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## Cai Yuanpei (1868–1940), Religion, and His Plan to Save China through Buddhism

### ABSTRACT:

This article examines the evolution of Cai Yuanpei's (1868–1940) views on religion in general and Buddhism in particular, focusing on his little-known essay, "Protecting the Nation through Buddhist Teachings" (1900). The twofold aim is to explain how a generally secularist leader such as Cai could have once advocated Buddhism as a key in constructing a modern nation but then changed his views. Toward this end I analyze Cai's writings and probe the sources of his ideas. This investigation reveals that Cai derived pro-Buddhist ideas from modernist Japanese Buddhism and from native Chinese thinkers fearful of Christianity and disenchanted with Confucianism. I argue that Cai's gradual change was due to Western secular philosophies and to his experiences with religious groups. I suggest that Cai wrestled with a fundamental issue for modern states, which remains divisive worldwide to this day: whether to grant a given religion or ideology a privileged place in the national constitution. An annotated translation of Cai's essay is appended.

### KEYWORDS:

Cai Yuanpei, religion, Buddhism, *jiao* (teachings/religion), *guo* (nation/state), Inoue Enryō

What are the indispensable elements of a modern, viable nation-state? Is a system of political and ethical teachings – a national ideology or religion – a necessary element? If so, which teachings are suitable, and what roles should they play in public life? These questions plagued intellectuals in China during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) from the late-nineteenth century onward. Such questions were, of course, not unique to China, but the details of their answers were.

At the turn of the twentieth century, some Chinese thinkers argued that what China needed was religion and that the religion it needed was Buddhism. This article discusses a stillborn scheme, formulated

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by a man who reached the highest strata of political and academic leadership, to save China with Buddhism. I will show how the scheme was, in effect, later rejected by its formulator. Rising expectations for Buddhism during social crisis, followed by dampening enthusiasm, describes the attitudes of many other political elites in the early-twentieth century. The same pattern has recurred through Chinese history. In times of crisis, Buddhism is often China's religion of the future, and perhaps it always will be.

Intellectuals in late-nineteenth century China generally assumed that some form of "teachings" (*jiao* 教) were required to strengthen China to resist foreign aggression. But they disagreed over which teachings were necessary. For two millennia, Confucianism had been the official state ideology in China, yet confidence in that evolving, multi-stranded tradition fractured as the Qing empire's power waned.<sup>1</sup> Some thinkers believed the time was ripe for Buddhist teachings to help reform or even replace Confucianism and to defend China from cultural colonization by Christianity.

Among these thinkers was Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940), whose 1900 essay "Protecting the Nation through Buddhist Teachings" argues that China needed Buddhism for national salvation. In brief, it holds that a nation requires a teaching to civilize its people and to assure its survival. However, Cai claims that, tragically, China had lost the true teachings of Confucius. But following the ideas of the Japanese Buddhist philosopher Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1856–1919), Cai also discovers that Buddhism still contains the true teachings that Confucianism has lost, and even more. Cai assumes that only three teachings are available to China: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Since for Cai, Christianity is patently false and Confucianism hopelessly distorted by its political entanglements, Buddhism is China's only choice. Yet Buddhism would have to be reformed before it can serve as a national teaching. Again taking his cues from Inoue, Cai sketches a five-point plan to reform Buddhism. This new Buddhism should be free of rituals and focused on education; it should feature monks who are physically fit, non-vegetarian, and non-celibate.

<sup>1</sup> The English word Confucianism translates several Chinese terms, including *rujiao* 儒教, *rujia* 儒家, and *Kongjiao* 孔教. In some contexts, such words with the character *ru* 儒 are better translated with other terms such as "classical learning" or "literati studies." But in Cai's "Protecting the Nation," the term *ru* is linked to Confucius and his teachings, and so Confucianism works best overall. But note that for Cai and some of his contemporaries, Zhuangzi's 莊子 thought is also *ru* ("Confucian").

Cai had a successful career under both the Qing empire and Republican China. Educated in the Confucian tradition, in 1892 he was posted to the Hanlin Academy, the Qing's highest agency for scholar-officials. Yet by the early-twentieth century, Cai was conducting revolutionary activities dedicated to the overthrow of the Qing. After an extended stay in Germany (1907–1912) studying Western learning (including philosophy, education, anthropology, and psychology), he returned to the newly-established Republic of China (R.O.C., 1912–), where he was selected for preeminent positions in government and academia, including minister of education (1912), chancellor of Peking University (1916–1927), and president of Academia Sinica (1928–1940).<sup>2</sup> Today Cai Yuanpei remains respected, and his ideas influential, in both the R.O.C. and the People's Republic of China (P.R.C., 1949–). In the P.R.C., the undergraduate honors college in Peking University, established in 2007, is named the Yuanpei College 元培學院 in his honor.

But given his current stature, Cai is nonetheless not known for advocating Buddhism. Instead, he is typically considered to have been a classically educated scholar who subsequently turned his attention to Western philosophy and liberalism, and as someone who played a central role in Republican educational philosophies and institutions, whose legacies continue to inform education in the contemporary R.O.C. and P.R.C. To the extent that he is associated with religion at all, he is remembered for his proposals to remove religion from schools, and to replace religion with education in aesthetic subjects. Along with his younger associate Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962), Cai was a prominent advocate of secularism and academic independence from religion.<sup>3</sup>

Cai's early interest in and positive evaluation of Buddhism were shared by reformist, revolutionary, and politically influential scholars whose lives spanned the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927), Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865–1898), Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1868–1936), and Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929).<sup>4</sup> Even Hu Shi, whose overall evaluation of Buddhism was criti-

<sup>2</sup> For a general introduction to Cai Yuanpei's life, see William J. Duiker, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei: Educator of Modern China* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State U.P., 1977); for a detailed chronology of his life, see Gao Pingshu 高平叔, *Cai Yuanpei nianpu changpian* 蔡元培年譜長篇 (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996; hereafter, *Nianpu*).

<sup>3</sup> There are numerous parallels between the careers and views of Cai Yuanpei and Hu Shi. From the mid-1910s onwards, Hu and Cai often held similar, pro-Western and liberal viewpoints and assisted one another. It was Cai who appointed Hu professor at Peking University. Like Cai, Hu Shi later served as chancellor of Peking University (1946–48) and president of Academia Sinica (1958–1962). And later in life, Cai's attitude toward Buddhism grew more critical and, in some respects, came to resemble those of Hu; Duiker, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei*, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> There are numerous studies of these four influential men in modern Chinese history. For

cal, dedicated significant intellectual energy to the academic study of Buddhism and found value in certain Chinese interpretations of Indian Buddhism particularly.<sup>5</sup>

With the collapse of the Qing in 1911, thinkers with the potential to set state policies stopped proposing that Buddhist teachings, much less Buddhist institutions, be granted a major role in the national polity. Sin-wai Chan concludes that “the Buddhist theme in late [Qing] political thought was merely a romantic interlude,” even as he allows that “evanescence does not mean insignificance.”<sup>6</sup> Indeed, while reformist political thought – at least among the powerful institutions and people who could implement state policy – had little role for Buddhism after 1912, the proposals of such reformers to refashion Buddhism so it could better serve the nation encouraged two trends: academic studies of Buddhism, on the one hand, and modernist Buddhist movements, on the other. Liang Qichao exemplifies the first trend: whereas his earlier essays on Buddhism concerned using the religion for nation-building, his studies of Buddhism published in the 1920s reflect scholarly interests in history and doctrine.<sup>7</sup> The monk Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947), the best known representative of modernist Buddhism in twentieth-century China, demonstrates the second trend: he first decided to embark on a career to reform Buddhism after debate with other monks over the ideas of the four men mentioned above, and those of Thomas Huxley (1825–1895) as well.<sup>8</sup>

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analysis of the role of Buddhism in the political thought of these and other figures, see Sin-wai Chan, *Buddhism in Late Ch'ing Political Thought* (Hong Kong: Chinese U.P., 1985); Ma Tianxiang 馬天祥, *Wan Qing Foxue yu jindai shehui sichao* 晚清佛學與近代社會思潮 (Kaifeng: Henan daxue chubanshe, 2005); Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光, *Xi chao you dong feng: Wan Qing Min chu sixiang, zongjiao yu xueshu shi jiang* 西潮又東風, 晚清民初思想、宗教與學術十講 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006); and Jiang Hainu 蔣海怒, *Wan Qing zhengzhi yu Foxue* 晚清政治與佛學 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012). For more on Buddhism and political thought in the late Qing, see Viren Murthy, *The Political Philosophy of Zhang Taiyan: The Resistance of Consciousness* (Boston: Brill, 2011), on Zhang; and Ni Guanning 倪管嫻, “Yong Fojiao lai jiu guo: Liang Qichao Foxue zhengzhi linian de jiangou” 用佛教來救國, 梁啟超佛學政治理念的建構, *Zhengda shicui* 政大史粹 28 (2015), pp. 39–68, and Noriko Mori, “Liang Qichao, Late-Qing Buddhism, and Modern Japan,” in Joshua A. Fogel, ed., *The Role of Japan in Liang Qichao's Introduction of Modern Western Civilization to China* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2004), pp. 222–46, on Liang.

<sup>5</sup> On Hu Shi's scholarship on Buddhism, see John R. McRae, “Religion as Revolution in Chinese Historiography: Hu Shih (1891–1962) on Shen-Hui (684–758),” *CEA* 12.1 (2001), pp. 59–102.

<sup>6</sup> Chan, *Buddhism in Late Ch'ing*, pp. 161–62.

<sup>7</sup> See Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Foxue yanjiu shiba pian* 佛學研究十八篇 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> For the influence of secular writings and modernist, often Buddhist-tinged, political thought on Taixu's intellectual formation, see Eric Goodell, “Taixu's Youth and Years of Romantic Idealism, 1890–1914,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 21 (2008), pp. 77–121; Scott Pacey, “Tan

Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (1837–1911) was the central figure connecting the partially overlapping communities devoted to academic studies of Buddhism, the reform of Buddhism partly through modern scholarship, and political reform using Buddhist resources. Tan Sitong, who was beheaded for his political activities, was Yang's student, as was Ouyang Jingwu 歐陽竟無 (1871–1943), an influential scholar who blended piety with academic-style critique.<sup>9</sup> Liang Qichao went so far as to write that “among scholars of the New Learning in the late Qing, virtually all were connected with Buddhist learning, and among those who had true faith [in Buddhism], almost all took their lead from [Yang] Wenhui.”<sup>10</sup> As far as I have determined, Cai Yuanpei was not in contact with Yang Wenhui, but Cai mentioned in his diary a discussion with Jiang Zhiyou 蔣智由 (1865–1929), a cofounder with Cai of the Chinese Educational Association (*Zhongguo jiaoyuhui*), regarding Yang Wenhui's forthcoming lecture on the *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*.<sup>11</sup>

Cai Yuanpei played integral roles in the networks of late-Qing, pro-Buddhist political activists, yet little research has focused on his actual attitudes toward Buddhism. To be sure, compared to other contemporaries such as Liang and Zhang, Cai wrote less on Buddhism. Furthermore, as I will argue later, Cai's earliest essay on Buddhism remained unpublished until 1984, and the “Buddhism” it advocated had been shorn of prototypical Chinese Buddhist practices. But Cai did assume a central role in shaping the educational and cultural sectors in which Buddhist institutions were regulated and sought to expand. So while in the Republican period Cai was not particularly concerned with Buddhism, he was a key actor in creating the intellectual climate

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Sitong's ‘Great Unity’: Mental Processes and Yogācāra in *An Exposition of Benevolence*,” in John Makeham, ed., *Transforming Consciousness: Yogacara Thought in Modern China* (New York: Oxford U.P., 2014), pp. 149–69; and Justin R. Ritzinger, *Anarchy in the Pure Land: Reinventing the Cult of Maitreya in Modern Chinese Buddhism* (New York: Oxford U.P., 2017).

<sup>9</sup> See Eyal Aviv, “Differentiating the Pearl from the Fish Eye: Ouyang Jingwu (1871–1943) and the Revival of Scholastic Buddhism,” Ph.D. diss. (Harvard U., 2008), particularly pp. 54–60, for Ouyang's relationship with Yang Wenhui.

<sup>10</sup> I have translated this sentence from the quotation in Li Xiangping 李向平, “‘Xin xue zhe’ yu ‘zhen xinyang’: Yang Renshan jushi yu jindai Fojiao geming” “新學者’與‘真信仰’，楊仁山居士與近代佛教革命，*Fayin* 法音 (2016, July), p. 17. For more on the connections between Yang Wenhui, Buddhist revivalism, and political reformism and revolution, see Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1968), pp. 1–22; and Gabriele Goldfuss, *Vers un bouddhisme du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle: Yang Wenhui (1837–1911), réformateur laïque et imprimeur* ([Paris]: Collège de France, 2001), esp. pp. 86–104.

<sup>11</sup> See Cai's diary entry for Guangxu 27, month 12, day 14 (January 23, 1902), in Zhongguo Cai Yuanpei yanjiuhui 中國蔡元培研究會, ed., *Cai Yuanpei quanji* 蔡元培全集 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997–1998), vol. 15, p. 372. Also see related notes in *Nianpu*, vol. 1, p. 228.

and institutional environment in which Buddhist ideas circulated and Buddhist institutions operated. Several studies have mentioned Cai's ideas in discussions of late-Qing Buddhist learning.<sup>12</sup> Two articles focus on the relationship between Cai's early ideas about Buddhism and those of Inoue Enryō.<sup>13</sup> More remains to be discovered regarding the nature of the Japanese influence on Cai. Yet as that topic has already been addressed in some detail, my focus here will be different.

Cai's essay "Protecting the Nation" exemplifies how, in formulating responses to national crisis, Chinese intellectuals appropriated resources from disparate sources including pre-imperial China, Meiji Japan, and the modern West. "Protecting the Nation" also demonstrates the semantic range and ambiguities of key terms shortly before China's transition from empire to republic, including *guo* 國 (nation, state, or country) and *jiao* 教 (teaching, religion, education, instruction, or *-ism*). The very language of the essay mixes classical and vernacular Chinese, and takes lexical terms from Japanese and translated Western works, demonstrating the synthetic nature of Cai's intellectual project. In terms of modern Buddhist history, Cai's essay highlights the subsequent failure of proposals to make Buddhism central to the national polity as well as to the failure of efforts to "reform" – others would say "destroy" – Chinese Buddhism along Japanese lines.

I begin with a portrait of Cai, highlighting the evolution of his ideas about Buddhism and religion. This is followed by analysis of the translated essay, including its historical precedents, related texts, and key concepts. Then I discuss the publication history of the essay. The last section discusses the broader questions that "Protecting the Nation" raises in light of subsequent Chinese history. The annotated translation follows in the appendix.

#### CAI YUANPEI, BUDDHISM, AND RELIGION

In this section I place "Protecting the Nation" within the context of Cai's life and other writings and explain how a thinker such as Cai could write such an essay. I will concentrate on Cai's personal background and his evolving views on Buddhism and religion.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Ma, *Wan Qing Foxue*, pp. 236–43, and Ge, *Xi chao you dong feng*, p. 95.

<sup>13</sup> See Gotō Nobuku 後藤延子, "Cai Yuanpei Fojiao huguo lun tanyuan" 蔡元培佛教護國論探源, in Zhongguo Cai Yuanpei yanjiuhui, ed., *Cai Yuanpei yanjiu ji: Jinian Cai Yuanpei xiansheng danchen 130 zhounian guoji xueshu taolunhui wenji* 蔡元培研究集, 紀念蔡元培先生誕辰130周年國際學術討論會文集 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe), pp. 449–61; and Wang Qing 王青, "Jingshang Yuanliao yu Cai Yuanpei zongjiao sixiang de bijiao yanjiu" 井上圓了與蔡元培宗教思想的比較研究, *Shijie zhixue* 世界哲學 (2013.3), pp. 128–35.

