fieldwork, I encountered a number of Han Chinese Buddhist devotees, some of whom live at Mount Wutai and volunteer to work at monasteries. I also met numerous Buddhist pilgrims each day, including Buddhist practitioners and Buddhist believers from different regions. They usually travel to monasteries on foot. Their pilgrimage route contains most of the monasteries in the core zone, five monasteries on the peaks and important monasteries outside of the core area.

For example, I met two Taiwanese nuns from Dharma Drum Mountain (法鼓山). One of them said that they had made the pilgrimage to most of the Buddhist sacred sites in Mainland China and this trip was their first time visiting Mount Wutai. In fact, I met these two nuns three times a day at different monasteries. At Pusa Ding, I saw them again among a crowd of visitors. The one who talked to me before sought me out and suggested that I should pray to Manjusri rather than doing fieldwork at Mount Wutai because fieldwork would not contribute to my “self-cultivation.” I responded that I appreciated her advice and that I would keep that in my mind. She then smiled at me and left.

I found an obvious difference between Tibetan and Mongolian pilgrims. Luohou Monastery, Pusa Ding, Shifang Tang, and Guanyin Cave are four major Tibetan Buddhist monasteries at Mount Wutai. Most lamas at Luohou Monastery and Pusa Ding are Mongols from Inner Mongolia, but the lamas at Shifang Tang and Guanyin Cave are Tibetans from Gansu and Qinghai. Mongolian pilgrims seem to prefer to go to Luohou Monastery (Figure 18) and Pusa Ding (Figure 19), but Tibetan pilgrims commonly visit Shifang Tang (Figure 20) and Guanyin Cave (Figure 21).

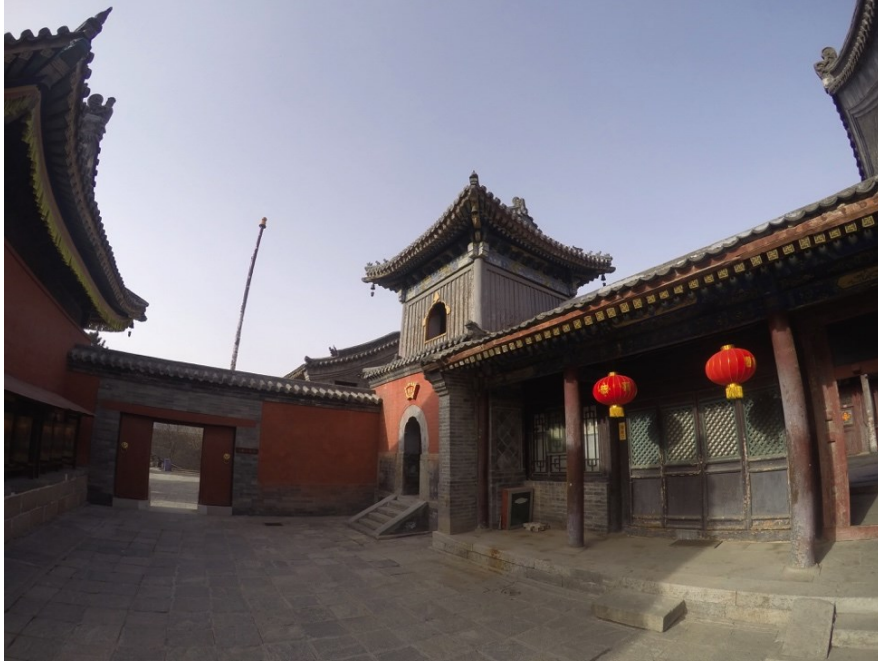


Figure 18: Luohou Monastery



Figure 19: Repairing work at Pusa Ding



Figure 20: Shifang Tang



Figure 21: Guanyin Cave

Temporary Buddhists refer to those who do not faithfully follow Buddhism in daily life, but act like a Buddhist at monasteries. They indeed make up of a large part of Mount Wutai's visitors. In China, the Han Chinese are strongly influenced by Confucianism and commonly do not identify as Buddhists.

Worshippers at Buddhist monasteries who burn incense and kowtow in front of the statues of buddhas or bodhisattvas could be temporary Buddhists, while they visit Buddhist monasteries or need supernatural guidance or support. As Yang points out, "besides laboring hard and working through stifling regulations and personal networks, some people naturally appealed to gods or tried to manipulate supernatural forces for better fortunes," and sometimes those "who have lost job security and life certainty in the market economy also turn to the spiritual for solace and fortune" (Yang 2011: 214).

The favours that temporary Buddhists request varies, such as asking for good health, asking for safety, asking for fortunes, asking for a promotion, asking for passing exams, asking for career success, and even asking to have a son. In particular, considering Manjusri is the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, many students and their parents go to Mount Wutai to ask for the help of Manjusri to attain success at school.

The most popular monastery at Mount Wutai among temporary Buddhists is Wanfo Ge (in Figure 22).²⁰ The main deity of Wanfo Ge is the Black Dragon King, commonly referred to as *Wuye* (五爺) by the local people. The local people believe that the Black Dragon King is both an incarnation of Manjusri and the guardian of the local community. Anything that people ask for will have a miraculous response by *Wuye*'s supernatural power.

This relation between *Wuye* and his believers develops two major activities, including

²⁰ Wanfo Ge is commonly known as *Wuyemiao* (五爺廟).

xuyuan (許願) and *huanyuan* (還願). *Xuyuan* is to make a vow that the person will come back to the temple to thank *Wuye* once the wish had been achieved. *Huanyuan* is to redeem the vow that come back to thank for *Wuye* usually by providing offerings. The locals believe that *Wuye* enjoys traditional opera. Accordingly, the local people built an opera stage opposite the hall in the front yard of the Wanfo Ge (Figure 23). *Wuye*'s believers usually promise that they will pay an opera troupe to perform for *Wuye* once the wish comes true.



Figure 22: The Wuye Hall at Wanfo Ge

The day I visited, an opera troupe from another city was performing on the stage. One performer told me that the price for using the stage in Wanfo Ge is usually from 20,000 Yuan and up to 30,000 Yuan (around 6,000 Canadian dollars) for only 2 hours. This expense does not

include the payment for the opera troupe.



Figure 23: The opera stage at Wanfo Ge

The motivations of common tourists visiting Mount Wutai are varied. First, Mount Wutai's unique landscape attracts tourists to visit and to enjoy its natural beauty. It is also a wonderful place for tourists to escape the hot weather in the summer. As Shepherd notes, "the vast majority of visitors are not pilgrims, but they visit for the fresh air, or comfortable climate, or chance to engage with nature" (Shepherd 2013: 143). Moreover, the local government has designed various special tourist programs, such as a rehabilitation program for seniors (Hou 2003: 40).

