

CASE HISTORIES OF MOTIVATION: TWO MODERN CHINESE MONKS

by Holmes Welch

In a recent volume on Buddhism in modern China¹ I devoted a section to the motivation of monks. What induced them to give up the warmth and comfort of family life and enter a monastery? My conclusion was that about one in four was attracted by the ideals of Buddhist monasticism whereas almost three in four were simply looking for an escape. Either illness or the death of people they loved or failure in business or the disasters of war and revolution had convinced them that secular life was inseparable from suffering; and so they had turned to the monastery for an alternative. I suggested that this was, from a Buddhist point of view, not at all an inappropriate motivation, since it amounted to wholehearted acceptance of the First Noble Truth. — To illustrate this theme, I included a dozen case histories, but in the final revision I decided to omit a couple of them. They were too long and led into too many side issues. Also they would have weighted my sample too heavily on the grim side of Buddhism in China. This side exists. Indeed it has played a disproportionate role in the picture of Chinese Buddhism that Westerners have received from the Christian missionaries who have written most books on the subject². I wanted to preserve a balance.

The readers of this journal, however, can probably be relied on to see things in the context of Chinese life, always harsh, and normal Buddhist practice. They may take a clinical interest in details that illustrate, better than most missionary accounts, the sufferings that monks endured, not only before they turned their backs on the world, but afterwards. Therefore I offer both case histories below, as recorded in Hong Kong during 1961–62 in the subjects' own words, which I have translated from the Chinese with a minimum of editing. The subjects' names, in accordance with our agreement at the time, have been suppressed.

I. Why A. B. became a monk

A. B.: Why did I become a monk? It was very queer. From the time I was born until now, I have never eaten anything but vegetarian food. When I was a baby, if my mother gave me pork, beef, fish, and so on, I would throw up. I liked bean curd best and even now I eat bean curd every day. — When I was little, I did not know that I was a Buddhist. My mother and father were not Buddhists. After I was born my father went to Harbin on business. He did not come home until I was five. It was only during those next six years that I saw him at all. So I had a very ordinary impression of him. I loved my mother the most. — Why did I become a monk? Because I was often sick as a child. Once when I was seven or eight, I had a dream. The sky was black. A man dressed in black was carrying a trident. He was very evil. When I saw him I was frightened to death.

¹ HOLMES WELCH, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, 1900–1950* (Harvard University Press 1967). Through its index the reader can get details on all the large monasteries mentioned in this article.

² See Chapter I, HOLMES WELCH, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Harvard University Press 1968).

H. W.: What did the dream mean? Who was it?

A. B.: I have noticed that Chang Fei³ has one of those tridents in his hand. Maybe it was Chang Fei who came.

H. W.: What did he come for?

A. B.: I didn't know. Even now I don't know. But the next day I got sick, running a high temperature. I was nine years old⁴. There were no good doctors in the country. My grandfather loved me specially because there were only three brothers and I was the middle one. I got very sick. He was afraid I would die. He bought a coffin for me. Then my mother — ordinary people would call it very superstitious — went to the temple to worship. I do not know what kind of a temple it was or which god she worshipped, but it was a Taoist priest's temple. We did not have many monks in Manchuria. Taoist priests were in the majority. People worshipped the San Huang and the Jade Emperor⁵. — In the temple she made a vow that if the bodhisattva⁶ would protect me, then after I was well, I would leave lay life and become a Buddhist monk or a Taoist priest. Once she had made this vow, I gradually got well. — When I was ten or eleven a Buddhist monk came to raise money in Mukden for a pagoda to be built at the Kao-min Ssu in Yangchow⁷. His name was Ch'ing-i. As soon as I saw him, I felt happy. I didn't know that he was a monk. It just made me happy to look at him. The peasants liked him too and many gave him contributions. My family gave two bushels of grain. People told him: "Don't go away, stay here." A Mr. Meng, who was very rich, spent a lot of money buying a place to build a small Buddhist temple and asked Ch'ing-i to be the head of it. So he stayed on. I was a young boy then, studying at the village school (I studied there five years in all) and, in the evening when classes were over, I would leave my bag of books at home and go to the temple to listen to him telling Buddhist stories. They were wonderful. I loved to listen to them.