Nothing in Cai Yuanpei's early background betrays an affinity with Buddhism. The fact that in the year 1900 he considered Buddhism a solution for China's woes stems from his frustration over the failure of the political reforms of 1898, his respect for modernizers in Meiji Japan, and the zeitgeist among reformist political thinkers during turn-of-the-century China.

Cai received a traditional education and advanced in a conventional, scholarly career during the first three decades of his life.<sup>14</sup> Born in Zhejiang in 1868, he learned Confucian classics by rote and studied Song Neo-Confucianism. He passed state examinations in rapid succession and attained the ranks of cultivated talent (*xiuca*; 1883), provincial graduate (*juren*; 1889), and metropolitan graduate (*jinsi*; 1890); in 1892 he joined the Hanlin Academy. The Hanlin Academy, an institution dating to the Tang dynasty (618–907), was located in Beijing and comprised elite scholars who served as advisors to the imperial court.<sup>15</sup> In spite of his traditional training and privileged position, Cai sympathized with political reformers such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. When in 1898 their reforms were aborted and the reformers fled to exile or were executed, Cai resigned from the Hanlin Academy in protest.<sup>16</sup>

Over the following eight years, Cai worked as a writer and educator, founding a number of schools and educational associations. At the same time he gradually evolved into both an anti-Qing political revolutionary and a pro-Westernization liberal republican.<sup>17</sup> In February 1900, in protest over an imperial edict demanding loyalty to the Qing, Cai resigned from his position as director of the East-West School (Dongxi xuetang 東西學堂) in Shaoxing. It was in the following month, when he was still living in Zhejiang, that Cai wrote "Protecting the Nation." After moving to cosmopolitan Shanghai in 1901, where he

<sup>14</sup> This and the next two paragraphs draw from Duiker, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei*, and *Nianpu*.

<sup>15</sup> For a study of the Hanlin Academy, see Adam Yuen-chung Lui, *The Hanlin Academy: Training Ground for the Ambitious, 1644–1850* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1981).

<sup>16</sup> The 1898 reforms have been studied extensively; see, e.g., Rebecca E. Karl and Peter Zarrow, eds., *Rethinking the 1898 Reform Period: Political and Cultural Change in Late Qing China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002). On the 1898 reforms in relation to religion, see Vincent Goossaert, "1898: The Beginning of the End for Chinese Religion?" *JAS* 65.2 (2006), pp. 307–35.

<sup>17</sup> According to the later recollections of Jiang Menglin 蔣夢麟 (1886–1964), a student in Cai's school who was also from Zhejiang and also a future Peking University official and R.O.C. minister of education, by October 1898 Cai was already more radicalized than either Kang Youwei or Liang Qichao. On one occasion after three rounds of drinks, while criticizing Kang and Liang for their goal to create a constitutional monarchy, Cai allegedly stated: "Unless you overthrow the Manchu Qing, any reforms are impossible 除非你推翻滿清, 任何改革都不可能"; *Nianpu*, vol. 1, pp. 133–34.

interacted with a wide range of political dissidents and (among other activities) taught Japanese, his anti-Qing sentiments grew.<sup>18</sup> By 1904 he combined his passion for both education and revolution by organizing training for teams of girl students to assassinate Manchu officials with explosives. His efforts in this endeavor were amateur and unsuccessful. Then in 1905 Cai led a branch of the anti-Qing Restoration Society (Guangfu hui 光復會) to join Sun Yat-sen's Chinese Revolutionary Alliance (Zhongguo tongmeng hui 中國同盟會), the organization which would topple the Qing dynasty and transform into the Chinese Nationalist Party (Zhongguo guomin dang 中國國民黨; a.k.a. the Kuomintang or K.M.T.). Cai, however, left to study in Germany by early 1907 and was not directly involved in national politics again until the Qing had been deposed.

Cai Yuanpei returned to China in 1912 to serve as the Republic of China's first minister of education, one of many positions of national importance he eventually held. Tracing Cai's entire career exceeds the scope of this article, although more of his legacy will be discussed below. What is relevant here is that by the time Cai was shaping educational policies that structured the studies of millions of Chinese students, he had apparently already given up on Buddhism. Instead, for intellectual guidance Cai had turned to Western philosophy, unmediated by Japanese translations. The thinkers who influenced Cai the most at this stage were probably the German Neo-Kantian philosopher Friedrich Paulsen (1846–1908), the Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921), and eventually the American pragmatist educator John Dewey (1859–1952).

During the Republican Period, Cai's attitudes toward religion were mixed, sometimes critical but at times almost appreciative. He was not uniformly hostile to religion as were Marxist revolutionaries and certain secularists. Based on his studies of Kantian transcendental idealism and unlike Marxist materialists, Cai believed reality was bifurcated into the "noumenal," or "absolute" (*shiti* 實體, *juedui* 絕對) and the "phenomenal" or "relative" (*xianxiang* 現象, *xiangdui* 相對). For Cai, these two realms were part of an integral whole and neither could be reduced to the other. Cai argued that science could provide reliable knowledge of the phenomenal world and that philosophy, but not science, could produce plausible, if not ultimately verifiable, knowledge of the noumenal

<sup>18</sup> In August 1898, Cai had begun to study Japanese, focusing on reading skills. He and several companions hired a Japanese teacher; *Nianpu*, vol. 1, p. 127.

world.<sup>19</sup> Religious teachings, for Cai, might contain philosophical insights into the noumenal realm and might help expose the limitations of philosophical materialism. But for Cai, religious doctrines required critical scrutiny, and those amenable to scientific testing should be examined based on canons of evidence accepted by scientists.<sup>20</sup>

In general Cai was cautious and dismissive of religions and of Confucianism, especially when the latter was understood in a quasi-religious way. He fought successfully to bar the Confucian classics from primary school curricula, and he argued forcefully against proposals to establish Confucianism as state religion.<sup>21</sup> Echoing the noumenal/phenomenal distinction, Cai argued that the scope of state concerns should be limited to the worldly (*shijian de* 世間的) and that religions were concerned with the separate realm of the spiritual (*linghun de* 靈魂的).<sup>22</sup> Therefore “within one state there is no hindrance to there being many religions, and within one religion there can be peoples of many states,” Cai wrote, and so “how could the two characters in the term *guojiao* 國教 [state religion] even constitute a [coherent] term?”<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Duiker, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei*, pp. 21–31. For an essay in which Cai clearly makes such distinctions while determining the content of public education, see Cai Yuanpei, “Duiyu xin jiaoyu zhi yijian” 對於新教育之意見, in Gao Pingshu 高平叔, ed., *Cai Yuanpei quanji* 蔡元培全集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984 [1912]; hereafter *CYPQJ*), vol. 2, pp. 130–37. (This collection is to be distinguished from the 1997–1998, Hangzhou, work of the same title, first cited n. 11, above, and subsequently not abbreviated.)

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., Cai's foreword to Wang Xiaoxu's 王小徐 (1875–1948) book on Buddhism and science: Cai Yuanpei, “Foreword,” in *Chinese Essays on Religion and Faith*, trans. and intro. Douglas Lancashire (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1981 [1932]), pp. 78–82. An introduction to Wang's book is provided in Erik J. Hammerstrom, “Science and Buddhist Modernism in Early 20th Century China: The Life and Works of Wang Xiaoxu 王小徐,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 39 (2011), pp. 1–32. Wang was an old associate of Cai's; they had together established an anti-imperialist, revolutionary newspaper as early as 1904.

<sup>21</sup> For an overview of late-Qing and early-Republican efforts to make Confucianism into an institutionalized religion, see Sébastien Billioud and Joël Thoraval, *The Sage and the People: The Confucian Revival in China* (New York: Oxford U.P., 2015). For a study of Qing efforts to enhance the role of Confucianism in school rituals and curricula in the first decade of the 20th c., see Ya-pei Kuo, “Redeploying Confucius: The Imperial State Dreams of the Nation, 1902–1911,” in Mayfair Mei-hui Yang, ed., *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2008), pp. 65–84. Like Liang Qichao but in opposition to Kang Youwei, Cai denied that the teachings of Confucius were or should become a religion. In April 1915 Cai stated that Confucianism in the imperial civil service examination “contained semi-religious characteristics 含有半宗教性質” and that abolishing that examination and eliminating courses in reading Confucian classics had been “a step forward for the educational sector 教育界進步之一端”; *Nianpu*, vol. 1, p. 577.

<sup>22</sup> Notice here that Cai does not employ the Buddhist terms for a similar contrast between the worldly (*shijian* 世間; Sanskrit: *loka*) and the transcendent (*chu shijian* 出世間; Sanskrit: *lokottara*). Cai may have taken the worldly/spiritual contrast from his studies in Europe or from Christian activists, such as those in the Society for Religious Freedom, where he gave this speech.

<sup>23</sup> Translated from a revised draft (1917) of a speech Cai delivered in December 1916 at the Society for Religious Freedom: Cai Yuanpei, “Zai xinjiao ziyou hui zhi yanshuo 在信教自

Later Cai vehemently opposed Christian influence in education, a sensitive issue since many of China's modern schools had been founded by Christian missionaries. In 1922 he argued against the offering in universities of theology departments and mandatory religious services and classes. Within a few years, through the efforts of many others as well, national laws reflecting his positions were passed.<sup>24</sup>

Cai's attitudes toward religion hardened over the years. In his famous "Essay on Replacing Religion with Aesthetics Education" (1917), Cai argued that religion was an obsolete human invention. Dividing the mental faculties into knowledge (*zhishi* 知識), volition (*yizhi* 意志), and affect (*qinggan* 情感), a typology common in Western philosophy and with roots in Plato, Cai argued that knowledge and ethics (that is, guidance for volition) had already become separate from religion. Only the affective realm, associated with aesthetics, was still entangled with religion. However, Cai argued that since art unfettered by religion was superior to religious art, an aesthetics purified of religion could better serve human emotional needs. All religions were self-aggrandizing and divisive, and so aesthetics should replace the only non-obsolete function of religion related to affect. In this 1917 essay Cai criticizes religion in general as well as Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism specifically, as the following excerpt shows:

No matter which religion, there is none which does not have tendencies to expand its own teachings and to attack other religions. Islam's Mohammed wielded the *Quran* in his left hand and a sword in his right hand... within Christianity there were also the wars between the Catholics and Protestants... No other religion is as tolerant and understanding as Buddhism, but students of Buddhism unthinkingly persist in mistaken, fixed views about doctrines, and they follow such base practices as *śarīra* [relic] worship and penance rituals; even those of understanding are willing to do such things. For the sake of protecting the Dharma, they even stoop so low as to parrot [supporters] of the imperial system of government

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由會之演說," in *CYPQJ*, vol. 2, pp. 490-91. In late 1916 and early 1917, there were proposals, ultimately unsuccessful, in the national legislature to make Confucianism (*Kongjiao* 孔教) the state religion (*guojiao*). Although wary of Christianity, Cai cooperated with the Christian-dominated Society for Religious Freedom to oppose such initiatives. On the Society for Religious Freedom and efforts to entrench Confucianism within the national constitution and education system, see Yi Liu, "Confucianism, Christianity, and Religious Freedom: Debates in the Transformation Period of Modern China," in Fenggang Yang and Joseph B. Tamney, eds, *Confucianism and Spiritual Traditions in Modern China and Beyond* (Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 247-76.

<sup>24</sup> See Duiker, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei*, pp. 77-79.

in this republican age. Religions act as a burden because they all over-stimulate the emotional faculties. In light of their shortcoming of over-stimulating the emotions, and specifically to reverence the cultivation of the emotions, it would be better to abandon religions and, as a replacement, to employ pure aesthetics education.<sup>25</sup>

蓋無論何等宗教，無不有擴張己教、攻擊異教之條件。回教之漠罕默德，左手持“可蘭經”，而右手持劍，... 基督教中又有新舊教之戰... 至佛教之圓通，非他教所能及。而學佛者苟有拘牽教義之成見，則崇拜舍利受持經懺之陋習，雖通人亦肯為之。甚至為護法起見，不惜于共和時代？附和帝制... 宗教之為累，一至於此，皆激刺感情之作用為之也。鑿激刺感情之弊，而專尚陶養感情之術，則莫如舍宗教而易以純粹之美育。

In this essay, Cai still favors Buddhism over Christianity. But Buddhism is no longer specifically mentioned as correct in contrast to other religions.<sup>26</sup> And Cai's plans to create a politically progressive, ritual-free Buddhism have vanished. Such negative views of religion are typical of other comments Cai made during the decade of the 1910s.

It is in a 1927 lecture Cai was invited to deliver to the monks at Taixu's Minnan Buddhist Seminary (Minnan Foxueyuan 閩南佛學院) that we can most clearly see the shift in Cai's views of Buddhism. The title of the lecture was "Buddhist Studies, Buddhism, and Reforms for the Present and Future."<sup>27</sup> In his speech he distinguished between

<sup>25</sup> Chinese text from Cai, "Yi meiyu dai zongjiao shuo 以美育代宗教說," in *CYPQJ*, vol. 3, pp. 32–33. Two translations of this essay into English are available: Douglas Lancashire, trans., "Aesthetics As a Substitute for Religion," in *Chinese Essays on Religion and Faith*, pp. 240–51; and Julia F. Andrews, trans., "Replacing Religion with Aesthetic Education," in Kirk A. Denton, ed., *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893–1945* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1996), pp. 182–89. The Buddhist scholar Lü Cheng 呂澂 (1896–1989), a disciple of Ouyang Jingwu, wrote a rebuttal in 1923 of Cai's argument to replace religion with aesthetics; see discussion in Liu Yanling 劉顏玲, "Lun Lü Cheng de meiyu guan: Jian lun ta dui Cai Yuanpei 'meiyu dai zongjiao' shuo de wudu 論呂澂的美育觀，兼論他對蔡元培 '美育代宗教' 說的誤讀," *Lilunjie 理論界* 453 (2011), pp. 85–87.

<sup>26</sup> In "Protecting the Nation," Cai rated Buddhism and Zhuangzi highest. The following year (1901), in his diary Cai restates this view, and furthermore states that 1. religious thought is a subcategory of philosophy, 2. all religious thought is misguided, 3. except for Zhuangzi and Buddhism: "The learning of the Way... is also called philosophy... religious learning, such as that of shamanism, Islam, and Christianity, is generally a false deviation within the learning of the Way. Only two [religious] schools, those of Zhuang[zi] and the Buddha, tally with the methods of the Way 道學者...亦謂之哲學...宗教學，若巫若回若耶，皆為道學而失之謬者。為莊、佛兩家，皆符道術"; Zhongguo Cai Yuanpei yanjiuhui, *Cai Yuanpei quanji*, vol. 15, p. 321.

<sup>27</sup> For the lecture, see Cai Yuanpei, "Foxue yu Fojiao jin hou zhi gaige" 佛學與佛教及今後之改革, in *CYPQJ*, vol. 5, pp. 118–20. For more on Cai's role in advocating the academic study of religion in Chinese higher education, see Christian Meyer, "How the 'Science of Religion' (*zongjiaoxue*) as a Discipline Globalized 'Religion' in Late Qing and Republican China, 1890–1949 – Global Concepts, Knowledge Transfer, and Local Discourses," in Thomas Jansen, Thoralf Klein, and Christian Meyer, eds., *Globalization and the Making of Religious Modernity in China: Transnational Religions, Local Agents, and the Study of Religion, 1800–Present* (Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 297–341, esp. pp. 311–25.