Second, the improvement of transportation to Mount Wutai made it a perfect day-trip destination. The completion of highway projects reduced the distance of Mount Wutai and

surrounding major cities, including Taiyuan, Datong, Beijing, Shijiazhuang, and Hohhot. “In addition, increasing stress and urbanization motivate people to escape from their familiar routine and travel” (Choe etc. 2013: 245). According to the license plates I saw at Mount Wutai, private vehicles are mostly from surrounding cities in Shanxi. I also observed private vehicles from Beijing, Tianjin (天津), Inner Mongolia, and Hebei.

Third, tourists consider Mount Wutai as a living museum to show China’s long history, which especially attracts foreigners to explore Chinese history. For example, I saw a number of Taiwanese tourist groups and a tourist group from Singapore in front of Shuxiang Monastery, which is a popular monastery among tourists because of the giant statue of Manjusri (Figure 24). Indeed, “Wutai Shan is promoted by state tourism authorities as a ‘religious-cultural tourism’ destination” (Shepherd, Yu and Gu 2012: 152).



Figure 24: Manjusri (up), is the largest statue of Manjusri (9.87m) at Mount Wutai, and Guanyin Bodhisattva (down) at Shuxiang Monastery

Overall, the local government along with the local community and local Buddhist community have benefited economically from the result of secularization—the growth of religious tourism—since the 1990s. The title of UNESCO World Heritage Site has increased the international reputation for Mount Wutai. More importantly, it promoted the religious tourism that brought the economic benefits to the region. Under the influence of secularization, a large number of “sites and objects that were either neglected or actively destroyed in the past...have transformed into ‘heritage.’ Religious practice may still be called feudal superstition but it is also presented as part of China’s heritage and evidence of a long and united Chinese history” (Shepherd 2013: 119). In fact, for the CCP and the government, heritage sites, like Mount Wutai, are opportunities to display China’s history, and a potential tourist attraction to increase the local economy. For UNESCO, a heritage site is a treasure that belongs to all humankind, so it must be protected. For local people, a heritage site is a symbol of the local identity that connects them with their past, and is part of their life in the present.

Chapter 4

Political Values of Mount Wutai

In light of the influence of Buddhism in Chinese society, Mount Wutai has political significance to the government. With the development of religious tourism, the local government realized that Mount Wutai could benefit the local economy. In addition, the government discovered the political value of Mount Wutai during the process of secularization, which is in line with the Central Government's interests at a national level. According to Ji, "today, as before, the Chinese government considers Buddhism an important instrument in ethnic affairs, international relations, and social mobilizations" (Ji 2011: 42). In this case, Mount Wutai helps improve the relation between the Central Government and Tibetans as a bridge of communication, which contributes to maintain national unity. In addition, it helps the government improve China's international relations.

In using Buddhism as an instrument in ethnic affairs, the Chinese government could potentially adopt a strategy similar to that adopted by the Manchu rulers during the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD). In this chapter, I explore the Manchu emperors' patronage of Tibetan Buddhism and Mount Wutai, and discuss the Manchu court's Buddhist policy in Mongolia and Tibet. I also explore the 13th Dalai Lama's relationship to Mount Wutai since the late 19th century, and the potentiality of Mount Wutai as a meeting place for the Chinese government and the 14th Dalai Lama.

The Manchu Emperors' Relationship to Tibetan Buddhism and Mount Wutai

In order to consolidate the Manchu realm, the creation of an effective Buddhist policy was a significant consideration to the Manchu court. In light of the influence of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibetan and Mongolian regions, the Manchu court supported the development of Tibetan Buddhism and promoted the political status of Tibetan lamas. The Manchu court gave the authority to Tibetan lamas over the management of Buddhist affairs in certain regions, including Mount Wutai. Under the Manchu court's patronage, Tibetan Buddhism flourished at Mount Wutai.

For the Manchu emperors, Mount Wutai was a pilgrimage center to hold rituals and also a destination for leisure. According to the records, four Manchu emperors made thirteen pilgrimages to Mount Wutai. For example, the Kangxi Emperor visited Mount Wutai five times (Cui 2000: 709).

On February 12, 1683, the Kangxi Emperor left Beijing with Crown Prince Yunreng [皇太子允礽] and arrived Mount Wutai on February 20. He made the pilgrimage to five peaks during his stay. On February 24, the Kangxi Emperor left Mount Wutai for Beijing. He hunted a tiger while he passed by Changchengling [長城嶺], and renamed the place as Shehuchuan (射虎川). The Kangxi Emperor visited Mount Wutai again from September 11 to 27 in the same year. On March 28, 1698, the Kangxi Emperor visited Mount Wutai with Prince Zhi [允禊] and Prince Cheng [允祉]. In February 1702, the Kangxi Emperor made his fourth pilgrimage to Mount Wutai with Crown Prince Yunreng, *Beile* Yinzhen [胤禛 who later ascended the throne as the Yongzheng Emperor in 1722] and Yinxiang [胤祥]. The last time that the Kangxi Emperor visited Mount Wutai was in February 1710 with Crown Prince Yunreng, Prince Cheng, *Beile* Yunsi [允禩], Prince Dun [允禩], Yinxiang, and Yunti [允禵] (Cui and Zhou 2008: 54-5).

The Kangxi Emperor's trips with his sons to Mount Wutai were not simply a practice of pilgrimage. It indeed involved many activities. According to Natalie Kohle,

[P]atronizing temples and sponsoring rituals were only two of the many activities performed by the emperor on his tours to Wutai shan, as Kangxi took part in a wide range of activities with dissimilar ideological resonances. He not only inscribed

stelae and tablets for monasteries, but also composed and enjoyed classical Chinese poetry together with his retinue, sacrificed to Confucius, appraised local officials, displayed his benevolence to local people, had a county student recite from the Classics, inspected waterways and dike works, competed with and trained his sons and imperial guardsmen in archery, and even engaged in hunting himself (Kohle 2008: 92-3).

Besides these activities mentioned above, the rumor said, Shunzhi Emperor lived anonymously as a monk at Mount Wutai after the death of his beloved imperial concubine. Therefore, looking for his father was one of the activities of his son the Kangxi Emperor's visits (Zhang, Wang and Li 2011: 35).

