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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The Center for Asian Studies is pleased to publish three senior theses from the 2016-2017 academic year. Each senior graduating with a degree in Asian Studies is required to complete a research project under the guidance of a faculty advisor on any topic related to Asia. Each year, students produce excellent work on a wide variety of topics, and this year was certainly no exception. In this issue, Leandra Laws analyses the topic of Boys' Love in Japanese anime and manga and the degree of acceptance of male homosexuality in Japanese society; Angelica Powell examines the conjunction of myth, event, and political usage of the May Fourth Movement; and Kurt Schreiber writes about the Japanese monk, Ennin and his travels to China.

The Genre of Boys' Love and the Societal Acceptance of Male Homosexuality in Japan

LEANDRA LAWS

INTRODUCTION

Japanese animation (anime) and manga (comics) have, for a long time, been popular commodities exported to countless countries around the world. While I have been following these trends, an interesting discussion has developed within the consumer community in regard to the most popular anime of 2016: *Yuri!!! on Ice*. This anime is about a young man named Yuri Katsuki who strives to be the best ice skater in the world and win the world championships. Through the course of the show, he develops a close relationship with his coach, Viktor Nikiforov, as he fights to become the best.

Yuri!!! on Ice gained sensational Internet popularity through memes, clips, and other media formats. This media coverage influenced me to begin viewing the program. While I thought it was enjoyable and cute, it did not seem extraordinary. However, *Yuri!!! on Ice* won many awards by the end of the year across multiple anime networks. For example, in the 2016 Crunchyroll Anime Awards, out of the fourteen categories, *Yuri!!! on Ice* won six, including "Anime of the Year"¹. Although the show's critical acclaim swept nearly half of the categories, a criticism of the victory arose in social media which challenged the show's standing, primarily due to its large fan-base comprised of women who promoted the *yaoi* (same-sex romantic pairing) tone. If true, this would have challenged the show's standing compared to programs which were more qualified to win some of the categories. Despite the fact that many of the social media claims were questionable, this fan-base merits further investigation for its intentions and demographics.

I decided to explore the genre of Boys' Love with the intent of discussing it as a female-

dominated field which does not accurately represent the Japanese gay community. Questions that will be considered in this paper are: Why does the female audience in pop culture overshadow the gay community? How do we account for the difference between the extreme popularity of same-sex love stories and the lack of acceptance overall of same-sex relationships in real life? Through the observation of Boys' Love material, such as *Yuri!!! on Ice*, *Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi: World's Greatest First Love*, and *Junjou Romantica*, in addition to socio-political events which have affected gay culture directly in both the past and present, Boys' Love culture overshadows gay culture with misrepresentations which can be corrected through empathizing, interacting, and engaging the gay culture in its own environments. I will unveil the implications for why the Boys' Love genre is a female-dominated field and how it affects Japanese interpretations and misrepresentations of the gay community.

Background Terms

To begin, I will define terms commonly used in this community in order to provide information necessary for an informed discussion of this topic. The term *yaoi* (やおい) is a self-deprecating acronym for *Y*Amanashi, *O*chinashi, *I*minashi (山[場]なし、落ちなし、意味なし), or "no climax, no point, no meaning."² It refers to male same-sex sexual relationship works which are usually not published commercially. Becoming popular in the 1980s, *yaoi* was condemned by the *Dōjinshi* (self-publication)

¹ "ANIME OF THE YEAR," Anime Awards, 2016, accessed May 4, 2017, https://theanimeawards.com/anime_of_the_year.html.

² Thomas Peele, *Queer Popular Culture: Literature, Media, Film, and Television* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).



community for being vulgar³, especially since it was mocked by such interpretations as *YAmete, Oshiri ga Itai* (やめてお尻が

痛い) meaning

“stop, my butt hurts” or *YArU, Okasi, Ikaseru* or “Do (him), rape

(him), make (him) cum.”⁴ The basic structure of *yaoi* relationships consist of a *Seme* (攻め

attacker, a more masculine type) and an *Uke* (受け the receiver, a more feminine type) as seen in

the image from *Super Lovers* ⁵(スーパーラヴァー

ス). This type of relationship has been criticized for not being a realistic representation of male same-sex relationships in and outside of Japan by the gay community itself. In addition, some men in the community felt uncomfortable by *yaoi* because they felt objectified⁶. Within homosexual relationships, men are not confined to maintaining traditional gender roles of one needing to be more masculine than the other. They are free to both be masculine or feminine in the relationship and to say same-sex couples have to maintain a heteronormative relationship is insulting to those attempting to break away from it.

³ Mark McLelland et al., eds., *Boys Love Manga and Beyond: History, Culture, and Community in Japan* (MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2015).

⁴ McLelland, *Boys' Love*, 56.

⁵ Miyuki Abe, "Super Lovers," digital image, Crunchyroll, 2016, accessed May 4, 2017, <https://akiba-souken.k-img.com/thumbnaill/images/official/c7/c799b0be74cdaf656a86b534805fdb13.jpg?h=600&w=600>.

⁶ Mark John Isola, "Yaoi and Slash Fiction: Women Writing, Reading, and Getting Off?" in *Boys' Love Manga: Essays on the Sexual Ambiguity and Cross-Cultural Fandom of the Genre*, ed. Antonia Levi, Mark McHarry, and Dru Pagliassotti (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co).

The second term used is Boys' Love or *bouizuru* (written in katakanaボーイズラブ), usually shortened to Boys' Love, used for commercially produced manga and light novels. It is a more public term popularized in the 1990s but has its origins in the Japanese Western-adopted ideal of romance. The *rabu* ("love") was developed during the mid-nineteenth century when Japanese discovered western ideas of love. *Rabu* refers to the idea of romantic love which is expressed spiritually and physically which, in turn, "encompasses the wide range of feelings indexed by the English term 'love'"⁷. Thus the term Boys' Love came to define an intimately romantic relationship between two men. The terms *yaoi* and Boys' Love are used interchangeably within the consumer community, although *yaoi* is more commonly used for works depicting sexual encounters.

The third term is *shōnen'ai* (少年愛), also translated as "young boy love", was used for commercially published *shōjo* (少女) manga during the 1970s and 80s when romantic relationship between boys was developed as a genre. *Shōnen'ai* was created for young pre-teen *shōjo* manga readers. This term used to be interchangeable with *yaoi* until it became associated with the literal love of young boys, or pedophilia, causing the term to lose popularity, due to taboo associations⁸. Afterwards, the term Boys' Love gained popularity to refer to the category of non-explicit, male, same-sex relationships.

In contrast to Boys' Love, gay manga made by men for the gay audience is called *bara* (薔薇), or "rose" in English. This genre was created earlier than Boys' Love in the gay magazine *Adonis*⁹, yet this genre has not ever been as publically popular as *shōnen'ai* and its future developments. Perhaps

⁷ McLelland, *Boys' Love*, 7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹ Jonathan D. Mackintosh, "Itō Bungaku and the Solidarity of the Rose Tribes [Barazoku]: Stirrings of Homo Solidarity in Early 1970s Japan," *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, no. 12 (January 2006): , accessed April 20, 2017, <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue12/aoki.html>.

it is due to the fact it contains more erotic content. Furthermore, *bara* is not exclusively related to manga; it also refers to any categories related to gay interests such as fashion, erotic literature, and other pop culture outlets. *Bara* manga usually consists of “one-shots”, which are short stories which are not serialized and are led by more masculine non-*bishōnen* (“beautiful boys” 美少年) characters. Thus, there is a lack of *seme-uke* heteronormative themes which are common in *yaoi*/Boys’ Love. Additionally, Mark McLelland, a sociologist and historian specializing in sexuality in Japan, notes how *bara* has “more emphasis upon sex than there is on building enduring relationships.” The themes of *bara* tend to be around allowing men to express themselves sexually and overcoming actual life issues such as same sex marriage and “coming out”. If *yaoi* does have these themes, they are usually exploited as a plot device and are not considered to be portrayed seriously.



Brief History of Homosexuality in Japan

Male same-sex relationships have always existed in Japanese culture and have been depicted in both literature and the arts. For example, male same-sex relationships are commonly dated back to the Tokugawa period (1600-1867). It was commonly known the superior/subordinate male relationships, or

older *nenja* (念者) and younger *wakashū* (若衆)¹⁰ relationships, between samurai tended to be on the intimate side. While being an apprentice, a young boy can agree to solidify their relationship in a brotherhood-type contract in an act of exclusivity. This structure of relationship is called *shudō*(衆道)¹¹. Furthermore, Buddhist monks were also known for their homosexual relationships. Buddhist monks were not allowed to have any relations with the opposite sex, which included sex and marriage. However, the monks exploited a loophole in which the scriptures never mentioned relations with same-sex persons. Thus began the long tradition and acceptance of acolyte and abbot “Boys’ Love”.

Another example of male homosexuality from the past is connected to *kabuki* (歌舞伎) theatre. Starting from the 1630s, *kabuki* evolved in which it was performed by exclusively males, called *yarō kabuki* (野郎歌舞伎) or male *kabuki*. Thus, men were required to play every role, including dressing up for female, *onnagata* (女形), roles. It was a common occurrence in which the male performers tended to develop intimate relationships within the troupe; in addition, such relationships were popular during these times. Unfortunately, since *kabuki* performers ranged from full adults to young youthful men, the traditional performing art developed a reputation for homosexual prostitution within the theaters. It became so widespread, the government at the time were forced to ban *kabuki* performances across the country as a way to control the highly-developed prostitution rings.

During the Meiji period, not only was *kabuki* banned, male homosexuality had fallen out of favor and had become a taboo subject due to the influences of Modernization and Westernization. Since Japan desired acceptance among the Western powers of the time, and male

¹⁰ "Nenja and Wakashu," digital image, JIMerrwo, April 2, 2002, accessed May 4, 2017, <https://jilmerrow.com/2012/04/02/male-coloursthe-history-of-homosexuality-in-japan/>.

¹¹ Gary P. Leupp, *Male Colors: The Construction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1995).

homosexuality was frowned upon in 19th century Western cultures, such popular entertainment had to be hidden from foreign attention. In the 1970s, Boys' Love in Japan grew in popularity through commercially published manga, which led to the creation of *JUNE* (ジユネ) magazine. This *yaoi* magazine helped expedite the growth of modern Boys' Love and *yaoi* culture. However, the popularity of Boys' Love was spurred by the development of *shōjo* manga, manga dealing with romantic emotions and relationships aimed at young women, a few years prior. It is clear throughout the history of Japan, male homosexuality, and its representation in artistic formats, has not always been such a taboo subject. It was not until Modernization, or more accurately, Westernization, where homosexuality became an underground lifestyle which could only be explored through a female audience.

Review of Modern Boys' Love Manga

To understand why women are the main producers and consumers of Boys' Love, it is necessary to look at some influences of Boys' Love manga to consider its structure and the effect it has on its consumer base as well as the community it claims to represent. The Year 34 Group, a group of female manga artists who started in *Shōwa* 24 (24年組), revolutionized *shōjo* manga and contributed to the expansion of *shōjo* manga subgenres; this aided Boys' Love to branch off and become more popular with the mainstream audience due to the fact it was developed alongside *shōjo*¹². The two main contributors of Boys' Love popularity are Takemiya Keiko (竹宮 恵子) and Hagio Moto (萩尾 望都). Both released pioneering manga stories which were Boys' Love-themed. Takeyama published a one-shot titled "*In the Sunroom*" in

1970. It is considered to be the first commercially published *shōnen'ai* which opened the doors to the later-defined Boys' Love manga. Moreover, Hagio Moto, the main founder of the *shōjo* genre, published "*Juichigatsu no gimunajimu*" (11月のギムナジウム): a love story about two boys attending boarding school. A few years later, it also became a major player of pioneering *shōnen'ai*.

The early forms of Boys' Love by these founding women, portrayed young, boy relationships which were drawn from the pages of *shōnen'ai*. Since *shōjo* manga had the target audience of teen girls, it became apparent to expand the theme and write stories encompassing young boys as well. Even though *shōnen'ai*'s name began to develop a negative connotation, as mentioned earlier, these types of same-sex relationship stories continued to climb in popularity. Therefore, in order to be able to continue to create these stories without encroaching on the line of child pornography, the male characters were required to be of the age of consent, 18 years old, for any depiction of sexual relations to be included. Due to this, the title of *shōnen'ai* was discarded, and the new labels of *yaoi*, for stories containing sexual relations, and Boys' Love, stories without strong depictions of sexual content, became the norms for the community.

The reason why female consumers overshadow gay male consumers in the Boys' Love community is due to the fact the genre was originally created for young, *shōjo* readers who were, almost always, girls. Once the demographics of the characters grew older, due to child laws, the audience changed also from pre-teen girls to teens and young adult women, thus making Boys' Love a subcategory of *shōjo* manga made for women, by women. Its origin also translates how Boys' Love carries the social stigma in which only women can read Boys' Love. This most likely deters men from publicly buying Boys' Love and, thus, lowering the opportunities for men to purchase Boys' Love. This is especially difficult for those who have not publically "come out" yet. The third section of this paper will explore the statistics of gay male consumers of Boys' Love and if the status of being "out" or not suggests a difference in consumerism.

¹² Masami Toku, "The Power of Girls' Comics: The Value and Contribution to Visual Culture and Society," *Visual Culture of Childhood: Child Art after Modernism*, December 28, 2004, accessed April 20, 2017, http://www.csuchico.edu/~mtoku/vc/Articles/toku/Power_Girls_Comics.html.

Why is Yaoi So Popular?

Moving on to the 2000s, the works of the popular Boys' Love *mangaka*, Nakamura Shungiku (中村 春菊), will be looked at to determine which elements in her work continue to make her pieces popular. Nakamura's works are quite popular in the *yaoi* community in and outside of Japan. Her most popular work, "*Junjou Romantica: Pure Romance*" (純情ロマンチカ/ピ



ユア ロマンズ) originally published in 2003, was the first *yaoi* work to reach the *New York Times* weekly bestseller list for graphic novels in July 2009 and September 2010. She also has another series, "*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi: World's Greatest First Love*"¹³ (*Sekai-Ichi Hatsukoi: Onodera Ritsu no Baai* [世界一初恋 一 小野寺律の場

合一]) originally published in 2006, which is still topping the anime charts in the Boys' Love category. Both series continue to enjoy popularity today. Nakamura has a distinct focus in which she depicts larger age gaps between the *seme* and *uke* characters. These figures are successful in the publishing industry as the characters generally start off as enemies, but gradually develop loving relationships. Nakamura has all of the stereotypical elements in her work which fit the definition of *yaoi*: a *seme/uke* dynamic and an easy-going romance which does not touch heavily on controversial topics. These are some of the reasons her publications have been enjoyed and remain popular. Not only does her focus fit the mold of Boys' Love, readers also have clear expectations when reading her work.

The second element which may possibly suggest Nakamura's popularity is the fact her

characters in "*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi: World's Greatest First Love*" are openly in a relationship within an office setting and the coworkers who edit in the background of these *shōjo* stories, are men. This contributes to the appreciation and acceptance of men writing Boys' Love and *shōjo* works since it is a female-dominated field. However, the artists and content creators are solely women. Furthermore, Nakamura's works probably appeal to a slightly wider audience of gay men who are in the workplace and who might not be able to completely express themselves. The workplace environment in these stories are open and friendly, compared to the stereotypical, strict, pencil-pusher environment. "*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi: World's Greatest First Love*" was a bit progressive for the early 2000s, though it obviously resonated with the community and continues to resonate with its audience over the 14 years of its production.

Still, because these works fit the frame of Boys' Love/*yaoi*, they provoke those who are against Boys' Love for depicting an unrealistic representation of the true gay male community in Japan and, sometimes, on the international scale. The first thing people in the gay male community consider to be a misrepresentation, was the expression of same-sex relationships within the workplace. Japanese businesses are not legally obligated to respect a person's sexual orientation and, even if they were, men tend not to express this part of their lives at work. Even straight, Japanese people tend not to flaunt their relationships in the office regardless of whether they are married and/or have children; despite this, these aspects of life are more likely to be brought up than sexuality. Of course, this is not taking into consideration the closeness of some coworkers and natural "water cooler" gossip which occurs in every workplace.

A second misconception, which "*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi: World's Greatest First Love*" actually acknowledges, is the prevalence, or lack thereof, of men in the Boys' Love and *shōjo* publishing community. Since *shōjo* manga was created by women, females continue to dominate the artistic field in this area. There is the assumption of how it is a dead-end path for men to pursue such a career as well as if the readers knew a man wrote the manga they are reading, it would not be as

¹³ Shungiku Nakamura, "Sekai Ichi Hatsukoi - World's Greatest First Love," digital image, Crunchyroll, 2011, accessed May 4, 2017, http://img1.ak.crunchyroll.com/i/spire1/4384118842b98b752dc3a02b2d25089b1317916725_full.jpg.

popular. This is not to say men cannot write *shōjo* manga; if they do, it would behoove them to have a female pen name to overcome the stereotype. Additionally, in “*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi: World’s Greatest First Love*”, men who are working with *shōjo* are portrayed as effeminate and only work in editing or other business-like departments. The creators of the stories and the artists in this



manga are all women. This effeminate trait of men in the show is over-emphasized, perhaps to exploit or parody the assumption of how only effeminate men are able to work in the *shōjo* industry. However, this does not apply to the love interest of the main characters, to avoid breaking the masculine *seme* character

structure.

Nakamura’s works, such as “*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi: World’s Greatest First Love*”, and their popularity has traveled through the decades as exemplary Boys’ Love. Nakamura creates very defined *seme* and *uke* characters who do not leave Boys’ Love readers disappointed. Nakamura’s manga also implicitly exploits current issues in Japan regarding how the gay community is interpreted in the workplace. She demonstrates how masculinity is challenged for men who decide to work in the *shōjo* industry. Conversely, the reasons which make her publications enjoyable are also the reasons the gay community criticizes them. This gives some insight to the differences between the demographic which consumes Boys’ Love versus the cultural archetypes of the Japanese gay community. In other words, the demographic of female readers and creators over-romanticize the acceptance and structure of gay relationships; and continue to de-masculine the men who currently want to work in the *shōjo* publishing industry.

The Evolution of Boys' Love

Finally, the elements of Boys’ Love in *Yuri!!! on Ice* ¹⁴(ユリ!!! on ICE) (*YOI*), originally written by Mitsurō Kubo, will now be evaluated and it will be shown how the show's popularity has been affected within the anime community. As mentioned earlier, *Yuri!!! on Ice* won multiple awards during the 2016 anime winter season and was the most “Tweeted” anime, collecting over 1,440,000 Tweets, beating out the previous anime, *Haikyuu!!*, by more than a million Tweets¹⁵. Even though Crunchyroll mostly represents the international anime watching community (read: outside of Japan), *Yuri!!! on Ice* was quite popular in Japan by winning the Tokyo Anime Award Festival out of 100 other competitors¹⁶. Despite all of these statistics, there were/are still many viewers who claim *YOI* was only popular due to the fact it was Boys’ Love and was, thus, overrated.

However, *YOI* is not technically categorized as a Boys’ Love anime as it is missing a few key elements which would have defined it as Boys’ Love, and not a sports anime. The first aspect to consider is the *seme* and *uke* theme. One could argue Viktor and Yuri have a *seme/uke* relationship since Viktor is the teacher and Yuri is the student; at the same time, they lack the masculine/feminine characterizes which defines *seme* and *uke*. It could actually be said they both take on more androgynous roles within the anime, though Yuri more so than Viktor. Yuri’s growth in confidence and skating capabilities are

¹⁴ Sayo Yamamoto, "Yuri!!! On ICE," digital image, Crunchyroll, 2016, accessed May 4, 2017, http://img1.ak.crunchyroll.com/i/spire3/3ecfb2e6bf12c8941f436552b6b1b5131481068207_full.jpg.

¹⁵ Rafael Antonio Pineda, "Yuri!!! on Ice Dominates Fall Anime on Twitter Rankings," *Anime News Network*, December 21, 2016, , accessed April 20, 2017, <https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/interest/2016-12-21/yuri-on-ice-dominates-fall-anime-on-twitter-rankings/110186>.

¹⁶ Mikikazu Komatsu, "Tokyo Anime Award Festival Announced Top 100 Anime of 2016", Crunchyroll, December 28, 2016, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://www.crunchyroll.com/anime-news/2016/12/28/tokyo-anime-award-festival-announced-top-100-anime-of-2016>

shown to be more “cool”, level-headed, and strong, which depicts him as more powerful than his competitors: this translates to a more masculine representation. Yet the trainer, Viktor, emphasizes Yuri should put all of his emotions into his skating. He wants Yuri to know how being the best at skating is not all about having the perfect techniques and skills if the audience cannot see the passion the skater holds as well. When Yuri does embrace his emotional side, his skating becomes more sensual—thus more feminine—and pleases the crowd more than simple, basic ability. The equality between each character and how they both need each other to gain some personal growth emphasizes their psychological bond is more than just a student and teacher hierarchy. It also challenges the *seme/uke* Boys’ Love structure. With the main characters alternating between masculine and feminine, Yuri’s balance between emotional expression and physical strength in contrast with Viktor having power as a reputable skater while being a more effeminate character, they break down the typical Boys’ Love structure.

Yuri and Viktor’s relationship is intimate and a bit complicated. They never label their relationship as dating or anything beyond good friends or mentor/student. However, by their actions and words, viewers are able to get a reading on their feelings of love, admiration, and equal respect. This is another aspect which, not only makes the series popular, but also challenges the Boys’ Love title. Yuri and Viktor’s relationship extends into intimacy without involving sexuality or physical romantic gestures, which is a defining factor of both Boys’ Love and *yaoi*¹⁷. This element is what separates *YOI* from other, typical Boys’ Love-esque content: a same-sex “couple” can have an extremely intimate relationship without it being defined as sexual or having an end goal of sex. “It’s how the two interact—in a way that focuses on their fears and psychology—and how their relationship progresses from fan and idol to a consensual, mutual bond that makes it stand out. Yuri and Viktor aren’t just another gay anime couple.