One day Ch'ing-i told me: "I'll soon be going to Shanghai. Would you like to come? I can take you along." — "What would you be taking me to do?" I asked. — "To go and see and have some fun. Shanghai is a wonderful place. People in Manchuria do not know all the wonderful things there are in the south."

I didn't tell my father and mother. They knew nothing about it. Originally the plan was that after two weeks I would be able to come home. He said that a couple of weeks wouldn't matter. So on the 23rd day of the 7th lunar month, 1932 (August 24), I left home⁸. This did not mean that I became a monk. Ch'ing-i did not shave my head or put me in a monastic gown. I just left. No one knew

³ Chang Fei was the butcher who became one of the trio of warrior-heroes of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

⁴ I have not attempted to correct inconsistencies in chronology.

⁵ The Jade Emperor is the Taoist divinity most commonly worshipped.

⁶ The Buddhist term *p'u-sa* (bodhisattva) is commonly applied in China to any divinity.

⁷ This was one of the four leading meditation centers in China, famous for the strictness with which the rules were applied.

⁸ The term *ch'u-chia* means, literally, to "leave home", but in Buddhist usage "to become a monk".

about it. I was eleven years old⁹. — On the seven-day trip by boat from Mukden to Shanghai, I was terribly seasick and when I finally got off, I could not walk. I was too miserable to know whether Shanghai was fun or not. Also I was not acclimatized. Ch'ing-i took me to a barber shop and had my head shaved. Nominally the shaving was done at his small temple in Liaoning, which, in fact, I have never been to in my life. After he had shaved my head he took me to the Hai-ch'ao Ssu to stay as a visitor¹⁰. I was still suffering from seasickness. — After a week in Shanghai, Ch'ing-i took me to Ningpo by boat and then to the T'ien-t'ung Ssu¹¹ about twenty kilometers out of the city. We arrived there in the first ten days of the eighth month. I could not understand a word of the language spoken in the area. I said: "I want to go home, I want to go home. I miss Mumy." — He said: "You can't go home. You are going to be a monk now. I've shaved your head [to make you a novice] and so you and I are the same." He gave me monk's clothing to wear. Then he went back to the Kao-min Ssu. I never saw him again¹².

I kept thinking: "I want to go home, I want to go home." But I had no money. I had only taken twenty silver dollars and they were all used up. I did not understand what it meant that I was to be ordained. But after a month I went to the ordination hall. There was no one I knew there, although there were many young monks — ten to twenty years old — who were going to be ordained too¹³. The ordinands ceremonies lasted two months in all.

The first two or three months after my ordination I did not care about anything. I was in the meditation hall. I was the youngest monk there. I was good at circumambulation¹⁴. My Three Roots were good. Now, when I look back on it, I feel sorry for myself. Most of the monks in the meditation hall were 50, 60, or 70. A few were 18 or 20. I was the youngest. There was no one else who was 11 years old. Queuing up to go to the refectory, I was the last in line. The life was very hard. Each monk took care of himself. If I got sick, there was no doctor I could see. If I wanted to drink some tea, there was no one to pour it out for

⁹ Here and below I give age by Chinese reckoning, which is generally one year more than by Western reckoning.

¹⁰ Unordained novices were not allowed to stay at large public monasteries where the rules were strictly enforced. The Hai-ch'ao Ssu, also known as the Liu-yün Ssu was large, but not particularly strict.

¹¹ This was another of the four leading meditation centers, often admired by Western visitors.

¹² It was exceptional for the monk who tonsured a boy to leave him like this. Usually he would keep him for one to three years at his own small temple, teaching him liturgy and monastic deportment, before sending him to be ordained. The boy was considered to be not only his disciple, but one of his heirs, who would inherit his temple and make offerings before his soul tablet after he died.

¹³ Although the original Buddhist rules forbade the full ordination of persons under twenty, it was not uncommon in China. What was uncommon was to find it happening to a boy of eleven in a monastery like the T'ien-t'ung Ssu. Strict monasteries usually insisted that their ordinands be at least sixteen.

¹⁴ During this time of the year, meditation at the T'ien-t'ung Ssu consisted of seven cycles of circumambulatory and seated meditation, lasting about an hour each; morning and evening devotions totalled more than another two hours. Almost all of these activities must have been incomprehensible to a boy of eleven.

me. My clothes stank. I couldn't wash them because I didn't know how to, and the water was too far away.

