

LIU SHUFEN

Ethnicity and the Suppression of Buddhism in Fifth-Century North China: The Background and Significance of the Gaiwu Rebellion

INTRODUCTION

During the ninth lunar month of the year 445 AD, Gaiwu 蓋吳 led the Lushui hu 盧水胡 branch of the Xiongnu 匈奴 people in rebellion against the authority of the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534). The ranks of the Lushui hu were soon swelled by Han Chinese forces, as well as members of the Di 氐 and Qiang 羌 peoples. Gaiwu's rebellion erupted in Xingcheng 杏城 (present-day Huangling 黃陵, in central Shaanxi), but quickly spread to cover much of the province, including the city of Chang'an 長安 and its environs. At its height, rebel territory extended as far west as modern Lanzhou 蘭州 in Gansu, as far east as Hedong 河東 in Shanxi, as far north as Xingcheng, and as far south as the northern banks of the Wei River (see the appended map). The Northern Wei's future hung by a thin thread.¹ The emperor Taiwu (or, Taiwudi 太武帝; r. 435–452) realized the gravity of the situation and personally led his forces in a massive counter-offensive, which would not be successfully concluded until the eighth month of 446.

The Northern Wei forces under Taiwudi's command reached Chang'an during the second month of 446. In the course of the campaign, some soldiers, grazing their horses in fields belonging to a Buddhist monastery (the source fails to name it), discovered that it was full of weapons. This proved to be the spark that ignited one of China's

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¹ *Weishu* 魏書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974; hereafter *WS*) 4, pp. 99–101; *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1956; hereafter *ZZTJ*) 124, pp. 3914–15; Yang Dongchen 楊東晨, *Shaanxi gudai shi* 陝西古代史 (Shaanxi renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), pp. 502–4.

largest and most devastating government suppressions of Buddhism.² Taiwudi was enraged that Buddhists were hoarding weapons.³ An official named Cui Hao 崔浩 (fl. 438–448), who was also a patron of Taoism, then proceeded to recommend the total eradication of Buddhism, and one month later Taiwudi issued an edict designed to implement just such a policy. The emperor's edict was implemented with brutal efficiency, particularly in and around Chang'an. Sources like Huijiao's 慧皎 (497–554) *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳) graphically describe how local monasteries were razed to the ground. Monks were ordered to return to lay life 還俗, and those who refused were summarily executed.⁴

Numerous scholars, including Kenneth K. S. Chen, Tang Yongtong, Tsukamoto Zenryū, Arthur Wright, and Erik Zürcher, have extensively researched the relationship between Buddhism and the nomadic peoples who ruled northern China during much of the medieval era.⁵ These scholars have focused on the ways in which different nomadic rulers chose to patronize Buddhism, as well as on periods of suppression, such as the one described above. However, the ways in which tensions between different ethnic groups in north China may have contributed to Taiwudi's anti-Buddhist campaign has been largely overlooked. By "ethnic group" I do not mean an objective category, but rather a socially constructed concept. Although the ancient Greeks used the term *ethnos* to describe people or animals that shared some biological or cultural traits, most scholars today treat ethnicity as a relational concept: individuals or groups can use ethnic categories as a means of identifying themselves or as labels to define groups considered to be "other." Thus, ethnicity often ends up as negotiable social or political rhetoric employed by various groups, and as a result the ways that they choose to define themselves or label others often change over time. In ancient China terms like Hu 胡, Man 蠻, and Yi 夷 were used

² For an overview, see Tsukamoto Zenryū 塚本善隆, *Tsukamoto Zenryū chosaku shū* 塚本善隆著作集 (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1974) 2, pp. 39–60; Tang Yongtong 湯用彤, *Han Wei Liang Jin Nanbeichao Fojiao shi* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史 (Taipei: Mile chubanshe, 1982), pp. 493–96; Xiang Yannan 向燕南, "Bei Wei Taiwudi mie Fo yuanyin kaobian" 北魏太武帝滅佛原因考辨, *Beijing shifan daxue xuebao (sheke ban)* 北京師範大學學報: 社科版 2 (1984); Luan Guichuan 樂貴川, "Bei Wei Taiwudi mie Fo yuanyin xinlun" 北魏太武帝滅佛原因新論, *Zhongguoshi yanjiu* 中國史研究 2 (1997).

³ Taiwudi's reaction is recorded in *WS* 114, pp. 303–34.

⁴ *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (*T* 2059; hereafter *GSZ*) 10, p. 392B.

⁵ Apart from works cited in the notes above, see Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1964), pp. 145–83; Arthur Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1959), pp. 54–64; and, Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), pp. 180–285.

as labels, and even in modern China the term *minzu* 民族 is employed as a means of defining, objectifying, and classifying various elements of the Chinese population.⁶

Conventional wisdom tends to argue that the emperor's policies were a result of Buddhist-Taoist conflicts at the Northern Wei court, as well as the machinations of Cui Hao and the Taoist master Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之 (fl. 425-448). However, the evidence presented below indicates that Taiwudi's motives may have been more complex, and derived in part from tensions between the Tuoba 拓拔 branch of the Xianbei 鮮卑 people who ruled the Northern Wei and those ethnic groups who opposed them. Beginning early in the fifth century, the Northern Wei faced intense resistance in the areas of north China where Buddhism flourished, particularly around modern Gansu, Hebei, and Chang'an. These conflicts appear to have created a sense of hostility towards Buddhism among some members of the Tuoba elite, which in turn contributed to Taiwudi's drive to eradicate the religion. In addition, recent archeological evidence reveals that Gaiwu and many other members of the Lushui branch of the Xiongnu people were devout Buddhists whose ancestors had fought side-by-side with Buddhist monks while resisting the Northern Wei in Liangzhou 涼州 (Gansu). Tuoba memories of this incident undoubtedly also lay behind Taiwudi's campaigns.

This paper uses the Gaiwu uprising in an attempt to trace the social and cultural history of Buddhism in medieval north China, particularly in and around the medieval metropolis of Chang'an during the fifth and sixth centuries. Beginning in the fourth century, Chang'an served as the capital of the Former and Later Qin kingdoms. Under the patronage and protection of these dynasties' non-Han rulers, a number of major translation projects were undertaken, which attracted members of the Buddhist sangha from far and wide. Beginning in the fifth century, however, the Northern Wei dynasty transferred its capital to Pingcheng 平城 (today's Datong 大同) and then to Luoyang 洛陽, marking Chang'an's decline in political importance. Buddhism continued to enjoy immense popularity in this region, however, a fact that may have played a role in Taiwudi's decision to suppress it.

In order to understand the ethnic and religious history of this key area, I have relied on a variety of sources, including dynastic his-

⁶ See "Introduction," in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds., *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1996), pp. 4-11. For critical studies of ethnicity in China, see Melissa J. Brown, ed., *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*, China Research Monograph 46 (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1996), and Stevan Harrell, ed., *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: U. of Washington P., 1995).

tories, statuary stele inscriptions 造像碑, *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, and Daoxuan's 道宣 (596–667) *Supplement to the Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳). The paper's structure is as follows: I begin by briefly describing the different ethnic groups who resided in Chang'an and its environs, as well as the ways in which they contributed to Buddhism's growth in the area. The second part attempts to put events occurring in the Chang'an area in a broader geopolitical context by focusing on the origins of the Lushui people and their control over vital land transport routes to both Central Asia and the Southern Dynasties during the first half of the fifth century. Finally, I discuss the often antagonistic relationship between Buddhism and the Northern Wei court, the policies towards Buddhism that the dynasty adopted, and the impact of these events on the Gaiwu Rebellion and Taiwudi's subsequent campaign against Buddhism.

