

**Classical Exegesis and the Dharma:
Navigating the Sea of Scriptures with Ding Fubao (1874 - 1952)**

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Numerous, numerous! The sea of scriptures! Take one step into it, and it's a vast [expanse] without a shore. All who see the vast sea of work to be done simply sigh with despair. It is as if we are in a boat on the ocean and encounter a sudden storm of angry waves. One glimpse at the limitlessness, and all the passengers look at each other in fear.

Ding Fubao, *Foxue congshu*, 377.

INTRODUCTION

Publishing scriptural texts has been an important practice among Buddhists in East Asia since at least the Tang dynasty (618 - 907 CE); not only is the earliest dated printed book a Chinese Buddhist scripture, but the East Asian collections of the Buddhist canon were some of the largest and most complex projects in publishing history. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, two innovations combined to produce an unprecedented expansion of Buddhist print culture in China. The first was the scriptural press, a xylographic (woodblock) publishing house that resembled those that had been run by temples for centuries, but with strong lay participation and distribution networks that connected individual presses. The second was the importation and adoption of mechanized movable type printing, which made it possible to publish greater numbers of texts at a lower cost than ever before, and which was initially used among Buddhists mainly for periodicals and other types of non-scriptural publications. The combination of these two new types of publishing methods allowed an unprecedented variety and number of Buddhist books to be published during the era spanning the end of the Qing dynasty (1644 - 1911) and the first decade of the Republic (1912 - 1949).

With this new flood of texts, however, came a series of problems. One of these was that

readers needed to be able to understand the often abstruse language and ideas of the Buddhist scriptural canon, which made use of specialized terms and grammatical forms dating from several different eras of translation. In a temple or monastic setting, students could learn these skills through instruction and memorization, but the expanded reach of Buddhist printed materials was beginning to incorporate a more diverse set of readers, including many lay people. One of the first publishers of Buddhist books to recognize this problem was the exegete, physician, and polymath Ding Fubao 丁福保 (Ding Zhongyou 丁仲祐, 1874 - 1952), and his solution was to compile a series of books entitled *Foxue congshu* 佛學叢書 (Buddhist Studies Collectanea) that was first published between 1918 and 1922. His primary concerns in producing this series were: providing readers with annotated scriptures that explained difficult terms and ideas; collecting and presenting evidence of phenomena that proved the reality of karmic retribution and other 'supernatural' aspects of Buddhist teachings; and finally, publishing the tools that readers needed to read and interpret the scriptures for themselves: namely, dictionaries of Buddhist terminology. The series was well-received and Buddhist publishers continued to publicize it and offer it for sale throughout the Republican period; his efforts were also mirrored by other editors, who issued similar “outlines” or “books for beginners” that attempted to explain Buddhist subjects in terms that were easy for novices to understand.

Ding's collectanea is, I would argue, one example of how developments in Buddhist print culture in modern China changed understandings of Buddhism itself. The expansion of the scale and scope of Buddhist publications in China from the 1870s to the 1930s not only broadened the field of media for the transmission of Buddhist ideas, but also had a significant effect on Buddhist religiosity itself. New methods of interacting with scriptural and other religious texts made possible and necessary by changes in printing techniques, publishing organizations, textual

analysis, and other aspects of print culture were both innovative and transformative. These new practices were also potentially destabilizing to the established system of Buddhist education and teacher-disciple relationships, as a much wider and more diverse set of readers was empowered to study the scriptures using their own interpretive means. The new presses, publication groups, and textual genres of Buddhist print culture in modern China acted as an agent of change, transforming the ways in which people interacted with Buddhist texts and teachings.