Early the next year [1934] Yüan-ying [the abbot] saw how young I was and provided six dollars to send me to study at the Kuan-tsung Ssu in Ningpo¹⁵, escorted by a monk. I was happier there. There were lots of other young monks — over 200 — ranging in age from 11 (I was still the youngest) to 18. It was terribly tough. In the first two levels we studied the Chinese classics, history, mathematics, and so on, but in the third and fourth level we had to learn Buddhist texts by heart. We were obliged to attend morning and evening devotions, of course, and we would use the time to recite our lesson rather than the liturgy. There were so many monks chanting the liturgy that no one realized what we were doing. If we had been found out, we would have been beaten by the proctor. He was terribly strict. I remember once during morning devotions we noticed a bad smell. One of the monks had diarrhea and he had not dared ask the proctor for permission to leave and go to the latrine. It was a miserable life — six or seven hours of classes a day besides our home work. Many students got T. B. and died.

My parents still did not know what had happened to me. I could not send them a letter because I did not know how to compose one. I thought that if I studied for a year, the next year I would be able to go home. But when the next year came, I still could not go. The curriculum was divided up into periods of three years. One could not leave in the middle unless one had broken the rules. One could not run away. We were never allowed outside. If we went to the principal for permission, he would ask what we wanted to do outside. He did not like us going out. No, we could not even go for a walk in the streets. It was very hard.

By the time three years had gone by, I had become happier. I was satisfied so long as I could eat my fill, even though the food was bad. At this point I began writing to my family. But the retired abbot censored all pupils' incoming and outgoing mail. My parents had long since learned where I was, because Ch'ing-i had gone back to my home district and told what had happened. Their letters to me, if they were in a serious vein — urging me to come home, for instance — never reached me. Other letters did. My letters to them were the same. By the time I got to be 16 or 17, I did not want to go home. I was afraid my mother and father would not let me be a monk. I was making progress every day and really achieving something. If I went home, my mother would weep and ask me to stay. I did not want to lead a life in the family. So, from the time I became a monk until today, I have never been home. When I was finally planning to, the Communists came.

My mother could only see with one eye when she died four years ago. She had wept too much. Our house was near the railway station and whenever a train came in, she used to stand at the door, weeping, and look to see if I were among the people getting off. I really feel badly about my mother.

H. W.: It would seem as if the monk Ch'ing-i was not a very good person. He should not have kidnapped you like that.

A. B.: In the ordinary manner of speaking, it was not very good. But in the Buddhist manner of speaking he was my great friend (*ta shan chih-shih*): he was

¹⁵ Here a famous Buddhist seminary had been started by Ti-hsien, the T'ien-t'ai lecturer and abbot, in the early Republican period.

my great benefactor (*ta-shan-jen*). If he had not come to make me a convert, I would not now be a monk.

H. W.: You have not had regrets?

A. B.: Regrets when things have turned out so well? If I had *not* become a monk, I would have regrets. It is not easy to get such an opportunity. The things of the world are impermanent, full of trouble: one can be burned by them. We monks have broken their hold on us through our understanding, our perception. We have escaped from the world. —

This is as far as I shall go with the story of A. B. in detail and in his own words. After the Japanese attack on Shanghai, he moved to Hong Kong, where he eventually settled and today plays a leading role. He is an officer of the Hong Kong Buddhist Association, editor of the Hong Kong Buddhist magazine, and the organizer of several Buddhist charities. He enjoys the respect and support of a large lay following, which makes it possible for him to live in a spacious flat, equipped with a shrine and auditorium, in one of the best quarters of the city. The interesting thing is that despite this busy, comfortable life and his sense of contribution to society and social welfare, he sometimes looks back with nostalgia on the collective meditation and harsh life of the large monastery, which cannot be found in Hong Kong.

The second case history involves a Buddhist monk who ended up very differently: he became a Lutheran pastor. He told me his story so that I might publish it and inspire others to follow in his footsteps towards the Cross. There may also, think, have been a need for self-justification, as the reader can judge for himself.