¹⁷ “Yuri and Victor”, digital image, November 18, 2016, accessed May 5, 2017, <http://thegeekiary.com/love-wins-on-yuri-on-ice/39440>.

They’re almost real,¹⁸” Velocci, an entertainment writer for Geek.com says. Since *YOI* has dynamic character development, substantial relationship growth, and teeters on the line of Boys’ Love, this evokes a sense of realism more so than typical Boys’ Love where the characters’ transaction between strangers to lovers is quite abrupt. The appreciation of the show comes from Yuri and Viktor’s relationship diverting from typical Boys’



Love stories, while having a romantic story with substance.

One of the biggest messages of *YOI* is, of course, the acceptance of gay relationships. In the show, all of the competitors spend time in other countries (i.e. outside of Japan) for each round of competitions. This is not to say there was a lack of Japanese support, but in regards to Yuri and Viktor’s relationship, it was supported by the fangirls, female fans, who attended their shows. At the same time, when Yuri and Viktor are around their international friends, it is during this time when they receive the most support for their relationship.

Similarly, another implication this show touches on is same-sex marriage in Japan. Towards the end of the series, Yuri gives Viktor a matching ring which is meant to represent the pair staying together unconditionally (whether that be as coach/student, friends, or potential lovers) at least until the end of the biggest competition and/or Yuri’s eventual retirement. This symbol was originally meant to be a good luck/promise ring between the two of them, but

¹⁸ Carli Velocci, “‘Yuri on Ice’ is a Non-Traditional Gay Anime Romance,” Geek.com, December 27, 2016, accessed April 20, 2017, <https://www.geek.com/television/yuri-on-ice-is-a-non-traditional-gay-anime-romance-1683540/>.

as other international friends noticed they had matching rings, their international friends congratulated them on their “engagement”. Yuri and Viktor never dispelled their friend’s assumptions and when confronted about its meaning, to Yuri’s embarrassment, Viktor agrees and claims it is an engagement ring. Currently in Japan, same-sex marriage is not legal; however, as of a 2013 poll, 70% of young Japanese are in favor of legalizations¹⁹. Although as of March 2009, Japan recognizes same-sex couples only if the union is with a foreigner: two Japanese nationals are not recognized. This also adds realism to the show since Yuri is Japanese and Viktor is Russian. The fact in which all of these events occur outside of Japan and around many different foreigners implies the creators are aware of the current situation in Japan and, in order to make this interaction receive approval, it was a requirement to occur outside of Japan.

So what makes *Yuri!!! On Ice* so popular? It may possibly be since it is not categorized as a Boys’ Love anime: the show is actually a sports comedy romance. It has modern animation, and all of the skating scenes were professionally choreographed by Miyamoto Kenji, a retired ice skater, now coach, who is a three-time winner of the Japan Ice Skating Championships. The show portrays the passion and effort Yuri goes through in order to follow his dreams to the international skating level. These elements attract those who favor sports anime.

Next is the fact how Yuri has to conquer his insecurities and embrace his feminine side in order to express himself in such a way which allows him to climb the ranks. Along with this is the development of Viktor and Yuri’s relationship. The main question which arises seems to be how two people can develop such an intimate relationship without being lovers: it is not just love, but how both Yuri and Viktor need each other to personally grow and flourish. They become better people with each other and do not

seem to care about labels, as long as they can support one another. This, in turn, attracts those who favor *shōjo* or romantic dynamics in shows. There is also the obvious fact how Yuri and Viktor are a same-sex couple who are able to express themselves without being judged. This, along with the romantic aspect, attracts those in the LGBTQ community, as well as women who enjoy Boys’ Love.

Since this type of relationship is not usually shown in anime (since it is not *yaoi* and does not follow the traditional Boys’ Love format), it was revolutionary for Japan. Fujimoto Yukari, a professional manga editor, states how works dealing with gender do necessarily reflect the gender situation of the time²⁰. Since *shōjo* and Boys’ Love are both female-dominated genres, what does this say about the anime watching community in Japan? When someone mentions anime or *otaku* (a young person who obsesses over popular culture or computers, to the point of harming their social skills), it is usually a young male who comes to mind. However, with *YOI* as an example, are there a lot more women enjoying manga and anime than expected? Both of these questions will be explored in the last section.

Male Homosexuality in Modern Japan

Since we have established *yaoi* and its other definitions, observed the development of male homosexuality through the history of Japan, and evaluated a few famous works of Boys’ Love, it is now time to see how homosexuality is interpreted in modern and contemporary times. Starting in 1880, same-sex sexual activity was legalized; however, same-sex couples, along with members of the LGBT community, do not have the same legal protections as opposite-sex couples. This means they are not included in the Equal Opportunity Law against discrimination in educational institutions, housing, health care, nor in the work place. Furthermore, even though the

¹⁹ Chisaki Watanabe, "Majority of Japanese Support Same-Sex Marriage, Poll Shows," Bloomberg, November 29, 2015, accessed April 20, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-11-29/majority-of-japanese-support-same-sex-marriage-poll-shows>.

²⁰ McLelland, Mark J. et al., eds. *Boys’ Love Manga and beyond: History, Culture, and Community in Japan*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015. Print.

Japanese constitution offers equal rights for everyone, same-sex partners are not included in the law for Prevention of Spousal Violence and Victim Protections. Unfortunately, this leads to not many available safe places for domestic violence victims in same-sex relationships. Additionally, through Japan's Prostitution Prevention Act (1958), "true" sexual conduct is between men and women; therefore, due to a technicality, homosexual prostitution, is not prohibited. Showing how most Japanese laws are to regulate behavior between cisgendered men and women, ignoring the fact of how there are people who do not fit such a mold.

On the other hand, Article 24 of the Japanese constitution states how "Marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual cooperation with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis." This means same-sex couples are not able to legally marry, nor are they granted marital rights. Also, same-sex couples from abroad are not legally recognized in Japan and are unable to obtain a visa for the foreign partner despite on their relationship²¹. Additionally, this means same-sex couples are not allowed to adopt or have access to IVF (In-Vitro Fertilization) if they want to start a family.

As of 2015, Dentsu Aegis Network performed a national survey. Out of about 70,000 people surveyed, 7.6% of people identified as a part of the LGBT community, compared to 5.2% from the 2012 survey²². Furthermore, participation in the Tokyo Gay Pride Festival from 2014 rose from 15,000 people to 55,000 people in 2015²³. Trends are showing how the LGBT community in Japan is

²¹ *The Violations of the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Persons in Japan*. Report. Oct 2008. Accessed May 4, 2017.

²² "電通ダイバーシティ・ラボが「LGBT調査2015」を実施(Dentsu Daibāshiti Rabo ga [LGBT Chōsa 2015] wo jisshi) " 電通(Dentsu), April 23, 2015, accessed May 4, 2017.

<http://www.dentsu.co.jp/news/release/2015/0423-004032.html>.

²³ Naomi Gingold, "Why an anime character can be openly gay in Japan, but you can't," PRI.org, August 25, 2015, accessed May 4, 2017,

<https://www.pri.org/stories/2015-08-25/why-anime-character-can-be-openly-gay-japan-you-can-t>.

slowly increasing its public presence, but remains small despite, as mentioned earlier, most young people's acceptance of the LGBT community. Unfortunately, this results in the major public figures of homosexuality are only present in manga, anime, or flamboyant celebrities such as Matsuko Deluxe. Until more pro-LGBT political activists are elected into the government, it will be a long time before this community gains any substantial legal rights outside of a few small cities.

Continuing, an important term to define when researching this topic is "heteronormativity". Heteronormativity is a term which was coined by Michael Warner in his book *Queer Theory*. It is defined as the theory in which a person's gender defines their natural role in life and society. It concludes how heterosexual relationships are the only true and natural orientation a person can or should have. The theory encompasses sexuality, gender identity, and gender roles. Some say it is an extreme view and is related to homophobia²⁴. In this paper, the term heteronormative will represent the "traditional" gender roles within a relationship structure: men being the more dominant, traditional familial providers, and strong, while women are the more submissive, care givers, and are more emotional.

Mark McHarry, author of the article "Identity Unmoored: *Yaoi* in the West", observes how *yaoi* authors create works which depict homosexual characters participating in heteronormative scenarios and acts. The outcome of this blurs contemporary hetero/homosexual identities (168)²⁵. In *yaoi*, heteronormativity tends to be gender-fluid, meaning how, despite characters do not fit the typical gender relationship structure (male-male instead of male-female) they are still imposed with a heteronormative dynamic: one male in the relationship will act masculine and the other male will act feminine. This is different than English-language comics where queer characters create conflict against heterosexual culture while still, inadvertently, embracing it

²⁴ Karen E. Lovaas and Mercilee M. Jenkins, *Sexualities and communication in everyday life: a reader* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007).

²⁵ Peele, *Queer Popular Culture: Literature, Media, Film, and Television*.

(190). While in *yaoi*, the male characters do not act much different than a heterosexual couple, with the only conflict being the male couple has to strive to keep their relationship a secret, which is not a requirement for a hetero-couple, in contrast. *Yaoi* is not made to make a political statement about the present gay community. Rather, it is a romance genre with its purpose to provide entertainment to its readers. On the other hand, Western gay comics attempt to make a statement while striving to be more progressive within its stories.

Psychology of the Female Admiration

Perhaps the reason why *yaoi* imposes heteronormative values upon its male characters is due to the fact it is created by women. It has been recorded how, in most cultures, more women than men tend to create erotica about male-male sexuality ²⁶(183). One of the reasons researchers speculate as to why this phenomenon exists, is because it allows women to break out of their gender roles and explore a different relationship dynamic. This allows women to explore the position of the “doer” rather than always being locked into the “done to” position within a relationship.

Furthermore, Tan bee Kee, author of the article “Rewriting Gender and Sexuality in English-Language *Yaoi* Fanfiction”, speculates, “with two male characters, there are no predefined roles to play in a romance. Either character is free to initiate a relationship. They are free from the pressure of ‘saving themselves’ for marriage. [...] In a story in which the *uke* loses his virginity to the *seme*, it is represented as the ultimate sign of trust and ultimate surrender of self to the partner. In heterosexual fiction, such a scenario would be an act of domination that is often portrayed as a ‘conquest or a devaluation of the woman’” (128-129)²⁷. Creating *yaoi* allows

women to be ambiguous about the heteronormative roles they deal with in real life. Through *yaoi*, women creators and readers are able to roleplay the masculine role and explore what it is like to be the *seme* in a relationship.

Additionally, the creation of *yaoi* by women can be a counter to the male chauvinism which overwhelms Japanese pop culture. From popular maid cafes to the females in anime being fan-service to males, women tend to be over-sexualized. By creating *yaoi*, it allows women to take control and over-sexualize to their own standards. Unfortunately, it does mean gay males, inadvertently, take the brunt of the negative aspects of over-sexualization: people not considering them as well as having real-life relationships misrepresented.

As stated earlier, there are those who are strongly against *yaoi* and feel it twists the lives of gay men into an unrealistic fantasy. In the mid to late 1990s, when *yaoi* was increasing rapidly, a Japanese feminist magazine called *Chosir* started a debate around its content. A gay activist/civil servant named Satō Masaki argued how *yaoi*'s characters had nothing to do with “real gay men”, and “*yaoi* lacks the authority and authenticity of lived experience; therefore, it risks a socio-political nihilism for the sake of aesthetic expression”²⁸. Masaki is implying *yaoi* tries to emulate real-life relationships and issues gay men go through without the creators actually having experienced such events. Moreover, due to *yaoi*'s lack of authenticity, the impact on its readers is how they might lose their morality in both the social atmosphere and the political one. In other words, outsiders might not take the dilemmas of the gay community seriously and subsequently feel the community does not need the same rights as cisgendered people. This, as mentioned earlier, is still currently an issue in Japan.

Masaki also stated, “*yaoi* and its readers were violently co-opting the reality of gay men and transforming it into their own masturbatory fantasy. [When reading *yaoi*, the women] look

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Tan Bee Kee. “Rewriting Gender and Sexuality in English-Language *Yaoi* Fanfiction.” in *Boys’ Love Manga: Essays on the Sexual Ambiguity and Cross-Cultural Fandom of the Genre*, ed. Antonia Levi, Mark

McHarry, and Dru Pagliassotti (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co).

²⁸ Isola, “Yaoi and Slash Fiction: Women Writing, Reading, and Getting Off?”

like those dirty old men salivating over images of lesbian sex.²⁹ Although this may be true with *yaoi*, which usually has more sexual content, this does not necessarily fit the frame of Boys' Love, which is more romance-based than pornographic. Even so, Boys' Love would still fit the fantasy aspect of the perfect relationship or how women think the perfect male-male relationship would be. This is especially the case since *yaoi* does not take the struggles real Japanese gay men experience into account. If there is conflict from coming out or getting acceptance from peers, it is used as a plot device to create drama and almost always has a happy outcome, which is more than generous compared to real life struggles.

Conclusion

To reiterate, why does the female audience in Boys' Love pop culture overshadow the gay community? The female audience in Boys' Love overshadows the gay readers due to the fact Boys' Love and *yaoi* were created by women, for young women and girls who already had interests in *shōjo*. Since *shōjo* is a genre for women, there is a stigma for men reading it, no matter the sexual orientation. This is not to say men cannot read *shōjo* (as many women read *shōnen*), but due to the heteronormative culture, there seems to be a double-standard in place. Furthermore, since *shōjo* is among the top most popular anime/manga genres (next to *shōnen*), it gives more opportunities for Boys' Love to, not only gain recognition, but also to be more socially acceptable than works made by gay men for gay men such as *bara*.

Finally, how do we account for the difference between the extreme popularity of same-sex love stories and the lack of overall acceptance of real same-sex relationships within Japanese law? The development of male homosexuality in art and pop culture is not a modern occurrence; and it has been observed women tend to be the creators of such works. Japanese throughout history tended to be very accepting of homosexual relationships before Western influence. The

difference between the popularity of Boys' Love and the lack of acceptance can be found in the purpose of the Boys' Love text. Boys' Love is not created for men, nor has the intention of representing the gay community in Japan. It is an outlet for women to explore different gender roles while enjoying the taboo aspect of male gay relationships. Since the characters of Boys' Love still have a heteronormative dynamic (*seme/uke*) despite being men, the female reader is allowed to easily place themselves into either place in the relationship dynamic. However, if we consider the gay community is not being properly represented in these stories or their issues are not taken seriously, this does allow the general public to make assumptions about how gay males should act and behave. That is, this can be interpreted to being gay is something to keep secret, while still having the ability to participate in passionate relationships. This can also turn current gay issues into small problems which have no urgency to be fixed, especially by government policy. Even though many young, Japanese people are tolerant with the idea of homosexuality, it can certainly be questioned as to whether or not the majority truly understands what it is like to be accepting and not to compare homosexuality to Boys' Love works.

Thus, through the observation of Boys' Love material, such as *Yuri!!! on Ice* and *Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi: World's Greatest First Love*, as well as socio-political events which have shaped the acceptance of homosexual relationships throughout Japanese history, I have concluded Boys' Love culture overshadows gay culture with intentional misrepresentations to appeal to the readers who consume Boys' Love in order to subvert the constraints of gender roles and push back on the over-sexualization of women in pop culture. This could be corrected through engaging more openly with the gay community in their own environment outside of what is represented in pop culture. Additionally, animes such as *Yuri!!! on Ice* are a great step forward towards the acceptance of gay relationships without letting prejudices hinder the community.

²⁹ Peele, *Queer Popular Culture: Literature, Media, Film, and Television*.

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The May Fourth Movement: the Myth, the Event and its Political Usage

ANGELICA L. POWELL

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1989, the world watched as a single man, with a shopping bag in hand, stood defiantly in front of three Chinese military tanks. This moment, captured by film and seen around the world, came at the end of the student protests which started in April by Beijing college students and workers. For the foreign media, this defiance joined a larger, ideological war between democracy and communism. For the Chinese government, the tank man's action, especially after the massacre the night before, tapped into a larger and more powerful idea than just democracy: the May Fourth protests of 1919.¹ Simply put, the May Fourth protests began after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles and

¹ A quick outline of the events of 1989 are as follows. Starting with Hu Yaobang's death on April 15, 1989, students met at Tiananmen Square in Beijing to hold a vigil and show their dissatisfaction with the reform in China. By April 18th, the demonstrations spread and students began to call for more democracy within China, in line with the opening of China (known also as the *gaige kaifang* or 改革開放). On April 22nd in the memorial of Hu Yaobang's death, four days later a state-run paper accuses the protestors of being counter-revolutionaries, which fuels the anger of the protestors which has now grown to tens of thousands of students in at least five cities by May 4th. On May 13th, hunger strikes begin at the same time Mikhail Gorbachev is intended to come to Beijing. By May 19th, Zhao Ziyang comes to Tiananmen Square to talk and try to stop the protests. By May 20th, troops were ordered to enter the city center and civilians blocked the way of the soldiers. Going to June 1st, there was a certain jubilation in the student's success. However, it was short-lived as on June 3rd, PLA soldiers started to circle the students, killing and injuring many of the protestors. On June 4th, crowds and civilians began to hear about what happened the night before and became angry and shocked. June 5th is where "tank man" stands in defiance against the actions of the military. This event ends on June 9th with the denunciation of the protests by Deng Xiaoping.

the loss of German-controlled Chinese land, which led to the students taking the roles of protector and conscience of the Chinese nation. For the government, the 1989 students' pro-democracy affiliation was not what made them dangerous: it was the similarities between the 1919 and 1989 students which made them a threat. The 1989 protestors took on this unique role, something only they could take on as students, of protecting and guiding the nation in its efforts to become a modern, globalized nation-state.

By 1989, May Fourth was unpredictable because after the 1919 protests, this movement's historical narrative would be simplified. Different authors transformed the event, treating it as a political tool for their gain. This anesthetizing of the complicated 1919 event, particularly by the Communist government in mainland China, made the students into characters. Ironically, this simplification made this event and its students into an even stronger political tool. The political script for the student protestors, which stems from the 1919 narrative and characters, transformed the legend of the students making the 1989 caricature stronger than the 1919 participants in the actual event.² By utilizing this legend, or better yet, this myth, the students of 1989 self-consciously appropriated the events of May Fourth to validate their movement to Chinese society and to redefine May Fourth in a

² The use of the term "script" in context to May Fourth is first used in the scholarly works of Jeffery Wasserstrom. He operationalizes the term "scripts" to correlate different protests with one another and parallels them with drama and theatrical productions. This can be seen specifically in his book *Student Protests in Twentieth-century China: The View from Shanghai*. This paper utilizes this term similarly and defines student protests within the frame of a "script". Jeffery N. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991),

more impartial way. In the students' first action in 1989, they reference the May Fourth narrative. They do so first, with both protests beginning in Tiananmen Square, and second, in the literature published by student leaders on the real May Fourth and in how 1989 represented the "New May Fourth Movement." Finally, in the culmination of tens of thousands of protestors on May 4, 1989, acknowledging the 70-year anniversary of the 1919 protests, by their actions.¹

In this moment of allegorical use of May Fourth these students' actions, raised two questions. First, "What is the larger pattern of May Fourth usage in the twentieth century?" Second, "How did the May Fourth events themselves become more of a bio-political legend than fact by the end of the twentieth century?" This paper will answer these questions by first looking at May Fourth as an event and then by looking at it as a myth.

By considering the simplification of the May Fourth narrative as the creation of its mythology, it is important to show the complexity and diversity of the actual event in 1919. In the twentieth century, historical events are cherry-picked and used for their political effectiveness, making the May Fourth Movement and the student protestors into political props and characters. Through this myth-building, the 1989 government feared the insidious political power in which utilizing this myth endowed the students. By looking at the event and observing these narratives, the May Fourth Movement ultimately becomes a more potent myth than the events and actions of the 1919 students themselves. This myth empowers student protestors who take on the caricatures of the May Fourth protestor, such as the events in 1935 (the December Ninth Movement), in 1966 (the Cultural Revolution) and 1989 (Tiananmen Square). In this way, there is a difference between 1919 participants versus the May Fourth characters used in the later part of the twentieth century.

Many of the May Fourth myths politically compartmentalize the 1919 college students. The May Fourth protestors were not the homogeneous group of students these narratives describe. Instead, Shanghai and Beijing student's politics were affected by the very different economic and socio-political environments they were in. Similarly, each city offered a broad diversity of education in the varying types of universities and the kind of instructors' teaching. Due to the variety, within these institutions, students themselves did not act in unison and by no means did all students from these schools participate in student protests.

Chinese Intellectual Society in an Imperial World

The political realities of China and the evolving education system leading up to 1919 affected the narrative of the May Fourth protestors. At the turn of the century, China was in a moment of exploration. China began to form institutions familiar to a modern nation-state, both by government reform and foreign harassment. Many intellectuals and officials in China believed it to be profoundly important to transform the Chinese government into an administration which met globalization in both domestic and national institutions. These changes came in response to the aggression of foreign powers and China's semi-colonial state. The actions of the British, the French, and even the Japanese made Chinese intellectuals worry about the security of their country's sovereignty. For these intellectuals, the role of protecting the nation's autonomy was self-entrusted. Many scholars believed it was imperative to protect China by creating institutions which legitimized China in a Westernized nation-state. For academics, this role of figuring out how to protect China would continue long after the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911. Post-1911, intellectuals would still not come to a consensus of how to protect and strengthen China. Chinese intellectuals may have taken up the role of protector, but there were several, often conflicting, opinions on how to protect the nation.

¹ Linda Hershkovitz, "Tiananmen Square and the Politics of Place," *Political Geography* 12, no. 5 (1993): 406.