Buddhist studies (*Foxue* 佛學) and Buddhism (*Fojiao* 佛教), and he discussed promising avenues for research in the former, which he called science (*kexue* 科學), as opposed to the latter, which he called religion (*zongjiao*).<sup>28</sup> For Cai, Buddhist studies should involve critical research into historical, textual, doctrinal, and comparative questions. Even basic Buddhist beliefs such as rebirth were dubious and should be subject to scrutiny. Although the issue was anathema to many Chinese Buddhists, for Cai the question of whether the historical Buddha preached the Mahayana scriptures should also be resolved. All religions were threatened by current state policies, Cai claimed, but certain reforms on the part of Buddhism could help in its defense. Among other reforms, institutionally Buddhists should promote education, and a small number of monasteries should be converted into factories, so that some monks could spend their time doing “half work and half spiritual practice 半工半修行.”<sup>29</sup> The most intelligent student-monks should be encouraged to attend secular schools or to study abroad. Thus secular educational institutions, for Cai, were placed hierarchically above Buddhist seminaries. At the end of the talk, Cai mentioned, only to dismiss, the very proposal that had been central to his 1900 essay:

I have also heard proposals to reform [Chinese monastics] to be like Japanese clerics, but I do not think this is necessary, and in any case, it is a question of only peripheral importance. 還聞有主張改同日本僧伽，兄弟以為不必，然此亦支末問題耳。

In his 1900 essay, Cai had argued that Buddhism could help save the nation. In this 1927 lecture, Cai now adduced no contributions that Buddhism could provide to the national polity. So whereas in 1900, a reformed Buddhism could have reformed the nation, by 1927, a reformed Buddhism could only escape state persecution.

Cai continued to advocate replacing religion with aesthetics until the end of his life. In 1930 he argued against proposals to use religion

<sup>28</sup> The term *Foxue* 佛學 has several shades of meaning depending on its context of use. When used to refer to the critical academic study of Buddhism, it is best translated as “Buddhist studies” or even “Buddhology.” When used to refer to relatively traditional modes of study, which assume the truth and overall consistency of Buddhist teachings, it is best translated as “Buddhist learning.” Sometimes *Foxue* can even be translated as “Buddhism” or “Buddhist.” Often the sense of *Foxue* is ambiguous by design, allowing secular scholars or state official on the one hand and pious Buddhists on the other hand to frame joint projects in ways that appeal to their respective constituencies. Incidentally, Cai Yuanpei was among those government officials who in 1928 pushed the monk Taixu to adopt the term *Foxue* (Buddhist studies/learning) rather than *Fojiao* (Buddhist teachings or Buddhism) in the name of an organization Taixu wanted to register. For examples of different uses of *Foxue* in Republican China, see Welch, *Buddhist Revival*, pp. 64–65 and 204.

<sup>29</sup> Cai, “*Foxue* yu *Fojiao*,” p. 120.

to enhance aesthetics. Instead, it was only possible to *replace* religion with aesthetics, because religion was compulsory, conservative, and bounded, whereas aesthetics was free, progressive, and universal.<sup>30</sup> Then in the preface to a book published in 1934, he wrote:

Some years ago I once advocated replacing religion with aesthetics education, since aesthetics education has the advantages of religion but lacks the shortcomings of religion. I still advocate this today. 我向年曾主張以美育代宗教，亦就因為美育有宗教之利、而無宗教之弊的緣故，至今我還是如此主張。<sup>31</sup>

In 1935, toward the end of his active public life, Cai wrote in another book preface that he had happily agreed to write the preface because the book's argument accorded with his own view to replace religion with aesthetics.<sup>32</sup>

Thus throughout his career Cai Yuanpei generally evinced a detached, critical attitude toward religion. Now we return to the question of how this man who once believed Buddhism could save China changed his mind. Cai does not address this shift, but we can find clues in his writings. First we examine the factors that led him toward a critical view of religion and Buddhism.

It was probably his exposure to secularist currents in Western thought, as well as to events in Europe, Japan, and China, that dampened Cai's enthusiasm for religion and Buddhism. Originally Cai assumed that all nations needed a particular teaching – something like a religion – for the uplift and unity of their people, and, as mentioned, that for China there were only Christianity, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Later Cai came to believe that religion and state should not be bound together and that furthermore, various Western philosophies and aesthetic theories were superior to religious and semi-religious teachings.

Cai also frequently noted that Europeans often did not take their religion seriously. During a visit to Wickersdorf, Germany, in 1911, he was impressed by a school in which religious activities had been replaced by a secular alternative: prayers before meals had been replaced by the recitation of the maxims of famous people.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Cai's interpretation of current events reinforced his suspicions that the rela-

<sup>30</sup> *Nianpu*, vol. 3, p. 489.

<sup>31</sup> Cai Yuanpei, "Meixue yuanli xu" 美學原理序, in *CYPQJ*, vol. 6, p. 449.

<sup>32</sup> Cai Yuanpei, "Xiandai Zhongguo zhengzhi sixiang shi xu" 現代中國政治思想史序, in *CYPQJ*, vol. 6, p. 493.

<sup>33</sup> *Nianpu*, vol. 1, p. 386.

tionship between virtue and religion had been overstated, particularly by Christian clergy. He observed that during World War One, while Russians seemed more religious than the French and Germans, their “civic virtue in war was far below that of the Germans and French – it can be seen that there is no strong connection between religion and virtue 戰爭中之國民道德，乃遠不如德、法，可見宗教與道德無大關係矣。”<sup>34</sup> Cai may have also come to understand that Japanese Buddhism, rather than playing a central role in Japan’s modernization, was arguably struggling for relevance.<sup>35</sup> Within China, Cai was personally involved during the 1920s in anti-Christian movements whose goals were separating religion from state-controlled activities, which sometimes meant in fact subordinating religion to state prerogatives.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, we should bear in mind that the “Buddhism” Cai had advocated was a philosophical, secularized Buddhism shorn of rituals. Let us take “*Buddhism*<sub>1</sub>” to be the set of all relevant beliefs, dispositions, and practices of all the people in a given time and place who regard themselves as practicing Buddhism, and *Buddhism*<sub>2</sub> to be the ideal of true Buddhism in the eyes of a given reformer. I suggest that Cai came to believe there was an insurmountable gap between the *Buddhism*<sub>1</sub> in China and the reformed, intellectualized *Buddhism*<sub>2</sub> of his ideals. Cai even appears to have downgraded, though not to have abandoned entirely, his belief in the potential contributions of *Buddhism*<sub>2</sub>. For Cai, in contrast to many Buddhist reformers, the problem was not just that ignorant Buddhists ruined Buddhism. Rather, for Cai in the latter part of his life, even true or ideal Buddhism had a limited or at best unproven value. For Cai, science, the social sciences, aesthetics, and philosophy had replaced, or should replace, the various functions that religions once fulfilled. What was valuable could be extracted through an academic salvage operation from the dying corpse of religion. As he wrote of Buddhism in 1916: “The nutritious fruits imported from Indian civilization were philosophical principles, but they were buried within the stench of religion 印度文明之輸入也，其滋養果實為哲理，而

<sup>34</sup> *Nianpu*, vol. 1, p. 634.

<sup>35</sup> On the severe challenges and organizational decline Buddhism encountered prior to and early in the Meiji period, see Martin Collcutt, “Buddhism: The Threat of Eradication,” in Marius B. Jansen and Gilbert Rozman, eds, *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1986), pp. 143–67. On Buddhism’s limited role in Japanese modernization throughout the Meiji period (1868–1912), see Winston Davis, “Buddhism and the Modernization of Japan,” *History of Religions* 28.4 (1989), pp. 304–39.

<sup>36</sup> On anti-Christian movements in 1920s China, see Jessie Gregory Lutz, *Chinese Politics and Christian Missions: The Anti-Christian Movements of 1920–28* (Notre Dame: Cross Cultural Publications, 1988).

埋蘊於宗教臭味之中。”<sup>37</sup> Cai's dying words were “science and aesthetics can save the nation.”<sup>38</sup>

In giving up on Buddhism as a key resource for social and political reform, Cai may have found confirmation in the writings of Liang Shuming (1893–1988), a philosopher whom Cai hired to join the faculty of Peking University.<sup>39</sup> In 1923, in his conclusion to a survey of fifty years of philosophy in China, Cai cites Liang Shuming's argument that Buddhism should not be changed into something useful for social reform.<sup>40</sup> Liang had argued against certain proposals of reformers of Buddhism like Taixu and Liang Qichao, and instead echoed Yan Fu's 嚴復 (1854–1921) comments (discussed below) years earlier about adapting Confucianism to modern political realities. Liang stated:

Actually, such reforms cannot be accomplished, and if they were accomplished, it would no longer be Buddhism...<sup>41</sup> Buddhism fundamentally cannot be pulled into the ordinary world to be used. If in order to pull it in to use it you have to alter its original face, then why take the trouble to disfigure Buddhism like that? I oppose the advocacy of Buddhism, and I oppose the reform of Buddhism. 其實這個改造是作不到的事, 如果作到也必非複佛教... 佛教是根本不能拉到現世來用的; 若因為要拉他來用而改換他的本來面目, 則又何苦 如此糟蹋佛教? 我反對佛教的宣導, 並反對佛教的改造。<sup>42</sup>

Liang Shuming indicates that he had discussed such issues with Zhang Taiyan and that Zhang shared his concerns that a Buddhism converted to become socially engaged would no longer be Buddhism. Liang Shuming's writings probably reinforced Cai's doubts about the practical applications of Buddhism.

Having summarized the evolution of Cai's attitudes toward religion, and specifically Buddhism, we now return to the essay “Protecting the Nation through Buddhist Teachings,” and to the question of

<sup>37</sup> Cai Yuanpei, “Wenming zhi xiaohua” 文明之消化, in *CYPQJ*, vol. 2, p. 467.

<sup>38</sup> Duiker, *Is'ai Yuan-p'ei*, 104.

<sup>39</sup> Thierry Meynard, *The Religious Philosophy of Liang Shuming: The Hidden Buddhist* (Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 23–24. In addition to Meynard's work, also see Guy Alitto, *The Last Confucian: Liang Shu-Ming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1979), on Liang Shuming and his complex relationship with Buddhism.

<sup>40</sup> In this essay, Cai also cites Liang Shuming's opinion that China must reject the philosophical orientation of India; Cai, “Wushi nian lai Zhongguo zhi zhexue” 五十年來中國之哲學, in *CYPQJ*, vol. 4, p. 382.

<sup>41</sup> This first sentence was probably directed more specifically against Liang Qichao's proposals to popularize Chan Buddhism.

<sup>42</sup> Liang Shuming 梁漱溟, *Dong xi wenhua ji qi zhexue* 東西文化及其哲學 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1999 [1921]), pp. 212–13.

what inspired Cai in the year 1900 to choose Buddhism as a solution. Fortunately, in the essay Cai explicitly mentions his source: the writings of Japanese Buddhist philosopher Inoue Enryō, a former cleric in the Ōtani 大谷 sect of the Jōdo Shinshū school 淨土真宗 of Buddhism. Cai's essay probably draws from Inoue's 1887 "Prolegomenon for the Revitalization of Buddhism" ("Bukyō katsuron joron" 仏教活論序論).<sup>43</sup> Here, Inoue asserts that modern nations need religion, that Christianity and Buddhism are in competition, but that Buddhism is superior and can block Christian infiltration; that Buddhism requires extensive reforms; Buddhist clerical regulations such as celibacy and vegetarianism are outdated; and Confucianism has some value but is insufficient. Even Cai's later distinction between "study" (*xue* 學) and "teaching/religion" (*jiao* 教), mentioned above, has precedents in Inoue's thinking.<sup>44</sup> Cai also explicitly mentions the regulations of the Jōdo Shinshū as precedents for some of his proposed reforms of Chinese Buddhism.

Cai did not follow through on his stated intention to promote a reformed version of Buddhism with assistance from Japanese advisors (presumably including Inoue). Due to political developments, neither was Cai able to visit Inoue during his trip to Japan in 1902. But in 1905 Cai published a translation of Inoue's "Lecture Notes on the Study of Monsters" 妖怪學講義 (1893/94), a long collection of essays

<sup>43</sup> Cai explicitly refers to this work by Inoue in an essay he wrote on philosophy late in 1901; *Nianpu*, vol. 1, pp. 224–25. For recent scholarship on Inoue and his 1887 text, see Miura Setsuo 三浦節夫, "Nihon kindai ni okeru dentō no 'hakken': Inoue Enryō no 'Bukyō katsuron joron'" 日本近代における伝統の“発見”, 井上円了の“仏教活論序論”, in Yoshida Kōhei 吉田公平, Iwai Shōgo 岩井昌悟 and Kosaka Kunitsugu 小阪田継, eds., *Kindaika to dentō no aida: Meiji no ingentan no seikan* 近代化と伝統の間—明治期の間観と世界観 (Tokyo: Kyōiku hyoron sha, 2016), pp. 168–89. See Kathleen M. Staggs, "In Defense of Japanese Buddhism: Essays from the Meiji Period by Inoue Enryō and Murakami Senshō," Ph.D. diss. (Princeton U., 1979), for analysis and a translation of the "Introduction to the Revitalization of Buddhism," and idem, "'Defend the Nation and Love the Truth': Inoue Enryō and the Revival of Meiji Buddhism," *MN* 38.3 (1982), pp. 251–81, on Inoue's Buddhist nationalism.

<sup>44</sup> See Wang, "Jingshang Yuanliao," pp. 129–30. Inoue made this distinction in a Japanese book that Cai recorded having purchased on December 31, 1901; *Nianpu*, vol. 1, p. 226. On the other hand, the *xue/jiao* distinction had already been expressed in Chinese writings earlier in publications Cai probably had read. For instance, in an 1895 article, Yan Fu sharply distinguished "Western learning" (*xixue* 西學) from "Western religion" (*xijiao* 西教), and he claimed that the two were in tension; Yan Fu 嚴復, *Lun shi bian zhi ji: Yan Fu ji* 論世變之亟, 嚴復集, ed. Hu Weixi 胡偉希 (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1994), p. 71. Similarly, 1896, Liang Qichao categorized books into the three categories of learning (*xue*), governance (*zheng* 政), and teachings/religion (*jiao*) and argued that governance was an extension of the learning category; Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Yin bing shi wenji: Dianjiao* 飲冰室文集, 點校, ed. Wu Song 吳松 (Kunming: Yunnan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), pp. 141–43. This same threefold typology is also expressed in Tan Sitong's *Studies of Benevolence* (*renxue* 仁學), the unpublished manuscript of which had circulated in certain circles as early as 1897; Sin-wai Chan, *An Exposition of Benevolence: The 'Jen-hsüeh' of T'an Ssu-t'ung* (Hong Kong: The Chinese U.P., 1984), pp. 12–14.

debunking popular Japanese superstitions.<sup>45</sup> Cai was not alone in his interest in Japanese scholarship on Buddhism in general and Inoue Enryō in particular. Kang Youwei had cited several of Inoue's books as early as 1896, including the "Prolegomenon for the Revitalization of Buddhism."<sup>46</sup> Liang Qichao, who fled to Japan in 1898, interacted extensively with Japanese Buddhist scholars on an academic basis and even visited Inoue's Philosophy Hall, in which the Buddha was portrayed as one of four great world philosophers.<sup>47</sup> Finally Zhang Taiyan, who fled to Japan three times (in 1900, 1902, and 1906), also interacted with Japanese Buddhist scholars, and Murthy asserts that Zhang's theories of historical evolution, developed starting in 1906, were strongly influenced by Inoue's philosophy.<sup>48</sup>

In any case, it would not have been difficult for Cai to come into contact with ideas from Jōdo Shinshū. The latter's Ōtani sect had an active presence in China at the turn of the twentieth century and had begun conducting missionary work in Shanghai as early as 1876, before any other Japanese Buddhist school.<sup>49</sup> Gotō Nobuku has convincingly argued, on the basis of Cai's diary entries and other writings, that Cai probably learned about Inoue's philosophy from Ōtani students studying in China, whom he met two months prior to writing "Protecting the Nation."<sup>50</sup> However, the precise Japanese "input" that inspired Cai to

<sup>45</sup> For Inoue's attacks on superstitious beliefs, see Jason Ananda Josephson, "When Buddhism Became a 'Religion': Religion and Superstition in the Writings of Inoue Enryō," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 33.1 (2006), pp. 143–68. For the publication history and text of Cai's translation, see *Nianpu*, vol. 1, pp. 221–22 and 301–2; and Cai, trans., "Yaoguaixue jiangyi lu (zonglun)" 妖怪學講義錄 (總論), in *CYPQJ*, vol. 1, pp. 244–389, respectively. For a list of Inoue's writings that Cai read, purchased, or translated, see Wang, "Jingshang Yuanliao," p. 219.