II. Why C. D. became a monk

C. D.: The story of how I became a Buddhist monk is a very strange one. If I tell it to you, I hope that you will translate it into English and give me a copy, since I do not feel able to write it in English myself. — I was born in the second month of 1919 in the market town of Kuo-ts'un, in T'ai *hsien*, Kiangsu, where my father had a small business making stockings on machines at home. From the time I was born, my mother and father did not want me. It was very strange. I was the first son. At one point they were apparently going to do away with me, but I had a great aunt (she was the wife of my paternal grandfather's younger brother) who snatched me out of their hands and said: "If you don't want him, give him to me. I will bring him up." Afterwards she boarded me with a village family. Her husband had died a long time ago and she worked as an amah for a very rich family in T'ang-t'ou. Of course all these things I do not remember myself. They are what my great aunt told me later. — When I got to be about eleven she sent me to live with my maternal grandmother. Her son, my uncle, had opened a tea shop in their house and I had to help out serving tea and food to the customers. It was very hard work. Also the customers were always talking about me, as if I were some kind of joke: "His father did not want him, his mother did not want him..." When I tried to play with other children, they too would tease me as the boy who had no father. At that time, it was very queer — I did not have much hair on my head. It was covered with boils and when I got my hair cut, it hurt terribly. Up to then I still had not been to school. My uncle's children were going to school, but I had to stay and help in the tea shop, pouring tea, carrying in the dishes — I was a servant.

My father and mother often came to my uncle's house. I was afraid of meeting them and as soon as they arrived, I would go out into the fields and hide, only

returning when they left. They never asked about me. On one occasion my father did see me. He beat me and kicked me. When this happened and when I saw how he looked, I was even more afraid. There was just no father's love. Another time, when I was looking at my reflection in a big earthenware jar, my mother surprised me, and I was terribly frightened. My mother was very bad, for she fetched a pair of scissors and said: "You can kill yourself with these." I was very frightened and went away.

All this happened when I was eleven or twelve. In the second half of my thirteenth year, my great aunt, who loved me very much and often came to see me, was asked by my father whether or not I could go back to my own home. She answered: "Certainly. If you are good to the boy — he is your own child — you can certainly take him home. I have no ulterior motive in bringing him up, and I would like you very much to take him back." So I went back to Kuo-ts'un. Nothing went wrong for the first month. I had a younger brother who was a favorite of my father's — it was really odd, he simply doted on him. I was the only one he did not like. When I got home I was not sent to school, but continued to do housework as I had before.

One evening my mother and younger brother had finished supper. In Kiangsu, you know, we had a custom of reheating the noon rice as a kind of congee for supper. After eating it, my mother and younger brother went out for a stroll, telling me that I should serve it to my father when he got home. On his return I went to bring him his supper in the courtyard (it was always sultry in the summer and so we ate out there), but the bowl was terribly hot, so I dropped it and it broke. My father got terribly angry and beat me. After beating me from head to toe, he took me towards the river. As he was pulling me along some neighbors, who were gathered in the Chinese medicine shop next door, saw us and began to remonstrate with my father. They tried to make him let go of me, but he would not. Finally he did release me and some one went to tell my great aunt. She was very unhappy about it and when she arrived, she told my father that he should not have acted this way — it was he himself who had wanted me to come home. Afterwards she took me back to the house of my maternal grandmother — and also to see a doctor so that he might look at the arm my father had been pulling me by. She then began thinking about my future. She was not really a Buddhist herself, but like most Chinese, she had certain Buddhist ideas. She had no son, and on her birthdays she always asked me to come and help her burn paper money and ingots so that they might be deposited to her account in the Bank of Hell for her use when she died. Sometimes it was for the account of her deceased husband, but more often to her own account.

My aunt kept thinking about all the misery I had gone through and finally she decided: "Since he has been miserable in this life, at least let him not be miserable in his future one. We had better take him to a temple and get him into the clergy. From now on he can prepare for his next incarnation (*hsiu lai-sheng*)."

One afternoon a woman neighbor took me to the Pao-lin An, a small temple three miles away. My aunt had gone there ahead of time, talked it over with the monk in charge, and settled the arrangements. I did not know what it was all about. I was only fourteen. In any case I arrived there one evening and became a "little monk" (*hsiao ho-shang*).