The Manchu emperors' pilgrimage to Mount Wutai also has symbolic meanings, which shows the Manchu court's authority and power in its realm. As Geertz notes, "when kings journey around the countryside, making appearances, attending fetes, conferring honors, exchanging gifts, or defying rivals, they mark it, like some wolf or tiger spreading his scent through his territory, as almost physically part of them" (Geertz 1983: 125). During the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD),

As imperial tourist of inspection were taken up again by the Qing emperors, Kangxi's western tours were only one part of a larger project of imperial touring of the empire, and the tours were modeled after (Han) Chinese as well as Inner Asian styles of rulership. Moreover, the timing of the first series of Kangxi's tours, undertaken shortly after the consolidation of the empire in the wake of the suppression of the Three Feudatories [三藩之亂] in 1683 [AD], shows that the tours were also designed as tours of victory over the newly consolidated realm (Kohle 2008: 95).

In addition, activities that the Kangxi Emperor performed during the trips display his personal charisma to his people. Geertz discusses Elizabeth Tudor's tour in England in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, and he describes Elizabeth Tudor "was Chastity, Wisdom, Peace, Perfect Beauty, and Pure Religion as well as queen; and being queen she was these things" (Geertz 1983: 129). In this case, the Kangxi Emperor was Power, Wisdom, Poet, Brave Warrior, and Tibetan Buddhist as well as emperor; and being emperor he was these things.

The main purpose of the Manchu emperors was to maintain China as a united state and reinforce the rulership of the Manchu court. In order to use Tibetan Buddhism to accomplish the purpose, the Manchu court promoted the position of Tibetan Buddhism in the state. For example, “the foundation of Tibetan monastic establishments, imperial patronage, placement of Tibetan Buddhists in leading offices at the mountain, and public acknowledgment of the leading role of Tibetan Buddhists in the gazetteers,” all of which reveals the significant role of Tibetan Buddhism during the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD) (Kohle 2008: 79). Moreover, “[t]he extent of imperial patronage of Tibetan Buddhism at Wutai shan was certainly unprecedented in previous dynasties” (Kohle 2008: 79).

During the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD), the Manchu court adopted Confucianism as the orthodox political ideology to rule the state. This strategy helped the Manchu court to improve the relationship with Han Chinese, and it also emphasized the ruling legitimacy of the Manchu court in China. In addition, the Manchu court used Buddhism to strengthen its legitimacy of rulership via the imperial patronage of Tibetan Buddhism at Mount Wutai. For example,

[M]ost of the Kangxi emperor’s inscriptions do not record specific events, but make a clear effort to draw on the legacy of the longstanding history of previous dynasties’ involvement with Wutai shan. This greater concern on the part of the Qing emperors with the creation of legitimacy through the patronage of Buddhism at Wutai shan is also suggested by the Qing emperors’ personal tours to the mountain (Kohle 2008: 91).

In fact, “the Qing emperors consciously wanted to project an appearance of continuity between their patronage of Buddhist institutions at Wutai shan and that of the Ming, at least to a Chinese audience” (Kohle 2008: 101). Sponsoring rituals for the protections of the state is another important event for the Manchu emperors at Mount Wutai, which helps to create “legitimacy in the eyes of Tibeto-Mongolian and Han Chinese Buddhists” (Kohle 2008: 87).

Another reason that the Manchu emperors revered Tibetan Buddhism is to control Tibetans and Mongols through its Buddhist policy. The Manchu emperors revealed their interests in Tibetan Buddhism and patronized the development of Tibetan Buddhism at Mount Wutai. However, according to historians,

[T]he completely sinicized Manchu Qing emperors had no personal commitment to Buddhism, and that their lavish patronage of Tibetan Buddhism was mere political expediency, in what was essentially an attempt to create a new stronghold of Tibetan Buddhism in the Chinese interior in order to orient the Mongols towards China and away from Tibet (Kohle 2008: 73).

For instance, the Qianlong Emperor did not truly believe in Tibetan Buddhism, and he only took advantage of Tibetan Buddhism for the need of rulership (Cui 2000: 727). In addition, Lama Xuesong told me, "Because Mongols are more aggressive and the Manchu court was afraid of rebellion, the Manchu court encouraged male Mongols to become lamas and each family only kept youngest son at home." The Manchu emperors' use of Tibetan Buddhism became a political issue in practice, and the aim was to "maintain Manchu paramountcy over both [China and Mongolia]" (Farquhar 1978: 34).

As part of the Manchu court's Buddhist policy, the Manchu emperors established relationships with Tibetan lamas, the Geluk School in particular. The contact with the Dalai Lama created another title to the Manchu emperors, which has a religious influence in Tibetan and Mongolian regions. According to David Farquhar,

Contact between the Manchu emperors and the Dalai Lamas of Tibet had begun in 1637, when T'ai-tsung (Hong-taiji, Abahai) invited the Fifth Dalai Lama to his capital at Mukden; formal recognition of the Manchu emperor as a bodhisattva was signaled in a letter sent by the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama to Emperor T'ai-tsung in 1640, which was addressed to the "Manjusri Great Emperor." This was followed in 1653 by a more solemn declaration when the Dalai Lama, on a trip to Peking by invitation of Emperor Shun-chih, T'ai-tsung's successor, presented the emperor with a gold plate which said "God of the Sky, Manjughosa Emperor and Great Being" (Farquhar 1978: 19-20).

The Manchu emperors not only obtained a new title with religious meaning from the Dalai Lama, but they also were seen as the incarnation of bodhisattva on the earth since Tibetan lamas regarded the Manchu emperor as the reincarnation of Manjusri. As the reincarnation of Manjusri, the Manchu emperors' presence at Mount Wutai becomes natural, while Mount Wutai is revered for the connection to Manjusri.

In Tibetan Buddhism, there were other incarnations of bodhisattvas besides the Manchu emperors, including the reincarnation of Avalokitesvara (觀音菩薩)—the Dalai Lama. As Farquhar argues,

Chinese Buddhists would of course agree that bodhisattvas had often been reborn in the world of humans, but they have rarely gone in for locating and identifying them among well-known contemporaries; that has been a Tibetan specialty, and Tibet's living bodhisattvas (T. sprul-sku), of whom the Dalai Lama is only the most famous, are familiar to many. Such divine rebirths have usually been monks or, if infants became monks, but laypersons, including kings, have occasionally been identified as specific incarnations usually posthumously (Farquhar 1978: 11).

The identity of the Manchu emperors as the reincarnation of Manjusri enhanced the connections with Buddhists in Tibetan and Mongolian regions. The Manchu emperors became a Buddhist figure to revere in the eyes of Mongols and Tibetans as well as Chinese. Most importantly, “[t]o be a recognized reincarnation of Manjusri would be an enormous help to an emperor trying to control affairs in Mongolia and Tibet” (Farquhar 1978: 25). During the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD), “Manchu Buddhist rule worked” in Mongolia and Tibet (Elverskog 2006: 6).