THE BUDDHIST STUDIES COLLECTANEA, 1918 - 1922

Published from 1918 to 1922, with reprint editions appearing as late as 1943, *Dingshi Foxue congshu* 丁氏佛學叢書 (Ding's Buddhist Studies Collectanea) was a landmark series in the modern history of Buddhist print culture. For the first time in Chinese, both scriptural texts and guides for beginners were brought together in an edited and annotated format and published using modern, movable-type printing. Its editor, Ding Fubao, was a life-long bibliophile who by 1929 had amassed a collection of some 150,000 books, and it is estimated that from 1901 to 1941 he wrote, edited, translated or annotated over 300 titles.¹ Ding structured his Buddhist collectanea by combining his training in classical scholarship with his knowledge of modern disciplines of knowledge such as medicine, drawing upon his vast personal library of source texts and his experience in publishing medical texts translated from the Japanese through his Shanghai yixue shuju 上海醫學書局 (Shanghai Medical Press). Although Ding's project of editing and compiling Buddhist texts followed a model that had been part of Buddhist textual

1 Wang Xinsheng 王新生, "Wuxi jihui jinian Ding Fubao 無錫集會紀念丁福保," *Quanjie dongtai* 泉界動態 (Jan. 1993), 74; Yang Qi 楊杞, "Jicang juanzhu wei yishen de cangshujia Ding Fubao 集藏捐著為一身的藏書家丁福保," *Dangdai tushuguan* 當代圖書館 (Feb. 1995), 61. In the 1930s Ding donated over 58,000 books to universities in Shanghai. Chen Yuanlin 陳元麟 (1945-), whose father Chen Sanzhou 陳三洲 distributed Ding's books through his Bolan Press 博覽書局, recalls that in 1949, the 75-year-old Ding was still active in the publishing world. See Chen Yuanlin 陳元麟, "Wo jian daoguo de Ding Fubao 我見到過的丁福保," *Biji zhanggu* 筆記掌故 (March, 2007), 71-72.

culture since ancient times, his goals were to make these ideas comprehensible and relevant to a contemporary audience.²

Ding was from Wuxi 無錫 in Jiangsu 江蘇 province, and thanks to his family's scholarly background he had an interest in books from an early age.³ In 1894 he worked as an instructor in a private school 塾 run by a well-known Wuxi book collector Lian Nanhu 廉南湖 (1868 - 1931), from whom he learned his methods of both book collecting and textual study. The next year he began studying at the Nanqing Academy 南菁書院 in Jiangyin 江陰, Jiangsu province, and while there received guidance from the eminent scholar of classical texts Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842 - 1918). Eventually he began work as a school teacher, but after finding it difficult to live on a teacher's salary, in 1902 he studied Chinese medicine under Zhao Yuanyi 趙元益 (1840 - 1902) at the Dongwen Academy 東文學堂 in Shanghai.⁴ In 1909 he placed first in the medical exams held in Nanjing 南京, which for the first time were based on a mixture of Chinese and Western medicine; Ding's success was likely thanks to his experience translating books on Western medicine from the Japanese. Sent to Japan by the Qing government, he studied the Japanese

2 According to Daojie 道階 (1866 - 1934), precedent examples include *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma, 668 CE); *Dazang yilan* 大藏一覽 (The Tripiṭaka at a Glance, Ming Dynasty or earlier); *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄 (Record of the Axiom Mirror, 10th century); *Jinghai yidi* 經海一滴 (One Drop of the Dharma Sea, 1735); *Zongjing dagang* 宗鏡大綱, (Outline of the Axiom Mirror, 1734). See Ding Fubao 丁福保, Cai Yunchen 蔡運辰, ed., *Dingshi foxue congshu* 丁氏佛學叢書 (Taipei: Beihai, 1970 [1918-1920]), 1360.

3 Principle sources on Ding's biography include: Ding Fubao, *Chouyin jushi ziding nianpu* 疇隱居士自訂年譜, in *Qingdai minguo cangshujia nianpu* 清代民國藏書家年譜, edited by Zhang Aifang 張愛芳 and Jia Guirong 賈貴榮 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2004 [1929]); Ding Fubao, *Chouyin jushi xueshu shi* 疇隱居士學術史, in Zhang and Jia: 425-658; Shi Dongchu 釋東初, *Zhongguo Fojiao jindai shi* 中國佛教近代史 (A History of Early Contemporary Chinese Buddhism), in *Dongchu laoren quanji* 東初老人全集 (Complete Collection of Old Man Dongchu), vols. 1-2 (Taipei: Dongchu, 1974), 2:647-650. Note that Dongchu's account relies exclusively on the introduction to the reprint edition of Ding's *Foxue congshu* written by Cai Yunchen 蔡運辰 (Cai Niansheng 蔡念生, 1901-1992.)