At the time I entered the temple, the monk who was my master was not there. He was at the T'ien-t'ung Ssu (near Ningpo), serving as proctor. Therefore my "grandfather master" on his behalf and with his approval, shaved my head and

gave me my name¹⁶. There were three of us novices. I was the second one. The first was bigger than I was and the third was my master's nephew. I spent about three years in the temple and at last began my schooling¹⁷. But there was one incident I must tell you about. I was often sent to Kuo-ts'un in order to buy things for the temple. Kuo-ts'un, you remember, was where my parents and my great aunt lived. Once my father saw me on the street there, and gave me an awful beating. When I went back to the temple I told my grandfather master about it. Subsequently he went to Kuo-ts'un and invited the prominent people of the village, my father, and my great aunt to meet him in a tea shop, and talked about me. He said to my father: "In the past you were always beating him: he was your child. Now he has entered the clergy, left his home and family, and, in fact, has no home and lay family. You must not beat him any more." My father agreed, but my grandfather master was still worried. Therefore in the presence of the leading citizens and of my aunt, he got my father to write out a guarantee that he would not beat me in the future, so that if it should happen again, the case could be brought to court. He never did beat me again. From this moment on I was no longer a member of the family, though at New Year festivals and on her birthdays I still went back to see my great aunt and chat with her. She would give me good things to eat. On her birthdays, of course, I would help her burn paper offerings.

As I say, I lived for three years at the Pao-lin An. I studied many sutras like the *Amitabha Sutra* and the ordinary short sutras. I did not study other books. The temple owned very little land and it depended for its livelihood mostly on people asking to have sutras recited. My grandfather master was very good at performing Buddhist services. He had an excellent voice. When someone died, we would go and recite. In the daylight hours we would recite penances and in the evening the *Fang yen-k'ou*. On the third day we would escort the coffin to the grave (though some families, if they had the space, would keep it at home for much longer). This way we would get a little money. At first I did not understand very much of it, but gradually I learned and I was able to make money with the rest of the "family".

All these three years my master was still away. We were in the care of my grandfather master, who had his mother living in a temple. She was really hard on people. She had three hundred coppers (which in all could be changed into one silver dollar) in a chest in her room. One day they disappeared. She said that it was we young monks who had taken it. We said we had not taken it. She did not believe us and said that it was certainly we. Our grandfather master was very tough about it. He said: "Tonight there is going to be a reckoning." My brother novices and I did not know what to do. The eldest of us was fifteen, I was fourteen¹⁸, and the youngest one was perhaps twelve. We knew that he was going to hang us up, tied by our hands, and then lash us with a rattan whip. We were terribly afraid. That afternoon I thought of a solution: we would

¹⁶ "Grandfather master" (*shih-kung*) means one's master's master. Many of the regular lineage terms are applied in the religious pseudofamily.

¹⁷ As the reader will see, C. D. regularly exaggerated the periods he claimed to have spent doing this or that. Each should probably be reduced by a third or more.

¹⁸ He may actually have been more than fourteen, or this episode may have happened soon after he arrived at the temple.

escape before evening. We went to my maternal grandmother's house. She asked us why we had come out in the evening like this. We told her a lie. We said that we had been sent to buy things and it had gotten late and we did not want to go back in the dark. My grandmother was very nice about it and said we were welcome to stay there. But while we were having supper, a servant arrived from the temple. He had been sent to find us. "O, here you are", he said. Then he told my grandmother that we had stolen some money. When she heard this, she became very upset. The next day the servant led us back to the temple, roped together so that we could not escape. Our grandfather master waited until evening, since there were worshippers at the temple during the day, and then hung us up by our hands — he made us stand on stools and then pulled them out from under. He said that our flight proved that we had taken the money — and this made sense, of course. But before he began to beat us, we talked it over among ourselves and decided to say that we had taken the money after all and spent it on bread and pancakes. When he hung us up and began to beat us, we confessed. Once we confessed, he released us and nothing more was said about it.

One day in the summer of 1931 a letter came from my own master, who was then a prior at the Hai-ch'ao Ssu in Shanghai, saying that he wanted me to come. My elder-brother novice stayed behind to take over the temple from my grandfather master, who was getting old. I spent one month in the Hai-ch'ao Ssu. At that time the Venerable Ch'an-ting was getting ready to go to Ying-k'ou and open a new monastery, the Leng-yen Ssu¹⁹. My master had been invited to go along and become prior. A lot of monks from the South — especially from Pao-hua Shan and Chin Shan — had also been invited. We all went up together to participate in the inauguration ceremonies. Immediately after it the first ordination was held, which lasted fifty-three days and was done strictly according to the rules, just as at Pao-hua Shan²⁰. I remember that on the day of the bodhisattva ordination the Japanese entered Manchuria²¹.