A Bridge between the Central Government and Tibetans

One of the primary goals of Chinese regimes, including today's Communist government has been to retain national unity. China consists of different ethnic groups, among which are fifty-five minority groups. Tibetans, as one of minority groups in China, have lived on the Tibetan Plateau for thousands of years. Although the debate over Tibetan sovereignty has been

discussed for decades, currently Tibet is part of P.R. China as one of the autonomous regions under the control of the CCP and the Central Government.

With the spread of Tibetan independence movements around the world, the CCP and the Central Government have adopted various methods to help keep Tibet in China and improve the relation with Tibetans. The CCP and the Central Government also take account of religious issues while they deal with Tibetan ethnic issues. In fact, religion is always a sensitive matter that is inseparable from ethnic issues (Ma 2010: 18).

The CCP and the Central Government have realized the influence of Mount Wutai on Tibetans while dealing with ethnic issues, and also have begun to restore Mount Wutai's historical role—a bridge of communication—as an important step of secularization. In addition, the CCP and the Central Government use Mount Wutai as an example to display the long history of China with Tibet. As a Buddhist sacred site, Mount Wutai is of special importance to Tibetans. This importance is a result of its religious importance in Buddhism and traditional use as a site of communication between the Central Government and Tibetans.

First, Buddhism has been deeply blended into the Tibetan culture. Therefore, pilgrimage has become an indispensable part of Tibetan religious life. Among various Buddhist sites, Mount Wutai has always been considered one of the most sacred pilgrimage centers for Tibetans because Mount Wutai's relationship with Manjusri. In 824 AD, the Tang court gave a map of Mount Wutai as a gift to the Tibetan ruler, and then Mount Wutai became a popular pilgrimage center in Tibet that attracted numerous Tibetan pilgrims to visit (Zhang, Wang and Li 2009: 376).

I would like to share my personal experiences, which show the importance of Mount Wutai among Tibetans. In 2010, I encountered a group of Tibetan Buddhist nuns at a small monastery in Lhasa, while I was traveling in Tibet for the first time. One of the nuns asked me where I came

from, and I responded that I am from Taiyuan, Shanxi. They smiled and told me that they knew of Mount Wutai and they would like to make the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai at some point.

A few years later in 2014, two of my Tibetan friends came to Taiyuan, and the first place that they went to was Mount Wutai after they arrived. I asked them why they wanted to go to Mount Wutai directly. They said, “The aim our trip is to make a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai.” I also learned that many Tibetans may not know of Taiyuan and Shanxi, but many Tibetans know about Mount Wutai.

During my fieldwork, I met numerous Tibetan pilgrims at Mount Wutai. By chance, I encountered two Tibetan lamas in a village. The reason that they came to Mount Wutai was for a retreat. They lived in two separate caves on the hillside for several months (Figure 25). I was impressed when I saw the location of the retreat caves (閉關洞), and I wondered how they found such secluded caves. The younger lama said, “these two retreat caves were recorded in Tibetan Buddhist scriptures, and many lamas have conducted retreats here.” In addition, he told me, “I could obtain empowerment and blessings from Manjusri at Mount Wutai to assist my self-cultivation.”



Figure 25: The retreat caves

In fact, I did not find any information about these two caves in either documentations or tourist guidebooks, so I inquired with some local Buddhist practitioners and local residents about the caves. Only a few of them had heard of the caves and none of them knew of their exact locations. Moreover, a number of Tibetans from other regions have settled down at Mount Wutai and opened their own businesses. It is fair to conclude that the influence of Mount Wutai as a sacred Buddhist pilgrimage center has spread among both Tibetan Buddhist practitioners and Tibetans.

Another factor that makes Mount Wutai significant to the religious life of Tibetans is the connection of Mount Wutai to some great Tibetan lamas. In reality, Tibetan Buddhist believers pay the highest respect to *tulkus* (祖古) and other prestigious lamas. In addition, a number of important Tibetan lamas have made the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai and some of them even resided at Mount Wutai. Either they were appointed by the rulers to manage religious affairs at Mount Wutai or they conducted the retreats for self-cultivation.

According to Chou, “as the abode of Manjusri, Wutai Shan has always held enormous ecumenical potential for all major schools of Tibetan Buddhism, each connecting to the deity by way of his human emanations or teacher-disciple relations” (Chou 2011: 134). Drogon Choyal Phagpa, who was the fifth leader of the Sakya School, made his pilgrimage to Mount Wutai in 1257 AD (Cui 2000: 563). In addition, Tibetan Buddhists believe that the founder of the Geluk School, Tsongkhapa, is an incarnation of Manjusri. In fact, the Geluk School became the dominant school of Tibetan Buddhism at Mount Wutai since the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD) under the support of the Manchu emperors, and present Tibetan Buddhist monasteries at Mount Wutai all follow the tradition of the Geluk School.

Besides Jasagh lamas and the Changkya Khutukhtu who were given control over Buddhist affairs by the Manchu emperors and lived at Mount Wutai, His Holiness the Dalai Lama was also associated with Mount Wutai. For example, H.H. the 6th Dalai Lama was the first Dalai Lama who made the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai during the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD), and H.H. the 6th Dalai Lama meditated in a small cave (Figure 26) at Qixian Monastery (棲賢寺) for six years (Cui: 2000 755).²¹



Figure 26: The cave where H.H. the 6th Dalai Lama meditated

In 1908 AD, H.H. the 13th Dalai Lama made a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai and lived at Pusa Ding for six months (Cui 2000: 755). H.H. the Panchen Lama (班禪喇嘛) also made the pilgrimage to

²¹ Qixian Monastery is also known as Guanyin Cave.

Mount Wutai. In May 1925 AD, H.H. the 9th Panchen Lama made a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, and resided at Pusa Ding for almost two months (Cui 2000: 755-6). H.H. the 10th Panchen Lama and H.H. the 11th Panchen Lama visited Mount Wutai in 1980 and 2004 respectively. According to Chou,

[E]ven though historically the grounds of Wutai Shan were always dominated by one school or another and that since the Qing dynasty the Gelukpas have overseen all religious affairs, Khenpo Jikpun's pilgrimage and its subsequent draw of Nyingma pilgrims from eastern Tibet demonstrate the possibility of reinventing Wutai Shan's religious topography through narratives of visionary encounters (Chou 2011: 134).