4 Jiang Qingbo 江慶柏, "Ding Fubao de cangshu guannian ji cangshu shijian 丁福保的藏書觀念及藏書實踐," *Tushuguan xue yanjiu* 圖書館學研究 (Feb. 2000), 96; BDRZ, Vol. 3, 269-270; Ding, *Nianpu*, 305; ZJFRZ, 423-424; Zhao Pushan 趙璞珊, "Ding Fubao he ta zaoqi bianzhu fanyi de yishu 丁福保和他早期編著翻譯的醫書," *Zhong-Xi yi jiehe zazhi* 中西醫結合雜誌, Vol. 10, no. 4 (1990), 248. Zhao Yuanyi had previously translated works on Western medicine and had attained the *juren* 舉人 degree in 1888.

medical system and purchased books on medicine, but the Republican revolution prevented him from submitting his findings to the Qing court.⁵ When Ding returned to Shanghai he set up a medical practice and began publishing his accumulated medical knowledge, initially through Wenming Books 文明書局, the publishing house he had founded in 1902 with two fellow translators and editors, and which had gotten its start by publishing translations of Japanese works and Western histories. His *Dingshi Yixue congshu* 丁氏醫學叢書 (Ding's Medical Collectanea) was initially published by Wenming Books from 1908 to 1911, but from 1914 he began to use the imprint of the Shanghai Medical Press, and it is under this imprint that he would publish most of his later work.⁶ His successful medical practice brought Ding an increased income which he spent on acquiring more rare and important texts for his collection. His published works were mainly edited and annotated versions of other authors' texts, and his ability to identify and acquire significant rare books helped to supply the content for his press.

The year 1913 was a turning point for several facets of Ding's life and work. He would later recall that from this year he resolved to make his lasting contribution in medicine rather than any other field, and he decided to put all his efforts into publishing medical works and in his medical practice. Yet it was also a year in which he collected a great number of Buddhist scriptures and began to compile a lexicon of Buddhist terms, and by the following year he was keeping a vegetarian diet, something he appears to have maintained for the rest of his life.⁷

5 Ding, *Nianpu*, 32; Zhao Pusan, 248. See below for a discussion of his medical translations.

6 Ding, *Nianpu*, 316-317, 325-326; Zhao Pusan, 248. Ding identifies Hua Chunfu 華純甫 and Li Jinghan 李靜涵 as his compatriots in the early days of Wenming Books. Earlier in 1906 Ding had founded a translation and publishing house called the Translation Society (Yishu gonghui 譯書公會) in his hometown of Wuxi through which he published a number of medical texts, but it folded after a property dispute in early 1908. For one catalogue of the Shanghai Medical Press' published works, see Shanghai tushuguan 上海圖書館, ed., *Zhongguo jindai xiandai congshu mulu* 中國近代現代叢書目錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai tushuguan, 1979), 13-15.

7 Ding, *Nianpu*, 357. Compiling the dictionary was said to have taken eight years, and it was completed in June of 1921, with an edition published through the Shanghai Medical Press the next year. See Yu, *Zhongguo jinxindai fojiao renwu zhi*, 427; Ding, *Nianpu*, 1929.

Extant sources provide several variant accounts describing the initial circumstances behind Ding's turn toward Buddhist study and practice, stories that range from the prosaic to the dramatic, but a few key common features suggest that certain elements are more reliable than others. Most accounts report that in 1903 Ding met the lay publisher and author Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (Yang Renshan 楊仁山, 1837 - 1911) while in Nanjing, and another account describes how in the following year a chance encounter with a copy of *Shishi yulu* 釋氏語錄 (Recorded Sayings of the Śākyas) planted the seeds of an interest in Buddhism. His autobiography, however, instead recalls how in 1911 the teacher he had employed to instruct his children was a devout Buddhist, and how although Ding had already collected a number of Buddhist scriptures and read them often, he had not yet put them into practice.⁸ There is no evidence that Ding took formal refuge (*guiyi* 皈依) as a lay Buddhist at the age of 40 *sui* 歲 (i.e. 1913), as claimed by one of the prefaces to his collectanea, but Ding does note that it was indeed in that year that he came to an important realization: for all his learning and erudition, he was not making any progress in the study of the Way.⁹ Yet based on available sources it appears that Ding came to be interested in Buddhism gradually rather than due to any dramatic event, and that it was through collecting and reading Buddhist texts that he came to Buddhist studies. Notably, unlike many others in this era who experienced a “conversion by the book”, Ding never committed himself exclusively to Buddhism, eventually shifting the focus of his textual engagement to other matters.¹⁰