One route for saving China many foreign-educated academics saw, was self-strengthening. Inspired by China's semi-colonial state, many reforms promoted Western-style institutions for Chinese needs. This movement happened during the Qing Era and created the foundations necessary for the May Fourth Movement. In the late Qing period, the Chinese education system paralleled the change happening within the government. The self-strengthening movement supported the government, and also led to the creation of additional modern educational institutions to aid Chinese society. This movement set the foundation for higher education system between the 1910s and 1920s. It also put an importance on making students an internal strength to the Chinese nation. Not all reforms were largely successful: the Hundred Days Reform is one such example. These reforms took place in 1898 when the Guangxu Emperor and officials adopted a hundred days of reforms in an attempt to strengthen China. However, in the case of the Hundred Days Reform, these forward-thinking changes were inhibited by conservative backlash the same year and were either stopped or barely passed. Through these modifications, education reform pushed academia to diversify instruction. One reform successfully created technical colleges in urban centers. These schools taught students technical knowledge Qing officials believed would strengthen China from foreign aggression. However, these schools did not bring in the best and brightest students, as there was no social advantage to attending these schools instead of studying the Confucian classics for the examination system, as had been done for centuries prior, made it difficult to better oneself within society. Nevertheless, these schools illustrate the growing pattern of students, and particularly Western-educated students, protecting the nation through their educational vocations, seen later on after the fall of the Qing Dynasty.

Transnational knowledge production from Japan influenced the twentieth century Chinese academic institutions. Another reform which alluded conservative backlash was the founding of Imperial University or *Jingshi Daxuetang*. Highly influential in the May Fourth movement,

the establishment of the Imperial University, later called Peking University and abbreviated as *Beida*, had a large impact in 1919.² In the later twentieth century, just like May Fourth, there is also a *Beida* myth present.³ As a dominant political force in the May Fourth Movement, Peking University student protestors tied the *Beida* myth with the May Fourth legend. German and French academic traditions adopted by the Japanese system influenced Tokyo University. Due to this emulation and the political role as the national university, the Imperial University would exist past the fall of the Qing and become one of the first public education institutions. This adoption of Tokyo University is part of a larger pattern of transnational knowledge production in Japan and its influence on modern Chinese institutions leading up to 1919. The Meiji Restoration was a formative, intellectual event in shaping the societies of East Asia. For China, the political changes going on in Japan deeply affected how scholars conceptualized modernity and the changes going on in their country. On one side, Chinese academics could see a modern country, outside of the West, on which to model their own political and intellectual ideas. On the other hand, Japanese intellectuals would incorporate Western ideas and give them Japanese names using Kanji, Chinese characters. These terms and ideas became linguistically compatible and made it easier for Chinese intellectuals to bring back these ideas to China. Some of the terminologies of the 1911 Revolution comes considerably from the Meiji Restoration, and later on gives 1919 students the

² A common occurrence in Chinese, the term *beida* (北大) is the abbreviation of *Beijing Daxue* (北京大學) or Peking University.

³ Prior scholarship about the effect of *beida* and the intellectual presence of Peking University can be seen in both Hao Ping's book, *Peking University and the Origins of Higher Education in China* and Timothy Weston's book *The Power of Position: Beijing University, Intellectuals, and Chinese Political Culture*. Hao, Ping. *Peking University and the Origins of Higher Education in China* (Los Angeles, CA: Bridge21 Publications, 2013). Weston, Timothy B. *The Power of Position: Beijing University, Intellectuals, and Chinese Political Culture, 1898-1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

hermeneutical tools needed to educate the masses through protests' fliers.

Transnational knowledge production was also highly influential in the foundation of the modern Chinese education curriculum. Two conduits of this transnational knowledge production is the studying abroad of many Chinese students in Japan and the living abroad of the estranged forward-thinkers from the Hundred Days Reforms.⁴ During this time, the new Japanese government put a large amount of effort into modernizing and building institutions which strengthened and turned Japan into a nation-state. This movement included translating and transferring Western terms into the Japanese language, as well as the studying of Western text in Japanese. Chinese scholars used Meiji terms such as "society", "citizen", "economy" and even "hygiene" and translated them into Chinese. These terms created new societal institutions and inspired Chinese intellectuals to redefine China into a more Western and modern context.⁵ Because these students translated Kanji characters, which uses Chinese characters, these similarities in language made usage much easier when bringing it back to China. Consequently, information passed from a Japanese teacher to a Chinese student, and then to the intellectual community back in China. This production of information between China and Japan, led to many Western and modern ideas being brought to China in its moment of transition.

One such example of knowledge production pertinent to the May Fourth discussion is *guomin*,

meaning "citizenship".⁶ During the early part of the twentieth century, the idea of *guomin* not only meant citizenship, but more specifically, civic responsibility. Shen Sung-chiao speaks in his article about the usage of the term *guomin* and how it "reveals a kind of awakening of a new political consciousness on the part of Chinese intellectuals."⁷ In Qing China, Chinese citizens were peasants, and had no responsibility to the nation. The imperial *guomin* had no relationship with the Emperor beyond basic taxes. Instead, their responsibility was to their immediate community. During the era of transition in the 1910s, intellectuals, journalists and writers tried to push Chinese citizenry to feel a larger sense of nationalism and responsibility to one's government. This tradition of *guomin* would be intertwined within the 1919 protests as students pushed urbanites on the streets to take up their civic responsibility of being a citizen. Through the growing intellectual movements, both within and outside of the country, China was in a position of complex, growing pains.

Republican China and Transforming Academia

With the fall of the Qing, there were various competing ideologies in the political realm of how China was to survive within the globalized world. While the 1911 Revolution undermined the Qing government, it did not lay out a plan on how to change or legitimize the new republican order. The revolution of 1911 is seen as a successful revolt but failed to create Republican institutions. Though the government tried to create strong democratic institutions, it failed. One example of this failure is the assassination of Song Jiaoren in March of 1913, which happened after he was elected Prime Minister. Dramatically shot after his election, by what many believe was his

⁴ Many reformers of the Hundred Days Reform left to live abroad after Empress Dowager Cixi put the Guangxu Emperor under house arrest and imprisoned then killed six of the reformers. Some of the reformers who escaped were Kang Youwei, and Liang Qichao.

⁵ For more information about this pattern of transnational knowledge production, Ruth Rogaski's book, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China*, outlines how the use of *weisheng*, or as she dubs, "hygienic modernity", as an idea is developed over time through the process of transnational knowledge production. Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2014).

⁶ The term *guomin* (國民) loses some meaning when translated into English. It means "citizen" or "citizenship" and is deeply intertwined with a moral imperative of civic responsibility.

⁷ Shen Sung-chiao and Hsiao Wen Chien, "Discourse on *Guomin* ('the Citizen') in Late Qing China, 1895~1911," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 7, no. 1 (2006): 2.

opponent Yuan Shikai, Song's death exacerbated the political environment. The assassination showed intellectuals how Chinese democracy was a sham and warlords were truly in charge. By 1916, three years before the May Fourth Movement, China was enveloped by warlords and lacked true political unity. This lack of unity was mirrored in the intellectual sphere, and profoundly affected students' view of China as a republic. While many agreed China was not strong enough and needed change, many groups had differing opinions on how to improve the country and protect it from both foreign and domestic powers.

As seen in the self-strengthening movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, China's position in the world was weak, and its national sovereignty was inconsequential in comparison to other foreign powers. Through events with foreign countries such as the Opium Wars and the Boxer Rebellion, foreign presence in China continued to grow. In this semi-colonial state, Chinese treaty-port cities, like Shanghai, became a hybrid of Western and Chinese culture. In addition to this international presence, foreign schools and education also arrived. Outside of the technical schools and universities instituted by the Qing reforms, other Western-styled education came from foreign, private institutions. Consequently, in the last few years of the Qing era, there were four types of colleges outside of Confucian education: Anglo-Chinese schools, Jesuit-run schools, missionary-run schools (mostly American) and institutional schools. Each of these independently-run schools taught different curriculum and balanced Chinese, foreign language, religion and scientific studies differently. These schools would be the political setting for the students as both institutions and pupils transitioned into the modern-age political and educational systems.

The post-Qing academic transition can be split into two sections: the first being during the establishment of the fledgling republic which replaced the Qing, and the second in the strong, federal government presence after 1927 during which the Guomindang were in power. In the first section, between 1911 and 1927, China lacked a strong centralized government. Consequently, during this time, higher education had a

significant amount of self-sufficiency. In addition, universities made a real effort in establishing a university, in the ideas of autonomy and academic freedom.⁸

After 1911, the use and application of education changed in China from the old imperial system to the republican system. Before 1911, imperial education revolved around the Confucian examination system. Doing well in these exams would allow students to better their lives and work within the imperial government. These exams were a "ladder to success" and made the Confucian education a vital part in how society and government functioned.⁹ After the 1911 Revolution, this employment of education in Chinese society transformed. With the new republican government, Confucian scholars were in limbo. On top of this, many young students began to reject Confucian teachings and look outward for education. During this time education reforms started to happen on the micro-level. The reformers' approaches, more familiar to Western eyes, were taken in transforming education so it would have academic independence from government. In this way, academia could help society by operating outside of governmental and societal constraints. The goal of many students was to aid and protect Chinese society. However, there was not a consensus on what to do. This role of protecting Chinese society would later be key within student movements of the early twentieth century.

Though they had diverse solutions on how to save China, students utilized the popular avenue of protests to communicate the need for action. During this time intellectuals saw China as surrounded by predatory nation-states. On top of this, students worried about the ineptitude of the Chinese warlords to protect the nation and the disinterest of Chinese citizens in their civic responsibilities. Many Chinese intellectuals believed changing the government institutions depended on the change of Chinese society. Consequently, students tried using protests to awaken the civilian population. As seen later in

⁸ Ruth Hayhoe, *China's Universities 1895-1995: A Century of Cultural Conflict* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996), 43.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

Shanghai, intellectuals and students would help people in the cities as well, by giving workers the intellectual and physical supplies necessary to demonstrate against the foreign governments and foreign factories. Because of this aid, the mode of protest became a commonly used tool in the student's arsenal to promote change and civic responsibility.

Going into the 1920s, a new intellectual concept of modernity grew. With the presence foreign powers within urban centers and the industrialization of China through foreign money, came an idea of modernity which related to foreign ideas and culture. This era of creating a new societal movement was known as the New Culture Movement. The New Culture Movement was a group of literati's attempts to define China into a "new China" filled with, "new thought", "new culture", and modern, more accessible vernacular. At the turn of the century, these intellectuals believed literature was a tool to inform the masses in morality. Liang Qichao, a forerunner to the movement, wrote in 1902, "the renovation of the people must begin with the renovation of fiction."¹⁰

To educate the masses writers like Mao Dun, Hu Shi and Lu Xun used stories to promote news ideas within Chinese society. Within universities, students widely read these stories. This pattern of narratives trying to inspire civilians is critical in two ways. First, this viewpoint of the enlightened, helpless Chinese will later fuel the need for students to be the protectors of society. Though each urban city had its unique intellectual environment, cities were tied together with the some of the same monolithic intellectual leaders inspiring student's actions. Literary figures like Lu Hsun and Hu Shi came from the New Culture movement and promoted intellectuals' traditions which rejected Confucian values. This intellectual formation came through the publishing of newspapers, journals, novels and, in particular, the works of New Culture thinkers. Many forward-thinkers stayed within this intellectual community and taught these

ideas to a small portion of the Chinese urban population.

Though seemingly contradictory, the classical Confucian tradition of education in the early twentieth century helped to build the New Culture Movement.¹¹ At the beginning of the 1911 period, there were two styles of colleges in the urban centers: Classical and Western-styled universities. The creation of Western-style schools represents the "overhaul of Chinese academic institutions" however, there were still traditional teachers teaching, particularly in Beijing during the early twentieth century.¹² Some might dismiss these scholars as the last generation of a lost time, however, their academic traditions helped the modern scholars become part of the conversation instead of alienating them. As Wen-Hsin Yeh says in her book, *The Alienated Academy*, in the 1910s and 1920s there was the academic tradition, coming from the classical scholars, of open-mindedness which "left open the possibility of modern innovations without radical disjuncture with the past."¹³ This open-minded environment illuminates a larger reality about the May Fourth students' actions: they did not work against old society, they worked within try to change it. Similarly they did not work against the government, but rather they were part of a larger system they were purposefully trying to protect. Traditional scholars might be an anti-thesis to "new culture," but they left educational pathways for the new intellectual ideas which facilitated the diversification Chinese academia.

Without a strong central government, Chinese universities varied considerably in their academic goals. Universities focused on topics and ideas in line with their socio-political and economic ability. Capital cities like Beijing, and later Nanjing, had very different academic institutions and goals than their foreign, port city counterparts like Shanghai. On top of this, in

¹⁰ Kirk A. Denton, *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Wrings on Literature, 1893-1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 81.

¹¹ As we will see later, the New Culture Movement was a culture movement within China during the early twentieth century that was anti-traditionalist.

¹² Wen-Hsin Yeh, *The Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republican China, 1919-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1900), 25.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 27.

urban centers, like Shanghai, cities had private institutions with subpar academics and were filled with politically charged students. Within these two academic environments, there was a rich academic diversity but also a significant disparity in educational consistency.

Two important types of students who were involved in the May Fourth period were students from top institutions like Peking University and urban students in institutions like Fudan University and St. John's University in Shanghai (the first Western style missionary school in the nation founded in 1879). Students in China's top-performing schools took on a social role of protector. Urban students thought in nationalistic terms and helped redefine the role of government by showing city inhabitants the role of citizens. In the end, both would take and borrow ideas from one another leading up to 1919. These ever-changing institutions helped students learn about becoming involved within a political environment. Educational societies became an important mechanism in building the political awareness for students. In tandem with the weak central government, these students redefined themselves into citizens, or *guomin*, through their communication with each other. One place this conversation happened is through print media. Moreover, the political foundations established pre-1919 helped students take on a unique role of political actor. These roles would continue after 1927 as the Nationalist government began to strengthen the central government.

As stated above, the educational system of the Qing became obsolete after the 1911 Revolution and there became a need to delineate colleges and universities both in what they taught and their role within society. One major figure in this redefining was Cai Yuanpei. In 1912, Cai Yuanpei helped legislate five higher education goals for Republican education: military education, education for citizenship, technical field education, global education and aesthetic education. The values of Sun Yatsen and the 1911 Revolution inspired these goals. These new objectives changed the educational system by connecting it with the political aims of republicanism. But it also left room for a vague change until 1927 when the central government could be fully present in academic affairs. These

over-arching changes consequently opened more doors for schools to exist than actually forcing nation-wide reform.

Though it is easy to oversimplify these changes as universal, varying parts of China felt the reforms of the republican education system in different ways. Urban centers were more susceptible to government changes, but even then, each city had its own environment which also shaped its response to reforms. For example, in Shanghai due to foreign controlled concessions as well as schools, governmental decrees did not have a large effect on these institutions. On the other hand, because of Beijing's direct connection with the government, Beijing was more deeply affected by the reforms. As the two of the major urban centers of Chinese education, Shanghai and Beijing helped define the relationship of the intellectual community's and the government in the joint effort of protecting the nation. Their importance comes from both their role in Chinese society and as areas to disseminate new ideas.

These two cities exemplify the similarities and differences in urban education, and, consequently, their role in the May Fourth Movement. With one city being the (old) capital of China and the other being a treaty port, their differences changed the personality of the May Fourth events within each city. Due to these differences, Beijing students and Shanghai students differed in academic focus and political leanings. Within each of the cities, institutions of higher education were built upon the political institutions of the cities. The public-political sphere in each city was different. In Beijing, the central government did exist and did have some effect on the universities within the city. This environment promoted the May Fourth role of academia as the conscience of the nation. In Shanghai, many reforms came from within the foreign institutions and not from the government. This semi-colonial environment promoted a sense of nationalism and attempted to empower the urban civilians within their roles as *guomin*. One way the schools began to communicate was through newspapers by reporting current events. This level of communication helped to foster the nationwide response in the events of 1919 and transfer ideas between cities. Through journalism, students communicated with one

another new ideas such as *guomin*, academic freedom and the role of the student as protector of the nation.

One member of this community and formative member in the educational environment leading up to 1919, was Cai Yuanpei. Cai is best known for his reforms of Peking University on the eve of May Fourth and his five goals of education reform. He spanned both the academic communities of Shanghai and of Beijing. His presence in the student nationalism of each city made him a catalyst for the cities and their communication. Beijing's urban academia built themselves upon the cities' official framework after the establishment of the Republican government. Beijing universities were established on the old order and built themselves on an already developed city with its own traditions. Public political environments were almost nonexistent as public spaces were not employed in Beijing society. This atmosphere made it difficult for students to find public theaters, like their Shanghai counterparts had access to, in order to act out their role as protestor. Shanghai intellectuals were tightly connected with local society, utilized public spaces and had a large diversity (as we will later see), while Beijing had its own environment built upon the politics and prestige of being the nation's capital. By being in this environment, Beijing intellectuals could contribute with an authoritative voice into the official sphere, but lacked, at this pre-1911 moment, the practice of protest in public spaces that are later seen in May Fourth.

After the 1911 revolution, this same atmosphere of Beijing helped to make the city the intellectual arm of the May Fourth Movement. Peking University was an important member within both the intellectual and political spheres of Beijing. Two major events affected Beijing's role leading up to 1919. The first is the political actions of and the death of Yuan Shikai. The second is the beginning of the presidency of Cai Yuanpei at Peking University.

Beijing students became more present to the crisis happening in China, when Yuan Shikai became the leader of Republican China (after going through backdoor channels). With Yuan Shikai being a warlord himself, his appointment

pushed China's government into warlordism. Many in Beijing were disillusioned by Yuan's appointment and began to see the overthrowing of the Emperor in 1911 as a failure. The death of Yuan Shikai in 1916 led to China falling into another decade of war and a political vacuum in Beijing. Though still officially the capital until the Nationalists victory through the Northern Expedition in 1928, many scholars claim Beijing during this time was a capital solely in name.¹⁴ In this way, students were affected by the events and crisis taking place leading up to 1919. This influenced their own political views and helped to define their role within society. The second event is Cai Yuanpei's appointment as President.

The Beijing intellectual environment changed when Cai Yuanpei became President of Peking University in 1917. Originally hesitant about taking the position, Cai Yuanpei's presence during the years leading up the May Fourth protests and with his ties to Shanghai was a large influence on *beida* student's leadership in May Fourth. In his first public statement he decried the remnants of the Qing system still in place at Peking University and how students wrongly were at *beida* for a bureaucratic career.¹⁵ Although contrary to Cai's belief this remaining tradition was immoral, the tradition gave Peking University a certain authoritative flavor of social utility within the student protests later. The college's social utility would later become the *beida* myth beginning to form during this time. It should be noted that though he influenced *beida* and the educational system, within the May Fourth Movement he tried stopping *beida* students from joining and resigned from his position at Peking University after the protests.

Different from Beijing, Shanghai's urban environment, was built upon the foreign presence which came about from it being a treaty port. In 1842, Shanghai opened itself up to Western powers and began to create a new, hybrid space. Because of the treaties from the Opium Wars,

¹⁴ Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 45.

¹⁵ Fabio Lanza, *Behind the Gate: Inventing Students in Beijing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 76.

foreign countries created communities called concessions and enjoyed extraterritoriality in China. The concessions were filled with British, French and American missionaries who could evangelize freely under the protection of this extraterritoriality.¹⁶ Due to extraterritoriality, Chinese intellectuals could find refuge in these spaces to speak politically and flee persecution from the Qing, and later, the warlords who controlled China. In these spaces, students were able to act out through public protest. Shanghai students treated political acts much like a theater play.¹⁷ As actors in the political sphere, college students played out and practiced their identity through the theatrical medium of protest. Unlike their contemporaries in Beijing, Shanghai students had the habit of thinking strictly nationalistically, treating any threat to Chinese sovereignty or territorial integrity as an attack against their own.

On top of these unique foreign institutions, Shanghai grew; as a result, many academic and political institutions which were foreign-created were taken over by Chinese. This includes the use of public space in the political sphere. The public park and consequent public theater became one of these public spaces Shanghai students learned to utilize their role as protestor. In this way, political society was deeply intertwined with cultural society and, thus, students interacted with China's situation in an artistic and academic way.¹⁸ Newspapers were an influential medium

used during the era of May Fourth. Mostly printed in Shanghai, these papers helped intellectuals practice their role of societal protector as well as propagate information outside of the city.

In the environment of the diversity of Shanghai, the importance of nationalism and national identity was predominant in the minds of Chinese intellectuals. Surrounded by Western institutions and foreign mediums, Chinese students contextualized their own identity as Chinese. Shanghai students learned about nationalism and sovereignty by seeing China's own humiliation in Shanghai. In Shanghai's hybridity, students learned also the term of citizenry or *guomin*. However, student protests and works did not come wholly from the academic institutions in Shanghai they attended, but was also composed of newspapers and worker groups. Many students helped create newspapers and publish content. In addition, students helped workers unionize and promoted workers' rights. Many of these students were influenced by the New Culture academic publishing about "new" China. As talked about shortly above, the New Culture movement used publishing media often, and disseminated their ideas throughout the urban campuses in China. In this way, student presence within China's search for modernity varied dramatically based on city, but not necessarily in utility.

The New Culture Movement promoted civic engagement and public dialogue. New Culture focused on the "awakening" of China and the transitioning of China into a modern country. This use of story and drama to instill values would later be utilized in the creation and utilization of the May Fourth myth, particularly in film and literature. A popular short story, written in 1918 exemplifies these ideas is "Diary of a Madman" by Lu Xun. The story focuses on the outcaste madman who believes his entire community eats human flesh. This realization pushes him to madness as he comes to terms with the fact the tradition of eating human flesh goes back into his ancestry. He is petrified by the realization his sibling and he have been eating flesh unknowingly throughout their lives. The

¹⁶ Extraterritoriality gave Britain, France, and any other country who became a most favor country allowing those within the foreign concession to be exempted from the jurisdiction of local and federal law within China. Consequently, they and anyone within the foreign concessions could were under the jurisdiction of the countries whose concession it was.

¹⁷ Jeffery N. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 3.