After being ordained I stayed at the Leng-yen Ssu for three years, enrolled the whole time in the meditation hall, which was operated according to the rules of monasteries in the South. There were many young people enrolled along with me. At the end of three years, my master decided to return to the South and asked me if I would like to come with him. I told him that I preferred not to. He did not press me. I left Ying-k'ou and went to the Chi-le Ssu in Harbin. There I also lived for nearly three years, enrolled in the Vinaya Hall. The curriculum again was the study of sutras, but because my previous education had been inadequate, I could not catch up with the other students and they decided to send me to a sub-temple in Sui-hua, where there were ten or twenty students working at the primary level. It was in charge of the Ven. Ching-k'ung, who has probably long since died. He was a very able person — a *hsiu-ts'ai* and a painter. He could expound the *Surangama Sutra*. I went through it three times with him. We also studied Chinese classics like the *Analects* and Mencius, and

¹⁹ This was one of several new monasteries founded in north China during the Republican period by the T'an-hsü. See WELCH, *Practice*, p. 172.

²⁰ Pao-hua Shan near Nanking was considered the most exemplary ordination center in China during the Republican period. It ordained about six hundred monks a year.

²¹ Possibly September 18, 1931.

every day we had to practice calligraphy. After about two and a half years I decided to leave. They wanted me to stay, partly because I was from the South and partly because they wished me to help them take care of the younger disciples. So I told a lie. I said that my mother had gotten sick and that I had heard about it by a letter, which I had burned. Only when I told this white lie did they let me go back.

I went to the Kuan-tsung Ssu in Ningpo and enrolled in the Buddhist seminary there. Because I was not far advanced, I spent the first year in its Vinaya Hall, studying the Chinese classics, Buddhist sutras, mathematics, history, geography, and the second year I entered the Research Center. It trained us how to expound the sutras. During the day we would listen to a teacher expounding and then in the evening we would practice expounding ourselves in front of our fellow students. It was a very strict kind of training.

After two years there I decided to leave. I went to Shanghai. At that time my master was in Hardoon Gardens, to which he had been invited by the Chinese widow (a Buddhist) of the Jewish millionaire, Silas Hardoon²². I stayed at the Yüan-t'ung Ssu. This was a monastery that specialized in performing Buddhist services for the dead. There I attached myself to the Rev. P'in-chüeh as his acolyte. He was famous for his expounding of the sutras. I went with him as far away as Swatow. After we got back from Swatow, the Japanese attacked Shanghai (August 8, 1937). The Yüan-t'ung Ssu was in the Chinese part of the city and one night it was bombarded. Many of its buildings were destroyed and many of its monks were killed or injured. The next day we tried to escape, but the soldiers outside prevented us. Finally a few of us managed to get away and went to Soochow, where we spent one night at the Hsi Yüan monastery. From there we went to Chin Shan²³. When we got to the gate we did not dare go in. We had never been there, but we had heard that you had to have good legs to stay at Chin Shan and if they were not good, then after two or three days you would have to leave²⁴. As we were standing there, the head of the wandering monks hall came out and asked us where we came from. When we told him, he said not to be afraid: we could stay as visitors in the wandering monks hall. This would be better than entering the meditation hall, though it was summer then, before the beginning of the winter term²⁵. He said that it would even be all right for us to stay on a permanent basis, which meant that we could go on living in the wandering monks hall for a long time, even eight or ten years, so long as we abided by the regulations. Alternatively, we could later enter the meditation hall. Before going to the wandering monks hall we had to have our ordination certificates examined at the guest department²⁶.

²² Hardoon Gardens was an enormous estate in the middle of the city, on which Mrs. Hardoon had built a lecture hall, a nunnery, and a retreat house for Buddhist monks.

²³ The third of the four model meditation monasteries of China and perhaps the most famous.

²⁴ Meditation periods at Chin Shan were so long that beginners usually suffered severe cramps from sitting in lotus position.

²⁵ Entry into the meditation hall was only possible at the beginning of a term. That year the winter term began August 20.