8 Ding, *Nianpu*, 318, 330. Technically this work is an autochronology, but as the term is awkward in English I will describe it as an autobiography here. Yu, *Zhongguo jinxiandai fojiao renwu zhi*, 424-425. The teacher was one Shen Bowei 沈伯偉 (Shen Zufan 沈祖藩, 1875 - 1918). Yu Lingbo claims that Ding had been publishing Buddhist scriptures as early as 1912, but I have not found any other evidence of this. Some accounts of Ding's turn toward Buddhist studies are mentioned in Jan Kiely, “Spreading the Dharma”, 193.

9 Ding, *Chouyin jushi xueshu shi*, 522. Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 29. Yu writes that a bout with a serious illness in 1914, along with the death of his mother in the same year, forced Ding to reconsider his orientation to “worldly matters”, but Ding's autochronology records his mother dying in March 1920. Ding, *Nianpu*, 381.

10 Ding further notes in his preface to 佛學起信論 (1919) that from the age of 40 *sui* he became fond of reading Buddhist scriptures. Some examples of these “conversions by the book” will be outlined in my forthcoming dissertation.

Just as his exposure to Buddhist matters came initially through texts, so too was his impact on the world of Buddhist thought and practice felt primarily through his publications, most of which were issued as part of his Buddhist Studies Collectanea. This was a series of annotated scriptures, books for beginners, dictionaries, and printed images, published by his Shanghai Medical Press. The thirty core titles of the series, as delineated by the contents of the 1970 reprint edition and by the preface and afterword that Ding wrote for the series, were first issued between 1918 and 1920, although Ding continued to add new titles and imprints to the series as late as 1925.¹¹ The largest title in the series, *Foxue da cidian* 佛學大辭典 (Great Dictionary of Buddhist Studies), was not published until June 1921 due to its sheer size and complexity, but its preface and front matter were included as part of the series in 1919.

Table 1: Titles published in *Ding's Buddhist Studies Collectanea* from 1918 to 1924

<i>Year</i>	<i>Titles Published in Series</i>
1918	八大人覺經箋註 Annotated Sūtra of the Eight Meditations of the Great Ones 佛遺教經箋註 Annotated Sūtra of the Deathbed Injunction 四十二章經箋註 Annotated Sūtra in Forty-two Sections 佛經精華錄箋註 Annotated Essential Records of Buddhist Scriptures 觀世音經箋註 Annotated Avalokitēśvara Sūtra 高王觀世音經箋註 Annotated Avalokitēśvara Sūtra of King Gao 孟蘭盆經箋註 Annotated Ullambana Sūtra 阿彌陀經箋註 Annotated Amida Sūtra 無量壽經箋註 Annotated Sūtra of Immeasurable Life 觀無量壽佛經箋註 Annotated Contemplation Sūtra 無量義經箋註 Annotated Sūtra of Unlimited Meanings 觀普賢菩薩行法經箋註 Annotated Sūtra of Meditating on Samantabhadra Bodhisattva 金剛般若波羅蜜經箋註 Annotated Diamond Sūtra 般若波羅蜜多心經箋註 Annotated Heart Sūtra
1919	佛學起信編 Awakening of Faith in Buddhist Studies 佛學指南 Guide to Buddhist Studies 六道輪迴錄 Records of Transmigration Through the Six Kinds of Rebirth