¹⁸ There has been previous scholarship of this idea, Xu from the department of history, at East China Normal University has argued that while Beijing was a bipolar city, Shanghai was a unipolar city in as much intellectuals were tightly connected with local society. Xu, Jilin "The Urban 'Cultural Nexus of Power': Intellectual Elites in Shanghai and Beijing, 1900-1937," *Frontiers of History in China* 9, no. 1 (2014): 33.

story ends with the phrase, “save the children.”¹⁹ The story shows the tragedy of Chinese society and how China is so deeply entrenched in its tradition which is cannibalistic, or rather, the destruction of men by men. This connects with the May Fourth movement due to this focus to save, for Lu Xun it is save the children, or the next generation. This choice, to use the term “save” eludes to a necessity of action, similar to the “save the nation” rhetoric used by May Fourth participants. Going into May Fourth, this idea of needing to save would be paramount in how students described their roles within society. Students needed to save the nation, protect the nation and it was through their education and own personal awakenings they felt justified to act.

The Event: May 4, 1919, Noon, Tiananmen Square

The morning of May 4, 1919 began rainy and overcast. Thirteen colleges and universities within Beijing prepared to meet mid-day to march. As thousands gathered in Tiananmen Square to protest the Treaty of Versailles, the last to come, an hour late, were the Peking University students.²⁰ Starting in Tiananmen Square, the Beijing student delegates stated the purpose of their demonstration: protesting the Treaty of Versailles in the League of Nation’s failure to recognize the Chinese sovereignty of Qingdao. The end of World War I and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, marked both a new era for Chinese students and their role as the political conscience of the nation.²¹ The students were met by the Ministry of Education, and even Cai Yuanpei, who asked the students to turn around. The *beida* students reiterated their goals, but they continued to join the larger movement. In the space of Tiananmen, these students took over the

square to take on their roles as protectors. But they also took on the role of awakening the people. By China’s sovereignty being threatened once again, the students wanted the urban population to take on their *guomin* responsibilities.

The students planned to begin at two o’clock by walking toward the Foreign Legation. The students handed out fliers entitled, “Manifesto of All Beijing Students” and carried posters saying, “China belongs to the Chinese,” “Give Us Back Qingdao.”²² In this moment, the students could play out the role they had created for themselves. Specifically, it allowed these students to be in the spotlight and take on a public role. The manifesto read, “If [China’s] people still cannot unite in indignation in a twelfth-hour effort to save her, they are indeed the worthless race of the twentieth century...” Finally, the leaflets pleaded for action and the importance of workers in taking on their civic responsibility, “Our country is in imminent peril – its’ fate hangs on a thread! We appeal to you to join our struggle.”²³ The student’s goals were to inspire the workers, or *guomin*, to take on their civic responsibility in protesting against the foreign disregard of Chinese sovereignty as well as the Chinese government’s blunders.

Another goal of the students was to call out the foreign powers and to protect China by representing the country by marching to the Legation Quarter. However, the students were stopped and not allowed to go into the foreign area, and when some representatives did make it in, most foreign embassies were empty. In fact, many foreign ambassadors were not at home due to the fact it was Sunday and they had taken the day off.²⁴ It is important to note these students were not protesting against the government, instead, these students self-entrusted themselves to the role of protector and conscience of the

¹⁹ Lu Hsun, *Selected Stories of Lu Hsun* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company Publishing, 2003) 7-19.

²⁰ Tse-tung Chow, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967), 105.

²¹ Wen-Hsin Yeh, *The Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republican China, 1919-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1900), 132-133.

²² Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 15.

²³ Tse-tung Chow, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967), 108.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 111.

country. By going to the Foreign Legation they were representing China and attempting to strengthen her sovereignty with their actions. In this way, students saw themselves as working in tandem with the government institutions by taking a public role in protecting their country. This part of the story is mirrored later, specifically in 1989, as the students see themselves as working with the government even though Deng Xiaoping calls them “counter-revolutionaries.” By following the tradition of the May Fourth Movement, the 1989 students self-entrusted the duty of representing China. Deng Xiaoping attempts to redefine them as dissenters rather than protectors, which illuminates the larger empowerment of May Fourth in the eyes of the government in the latter half of the century.

Due to the fact authorities would not allow them to continue in the Foreign Litigation, the students decided to march up the street to Cao Rulin, who was a foreign affairs minister at the time and was considered to be a Japanese sympathizer. As Chow Tse-tung says in her narrative, up to this point things had not lost control and, as quoted, a British correspondent had said the students were, “in an orderly procession, quite worthy of the students of an enlightened nation. But the wrath of the demonstrators was roused by the repressive measure taken by the police, whereupon they broke out into acts of unbridled violence.”²⁵ This violence is not particularly surprising, since the students had stated in their manifesto, violence did not scare them. It is the police action of obstructing their ability to act out their role of protector, which caused the frustration and violence.

Around 5 o’clock, the students stormed the house and, for the next forty-five minutes, fighting ensued. Though the police were called “benevolently neutral,” when their superiors and the army came, the police began to fire shots into the air.²⁶ By 5 o’clock, however, most students from the morning had dispersed and the students arrested were not the original student leaders of the protests. After the protests, students began to organize and join the fervor of New Culture,

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 114.

nationalism and the immediacy of Japanese actions. Within Chinese academic society, the demonstration signified something much more than a suppressed protest. Though the students did succeed in the dismissal of three ministers who seemed to have Japanese leanings, these protests did not change the government’s actions and did not curb Japanese aggression. On top of this the May Fourth Movement proved unable to successfully promote civic responsibility and civilian participation. After Beijing, this very goal of civic participation would be integrated and implemented into protest practices in the May Fourth Era.

This movement would continue to other urban centers, including Shanghai, and led to protests around the country. Though a student movement, the participants came from the large group of academics and literati present within each of these cities. Student activists, professors and journalists all participated in the movement fulfilling different roles. On top of this academic element, there was also the joining of the urban proletariat with the educational elite making this a powerful political protest and, later on, a powerful political narrative.²⁷ This protest would create an era which would span from 1917 to 1921, and would later be called the May Fourth Era.²⁸ This intellectual influence and inspiration for later intellectuals would begin the simplification which would lead to the mythology created towards the latter half of the twentieth century.

One major lesson students learned within the May Fourth protests was the need to speak to the masses. After the original event itself, students discovered the need to communicate to civilians in a more condensed and simplified matter. For example, in Shanghai, student propagandists simplified their movement to focus on the idea of

²⁷ Wen-Hsin Yeh, *The Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republican China, 1919-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 134.

²⁸ Tse-tung Chow, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967), 1.

wangguo, or the idea of national extinction.²⁹ By focusing on this idea of *wangguo*, students tried to instill fear into the civilian population. Students simplified their own goals in order to promote civilians to take on civic responsibility to prevent China's cultural extinction. In this way, students began to learn how to communicate more effectively with the masses.

The Aftermath: the Beginnings of Myth-Making

After the May Fourth event, Chinese intellectualism and the academic environment began to change. The role May Fourth had made for students began to permeate throughout the intellectual communities in urban areas, this was known as the May Fourth Movement. Following the May Fourth protests, written works were circulated almost. In his book, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China*, Jefferey Wasserstrom states, "viewing the protesters of 1919 as heroic and successful (since they had brought about the dismissal of the three traitorous officials), new generations have faithfully kept the May Fourth protest scripts alive."³⁰ Students and intellectuals coming out of the May Fourth period created an idealized version of success which helped to begin the legend behind May Fourth. Students acted out their role of protector and scripts were kept alive. This is seen particularly in the scripts which focus only on the afternoon of the May Fourth protests, which was non-violent. This fits the narrative of what May Fourth represented and how the students were supposed to act.

The transposing of the May Fourth Era has three major usages in the mid twentieth century. The simplification of the May Fourth protests is not the outcome of an insidious force maliciously re-writing history. Instead, different political actors utilize the May Fourth narrative to contextualize their actions. The first is the

application of the script used by the Beijing students into other student movements in the decades following the May Fourth protests. The second action is "remembered history" seen in Chinese culture mediums such as literature and cinema. Through this usage, the authors and artists outlined some of the major themes of the May Fourth Movement.³¹ This is seen in both *jinian* and *huiyi* history of the May Fourth period.³² The final layer is the official usage of May Fourth to promote political means within the Chinese civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists, the cultural revolution and in 1989. Studying this period before Japanese occupation, there are two movements solidifying student's roles in society within the May Fourth paradigm: May 30th in 1925, and December 9th in 1935.³³

May Fourth became a script for republican-based protest and the first usage of May Fourth is listed above, students' own simplification of the May Fourth narrative start to create the May Fourth Legend. A good example of the usage of May Fourth scripts can be seen in Shanghai. Youth movements of Shanghai, would follow the May Fourth protest patterns closely. In his books, Jefferey Wasserstrom outlines this pattern. First, students angered by an event, which, generally, threatens Chinese sovereignty, hold a public, mass meeting. Second, they have classroom strikes and go out to the streets to give lectures. Finally, they hold protests and promote labor

²⁹ Joseph T. Chen, *The May Fourth Movement in Shanghai: the Making of a Social Movement in Modern China* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), 221.

³⁰ Jefferey N. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 86.

³¹ Vera Schwarz, uses this term in her chapter "May Fourth as an Allegory" in which she outlines the usage of May Fourth specifically in history and how cultural mediums affect this history. Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986).

³² *Jinian* means commemorative proclamation, *huiyi* means personal recollections both terms are spoken about in, Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986).

³³ Joseph W. Esherick and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, "Acting Out Democracy: Political Theater in Modern China," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 49, no. 4 (1990): 854.

strikes against foreign goods.³⁴ With this, a May Fourth script is practiced on the streets, solidifying the overall characterization of May Fourth in the 1920s and 1930s. Some of these events lacked an important goal of May Fourth, which is this idea of *guomin* or civic responsibility. In this way, the scripts were not perfected to be potently, politically powerful.

An interesting medium in which May Fourth is propagated through society, is Shanghai cinema. This movement will help illuminate the usage of May Fourth going into 1935 and the December 9th protests. Ellen Widmer and Teweï Wang look at the phenomenon of May Fourth and give three qualifications for films to be considered a “May Fourth work”. First is nationalist opposition to imperialist aggression, the second the support of the political democratization of Chinese life and finally, rejection of traditional Confucian morality and values.³⁵ The making of May Fourth cinema helped to connect May Fourth narratives to civilians. This is because these films were not for the intellectual environment, instead, they were for the common man. Widmer and Wang challenge the myth which claims the Communist Party brought the movement to Shanghai cinematographers. Instead, they argue May Fourth cinema content was an idealized anti-capitalism, anti-warlordism and anti-imperialism sentiment.³⁶ The three political positions in Widmer and Wang help to illuminate the May Fourth cinema presence, as well identify the May Fourth paradigm in general. Through these three patterns, we will see the simplification and popularization of the May Fourth narrative within popular culture.

May 30th is a major protest in the moment of defining May Fourth protest scripts. May 30th began in 1925 when hostile Japanese managers treated their workers badly in Shanghai. Students became agitated and chose to protest after a

factory guard killed a worker. When this information spread to the universities, the students proceeded down Nanjing Road. These students clashed with British police and the incident ended with thirteen deaths. After this, students started large boycotts and strikes with, not only students, but also workers and members of all classes.³⁷ This movement is important within the May Fourth paradigm and mythology because in the event, students take on the scripts of May Fourth and when they are killed in the streets, the civilians themselves stand up. Civilians’ acceptance and participation in the students’ protests helped to solidify the role of students and the role of civilians within the May Fourth script.

Within each city, these intellectual protesters were subject to different political environments. After 1919, Shanghai’s breathing space, due to China having a weak central government and from a reduced presence of foreign powers, was coming to an end. Shanghai would be reintroduced to government control with the Nationalist taking control of the government. Consequently, from 1927 to the late 1930s, the Nanjing government attempted to gain control and centralize the education system. With the close of World War I, Western powers now had the resources to divert their attention to China. In this way, the intellectual sphere had to revert to a heightened foreign presence and government control. However, Shanghai was not ready for this loss of freedom. Further north, in the Beijing intellectual community, the apprehension of the political vacuum had been present for half a decade. In Shanghai during this time, there were many worker based protests. While in Beijing, there were not many protests based on workers but, instead, focused on education curriculum and how to make the academic environment authentically Chinese. Within this diversity, however, was the script usage of May Fourth and the transposing of 1919 on the diverse protest movements. Both movements focused on protecting the nation and focused on trying to promote civic responsibilities. For example, after

³⁴ Jeffery N. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 86.

³⁵ David Der-wei. Wang, Dewei Wang, and Ellen Widmer, *From May Fourth to June Fourth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 297.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 300.

³⁷ Marie-Claire Bergère, *Shanghai: China’s Gateway to Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 187.

May Fourth both Peking University and Fudan University sent student delegates to promote anti-Japanese protests and the idea of *guomin*.³⁸ These movements would primarily focus on anti-Japanese protest, however, much like the May Fourth Movement. And they would also try to empower the Chinese populace and give them the tools necessary to protest.

Throughout this period, China's social sciences fragmented and focused on different themes. In Beijing, universities focused on critical theory which tried to form a link between classical Chinese tradition and their contemporary reality. In Shanghai, outside of the foreign missionary schools, many universities introduced a more Marxist approach.³⁹ In this May Fourth culture, there were many study societies, especially in Shanghai. Within these societies, the beginnings of Chinese Communism came to fruition. The dynamism of the proto-Communist groups were owed to the leadership of Chen Duxiu.⁴⁰ Part of the original May Fourth Movement in Beijing, Chen withdrew to Shanghai for security. Here, he was able to practice his talent as an organizer of movements and people. Within the intellectual environment, the Communist Party had its First Party Congress on July 23, 1921. With the birth of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) coinciding with May Fourth, the People's Republic of China would later intertwine the May Fourth narrative with the inception of the Communist Party. However, outside of Shanghai there was not a large presence of Communism within the May Fourth scripts.

This watershed moment of movements helped establish the practice of protest. During these early moments, students felt as if they had a right and, more importantly, a duty to speak out

on political issues. This would later transfer into the Communist Era, and play a large part in the student movements post-World War II. The breakpoint of protest was the beginning of a "seemingly continuous stream of political movements inspired, animated and organized by young people" within the twentieth century.⁴¹ At the same time, China was coming into the Nanjing Decade, in which either the Guomindang or Nationalist government could establish a strong enough government to influence the academic environment, and its' politically charged students. The Nanjing Decade begins the next chapter of May Fourth usage outside of its own era.

China was already in a civil war between the nationalists and the Communists by the time of the Japanese Occupation of China in 1927 as well as the Marco Polo incident. Each of these political parties treated May Fourth differently. With the New Life Movement, the Nationalists promoted traditional values, as Chiang Kai-shek and his government directly attacking the May Fourth narrative which connected with the new culture movement. The Nationalist government believed the May Fourth movement had been destructive to Chinese society due to its self-serving and liberal students. Chiang Kai-shek later on said students "had no real knowledge of the enduring qualities of Chinese culture" and scholars had "lost their self-respect and self-confidence." He believed the "influence of [Western] ideas prevailed," and "the people regarded everything foreign as right and everything Chinese as wrong."⁴² Conversely, the Communists took on the May Fourth scripts and utilized the simplification of narrative once again to fit the class-struggle concepts of Marxism. After the war, Mao Zedong, the Communist Party leader and future Chairman of China, saw May Fourth as a time of awakening for the Chinese Proletariat. For Mao, May Fourth was the result of the Russian Revolution and the start of the Communist

³⁸ Wen-Hsin Yeh, *The Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republican China, 1919-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 132.

³⁹ Ruth Hayhoe does a very good job of outlining these difference in her second chapter of *China's Universities*. Ruth Hayhoe, *China's Universities 1895-1995: A Century of Cultural Conflict* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996), 51.

⁴⁰ Marie-Claire Bergère, *Shanghai: China's Gateway to Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 183.

⁴¹ Jeffery N. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 21.

⁴² Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 175.

revolution in China.⁴³ In this seizure of the May Fourth story, the narrative and its script was affected by the Marxists scripts of the worldwide Communist revolution.

In the 1930s, the popularization and critiques of May Fourth narratives came in tandem with party politics permeating through society. This comes from the students' belief their duty was not to their own political growth, but rather how they needed to fall in line for the nation. The December 9th Movement was nationalistic and took on the anti-imperialist language seen previously in the May Fourth Movement. This nationalism was a response to Japanese aggression in northern China, as well as the Nationalist government's choice to prioritize fighting and killing the Communists above fighting Japan.

On December 9, 1935, thousands of Beijing students marched to call Chiang Kai-shek, the Nationalist leader, to stop fighting the Communists and instead focus on Japanese aggression. This movement spread similar to the May Fourth Movement and helped to rebuild the base of the Communist Party. This rebuilding happened due to the fact it was not a purely Communist movement, rather, it called for the government and society to redefine Communism in a better light for the benefit of the nation.⁴⁴ Once again, Beijing students take on the role of protestors to protect the nation. This time, May Fourth veterans helped the new generation of patriotic students.⁴⁵ In its transgenerational knowledge, December 9th became what Ying-shih Yü calls a "direct outgrowth and fulfillment of the aspirations of the original student movement of

1919."⁴⁶ Within the December Ninth Movement there is this usage of the May Fourth narrative: anti-imperialist protests and the rise of student vocation to protect the nation. Much like May Fourth, the December Ninth Movement spread to other urban centers, including Shanghai. On December 23, 1935, thousands of students went to Shanghai's North Station to attain free passage to Nanjing in order to join the protests. This is a highpoint to Shanghai's December Ninth Movement.⁴⁷ December Ninth is an often-ignored movement in the history of student twentieth century protests, but it greatly affected how protest was seen and, consequently, how May Fourth was seen after World War II.

Post-World War II: Building a Bio-political Myth

After World War II and the subsequent retreat of the Guomindang to Taiwan, the May Fourth narrative continued to propagate thanks to the Communist government. One of the first uses of the movement is in the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). With the 1949 victory against the Guomindang, for the Communists, it was the end of "old" or "feudal" China and the beginning of the "new" China. In Mao's China, there was an endless succession of mass demonstrations.⁴⁸ The mass demonstrations dominated and took over the protests' scripts of the earlier half of the twentieth century and required these scripts, not only for students, but also for members of the Communist Party and the Proletariat. In this political control, the CCP could achieve a mass awareness of politics which previous Chinese

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Based off of John Israel's paper, it can be inferred December 9th was not just a communist provoked demonstration and instead was inspired by May Fourth, Yen-ching staff and an openness to socialism within the government. John Israel, "A Case Study in Chinese Communist Historiography" 23, no. 23 (2017): 140-69.

⁴⁵ Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 218.

⁴⁶ Milena Doleželová-Velingerová, Oldřich Král, and Graham Martin. Sanders, *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China's May Fourth Project* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 303.

⁴⁷ Jeffery N. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 196.

⁴⁸ Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 186.

leaders had not been able to access in the 1920s and 1930s.⁴⁹

At the same time, however, there was the persistent issue of intellectual loyalty to the Communist takeover. Some intellectuals only went to the Communists due to the fact it was an alternative to the New Life Movement of the Guomindang. Others went but were hesitant in the CCP's leadership of the nation. Simultaneously, the December Ninth and May Fourth Movements were used to define the Communist Party's role in China's past and future. This included the Communist historiography of the December Ninth Movement: directly connecting the success of the movement with the help of the Communist Party and Mao Zedong. This story is an example of the bio-political building of the Communist Party, dubbed by John Israel as, "orthodoxy plus obedience equals success."⁵⁰ This same phenomenon would happen to the May Fourth narrative with Mao addressing himself and other contemporaries as the, "heir of May Fourth" and dubbing May Fourth as a "cultural revolution."⁵¹ In this usage and rewriting of the May Fourth spirit and narrative, the movement connected to its roots of cultural enlightenment in a way to protect the nation. Similarly, in the Communist takeover of China the May Fourth participants were branded as the protector of China through this intellectual enlightenment to the reality of class struggle. In this branding, the Communist Party also seized a bio-political control over the students by creating a communal vocation which was defined and watched over by the CCP.

In the few years after 1949, the May Fourth narrative would be brought up again and again, particularly in the major anniversaries of the event itself. It is in the moments of anniversary in which there can be more concrete connections to events in the 1950s and 1960s and their dialogue

with May Fourth. In this way there can be a study of May Fourth narratives and events in the later twentieth century such as the Cultural Revolution and the 1989 student protests. Some scholars, such as Jeffery Wasserstrom, believe May Fourth and the Cultural Revolution should be separated into distinct events due to the hatred of the West and their anti-intellectualism.⁵² However, there is a certain need to study this event within the context of the May Fourth Movement, particularly in the legend's bio-political uses. The underlying student role which is developed in the 1920s is used throughout the Japanese Occupation and then in the beginning of the communist's nation-building. The Communist Party, from the 1920s on, understood the powerful role of students and the May Fourth scripts to connect with urban proletariat and promote mass movement, two fundamental elements of Communism. However, the party regulated these movements more and more leading into the 1950s and took the role of students choosing to protest away from intellectuals, and into the hands of the party.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the CCP would help students hold mass demonstrations, but within the role of supporting the Party. These demonstrations took over the May Fourth student role, and replaced the nation with those of the Party, which slowly became the same thing. In these protests, the need to promote *guomin* morphed to fit the ideals of Communism. Before these movements, students protected the common people, or *laobaixing*, of the urban centers by pushing the people to take on their own civic responsibility. On the other side, the Communist-inspired movements were for the benefit of the worker and farmer: the cornerstone of the CCP's *laobaixing*. Students were called to lose their own intellectual, autonomous identity to help the nation as a whole. An example of this is Mao Zedong's statement in a newspaper on the anniversary of May Fourth, "The ultimate line of demarcation between the revolutionary intellectuals, on the one hand, and nonrevolutionary and counter-revolutionary intellectuals, on the other, lies in whether they

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ John Israel, "The December 9th Movement: A Case Study in Chinese Communist Historiography," *The China Quarterly* 23 (1965): 140.

⁵¹ Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 248, 256.

⁵² Jeffery N. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 296.

are willing to, and actually do, become one with the masses of workers and peasants.”⁵³ In this way, Mao calls for students to take on a new type of *guomin* a responsibility to the masses to promote a Communist society and protect the Party.