<sup>46</sup> See Noriko Mori, "Liang Qichao, Late-Qing Buddhism, and Modern Japan," in Joshua Fogel, ed., *The Role of Japan in Liang Qichao's Introduction of Modern Western Civilization to China* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2004), pp. 222–46.

<sup>47</sup> Mori, "Liang Qichao," pp. 230–38.

<sup>48</sup> Murthy, *Political Philosophy*, pp. 146–50.

<sup>49</sup> On Japanese Buddhist missionary activity in China during the late-Qing and Republican periods, see Xiao Ping 蕭平, "Zhongguo jindai Fojiao fuxing yu Riben" 中國近代佛教復興與日本, in Yongming 永明 et al., eds., *Zhongguo fojiao xueshu lundian* 中國佛教學術論典 (Gaoxiang, Taiwan: Foguangshan wenjiao jijinhui, 2001), vol. 42, pp. 59–118. On the activities of the Higashi Hongan-ji Temple (i.e., Ōtani Shinshū) Buddhism in late-Qing China, also see Ge, *Xi chao you dong feng*, pp. 47–66. Ge argues that, in China, Shinshū Buddhism failed to attract converts but nevertheless had an important influence on Buddhist modernism and academic Buddhist studies.

<sup>50</sup> Gotō, "Cai Yuanpei Fojiao huguo," p. 458. On late-Qing intellectuals and Buddhism, including the connection between Inoue and Cai Yuanpei, also see Ge, *Xi chao you dong feng*, pp. 77–167. Ge further argues that during the 1920s, Buddhist scholar-activists such as Taixu and Ouyang Jingwu appropriated many of the Buddhist ideas of late-Qing political reformers.

write his essay in 1900, i.e., the Japanese text(s) and the content of the conversations Cai had with Japanese students, remains uncertain.

The balance of evidence clearly indicates that Cai was impelled to write “Protecting the Nation” out of frustration with the political situation in China, particularly the failure of the 1898 reforms, and that the essay was inspired by and partly drawn from the writings of Inoue. Having seen the place of this essay in relation to Cai’s later writings on Buddhism and religion, we now turn to the essay itself and its contemporaneous Chinese context.

#### “PROTECTING THE NATION THROUGH BUDDHIST TEACHINGS”

“Protecting the Nation” is a complex work synthesizing ideas of diverse origins. Explaining thoroughly all of the various topics it touches on – such as Cai’s interpretation of Yan Fu’s interpretation of Herbert Spencer – would be impractical. The translated essay in the appendix allows it some leeway to speak for itself, and the annotations provide additional background. In this section I will discuss three topics concerning the essay: its immediate historical background, its central concepts and assumptions, and its publication history. Some readers may wish first to read the translated essay in the appendix before continuing in this section.

#### *Concepts and Contexts*

The essay, composed in March 1900, was written in response to threats to China as interpreted by Cai. The threats were real and immediate. Just five years prior, in 1895 Japan had defeated the Qing militarily and had two armies positioned to seize Beijing if peace on Japan’s terms was not accepted. Foreign powers including Russia, the United Kingdom, and France took advantage of China’s weakened condition over the next four years to push through favorable treaties with China. In 1898 the Guangxu emperor (1871–1908) initiated a series of political reforms, which Cai supported, but within several months the emperor was placed under house arrest and his reforms were aborted. The Boxer Uprising was spreading in northern China as Cai composed the essay in Zhejiang in early 1900, and in August 1900 foreign armies occupied Beijing in retaliation for Boxer attacks on their legations.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> For studies discussing Chinese political and military history during the 1890s, see John King Fairbank and Kwang-Ching Liu, eds., *The Cambridge History of China: Late Ch’ing, 1800–1911*, vol. 11, part 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2008). For a study of the origins and events of the Boxer Uprising, see Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1987).

Meanwhile, the presence of Western Christian clergy in the educational sector had expanded since 1898: interest in missionary schools was growing, and the faculty in the Imperial University (Jingshi daxuetang 京師大學堂), China's first modern university and the predecessor of Peking University, were often Western clergy.<sup>52</sup> In sum, recent events had accentuated the sense that China was at risk of encroachment or dismemberment, both politically and culturally.

Thus Cai's problem in "Protecting the Nation" was to diagnose China's continuing weakness and to propose a cure. Cai argues that all nations (*guo*) need an effective teaching (*jiao*) to civilize their people and that China currently lacks such a teaching. Buddhism, however, once it has been reformed, could serve as a teaching to stanch national decline.

Cai's particular conception of and solution to China's problems reflected contemporaneous Chinese discussion about two concepts, *guo* 國 and *jiao* 教.<sup>53</sup> Each of these terms had a range of semantic meanings; to understand them only through English glosses is to risk distorting them. With that caveat in mind, possible – but not exhaustive – translations for these key terms include the following. *Guo* has been translated as "nation," "state," "country," "empire," "kingdom," "dynasty," and "reign." *Jiao* has been translated as "teaching," "teachings," "religion," "instruction" (the activity of teaching), "instructions" (a genre of text), "moral education," "philosophy," "faith," "Chinese values," and "doctrine."<sup>54</sup> Cai's essay is one further example of discourse late in the Qing to define such concepts and to determine the relationship between the two concepts. We will return to Cai's particular understanding of these terms after sketching the broader intellectual milieu, which will permit us to see Cai's views in relation to available alternatives.

<sup>52</sup> Timothy B. Weston, *The Power of Position: Beijing University, Intellectuals, and Chinese Political Culture, 1898–1929* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2004), pp. 31–35.

<sup>53</sup> A third term, *zhong* 種, meaning race or people, was also a topic of discussion. See, e.g., Yan Fu's discussion the preservation of *guo*, *jiao*, and *zhong* in three newspaper articles first published in June 1898; Yan, *Lun shi bian*, pp. 96–108. Sometimes the meaning of *zhong* is incorporated into the term *guo*. For example, when *guo* means "nation" in the sense of a collectivity of the people within a given territory, the term overlaps with *zhong*. To simplify matters, here I limit discussion to *guo* and *jiao*, which are the crucial terms in Cai's essay.

<sup>54</sup> For a study of the meanings of the old term *jiao* ("teaching") and the term *zongjiao* ("religion") around the turn of the twentieth century, see Chen Xiyuan 陳熙遠, "'Zongjiao': yi ge Zhongguo jindai wenhua shi shang de guanjianci" "宗教，一個中國近代文化史上的關鍵詞，*Xin shixue* 新史學 34 (2002), pp. 37–66. For earlier meanings of *jiao* and *zongjiao*, see Anthony C. Yu, *State and Religion in China: Historical and Textual Perspectives* (Chicago: Open Court, 2005), pp. 5–25. According to the research of Federico Masini, the term *zongjiao* as a translation for "religion" first appeared in a Chinese-language publication in 1890; Masini, *The Formation of Modern Chinese Lexicon and Its Evolution toward a National Language: The Period from 1840 to 1898* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1993), p. 222.

Among Chinese political leaders and intellectuals, pressing questions in the face of foreign threats included the following: How can the Chinese *guo* and *jiao* be preserved (*bao* 保)? Can they both be preserved, or will one have to be sacrificed? What is the relationship between the preservation of *guo* and the preservation of *jiao*? Finally, what precisely are the *guo* and the *jiao*? Thus the meanings of the terms themselves, and not merely the relationships between them, were part of the debates. For example, *guo* could refer to China as a nation (people within a given territory, or a sequence of claimed predecessor and successor states), as a state (political entity governing a people), or as a dynasty (in this case, the Manchu-Qing ruling family). *Jiao* could refer to Confucianism (with broad, narrow, mainstream, and minority ways of interpreting it) or to a more generic set of teachings.

In the late 1890s Kang Youwei and Zhang Zhidong were the most important interlocutors debating China's future in terms of preserving the *guo* and the *jiao*.<sup>55</sup> Kang Youwei focused on the *jiao* – meaning Confucianism interpreted in a uniquely progressive and esoteric manner – as the key to preserving the *guo*, by which he meant China as a state. In concrete terms, Kang advocated making China into a constitutional monarchy. Zhang Zhidong opposed Kang Youwei's formulation in multiple ways. For Zhang, the *jiao* was Confucianism as conventionally interpreted, and the *guo* meant first and foremost the reigning Qing dynasty. Zhang emphasized preservation of the *guo* and argued that ultimately the *guo* should not be distinguished from the *jiao*; preservation of the current dynasty would automatically entail preservation of the *jiao*. Zhang also opposed erosion of Qing dynastic authority through democratic institutions such as constitutions and parliaments. Despite their differences, both Kang and Zhang aimed to preserve some form of Confucian *jiao*.

Other thinkers doubted the necessity, possibility, or desirability of preserving the Confucian *jiao*. In a letter of correspondence to Yan Fu written in 1897, Liang Qichao restates Yan's view that "the teachings [*jiao*] cannot be preserved, and furthermore need not be preserved, and if one says that the teachings are preserved as we progress, it is not actually the original teachings that are being preserved 教不可保而亦

<sup>55</sup> On the different approaches of Kang and Zhang, see Hao Chang, "Intellectual Change and the Reform Movement, 1890–1898," in Fairbank and Liu, *Cambridge History of China: Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911*, pp. 274–338. For more on the networks of people and the sequence of events surrounding such debates, with a focus on Zhang, see Daniel H. Bays, *China Enters the Twentieth Century: Chang Chih-Tung and the Issues of a New Age, 1895–1909* (Ann Arbor: U. Michigan P., 1978), pp. 19–70.

不必保，又曰保教而進則又非所保之本教矣。”<sup>56</sup> From his responses, Liang Qichao appears to have been influenced by Yan Fu, and to have been distancing himself from the views of his teacher, Kang Youwei. For example, Liang wrote to Yan that once an official teaching has been established, the thinking of scholars becomes restricted and they are unable to develop new learning (*xinxue* 新學). By 1902, Liang made public his views in favor of intellectual freedom over a unified national teaching. In his essay titled “Preserving the Teachings is Not a [Proper] Means of Venerating Confucius” 保教非所以尊孔論 he argued against the policy of “preserving the [Confucian] teachings 保教.”<sup>57</sup> Liang conceded that this essay directly contradicted his views published several years earlier. In the essay, Liang still affirmed the value of Confucianism. But he argued that teachings should rise and fall on their own merits, and that people should incorporate the strong points of different teachings. Confucius himself was open-minded in this vein, argued Liang. Therefore Liang opposed policies designed to preserve the [Confucian] teachings because, among other reasons, such policies were intellectually confining and harmful in diplomacy. In his own words:

The main goal of this essay is to [demonstrate] that preserving the teachings impedes freedom of thought. The second goal is to show it impedes foreign relations. 保教妨思想自由，是本論之最大目的也。其次焉者，曰有妨外交。<sup>58</sup>

Meanwhile, several reformist or revolutionary thinkers argued that China did need a *jiao*, but that the *jiao* needed was Buddhism, not Confucianism. These thinkers maintained respect for Confucianism as purportedly taught by Confucius, and they explicitly rejected the claims of missionaries that China needed Christianity. Tan Sitong, for example, praised Buddhism as the best *jiao* among the three he discussed: Confucianism, Christianity, and Buddhism.<sup>59</sup> Buddhism he recommended for many reasons, including its tolerance, the interest in it displayed by Westerners, and its presumed role in Meiji Japan's successful modernization. For Tan, authentic Confucian teachings could in principle

<sup>56</sup> Translated from Ding Wenjiang 丁文江, *Liang Rengong xiansheng nianpu changpian chugao* 梁任公先生年譜長篇初稿 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1962), vol. 1, p. 42.

<sup>57</sup> Liang, *Yin bing shi*, pp. 1343-49.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1347.

<sup>59</sup> Tan calls these the three teachings (*sanjiao* 三教), a term more traditionally used in China to refer to Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. He dismisses the teachings of Lao Er (i.e., Laozi) for its teaching of passivity, and he laments that Chinese often confuse the Buddha's teachings with Laozi's teachings; Chan, *Exposition of Benevolence*, pp. 115-16. Despite Chan's use of the word “[D]aoism” in his translation, note that Tan does not actually employ a term directly corresponding to “Daoism” such as *Daojiao* 道教 or *Daojia* 道家.

successfully govern the world, but centuries of their distortion by lesser thinkers such as Xunzi and Chinese imperial governments made this impossible.<sup>60</sup> Still, for Tan, the *jiao* in a given state is essential to national stability. In his words:

When the *jiao* is not practiced, then governance becomes chaotic, and when governance is chaotic, learning perishes. Thus today in discussing governance and learning, if we wrongly do not discuss *jiao*, [our discussion] will be useless. 教不行而政亂，政亂而學亡。故今之言政、言學，狗不言教，等於無用。<sup>61</sup>

Cai Yuanpei's "Protecting the Nation" (1900) followed many of Tan's ideas. For instance, for Cai, a teaching or *jiao* is essential for the state. The three potential choices of *jiao* are Confucianism, Christianity, and Buddhism. A purified Confucianism could in theory be promoted, but for practical reasons cannot be. Buddhism is thus the best available choice. Japanese support for Buddhism adds further strength to the case for Buddhism.

It is evident that Cai's ideas in the essay, particularly in the first half, derive as much from his Chinese environment as they do from Japanese influence. Yet Cai's essay also displays the imprint of Japanese Buddhist modernism as expressed by Inoue.<sup>62</sup> Cai appears to be particularly taken by Inoue's claim that Buddhism is in accord with science and philosophy. Cai's overarching claim is that Buddhism can protect the "nation," that is, China, which for Inoue of course referred specifically to Japan.

The reforms Cai thinks Buddhism will be required to undertake have parallels in Inoue's writing, and some of his terminology mirrors Inoue's. For example, rather than using the common term "preserve" (*bao* 保), Cai uses the term "protect" or "support" (*hu* 護) in the phrase "protect the nation" (*huguo* 護國). Likewise, Inoue's writings repeatedly advocate *gokoku airi* 護國愛理 (Chinese: *huguo aili*), "to protect the nation and to love the truth" –the "truth" for Inoue being primarily the teachings of Buddhism.<sup>63</sup> The term "protect the nation" has a long

<sup>60</sup> See Chan, *Exposition of Benevolence*, pp. 181–91. The publication history of Tan's main work cited here, *Studies of Benevolence*, is complicated. It is difficult to be sure which parts of Tan's writings Cai Yuanpei had read by March 1900. By 1897, *Studies of Benevolence* was completed and made available in certain circles as a manuscript, and summaries of it were published. Then it was published serially in two somewhat different versions, in Yokohama and Shanghai, beginning in 1898; *ibid.*, pp. 10–20.