ETHNICITY AND RELIGION IN THE CHANG'AN AREA

Thanks to research by leading scholars such as Thomas Barfield, Albert E. Dien, Wolfram Eberhard, Ma Changshou 馬長壽, Scott Pearce, and Tang Changru 唐長孺, we can now better appreciate the extent to which Chang'an and its environs constituted a fluid and complex ethnic environment.⁷ To view this area as a "melting pot" is still debatable, but at the very least it seems to have been a bubbling cauldron of ethnicity. By the early medieval era, the Guanzhong 關中 region of north China (which included much of today's Shaanxi province, including Chang'an) was home not only to Han Chinese but also members of other ethnic groups – Xiongnu, Xianbei, Di, Qiang, Xiuguan 休官, and Tuge 屠各. The Di resided in the north and northwestern portions of Chang'an (Xianyang 咸陽 county and Fufeng 扶風 commandery), while members of the Lushui and other Xiongnu peoples, as well as western and northern Qiang groups, had also settled to the northeast of Chang'an in Fengyi 馮翊 and Xinping 新平 commanderies

⁷ See Thomas Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1989); Wolfram Eberhard, *Conquerors and Rulers: Social Forces in Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 1952); Albert E. Dien, "A New Look at the Xianbei and Their Impact on Chinese Culture," in George Kuwayama, ed., *Ancient Mortuary Traditions of China: Papers on Chinese Ceramic Funerary Sculptures* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1991), pp. 40–59; Ma Changshou, *Beiming suo jian Qian Qin zhi Sui chu de Guanzhong buzhu* 碑銘所見前秦至隋初的關中部族 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985); Scott Pearce, "Form and Matter: Archaizing Reform in Sixth-Century China," in Scott Pearce, Audrey Spiro, and Patricia Ebrey, eds., *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200–600* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2001), pp. 149–78; Tang Changru 唐長孺, "Wei Jin zahu kao" 魏晉雜胡考, in idem, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao luncong* 魏晉南北朝史論叢 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1955). See also Jonathan Karam Skaff, "Survival in the Frontier Zone: Comparative Perspectives on Identity and Political Allegiance in China's Inner Asian Borderlands during the Sui-Tang Dynastic Transition (617–630)," *Journal of World History*, 15.2 (2004), pp. 117–53.

(see Map 1).⁸ Members of these different ethnic and subethnic groups began to arrive in the Guanzhong region as early as the first century AD. Some had migrated of their own free will, but many others were forcibly resettled there after surrendering to the Han dynasty during the first and third centuries. By the third century, these various peoples constituted approximately half of Guanzhong's total population. The Di and Qiang appear to have been the most numerous, with populations exceeding 300,000 each.⁹ Large numbers of Xiongnu people also settled along the northern and southern banks of the Wei River after the Xiongnu rulers of the Former Zhao (319–328) selected Chang'an as their capital. In addition, following successful Former Zhao campaigns against other ethnic groups, over 30,000 Di and Qiang people were forcibly resettled around Chang'an. A few years later, the Di rulers of the Later Zhao (328–350) and their subjects occupied Chang'an, and the city also served as the capital for the Qiang rulers of the Later Qin (386–417).¹⁰

Although the Northern Wei occupied Chang'an in 426, the dynasty's capital was initially situated in Pingcheng, and later Luoyang; relatively few Xianbei chose to settle in the Guanzhong area. The Northern Wei also do not appear to have placed much trust in their new subjects. The biography of the military official Lu Si 陸侯 contains the following statement: "The area around the city of Chang'an is full of dangers. Its people are tough and fierce, and of many different kinds 夫長安一都，險絕之土，民多剛強，類乃非一。"¹¹ Moreover, a letter from Taiwudi to the Liu-Song emperor in 451 contains the following bald statement of ethnic realities:¹²

None of the soldiers that I have deployed is of my people. To the northeast of my capital (Pingcheng) are the Dingling and the Hu, while to the south lie the Di and Qiang. If the Dingling were to die, this would reduce the number of bandits in the Changshan and Zhao commanderies (in present-day Shandong and Shanxi). If the Hu were to die, this would reduce the number of bandits in Binzhou (in present-day Shanxi). If the Di and Qiang were to die, this would reduce the number of bandits in Guanzhong. If you were to kill some of the Dingling and Hu, that would be no great loss.

⁸ Yang, *Shaanxi gudai shi*, p. 502.

⁹ *Jinshu* 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974) 56, p. 1533.

¹⁰ Ma, *Guanzhong buzhu*, p. 6; Han Xiang 韓香, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao shiqi Shaanxi shaoshu minzu fenbu ji xingshi" 魏晉南北朝時期陝西少數民族分布及姓氏, *Shaanxi lishi bowuguan guankan* 陝西歷史博物館館刊 4 (1997), p. 162.

¹¹ *WS* 40, p. 902.

¹² *Songshu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974) 74, p. 1912.

吾今所遣鬥兵，皆非我國人。城東北是丁零與胡，南是三秦氏、羌。設使丁零死者，正可減常山、趙郡賊；胡死，正減并州賊；氏、羌死，正減關中賊。卿若殺丁零、胡，無不利。

Here Taiwudi clearly uses terms like “Di” and “Qiang” as labels to define groups he considered to be hostile to his rule. How such groups actually chose to define themselves remains largely unknown, while on-going attempts to construct their ethnic identity remain a pertinent issue in today’s China.¹³

Chang’an, in earlier times a strategic haven for its key location “inside the passes,” was by the third century growing more important for its relationship with the Silk Road, and thus developed into a thriving Buddhist center that attracted merchants and members of the Buddhist sangha from India and Central Asia.¹⁴ A key event was the arrival of the Yuezhi 月支 (Parthian) monk Zhu Fahu 竺法護 (266–308), who translated many Buddhist sutras and founded a Buddhist monastery in Chang’an that attracted numerous followers and disciples.¹⁵ In the years following Zhu Fahu’s arrival, Chang’an grew into a major religious center, both in terms of translation activities and construction of Buddhist monasteries. The city became home to large numbers of foreign and Han Chinese members of the sangha. An example of this is the Han monk Boyuan 帛遠 (Western Jin era), who built a hermitage 精舍 in Chang’an where he studied and preached the dharma. His followers, both members of the sangha and the laity, numbered over one thousand.¹⁶ Patronage of Buddhism by non-Han peoples is well-documented. One famous case involved Shi Hu 石虎 (r. 335–349), a ruler of the Later Zhao, who began to practice Buddhism after identifying with that religion’s non-Chineseness and being impressed by the spiritual powers of Fotucheng 佛圖澄 (232–348).¹⁷ Under Fotucheng’s leadership, Buddhism flourished throughout north China. Numerous

¹³ Wang Ming-ke, “From the Qiang Barbarians to Qiang Nationality: The Making of a New Chinese Boundary,” in Shu-min Huang and Cheng-kuang Hsu, eds., *Imagining China: Regional Division and National Unity* (Taipei: Institute of Ethnology, 1999), pp. 43–80; Wang Ming-ke 王明珂, *Manzi, Hanren yu Qiangzu 蠻子漢人與羌族* (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 2001).