During the period of the Qing (1636-1912 AD), the Manchu rulers carried out policies that aimed to promote Tibetan Buddhism as well as encourage Tibetan Buddhist practitioners to make the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai in order to solidify the relation with Tibetans. In other words, the Chinese government promoted Mount Wutai's ability to strengthen ethnic unity and social stability (Cui and Zhou 2008: preface). In contemporary China, "the Chinese government had one overriding interest in dealing with questions of ethnicity: maintaining a unified China" (Wicker and Tam 2011: 53).

The Dalai Lama and Mount Wutai since the late 19th century

H.H. the 13th Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso (圖登嘉措), was born in Tibet in 1876 AD. Two years later, Thubten Gyatso was recognized as the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. He was confronted with the threat of British invasion after he took over the control of Tibetan government. In the 29th year of Guangxu of the Qing dynasty (1903 AD), the British Indian Army invaded Tibet and occupied Lhasa in August 1904 AD. The Dalai Lama fled from Lhasa before the British arrived. His first destination was Urga (庫倫), where he stayed over a year. During his time in Urga, the Dalai Lama had several meetings with the 8th Jebtsundamba

Khutuktu (第八世哲布尊丹巴呼圖克圖) and he also gave teachings to local Mongols. In 1906 AD, the Dalai Lama left Urga and went to Kumbum Monastery (塔爾寺), Qinghai. In 1908 AD, the Dalai Lama made the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai on his way to Beijing. The Dalai Lama worshiped Manjusri at Pusa Ding and visited major monasteries at Mount Wutai. Moreover, the Dalai Lama gave teachings to local Buddhist practitioners and had meetings with foreign representatives. He resided at Pusa Ding for six months and left for Beijing in July 1908 AD (Cui 2000: 755).

During that time, Mount Wutai was not only a pilgrimage center of Tibetan Buddhism to the 13th Dalai Lama, but also served as a meeting place for the political purpose. As Token Tada claims,

Wutai Shan afforded to the thirteenth Dalai Lama can be witnessed in frequent meetings with representatives from the capital in Beijing, Tibetan and Mongolian religions, Great Britain, America, Russia, France, Germany, and Japan, who were able to meet with him without the close monitoring of the Qing court (Tada 1965: 95).

In fact, Mount Wutai has a history of being a meeting place for the Chinese government and the delegations from Tibet and Mongolia. According to Gary Tuttle and Johan Elverskog,

From the early seventeenth century onward, Wutai Shan had served as the meeting place for Chinese court officials and representatives from the outlying Tibetan and Mongolian regions, because of its proximity to Mongolia and the capital in Beijing, its perennially cool climate, which was more tolerable for Tibetans and Mongolians, and most importantly, its distinction as a shared place of pilgrimage and devotion among these various groups of people (Tuttle and Elverskog 2011) [cited in Chou 2014: 434].

In other words, the religious importance of Mount Wutai and its geographic location contributed to its political value as a meeting place. This is why the 13th Dalai Lama visited Mount Wutai and spent six months on his way to meet the Manchu court in Beijing. Although the 13th Dalai

Lama visited Mount Wutai only once, the story of the 13th Dalai Lama and Mount Wutai continued in later years.

After the 13th Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa, he gave an order to extend the size of the White Palace (白宮) and the Summer Palace (Norbulingka 羅布林卡). Mural painting was designed as part of the construction work. According to Chou,

The central theme that surfaced in the Eastern Sunlight Hall [東日光殿 located in the White Palace] and at Kelsang Dekyi Palace [格桑德吉宮 located in the Summer Palace] is that of sacred time and place. While calendrical and hagiographical narratives chart the temporal axis, the assembly of sacred sites brings order and structure to the space of the Buddhist universe...According to this scheme, Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya occupies the center of earth (Jambudvipa), while Wutai Shan of China stands as the most exalted place in the east, Shambhala in the north, the Potala Mountain in the south, and Uddiyana of the Land of Dakinis in the west (Chou 2014: 423).

This mural painting of the Buddhist universe depicts Mount Wutai as a sacred site on the earth and also an earthly paradise. It directly shows the important position of Mount Wutai in the cosmology of Tibetan Buddhism. As Chou explains,

This cosmography itself is developed from the classical Indian Buddhist world system most widely studied in Tibet through Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakosabhasyam*, an extremely influential treatise that became one of the core texts in the Gelukpa monastic curriculum (Kloetzli 1987:114) [cited in Chou 2014: 424]. The universe described therein centers around Mt. Meru rising from a Great Ocean. In each direction of Meru are four continents, of which only the southern one is accessible to humans. This southern continent, known as Jambudvipa, corresponds to the physical earth that humans inhabit. It was within this system that Tibetan Buddhist exegetes further mapped the above-named five sacred places onto the five directions of Jambudvipa. These exalted places are therefore both supreme and within worldly reach (Chou 2014: 424).

The role that Mount Wutai plays is to complete “a systematic rendering of the world in accordance with a Tibetan Buddhist cosmology” (Chou 2014: 429). Besides the mural painting under the 13th Dalai Lama's order, “[s]uch depictions of Wutai Shan are also frequently seen in

Tibetan thangka paintings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where the same set of five Manjusri appear on five peaks with corresponding inscriptions” (Chou 2014: 429).

H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama also has connections with Mount Wutai. Mount Wutai is a symbol to show the effort that the current Central Government has made in terms of protection of Tibetan Buddhism. In addition, Mount Wutai plays a role in cultural exchange between the Han Chinese and Tibetans. With this growth of cultural exchange, the contradiction and misunderstanding between two groups will reduce. Most importantly, Mount Wutai is a potential place for negotiation between H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama and the Central Government. “During the Qing and early Republican periods, Wutai Shan also served as the meeting place between the central Chinese government officials and representatives from the outlying religions of Tibet and Mongolia” (Chou 2011: 4). In 2014, H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama indicated again his hope during the interview that he is still waiting for a chance to make the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. In fact, he has proposed this idea to the Central Government in 1954 and again in 2005.²² In recent years, the special representatives of H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama have had ten negotiation meetings with the Central Government officials since 2002. The most recent meeting was in 2010.

In 2014, a rumor spread at Mount Wutai that the Central Government had come to an agreement on the potential of H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama’s return to China, which would be based on H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama’s pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. I attempted to inquire about the reliability of this rumor with Buddhist practitioners at Mount Wutai, but most of them intentionally avoided providing any information that related with H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama. Finally, a Tibetan lama noted that it is true that H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama wishes to make a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. In reality, it is impossible for H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama to return to Tibet any time soon, which makes Mount Wutai a potential place in Mainland China for him to

²² <http://global.dwnnews.com/news/2014-10-08/59612010.html>

temporarily stay.