<sup>61</sup> Cited from *ibid.*, p. 191, n. 329.

<sup>62</sup> See Miura, "Nihon kindai ni okeru dentō no 'hakken'"; Staggs, "In Defense of Japanese Buddhism"; and *idem*, "Defend the Nation and Love the Truth."

<sup>63</sup> One of the Chinese Communist Party's central policies toward recognized religions in

history in the Buddhism of both China and Japan, but given his relative unfamiliarity with Buddhist writings, Cai probably took the term from Inoue.<sup>64</sup>

“Protecting the Nation” expresses Cai’s particular understanding of the *guo*, the *jiao*, and their interrelationship. By *guo*, Cai generally means a nation, but sometimes he means a certain political state. Cai defines *jiao* as “the means to clarify the way (*dao*) that people should treat one another” and he lists Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity as *jiao*. He also takes the term *zongjiao* 宗教 (religion) from Inoue and apparently treats it as a synonym of *jiao*. In sum, *jiao* for Cai consists of philosophical, moral, and social teachings. The precise content of authentic Buddhist teachings for Cai circa 1900 is ambiguous. But clearly he recommends Buddhism in part because it is true, not simply because it could be useful. Rightly understood, Confucianism – or parts of it – would be the same as Buddhism, and even a Chinese pre-Confucian tradition begun by an ancient, obscure figure named Xie is commended (this mythical figure is described in my notes to the translation). Thus Cai evinces a “unitarian” understanding that various teachings may appear different on the surface but ultimately be identical. But for Cai, Christian teachings are simply untrue and hence rejected.<sup>65</sup>

One common denominator of true teachings for Cai is their anti-authoritarian political doctrines.<sup>66</sup> Thus the teachings of “people’s

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China is to foster religious leaders who “love the nation and love the religion 愛國愛教,” a slogan resembling Inoue’s *gokoku airi*. But the intents are different. In essence, the Chinese policy aims at promoting religious leaders who reliably support the Communist Party and who would sway Buddhist public opinion toward a pro-party stance during “crucial moments 關鍵時刻,” i.e., during future social uprisings in which the Party’s grip on power is threatened. Charles Jones writes that a similar slogan, *aijiao weiguo* 愛教衛國 (“love the religion and guard the nation”) was commonly used by the state-sanction Buddhist association in the R.O.C. during the period of one-party rule in Taiwan. See Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan: Religion and the State, 1660–1990* (Honolulu: U. Hawai’i Press, 1999), p. 145. Another similar term commonly found in R.O.C. Buddhism, both before and after 1949, is *huguo weijiao* 護國衛教 (“protect the nation and guard the religion”).

<sup>64</sup> On Buddhist *huguo* in Chinese history, see Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State U.P., 1998); in medieval Japan, Albert Welter, “Zen Buddhism as the Ideology of the Japanese State: Eisai and the *Kōzen Gokokuron*,” in Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright, eds., *Zen Classics: Formative Texts in the History of Zen Buddhism* (New York: Oxford U.P., 2006), pp. 65–112.

<sup>65</sup> In contrast, for Inoue Christianity and Confucianism were both clearly inferior to Buddhism but elements of Western philosophy such as German idealism were equal to Buddhism; Josephson, “When Buddhism Became a Religion.”

<sup>66</sup> In his comments on Cai’s “Protecting the Nation,” Ma Tianxiang posits a political interpretation of Cai’s *jiao*; Ma, *Wan Qing Foxue*, pp. 236–42. I agree that Cai regards true teachings as including or entailing egalitarian political doctrines, but I contend that for Cai such doctrines were only one aspect of Buddhist teachings.

rights” (*minquan* 民權) in Confucianism and “being without lord” (*wujun* 無君) in Buddhism are praised, and true teachings cannot be preached under a monarchy. Finally, the flourishing of the true *jiao* and the nation (*guo*) are directly related: when true teachings disappear the nation eventually degenerates. On the other hand, a particular state (also *guo*, here referring to a political entity under a given regime), when controlled by an evil ruler, corrupts and persecutes the true teachings. Thus the collapse of such states allows for later revivals of true teachings. I surmise that in 1900, Cai thought the Qing dynasty was on the brink of collapse and so the time was ripe to promote the true *jiao* of the Buddha in China.

Cai’s “Protecting the Nation” presages other essays in the late Qing that argued for expanding the role of Buddhism in public life. One was Liang Qichao’s “On the Relationship between Buddhism and the Governance of Society” 論佛教與群治之關係 (1902). In it, Liang asks whether China could best progress with or without “faith” (*xinyang* 信仰). He argues that at its current stage of development, China needs faith, that faith is rooted in religion (*zongjiao*), and that Confucianism (*rujiao* 儒教) counts as a kind of education rather than as a religion.<sup>67</sup> Thus, given that Christian doctrines are shallow, and that Buddhism has six advantages (which he proceeds to discuss) relative to many religions, Buddhism is worthy of faith.<sup>68</sup> Despite his praise for and personal interest in Buddhism, Liang sometimes implies that he promotes Buddhism

<sup>67</sup> “The Confucian teachings are teachings of education, not teachings of religion 孔教者, 教育之教, 非宗教之教也.” See Liang, *Yin bing shi*, p. 1350. For discussion of Liang’s 1902 essay, see Mori, “Liang Qichao,” and Ni, “Yong Fojiao lai jiu guo.” On the evolution of the concept of religion in Liang Qichao’s thinking, also see Marianne Bastid-Bruguière, “Liang Qichao yu zongjiao wenti” 梁啟超與宗教問題, in Hazama Naoki 峽間真樹, ed., *Liang Qichao, Mingzhi Riben, Xifang* 梁啟超明治日本西方 (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2012), pp. 367–419. Incidentally, it is clear from such writings that Chinese thinkers discussed whether or not Confucianism was a “religion” shortly after the term *zongjiao* entered the Chinese language as a translation for religion, and that they continue to do so in the present. See Anna Xiao Dong Sun, *Confucianism as a World Religion: Contested Histories and Contemporary Realities* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 2013). Thus W. C. Smith’s often cited shibboleth that “the question ‘Is Confucianism a religion?’ is one that the West has never been able to answer, and the Chinese never able to ask” – repeated in the preface to a major new collection of translated religious texts – is either trivial or false. See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 66; and Jack Miles, “Preface,” in Jack Miles, Wendy Doniger, Donald S. Lopez, and James Robson, eds., *The Norton Anthology of World Religions* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015), p. xlix. The statement is trivial if the implication is that Chinese never considered whether Confucianism was a *zongjiao* before the modern word *zongjiao* existed, and it is false otherwise.

<sup>68</sup> Liang formulates these six advantages as six propositions, which he discusses sequentially. The first proposition, for example, is that “Buddhist faith is informed faith, not blind faith 佛教之信仰乃智信而非迷信.”

because it could be socially useful, not because it is true.<sup>69</sup> In contrast, political revolutionary Zhang Taiyan's "On Establishing Religion" 建立宗教論 (1906) emphasizes the truth of Buddhism, rather than its utility.<sup>70</sup> Zhang's essay advocates Yogācāra Buddhism in particular: in addition to arguing for its doctrinal superiority, it claims that Buddhism eliminates one's fear of death – an important virtue for anti-Qing activists, who needed to spur their followers to make personal sacrifices, including martyrdom. Like Cai and Liang, Zhang promotes a rational, secularized Buddhism. For example, he still counts Buddhism as a religion (*zongjiao* 宗教) because it includes worship (*chongbai* 崇拜), but in Buddhism, Śākyamuni is purportedly "venerated as a teacher, and is not venerated as a supernatural being 尊其為師, 非尊其為鬼神."<sup>71</sup>

We can see, then, that Cai's "Protecting the Nation" was just one of several essays composed in the late Qing to promote Buddhism for political projects. The Buddhism such authors advocated was ostensibly rational, nationalist, and politically reformist or revolutionary (not quietist). This Buddhism was, for most thinkers at the time, not only socially and politically useful, but true. At the time it was first advocated, this kind of political Buddhism had little connection with the people conventionally recognized as Buddhist: monks, nuns, and lay disciples who had received the three refuges (*sangu* 三皈) and lay precepts (*wujie* 五戒). In time, however, elements of such political Buddhist thinking would be appropriated by modernist Buddhist reformers, secular scholars, and state authorities, and would thus shape the development of modern Chinese Buddhism from both within and without.

One might surmise that Cai's essay played an important role in a network of political discourse about Buddhism among the future elites of Republican China. It may have been the first such essay to promote Buddhism to save China as a modern nation. But unlike other essays

<sup>69</sup> Also see Mori, "Liang Qichao," for discussion of this essay, and of two other essays Liang wrote in 1902, in which he asserts that religion is useful at earlier stages of social evolution but becomes an obstacle at later stages.

<sup>70</sup> For this essay, see Zhang Taiyan 章太炎, *Ge gu ding xin de zheli* 革故鼎新的哲理, ed. Jiang Fen 姜玢 (Shanghai: Shanghai yuandong chubanshe, 1996), pp. 197–213.

<sup>71</sup> See Zhang, *Ge gu ding xin*, p. 210. For discussion of Zhang's essay, see Murthy, *Political Philosophy*, pp. 110–23. Zhang probably took such discourse from Japanese scholars such as Anesaki Masaharu (1873–1949), with whom he was well acquainted. On Japanese academic discourse, especially from the 1890s onwards, that the Buddha was a man, albeit one of the great men of history, rather than a supernatural being, see Micah L. Auerback, *A Storied Sage: Canon and Creation in the Making of a Japanese Buddha* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 2016), pp. 165–233. Note that Zhang was well acquainted with both Liang Qichao (Zhang had worked as a writer for a newspaper Liang ran) and Cai Yuanpei (Zhang was a fellow member of his in Shanghai organizations). In 1912 Sun Yat-sen offered Zhang Taiyan the position of R.O.C. minister of education, but as the legislature would not approve his candidacy, the position was offered to Cai instead; Duiker, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei*, p. 114, n. 2.

discussed in this section, Cai's essay was mute: we see, next, that most likely it was not published until after his death.

### *Manuscript and Publication*

All evidence suggests that Cai left the manuscript of "Protecting the Nation" unpublished during his lifetime. I have discovered no contemporaneous sources that cite or quote its text. Apparently, the essay was not published until 1984, in volume one of *Cai Yuanpei quanji* (*Collected Works of Cai Yuanpei*).<sup>72</sup> This collection was edited by Gao Pingshu 高平叔 (1913–1998), Cai's former assistant, whose extensive scholarship on Cai has led to the publication of previously undiscovered manuscripts. Gao indicates that his transcription of "Protecting the Nation" derived from a manuscript, but he does not indicate its source or its peregrinations, as he sometimes does in other cases.<sup>73</sup>

Following publication in 1984, "Protecting the Nation" was reprinted in a number of collections. Two of these state they take the text from the 1984 transcription made by Gao Pingshu.<sup>74</sup> Another collection, also edited by Gao, basically reproduces the 1984 transcription.<sup>75</sup> A fourth collection, also produced in the P.R.C. by an organization with which Gao Pingshu was affiliated, states its transcription of the essay was made from the manuscript.<sup>76</sup> The transcriptions published in the P.R.C. all convert the essay into simplified Chinese characters. The transcription published in Taiwan (edited by Sun Changwei 孫常煒, 1991) takes the text from the 1984 P.R.C. edition and converts it back into traditional Chinese characters, but also introduces errors of transcription.

<sup>72</sup> Earlier collections of Cai's writings, including Wangjia 王家, ed., *Cai Yuanpei quanji* 蔡元培全集 (Tainan: Wangjia chubanshe, 1968), and Li Ruoyi 李若一, ed., *Cai Yuanpei de zhengzhi sixiang* 蔡元培的政治思想 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1972), do not include "Protecting the Nation."

<sup>73</sup> See Cai, "Fojiao huguo lun" 佛教護國論, in *CYPQJ*, vol. 1, p. 108; and *Nianpu*, vol. 1, p. 181. Both the 1984 and 1997–1998 collections of Cai Yuanpei's works indicate that the essay was composed during March 1900. (According to the editorial guidelines in both of these collections, all dates follow the Western calendar). But curiously, Gao writes elsewhere that the essay was composed in the fourth lunar month of 1900, which corresponds almost entirely to May 1900. This is an unexplained discrepancy of two months. See *Nianpu*, vol. 1, p. 181.

<sup>74</sup> See Cai, "Fojiao huguo lun 佛教護國論," in Sun Changwei 孫常煒, ed., *Cai Yuanpei xiansheng quanji xubian* 蔡元培先生全集續編 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1991 [1900]), pp. 274–77; and Cai, "Fojiao huguo lun 佛教護國論," in Li Jingming 李景明 and Tang Minggui 唐明貴, eds., *Ru shi bijiao yanjiu* 儒釋比較研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003 [1900]), pp. 1–4.

<sup>75</sup> See Cai, "Fojiao huguo lun 佛教護國論," in Gao Pingshu 高平叔, ed., *Cai Yuanpei zhengzhi lunzhu* 蔡元培政治論著, (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1985 [1900]), pp. 15–18.

<sup>76</sup> See Cai, "Fojiao huguo lun 佛教護國論," in Zhongguo Cai Yuanpei yanjiuhui, ed., *Cai Yuanpei quanji*, vol. 1, pp. 272–76. The basic format of this transcription is similar to that of the 1984 transcription, but includes several new annotations.

As discussed previously, since 1984 scholars have mentioned “Protecting the Nation” in the context of broader studies of intellectual history. None of the authors who mention it discuss its publication history (or lack thereof), although in his analysis Ma Tianxiang 馬天祥 assumes, citing no source and identifying no recipient, that in March, 1900, Cai “formally presented 正式提出” the essay.<sup>77</sup> Yet given the lack of evidence that “Protecting the Nation” was published during the Republican Period, it is reasonable to conclude that the essay was first published in Gao’s edited collection in 1984.<sup>78</sup>

At least two implications can be drawn from the fact that Cai never published the essay. First, while we might use the essay as a lens into Cai’s thinking and into the late-Qing intellectual milieu, we cannot study the contemporaneous impact of the essay, because it had none. Second, the fact that the essay remained a manuscript, perhaps one written solely for Cai’s personal reflection, must influence our interpretation of it. It may suggest, for instance, that Cai felt free to write his opinions more frankly than he otherwise would. On the other hand, perhaps Cai chose not to publish the essay because he regarded it as a thought-experiment whose claims he himself doubted. The essay is surprisingly pro-Buddhist, given the other writings in Cai’s oeuvre.

In sum, I would suggest that Cai’s positive appraisal of Buddhist teachings in general was relatively enduring, even though his belief in the potential of Buddhism for socio-political reform was relatively short-lived. Just how this played out after his lifetime will be taken up next.

#### ASSESSMENT AND LEGACY

After 1900, Cai Yuanpei eventually went on to shape Chinese educational and cultural institutions, while his plans in “Protecting the Nation” had been set aside when he gained the ability to promote them. In the essay, Cai synthesizes traditional Chinese learning, modernist Japanese Buddhism, and European thought. To use a metaphor Cai employed frequently, the essay was produced through intellectual “digestion” (*xiaohua* 消化), but he had little use for the finished product. I suggest that, in addition to lowering his estimation of Buddhism years later, Cai also distanced himself from the basic framing of the problems implicit in the essay.