¹⁴ See in particular Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600–1400* (Honolulu: U. of Hawaii P., 2003); Liu Xinru, *Ancient India and Ancient China: Trade and Religious Exchanges, AD 1–600* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1988); Victor H. Mair, *Painting and Performance: Chinese Picture Recitation and Its Indian Genesis* (Honolulu: U. Hawaii P., 1988); Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* (Berkeley: U. of California P., 1963).

¹⁵ Tang, *Fojiao shi*, p. 220. See also *GSZ* 1, p. 326c.

¹⁶ *GSZ* 1, p. 327A.

¹⁷ *GSZ* 9, p. 385A. See also Arthur Wright, “Fo-t’u-t’eng: A Biography,” *HJAS* 11.3–4 (1948).

monasteries were constructed, and residents of diverse ethnic backgrounds joined the sangha.¹⁸

Chang'an's importance further increased after the Later Qin established its capital there; and in fact it may be argued that Buddhism's golden age occurred in Chang'an under the rule of the Later Qin emperor Yao Xing 姚興 (r. 399–416), who belonged to the Qiang people. His patronage helped attract over five thousand members of the sangha to the city, many of whom engaged in either translation projects or ritual activities. One contemporary account even states that nine out of ten Later Qin households, including both Han Chinese and other peoples, were Buddhist.¹⁹ At times, entire Han Chinese lineages actively engaged in Buddhist practices. One source describing the activities of Zhu Fahu late in the third century in Chang'an tells how one Han Chinese led over a hundred members of his kin group to practice Buddhism.²⁰ In addition, many members of the sangha in Chang'an were classically educated and proved able to befriend and also attract the support and participation of members of the Han Chinese aristocracy. For example, when the eminent monk and translator Dao'an 道安 (312/14–385) resided in Chang'an at the end of the fourth century, Chinese scholars vied for the privilege of exchanging poems with him and they often lauded his literary abilities.²¹ Huijiao, the author of *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, was a southerner, so his work has relatively few accounts of monks in north China. Nevertheless, it does describe how many Han Chinese residing in and around Chang'an decided to "leave the family 出家" and join the sangha, particularly during the Former and Later Qin dynasties. These included eminent monks such as Sengzhao 僧肇 (384–414) and Xuangao 玄高 (402–444).²²

Han and non-Han patronage of Buddhism continued unabated despite frequent shifts in the balance of power in north China. According to Ma Changshou, most of the Buddhist statuary steles from the Guanzhong region that date to between the fifth and sixth centuries were erected by members of the Han and Qiang peoples.²³ A few others

¹⁸ Tsukamoto, *Chosaku shū* 2, pp. 8, 34.

¹⁹ *Jinshu* 117, p. 2985.

²⁰ *GSZ* 4, p. 347B.

²¹ *GSZ* 5, p. 353A.

²² For more biographical data on these and other northern monks, see *GSZ* 3, p. 343B; 5, p. 354B; 6, pp. 362C, 365A; 7, pp. 368B, 369B, 370A, 371A, 374B; 10, pp. 389A, 392B; 11, p. 397A. For an important overview of the role of monks in medieval China, see John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: U. Hawaii P., 1997).

²³ For more on the importance of statuary stele to the study of the social history of Buddhism in medieval China, see Stanley K. Abe, *Ordinary Images* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 2002); Liu Shufen, "Art, Ritual, and Society: Buddhist Practice in Rural China during the Northern Dynasties," *AM* 3d ser. 8.1 (1997), pp. 19–46; Audrey Spiro, "Hybrid Vigor: Memory, Mimesis, and the

were set up by the Di, but there is almost no evidence for Xianbei stele worship in this particular region during that period of time.²⁴ Members of the Qiang and Di did not hesitate to join the sangha. For example, *Biographies of Eminent Monks* describes the career of a monk named Tanyi 曇翼 (no dates; disciple of Dao'an), a member of the Qiang who lived during the late-fourth and early-fifth centuries.²⁵ The same source also recounts the activities of a monk named Huida 慧達 (345–436), a member of the Xiongnu whose lay name was Liu Sahe 劉薩訶.²⁶ Numerous statuary inscriptions also list the names of Qiang members of the sangha. One text from Tongchuan 銅川 in Shaanxi, which records the activities of the local Buddhist charitable society (*yiyi* 義邑) in the year 533, contains the name of a Qiang monk Fumeng Senggui 夫蒙僧貴 (no dates).²⁷ Another text from Fuping 富平 county in Shaanxi dated 539 lists four non-Han monks and one lay Buddhist with the surname Jiao 焦.²⁸ The Jiao probably belonged to the Xianbei people, and also constituted one of Fuping's leading lineages.²⁹

Buddhism's success in attracting such active support among the Han and non-Han peoples in north China appears to have resulted from both state and elite patronage, as well as the efforts of members of the sangha. These men (and a few women as well) traveled throughout north China, preaching the dharma, organizing charitable societies, and presiding over ritual activities. The most renowned members of the sangha attracted large numbers of followers. For example, the Liangzhou monk Xuangao was said to have been served by over one hundred members of the sangha. By the beginning of the fifth century, his popularity led some members of the aristocracy to accuse him of

Matching of Meanings in Fifth-Century Buddhist Art," in Pearce, Spiro, and Ebrey, *Culture and Power*, pp. 125–48. Dorothy C. Wong, "Ethnicity and Identity: Northern Nomads as Buddhist Art Patrons during the Period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties," in Nicola di Cosmo and Don J. Wyatt, eds., *Political Frontiers, Ethnic Boundaries, and Human Geographies in Chinese History* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), pp. 80–118.

²⁴ Ma, *Guanzhong buzhu*, pp. 46–51.

²⁵ GSZ 5, p. 355c.

²⁶ GSZ 13, p. 409b; see also *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (T2060) 25, p. 644c. For more on Liu Sahe, see the classic study by Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤 entitled "Liu Sahe shiji yu ruixiangtu" 劉薩訶事跡與瑞像圖, in Duan Wenjie 段文杰, ed., 1987 *Dunhuang shiku yanjiu guoji taolun hui lunwen ji* 1987敦煌石窟研究國際討論會論文集 (Shenyang: Liaoning meishu chubanshe, 1990), pp. 336–49. See also Chen Zuolong 陳祚龍, "Liu Sahe yanjiu" 劉薩訶研究, in *Huanggang Foxue xuebao* 華岡佛學學報, 3 (1973), pp. 33–56; Roderick Whitfield, "The Monk Liu Sahe and the Dunhuang Paintings," *Orientalism* 20.3 (March 1989), pp. 64–70; Wu Hung, "Rethinking Liu Sahe: The Creation of a Buddhist Saint and the Invention of a Miraculous Image," *Orientalism* (November 1996), pp. 32–43.