In the students taking on the role of belonging to a large community, they policed their own actions for the good of the whole. This movement became more than just intellectual protests, by bringing in both the people and military. On top of this, a paradox existed in the 1950s Communist education system, as it was similar to the elitist system of the 1920s. While students who did come from an acceptable Communist pedigree of middle and low class were allowed into the elite colleges, those same students struggled with the intellectual societal coding from the unchanged education system. These new students joined a larger community and took on the Maoist May Fourth role of the student. This led to the culmination of youth loyalty to Mao, which made it possible for him to take on the role of protecting the nation from traditionalists. Factionalism existed in the Cultural Revolution and by the end of the purges and denunciations, the event itself was much more complicated than labeling it *just* a performance of May Fourth. Nevertheless, the environment of education and the expression of protest does fit within this May Fourth paradigm, helping to illuminate the scripts utilized by the Party to bring students to their Party-sanctioned role of protecting of the nation.

As Fabio Lanza talks about in his book, the students in the Cultural Revolution were in a similar intellectual and political position to take on the role of a Maoist May Fourth protestor. As Lanza says, Mao Zedong himself took steps as a student, teacher and educational organizer to connect May Fourth to the Red Guard movement.⁵⁴ As Communism was deeply connected with the May Fourth narrative, these students joined a collective revolution which made the apparatus necessary for the Cultural

Revolution to differ from May Fourth. However, as the CCP transposed May Fourth scripts into their movements, they began to reach the limits of the original May Fourth role of students. Lanza labels this phenomenon an “exhaustion” of the role of students within the Cultural Revolution.⁵⁵ Despite this “exhaustion”, later student movements kept May Fourth alive.

With such a distorted script of May Fourth, the role of students would be exhausted, 1919 anniversaries would pass as would Chairman Mao. All the while, May Fourth would continue to be present within public schools and scripts would be taught to students. Though students would be taught their protector roles, they were held back by the paradoxical bio-political legend which was May Fourth. With the passing of the *Gaige Kaifang*, China began to open up economically, socially and politically. In this moment of change, leaders like Hu Yaobang would make progressive reforms drastically changing the socio-political environment of China. On top of this, Beijing students would begin to access new narratives of May Fourth and how it had been used in the past. This narrative was how it was during the early twentieth century students and intellectuals created the role of protector and the need to promote *guomin*. This role would be continued to be played throughout the twentieth century. The 1970s and 1980s students would see how the CCP would take the narrative and twist it for its own political use. These students then took on the role of student protector both defined by the participants of the May Fourth era and defined by the May Fourth characters in the political narrative of the event. 1989 would retake the exhausted student role and take on the Maoist script, the Civil War script and the enlightenment script to create a strong pro-Democracy hybrid. These students would choose, reforming and modernizing scripts and intertwine it with the bio-political taste of the CCP’s myth. This cocktail would make a potent protest movement in 1989, which confronted the CCP’s own role in protecting the nation and promoting civic responsibility.

⁵³ Mao Tse-Tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 3 (U.S.A: International Publishers Co., 1955), 10-11.

⁵⁴ Fabio Lanza, *Behind the Gate: Inventing Students in Beijing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 208.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 214.

In 1989, the students were able to utilize the May Fourth narratives and also justify themselves to the civilian population; which is seen in the population's own defiance and choice to protect the students at the end of the 1989 event. The students chose to redefine May Fourth, and, simultaneously, redefine themselves as students and also successfully promoted civilians as well as the *putong laobaixin* to take on their role as *guomin*. This was only possible due to the omnipresent residue of the CCP's bio-political changes of the May Fourth script since it introduced civilians to the narrative and made them characters. The study of May Fourth illuminates the larger pattern of myth-building in Chinese history and the need for modern historical critique of established narratives within Chinese history. These myths give the complicated task of taking on these narratives to modern day historians. The May Fourth Myth also gives present day students their own scripts to utilize and call for students to act. This usage makes the May Fourth Myth become more than the historical moment on May 4th, 1919. By acting out the role of the May Fourth students, modern day participants prove May Fourth as a powerful bio-political tool and have kept the myth alive. The importance of May Fourth as a turning point of Chinese modernity has diminished recently within scholarly work. It is not May Fourth as an event which makes it important, it is the scripts and the impact on students utilizing the myth which makes May 4, 1919 such a formidable event in the twentieth century.

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In Search of the Law: Ennin's Journey in a Japanese Buddhist Context

KURT MARTIN SCHREIBER

INTRODUCTION

Among the myriad of historical figures and personalities who transmitted their thoughts through writing, the premodern traveler holds a special place in the imagination: intrepid explorers and pilgrims who took flight from their homes to distant and, sometimes, dangerous lands without the aid of modern transport. Whether they went in search of trade, religion, knowledge, or power, the premodern traveler connects deeply with the modern mind. The traveler's ambition and desire to seek out something more, leaves a resonating impression upon us even today.

Yet, few of these travelers left behind records of their journeys, and the very few who did only wrote down their experiences many years after they occurred. Thus, the full reasons for their travels are often open to myth and conjecture. In the premodern East Asian context, travel accounts which come to mind are Xuanzang's seventh-century *Record of the Western Regions* or Marco Polo's late thirteenth-century *Description of the World*. While inspiring and important, both works leave much to the imagination. The Japanese Buddhist monk Ennin (793-864) stands out among the rest in his detail and accuracy, leaving behind a complete diary of his nine-year journey in the ninth-century to Tang China "in search of the law". This diary preserves the reality of his travels.

Ennin (known more commonly in Japan by his posthumous name Jikaku Daishi) embarked to China in the summer 838 in order to study Buddhism under the Tiantai school of his master, Saichō, as well as collect and copy new texts and teachings. The record of this journey is preserved in his diary, *The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*. The "law", in this case, being a common name used to refer to the principle teachings of Buddhism. During his journey, Ennin encountered deadly seas, multicultural

metropolises, holy and sacred mountains, and he was directly affected by the brutal Buddhist persecution carried out by Emperor Wuzong (814-846).

Ennin departed on his journey during a time of great change in his world. In Japan, the Heian court had just risen to power and would rule Japan until the twelfth-century. In China, the great Tang Empire was in a state of cultural decline and an unstable ruler was primed to rise to the throne. Ennin found himself, not only as a witness, to these moments of change, but an active participant. His vivid diary gives the modern reader the sense of urgency and ambition with which Ennin undertook his mission. The importance of this mission, copying valuable texts and Chinese knowledge centered on Buddhism, cannot be understated: the "law" Ennin received would go on to shape Japan in the Heian period and beyond. Despite the centrality of Buddhism to his journey, the few scholars who have previously written works on Ennin seem to be more concerned with records of what he saw and experienced while in China, rather than what he brought back with him. Often, far more attention is given to other prominent monks, such as Saichō (767-822) and Kūkai (774-835), the latter being the founder of the Shingon sect.

In Japan, one of the top scholars to have written on Ennin's journey is Okada Masayuki. Okada translated the diary to modern Japanese in 1926 and conducted his own scholarly work on the diary.¹ Okada's points of study focus on scattered details surrounding the figure of Ennin himself. The research conducted by Okada, is undoubtedly important to the histories of both China and Japan; however, by focusing on the

¹ Okada, Masayuki, "Jikaku Daishi no nitto kiko ni tsuite," *Toyo gakuho*, 11.461-86; 12.147-86, 273-95; 13.1-28. 1926; as quoted in Edwin O. Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1955), 14.

minutiae of what Ennin recorded, rather than on the journey and its actual purpose, Okada leaves much to be desired for the modern researcher. There are five crucial points Okada chose to focus on during his research: 1) Emperor Wuzong's attempts to deprive his eunuchs of power, 2) a stele inscription Ennin copied, which describes the capture of Chinese troops by the Japanese army during the seventh-century Korean wars, 3) datings of the Turkish Uighur invasions of China took place concurrently with Ennin's journey, 4) details concerning the trader and power broker Chang Pogo, and 5) the great Buddhist persecution carried out by Emperor Wuzong between 840 and 845.¹ While his research gives valuable insight into the time period, Okada's interpretation of events is narrowly focused on events concerning the history of Tang China. Due to this focus, he does not necessarily focus on Ennin himself.

Famed East Asian historian Edwin O. Reischauer excelled where Okada did not: he completed an excellent translation and study of the diary in 1955, which focuses heavily on the person of Ennin. This translation is titled *Ennin's Diary: The Record of Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*, and, in conjunction with the release of this translation, Reischauer also released the companion book *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*.² Reischauer's companion work, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, is the main historical study done on Ennin's diary in the English language, and it will be the main secondary work to which I will compare my own research. In his work, Reischauer elegantly and deeply explores Ennin's journey itself. Reischauer's work examines many aspects of the diary, dedicating each chapter of *Ennin's Travels* to a certain aspect of Ennin's journey.

Reischauer focuses on five main issues of historical importance in *Ennin's Travels*, 1) Ennin

himself, his life and his role in the Buddhist clergy, 2) the Japanese embassy of 838, its construction and purpose, and its fate following departure from China, 3) description of Chinese officialdom during the Tang period, as recorded by Ennin, 4) popular life and religion in Tang China, and 5) the Buddhist persecutions of Emperor Wuzong.³ Reischauer does not seek to make any strong arguments about Ennin or his life in this work. Instead, he seeks to create a readable outline of the diary which can be useful to the casual, Western reader and historian, alike. He provides excellent scholarship on various topics mentioned in the diary, and his study can certainly be considered both complete and comprehensive.

The depth of his study is thorough, to the point only a few historians writing in English made comparable attempts to research Ennin's journey, since Reischauer's account appeared. Although a variety of academic works written since 1955 will be examined in this thesis, there appears to be an almost deafening silence in the historical community on the subject, particularly in Western scholarship. I do not know exactly why this is, but in my opinion there is an entire world contained in Ennin's diary, and it is a subject which deserves new interpretations and insights. Thus, in my study, I seek to go beyond Reischauer's vision of Ennin's world. I seek to broaden the perspective and to see Ennin for his place in the larger context of Japanese Buddhism. Specifically, I want to contextualize where Ennin falls in the greater lineage of Buddhist monks who ventured to and from China during the same time period as Ennin's journey, as well as the legacy his journey left on Japanese Buddhism and its teachings.

Notes on Sources and Translations

Before I go any further, I would like to briefly explain what translation of the diary I am

¹ Okada, *Toyo gakuho*, 11.461-86; 12.147-86, 273-95; 13.1-28. 1926; as quoted in Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels In T'ang China*.

² Edwin O. Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*. (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1955) and Edwin O. Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary: The Record of Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1955).

³ Reischauer also includes a lot of supplementary historical context in his text, and one chapter is dedicated to the role that Sillan interpreters played in Ennin's travels.

working with and how this diary has been transmitted into my hands through the ages.

According to Reischauer, the diary itself "came very close to total disappearance before it was rediscovered by modern scholars," and this near disappearance is the result of only two manuscripts surviving to modern times.⁴ The original text was written in classical Chinese, which was the official language of educated Japanese at the time. The first, and primary, manuscript of the diary is known as the Tōji text (named after the temple where it is housed), which is an exact copy of Ennin's original text. It was produced in 1291 by the monk Kennin. Kennin was seventy-two years old when he made this copy, and it is assumed to be a near exact copy of the original text.⁵

In 1805, the Tōji text was further copied and slightly amended in a manuscript known as the Ikeda text. Since the changes were minimal, the Tōji text is assumed to be the only original copy of Ennin's diary still in existence. In his translation, Reischauer attempts to correct a number of copyist's errors in the Tōji text, as the age of the manuscript has left many holes and worn sections; in addition, due to the advanced age of Kennin, the hand is shaky at points. Reischauer also makes the point of how Kennin may have not actually understood what he was copying and was, instead, doing so as an act of piousness. This would also explain some of the copyist errors.⁶ Reischauer made his English translation based on a combination of both the Tōji and Ikeda texts in 1955, which is what I am using as the primary text for this thesis.⁷

⁴ Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels*, 16-17.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ It should be noted that Reischauer and most of the sources researched used the Wade-Giles system of Chinese-English translation. In this work I will be using the Pinyin system of Chinese-English translation. As such I will be modifying direct quotes (where possible) from these books to Pinyin from the Wade-Giles system to avoid any confusion between my writing and Reischauer's.

Organization

I will divide my argument into three parts in order to explore Ennin and his life in the context of early Japanese Buddhism. Part One will focus on Ennin's predecessors and their journeys to China: Saichō (the founder of Japanese Tendai) and Kūkai (the founder of Japanese Shingon). These two monks took part in the embassy of 804, thus, their journeys and achievements are close enough in time and place to be properly examined. Part Two will examine Ennin's decision to journey to China, specifically, the challenges and obstacles he faced collecting the knowledge he sought as well as why he collected the materials he did. In Part Three, I will turn my lens to the near loss of Ennin's knowledge at the hands of Emperor Wuzong and his Buddhist persecution, as well as the legacy Ennin left on Japanese Buddhism following his return. This section will mostly focus on Ennin's accomplishments in a historical context.

I argue the premise in which Ennin plays a crucial role in the propagation of Buddhism in Japan, specifically, the solidification of the Tendai sect and its canonization of Chinese texts. While other scholars have made excellent studies of Ennin and his life, I want to go beyond research solely on Ennin and focus on his journey in the context of Japanese Buddhism as a whole. Specifically, I want to compare and contrast Ennin's journey with those of his predecessors, Saichō and Kūkai, in order to understand where Ennin's journey differs and why this difference is important in a larger context. A closer reading of Ennin's diary is required in order to do this, with a focus on the challenges Ennin faced during his time in China. I ask, how did the challenges Ennin faced during his journey affect the outcome of which texts and teachings he was able to acquire compared to his predecessors Saichō and Kūkai? Ennin's journey came at a time of great change in the Far East, at the end of Eastern transmission of Buddhism from India, and during a state of decline for the great Tang Empire. In Japan, the Heian court had just established itself and would continue to build the foundations of Japanese culture for the next two centuries. Ennin was not only important for the Buddhist legacy he built upon, but also for the knowledge and texts he was

able to secure during his travels in Tang China within an era of great change.

Part I: Saichō and Kūkai: Ennin's Predecessors

To understand where Ennin stands in the greater hierarchy of the East Asian Buddhist exchange of the ninth-century, we must first look back at his storied predecessors, the monks Saichō and Kūkai, and their accomplishments. Ennin's journey, and later teachings, occurred at a transformative-time in the history of Japanese Buddhism, as his travels fell at the conclusion of a long phase of transmission of continental religious and cultural knowledge to Japan. The flow of Buddhist knowledge and texts had been moving eastward from India, long before Ennin's journey in 838. The Silk Road was built in the second-century BCE, and consistent trade links were established between the East and West during the time of the Chinese Han Empire. Buddhism first entered China via these networks around the first-century BCE, and spread across the area thereafter.⁸ During the intervening centuries, a series of Chinese and Indian monks travelled between the two countries in a grand exchange of information.

Following a long era of division in China, the reunited Sui (581-618) and Tang dynasties (618-907) saw the further development of Buddhism into a variety of, as well as its division into, many different sects. The sect of the greatest importance to Ennin and his life was the Mt. Tiantai sect, which was founded by the Chinese monk Zhiyi in the sixth-century, and centered on the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*.⁹ Under the Tang dynasty, a golden age of Buddhism flourished, an age which would encourage many monks to brave the hazardous journey between China and Japan in order to propagate their religion.

As Buddhism spread throughout China, it also found a foothold within Korea, and, later, within Japan itself. Buddhism was officially "introduced" to Japan in 552, according to the *Nihon Shoki*, and it was initially supported by the powerful Soga clan. The religion further gained a strong foothold in Japan under the reign of Empress Suiko (554-628), who greatly supported the foreign faith and encouraged its spread throughout the Japanese islands. By the time of the Nara period (710-794), Japanese Buddhism was concentrated into the six Nara schools, which initially consisted of the *Jōjitsu* (*Tattvasiddhi*, a sect of Nikaya Buddhism), *Kusha-shū* (*Abhidharma*- focused Nikaya Buddhism), *Sanronshū* (East Asian *Mādhyamaka*), *Hossō* (East Asian *Yogācāra*), and the *Kegon* (*Huayan* school).¹⁰ The sixth Nara school, the *Ritsu* (*Vinaya* sect), was brought to Japan from China by the famed monk Ganjin (Jianzhen), who arrived in 754 and brought with him the *Vinaya* precepts.¹¹

During this time, China maintained itself as the main power of the region, as it had done so for many centuries prior. All the peoples outside the borders of China were known as the "four barbarians", as they were the "barbarians" who lived in the four cardinal directions.¹² As a result of the political importance of the various Chinese dynasties as well as the power they wielded, the countries and kingdoms surrounding China were expected to send "embassies" (in Japan these were referred to as *kentōshi*) to China in order to secure the good will of the Chinese emperor and his court. Unlike the embassies of the modern era which are headquartered in the capitals of nation-states, the embassies of the first-millennia Chinese sphere, consisted of large, shifting delegations from the countries surrounding China, including the Japanese archipelago.

These missions mainly served to embody a form of vassal-lord relationship between China and the countries around it. The embassies would grant gifts and reverence to the emperor, and the Chinese would, in turn, grant gifts and the

⁸ Kenji Matsuo, *A History of Japanese Buddhism*, (Folkestone, UK: Global Oriental, 2007), 16.

⁹ Stanley Weinstein, "The Beginnings of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan: The Neglected Tendai Tradition." Edited by Yoshito S. Hakeda, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 34, no. 1 (1974), 179.

¹⁰ Matsuo, *A History of Japanese Buddhism*, 18.

¹¹ Marcus Bingenheimer, "A Translation of the Tōdaiwajō tōseiden," *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* no. 4 (2003), 168-69.

¹² Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels*, 40.

emperor's investiture.¹³ This was the formal relationship between China and its neighbors for many centuries, and this initial period of Japanese embassy diplomacy came to an end following the end of Ennin's own mission. The embassies who came between the first and sixth-centuries, were sporadic and most likely originated from many different political forces vying for power in early Japan. After the fall of the Han, China entered a state of conflict and political disruption which would last for about four centuries. It wasn't until the reunification of China under the Sui dynasty in 581, and the political unification of Japan during the Asuka period (528-710), where it was possible for larger embassies to travel to China on a regular basis.

Coincidentally, this period of political stabilization which regularized Chinese-Japanese relations also marked the "official" arrival of Buddhism to Japan in the sixth-century in the form of *sutras* brought by Korean monks. A debate about whether or not the introduction of foreign religions to the newly formed court would be allowed, began in 552 after the arrival of Buddhist texts and images from the Korean kingdom of Paekche. Prince Shōtoku famously established the Buddhist monastery of Horyuji in Japan, and championed the integration and assimilation of Chinese culture into Japan through his "Constitution in Seventeen Articles" (604), which espoused both Confucian and Buddhist principles. In 607, Prince Shōtoku dispatched Ono no Imoko as the head of an embassy to the Sui dynasty, which was the first of many large, organized, systematic embassies which would follow until Ennin's embassy in 838. Ennin's embassy was the last one conducted during this period of Japan-China relations, due to the decline of the Tang.¹⁴ The embassies who first met with the Sui emperor, and the later Tang, secured relations between the Chinese and Japanese, but also allowed the Japanese to both learn about and adapt Chinese culture. The seventh and eighth of these embassies, which departed in 717 and 734, were respectively staffed by the scholar monks Gembō and Kibi no Makibi, both of whom transmitted numerous

secular and religious teachings of China during their trips.¹⁵

In 752, another embassy departed for China and returned with the famed Chinese monk Ganjin (Jianzhen), who had previously attempted the journey to Japan six times by the time of his departure to Japan with the embassy.¹⁶ Ganjin brought with him the *Vinaya* precepts and established the *Ritsu* sect in Nara. Ganjin's transmissions of Buddhist knowledge allowed the court to further regulate the Buddhist clergy using the ordination rituals he introduced. Ganjin is today considered one of the most influential Buddhist scholars in China, and he is still highly revered in his home of Yangzhou in China for his teachings.

After a failed embassy to China in 777, another embassy was ordered in 801, which would eventually be staffed by the monks Saichō and Kūkai. This embassy is of the greatest importance to Ennin's own journey, since Saichō was the founder of Tendai Buddhism in Japan as well as the master of Ennin. Saichō in particular had a huge effect on Ennin's later journey, as the biography *Jikaku Daishi den* recounts it was supposedly the direct influence of Saichō which inspired Ennin to take part in the later 838 mission.¹⁷ In addition, Kūkai established the esoteric Shingon sect in opposition to the teachings of the Tendai sect.

Saichō (Dengyō Daishi) was born in 767, and became a member of the Japanese provincial temple system at the age of 13. From then on, he studied under the master Gyōhyō (722-797) who himself studied under the Chinese monk Daoxuan (702-760, Dōsen in Japanese), who was a former, prominent monk of the Mt. Tiantai sect in China.¹⁸ Saichō received monastic ordination at Tōdai-ji temple in Nara at the age of 20, and then retreated to Mt. Hiei for the next seventeen years

¹³ Ibid., 41.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 46.

¹⁶ Marcus Bingenheimer, "A Translation of the Tōdaiwajō tōseiden," *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* no. 4 (2003).

¹⁷ Anonymous, *Jikaku Daishi den*, translated by Enshin Saitō, (Tōkyō: Sankibō Busshorin, 1992).

¹⁸ Paul Groner, *Saicho: The Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School, With a New Preface*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 2.

in order to mediate and intensely study Buddhist texts, eventually coming under the sway of the *Lotus Sutra* and the teachings of the Mt. Tiantai sect of China.¹⁹ While Saichō was in retreat, the capital of Japan was moved from Nara in 784 to the city of Nagaoka-kyō, and then to Heian (modern day Kyoto) in 795. Since Mt. Hiei is located near Kyoto, Saichō came into close contact with the Heian court.