<sup>77</sup> Ma, *Wan Qing Foxue*, p. 238.

<sup>78</sup> I would like to acknowledge the help of two librarians at Peking University, Zhang Suxia and Zhou Muhong, for confirming the essay’s publication history and for their efforts, albeit unsuccessful, to acquire the original manuscript.

Despite its call for reform, in comparison with Cai's later writings, "Protecting the Nation" reads like a relic of a bygone era. Several of its assumptions derive from traditional strands of Confucian thought, including the following: 1. The nation should follow correct teachings in order to flourish. 2. Such teachings can be found, albeit sometimes in cryptic forms, in ancient texts. 3. The nation will undergo cycles of revival and decay, and such cycles are linked to adherence or nonadherence to the correct teachings. In short: national salvation lies in acting on the revelations found by reading ancient texts properly.

What was unusual for an essay by a classically trained literatus was Cai's call to replace Confucianism with Buddhism. Yet Cai's argumentation of this point is vague and weak. Vague, because he does not specify which Buddhist doctrines he considers authentic. He expends more effort to show which beliefs and practices are not true Buddhism than which are. Weak, because the choice of Buddhism rests on a desperate, "what else" line of thinking, based on dubious assumptions at every step: China needs a teaching. There are three choices. One choice is bad, the other blocked. Only one choice remains. Buddhism shall save us because it must!

Because of his powerful influence in the realms of education and culture more generally, however, Cai shaped Buddhism in indirect ways, and his legacy continues to do so. Cai prodded Buddhist institutions to develop along certain paths and at the same time provided resources for Buddhists to enter into larger intellectual worlds. For example, in 1928 in his capacity as chair of the University Council 大學院 (a government agency that existed from 1927–1928; basically a version of the Ministry of Education), he signed an official letter to a regional Buddhist association in which he lays out various regulations that monastics were expected to follow. Among other regulations, monastics should not "advocate superstition 提倡迷信," and they should have "proper occupations 正當職業" in addition to religious practice.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, before the monk Taixu went on his tour of Europe, Cai opened opportunities for him: in July 1928, on Taixu's behalf, Cai wrote letters of introduction to the academic luminaries Henri Bergson (1859–1941), Hans Driesch (1867–1941), and Bertrand Russell (1872–1970).<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> See Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 and Xue Dubi 薛篤弼, "Guomin zhengfu mishuchu zhi Jiang-Zhe Fojiao lianhehui gonghan" 國民政府秘書處致江浙佛教聯合會公函, *Haichaoyin* 海潮音 (August 1928) 9.7, pp. 3–4. Reprinted in Huang Xianian 黃夏年, ed., *Minguo Fojiao qikan wenxian jicheng* 民國佛教期刊文獻集成 (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2006), vol. 170, pp. 555–56.

<sup>80</sup> See *Nianpu*, vol. 3, pp. 246, 247, and 251. These three philosophers were extremely in-

Moreover, the impact of Cai's ideas on education and religion are evident to this day. In the P.R.C., for example, a recent study of the curricula in Buddhist seminaries faulted seminaries for not adhering to the model of "five kinds of education" (*wuyu* 五育) that Cai Yuanpei had outlined.<sup>81</sup> In the R.O.C., in a recent (2003) dispute between the president and the trustees of a Buddhist university over intellectual freedom, numerous public intellectuals voiced their support for the president by citing precedents Cai Yuanpei had established for the separation of education and religion. The aggrieved university president in his defense also mentioned Cai Yuanpei.<sup>82</sup>

As an object of study, "Protecting the Nation" is relevant not only as a lens into a transitional period in Chinese history but also as a source of historical reflection on the ideas it promotes and the questions it raises. The essay makes five specific proposals for the reform of Chinese Buddhism along Japanese lines. In the past century efforts have been made from both inside and outside monastic communities to implement such reforms, but only the second proposal, advocating the establishment of schools, has been largely successful. That is, dozens of Buddhist seminaries (*Foxueyuan* 佛學院), institutions that did not exist in 1900, can now be found in Chinese Buddhist communities worldwide. Why this specific institutional reform succeeded while others failed merits further study.<sup>83</sup>

The essay also addresses fundamental concerns about statecraft: how should the *guo* be conceived and what is the proper relationship between the *guo* and the *jiao*? Cai believed the nation required a national teaching and myopically assumed the three choices, as mentioned. In

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fluent in China during the 1920s, and Russell and Driesch visited China on lecture tours. For analysis of the impact of Bergson and Driesch on newly formulated strains of Confucian thought, which Taixu recommended to Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek in 1939, see Kuming Chang, "Ceaseless Generation": Republican China's Rediscovery and Expansion of Domestic Vitalism," *AM* 3d ser. 30.2 (2017), pp. 101-31.

<sup>81</sup> See Jingyin 淨因 and Zhang Qi 張琪, "Handi Fojiao yuanxiao kecheng shezhi diaocha baogao" 漢地佛教院校課程設置調查報告, in *Fojiao jiaoyu de jiyu yu tiaozhan* 佛教教育的機遇與挑戰 (Beijing: Preparatory Office of the World Buddhist Forum, 2009), pp. 149-60.

<sup>82</sup> See Gong Pengcheng 龔鵬程, *Yiyi Fenzi* 異議份子 (Taipei County: Yinke chuban, 2004), pp. 281-311. The disputes centered around two controversial activities on the campus of a Buddhist university: a lecture discussing sex as a way of liberation, and a cultural exchange event involving roasting a lamb. Gong Pengcheng, the president of Foguang University who was pressured to resign, includes extensive, albeit partisan, accounts of these incidents and their consequences. For analysis of the events, see Linsay Tsai, "Buddhist Education and the Rise of the Buddhist University in Modern Taiwan," Ph.D. diss. (University of Bristol, 2011), pp. 133-37.

<sup>83</sup> This question is addressed in Douglas M. Gildow, "Buddhist Monastic Education: Seminaries, Academia, and the State in Contemporary China," Ph.D. diss. (Princeton University, 2016).

some sense Confucianism had been the national teaching since the second century BC but by 1900 it was increasingly found lacking. As Mark Elvin states it, around the turn of the twentieth century “the central problem of twentieth-century Chinese history was now becoming apparent, namely, what was going to replace Confucianism.”<sup>84</sup> In hindsight, we can see that no traditional religion, neither Buddhism nor Christianity, replaced Confucianism.<sup>85</sup>

Instead, two modern ideologies, the Three Principles of the People (or Sanmin-ism) in the R.O.C., and Marxism-Leninism (or Communism) in the P.R.C., partially took the place of Confucianism to guide (or justify) national narratives, state policies, and ethical and political education. In Republican China these two ideologies vied for supremacy as if they were rival religious faiths. In the late 1930s, the Chinese Nationalist Party argued that Sanmin-ism superseded and should incorporate Communism, and the Chinese Communist Party argued back. For example, in 1939 Communist leader Zhou Enlai 周恩來 (1898–1976) penned a document declaring that for the Communist Party, “Communism is our faith 共產主義是我們的信仰,” but that true Sanmin-ism (read: as interpreted by Communists) still had an important political function in the United Front. Zhou labeled other versions of the Three Principles as “false” (*wei* 偽) or “revisionist” (*xiuzheng* 修正), and he decried efforts to integrate Sanmin-ism with Marxism as diluting ideological purity.<sup>86</sup> Military victory for the Communists in 1949 served as the final arbiter in the ideological contest, although Sanmin-ism was fortified in the R.O.C. rump state in Taiwan.

As the R.O.C. transformed from a party-state into a democratic state in the 1980s in Taiwan, Sanmin-ism fell in status from official state ideology to private party platform. By the early-twenty-first century, Sanmin-ism had already disappeared as a distinct topic of study in public schools and as a topic on university entrance exams. There

<sup>84</sup> Mark Elvin, “The Collapse of Scriptural Confucianism,” *Papers on Far Eastern History* 41 (1990), p. 72.

<sup>85</sup> Within the P.R.C. today, however, according to the state framework of five official religions (Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism), Buddhism and (Protestant) Christianity are the two most popular choices for personal religious affiliation. A third major choice of an affiliation is the Chinese Communist Party, which officially has nothing to do with religion.

<sup>86</sup> For a useful if partisan overview of the debates over ideology from 1938 to 1940, see Li Yongjin 李永進, “Guo gong sanminzhuyi zhi zheng yu xinminzhu zhuyi geming huayu de jiangou (1938–1940)” 國共三民主義之爭與新民主主義革命話語的建構 (1938–1940), *Zhong-gong zhongyang dangxiao xuebao* 中共中央黨校學報 4 (2016), pp. 82–89. For a translation of one of the Communist Party’s many documents during those years comparing Sanmin-ism and Communism, see Tony Saich, *The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party: Documents and Analysis* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), pp. 897–906.

are no longer any of the once-common academic institutions called Institutes for Sanmin-ism (Sanminzhuyi xueyuan 三民主義學院), and the party in power from 2000 to 2008 and from 2016 to the present does not advocate the ideology.<sup>87</sup> All of this can send us back to the questions Cai's essay raises, namely, that in effect the R.O.C. has decided that it no longer requires a national teaching. This was a viewpoint pre-saged by Yan Fu in the nineteenth century, as shown above in Yan's correspondence with Liang Qichao. Thus in the R.O.C., the most significant choice regarding state ideology is no longer: Which to choose? but rather: Should any single ideology be chosen at all?

In the P.R.C., in contrast, the Communist Party maintains one-party rule and demands allegiance to its ideology. Marxism is the subject of mandatory school classes, and Institutes for Marxism (Makesizhuyi xueyuan 馬克思主義學院) abound within university campuses. A recent (2017) essay on the Party's important website *Qiushi* 求是 ("seeking truth") for ideology describes Communism as one among several competing "systems of faith" (*xinyang tixi* 信仰體系).<sup>88</sup> According to the article, the "Communist faith" (*gongchanzhuyi xinyang* 共產主義信仰) is superior to "religious faith" (*zongjiao xinyang* 宗教信仰), and Christianity in particular is singled out for criticism. On the other hand, the spirit of Communism is said to be in accord with certain Confucian (*Rujia* 儒家) and Buddhism (*Fojia* 佛家) beliefs.<sup>89</sup> Finally, the article discusses the negative consequences of capitalism and states that "a comprehensive survey of human thought through history [reveals that] other than Marx, no other thinker has made such a deep, systematic analysis of capitalism 縱觀人類歷史上的各種思想, 除了馬克思... 沒有其他任何思想家對資本主義進行了如此深刻的、系統的剖析," and so "only Communism is the correct path for humanity 只有共產主義才是人間正道." In other words: if not Communism, what else? Despite the Party's insistence on Communism, since the 1980s in the P.R.C. a prominent strand of public discourse claims that China suffers from a "crisis of faith" (*xinyang weiji*

<sup>87</sup> In the R.O.C., remnants of the single-ruling-party state linger, including the enshrinement of Sanmin-ism in central national laws and symbols. For example, the first article in the R.O.C. constitution (1947-) calls Sanmin-ism foundational to the state, and the first verse of the R.O.C. national anthem (1943-) calls Sanmin-ism the "central tenet of our party." On the legacies of one-party rule in Taiwan, see Mikael Mattlin, *Politicized Society: The Long Shadow of Taiwan's One-Party Legacy* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2011).

<sup>88</sup> See "為什麼說共產主義信仰更值得我們去追求" <[http://www.qstheory.cn/wp/2017-03/16/c\\_1120638651.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/wp/2017-03/16/c_1120638651.htm)>.

<sup>89</sup> It is significant that here the words for Buddhism and Confucianism are formed with the suffix *-jia* 家 (school of thought, lineage) rather than *-jiao* 教 (teaching, religion). As shown previously in the discussion of the suffixes *-xue* 學 and *-jiao*, for anti-religious thinkers *jiao* carries undesired religious connotations.

信仰危機) or a “faith deficit” (*xinyang queshi* 信仰缺失), which allegedly erodes common norms, morality, and trust. Religious and quasi-religious groups, including Buddhists, Christians, and Confucians, argue that they are doing their share to remedy the supposed deficit and to enhance public morality.

Looking back on the whole century, it seems that schemes to integrate Buddhism into state ideology, such as Cai Yuanpei’s, were not so much rejected as ignored and forgotten. Like Cai, other important intellectuals who had been captivated by the potential of Buddhism in their youth subsequently lowered their expectations or grew disenchanting with it.<sup>90</sup> The most important story of Chinese Buddhism in the twentieth century may be the one that never happened: Buddhism never gained a leading position in Chinese intellectual or political realms. Indeed, Buddhism’s position in the Chinese intellectual mainstream is arguably no stronger in the early-twenty-first century than it was a hundred years earlier. This simple observation can be obscured by studies emphasizing Chinese Buddhist “revivals” over the past century.

Yet the relationship between the state and Buddhism has remained consequential for both sides. Buddhist organizations have arguably flourished most where state control has been intentionally reduced, in the R.O.C.’s budding civil society.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, Buddhists themselves, particularly monastic institutions, have attempted or been compelled to make the state more central to Buddhism. For an example both resonant and clashing with Cai’s proposals, Buddhist organizations have sponsored rituals whose designated purpose is to “protect the nation” (*huguo*).<sup>92</sup> Such rituals express patriotism, political loyalty, and desires for state patronage. They were probably most prominent during the late 1930s and early 1940s, during the war with Japan. The underlying logic of such efforts, although resonating with Cai’s essay

<sup>90</sup> This occurred, e.g., with Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1929), Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893–1976), and Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978). The New Confucians also gradually lost interest in Buddhism; see Jason Clower, “Chinese Ressentiment and Why New Confucians Stopped Caring about Yogācāra,” in John Makeham, ed., *Transforming Consciousness: Yogācāra Thought in Modern China* (New York: Oxford U.P., 2014), pp. 377–411.

<sup>91</sup> See Richard Madsen, *Democracy’s Dharma: Religious Renaissance and Political Development in Taiwan* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2007).

<sup>92</sup> See mention of such rituals in Gregory Adam Scott, “The Buddhist Nationalism of Dai Jitao,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 39 (2011), pp. 55–81; Yu Xue, *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism: Chinese Monks in the Struggle against Japanese Aggressions, 1931–1945* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Jan Kiely, “The Charismatic Monk and the Chanting Masses: Master Yinguang and His Pure Land Revival Movement,” in David Ownby, Vincent Goossaert, and Ji Zhe, eds., *Making Saints in Modern China* (New York: Oxford U.P., 2017), pp. 30–77; Catherine Despeux, “The ‘New Clothes’ of Sainthood in China: The Case of Nan Huaijin,” in *ibid.*, pp. 349–93; and Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, p. 148.

when it claimed to be “protecting the nation,” was often diametrically opposed to Cai’s aims. For example, in sermons at such rituals, the prominent monk Yinguang 印光 (1862–1940) stated that the best way to protect the nation was to recite the name of the Buddha Amitābha and to adopt a vegetarian diet, as such actions would dispel the negative karma that led China to suffer invasion from Japan.<sup>93</sup>

While worthy of further study, the post-Qing history of a “state-protecting” Buddhism exceeds the scope of this article. Modern Chinese states, as opposed to occasional Buddhist political figures acting on their private initiative, have not made it a priority to sponsor Buddhist protection. In contrast, modern Buddhist organizations have been more anxious to gain protection from the state. I suggest that now in the P.R.C., the more pressing question is no longer how Buddhism might protect the state, but how the state – sometimes by enlisting it in an alliance against Westernization, sometimes by labeling it as a national heritage – might protect Buddhism.