²⁷ Ma, *Guanzhong buzhu*, p. 91.

²⁸ See Wang Chang 王昶, *Jinshi cuibian* 金石萃編, in *Shike shiliao xinbian* 石刻史料新編 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1978), first collection, vol. 1, j. 32, p. 14.

²⁹ Ma, *Guanzhong buzhu*, p. 47.

fomenting rebellion, and when he was banished over 300 followers made the journey with him. Later, Xuangao was allowed to return from exile, and he turned his attention to attracting followers among north China's aristocratic families. He eventually included even Taiwudi's heir-apparent Tuoba Huang 拓跋晃 among his disciples before being implicated in political in-fighting at court and executed in the ninth month of the year 444 (see below).³⁰

Less renowned members of the sangha, whose activities authors such as Huijiao chose not to record, worked in urban and rural areas preaching to people about Buddhism and organizing believers into the charitable societies mentioned above. Depending on the region they existed in, these societies were known as *yiyi* or *fayi* 法義. The members of the sangha who headed them were usually referred to as “masters of charitable organizations 邑師.” These groups, which ranged in size from a few dozen to several hundred members, engaged in a wide range of activities, including erecting statuary steles, carving caves for Buddhist images, staging fasts 齋, copying and chanting Buddhist scriptures, building bridges and wells, constructing or repairing roads, distributing food to the needy, and founding “charitable cemeteries 義塚.”³¹ The presence of these and other socioreligious organizations reflects Buddhism's pervading influence in north China, on that encompassed the region's ruling elites and commoners. It is also important to remember that Buddhism exerted considerable financial power in north China as well. For example, Zhu Fahu was renowned for his wealth among the people of Chang'an. One third-century aristocratic family decided to test his charitable nature by pretending to be desperately in debt and asking for an emergency loan of 200,000 cash. A disciple of Zhu named Facheng 法乘 (Western Jin era) saw through the trick and agreed to the loan on behalf of his teacher, who appeared

³⁰ GSZ 11, p. 397B-C.

³¹ For more on the history of these organizations during the Northern Dynasties, see Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to Tenth Centuries*, trans. Franciscus Verellen (New York: Columbia U.P., 1995), pp. 259-77; Michihata Ryōshū 道端良秀, *Chūgoku Bukkyō to shakai fukushi jigyō* 中國佛教と社會福利事業 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1967); Takao Giken 高雄義堅, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shiron* 中國佛教史論 (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1952), pp. 25-36; and Yamazaki Hiroshi 山崎宏, *Shina chūsei Bukkyō no tenkai* 支那中世佛教の展開, 2d edn. (Tokyo: Kiyomizu shoten, 1947), pp. 675-831. For more on such organizations during the Tang, see the essays by Naba Toshisada 那波利貞 in his *Tōdai shakai bunka shi kenkyū* 唐代社會文化史研究 (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1974), esp. pp. 459-678, as well as Hao Chunwen 郝春文, *Tang houqi Wudai Song chu Dunhuang sengni de shehui shenghuo* 唐后期五代宋初敦煌僧尼的社會生活 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998). See also Liu Shufen 劉淑芬, “Beiqi Biaoyi xiangyi cihui shizhu, zhonggu Fojiao shehui jiuji de ge'an yanjiu” 北齊標異鄉義慈惠石柱中古佛教社會救濟的個案研究, *Xin shixue* (*New History*) 5.4 (Dec. 1994), pp. 1-50.

rather puzzled and hesitant. The entire family then began to engage in Buddhist practices.³²

The evidence presented above demonstrates that Buddhism constituted a potent political, social, and economic force in north China. Despite incessant warfare among the groups who lived there, this religion managed not only to survive but also attract a broad base of support that included members of all social classes and ethnic groups. Buddhism's strength made it a force to be reckoned with, but also caused considerable uneasiness among the rulers of north China, particularly the Xianbei. In the following two sections, we turn our attention to the reasons for Xianbei anxiety, particularly the Buddhist and ethnic links to Gaiwu's rebellion.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LUSHUI HU

An important reason for Taiwudi's anxiety over Gaiwu's uprising was the growing influence of the Lushui hu in north and northwest China. There has been much debate over the origins of the Lushui hu,³³ but I tend to concur with research by Zhao Yongfu 趙永復 and Wang Qing 王青, which argues that the Lushui hu were named after the Lu River (Lushui 廬水), which flowed through Anding 安定 commandery and other parts of today's provinces of Ningxia and Gansu.³⁴ The Lushui hu may have originally been part of the Yuezhi hu 月支胡 (also known as the Yueshi hu 月氏胡), a people who during the first centuries AD settled in different parts of northern and northwestern China, including the Dunhuang 敦煌, Anding, and Guanzhong regions. The latter group of Lushui hu, which included the Gai lineage, resided in the area around Xingcheng in Shaanxi.³⁵

Beginning in the third century, the Lushui hu endeavored to establish themselves as a political power in north China, but failed to do so until the beginning of the fifth century, when the Lushui hu leader

³² GSZ 4, p. 347B-C. For more on Buddhism's economic influence in medieval north China, see Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, and Denis Twitchett, "The Monasteries and China's Economy in Medieval Times," *BSOAS* 19.3 (1957), pp. 526-49.

³³ Zhou Yiliang 周一良, "Beichao de minzu wenti yu minzu zhengce" 北朝的民族問題與民族政策, in idem, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilunji* 魏晉南北朝史論集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), pp. 156-57; Tang, "Wei Jin zahu kao," pp. 403-14; Wang Zongwei 王宗維, "Handai Lushui hu de zuming yu judi wenti" 漢代廬水胡族的族名與居地問題, *Xibei shidi* 西北史地 16 (1985); Zhao Yongfu 趙永復, "Guanyu Lushui hu de zuyuan ji qianyi" 關於廬水胡族的族源及遷移, *Xibei shidi* 23 (1986); Wang Qing 王青, "Ye lun Lushui hu yi ji Yueshi de juchu yu zuyuan" 也論廬水胡以及月氏胡的居處和族源, *Xibei shidi* 65 (1997).

³⁴ Zhao, "Lushui hu de zuyuan," pp. 43-46; Wang, "Ye lun Lushui hu," pp. 25-26.

³⁵ Wang, "Ye lun Lushui hu," pp. 27-28.