¹¹ Cai Yunchen, who edited a reprint edition of the series, based his choice of which texts to include in his reprint on the 1918 series catalogue appended to *Annotated Essential Records of Buddhist Scriptures* 佛經精華錄箋註. See Ding, *Foxue congshu*, preface, 5. The catalogue itself is on p. 1520. For a later catalogue of the series, see Anonymous, “醫學書局佛學叢書,” *Shijie fojiao jushilin linkan* 世界佛教居士林林刊, No. 10 (August 1925), MFQ 14:448. Cai did not include *Foxue da cidian* in his reprint due to its size and the fact that the Huayan lianshe 華嚴蓮社 in Taiwan had already reprinted it by that time.

	六祖壇經箋註 Annotated Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch 佛學小辭典 Concise Dictionary of Buddhist Studies 佛學大辭典序例 Preface and Notes on the Great Dictionary of Buddhist Studies
1920	佛學撮要 Essentials of Buddhist Studies ¹² 佛學初階 Initial Stages in Buddhist Studies 佛學之基礎 Foundations of Buddhist Studies 學佛實驗譚 Discourse on Studying Buddhism Experimentally 觀世音菩薩靈感錄 Record of the Miraculous Response of Guanshiyin Bodhisattva 心經詳註 Detailed Annotated Heart Sūtra 入佛問答 Questions and Answers on Beginning Buddhism 靜坐法精義 Essential Meaning of the Method of Quiet Sitting 釋迦如來成道記註 Annotated Record of Śakyamuni Attaining the Way 無常經 Sūtra of Impermanence 佛像 Buddha Images - 25 types
1921	學佛捷徑 Shortcut to Studying Buddhism 佛學大辭典 Great Dictionary of Buddhist Studies 法華經句解 Phrasal Understanding of the Lotus Sūtra 圓覺經畧疏 Brief Outline of the Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment 維摩經註 Annotated Vimalakīrti Sūtra 讀大乘起信論捷訣 Key to Reading the Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith 佛教宗派詳註 Detailed Annotated Schools and Sects of Buddhism 袖珍本佛經叢刊 Pocket Edition of Buddhist Sūtra Series, Volume 1 袖珍本入佛問答類編 Pocket Edition of Questions and Answers on Beginning Buddhism, Arranged by Subject
1922	心經精義 Essential Meaning of the Heart Sūtra 死後之審判 The Judgment After Death
1923	大悲咒箋註 Annotated Dhāraṇī of Great Compassion 佛教感應篇 Articles of Miraculous Response in Buddhism 三藏法數 The Buddhist Canon and Categories of Concepts
1924	無量壽經箋註 Annotated Sūtra of Immeasurable Life [reprint?]

Ding's series was the product both of several years of intense study of Buddhist texts, and of his previous experience in publishing, textual exegesis, and medical and scientific study. For the most part, the content of the *Buddhist Studies Collectanea* is drawn from that produced by authors other than Ding himself. This is most evident in the set of introductory titles, which are made up of selected episodes from scriptural and classical sources arranged by topic. With an ever-growing collection of books, and a keen eye for rare and important texts, Ding was

¹² Reportedly, 19,000 copies of this title were printed this year.

particularly suited to this type of work. What emerges is a set of texts that situate Buddhist ideas into a historical and literary context that would be intimately familiar to the educated and literate elite of modern China. Yet Ding is not only focusing on the textual past, but also addressing questions and concerns of his own day, particularly those related to evidence, superstition, and supernatural phenomena.

This is reflected in the term that Ding uses to title his series. *Foxue* 佛學 (Buddhist Studies) was a neologism at the time, its origins dating back perhaps no further than 1895 in Japan, and 1902 in China.¹³ It stands among a host of other terms used to describe modern concepts that were adopted from the Japanese in the decade that followed the First Sino-Japanese War, when Chinese scholars sought to learn the techniques by which Japan was able to modernize its military, economy, and society.¹⁴ The short-lived *Foxue yanjiu hui* 佛學研究會 (Association for Buddhist Research) founded in 1910, and the periodical *Foxue congbao* 佛學叢報 (Buddhist Miscellany) which was first issued in 1912 both used the term, but otherwise it is not often seen in Buddhist titles until the early 1920s and the publication of Ding's series.¹⁵ Ding does not explicitly discuss his use of this term, which appears in both the series title and in many of the individual works. By denoting his subject with *foxue* rather than *fojiao* 佛教, *fofa* 佛法, *fohua* 佛化 or an alternate term, however, Ding may have been trying to avoid some of the