*Appendix: Annotated Translation of “Fojiao huguo lun” 佛教護國論*

- Text in parentheses and brackets has been added by the translator, unless otherwise noted.
- The symbol □ indicates an illegible Chinese character in the manuscript.
- The essay has been divided into sections and paragraphs by the translator. Paragraphing decisions partially follow those provided in Chinese transcriptions.
- Matters discussed extensively in the main text of the article, above, are not discussed in the annotations. For instance, below I do not discuss the crucial terms *guo*, *jiao*, or *zongjiao*.
- The Chinese source text is Cai, “Fojiao huguo lun” 佛教護國論, in *CYPQJ*.

*Essay on the Protection of the Nation through Buddhist Teachings*  
(March 1900)<sup>94</sup>

[Decline of the Nation and the Teaching]

Mencius said: When people carry out the Way (*dao*), if they are well fed, warmly dressed, living in ease, and yet without a teaching, then they are similar to animals.<sup>95</sup> A *nation* (*guo*) is formed by a conglomeration of people. A *teaching*

<sup>93</sup> See Kiely, “Charismatic Monk,” on Yinguang.

<sup>94</sup> The editor of Cai, “Fojiao huguo lun,” in *CYPQJ*, includes the date “March 1900” in parentheses after the title of the essay. Other transcriptions specify that the essay was composed in the second month of Guangxu 26, which falls within March 1900. (The first day of the second month, Guangxu 26, fell on March 1, 1900.) Presumably the original manuscript includes “Guangxu 26, second month,” as the date of composition.

<sup>95</sup> The actual quotation from *Mengzi* differs by one character from Cai’s phrasing. Cai changes the third character from 有 to 爲; I translate according to Cai’s wording. For the *Mengzi* passage, see book 3A, chapter 4: “人之有道也，飽食、煖衣、逸居而無教，則近於禽獸。”

(*jiao*) is the means to clarify the way (*dao*) that people should treat one another. If a nation lacks a teaching, then its people are similar to animals, and the nation will perish. Therefore, all teachings take protection of the nation as a central tenet.

The teaching of our nation began with Xie,<sup>96</sup> and starting from Confucius it began to have a clergy.<sup>97</sup> Then cruel lords arose one after another,<sup>98</sup> [each] creating [his own] state (*guo*) and enslaving its people, detesting the clergy's discourse on protecting the nation and reviling it. This is proven by the likes of [the people of the states of] Chen, Cai, and Kuang, and by Commander Huan [of the Song state (ca. 11th c. BC–286 BC)].<sup>99</sup> Confucius cleaved to the doctrine of adaptation – that is, he was audaciously correct in action but conciliatorily indirect in speech.<sup>100</sup> [Thus, he] took crude traces of the old teaching, in which hints of true principles could be vaguely perceived, and he told [such traces] to the common people.<sup>101</sup> The higher, true principles he taught orally to his most talented

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Van Norden translates as follows: “The Way of the people is this: if they are full of food, have warm clothes, and live in comfort but are without instruction, then they come close to being animals.” See Bryan W. Van Norden, *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008), p. 71.

<sup>96</sup> The *Scribe's Records* (*Shiji* 史記) describes Xie 契 in the Basic Annals of the Yin (or Shang) dynasty (ca. 1600 BC–1046 BC). In this account, Xie was born of the secondary wife of the emperor Ku 帝嚳 after she was impregnated from eating the egg of a black bird. The emperor Shun eventually enfeoffed Xie and appointed him a minister, ordering him to “...attentively preach the teachings of the five relations. The essence of these five teachings lies in tolerance ... 敬敷五教，五教在寬”; (*Shiji* 3, p. 91; fully cited, below). The five relations are glossed to mean father, mother, elder brother, younger brother, and children. Translation and gloss are taken from Ssu-ma Ch'ien, ed. William H. Nienhauser Jr., *The Grand Scribe's Records, Volume I, The Basic Annals of Pre-Han China*, trans. Tsai-fa Cheng, Zongli Lu, William H. Nienhauser Jr., and Robert Reynolds (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1994), p. 41. (The Chinese text cited above and in n. 108, below, is that of Gu Jiegang et al., eds., *Shiji* 史記 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959].) According to the *Scribe's Records*, one male descendant of each successive generation after Xie inherited Xie's fiefdom. The thirteenth-generation descendant after Xie was Tang 湯, who overthrew the Xia dynasty and founded the Shang dynasty.

<sup>97</sup> The term “clergy” here translates *jiaoshi* 教士, which could also be rendered “scholars of the teaching” or just “teachers.” I chose “clergy” because this same term is used to label Christian clergy, who were on Cai's mind as he wrote this essay, and because the teaching Cai advocates here resembles a religion.

<sup>98</sup> The phrase “cruel lords arose one after another” (*baojun daizuo* 暴君代作) appears in *Mengzi*, book 3B, “Teng Wen Gong Xia”; my translation follows Van Norden, *Mengzi*, p. 84.

<sup>99</sup> Chen, Cai, Kuang, and Song were all Chinese states during the lifetime of Confucius (551?–479? BC), during the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BC). Here Cai alludes to incidents described in chap. 47 of the *Scribe's Records*, “Hereditary House of Confucius” 孔子世家, in which Confucius is harassed or attacked.

<sup>100</sup> The phrase “audaciously correct in action but conciliatorily indirect in speech” translates *weixing xunyan* 威行遜言, which appears in section 14.3 of the *Analects of Confucius*. My translation largely follows that given in Edward G. Slingerland, *Confucius Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003), p. 154.

<sup>101</sup> Here Cai draws on a tradition in Chinese historiography that great sages such as Confucius spoke with “subtle words” (*weiyen* 微言) which, although seemingly simple, in fact had esoteric “profound meanings” (*dayi* 大義) to those who knew how to interpret them. The political reformer Kang Youwei, whose ideas may have influenced the first part of this essay, relied on the concept of *weiyen* in his interpretation of Chinese classics. For more on Kang Youwei and esoteric interpretations of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, see Michael Nylan, *The Five “Confucian” Classics* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 2001), pp. 65–67 and 253–68. The concept

disciples, but he dared not inscribe them on bamboo or silk.<sup>102</sup> When the [Zhou, 1046–256 BC] state perished, stagnation [of the teaching] had reached the utmost limit and then rebounded.<sup>103</sup> Unemployed scholars held discussions, the rights of the people sprouted, and new learning prospered.<sup>104</sup> Mencius (4th c. BC) ventured to proclaim loudly the secondary true principles of Confucius and to elaborate on them, while Zhuangzi [even] expressed the primary true principles through allegories.<sup>105</sup>

Yet before long [such true teachings] were not practiced; they were abandoned in the Qin (221–206 BC) and adulterated in the Han (202 BC–220 AD). Disciples of the secondary true principles of Confucius, based on the tenet of adaptation, mixed [the teaching] with contemporaneous secular learning<sup>106</sup> so as to be acceptable to worldly rulers, such as [in studies of] the *Gongyang* [Commentary] and

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of *weiyuan* in Confucianism is similar to the concept of expedient or skillful means (*fangbian* 方便) in Mahayana Buddhism, for which see Michael Pye, *Skilful Means: A Concept in Mahayana Buddhism* (London: Duckworth, 1978).

<sup>102</sup> Early Chinese writing was often written on strips of bamboo or silk scrolls.

<sup>103</sup> Here Cai alludes to traditional Chinese theories that phenomena go through natural cycles of decay and revival. More specifically, he evokes the concepts of the dynastic cycle, the process by which a state was believed to rise and fall. Although the Zhou dynasty was not formally extinguished until 256 BC, its authority had collapsed centuries earlier. Cai evidently considers the Zhou state to have been defunct by the fifth century BC or so.

<sup>104</sup> By the time this essay was composed, the terms “rights of the people” (*minquan*) and “new learning” (*xinxue*), although having traditional meanings, also meant “democracy” and “Western learning,” respectively. Thus here Cai subtly alludes to, but does not advocate, the theory that modern Western political and scientific knowledge had precedents, or even roots, in ancient China.

<sup>105</sup> In the manuscript of the essay, written in the margin above this sentence, is the following note: “*Analecets of Confucius* = ruler = Hinayana; *Mengzi* = people’s rights without abolishing the ruler = provisional Mahayana; *Zhuangzi* = people without ruler = true Mahayana 論語=君主=小乘; 孟子=民權不廢君=權大乘; 莊子=有民無君=實大乘.” Cai may have taken this typology from Liang Qichao, who had in turn been influenced by Kang Youwei’s and Tan Sitong’s ideas about Confucianism. In an essay published in June 1899, “On the Reform of China’s Religions” 論支那宗教改革 (Liang, *Yin bing shi wenji*, pp. 1334–38), Liang made a typology of Confucians (or, Classicists), that is, *ruzhe* 儒者, in three levels of understanding, from lowest to highest: 1. Xunzi, 2. Mencius, and 3. Zhuangzi. Liang argued that the mainstream Confucian tradition had distorted Confucius because it relied too much on the elementary ideas of Xunzi, who neglected important texts such as the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. From the esteem Cai grants a society of “people without a ruler” here, we can see an early reflection of his long-standing interest in utopian anarchism. The earliest source of this interest may have derived from Cai’s reading of the *Zhuangzi*. Kang Youwei’s utopian thought probably also influenced Cai to some degree. Cai made an effort to collect and read Kang’s writings as early as the fall of 1893; *Nianpu*, vol. 1, p. 61. But Cai was not favorably impressed with Kang’s ideas. In his diary entry for November 16, 1896, while evaluating Liang Qichao’s writing, Cai found Kang Youwei’s influence unfortunate: “The intention was basically correct, but [Liang] inserted the ridiculous ideas of his main teacher Kang Youwei, which is regrettable 立意本正, 而竄入本師康有為悖謬之言, 為可恨也”; see Zhongguo Cai Yuanpei yanjiuhui, ed., *Cai Yuanpei quanji*, vol. 15, p. 99. For discussion of Kang’s utopian thought and a translation of his *Book on Great Unity* (*Datongshu* 大同書), see Laurence G. Thompson, *Ta Tung Shu: The One-World Philosophy of K’ang Yu-Wei* (London: George Allen, 1958).

<sup>106</sup> The translation “secular learning” (*suxue*) highlights the religious nature of the teaching Cai discusses in this essay.

the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.<sup>107</sup> Then later, owing to [scholars'] inclinations for profit and emolument, even the crude traces of the old teaching were lost. After the [Sima] Jin (266–420) and [Liu] Song (420–470) [dynasties], the stagnation [of the teaching] reached the utmost limit and again rebounded, [this time] with the assistance of translated Buddhist scriptures and in fluent expositions on [the writings of] Zhuang of Meng [i.e., Zhuangzi].<sup>108</sup> Yet only the logical mode of argumentation was taken [during this resurgence of the teaching], and the true principles were not acquired.

Thus, although [Xiao] Yan, the Monarch [i.e., Emperor] Wu of Liang (r. 502–549), read the books of Zhuangzi and the Buddha, he still turned his back on the principles of national protection, and thereby brought about the destruction [of his state].<sup>109</sup> Buddhists of that time knew that within a monarchy, knowledge of true principles would not be accepted, and so they thought of ways to adapt Buddhism. Therefore they invented theories about the [karmic] merit of donations, and incorporated absurd ideas of the common folk, so that [Buddhism] would be accepted by foolish, mundane men and women. Afterwards, Buddhists became like the foolish Confucians (*ru*) who were swayed by considerations of profit and emolument, but their mistakes were not as great, as Buddhists did not serve as vassals to the Son of Heaven, and at least kept their independence. Later, owing to their demand for donations, which were still insufficient to support themselves, [Buddhists] invented scripture-penance [rituals], which they could market for profit.<sup>110</sup> Thus [the Buddhists] could no longer remain independent, and became just like the foolish Confucians. As for followers of Fu 傅 [Yi 奕] (554–639) and Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824), they supported the foolish Confucians, and so they flattered rulers and engaged in debates with the Buddhists. As for the □□ group, they in a like manner supported the foolish monks, and so they flattered rulers and engaged in debates [with Confucians]. Alas, [both sides] were so petty!<sup>111</sup>

From the Song (960–1279) through the Ming (1368–1644) [dynasties], stagnation reached the utmost limit and again rebounded, with the Confucians appro-

<sup>107</sup> The *Spring and Autumn Annals*, compiled 5th c. BC, is one of many texts retrospectively labeled “Confucian classics.” The *Gongyang Commentary* and the *Zuo Commentary* (mentioned later) are the two most influential commentaries on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. See Nylan, *Confucian Classics*, pp. 253–306.

<sup>108</sup> The meaning of these two phrases is ambiguous. They could also plausibly be taken to mean “with assistance from translated Buddhist scriptures, which were fluently explained through the [ideas of] Zhuang of Meng.” Zhuang of Meng 蒙 refers to Zhuangzi, the later renowned fourth-century BC philosopher who was from a region called Meng: “As for Zhuangzi, he was a man of Meng 莊子者，蒙人也”；*Shiji* 63, p. 2143.

<sup>109</sup> For a recent study of emperor Wu of Liang, focusing on early retrospective discussions of his Buddhist beliefs and their social effects, see Mark Strange, “Representations of Liang Emperor Wu as a Buddhist Ruler in Sixth- and Seventh-Century Texts,” *AM* 3d ser. 24.2 (2011), pp. 53–112.

<sup>110</sup> On such rituals and the translation of the term *jingchan*, “scripture-penance rituals,” see Douglas M. Gildow, “The Chinese Buddhist Ritual Field: Common Public Rituals in PRC Monasteries Today,” *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies* 27 (2014), pp. 59–129.

<sup>111</sup> It is unclear what the two illegible characters here are; the context suggests they mean something like “pro-Buddhist.”

priating the Buddhist principles of mind in order to justify Confucian teachings. Yet it was as if out of nine cows they saw but one hair, [whose influence] was deeply concealed. They mistakenly believed that [the true teachings] could not be found in Buddhism but could be found in their own Confucianism. This [kind of appropriation] is evident in the case of Chen Heng's 陳恆 stealing the state; [it demonstrates] the knowing of five hundred without the knowing of ten.<sup>112</sup> Finally, owing to this lack of understanding, the [teachings] of Confucius and the Buddha both died out, and our nation became a nation without a teaching, and daily [our people] grew similar to animals.

### [Buddhism Can Protect the Nation]

It was not until I read the writings of Japanese philosopher Mr. Inoue [Enryō, 1856–1919] that I had an [important] realization. Mr. Inoue states: *Buddhism* means true principles and that by which the nation is protected. He also states: Buddhism is a religion (*zongjiao*) based on science (*lixue*) and on philosophy; the doctrines of the Hinayana are science; the doctrines of the provisional Mahayana are phenomenal philosophy; the doctrines of the true Mahayana are noumenal philosophy.<sup>113</sup> How amazing! How similar this [formulation] is to that of our Confucius and his words. The *Analects* are Hinayana; what the *Mengzi* promotes is provisional Mahayana; and what the *Zhuangzi* promotes is true Mahayana. What the *Analects*, *Mengzi*, and *Zhuangzi* are unclear about, we [can] acquire from the Buddha's words, which include even more. Furthermore, Confucius and the Buddha both regarded clarifying the teaching as their goals. Once the teaching is clarified, how could there be a separate Confucianism or Buddhism; [rather], Buddhism and Confucianism are one and the same, and no distinction can be made. Mr. Inoue states further: pure and unadulterated oneness is the seed of Buddhism. This [seed] takes the multifarious cultural products of society<sup>114</sup> as its

<sup>112</sup> “The knowing of five hundred without the knowing of ten” appears to mean “seeming to know a lot, without knowing the fundamentals.” In the context here, it also implies ingratitude: Confucians surreptitiously drew on Buddhist ideas and then attacked Buddhism. Chen Heng (aka Chen Chengzi, or Tian Heng, 6th c.–5th c. BC), a minister in the state of Qi, instigated a coup against the reigning duke of Qi and thereafter politically dominated Qi. Traditional Chinese classics and commentaries revile Chen as the prototypical disloyal official. Chen Heng is mentioned in section 14.21 of the *Analects of Confucius*; see Slingerland, *Confucius Analects*, pp. 162–63, which compares this account with that found in the *Zuo Commentary*.