Improving China's International Relations

The Chinese government has a strong desire to expand their influence worldwide in order to obtain more space to develop. Chinese culture, as an intangible and abstract force, influenced both Chinese society and the Chinese government. As Tim Oakes observes, “there is a long history of cultural governance in China, that governance is now articulated with a global discourse in which culture is increasingly viewed as an expedient resource for specific moderation and development objectives” (Oakes 2010: 57). In addition, Oakes points out, “around the world there has been a ‘cultural turn’ in development policy and practice, with culture being valued as a resource both for the establishment of economic value chains and for community empowerment, ‘good governance’ and ‘sustainability’” (Oakes 2010: 57).

In order to realize the rejuvenation of China, the prosperity of Chinese culture becomes necessary. Chinese culture is a tool to spread China's influence on the international stage. It has not been fully transformed, however, into developmental advantages. In October 2007, at the 17th National Congress of the CCP, the CCP proposed the issue of improving the international influence of Chinese culture, which aims to help other countries to understand and trust China. The goal of establishing a strong and developed nation cannot only rely on economic growth and military force—Chinese culture, including Buddhism, is involved as well.

In China “among the recognized religions, Buddhism is the most advantageous to the diplomatic interests of the PRC government: Christianity and Islam are suspicious in terms of national loyalty, while Daoism is limited to ethnically Chinese societies” (Ji 2013: 22). Therefore, Buddhism is “especially favorable to concepts like ‘soft power’, which are susceptible to being employed to underlie the political superiority of Buddhism in the power games in the Chinese

religious field” (Ji 2013: 22).

It is important to understand the influence of Buddhism in terms of China’s relationships with other countries and national security. Buddhism is useful to the Chinese government to help enhance its international reputation and to publicize the government’s policies of freedom of religious belief, which helps improve China’s international reputation. As Ji points out, “since 1990s, recognizing the increasing influence of Buddhism in Chinese societies and the good image of Buddhism as a pacific religion in the West, the PRC government, at the central level, tends more actively to use Buddhism to realize its aims in its external policies” (Ji 2013: 21). For example, the government has sought to use Buddhism “to promote national reunification in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Chinese diasporas, to strengthen the links between China and Buddhist countries in Asia, and to endorse the CCP’s policies of religion” (Ji 2013: 21).

In this case, Mount Wutai has an advantage over other Buddhist sites in China because it has received international recognition. By promoting the international popularity of Mount Wutai, the Chinese government is making efforts to create a new image of China as open and improving, and to help the country’s reputation with other Buddhist nations. For example, in 2005, as part of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of establishment of China-Nepal diplomatic relation, the Arniko Society of Nepal donated a giant bronze statue of Manjusri to Mount Wutai and the Foreign Secretary of Nepal attended the ceremony of donation (An 2012: 20). The King of Cambodia, Norodom Sihamoni, also visited Mount Wutai in September 2014.²³

As China’s participation in the world economy has increased, the Chinese government has faced more and more “international criticism on human rights grounds of policies aimed at controlling religious practices” (Potter 2003: 12). The Chinese government is aware that China’s policies on the management of religion have had a negative impact on China’s international

²³ http://www.fjnet.com/jjdt/jjdtmr/201409/t20140905_222073.htm

image. The CCP and the Chinese government could use the development of Mount Wutai as a strategy to reshape China's image.

Mount Wutai has gained an international reputation in the West as a heritage site, and it attracts numerous visitors from all over the world. More importantly, the Chinese government could use Mount Wutai as the example to show the world a real situation of Buddhism in China and China's change. In addition, "in recent years, the CCP's utilization of Buddhism as political instrument has also been extended to Taiwan and Hong Kong affairs" (Ji 2011: 42). Mount Wutai has a long history of contact with other Asian countries and overseas Chinese Buddhists. The local government and the Buddhist Association of Mount Wutai has organized an "International Buddhist Cultural Festival of Mount Wutai" since 1998, an event that lasts two weeks from the April 1st to 15th according to the lunar calendar (Hou 2003: 466).²⁴

During the process of secularization, Buddhism is indeed regarded "as an element of *soft power* by the Chinese government, because of its transethnic and international influence in Asia" (Ji 2013: 21). As one of the most prestigious Buddhist sites in China, Mount Wutai influenced the landscape of Chinese Buddhism and its influence has spread to others parts of Asia. Although the aim of developing Mount Wutai was initially for economic reasons, Mount Wutai has political values as well that could be used to serve the political purpose in contemporary China. For example, Mount Wutai could serve as a bridge of communication between the Central Government and Tibetans as it did previously during the Qing (1636-1912 AD). Moreover, because of its international influence in Asia, Mount Wutai represents the reality of Buddhism in contemporary China, which helps improve China's image and betters the country's relationship with other Buddhist countries in Asia and Chinese Buddhists living abroad.

²⁴ In 2015, I had hoped to attend the event, but I was informed that the local government had cancelled the festival; the official who gave me this information offered n explanation.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

During the process of secularization, the CCP and the Chinese government, on the one hand, have created a complex supervisory system to control religion from the national level to the county level in order to institutionalize religion in China. On the other hand, the CCP and the Chinese government also carried out a number of regulations to restrict religion. The Chinese government, however, has begun to take account of the influence of religious communities when they formulate and implement their religious policies. In recent years, the Chinese government has adopted more moderate policies in terms of religious affairs.

Among the five government-approved religions, the CCP and the Chinese government found that Buddhism has political and diplomatic superiority over the others because of its secular values. According to Peter Van der Veer, “the main trouble with Christianity and Islam is that they ‘do not belong’-are not indigenous [to China]” (Van der Veer 2014 66). In addition, Christianity is associated with a history of warfare and colonization. As Van der Veer points out, “in the aftermath of the Opium Wars the Qing government was forced to accept Christian missionaries” (Van de Veer 2014: 87). Compared to world religions like Christianity and Islam, as a Chinese indigenous religion, Daoism is largely limited to Chinese societies and has less international influence than Buddhism. The Chinese government guarantees the freedom of religious belief and practices for the five official religions, but the Chinese government remains skeptical with Christianity and Islam. The reason why the Chinese government promotes and supports Buddhism as well as Daoism is to inhibit the spread of Western influence in China.