One court official who began to take notice of Saichō was the powerful Wake no Hiroyo, who invited Saichō to hold lectures at his family temple of Takaoson-ji in 802. Following these lectures, Saichō came under the official support and patronage of the Wake family. Through this connection, he was brought under the attention of Emperor Kanmu (737-806).²⁰ The Emperor was anxious to come out from under the control of the Nara sects of Buddhism, and he became fascinated by the teachings and ideas of Saichō. Saichō informed the Emperor the Nara schools were not following the true teachings of the Buddha, as their ideology was centered on *sastras* (commentaries), while the *Lotus Sutra* of Mt. Tiantai was a direct transmission of the teachings of the Buddha. Saichō claimed the *Lotus Sutra* was based directly on the Buddha's words, therefore, the teachings of the Mt. Tiantai sect in China which centered on the *Lotus Sutra* were superior to those of the Nara school.

Incidentally, Emperor Kanmu's political ambitions aligned nicely with Saichō's religious goals.²¹ For this reason, Emperor Kanmu became the most powerful supporter Saichō could wish for. The Emperor and the court began preparations for the next embassy to China beginning in 801. After giving Saichō permission to found the Tendai school in Japan, he wanted a representative to travel to China with the mission in order to obtain complete texts and images from the Mt. Tiantai sect.²² Originally, Saichō

suggested two of his disciples go on the mission rather than himself, although Emperor Kanmu insisted Saichō travel with the embassy in order to be taught and ordained by a master in China. Upon his return, the Emperor reasoned, Saichō could practice ordination rituals himself. The first attempt to reach China was launched in 803, with Saichō on board. However, it met with disastrous results when the embassy was caught in a typhoon before the ships could even leave the proximity of the Japanese islands. It would be another year before this *kentōshi* was launched again due to the fact the surviving ships of the first attempt needed repairs.

During the intervening time, an additional Buddhist master, known as Kūkai, gained permission to join the embassy. Kūkai (774-835), also known by his posthumous name Kōbō Daishi, was a monk quite dissimilar to Saichō. Unlike Saichō, Kūkai was a relatively obscure, wandering ascetic until his departure to China. Still, like Saichō, it is known he was born into a wealthy family who had deep aristocratic roots; thus, he was extremely well educated by the time he reached his twenties. Like many aristocratic youths of his time, Kūkai was trained in the classical Chinese arts and had been enrolled in the court university (*daigaku*) in Heian at the age of eighteen to continue his education in Chinese literature and history.²³

However, at some point, he abandoned his classical studies and chose to seek inner truth as a wandering ascetic. It is not exactly known where Kūkai went, nor where he studied during this time, but he certainly must have been studying Buddhist texts in either Nara or Kyoto since he gained a vast knowledge of Buddhism during his years of wandering. At some point in his time as an ascetic, he supposedly had a dream which would inspire his future as the head of the esoteric school in Japan.²⁴ In the dream, an

¹⁹ Ibid., 10.

²⁰ Robert Borgen, "The Japanese Mission to China, 801-806," *Monumenta Nipponica* 37, no. 1, (1982), 2.

²¹ Ryūichi Abé and Anbu Long, "Saichō and Kūkai: A Conflict of Interpretations," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 22, no. 1/2, (1995), 108.

²² Robert Borgen, "The Japanese Mission to China, 801-806", 1.

²³ Yoshito S. Hakeda, *Kūkai Major Works: Translated with an Account of His Life and a Study of His Thoughts*, (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972), 18-19.

²⁴ Saichō, Kūkai, and Ennin all supposedly had prophetic dreams instructing them to travel to China in search of Buddhist law. Whether or not they actually did is a matter of historical debate, but this

unknown man told Kūkai, "The *Mahāvairocana Sutra* [is the scripture which contains] the doctrine you have been searching for."²⁵ Kūkai then resolved to search for this text.²⁶

Kūkai was unable to find a suitable study of the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* within Japan: thus, he instead resolved to travel to China in order to study under a master of esoteric Buddhism. Although not originally assigned to the 803 mission, and not among its numbers during the first failed departure, Kūkai managed to receive permission to travel with the embassy on the following attempt, which departed the following year. It is historically unknown how Kūkai managed to gain permission to become part of this mission as a student, although Hakeda speculates numerous possibilities in his master work, *Kūkai: Major Works*. On the sixth day of the seventh moon of the year Enryaku 23 (804), Kūkai, Saichō, and the rest of envoy of four Japanese ships finally departed from the port of Tanoura in Kyushu.²⁷

The ships sailed away from Japan relatively peacefully on their second, and final, attempt, with Kūkai on the first ship and Saichō on the second ship. However, by the second night, they were again met with disaster when they encountered a storm at sea. During the storm, the first and second ships were separated, while the fourth and fifth ships were blown back to Japan. Kūkai aboard the first ship landed in the southern province of Fujian after being adrift at sea for a month. Once he arrived, Kūkai and his compatriots were greeted very coldly by the government officials in Fujian, who were not accustomed to foreign missions landing in their territories. Negotiations between the two parties failed rather quickly, and the Japanese ship was impounded and its delegation was stranded in swampland for two months.²⁸ After writing a

seems to be a reoccurring theme in all three of their biographies.

²⁵ Hakeda, *Kūkai Major Works*, 26.

²⁶ The *Mahāvairocana Sutra* (Japanese: Dainichi-kyō) is the main text esoteric Buddhism is based on. This text would become the principal scripture of Kūkai's Shingon text.

²⁷ Hakeda, *Kūkai Major Works*, 29.

²⁸ Hakeda, *Kūkai Major Works*, 30.

letter to the "governor" of the province, Kūkai and his party were given fifteen houses to lodge in before being allowed passage to Changan. There, they arrived six months after their departure from Japan.

Here, Kūkai planned to live for twenty years, studying esoteric Buddhism. Upon his arrival, he set out to find a master worthy to instruct him. He was lodged in the Ximing Temple in the third month of 805, and used this temple as his base while he searched for teachers to instruct him.²⁹ He visited many different temples, until he finally found a teacher in Master Huiguo (746-805), who was considered to be the patriarch of esoteric Buddhism in China at the time, and resided in the East Pagoda Hall of the Qinglung Temple. Kūkai's first meeting with Huiguo was apparently quite dramatic as he recorded after his return to Japan,

As soon as he [Huiguo] saw me he smiled with pleasure and joyfully said, "I knew that you would come! I have waited for such a long time. What pleasure it gives me to look upon you today at last! My life is drawing to an end, and until you came there was no one to whom I could transmit the teachings".³⁰

Historian Hakeda Yoshita confirms this claim of transmission, "Huiguo, at sixty, was living on solely to transmit his whole teachings to Kūkai". Thus, it can be assumed Kūkai placed extreme importance upon his teachings.³¹

Within three months of meeting Huiguo, Kūkai had already achieved his final *abhiseka* initiation and was ordained a master of esoteric Buddhism, speaking to his skill as a learner.³² He also spent this time copying *sutras* and esoteric images. On Huiguo's deathbed, soon after Kūkai's initiation, Huiguo instructed him to return to Japan to spread his teachings,

²⁹ Kūkai, *A Memorial Presenting a List of Newly Imported Sutras and Other Items*; as cited in Hakeda, *Kūkai Major Works*.

³⁰ Kūkai, *A Memorial Presenting a List of Newly Imported Sutras and Other Items (Shōrai mokuroku)*, 99; as cited in Hakeda, *Kūkai: Major Works*.

³¹ Hakeda, *Kūkai: Major Works*, 32.

³² Japanese: *kanjo*, an esoteric initiation ceremony which involves the sprinkling of holy water on an individual who has been initiated. The literal translation of the Sanskrit word *Abhiseka* is "sprinkling water".

Hasten back to your country, offer these things to the court, and spread the teaching throughout your country, offer these things to the court, and spread the teachings throughout your country to increase the happiness of the people. Then the land will know peace, and people everywhere will be content.³³

With his master no longer alive and his studies and ordination completed, Kūkai decided to return to Japan to spread his teachings, cutting his planned twenty-year stay drastically short. Kūkai returned to Japan with the sailor Takashina Tōnari, in addition to many *sutras*, large mandalas, books of poetry, along with many other items which are catalogued in *A Memorial Presenting a List of Newly Imported Sutras and Other Items*, which he wrote upon his return. He had brought back 142 Buddhist *sutras* in 217 fascicles, 42 Sanskrit texts in 44 fascicles, 32 commentaries in 170 fascicles, 5 mandalas, 5 portraits of esoteric patriarchs, 9 ritual implements, and 13 different objects given to him by Huiguo.

Saichō's experience in China on the same mission, while wildly different, also represented major progress for the Tendai sect in Japan. The second ship he was aboard spent an astonishing two months adrift at sea. Ironically, it landed in the city of Mingzhou which was much closer to Japan, distance-wise, than Fujian province where Kūkai had landed a month earlier. Saichō and his party were greeted much more amicably due to Mingzhou being a major port where many Japanese *kentōshi* had landed previously. Without much delay, Saichō and his party were able to go forward to Mt. Tiantai without much issue. Being labeled as a scholar monk instead of student monk, Saichō had much less time to achieve his goals since he had to depart with the mission, much as Ennin later would be restricted with his title as a scholar monk as well. Once he arrived at Mt. Tiantai, Saichō found his teachings through Tiantai Master Xingman, and later at Daosui Temple for 140 days. During his time at Mt. Tiantai, Saichō was officially ordained a master of the Tiantai sect himself, thus fulfilling his goal of becoming a Tendai master in China.

Saichō received and copied numerous Tendai texts during his time at Mt. Tiantai. By the third month of 805, he had returned to Mingzhou in order to await his ship for his return to Japan. While waiting for departure, not wanting to waste time, Saichō received official permission to travel to Yuzhou where he stayed at the Longxing Temple. Here, he learned of esoteric Buddhism from Master Shunxiao who initiated Saichō into the esoteric Buddhist tradition. Saichō and his party made a copy of 102 esoteric texts in 115 fascicles and obtained seven esoteric ritual implements before returning to Mingzhou, and, eventually, Japan.³⁴ Upon his return, Saichō was greeted as a hero by Emperor Kanmu who was intrigued by the teachings of esoteric Buddhism, and he had Saichō begin *abhiseka* initiation rituals at the Takaosanji Temple. Emperor Kanmu declared:

Esoteric Buddhism had not yet been transmitted to this land, but fortunately Saichō has obtained it... All necessary funds for the performance of the ritual, regardless of amount, are to be provided as Saichō shall direct.³⁵

With this proclamation, esoteric Buddhism was now seen as a part of Saichō's Tendai sect within Japan, and with his and Kūkai's return to Japan, a new phase of Japanese Buddhism had begun.

To put it plainly, the impact both Kūkai and Saichō had on Japanese Buddhism was immense, and their return marked the beginning of the founding of both the Shingon and Tendai sects (although Tendai had already been established prior to the mission, the teachings Saichō received in China greatly improved the sect's teachings). Despite their great achievements, the relationship between Saichō and Kūkai was very tenuous upon their return to Japan. This tenuous relationship would lead to a separation in their respective sects. The rupture point in the relationship of the two would come from the study and practice of *Mikkyō*, with Saichō viewing esoteric teachings as compatible with the exoteric teachings of the Tendai sect, with Kūkai seeing

³³ Hakeda, *Kūkai Major Works*, 100-101.

³⁴ Hakeda, *Kūkai Major Works*, 36.

³⁵ *Dengyo daishi zenshu* (The complete works of Dengyo daishi-Saicho), 92-93; as cited in Hakeda, *Kūkai Major Works*, 36.

this mix as a perversion of true esoteric Buddhism.³⁶

Saichō, as mentioned above, had received his initiation rites while in Yuzhou. Since he left as a favored monk under Emperor Kanmu, upon his return, his version of esoteric Buddhism was quickly endorsed. In contrast, Kūkai's achievements did not meet such high praise or notice. A month after Saichō's return to Japan, he had already been commanded by Emperor Kanmu to perform the *abhiseka* initiation rites at Takaosan-ji for the eminent priest of Nara. This event is officially considered the first esoteric initiatory rite performed in Japan.³⁷ In the first month of 806, the court of Emperor Kanmu allowed Saichō's Tendai Lotus School (*Tendai hokke shu*) to perform two ordinations a year, one for the study of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (esoteric teaching), and one for the study of *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, the main work of the Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi.³⁸ The inclusion of esoteric Buddhism in the Tendai school of Japan, marks a departure from the original Tiantai sect located in China, as the school revolved around the teaching of the *Lotus Sutra* only. This inclusion would be what brought Saichō's teachings into direct conflict with Kūkai's.

After his return to Japan, Kūkai spent a few years living on Kyushu awaiting an invitation from the court to travel to Heian. It was 809, three years after his journey, when Kūkai finally received a reply from the court instructing him to reside in Takaosanji outside of Kyoto. His move to this temple coincided with Emperor Saga's rise to power. This change in leadership created a much more favorable climate for Kūkai: Emperor Saga was to Kūkai, as the former Emperor Kanmu was to Saichō. This change resulted in Kūkai as the administrative head (*bettō*) of the Tōdaiji in Nara, where he would perform esoteric ceremonies and gather students for his teachings. At the same time, Saichō and Kūkai began to exchange correspondence with each other, with Saichō

initially requesting twelve esoteric texts Kūkai had brought back from China with him.³⁹

In 812, Saichō asked Kūkai if he would perform a proper *abhiseka* ceremony on him. Kūkai agreed, and the ceremony in Japan was performed on Saichō, the Wake brothers, and Mino Tanehito. Saichō then asked if he could receive the highest form of *abhiseka* ordination from Kūkai, but Kūkai promptly refused his request, stating he would need at least three years of practice to achieve such a level.⁴⁰ Saichō sent his disciples to take part in this teaching, rather than himself. As Kūkai entrenched himself as leader of the Japanese esoteric Buddhist community, he asked Emperor Saga for land at Mt. Kōya, which he officially consecrated on the fifth month of 819.

In the meantime, Saichō and Kūkai continued to write letters to one another. Of the twenty-four still existing letters, eleven consist of Saichō requesting esoteric texts from Kūkai.⁴¹ The rift between the two slowly developed as Saichō lost many followers to Kūkai's teachings, and the rift became more severe as Kūkai preached how the esoteric teachings were the only pure teachings. In contrast, Saichō still advocated for the assimilation of different sects and their teachings in the Tendai school. In 816, these competing ideologies led to a split between Saichō and Kūkai when Kūkai demanded Saichō return the texts he was copying. Furthermore, in one of his letters to Saichō, Kūkai flatly stated how if Saichō wished to continue learning about the *Mikkyō* tradition, he would have to come learn under him in person.⁴² In his final letter to Saichō, Kūkai draws a clear line between their two sects and demands Saichō become his disciple, which Saichō could not do, considering his lofty position at Mt. Hiei.⁴³

With the split between the two schools cemented, the two masters went on to their

³⁶ *Mikkyō* : Japanese: esoteric Buddhism

³⁷ Abe, *Saicho and Kukai: A Conflict of Interpretations*, 108.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Hakeda, *Kukai Major Works*, 42.

⁴⁰ *Rankei ionshu*, 383-385; as cited in Abe, *Saichō and Kūkai: A Conflict of Interpretations*.

⁴¹ Abe, *Saicho and Kukai: A Conflict of Interpretations*, 111-137.

⁴² *Koya zappitsu shu*, 595-96; as cited in Abe, *Saicho and Kukai: A Conflict of Interpretations*, 123.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 547-52; as cited in Abe, *Saicho and Kukai: A Conflict of Interpretations*, 127.

respective temples at Mt. Kōya and Mt. Hiei in order to continue the teachings of their sects. At Mt. Hiei shortly after their split in 816, Saichō transmitted the Bodhisattva vows to a young student monk named Ennin. With the separation between the Tendai and Shingon schools settled, the stage was set for both sects to continue consolidating the teachings of their teachers. Being a disciple of Saichō, Ennin would spend the next twenty-two years engrossing himself in the Tendai teachings. In 838, he finally embarked on his own journey to China, to follow in his master's footsteps.

Part II: Journey to China and Two Years of Obstacles

Ennin was born in 793, in the district of Tsugu, in the Province of Shimotsuke, in the East of Japan.⁴⁴ He was born to a non-aristocratic family, which makes his later rise to prominence and importance quite remarkable, considering the class system of Heian Japan. According to his oft-exaggerated biography, at the time of Ennin's birth, a purple cloud appeared above his home. A wandering monk named Kōchi observed this, and asked for Ennin to be entrusted to his care when he came of age. After receiving a classical education in Chinese writing at a young age, when Ennin was nine years old, his father died, and Kōchi returned to take the child under his wing, as promised.⁴⁵ At the age of fifteen, while he was studying under Kōchi, Ennin had a dream-vision of the Tendai founder Saichō. He then resolved to study under Saichō at Enryakuji temple on Mt. Hiei. He was accepted as a candidate novice in 814, and received his bodhisattva vows two years later at Tōdaiji monastery, where Saichō declared him a "greater vehicle" of Mahayana Buddhism.⁴⁶

When Saichō died in 822, Ennin continued to practice religious rites at Mt. Hiei, and lectured on the *Lotus Sutra* himself in 828 before retiring to an isolated hermitage, where he lived alone in meditation. In 834, another *kentōshi* was

commissioned to travel to China, and, according to his biographies, Ennin had another dream-vision of Saichō who instructed him to go to China with this embassy "in search of the law."⁴⁷ In this vision, Saichō tasked Ennin with traveling to Mt. Tiantai in order to gain access to texts related to the *Lotus Sutra* as well as to Mikkyō (esoteric) Buddhism. Whether Ennin had a dream or not instructing him to go on this mission cannot be entirely certain, but what is certain is how he chose to go. Resolute, Ennin abandoned his hermitage and gained the court's permission to travel with the embassy to China. Much like Saichō and Kūkai's previous mission between 804-805, Ennin's embassy was plagued with many hardships from the start. The first attempts at the journey took place in 836 and in 837, and both times the ships were blown back to Japan or were wrecked before they made it too far out.⁴⁸ It may strike some as odd how these embassies had such difficulty making the journey from Japan to China, at a time when there was not only a robust sea trade between Korea and China, but also an established sea trade between China, the East Indies, India, and even Arabia. There are multiple factors for why these ships had such difficulty making the crossing, and these all played a major role in shaping Ennin's journey.

The biggest reason Japanese embassies had such a high failure rate was due to the insistence of the Japanese court in which Japanese ships be used as sign of power and prestige, instead of better-built Korean or Chinese ships.⁴⁹ Japanese ship design was quite poor compared to the designs of Korean and Chinese ships, and they were built with the major design flaw of having

⁴⁴ Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels*, 20-21.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, It should be noted how Ennin's biographies were prone to over embellishment or outright fabrication when discussing Ennin's travel, and, most likely, early childhood. Ennin does not write a record of his life prior to his journey in *In Search of the Law*; although, there are a few incidents where Ennin witnesses some minor "miracles" or auspicious signs during his journey, which in his biography are described as far greater and more important events than they really were.

⁴⁸ Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels*, 23.

⁴⁹ Borgen, "The Japanese Mission of 801-806", 7.

flat bottoms, making them less maneuverable.⁵⁰ The flat-bottomed design of Japanese ships made it incredibly difficult to navigate the deep sea, which was a necessity for the sea route Japanese ships attempted to take at this time. Without proper maneuvering ability, the ships were left to the mercy of the prevailing winds, of which the Japanese had not yet gained an understanding. The Japanese understanding of wind patterns was poor, to the point they insisted the missions depart for China in July. July marked, not only the high season for typhoons and tropical storms in the sea separating China and Japan, but also the improper season for westward sailing as the trade winds pushed in the opposite direction.⁵¹ Thus, the sea crossing was the first great challenge Ennin faced.

Ennin boarded the second ship of his own embassy on July 18th, 838, and departed from Ukushima in the Hakata Bay region, the traditional point of departure for embassies on the island

of Kyushu.⁵² This departure was relatively secure, compared to the former ones Ennin's party

had attempted. For the first day of the voyage, all the ships managed to stay in contact using

"fire signals".⁵³ Despite this communication, all four ships lost contact with each other within another day, leading the crew on Ennin's ship to find the way using traditional methods, such as noting the color of the sea and which direction birds passed overhead. After four days of relatively smooth sailing, Ennin's ship was caught on a shoal in water only eight feet deep. High wind and waves battered the rudder of the ship until it snapped in two and, in low tide, the ship became beached on the sandy bottom. In fear the ship would be completely torn apart by winds,

the crew cut down all the other means of steering the ship: "We therefore took down the mast and cut down the left and right bow planking and erected poles at the four corners of the ship..."⁵⁴

The ship drifted for another day or so before being within close enough proximity to the mainland for them to send a boat to shore to seek help. Later, some Chinese fisherman and an official of the region's salt bureau came to transport the ship's crew to shore. Ennin's journey to China by ship took just about one week of travel time, a far cry from the two months it took Kūkai's ship to reach China when it set out for the same path. This disparity is an excellent example of the variation in challenges each mission faced, something as seemingly inconsequential as a gust of wind or errant wave was enough to utterly change the fate of the people aboard these ships. Ennin's sea journey, while terrifying, may have been more expedient than those of the 804 mission, but the bureaucratic and cultural challenges Ennin would come to face were far greater than those of his predecessors.

Upon reaching the shore in Shandong, Ennin and the embassy made their way south to Yangzhou using the Grand Canal. They eventually arrived on the 25th day of the seventh moon of 838. Yangzhou is where Ennin would stay for the next two years,, as he tried to gain the proper permissions and permits to travel to Mt. Tiantai: the main goal of his mission. On the first of the next moon, Ennin began his official business in trying to secure these permissions. His first request was through the ambassador of the mission, Fujiwara no Tsunetsugu, who forwarded a letter requesting travel permission for both Ennin and Ensai, another monk who was accompanying the mission as a student monk. The ambassador was having his first meeting with Li Deyou, who was one of the most prominent statesmen in his day and would go on to play a pivotal role in the later Buddhist persecutions as Minister of State. The ambassador forwarded a letter from the two monks to Li, and, in turn, he forwarded the letter to the authorities of Yangfu province two days later.

⁵⁰ Reischauer, Edwin O, "Notes on T'ang Dynasty Sea Routes," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 5, no. 2 (1940).

⁵¹ Borgen, "The Japanese Mission 801-806", 7.

⁵² Bruce Loyd Batten, *Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War And Peace, 500-1300*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006).

⁵³ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*, translated by Edwin O. Reischauer, (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1955), 2-3.