<sup>113</sup> In China in the year 1900, the term *lixue* 理學 could refer both to the study of principle (i.e., Neo-Confucianism, or mainstream Confucian writings from roughly the Song through the Ming dynasties), as well as to Western science. Inoue strongly and unambiguously argued for the compatibility of Buddhism and modern Western science. Thus here *lixue* signifies modern science, although the term also evokes allusions to Confucianism, as the next several sentences in the essay demonstrate. Inoue also frequently employed the typology of *Hinayana-provisional Mahayana-true Mahayana*. See Staggs, “In Defense of Japanese Buddhism.”

<sup>114</sup> Here “cultural products” (*wenwu* 文物) could also be translated “products of civilization.” Today, *wenwu* usually means “artifact.” But here Cai denotes something broader, although technological products may also be important *wenwu* for Cai. Unfortunately, because Cai does not use the term *wenwu* in other publications until much later, it is difficult to cite direct evidence for this point. As far as I have discovered, Cai does not use this term in any relevant way again until 1916, in his essay “The Digesting of Civilization” 文明之消化, where *wenwu* means products of culture more generally, and includes products of both the “material realm

nutrients, absorbing them into its body, which then changes the substance of the original form within the seed. Then, sequentially it develops into the main trunk [of a tree] that is tens of *zhang* high and into countless branches and leaves.<sup>115</sup> This is what is meant by evolution and development.

Alas! Christians ridicule others for worshipping idols, unaware that their worship of air is equally absurd.<sup>116</sup> Inheriting the old stratagems of rulers, [Christians] claim that Heaven [*tian*, or: God] brings people calamity and fortune, and they detest philosophy as causing one harm and revile it; this is the extreme absurdity of their teachings.<sup>117</sup> Yet Christians are able to absorb the cultural products of society as nutrients, and their physiques are quite fearsome, like ferocious beasts. Although the quality of their brains is crude, when they unleash violence, ordinary people are unable to resist. So much the less [can Christians be restrained given that] the brain-quality of Confucians and Buddhists, while extremely nimble, is unable to take cultural products as nutrients. How sorrowful – our nation’s Confucians and Buddhists perish owing to their empty stomachs. Meanwhile Christianity, its electric power having deeply entered into the brains of White people,<sup>118</sup> seizes the ruins of Buddhism in India, and gradually wishes to advance to seize the ruins of our nation’s Confucianism (*Kongjiao*).<sup>119</sup> If their [Christian] teachings were actually true, then Christianity and Buddhism could both be acceptable, as

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物質界” and “spiritual realm 精神界.” That essay argues that prosperous civilizations are able to absorb (*xishou* 吸收) and digest (*xiaohua* 消化) the cultural products of other civilizations. For example, ancient Greece “digested” ancient Egyptian and Phoenician culture, whereas China was weakened by its deficiencies in the scope and methods of its cultural “absorption” and “digestion.” See Cai, “The Digesting of Civilization” 文明之消化, in *CYPQJ*, vol. 2, pp. 467–68. I suggest that Cai’s concepts of cultural products and digestion in his influential 1916 essay are continuous outgrowths of the concepts he expressed in “Protecting the Nation.”

<sup>115</sup> One *zhang* was slightly more than ten feet, when judging by standards in place at the very end of the Qing. Inoue was fond of using analogies with plants to describe Buddhism. See Gerard Clinton Godart, “Tracing the Circle of Truth: Inoue Enryō on the History of Philosophy and Buddhism,” *Eastern Buddhist* 36.1–2 (2006), pp. 106–33, for more on Inoue’s organic development analogies and their logical implications.

<sup>116</sup> “Worship of air” (*bai kongqi* 拜空氣) probably implies that, for Cai, the Christian God does not exist, and so Christians who worship while facing the heavens are really just worshipping air. The term translated “absurd” here, *wuli* 無理, could also be translated “without principles” – which again shows the resonances in this essay with the Neo-Confucian theories of principle (*li* 理) as well as the contrast with the term that Inoue and Cai often use for truth, “true principles” (*zhenli* 真理).

<sup>117</sup> Here we can see the early hints of Cai’s orientation toward Western culture during the last four decades of his life, namely, Western philosophy, science, and arts are good, but Western religion is bad or at best antiquated.

<sup>118</sup> In late-19th- and early-20th-c. China, various theories connecting *qi* 氣, ether, electricity, and mental (or brain) power were prevalent. Such theories drew selectively from contemporary Western science. For an overview of such thinking, see Benjamin A. Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2005), pp. 399–402. For a translation of Tan Sitong’s *Renxue* 仁學 (*Studies of Benevolence*), an important example of such theorizing which was first published in installments from 1898 to 1901, see Chan, *Exposition of Benevolence*. Cai uses such theories of electricity elsewhere in his writings, as for example in an essay to explain the attraction between men and women; Cai, “Public Contract between Husband and Wife,” in *CYPQJ*, p. 102.

<sup>119</sup> Here Cai uses *Kongjiao*, “Confucian teachings” or “Confucianism,” a term which by

could Christianity and Confucianism, without any distinction between them. Yet, Christianity lacks true principles, as has already been stated.

Alas! Among the Confucians and Buddhists, is there anyone who can absorb cultural products and strengthen their physiques so as to resist the Christians? Among the Confucians, there ought to be those who know about [the need] for this [resistance], but owing to the constraints of inherited social institutions [i.e., the Chinese state], whose deployed nets are fine-meshed, they are unable to deploy their fundamental resources. To explain with a metaphor of eating: there is a grand feast set out, with three seats, for [the three characters, called] Christian, Buddhist, and Confucian. Among the plates there are the fine dishes, which benefit the body; and the finest dishes, which benefit the brain. At each place at the table there is one plate. Christian eats his fill by partaking only of the fine dishes, and he dares not eat from among the finest dishes. No one has yet to sit at the seats for Confucian and Buddhist. [Yet] there are countless, vicious dogs present, who fear lest someone eat Confucian's food so as to strengthen his mind and energy and then overpower them [i.e., the dogs]. So the dogs have gathered beside [Confucian's] seat, lying in wait, ready to bite anyone who comes along. If there are people who do not fear the dogs' bites and still come, [they will find] there are no spoons or chopsticks there. But the vicious dogs have not reached Buddhist's seat, where the spoons and chopsticks are neatly arranged.

Of yore the Buddha's teaching were said to be "without ruler."<sup>120</sup> Since the Tang [dynasty, 618–907], with its policies such as the destruction of monasteries and the killing of monks, never has it been said that [Buddhist places] were free from vicious dogs.<sup>121</sup> Yet having respectfully read the imperial edict of the □ month of the year 24 [of the Guangxu reign era, i.e., 1898], and given the policy of making Buddhists monasteries into schools, [we] can [now] say that the [Buddhist] spoons and chopsticks are in good order.<sup>122</sup>

If [we] scholars with the resolve to protect that nation were to abandon Buddhism, what else could we rely upon?

#### [First Buddhism Needs Reform]

However, the Buddhist monasteries of today include things which must be reformed. I will be traveling to Japan to seek out advisors, after which I will then

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the early years of the Republic often signified Confucianism as an institutional religion, something Cai publicly opposed.

<sup>120</sup> Cai's point here is that in imperial China, Buddhist monks did not pay homage to the secular rulers of the day.

<sup>121</sup> By this point it is clear that the "vicious dogs" are the agents of the Chinese imperial state, which in 1900 for Cai would have been personified by the Qing court, which was dominated by the empress-dowager Cixi 慈禧 (1835–1908). For Cai, Chinese dynasties, rather than promulgating Confucianism, actually twist and maim it.

<sup>122</sup> The illegible word in this sentence may be "fourth" (si 四). Cai is almost certainly referring to an edict promulgated on July 10, 1898 (corresponding to Guangxu year 24, fourth month, twenty-second day). Yet when Cai wrote this essay, the edict had already been recalled and related policies were not implemented until 1901. Therefore, Cai seems to be expressing his support for the edict and for the promise such policies contained that would make Bud-

carry out [certain reforms].<sup>123</sup> [Now] I will briefly raise a few humble opinions [regarding such reforms], which await further assessment.<sup>124</sup>

(1) The activities of scripture recitation and repentance rituals should be eliminated and the focus should be on teaching activities.

(2) Following the regulations of the Japanese temple [Higashi 東] Hongan-ji 本願寺, general schools and specialized schools should be established.<sup>125</sup>

(3) To provide for the protection of the nation, [monasteries should] start with physical training and progress to military training.

(4) To prohibit the consumption of meat is to promote the doctrine of abstaining from killing – this is the most essential precept of Buddhism. Why is this so? Human beings are fundamentally animals; it is just that they are [more] evolved.<sup>126</sup> The reason [we] humans eat animals is just that they are stupid and we are smart; they are weak and we are strong. Yet, following this argument, since among humans there are differences between the smart and the stupid, and between the strong and the weak, should then the intelligent feed on the stupid and the strong feed on the weak? Alas, it is for such reasons that the White race tramples upon other races. In view of this, Buddhists prohibit the consumption of meat. Yet, while humans have evolved from animals, animals have evolved from plants. Plants cannot move, and yet they are not without life. Not eating animals but eating plants – isn't this [still] killing?<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, in a single drop of water, observed through a microscope, there are countless microorganisms – so isn't drinking water also killing? So, the Buddhist [teaching] not to consume meat should just be equivalent [in intent] to the doctrine that Confucians should keep their distance from kitchens.<sup>128</sup> Since these [two] doctrines are equivalent, then not consuming meat is acceptable, but consuming meat is also acceptable.

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dharma into a resource to save the nation. See Goossaert, “1898,” for more on the 1898 edict to transform religious establishments into schools.

<sup>123</sup> As mentioned previously, in 1902 Cai traveled to Japan and intended to visit Inoue, but political events curtailed the itinerary, and he never saw Inoue.

<sup>124</sup> The following proposals closely resemble those of Inoue Enryō for Japanese Buddhism; see Staggs, “In Defense of Japanese Buddhism.”

<sup>125</sup> For an overview of the Higashi Hongan-ji's educational projects during the 19th and early-20th c, see Robert F. Rhodes, “A Translation of ‘Otani University's Founding Spirit’ by Sasaki Gessho (Introduction),” *Shinshū sōgō kenkyūjo kenkyū kiyō* 真宗総合研究所研究紀要 30 (2013), pp. 1–11.

<sup>126</sup> Here, in the statement that humans are animals (*qinshou*, lit. “birds and beasts”), the influence of modern biological science is clearly seen. In traditional Chinese cosmology, entities were ranked in a hierarchy which, from “bottom” (inferior) to “top” (superior), included: insentient objects, animals, barbarians, and civilized (esp. Chinese) people. Part of this hierarchical conception is evident earlier in Cai's essay, when he quotes approvingly from the *Mengzi* that people lacking proper instruction (or a teaching) become like animals.

<sup>127</sup> Note that here Cai is injecting modern understandings of “life” into Buddhist doctrines. The traditional Buddhist precept prohibits the killing of sentient beings, not the killing of “life” as understood in late-19th-c. biology.

<sup>128</sup> Here Cai is alluding to, and partially quoting, the following passage from the *Mengzi*, Book 1A: “Gentlemen cannot bear to see animals die if they have seen them living. If they hear their cries of suffering, they cannot bear to eat their flesh. Hence, gentlemen keep their distance from the kitchen 君子之於禽獸也，見其生，不忍見其死；聞其聲，不忍食其肉。是以君

In the future, after great advances in chemistry, when [people] are able to know how to extract from plants the same health-producing components they [currently take from] animals – then animals [should] not be consumed. Then at a later date, when even the components of plants and water can be extracted from the air, only then [could people] not consume plants and water. Then, the Buddhist doctrine of abstention from killing will be perfected. Yet today, following the Japanese [Jōdo] Shinshū precedent, [Buddhist teachings should still] allow the consumption of meat. However, this must be done for health reasons, not for indulging in its flavor.

(5) The prohibition on taking a wife – this doctrine is proclaimed just so as to put an end to struggles [for survival], since monks wrongly fear population growth [within their communities] owing to a lack of land and resources to raise [children].<sup>129</sup> They do not understand that as society progresses, the population [birthrate] will naturally decrease. This can be known by reading the theories of [Herbert] Spencer as translated by Yan Youling 嚴幼陵.<sup>130</sup> In the future, at the limits of evolution, people will couple through purely spiritual means, without use of their physical bodies, and will create a substance that neither is born nor dies. At that time, [reproduction] will not occur through sexual intercourse between men and women, and the custom of taking a wife will naturally go extinct. For today, the precedent of the Japanese [Jōdo] Shinshū should temporarily be emulated, and it should not be prohibited [for Buddhist monks] to marry wives. However, this must be conducted according to public contracts between husband and wife, and it should not be [a matter of] casual indulgence.<sup>131</sup>

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子遠庖廚也” (translation taken from Van Norden, *Mengzi*, p. 9, with one minor correction). In the *Mengzi*, avoiding kitchens is presented as an expression of – or by another interpretation, as a means of cultivating – the cardinal virtue of benevolence (*ren* 仁).

<sup>129</sup> This claim betrays Cai's ignorance or willful distortion of Buddhist teachings, which do not oppose “marriage” (read: sex) for the purpose of reducing population growth.

<sup>130</sup> This was another name for Yan Fu (mentioned above). He was an influential thinker and translator during the late-Qing and early-Republican periods. Yan read extensively the writings of the English sociologist Herbert Spencer (1820–1903). In December 1897 and January 1898, in *Guowen bao* 國聞報, a newspaper he founded, Yan published his translations of parts of Spencer's *A Study of Sociology* (1873). Then in 1903 Yan published a complete translation of the book. For the dates of publication of Yan's partial translations, see Luo Yaojiu 羅耀九, Lin Pinghan 林平漢, and Zhou Jianchang 周建昌, *Yan Fu nianpu xinbian* 嚴復年譜新編 (Xiamen: Lujiang chubanshe, 2004), pp. 103–5 and 109. For an important study of Yan Fu that focuses on the influence of Spencer, see Benjamin I. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard U.P., 1964).

<sup>131</sup> In March 1900, the same month that Cai composed “Protecting the Nation,” he also composed an essay including his thoughts on the proper reasons for marriage and the rules married couples should follow. See Cai, “Public Contract.” In general, the essay reflects Cai's reformist, liberal orientation; e.g., arguing that women should sometimes be the dominant partner in a marriage and proposing the prohibition of foot-binding.

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*LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS*

- Nianpu*      Gao Pingshu 高平叔, *Cai Yuanpei nianpu changpian* 蔡元培  
年譜長篇
- CYPQJ*      Gao Pingshu, ed., *Cai Yuanpei quanji* 蔡元培全集