In this thesis, I described how religion has suffered under the Republican and that this suffering continued to the CCP's regime. There are two factors that caused this suffering at the early period of both regimes. First, the fate of religion is "deeply imbricated with the formation of the modern state" (Ji 2008: 236). Both regimes labeled themselves as the reformer and aimed to establish a modern state. Under such circumstance,

[D]uring the Republican period (1912–49), Chinese religious beliefs had already been considered by numerous political and intellectual elites as spiritual obstacles to modernization. Thus to an extent the anti-religious policy of modern China had its historical origin here, rather than with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). But when the CCP came into power, the political hostility toward traditional beliefs was strengthened much further and extended to all religions by the ideology of class struggle and historical materialism (Ji 2008: 237).

Second, religion was an influential social force in Chinese society and had a large number of followers. Some religious communities were associated with rebellious movements, but "as long as they did not violate the political order they could be tolerated" (Van de Veer 2014: 87).

In order to maintain power and authority, both the Republican government and the Communist government restricted and repressed religion. Under the control of the CCP, the repression of religion reached a climax during the Cultural Revolution. It became more fierce and violent through political force. Studies on the Cultural Revolution, however, are relatively sensitive in China and the information available to the public is limited. According to a high ranking Buddhist monk, "the Buddhist community in Hong Kong puts great effort into collecting documents and information since the movement took place, and work to collect relevant documents and stories has also started in Mainland China."

During the Cultural Revolution, Buddhism came under attack at Mount Wutai and throughout China. In the 1980s, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, the religious policy changed and religion finally began to revive. In addition, another influential policy, the Reform

and Opening-up (改革開放), also carried out in the 1980s, which transformed the primary task of the Chinese government from launching socialist reform movements to focusing on economic development. The revival of religion brought the secularization to a new stage, which means that the CCP and the Chinese government began to not only restrict religion but also use religious resources to achieve economic increase. As a result, the Chinese government financially supported the reconstruction of some major Buddhist monasteries, but most of monasteries had to rely on their own resources to recover. Under these circumstances, a number of Buddhist monasteries at Mount Wutai started to sell admission tickets in order to earn enough income to maintain the basic living conditions of monasteries.

With the growth of tourism, Buddhist monasteries became popular tourist attractions that brought the development of Mount Wutai to a new level. The local government realized the economic benefits of Buddhism and wanted to take a piece of the economic pie. As such, the local government began to support the development of Mount Wutai in order to improve the local economy. As Ji observes, however, “monasteries have been forced to invest heavily in tourist commercial and marketing activities engineered by the government; as a result their spiritual authority may begin to be doubted by devout lay believers” (Ji 2011: 46).

The CCP and the Chinese government have also explored the political value of Mount Wutai during the process of secularization since the revival of religion in 1980s. First, it was a chance for Mount Wutai to restore its historical role as a bridge of communication between the Central Government and Tibetans, which improved the relationship between the Central Government and Tibet as well as contributed to national unity. Unlike the Manchu emperors, the CCP’s leaders do not make the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai as Buddhist believers. The similarity between the Manchu court and the CCP is to use Mount Wutai to deal with political issues. For

example, both the Manchu court and the CCP use Mount Wutai to solidify Tibetans in order to maintain China as a consolidated nation. In addition, Mount Wutai is an important site to show the Buddhist policy of the Manchu court and the CCP. Second, Mount Wutai is a great example of how the Chinese government has used Buddhist sites to reshape China's image in order to improve their international relation with other countries. As a result, "the political utilization of Buddhism by the central government may further weaken the autonomy of Buddhist institutions in the long run, despite the fact that, compared with the other religions in China, Buddhism now benefits from more favors bestowed by the state" (Ji 2011: 46).

The development of Mount Wutai can be understood as an example of secularization in the Communist China. In this case, the CCP and the government institutionalized and restricted Buddhism at Mount Wutai, and meanwhile they used secular values of the development of Mount Wutai to serve economic and political purposes. Under the influence of secularization, the development of Mount Wutai was associated with the theme of economic benefits at the local level, and political utilization by the Central Government at the national level. As a result, the government supported the development of Mount Wutai and changed the political environment for Buddhism at Mount Wutai. Compared to the period of the Cultural Revolution, the Buddhist community became more influential and the position of Buddhist practitioners improved in negotiations with government officials.

The aim of this research is not to denounce the CCP and the Chinese government in terms of control of religion. I intended to investigate the relationship of the CCP and the Chinese government with religion in contemporary China during the process of secularization. More importantly, I aimed to explore the secularization in the Communist China and the influence of secularization on the development of Buddhist sacred sites, Mount Wutai in this particular case.

In the Communist China, the CCP and the Chinese government not only control religion, but also utilize religious resources to serve certain purposes for the secular Party-state.

I think that the CCP and the Chinese government owe an official apology for what they have done to religious groups and religious believers during the process of secularization. Moreover, the CCP and the Chinese government have a responsibility to face the aftermath of previous socialist reform movements in order to prevent future tragedies like the Cultural Revolution. In addition, the Chinese government needs to focus on improving professional quality of government officials in general, and to train a specialized administrative team of officials with a relevant background and knowledge of religion. I will continuously pay attention on the process of secularization of Buddhism in China. Although the future of the development of Mount Wutai is unpredictable, I sincerely wish Buddhism and Mount Wutai a bright future.

Appendix

List of Dynasties in Chinese History

Name	Chinese	Date	The important event at Mount Wutai
Xia dynasty	夏朝	2029-1559 BC	
Shang dynasty	商朝	1559-1046 BC	
Western Zhou dynasty	西周	1046-771 BC	
Eastern Zhou dynasty	東周	770-255 BC	
Spring and Autumn period	春秋時代	770-403 BC	
Warring States period	戰國時代	403-221 BC	
Qin dynasty	秦朝	221-207 BC	
Western Han dynasty	西漢	206 BC-25 AD	
Eastern Han dynasty	東漢	25-220 AD	In 68 AD, the Great Faith Numinous Vulture Monastery was built at Mount Wutai, which was the first Buddhist monastery at Mount Wutai.
Three Kingdoms	三國	220-280 AD	
Western Jin dynasty	西晉	266-316 AD	
Eastern Jin dynasty	東晉	317-420 AD	According to Zhengsen Cui, Master Daoan introduced Buddhism to Mount Wutai area for the first time (Cui 2000: 88).
Southern and Northern Dynasties	南北朝	420-589 AD	According to Cui, the Great Faith Numinous Vulture Monastery and its twelve subordinate monasteries were built under the Emperor Xiaowen's order (Cui 2000: 122). Emperor Xiaowen of Northern Wei made the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai.
Sui dynasty	隋朝	581-618 AD	Emperor Yang of Sui made the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai.
Tang dynasty	唐朝	618-907 AD	Mount Wutai became a sacred pilgrimage destination.