⁵⁴ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 7

The same day Li sent the first of many requests, Ennin found the bureaucratic red tape, which had built up in China over the centuries, proved to be far more burdensome to his pilgrimage than expected. Ennin first tried to have an artist enter an unspecified monastery in order to copy religious painting, but he was turned away since he needed official permission to enter monasteries as a foreigner. Ennin's confusion with this law is clearly marked in his diary after the interaction:

We had an artist go to the monastery to draw pictures of the Bodhisattva Myōken and the Four [Heavenly] Kings, but for some reason the regulations do not allow foreigners to enter monastery buildings at will, and the officers of the monastery would not allow him to draw the pictures.⁵⁵

No doubt exacerbating Ennin's frustration about the situation, the following day Li Deyou informed Ennin his travel requests had been denied; furthermore, the supplies the Japanese delegation were given for daily needs, were reduced. Ennin was informed he would not be able to travel until he was granted Imperial permission, and "in the meantime we monks were to be quarantined in a monastery".⁵⁶

From this point onwards, the next two years of the diary recount a long game of back-and-forth between Tang officials and Ennin's Buddhist delegation. This would become the first major, and continuing, obstacle in Ennin's search for understanding about his own faith, and would ultimately determine he would never reach his intended goal of Mt. Tiantai. It is not without reason in which Ennin found himself encountering such difficulty along his journey, since the Tang dynasty had a long established tradition of intense bureaucratic order.

The Tang dynasty had a system of bureaucratic rule first established during the Han dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE). By the time of Ennin's journey, the imperial state had become entrenched in everyday life within China. The bureaucracy established in China at the time of Ennin's journey, relied on a complicated, interconnected system of officials, which

extended downwards, from the supreme command of the Emperor at the center. Even the geography of China was divided in a hierarchical fashion, the most powerful province being the capital, the power then extended to the regional Commanderies, then the prefecture, and, from there, to the sub-prefecture. This system of power, was derived from Confucian values which advocated for a strict, hierarchical ordering of society which was necessary for the prosperity of China.

Nearly everything in Tang China fell under the control of the government and its officials, which Ennin describes consistently throughout the diary. From the salt bureau he first encounters in Dongliangfengcun to the Emperor himself, Ennin found himself interacting with officials on every step of his journey. The officials he met ranged from petty officials operating on the local level, to major historical officials such as Li Deyou, who was the leader of the dominant faction of scholar-bureaucrats, and Qiu Shiliang, a powerful court eunuch and general.⁵⁷ Ennin also copied numerous official documents and letters into his diary, and records in detail a number of letters he had written to Chinese officials in order to get the permissions he needed to fulfill his pilgrimage. Although this period is considered one of general decline for the Tang dynasty, Ennin's diary gives excellent insight into how structured and ordered remained despite the upheaval slowly developing around him.

The biggest issue Ennin faced when it came to the Tang government was his status as both a foreigner and a Buddhist scholar monk. As discussed in Part I, Ennin's embassy was one in a long line of Japanese embassies to China. Because of this, there was a strict order he had to follow once he arrived as a member of a foreign embassy. Ennin's biggest obstacle for the first eight months he was in Yangzhou, was his status as a "Scholar Monk", notably, the same title Saichō held. This status attached him to the Japanese embassy with which he came, and was a major factor in him being unable to travel Mt. Tiantai since he was scheduled to return to Japan with the embassy in the second moon of 839. Due to the bureaucracy keeping him trapped in

⁵⁵ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 29.

⁵⁷ Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels*, 7.

Yangzhou for the entire length of the *kentōshi's* mission, his goal of reaching the holy mountain and returning during the time frame, was basically non-existent. Ironically, if Ennin held the status of a "Student Monk" he would have received permission to remain in China in order to study. His fellow Tendai monk, Ensai, also took part in the 838 mission with this status, and he was allowed to study at Mt. Tiantai because he was not expected to return to Japan with the embassy.⁵⁸

This is not reminiscent of the travels of Saichō and Kūkai who both found their ways to Tiantai and Changan, respectively, relatively easily, in accordance with their biographers. While Saichō managed to make it all the way to Mt. Tiantai without difficulty, Kūkai did run into a little bit of a situation when he first arrived in China during his time in Mingzhou, although, as described in Part I, he was able to depart after writing a courteous letter to local officials. Kūkai was classified as a student monk himself; thus, after managing to get the necessary travel permits, he was allowed an unspecified amount of time to reside in China. Ennin, on the other hand, was allotted only the same amount of time the diplomatic *kentōshi* had in China, expounding his difficulties.

Despite the bureaucratic entanglements in which Ennin found himself, he tried again and again to gain permission to travel to Taizhou (near Mt. Tiantai), during the eight frustrating months he was in Yangzhou. After consistent denials from local officials, Regional Commander Li informed Ennin on the sixteenth day of the ninth moon of 838 how, in order to gain permission to go to Taizhou, the Japanese ambassador would have to present a petition upon reaching the capital, and, if it was regarded favorably, Ennin and his party would then gain access to Taizhou.⁵⁹ It was not until the fifth day of the tenth moon when the Ambassador and his party set out for the capital. The situation was not ideal for Ennin, as he would need Imperial permission in order to stay in China.

After the embassy departed for the capital, Ennin set about trying to secure permission for

Ishō and Igyō, two novices accompanying him in his pilgrimage, to become ordained. He found further restrictions had been placed by the government on the matter. In the second year of Taihe (828), orders had been issued to the prefectures forbidding people from shaving their heads and becoming monks, due to a number of ordinations being carried out without government oversight. While he tried to get permission to travel to Mt. Tiantai, Ennin recorded many aspects of daily life in Yangzhou, as well as recording the many different customs and holidays the citizens of Yangzhou participated in.⁶⁰ It was not until the eighteenth day of the twelfth moon of 838 in which Ennin received the news that the ambassador and his party had reached Changan. The same day, he also received word from Li the ordinations of Igyō and Ishō would not be allowed without "special Imperial permission".⁶¹

Ennin spent the next few months copying whatever religious texts and artifacts that he could while he was staying at the Kaiyuansi monastery, including three copies each of paintings of Nan-yo and Tiantai, as well as the esoteric *mandaras* of the *Kongōkai* and the *Taizōkai*. He was also taught how to make *dan* by the monk Chuan[ya] Heshang.⁶² It is interesting to note how Ennin spent his last two months in Yangzhou studying esoteric Buddhism and collecting related texts, it goes to show how, despite the earlier schism between Tendai and Shingon Buddhism, esoteric teachings were still important enough to Ennin in which he actively tried to seek them out. This suggests, despite the falling out between Saichō and Kūkai over the intricacies of belief, Ennin was still following in Saichō's footsteps in incorporating both the teaching of the *Lotus Sutra* and esoteric Buddhism in the Tendai sect.

⁶⁰ See *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China* by Edwin O. Reischauer for additional information on the daily records of Ennin during his time in Yangzhou.

⁶¹ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 64.

⁶² Small tables or raised trays bearing the image of a deity of esoteric Buddhism surrounded by the proper symbols and adornments in the proper positions. The art of preparing *dan* is called *dan'yo*. See *Ennin's Diary*, 80.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁵⁹ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 39.

On the eight day of the second moon of 839 Ennin received a letter from the Administrative Officer Nagamine, which stated that when the ambassador had his audience with the Emperor, he had "vigorously" presented the petition for Ennin to travel to Mt. Tiantai. Yet, despite his efforts, the Emperor himself declined his request. Ten days later, Ennin and his party departed the Kaiyuansi to the Pingqiao Inn in order to prepare for their departure to Zhuzhou. There, they were scheduled to depart for Japan on Korean-built ships, which the embassy had bought since all of the Japanese ships were essentially destroyed during the first crossing. Although Ennin makes no personal comment about being denied permission to travel Mt. Tiantai by the Emperor himself, this development was undoubtedly a major blow to him and his party, particularly so close to their time of departure. Despite this major obstacle, Ennin continued to plan around Chinese officials in order to complete his search for Buddhist law.

At first believing he would not be allowed to stay in China any longer, Ennin entrusted the Student Monk Ensai with a letter to Tiantai and his "Questions from the Monastery" and the "Questions from the Shuzenin", which he had intended to ask himself upon his arrival at Mt. Tiantai.⁶³ On the seventeenth day of the third moon of 839, Ennin moved his belongings to the second ship of the return envoy in preparation of departure, yet Ennin still continued to come up with a way to stay in China, instructing his Korean interpreter Chongnam to "devise some scheme whereby I can stay [in China]".⁶⁴ On the twenty-second day, Ennin and the rest of the Japanese embassy departed on nine Korean-built ships. For the next few days, they attempted to make the crossing to Japan. As with the first crossing they made, for days, the embassy ran into unfavorable seas and winds, continually pushing the ships back towards the Chinese coast.

When they reached the area around Mizhou, Ennin seemed to make up his mind how he would not be returning to Japan with the rest of the ships, as he entrusted four letters and a black

scepter gifted to him at Zhuzhou to be returned to Mt. Hiei by the embassy's ships, "Student of History" by Nagamine no Sukune.⁶⁵ He entrusted these items to Nagamine on the first day of the fourth moon of 839, and by the fifth day Ennin revealed in his diary the "scheme" he and Kim Chongnam had come up with while they were awaiting their departure in Zhuzhou:

I, the Scholar Monk, while at Ch'u-chou, had planned with the Korean Interpreter Kim Chongnam that, when we reached the Mi-chou region, we would live in hiding in the mountains and would then go to [Mt.] T'ien-t'ai and also to Ch'ang-an.⁶⁶

Also on this day, Ennin entrusted a box of "Buddhist teachings" he received in Yangzhou, the copies of the two *mandara* and the *dan'yō*, as well as his baggage, to Tomo no Sukune, the commander of the eighth ship he was stationed on. Thereafter, Ennin, Ishō, Igyō, and their Chinese attendant Tei Yūman embarked from their ship and illegally re-entered China in the

hopes of fulfilling their plan. Ennin remarks in his diary, "We climbed up the shore and gazed at the white sails moving in a row over the sea".⁶⁷

Despite their efforts to go unnoticed, within a few hours, Ennin and company found themselves face to face with a crew of sailors hauling cargo from Mizhou to Zhuzhou. Immediately, Ennin tried to pass himself off as a Korean monk, naming himself Kyongwon, and his disciples Hyeil and Kyohye. The sailors agreed to help them find their way to a nearby village called Suchengcun, where they stayed in the home of a Korean. Not even a day into their stay, the village elder declared the monks were neither Korean nor Chinese and told them he had already sent a letter to the Guard Officer of the prefecture to send three or four men to investigate the incident. Again, we see the efficiency of the Tang bureaucracy in action, once again setting an obstacle before Ennin and immediately dashing his plans to stay in hiding until he could get to Mt. Tiantai.⁶⁸

⁶³ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 91.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

This whole event is starkly different from the journey of his predecessors Saichō and Kūkai, for whom the audaciousness of the plan would have been unthinkable. Not only was it considered illegal for Ennin to return and stay ashore without the proper documents, it was illegal for Ennin to travel without any documentation. Choosing to be abandoned on shore could have ended with him being imprisoned or executed if he had been less clever about it. Regardless, he managed to get through this attempt unscathed, and it did not deter him from trying again.

Through a series of misdirections and official shuffling, Ennin again found himself on the second ship of the embassy. For three months he waited on the ship either to go to Japan, or find a way to return to shore and stay in China. After about two and a half months aboard the second ship as it tried to set off again and again in unfavorable winds, a Korean representative of the Mt. Chi Cloister came aboard to ask if Ennin would want to stay with them. On the twenty-third day of the seventh moon of 839, Ennin agreed: "In order to go to T'ien-t'ai, we three monks have given up the idea of returning home and are staying at the Mt. Ch'ih Cloister."⁶⁹

While at Mt. Chi, the Korean monks insisted how going south to Mt. Tiantai was far too long a journey for Ennin and his company. Instead, they insisted he make a pilgrimage north to Mt. Wutai, a place about 2,000 *li* (1 *li* is about 0.3 of a mile: 2,000 *li* converts to about 621 miles) from Mt. Chi, where Tendai monks were in residence. He was also told by the Korean monk Songnim Hwasang the monks of Wutai were practicing *hokke-zammai*. Because of this and other fabulous testimonies of the religious wonders of Mt. Wutai, Ennin made a momentous decision which would change the course of his journey.⁷⁰ This decision had the effect of transforming the knowledge he would bring back with him.

Ennin states: "I have changed my previous plan and intend to spend the winter at the mountain cloister and, when the spring comes, to wander forth on a pilgrimage to Mt. [Wu]-t'ai".⁷¹

Unable to travel to Mt. Tiantai changed what scriptures, teachings, and practices Ennin would bring back to Japan with him. When he decided to stay at Mt. Chi with the goal of eventually traveling to Mt. Wutai, Ennin diverged significantly away from the path of his mentor Saichō's journey. Already, Ennin was in China longer than his master, and by going to Mt. Wutai instead of Tiantai, Ennin would establish his own place in the history of Japanese Buddhism, for he would bring back new teachings about the Tiantai sect which would only contribute to the strengthening of the Japanese Tendai sect.

Ennin did indeed follow through with his plan to stay at Mt. Chi cloister for the winter of 839-840. After writing numerous letter to the Guard Officer Choe as well as to other figures such as Chang Pogo, Ennin finally received official permission to go on a pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai on the nineteenth day of the second moon of 840. On the twenty-fourth day, he received official documentation. The following day, Ennin embarked on foot across China to Mt. Wutai, a journey from the tip of Shandong to the northern mountainous interior of China which spanned nearly 600 miles.

After a little over two months of travel across northern China, with comparatively little interference by government officials, Ennin and his company reached the edge of the Wutai mountains on the twenty-eighth day of the fourth moon. Ennin excitedly wrote in his diary what his thoughts were when he first witnessed the central terrace from afar,

On looking at them [the five terraces] from afar, our tears flowed involuntarily. The trees and strange flowers are unlike those anywhere else, and it is a most unusual region. This then is the gold-colored world of My Ch'ing-liang⁷², where Monjushri⁷³ manifested himself for our benefit.⁷⁴

At last, after forty four days of travel (not counting rest days), Ennin was in reach of fulfilling his "search for the law" and would soon be able to study many Tiantai traditions yet unknown to the people of Japan, such as the

⁶⁹ Ibid., 136-137

⁷⁰ *hokke-zammai* : one of the four types of religious concentrations of the Tendai sect.

⁷¹ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 138.

⁷² Another name for Mt. Wutai.

⁷³ Manjushri is the Bodhisattva of supreme wisdom in Mahayana Buddhism.

⁷⁴ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 214.

practice of *hokke-zammai* and *hanju*, as well as an intense reverence for Monju's holy land at Wutai⁷⁵.

Part III: Study at Wutai and Changan

Ennin and his party entered the Tingdian Common Cloister where they worshipped the image of Monju, undoubtedly grateful for the completion of their journey. Wutai was considered the earthly home of the Bodhisattva Monjushiri, one of the great bodhisattvas of his time. In a very real sense to Ennin and his party, as well as the monks who continuously lived in the valley, the land of Wutai was the land of Monjushiri (Monju). Again and again, Ennin mentions the worship of Monju and the customs which came along with it. It is no wonder how the first thing he did upon arrival in the region was worship an image of the bodhisattva, which probably had great effect on Ennin since Monju was the bodhisattva of wisdom, no doubt endowing Ennin with a sense he was on the right path.

Ennin was not one to waste time, and by the first day of the fifth moon of 840 ⁷⁶Ennin embarked on a pilgrimage around the "five terraces"⁷⁷ and the many monasteries of Mt. Wutai. Ennin makes a particular note on this day of a place for the practicing of *hanju*⁷⁸, a practice dedicated to which he would erect a famous hall after his return to Japan. The first fifteen days of Ennin's time at Wutai was spent at Chulinsi. On the fourteenth day, the novice monks Ishō and Igyō finally received their ordinations, as Wutai was a location designated for the ordination of monks by the Tang government. On the sixteenth

day, Ennin and his party moved to the Tahuayensi monastery where they would reside for the next month and a half.

I want to look at Ennin's time at Mt. Wutai a little more closely for the purpose of this work, since the time he spent here, and later at the capital of Changan, mark a unique experience which was not shared by his predecessors on the previous mission. Mt. Wutai is located in the northeastern corner of the modern Shanxi province. By the time of Ennin's journey, it had already developed into a great monastic center of China, and, as mentioned above, was a center of worship for the bodhisattva Monju. Reischauer claims Mt. Wutai had "mysterious" origins in his companion work *Ennin's Travel in T'ang China*, but most records point to the first buildings being built in this location by the 1st century CE.⁷⁹ While Mt. Tiantai was the origin of Japanese Tendai Buddhism, Mt. Wutai had existed as a Buddhist center of worship and knowledge for many centuries longer. In addition, Mt. Wutai had long been considered a center of imperial Buddhist worship, with a number of emperors and empresses making a pilgrimage to the site from the Northern Wei period (471-499), which caused the five terraces to be a famed site of pilgrimage.⁸⁰

Ennin was just one in a long line of pilgrims to Mt. Wutai, thus, when he arrived, there were already many traditions in place in which he would take part. One of the traditions was attending lectures by head priests and monks at the various monasteries. The teachings at these monasteries were not necessarily tied with the Tendai sect, but instead, represented a hodgepodge of Buddhist ideas and teachings. In addition, the worship of Monju constituted a separate, dedicated practice. Therefore, when Ennin found himself in the "golden world" of Monjushiri, he also found himself among a treasure trove of Buddhist teachings and ideas. These things were quite different from what his predecessors had gathered. By going off the path he had planned on traversing, Ennin was able to discover new practices, which he would go on to

⁷⁵ Ibid., 215.

⁷⁶ June 4th, 840

⁷⁷ Five mountains at Wutai that were climbed by the monks and pilgrims of the site. Each mountain represented one of the four cardinal directions and the "center".

⁷⁸ *Hanju dojo*, *hanju*, or *hanju-zammai* is another one of the four traditional practices. In this practice the participant walks around and image of Amida Buddha while meditating on his name for ninety days and nights.

⁷⁹ "Mount Wutai," [unesco.com](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1279), 2009, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1279>

⁸⁰ Ibid.

bring back to Japan with him, specifically, to the Tendai sect.

During his first day at Tahuayensi, Ennin was fortunate enough to see two Tendai Abbots lecturing on the Tendai texts of the *Maka-shikan* and the *Shikan*.⁸¹ One of the lecturers was named Chiyuan Heshang, who had come from Tiantai himself. Following his lecture Ennin spoke to him about the situation of their travels. Heshang was well aware of Saichō's travels to Mt. Tiantai in 804, and inquired about whether the sect had prospered in Japan. Ennin informed him the sect had indeed established itself within Japan, and, at this, the Abbot was "extremely happy".⁸² At the end of the second scroll of his diary, Ennin states:

When one enters this region of His Holiness [Monju], if one sees a very lowly man, one does not dare feel contemptuous, and if one meets a donkey, one wonders if it might be a manifestation of Monju. Everything before one's eyes raises thoughts of the manifestations of Monju. The holy land makes one have a spontaneous feeling of respect for the region.⁸³

Clearly, Ennin had finally found a place to not only learn new things about his own faith, but also a place where he could practice his faith peacefully and freely, compared to the experience he had in China for the first two years, the amount of knowledge he was gaining about the Tendai sect was incomparable.

While at Tahuayensi, Ennin found many Buddhist treasures which he described in his diary. The artifacts included three copies of the *Lotus Sutra*, one from India in the original Indian format, one in small Chinese characters, and a third with golden Chinese characters. A two-story pagoda was also located at the site, which was said to contain one of the 84,000 mini pagodas made by the Buddhist King Asoka of India during the third century BCE. The grandest item at the monastery, was an image of Monju riding a "supernatural" lion which took up an entire five bay hall.⁸⁴ All these images, no doubt, gave this region a great sense of great religious importance to Ennin.

⁸¹ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 223.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 224.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 199.

On the seventeenth day of fifth moon of 840, Ennin presented the thirty questions he had previously entrusted to Ensai to take to Mt. Tiantai to Chiyuan Heshang. However, the monk refused to answer the questions since he had been told they had already been resolved by the teachers at Tiantai. This answer was apparently satisfying to Ennin, and he did not press the matter with Heshang; thus, it seems Ennin took the authority of Tiantai seriously and found it unnecessary for the answers to be reproduced for himself. Since his thirty questions had already been resolved in the South, Ennin spent the next few days exploring the terraces and enjoying the natural and religious scenery of Wutai. He records in his diary the myriad of sites and art he enjoyed while at Wutai with great accuracy, these records themselves are among the most important Ennin brought back with him from China. Not only do they record the religious rites of the times, but this account also records the traditional practices of the monks at Wutai, and it also captures an image of how the region would have looked in the year 840.

During this same time period, Ennin went about copying the Tiantai texts at the monastery, which he completed on the twenty-ninth day of the sixth moon of 840. He made a catalogue of all the texts he had copied and had it signed off by his teacher and Abbot Chiyuan Heshang by signature. Ennin began to put his baggage in order by the first day of the seventh moon of 840 in preparation for his trip to Changan.⁸⁵ They departed from the monastery on the same day, as Ennin recounts, "Brushing aside our tears and grasping hands, we parted".⁸⁶

Ennin's time at Mt. Wutai, although described relatively briefly in the diary compared to other events, is greatly emphasized in the later biography of his life. While Ennin used most of the record of his time there to describe what he saw around him as well as the people he spoke to, he wrote relatively little about what exactly he learned or exactly which Tiantai texts he had copied during his time there. He recorded seeing a few minor "miracles" while there, including a colored cloud in the sky he and some other

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

monks saw float by, and a light he saw which looked like a lantern moving up and down a mountain. Ennin never wrote in detail about his own status as a foreign monk among the monasteries of Wutai, and, besides the nature of some of the personal conversations he recorded, it did not seem particularly remarkable to any of the other monks or priests at Wutai how Ennin and his company had arrived there.