Juqu Mengxun 沮渠蒙遜 took the throne of the kingdom of Daliang 大涼 (better known as Northern Liang 北涼) in 401. While not particularly large or long-lived, this kingdom was important due to the fact that it bestrode the trade routes from north China to Central Asia (see below). In 412, Juqu Mengxun established his capital at Guzang 姑臧 (in today's Wuwei 武威, Gansu). By 431, however, the collapse of the Western Liang (Xiliang 西涼) and Xia 夏 kingdoms caused the Northern Liang and Northern Wei to share a common border. To the Northern Wei, which aimed to establish complete control over north China and the trade routes to Central Asia, the Northern Liang was an obstacle that had to be removed. Accordingly, in 439, the Northern Wei made war on the Northern Liang, and soon took its capital city of Guzang.³⁶ Juqu Mengxun's son Juqu Mujian 沮渠牧犍 surrendered to the Northern Wei and was forcibly resettled near the Northern Wei's capital Pingcheng along with 30,000 of his subjects. His surrender did not mark the end of Juqu power in northwest China, however, as his younger brother Juqu Wuhui 沮渠無諱 led the remaining Lushui hu forces through Gansu to as far west as Xinjiang, taking the strategic sites of Jiuquan 酒泉, Dunhuang, Shanshan 鄯善 (Ruoqiang 若羌, Xinjiang) and Gaochang 高昌 (Turfan 吐魯番, Xinjiang) during the years 439-442. In other words, while the Northern Liang ruler Juqu Mujian and other members of the royal family were in effect prisoners near Pingcheng, the overall power of the Lushui hu, which Tang Changru has referred to as the "government of Juqu in Gaochang 高昌沮渠政權," had not collapsed. The Northern Wei had to face this strategic challenge until 460, when the Rouran 柔然 people conquered the Lushui hu who had moved to Gaochang.³⁷

In addition, by the fifth century most of the Lushui hu were concentrated in the Hexi 河西 and Shaanbei 陝北 regions of north China, which allowed them to exert extensive control over transportation routes in the Central Plain, southern China, and Central Asia. The Northern Liang controlled routes to Central Asia that ran through areas under its control, especially Dunhuang and Gaochang. Beginning in Han-dynasty times, Gaochang had developed into perhaps the most important trans-

³⁶ For more on Taiwudi's campaigns, see David A. Graff, *Medieval Chinese Warfare, 300-900* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 72-73.

³⁷ Tang Changru, "Beiliang Chengping qinian xiejing tiji yu xiyou tongwang Jiangnan de daolu" 北涼承平七年寫經題記與西域通往江南的道路, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao Sui Tang shi ziliao* 魏晉南北朝隋唐史資料 1 (1979), p. 5; Tang Changru, "Nanbeichao qijian xiyou yu Nanchao de ludao jiaotong" 南北朝期間西域與南朝的陸道交通, *idem*, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilun shiyi* 魏晉南北朝史論拾遺 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983).

portation hub on the roads leading westward out of China. Any political power that was able to occupy the ancient city of Gaochang (the ruins of which lie some 20 kilometers east of today's Turfan) could exert near complete control over routes running from China and the Mongolian plains to the northern stretches of the Tianshan 天山 regions. It would not be an exaggeration to state that all roads from China to the West led to Gaochang, which was a strategically vital location in ancient times, and even today is referred to as the "Gateway to the Western Regions 西域的門戶."³⁸ The Lushui hu lost some control over these routes following the collapse of the Northern Liang, but their ability to reestablish a power base in Gaochang allowed them to retain some measure of strategic importance.³⁹ Moreover, the Lushui hu took advantage of their position to establish close contacts with the Liu-Song dynasty, which included exchanges of envoys.⁴⁰ The Northern Wei launched a series of attacks on the Lushui hu in 444 and 445, but the Lushui hu retained at least some control over strategically important parts of the northwest until at least the 450s.

During the years following the fall of the Northern Liang, members of the Lushui hu who had been forcibly resettled continued to resist the authority of the Northern Wei, and two rebellions occurred in the years just prior to Gaiwu's uprising. The first took place in today's Shanxi province in 444, and was led by a member of the Juqu royal family named Juqu Bing 沮渠秉 (one of Juqu Mengxun's sons) and a member of the Shu 蜀 people named Xue Andu 薛安都.⁴¹ The second, which took place in Xingcheng in the third month of the year 445, was led by a Lushui hu named Hao Wen 郝溫. As mentioned above, Gaiwu and members of his lineage resided in and around Xingcheng, and at least some of them fought alongside Hao Wen.⁴² These events must have caused Taiwudi to treat the Lushui hu as a thorn in his side, an attitude only further aggravated by the Gaiwu Rebellion.

³⁸ Dong Yuxiang 董玉祥 and Du Doucheng 杜斗城, "Beiliang Fojiao yu Hexi zhu shiku de guanxi" 北涼佛教與河西諸石窟的關係, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 1 (1986), p. 90.

³⁹ Duan Lianqin 段連勤, "Gongyuan wu shiji shangbanye Gaochang lishi fawei" 公元五世紀上半葉高昌歷史發微, *Xibei shidi* 31 (1988), p. 100.

⁴⁰ Ikeda On 池田溫, "Gaochang san bei luekao" 高昌三碑略考, Xie Chongguang 謝重光, trans., *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊 13-14 (1988), pp. 148-49.

⁴¹ *WS* 42, pp. 941-42; *ZZTJ* 124, p. 3906. The Xue also fought alongside the Lushui hu during the Gaiwu Rebellion (see below).

⁴² *WS* 42, pp. 941-42; Tang, "Wei Jin zahu kao," p. 410.

THE GAIWU REBELLION AND
TAIWUDI'S SUPPRESSION OF BUDDHISM

Matters went from bad to worse upon the outbreak of the Gaiwu Rebellion, which began during the ninth month of 445. The *Zizhi tongjian* records that before the rebellion erupted there were rumors that someone with the name Wu would overthrow the Northern Wei, but no obvious millenarian beliefs appear to have been involved.⁴³ Gaiwu's uprising differed significantly from the earlier rebellion led by Hao Wen. For one thing, it appears to have been better organized. Soon after Gaiwu rebelled, members of the Qiang joined his ranks,⁴⁴ followed two months later by members of the Shu-Xue 蜀薛 lineage led by Xue Yongzong 薛永宗.⁴⁵ Gaiwu soon assumed the title of king of Tiantai 天台王 (Tiantai refers to a place near Xingcheng, not the better-known Tiantai area of Zhejiang), but during the second year of the uprising he changed this title to "king of the lands of Qin 秦地王" in order to attract support from members of the Di, Qiang, and Tuge peoples. Gaiwu's recruiting efforts appear to have enjoyed some success, as over 100,000 Han and non-Han peoples from the Guanzhong area responded to his call to arms. Gaiwu also sent an envoy to solicit assistance from the Liu-Song, but nothing seems to have come of that particular endeavor.⁴⁶

The Gaiwu Rebellion constituted the most serious threat that the Northern Wei had faced since its founding. In the tenth month of 445, an army commanded by Tuoba Qi 拓拔紇 that had been deployed to crush Gaiwu was utterly defeated, prompting Taiwudi to concentrate his forces in the Chang'an area, where they were placed under the leadership of Shusun Ba 叔孫拔. Gaiwu's forces continued to advance, however, quickly occupying the western and southeastern portions of today's Shaanxi province. By the eleventh month of the 445, the rebels reached Chang'an, where they were attacked by Shusun Ba's contingent of Northern Wei forces that had been charged with defending the city. Taiwudi also attempted to prevent Gaiwu's forces from linking up with rebel troops led by Xue Yongzong, and he did so by ordering another branch of the Shu-Xue to build fortifications along the banks

⁴³ *ZZTJ* 124, p. 3914; see also Shi Guangming 施光明, "Bei Wei Gaiwu qiyi ji qi xingzhi chutan" 北魏蓋吳起義及其性質初探, *Ningxia jiaoyu xueyuan Yinchuan shizhuan xuebao (shehe ban)* 寧夏教育學院銀川師專學報 (社科版) 3 (1991).