Five Dynasties and Ten kingdoms	五代十國	907-979 AD	
Northern Song dynasty	南宋	960-1127 AD	
Southern Song dynasty	北宋	1127-1279 AD	Emperor Taizong of Song made the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai.
Yuan dynasty	元朝	1271-1368 AD	Drogon Chogyal Phagpa arrived Mount Wutai in 1257, which labeled the first emergence of Tibetan Buddhism at Mount Wutai (Cui 2000: 540). Emperor Chengzong of Yuan and Emperor Yingzong of Yuan made the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai.
Ming dynasty	明朝	1368-1644 AD	The 5 th Gyalwang Karmapa Deshin Shekpa made a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai in 1407 (Cui 2000: 622). Shakya Yeshe made a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai and resided there for at least four years (1415-1419) (Cui 2000: 623).
Qing dynasty	清朝	1636-1912 AD	Ten Chinese Buddhist monasteries at Mount Wutai were converted to Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in 1705 (Li, Ma and She 2013: 41). Four Manchu emperors made the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. The Manchu court gave the authority to Tibetan lamas regarding religious affairs at Mount Wutai.

Glossary

Name	Chinese	
Abbot	住持	A monk who holds the position of administrator of a Buddhist monastery.
Arhat	阿羅漢	It refers to those who have achieved enlightenment, but have not reached full Buddhahood.
Avalokitesvara	觀音菩薩	The Bodhisattva of Compassion.
<i>baozi</i>	包子	Steamed and filled bun.
Baima Monastery	白馬寺	Located in Luoyang, Henan, which is the first Buddhist monastery in China.
<i>beile</i>	貝勒	A noble title for the Manchu princes during the Qing (1636-1912 AD).
Bells and vajras	金剛鈴和金剛杵	Ritual instruments in Tibetan Buddhism.
Bodhisattva	菩薩	It refers to those who are motivated by compassion and have achieved enlightenment, but decided not to complete nirvana for the benefit of all beings.
<i>dbu mdzad</i>	翁則	The title for the leading lama of chanting in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries.
Deng Xiaoping	鄧小平	Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997) was a Chinese revolutionary and statesman, who was the core of the second-generation leaders of P.R. China.

Dharma Drum Mountain	法鼓山	An international Buddhist organization in Taiwan, founded by Master Sheng-yen.
Falun Gong	法輪功	A spiritual practice originates from China, which combines meditation and <i>qigong</i> . It was first taught by Li Hongzhi in China in 1992. The Chinese government labeled it as an illegal origination in 1999. The government has banned Falun Gong in China.
<i>guoshi</i>	國師	The Imperial Preceptor.
Hui	回族	The Hui people are a predominantly Muslim ethnic group in China.
<i>karmadana</i>	維那	The title for the leading monk of chanting in Chinese Buddhist monasteries.
Lama	喇嘛	The title for a teacher of the Dharma in Tibetan Buddhism, but now it commonly refers to Tibetan Buddhist practitioners in China.
Li Hongzhi	李洪志	The founder and spiritual leader of Falun Gong.
Lin Biao	林彪	Lin Biao (1907-1971) was a Marshal of the People's Republic of China and Mao's designated successor as the sole Vice Chairman of the CCP by that time.
Manjusri	文殊菩薩	The Bodhisattva of Wisdom.
<i>mantou</i>	饅頭	Chinese steamed bun.

Master Daoan	道安法師	Master Daoan (312-385 AD) was a Buddhist monk of the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420 AD).
Master Nenghai	能海法師	Master Nenghai (1886-1967 AD) was a Buddhist monk and religious leader in China. He was also the vice-president of the Buddhist Association of China.
<i>pravrajana</i>	出家	Leaving home.
Prayer flags	經幡	Prayer flags are colorful rectangular cloth, which are commonly hung between two objects in high places.
Prayer wheel	轉經筒	A cylindrical wheel on a spindle with the Buddhist mantra inside of the wheel, which is used in daily life by Tibetan Buddhists.
Shakya Yeshe	釋迦也失	Shakya Yeshe (1354-1435 AD) was a disciple of Tsongkhapa, and he founded Sera Monastery (色拉寺) in Lhasa.
Singing bowl	磬	A singing bowl is commonly used for meditation in Buddhism.
Sun Yat-sen	孫中山	Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925 AD) was a Chinese revolutionary and the first president of the Republic of China.
The Changkya Khutukhtu	章嘉呼圖克圖	The title of the spiritual head of the Geluk School of Tibetan Buddhism in Inner Mongolia.

The Cultural Revolution	文化大革命	A sociopolitical movement from 1966 to 1976 in China.
The Dalai Lama	達賴喇嘛	The highest-ranking lama in the Geluk School and also one of the spiritual heads of the Geluk School of Tibetan Buddhism.
The Great Leap Forward	大躍進	An economic and social campaign (1958-1961) in China, which aimed to transform the state from an agrarian economy into a socialist society.
The Luogouqiao Incident	盧溝橋事變	A battle between the Republic of China's National Revolutionary Army and the Imperial Japanese Army, which marked the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War.
The Panchen Lama	班禪喇嘛	The second highest-ranking lama in the Geluk School and also one of the spiritual heads of the Geluk School of Tibetan Buddhism.
The Red Guards	紅衛兵	A group of fanatic students that caused social chaos during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976.
The Socialist Education Campaign	社會主義教育運動	Also known as the Four Cleanups Movement (四清運動) including “Cleanse Politics (清政治), Cleanse Economy (清經濟), Cleanse Organization (清組織), and Cleanse Thought (清思想).”
The Summer Palace (Norbulingka)	羅布林卡	The summer residence of the Dalai Lama.

The Three Feudatories	三藩之亂	A rebellion in the Qing dynasty (1636-1912 AD).
The White Palace	白宮	The living area of the Dalai Lama in the Potala Palace (布達拉宮).
Tingsha cymbal	鈸	A ritual instrument, which is used by Tibetan Buddhist practitioners.
<i>tulku</i>	祖古	A custodian of a specific lineage of teachings in Tibetan Buddhism.
Urga	庫倫	The former name of Ulaanbaatar (烏蘭巴托), the capital of Outer Mongolia.
Wang Zuoran	王作安	The current director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs (國家宗教事務局).
Zhongnanhai	中南海	The headquarters of the CCP and the Chinese Central Government.

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