²⁶ Normally the certificates would not have been examined, but this was a time

I remember that after we had finished the procedures, the first time we went to the dining hall the proctor spotted us and officially informed us that our silk robes and leather-soled shoes, which we wore in Shanghai, were contrary to the regulations at Chin Shan. "You will either have to change your clothes or leave the monastery." He was very severe about it. When we got back to the wandering monks hall, some of the other visiting monks kindly gave us cotton robes and shoes. — So we lived in the wandering monks hall at Chin Shan. Every day we meditated there for three periods, one after each meal: in the morning, at noon, and evening. Besides this we had to do manual chores — for example, in the monastery vegetable garden.

I was at Chin Shan in all for three years. That first year I did enroll in the meditation hall. Not long after I enrolled, Japanese troops reached Chen-chiang and came to the monastery. We were all having lunch in the meditation hall. At this time, because of the tension, everyone ate in his own hall or apartment, whereas normally they went to the refectory to eat. The Japanese entered and told us to gather outside the main gate. We didn't know what it was all about. Most people went, but I lagged behind and managed to get away and hide in the back of the monastery. Once outside, the monks were ordered to carry cases of ammunition to Lung-t'an, which is near Pao-hua Shan. But it was not so bad. When they finished the stint, they were given a pass that enabled them to return to Chin Shan.

My rank in the meditation hall was that of acolyte. What we did there made a deep impression on me. I can still sit in the lotus position. I do not like the way some converts to Christianity talk about bad things in Buddhism. I now have a Christian viewpoint, but at that time my viewpoint and way of thinking were Buddhist. I shall never forget the meditation hall at Chin Shan. In my last half year I applied for the menial office of senior verger in the great shrine-hall. The reason I asked for this was that it offered an opportunity to make a lot of money. Chin Shan did not give money to its monks. It performed no plenary masses nor any other Buddhist services²⁷.

Many Japanese soldiers came to the monastery. Although the Japanese army was very harsh towards Buddhists, many of the soldiers still believed in Buddhism. The other verger and I would bring a small tray with "contributions" written on it and bow to the soldiers very politely. Some of them angrily refused; some would be very polite and put in a dollar. These contributions we kept ourselves.

Then we had another idea. We wrote the following on slips of paper: "Homage to the Amitabha Buddha! Here in this ancient monastery, the Chiang-t'ien Ssu in Chen-chiang, the illustrious Fa-hai²⁸ practiced the religious life." The people who came were like children. They all wanted to buy

of great turmoil and the guest prefect may have been suspicious of the authenticity of C. D. and his friend.

²⁷ Chin Shan held no plenary masses — the largest of the rites for the dead, performed by sixty to seventy monks for seven days — after the Japanese occupation, which made it difficult for lay devotees to pay for them or come to the monastery to observe them. Minor rites for the dead were not performed at model monasteries anyway.

²⁸ An eminent T'ang Dynasty monk who figures as a wonder worker in *The Legend of the White Serpent*.

them at ten cents apiece. We could not keep up with the demand, so we had to print them instead of writing them. Ten thousand were not enough and we had to print a second ten thousand. Many, many Japanese bought them, so that some day they would be able to show them to people and say "Once when I was fighting in China, I went to Chin Shan."

I made quite a lot of money this way. Then I decided that I would leave Chin Shan. I went to Shanghai. The Yüan-tung Ssu had not been repaired and so I went to the Fa-tsang Ssu. This was a place that really made money, conducting Buddhist services. From morning to night, from the beginning of the year to the end, there were plenary masses. I was one of the rank and file. During the day I recited a penance — one penance took the whole day — and in the evening a *fang yen-k'ou*. There was no time to rest. If you wanted to rest, you had to ask for leave, and this was very hard to get. If, for example, you said that you were sick, you would be told that since you could not recite penances, you should go to the hall to recite buddha's name. There it was possible to sleep — and still get paid 25 cents a day. To recite buddha's name had the same kind of efficacy in salvation as to recite a penance, and laymen were willing to pay for it. Thereby they hoped to "borrow the power of the monks" in cancelling the sins committed by the deceased and enable him to go to the Western Paradise.