⁴⁴ *WS* 4, p. 100.

⁴⁵ *WS* 42, pp. 941-42; Liu Shufen, "Bei Wei shiqi de Hedong Shu Xue" 北魏時期的河東蜀薛, *Chūgoku shigaku* 中國史學 11 (2001), pp. 37-55.

⁴⁶ *ZZTJ* 124, p. 3915; *Songshu* 95, pp. 2339-41; Tang, "Wei Jin zahu kao," p. 410.

of the Yellow River in order to cut transportation routes between the two armies.⁴⁷ Taiwudi's appreciation of the gravity of the situation can also be seen by the fact that he even decided to take matters into his own hands and lead his troops into battle, surrounding and then inflicting a crushing defeat on Xue Yongzong's troops at Yongzhou 雍州 (near today's Linfen 臨汾, Shanxi). All of Xue's family members who survived the fighting – men, women, and children – proceeded to drown themselves in the Fen 汾 River. Taiwudi's forces finally reached Chang'an in the second month of 446, killing Han and non-Han resisters en route. A third force of Northern Wei soldiers routed Gaiwu's forces at Xingcheng, but after they left Gai returned home and rekindled the flames of war against the dynasty. Further fighting continued until the eighth month of 446, when Gai died suddenly of unexplained causes. Northern Wei troops then quickly exterminated any remaining rebel forces, and the rebellion, which had lasted almost an entire year, was finally suppressed.⁴⁸

As I noted at the beginning of this paper, Taiwudi's fierce anti-Buddhism campaign appears to have been prompted at least in part by his fear of Buddhism's influence among different ethnic groups in north China. Buddhism's widespread clout and popularity in the region, including Chang'an and its environs, have also been described above, but few of the scholars who have studied the history of medieval Buddhism have addressed the question of why Taiwudi's suppression of Buddhism began in Chang'an. This problem is particularly relevant because in 446 the capital of the Northern Wei was not in Chang'an but in Pingcheng. The evidence presented below indicates that Taiwudi's decision to start his suppression in Chang'an, as well as have it thoroughly enforced there, may have resulted from two key factors. The long-term cause involved Northern Wei concerns about Buddhism's links to hostile ethnic groups, while the proximate cause was Gaiwu's rebellion and his lineage's ongoing patronage of Buddhism.

To understand the Northern Wei's attitude towards Buddhism, we must go back in time to the beginning of the fifth century, when the dynasty had just been established after over a century of fierce ethnic conflict in north China. At that time, the region was a thriving center of Buddhism, so the Northern Wei emperors initially adopted a tolerant and at times even benevolent attitude in an attempt to win over the hearts and minds of their new subjects.⁴⁹ However, in the year 402 a

⁴⁷ *WS* 42, p. 941; *ZZTJ* 124, p. 3915; Liu, "Bei Wei shiqi de Hedong Shu Xue."

⁴⁸ *WS* 4, p. 100; *ZZTJ* 124, pp. 3915–22. ⁴⁹ Tsukamoto, *Chosaku shū* 2, pp. 11–26.

Buddhist rebellion, led by a sramana (*shamen* 沙門) named Zhang Qiao 張翹, erupted in Xingtang 行唐 (in today's Hebei). In the course of this uprising, Zhang, who referred to himself as the "Supreme King" (Wushang Wang 無上王), joined forces with Xianyu Cibao 鮮于次保 of the Dingling 丁零 people.⁵⁰ Government forces proved stronger, however, and the rebellion was crushed in just two months. While Zhang's uprising was short-lived, it proved to be the first of ten religious rebellions during the Northern Wei inspired by millenarian beliefs in the Maitreya Buddha and Prince Moonlight (Yueguang pusa 月光菩薩),⁵¹ leaving the Northern Wei deeply impressed by both Buddhism's strong social base among the various peoples of northern China as well as its potential for inspiring insurrection.⁵²

The Northern Wei's relationship with Buddhism fared little better in the other Buddhist center of Liangzhou. In the year 439, a Northern Wei force invaded the territory of the Northern Liang, which was ruled by the Juqu clan of the Lushui branch of the Xiongnu. The Juqu were devout Buddhists and had sponsored a translation of the *Nirvana Sutra*. They continued practicing Buddhism even after being driven into Xinjiang.⁵³ During the siege of Liangzhou, the Northern Liang side grew short of manpower, and "forced" over three thousand monks residing in the city to help man the walls.⁵⁴ Whether these monks possessed some degree of martial training like the renowned Shaolin 少林 monks of late imperial China is unclear,⁵⁵ but the act of armed resistance, which occurred against forces led by Taiwudi, made a distinctly unfavorable impression upon the emperor.⁵⁶ After the fall of Liangzhou,

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 145–50; see also *WS* 2, pp. 39–40.

⁵¹ See Erik Zürcher, "Prince Moonlight: Messianism and Eschatology in Early Medieval Chinese Buddhism," *TP* 68 (1982), pp. 1–75; see also Barend ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 120–23.

⁵² Tsukamoto, *Chosaku shū* 2, p. 181.

⁵³ Omura Seigai 大村西崖, *Shina bijutsu shi, chōsō hen* 支那美術史雕塑篇 (Tokyo: Bussho kankokai zozobu, 1915) 1, pp. 176–78.

⁵⁴ These events are vividly described in *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 25, p. 646c; see also Tsukamoto, *Chosaku shū* 2, p. 57.

⁵⁵ In a recent article, Meir Shahaar notes that while Shaolin monks did fight for Li Shimin 李世民 (the future Tang emperor Taizong 太宗; r. 627–49) in 621, no source states that they had studied the martial arts in their monastery; rather, they might have received martial training outside the monastery, or been trained *ad hoc* before battle; Shahaar, "Ming-Period Evidence of Shaolin Martial Practice," *HJAS* 61.2 (December 2001), pp. 362–64; "Epigraphy, Buddhist Historiography, and Fighting Monks: The Case of the Shaolin Monastery," *AM* 3d ser. 13.2 (2000), pp. 15–36.

⁵⁶ Tsukamoto, *Chosaku shū* 2, p. 58; Yao Chongxin 姚崇新, "Bei Liang wangzu yu Gaochang Fojiang" 北涼王族與高昌佛教, *Xinjiang shifan daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 新疆師範大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) 1 (1996); Lu Qingfu 陸慶夫, "Wu Liang Fojiang ji qi dongchuan" 五涼佛教及其東傳, *Dunhuangxue jikan* 25 (1994), pp. 13–16.

he responded by ordering that all surviving monks be put to death. However, Taiwudi's younger brother and Kou Qianzhi pleaded for clemency, arguing that the monks had fought against their will. Taiwudi relented, but did command that the monks be split up into small groups and sent to perform forced labor in different parts of the realm.⁵⁷ The monk Xuangao described above, who attracted so many followers from among the northern elite, was also from Liangzhou, having been forcibly relocated to Pingcheng after the successful Northern Wei campaign against the Northern Liang in 439.