Despite the relatively mundane details recorded in the diary, the biography *Jikaku Daishi den*, written not too long after Ennin's death, speaks to the legendary and fantastical status Ennin had achieved following his return. While most of the details in the biography are accurate, there are some which are clearly made up or an exaggeration of what actually happened. For example, when the biography describes Ennin's arrival at Wutai, it states how after Ennin met the great reverends,

They wondered if Ennin, the guest monk might be Manjusri (Moju). Ennin on the other hand thought they looked as if they might be Manjusri, and so with great wonder they made profound reverence to each other.⁸⁷

In the actual diary, Ennin makes no mention of the monks of Wutai mistaking him for Monju, and, if they did, he neglected to record them doing so. It seems this may be a literal interpretation of Ennin's observation of how there was a great feeling of equality among all the people of Wutai, but Ennin's legendary status in Japan led the biographer to believe Ennin was describing himself as being mistaken for Monju.⁸⁸

The miracles mentioned above are also blown to epic proportions by the *Jikaku Daishi den* and it also adds some fantastical miracles which are complete fiction. These miracles included Ennin encountering a lion on his hike up one of the terraces, the appearance of a five-colored halo only Ennin saw inside the monastery, and the rainbow cloud he actually wrote about, but in the biography it is described as swooping down and enveloping Ennin to the great astonishment of the other monks.⁸⁹ It also somewhat accurately (although still exaggeratedly) records the

appearance of the light Ennin saw, except it quotes Ennin announcing complete reverence to the esoteric syllables (*Dhāranī*) and to Monju, a proclamation he did not record himself in the diary.

There are three key points to make about the impact Ennin's journey had on Japan and the monks who followed him. The first, is the importance and prominence of Mt. Wutai in the Japanese mind following Ennin's pilgrimage to the region. While few Japanese knew about Wutai before Ennin's journey, possibly including his master Saichō, it is very clear from Ennin's personal record he had no knowledge of, or interest, in the place prior to meeting the Korean monks at the cloister in Shandong instructing him to go on pilgrimage there instead of Tiantai. It can be assumed how if a prominent Tendai monk at Enrakyuji, such as Ennin, had no knowledge of Wutai's location or practices prior to his departure, than it was not a place widely known about within Japan. Ennin's pilgrimage to this location and his record of it in his diary introduced the region into the Japanese consciousness as a holy place, comparable to Mt. Tiantai itself.

The second key point is the record of what Ennin learned at Mt. Wutai, which is not described in much detail within the diary itself. The *Jikaku Daishi den* records Ennin having studied the *Maka Shikan* under Chiyuan, and describes him collecting thirty-seven texts during his time at Wutai. This is a detail left out of the diary, and the number of teachings brought back by Ennin is most likely accurate due to the time in which the biography was written after his death. These thirty-seven texts most likely had a great effect on the Tendai sect due to their inclusion in Ennin's biography.

The final key point from this section of the *Jikaku Daishi den* is the inclusion of a (possibly) fictional quote from Ennin about his devotion to the esoteric syllables (*Dhāranī*). Whether this is true or not is inconsequential, the inclusion of this quote means the memory of Ennin and his journey included the practice of esoteric Buddhism. Unlike Saichō, who did not have the chance to receive a complete teaching in esoteric Buddhism while in China and was later shunned by Kūkai for trying to integrate esoteric teachings

⁸⁷ *Jikaku Daishi den*, 45.

⁸⁸ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 292.

⁸⁹ *Jikaku Daishi den*, 46.

with those of the *Lotus Sutra*, Ennin appears to be someone who, in the memory of his fellow monks, was equally devoted to both the teachings of esoteric Buddhism and the *Lotus Sutra*. This speaks greatly to the consolidation of the Tendai sect Ennin achieved after his return, and the successful integration of esoteric teachings and the *Lotus Sutra* Saichō advocated for in his lifetime.

When Ennin arrived in Changan in 840, it was still one of the great capitals of the world during its time, perhaps even the greatest. It certainly was one of the most cosmopolitan cities of the ninth century, being the easternmost terminus of the great Silk Road which had brought Buddhism to the East in the first place, and the center of commerce for contemporary East Asia. Changan was also the center of power in China, containing the throne of the newly enthroned Emperor Wuzong. Ennin departed from the Wutai region on the twenty-second day of the seventh moon of 840. On his way, he ran into the Commissioner for the Imperial Mausoleum returning from entombing the former Emperor with a large company of soldiers which lined either side of the Imperial road.⁹⁰ Ennin waited for the Commissioner to enter the city gates. Then, on the twenty-second day of the eighth moon of 840, he and his companions entered the city.

Ennin's coincidental meeting with the funeral party of the former Emperor prior to entering the city of Changan is almost a literary foreshadowing of the change which was about to take hold within China. With the former Emperor dead and buried, Emperor Wuzong gained control of the Tang Empire. With his absolute power, he would create the biggest obstacle Ennin had faced yet in his search for the law. Ennin's travels from the Korean cloister to Mt. Wutai had been relatively trouble-free, and the formally, troublesome Tang bureaucracy which had trapped him in Yangzhou for over a year, rarely made an appearance in his diary during his travels between Shangdong and Mt. Wutai, as well as Mt. Wutai and Changan, aside from the occasional official asking to view his travel credentials. Ennin's arrival in Changan coinciding with the rise of Emperor Wuzong to power

marked a departure from his relatively free travels: Ennin and the rest of the Buddhist in China were about to be persecuted in one of the greatest religious persecutions in Chinese history.

The persecution Ennin would face, evolved over time while he was in Changan. Upon his arrival, he does not record in his diary anything particularly peculiar about the situation, and he goes about searching for teachers and texts as usual when he arrives at a new location. Once again, Ennin and his company fell under tight, bureaucratic control. A few days after his arrival, they were ordered to stay in the Zishengsi monastery by the Commissioner of Good

Works.⁹¹ The monk Huaiqing arrived at the monastery and informed Ennin there were many teachers of esoteric Buddhism he could seek out within the city, these teachers included: [Fa] run Ho-shang (the disciple of Kūkai's teacher Hui-kuo) who mastered the *Taizō[kai]*, an Indian monk named Nanda, and a Master Wen-wu who had mastered the *Kongōkai*. Ennin spent the next month and a half trying to figure out who he should go to. Based on these recommendations, Ennin eliminated Ho-shang because he was senile, Nanda because he did not know Chinese, and, finally, settled to learn from Master Yuanzheng.

Ennin came into a copy of the esoteric text, *Methods of Reciting Religious Formulae*, and made a copy of it and received instruction at the "Imperial Scripture Translation

Cloister" (Chifanqingyuan) from Master Yuanzheng on the *Kongōkai*. He also ordered four copies to be made of the *Kongōkai Great Mandala*. For the next few months, Ennin completed his study of the *Kongōkai* and wrote in his diary about happenings in the capital, such as the Emperor holding lectures between Taoists and Buddhists at the Imperial Palace. Well into the spring of 841, Buddhist ordination rituals⁹² and practices continued in the capital; Ennin also bought copies of the *Taizōkai* and *Kongōkai Kue Mandaras* during this time. Finally, Ennin was ordained into the esoteric tradition on the third day of the fifth moon of 841 and began to receive

⁹⁰ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 283.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 288.

⁹² Referred to as "baptisms" in Reischauer's translation.

instruction in *Taizōkai*, as well as the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* and the "Great Law of *Soshitsuji*".⁹³

It appears from the diary Ennin was prepared to return to Japan by the eighth moon of 841, apparently satisfied with his teachings and the texts he had received. Unfortunately, once again, he found himself trapped in a Chinese city, but there was far more than bureaucracy at play in keeping him in place. This time, Ennin would become the victim of larger, political as well as cultural movements sweeping through Tang China. While Ennin waited for a reply for his request to return home, on the 3rd day of the third moon of 842, the newly appointed Minister of State, Li Deyou (the same man who was the Regional Commander of Yangzhou when Ennin was stuck there) petitioned the throne to have the monks and nuns of China regulated, "dismissing nameless monks without protection" and prohibiting the appointment of boys as novices.⁹⁴ This marked the beginning of the great Buddhist persecution of the Tang would last for the next three years.

As with most religious persecutions, this Tang persecution took place at a time of great economic disruption throughout the empire, and the straining of resources on the fronts of two wars caused much of the leadership to go along with the persecution to secure the resources of the monasteries. The hate, paranoia, and misguided faith of Emperor Wuzong confirmed his target as he slowly lost his mind and became a Taoist fanatic, fueled by hardline traditionalists trying to purge China of "foreign" influence. Ennin records in his diary of the imperial decrees issued against Buddhism and his own fear of how all the material he had gathered would be destroyed before he could return it to Japan.

At this point, I would like to diverge from explaining the Buddhist persecution or the wars waged by Emperor Wuzong against his own people. Previous scholars have done an excellent job of studying these topics; thus, instead, I would like to take this time to once again examine the struggles Ennin had as compared to those of his predecessors. Obviously, Ennin's journey had

been filled with far more hardship than either Saichō's or Kūkai's had, whether it be the intense bureaucratic struggles he encountered or the vast distances he was forced to travel. The beginning of the Buddhist persecution marked the biggest challenge Ennin would face, for not only were all the works he collected at risk of being confiscated and destroyed, but his life itself was now at risk as the Emperor began to issue more severe orders.

Saichō never made it to Changan during his time in China, but Kūkai spent the majority of his time in Changan learning from Master Huikuo about esoteric Buddhism. Essentially, Ennin had traveled to the capital for the same reason, no doubt having heard the stories of Kūkai's experience in Changan from Saichō himself. As described in Part I of this work, Saichō was in full support of blending esoteric practices with those of the Tiantai sect and saw no issue with doing so. Kūkai, on the other hand, denounced the Japanese Tendai sect as exoteric, and cut off contact with Saichō the same year Ennin received his bodhisattva vows from him (816). Since Saichō had only managed to make copies of half the esoteric texts Kūkai had gathered from Changan, it is reasonable to assume how, before even departing on his journey, Ennin had a strong desire to travel to Changan to receive a complete teaching first hand.

Of course, it seems from the diary Ennin had no intention of traveling to Changan when he first arrived in China in 838, since his main goal then was to travel to Mt. Tiantai and probably return with the *kentōshi* to Japan. Although he never explicitly states when he made up his mind to travel to Changan, it can be assumed from the course of events in the diary he probably decided to do so during his stay at Mt. Chi, probably around the same time he changed his mind about going to Tiantai. Regardless of the reason why he ended up there, Ennin's stay in Changan is immensely important to later followers of the Tendai sect, this much can be surmised from how Ennin's biographer speaks of his time there.

The biography *Jikaku Daishi den* praises Ennin's accomplishments while at Changan, recording how he copied a great number of esoteric texts while there:

⁹³ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 308.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 312.

During his six year stay in Chang'an Ennin obtained 559 scrolls consisting of the texts of mantras, sutras, and commentaries, together with 21 kinds of Buddhist teachings including the Mandalas of the *Taizōkai*, *Kongōkai* and all honored ones, portraits of high priests, Buddha relics, and scared utensils.⁹⁵

While Ennin doesn't state himself how many texts he collected while in Changan, it can be assumed the number presented in his biography is close to accurate since the other teachings he received, as previously mentioned, were also mentioned by Ennin in his diary. The text goes on to describe the various other teachings and ordinations Ennin received while in Changan.

A fascinating, recurring theme in *Jikaku Daishi den* is the insinuation of how Ennin was guided throughout his journey by Saichō himself, who supposedly appeared in his dreams.

Whether this is a fantastical addition to emphasize the holiness of both Ennin and Saichō, or a version of the journey Ennin had told his disciples after his return is unknown, the diary itself makes no mention of these dreams. While in Changan, the biography recounts one of these dreams which may shed light on how important this portion of his travels were to Tendai's later followers. After Ennin received the *Abhiseka* ordination from Yuangcheng, Saichō supposedly appeared to him in a dream stating, "Well done! Bring back the copied Mandala to Japan and show it to me".⁹⁶ Perhaps this inclusion is a remembrance of Saichō's inability to obtain the esoteric teachings from Kūkai during his life, an imagined statement of what Saichō would have thought had he lived long enough to see Ennin return from China.

The importance of Ennin's time in Changan to the Tendai sect cannot be understated. It could even be said Ennin's time there is as important to Tendai as Kūkai's journey was to Shingon. Unlike Kūkai, Ennin could not just leave town once he finished getting what he came for: for five years, Ennin would be trapped in the capital as the persecution of Buddhists continued. The persecution against Buddhists became so severe, according to Ennin, there was even a point where

the Emperor considered murdering all the Buddhists within the city instead of just returning them to lay life:

The Emperor announced, "The pit from which they took the earth [for the terrace of the immortals] is very deep and makes people afraid and uneasy. We wish that it could be filled up. On a day for sacrifice... [we] should gather all the monks and nuns of the two halves of the city...and should cut off their heads and fill the pit with them".⁹⁷

Even if this account is embellished or untrue, it clearly shows the high anxiety which must have gripped the monks of the city. Ennin requested to leave the city on multiple occasions during the years of the persecution, but his requests were denied repeatedly, although some of the Chinese officials were very sympathetic to his plight.

Finally, on February 11, 845, Ennin finally submitted to the will of the Emperor and offered to return to lay life so he could travel home to Japan. Shortly after, an official imperial edict was issued ordering all foreign monks to return to lay life and then return to their homes. Ennin packed up his belonging into three hampers which were to be transported by three donkeys. Being forced to return to lay life was something which would be unthinkable to his predecessors Saichō and Kūkai, although Ennin seems to have taken this challenge, as all he faced, in stride. In the entry for this day, Ennin actually remarks on his personal feelings about this edict in a melancholic reflection about the position he was in:

I do not regret my return to lay life. I merely regret that I shall not be able to take with me the holy teachings I have copied. Buddhism has been proscribed on Imperial order, and I fear that, [were I to take the writings with me], on my way the various prefectures and Commanderies would examine me and, discovering the truth, would accuse me of disobedience to an Imperial edict.⁹⁸

Yet Ennin still did not resign himself to completely losing the texts and teachings he had gathered. When he entered Zhuzhou after leaving the capital, he convinced his interpreter Yu Sinon to take the hampers he had with him and keep

⁹⁵ *Jikaku Daishi den*, 48.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁹⁷ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 359.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 363.

them in his home while he and his company searched for a way back to Japan.

For two years, Ennin searched for a way to return to Japan, but it was not until 847 in which he was finally able to make progress in returning. Believing he had found a way home with a Korean sailor named Kim Chin who was transporting charcoal, he took his party to Zhuzhou so he could collect the hampers of texts he left there. Despite his success in finding transport, Ennin still had to travel all the way back to Mt. Chi in order to reach the ship, which was waiting for him in an inlet. On the eighth moon of 847⁹⁹, he successfully reached the ship in time, and Ennin received parting letters from his Chinese sponsor Commissioner Chang. On the 15th day of the month while aboard the ship home, Ennin re-shaved his head and donned his black monastic robes once more. In less than a month of hopping along the islands off the coast of Korea, Ennin would be back in Japan, completing his search for the law and successfully returning a myriad of texts and teachings for the benefit of his followers. The diary does not end in a grand reflection or statement, nor does Ennin even acknowledge his search had ended, the last entry Ennin makes is simply, "In the after noon Master Nanjū came".¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

It may strike some as odd in the modern world how Ennin would end his diary so abruptly; but to Ennin, his job was far from over after his return. Instead, the journey to China was a means to an end. Ennin's true purpose was to bring back the teachings of esoteric Buddhism and the Tiantai sect for the benefit of his master's Tendai sect in Japan. Collecting the texts was just the first step in this process. Ennin's return to Japan is unfortunately not recorded in his own words, though it is recorded in his biography *Jikaku Daishi*.

Upon returning to Kyoto, Ennin immediately went back to Mt. Hiei and "worshipped at the

memorial places of his master Saichō."¹⁰¹ He then went about writing a new *Hokke Senbō*¹⁰², a process which Saichō had started and he was granted promotion from the Emperor himself. Ennin went on to make copies of the esoteric texts and mandalas he had collected, apparently only regretting not being able to copy the *sūtras* written in Sanskrit.¹⁰³ In 854, Ennin was asked by the Emperor to be Zasu (head priest) of the Enryakuji Temple. However, Ennin surprisingly rejected this position, wanting to return to his solitary retreat since he considered himself unworthy of such an honor,

I only hope to retreat to a secluded place and cultivate my mind, and to shut myself away from the noise of the world. I would never have ideas above my station to take such a high post. I humbly beg the mercy of the Emperor to grant me to be only my own person.¹⁰⁴

Despite this plea, Ennin was forced by the Emperor to this position anyways; in this way, he followed in his master's footsteps and became the head of Enryakuji Temple.

In the meantime, and for the decades following his journey, Ennin continued to teach about what he had learned in China, worshipping with Emperors and court nobles while expanding the numbers of his disciples. In 860, he wrote the *Kenyōdaikairon* (Treatise on Revealing and Praising the *Mahāyāna* precepts) and continued to preside over esoteric initiations. He spent the rest of his days perfecting Saichō's teachings and reinforcing his ideals. When Ennin was near death, he requested only a tree should be planted at the site which he was buried, rather than a large memorial like Saichō's. He also requested a precept platform be built to induct female bodhisattvas, declaring it would lead to a "flourishing of Buddhism" in Japan.¹⁰⁵

Ennin certainly seems to have been a rather kindly man who was deeply involved with his faith. The fact he wanted to return to his hermitage rather than become Zasu is evidence of how he did not really want power or influence

¹⁰¹ *Jikaku Daishi den*, 56.

¹⁰² Tendai rites.

¹⁰³ *Jikaku Daishi den*, 56.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁹⁹ September 5, 847.

¹⁰⁰ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 408.

among the court, nor the Buddhist community. It seems Ennin truly wanted to propagate Buddhism throughout Japan, just as declared in his diary. Supporting the building of ordination platforms for nuns, as well as monks, is also evidence for this: it seems he did not discriminate against gender when it came to his religion.

Having completed his teachings, Ennin finally reached his deathbed in 864 and reflected on his experiences in his life. Chanting Amida Buddha's name, he died at Enryakuji Temple at the age of 71, and was buried on the nearby Tendai ridge. After his death, his legacy was continued by the building of the Monjurō (a housing place for carved piece of wood from Mt. Wutai which depicted Monju) and the Sekizan Zenin Hall (the Mount Chi Meditation Hall). In the end, Ennin had strengthened the Tendai sect of Japan and built a lasting legacy in his teachings and constructions.

Compared to Kūkai and Saichō, Ennin may seem a little more unimportant in the grand scheme of things. While Saichō and Kūkai were ambitious enough to start their own sects, Ennin, in comparison, seems like someone who simply followed in his master's footsteps. As can be seen throughout this work, this interpretation of Ennin is far from the truth. Ennin was just as ambitious as his predecessors, not only in traveling to China, but facing far more challenges once he arrived. Ennin's legacy can be found in his unceasing determination to achieve his goals, while, at the same time, maintaining a humble spirit about his circumstances, leading to success in his search for Buddhist Law.

The challenges he faced were great, and not once did he deter from his ultimate goal of obtaining the "law". From Chinese officials, to persecutions, to the chaotic sea, no obstacle deterred Ennin, even if his trajectory changed along the way. He spent nine years living in China and when he returned to Japan, he did not waste any of the rest of his days on anything other than his teachings. It seems Ennin never forgot about his time in China, both halls he had constructed on his deathbed reflect special experiences Ennin had while in China: his time at Mt. Wutai and Mt. Chi.

The most important legacy Ennin left behind was his understanding of, and later teaching, about esoteric Buddhism. Saichō had advocated

for the blending of the *Lotus Sutra* and esoteric teaching into one unified form of spirituality, but he was unable to gain all the texts necessary due to Kūkai's condemnation of this ideology. Ennin, on the other hand, devoted much of his time to the retrieval of mandalas and esoteric texts while he was in China, no doubt strengthening the Tendai's sect hold on its own doctrine. Moreover, by actually traveling to Changan as Kūkai did before him, Ennin was taught directly by masters of esoteric Buddhism. There is no doubt the Tendai sect would not be what it became, had Ennin not gone on his journey to China and sought out esoteric teachers.

Ennin's journey to China was vastly important to the development of Japanese Buddhism. His journey to Mt. Wutai and Changan introduced new teachings to both himself and Japan, and the record he left behind is immensely important to historical research of Tang China. Ennin found himself existing in a transitory state in East Asian history, the initial transmission of Buddhism from India to the East was coming to an end. The initial phase of cultural transmission between Japan and the Chinese mainland came to an end with Ennin's return as well, no other *kentōshi* would be sent to China until the Kamakura period. The Japanese court he returned to was cementing its rule from Heian-kyo, and the prosperous Heian period would see the introduction of classical Japanese culture and society, with influences which still resonate today. In China, the great Tang Empire was in a state of decline and would come to an end by the turn of the century. To say Ennin is unimportant except for the diary he left behind is quite baseless, he lived in a changing world and the teachings and texts he received would ultimately strengthen the Tendai sect and help it become a permanent part of Japanese Buddhism.

One quote from his diary is especially poignant and shows, even at the time of writing, Ennin and those around him were aware of the changing world. While he was departing Changan after being returned to lay life, a friend of Ennin's, Chief Administrator Xin, rushed to meet with Ennin before he departed and said to him,

Buddhism no longer exists in this land. But Buddhism flows toward the East. So has it been said since ancient times. I hope that you will do

your best to reach your homeland and propagate Buddhism there. Your disciple has been very fortunate to have seen you many times. Today we part, and in this life we are not likely to meet again. When you have attained Buddhahood, I hope that you will not abandon your disciple.¹⁰⁶

This sentiment best explains Ennin's place in a Japanese Buddhist context, he found himself near the end of the initial exchange of culture, technology, and ideas between China and Japan. His homeland would soon set its own path away from the declining Tang, and no more official missions would come. Perhaps the greatest legacy left by Ennin, was his ability to persevere even when the odds of the world were against him: he never backed down nor lost faith. The law he went in search of was found, and by bringing it home, he helped strengthen and build Japanese Buddhism.

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¹⁰⁶ Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 371.

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