I stayed there for more than a year. Ordinarily one could not leave the premises — except to perform Buddhist services in people's houses. It was like living in a prison. One could not go out without permission. There was a meditation hall, but it was not a real one; it was used for Buddhist services. There was no meditation. Life was harder physically at the Fa-tsang Ssu than it was at Chin Shan, but one made more money. It was like being in business.

When we went out to perform Buddhist services in people's homes, they had to pay \$ 1,50 per monk, of which the monastery gave us 50 cents. We went out, in particular, to recite a short sutra and then repeat buddha's name, walking around the corpse on the first night after death when the corpse had not yet been put in the coffin. This gave the family a chance to sleep, since otherwise they would have had to be keeping a vigil themselves. On the first night the body would not yet have been put in its coffin. Especially in summer there was often a bad smell — it did not make any difference whether they were rich or poor.

I made quite a lot of money at the Fa-tsang Ssu. I remember that towards the end of my stay I saw a copy of a magazine put out by Tao-fung Shan²⁹. It said that people of every religion were welcomed there. There was a school, and one could study English, among other things. I talked it over with a fellow monk, and we decided it would be interesting to go and have a look. So we wrote a letter to Dr. Reichelt, saying that we would like to come. He was very kind, and even sent us the money for our travel. At that time it was not necessary to have an entry permit from the British. But Hong Kong was a British area and Chinese people did not go there very much. When one first came to Tao-fung Shan, one could continue to wear monk's robes for the first half-year or so. One went to chapel every day and attended classes. It was 1937 when I came³⁰. There were

²⁹ Tao-fung Shan was the name of the Christian Mission to the Buddhists, started by the Norwegian Lutheran, Dr. K. L. Reichelt, in 1922 in Nanking and moved to Hong Kong in 1931. See WELCH, *Buddhist Revival*, pp. 186, 339 f.

³⁰ Probably he meant 1940.

lamas at Tao-fung Shan as well as Taoist priests, but Buddhist monks were the majority: perhaps thirty out of forty. We lived in the wandering monks hall, ate vegetarian food, went swimming in the afternoons and then came back to chapel — it was fascinating.

To return to the beginning of the story, I still do not know why my parents did not want me. Yet if I look at it from the Christian point of view, it was a kind of help. It was a kind of preparation. If it hadn't been for that, there wouldn't be this now. —

"This now" included his pastorate, his wife and children, and the nice house we were chatting in, which the Lutherans had given him as quarters. In his own way he seemed to be as successful as A. B. who had, by chance, been his fellow student in Ningpo. He sent him best wishes through me, explaining that it was difficult for them to meet. In the course of our conversation he mentioned several other Buddhists whom he had avoided meeting because he felt "embarrassed". I am not sure that, after all he had suffered, C. D. had really found a peaceful haven in Christianity. It is hard to be Chinese and to belong to a foreign religion — just as it is hard to be a modern Chinese and belong to *any* religion.

VERZEICHNIS DER ALTEN DRUCKE

im Institut für Missionswissenschaft
der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster (1. Nachtrag *)

zusammengestellt von Werner Promper

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| Nr. 94 | 1561 | |
| TEVET, ANDREA | | |
| <i>Historia dell'India America detta altramente Francia Antartica</i> , tradotta di francese in lingua italiana, da M. Giuseppe Horologgi. | | |
| Vinegia: Gabriel Giolito de'Ferrari 1561, 363 pp. | | |
| | | H (Geogr) 40 |
| Nr. 95 | 1586 | |
| GONZÁLEZ, GIOVANNI, O.S.A. | | |
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| Venetia: Andrea Muschio 1586, 462 pp. + Tavola delle cose notabili, che si contengono in quest'opera. | | |
| | | G 328 |
| Nr. 96 | 1587 | |
| [GUALTIERI, GUIDO] | | |
| <i>Neue warhafft außführliche Beschreibung der Jüngstabgesandten Japonischen Legation ganzen Reiß aus Japon bis gen Rom und widerumb von dannen in Portugal biß zu ihrem abschied aus Lißbona</i> . Jetzt aus dem Italienischen in Teutsche Sprach gebracht. | | |
| Dillingen: Joannes Mayer 1587, 337 pp. (BM IV 1684; cf. 1666 [Original]) | | |
| | | G 1668 |

* Vgl. ZMR 1965, 29—42. — Die Signaturen verweisen auf den Standort in der Bibliothek; BM = *Bibliotheca Missionum*.