We have seen in the pages above that the Northern Wei's relationship with Buddhism was severely strained in the two Buddhist centers located in Hebei and Liangzhou. As for Chang'an and the Guanzhong area, there is evidence that even before Gaiwu's rebellion Taiwudi was concerned about Buddhism's strength there. In the first month of the year 444, he issued an edict forbidding people to house either sramana or shamans 師巫. Those religious specialists caught in the act were to be put to death, as were the families of those who had housed them.⁵⁸ The edict, which was vigorously enforced in the Chang'an area, directly contradicted the policies of the Northern Wei's first rulers. According to *Weishu*, the second emperor, Mingyuandi 明元帝 (r. 409-424), "...loved the Yellow Emperor and Laozi and held highly the law of the Buddha. In all corners of the capital he set up images and statues and commanded the sramana to guide the people's customs."⁵⁹ Taiwudi's edict of 444 had the effect of dragging the sangha back from the people and locking them in their monasteries.⁶⁰ The fact that this edict was enforced in Chang'an reveals that Taiwudi had also become concerned about Buddhism's strength there. Taiwudi's unease appears to have deepened after Xuangao and his companion Huichong 慧崇 were implicated in plots to overthrow the Northern Wei and put to death. Tang Yongtong has argued that their execution may have marked the beginning of Taiwudi's persecution of Buddhism.⁶¹

The more immediate cause of Taiwudi's anti-Buddhist campaign was the discovery of weapons in a local Buddhist monastery near Chang'an during the fighting against Gaiwu's forces. The effect this discovery had on Taiwudi is not difficult to imagine. His ancestors had

⁵⁷ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 25, p. 646c.

⁵⁸ *WS* 4, p. 97.

⁵⁹ See "Wei Shou: Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism," English trans. of Tsukamoto Zenryū's Japanese annotated translation by Leon Hurvitz, in Seiichi Mizuno and Toshio Nagahiro, eds., *Yunkang: The Buddhist Cave-Temples of the Fifth Century A.D. in North China* (Kyoto: Kyoto University, 1956), volume 16 (Supplement and Index), pp. 23-103, esp. p. 52.

⁶⁰ Tsukamoto, *Chosaku shū* 2, p. 59.

⁶¹ *GSZ* 11, pp. 397c-98a; Tang, *Fojiao shi*, p. 492.

been forced to put down one Buddhist rebellion, and he himself had encountered armed Buddhist monks fighting on behalf of the very same branch of the Lushui hu who were in the process of rebelling. Taiwudi was probably also well aware of the fact that the Gais were practicing Buddhists, and that Buddhism was highly popular in and around the Gai homeland at Xingcheng. Evidence for the Gai lineage's support of this religion comes from Buddhist caves and statuary steles in the area around Xingcheng. For example, an inscription from Xiangfang 香坊 Cave in Huangling county (that is, fifth-century Xingcheng) lists the male donors as bearing the surname Gai; their wives were western Qiang of the Sixian 似先 and Wang 王 lineages. The images of twenty-two donors (ten male, twelve female) portray them clothed in non-Han costume.⁶² In addition, a Buddhist cave temple built near Fudi 福地 Reservoir (present-day Yijun 宜君 county, southwest of Huangling) in the year 535 was the site of a Buddhist charitable organization boasting members of both the Gai lineage and members of the western Qiang.⁶³ Finally, a statuary inscription from the year 548 found in Huangling in 1978 lists the names of twenty-nine donors, most of whom were Lushui hu named Gai and western Qiang named Sixian. This latter inscription also indicates that members of the Gai and Sixian families intermarried.⁶⁴ All this is evidence that the Gais were not only enemies of the Northern Wei but also practicing Buddhists who actively patronized their religion and devoted much of their wealth to it.

Taiwudi's suppression of Buddhism began during the spring of 446. The emperor not only accused some monks of hiding weapons for Gaiwu's forces, but also complained that they helped local aristocrats evade taxes and sported with their women. Taiwudi ordered that all sramana from the Chang'an region be executed, and all Buddhist statues destroyed. The emperor himself began to enforce this decree in and around Chang'an, and ordered his heir-apparent Tuoba Huang to implement the command throughout the rest of the Northern Wei empire as well. Tuoba Huang did all in his power to prevent Taiwudi from acting unchecked, but Buddhism suffered grievously in the years immediately following the Gaiwu Rebellion.⁶⁵

⁶² Jin Zhilin 靳之林, "Shaanbei faxian yipi Beichao shiku he moai zaoxiang" 陕北发现一批北朝石窟和摩崖造像, *WW* 4 (1989), pp. 62.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁶⁴ Jin Zhilin, "Yan'an diqu faxian yipi Fojiao zaoxiangbei" 延安地区发现一批佛教造像碑, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 5 (1984), p. 45.

⁶⁵ *WS* 4, pp. 100-1; 114, pp. 3023-34; *ZZTJ* 124, p. 3923.

Anti-Buddhist sentiments also appear to have played a part in Taiwudi's decision to exterminate some of the remaining members of the Juqu lineage who lived under his control. For example, during the first month of the year 447, he ordered that a Juqu princess in his court who had been given the honorific title Zhaoyi (Juqu Zhaoyi 沮渠昭儀; the sources do not reveal her real name) commit suicide due to her alleged involvement with the well-known monk Tanwuchen 曇無讖 (385-433), a sramana from Jibin 罽賓 (today's Kandahar-Kashmir area) who had preached the dharma throughout northwest China. He found great favor in the court of the Northern Liang ruler Juqu Mengxun, and was one of the most important figures behind the translation of the *Nirvana Sutra*, as mentioned above. Impressed by his reputation, Taiwudi had invited Tanwuchen to the Northern Wei court in the year 432, but Juqu Mengxun, unwilling to part with him yet also wary of offending the Northern Wei, had the monk put to death.⁶⁶ As for Juqu Zhaoyi, she was one of Juqu Mengxun's daughters. In the year 433, Taiwudi, who at the time was still attempting to establish peaceful relations with the Northern Liang, asked for and was granted her hand in marriage. The charges Taiwudi leveled against Juqu Zhaoyi and her sisters years later would claim that even before meeting Tanwuchen they had "all practiced heterodox ways, and took part in wild orgies with their friends 皆爲左道, 朋行淫佚," and that Tanwuchen had provided the Juqu women with instruction about "the joining of men and women 男女交接."⁶⁷ Of course, all this was supposed to have happened over fifteen years before Juqu Zhaoyi was ordered to commit suicide, so why the emperor chose to file such charges at such a late date remains a mystery.⁶⁸ Perhaps the fact that he resurrected Tanwuchen's ghost in order to deal with members of the Lushui hu reflected ongoing hatred for this ethnic group and their religious beliefs.

In addition to ordering Juqu Zhaoyi to take her own life, Taiwudi also decreed that all members of the Juqu lineage be put to death during the first month of the year 447. The sole exceptions were Juqu Mujian 沮渠牧犍, Juqu Wannian 沮渠萬年, and Juqu Zu 沮渠祖. Taiwudi spared the latter two members of the Juqu lineage because they had surrendered without a fight to Northern Wei forces during the campaign to take Guzang, and this apparently caused him to trust them more than other members of their lineage. Juqu Mujian was one of Juqu Mengxun's sons, and Juqu Zhaoyi's older brother. His life was spared because in

⁶⁶ *WS* 99, pp. 2208-9; *ZZTJ* 122, p. 3845.

⁶⁷ *WS* 99, p. 2208.

⁶⁸ Many scholars consider the charges against Tan and Juqu Zhaoyi to have been baseless; see Kieschnick, *Eminent Monk*, p. 155, n. 21.

437 he had agreed to marry Taiwudi's favorite younger sister, the princess Wuwei 武威公主, who was known to have accompanied Taiwudi during his wars against the Northern Liang. This was clearly a match of political convenience for all involved, but at least allowed Juqu Mujian the luxury of outliving many of his relatives for a few weeks. However, he was ordered to commit suicide in the third month of the year 447 over the protests of his princess bride, who insisted on being buried alongside her Lushui hu husband despite having been forced to remarry.⁶⁹ Juqu Wannian and Juqu Zu were forced to commit suicide in the first month of 452, after being accused of plotting to overthrow the Northern Wei.⁷⁰ Taiwudi's victory over the Juqu remnants of the Northern Liang was short-lived, however, since he was murdered the very next month. Eight months later, Tuoba Huang's eldest son, Tuoba Rui 拓拔濬, emerged victorious from the ensuing political struggles and assumed the Northern Wei throne as Wenchengdi 文成帝 (r. 452-465). One of his first acts upon assuming the throne was to rescind Taiwudi's anti-Buddhist measures.⁷¹ Moreover, the Gai lineage and other Lushui hu remained a force to be reckoned with. The Gai not only continued to practice Buddhism despite Taiwudi's persecution, but even rose again in rebellion during the reign of the emperor Xianwendi 獻文帝 (r. 466-471).⁷²

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The evidence presented above reveals that previous analyses of Taiwudi's motives for launching the anti-Buddhism campaign may need to be revised. While Buddhist-Taoist rivalries at court may have had some influence on Taiwudi's decision-making process, it also seems readily apparent that his policies had been shaped by years of bitter experience in trying to suppress non-Tuoba peoples whose strength derived in part from Buddhism. Small wonder then that Taiwudi would have been so infuriated by the discovery of weapons in a Buddhist monastery with possible links to the Gaiwu Rebellion. What with visions of Liangzhou's armed monks dancing in his head, his decision to launch a thorough suppression of Buddhism, particularly in Chang'an and its environs, begins to seem somewhat more comprehensible. Therefore, it would appear that Taiwudi's suppression of Buddhism resulted from a complex combination of political, religious, and ethnic factors that prompted the emperor's decision to destroy enemies from a rival ethnic

⁶⁹ *WS* 83, p. 1824; 99, p. 2209; *ZZTJ* 123, p. 3866.

⁷⁰ *WS* 99, p. 2209.

⁷¹ *WS* 114, pp. 3035-36.

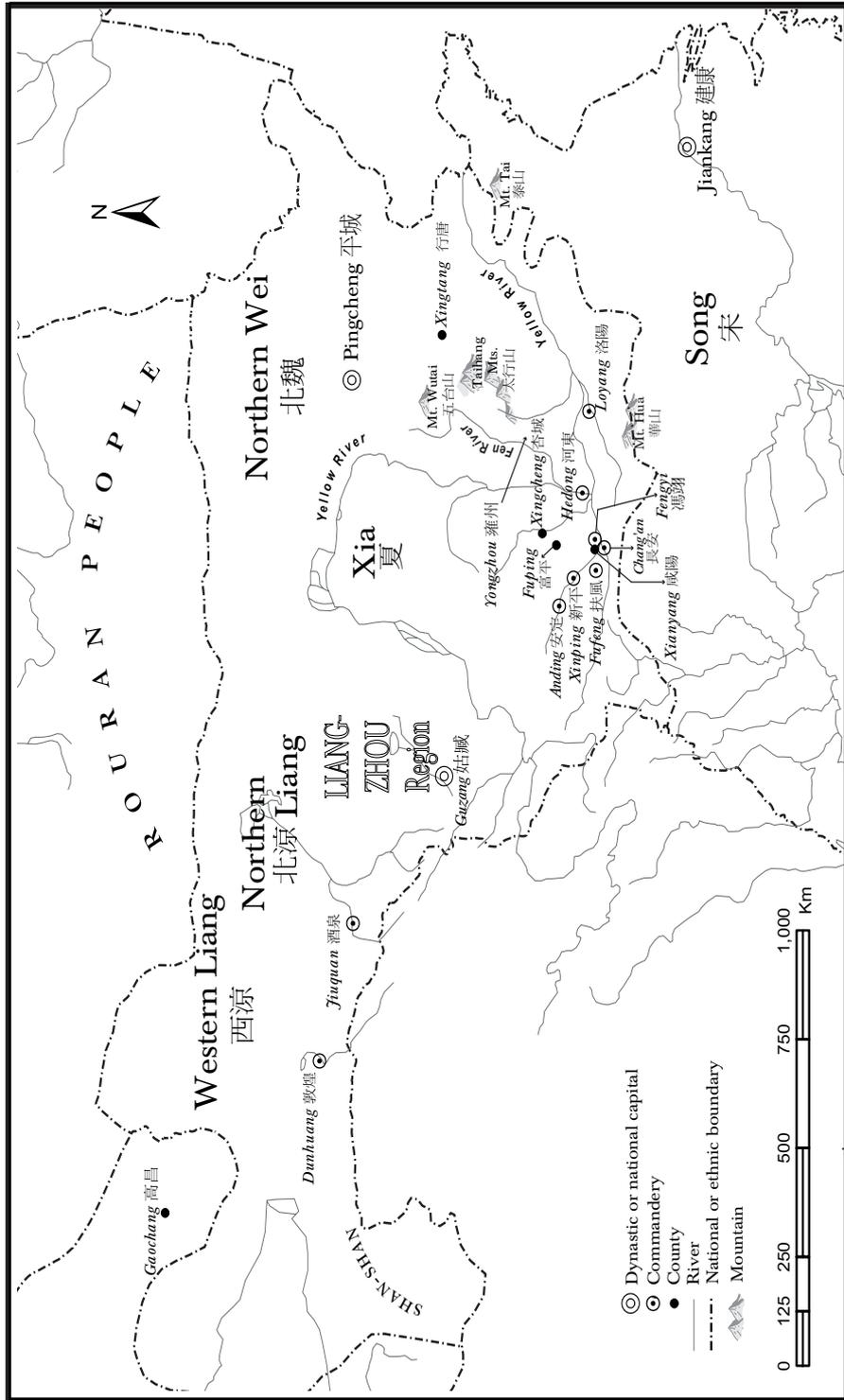
⁷² *WS* 43, p. 963.

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group by crushing the religion that had helped nurture their ambitions. Although the exact role ethnic tensions played may never be known, this case study may help us better appreciate the ways in which ethnicity may have shaped Buddhism's fortunes in medieval China.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>GSZ</i>	<i>Gaoseng zhuan</i> 高僧傳
<i>WS</i>	<i>Weishu</i> 魏書
<i>ZZTJ</i>	<i>Zizhi tongjian</i> 資治通鑑



North China at the Time of the Gaiyou Rebellion

Note: W. Liang, N. Liang, and Xia had all fallen by the time of the Rebellion.