13 Read as *futsugaku*, 佛學 was first used in Japanese as a combination phonetic-semantic term (parallel to *rangaku* 蘭學), meaning French Studies. The first instance of the term being used as *butsugaku* that I have found is Saeki Hōdō 佐伯法導, *Butsugaku sansho: kakushū hikkei* 佛學三書：各宗必携 (Kyōto: Hōzōkan 法藏館, Meiji 28 [1895].) The earliest use of *foxue* in Chinese that I have found is a 1902 catalogue from Yang Wenhui's Jinling Scriptural Press, entitled *Foxue shumu biao* 佛學書目表. See Yang Wenhui 楊文會, Zhou Jizhi 周繼旨, ed., *Yang Renshan quanji* 楊仁山全集 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2000), 344-368. Also see Goldfuss, 60-67. Given Yang's close association with Nanjō Bunyu, and with Japanese Buddhist texts, he may have been a key point of transmission for this term to enter the Chinese lexicon.

14 See Lu Yan, *Re-understanding Japan: Chinese Perspectives, 1895-1945* (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); Federico Masini, *The Formation of Modern Chinese Lexicon and its Evolution Toward a National Language* (Rome: Department of Oriental Studies, University of Rome, 1993.)

15 On the *Foxue yanjiu hui* see Goldfuss, 215-216. *Buddhist Miscellany* was republished in MFQ Vols. 1-4.

negative associations that late-Qing scholars had attached to these latter terms in their criticisms of Buddhism's decline.¹⁶ This move also serves to situate the subject of the series alongside other modern knowledges signified by similar terms, such as *kexue* 科學 (science), *shuxue* 數學 (mathematics), and perhaps most significantly, *yixue* 醫學 (medicine).

Ding had published titles as part of series before, including his Medical Collectanea mentioned above, as well as a Literary Collectanea (*Wenxue congshu* 文學叢書, dates unknown), and an Advancing Morality Collectanea (*Jinde congshu* 進德叢書, 1912? - 1925?) Of these, Ding's Medical Collectanea appears to have had the largest catalogue, with 46 titles that can be dated to 1918 or earlier.¹⁷ Many of the titles in this earlier series were translations of Japanese texts, themselves originally translations from European-language works; Ding's editing and translation work tended to emphasize making these cutting-edge medical and scientific concepts easier for the reader to understand.¹⁸ This pattern would later be repeated in his Buddhist Studies Collectanea, the publication of which occurred while Ding continued to issue titles as part of his medical series.

Just as Ding drew together many sources to form the content of his Buddhist Studies series, the selection, arrangement, and interpretation of the texts was an effort that went beyond Ding himself and involved a network of Buddhist monastics and laypeople. We can get an idea of the nature of this collaboration from a series of letters written to Ding by the Buddhist monk Yinguang 印光 (1861 - 1940) while the latter was living on Putuoshan 普陀山.¹⁹ The

16 Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873 - 1929) appears to have defined and understood the term *foxue* similarly in his 1920 *Qingdai xueshu gailun* 清代學術概論 (General Treatise on Qing Dynasty Thought). See Wang Junzhong 王俊中, "救國, 宗教抑哲學? —— 梁啟超早年的佛學觀及其轉折 (1891-1912)", *Shixue jikan* 史學集刊, no. 31 (June, 1999): 93-116, especially fn7.

17 Shanghai tushuguan, ed., *Zhongguo jindai xiandai congshu mulu*, 13-15.

18 Zhao Pushan, 248-249.

19 Ding, *Nianpu*, 375-376. Yinguang taught and practiced in the Pure Land tradition, emphasizing scriptural study in addition to the recitation of Buddha's name (*nianfo* 念佛). See Yu Lingbo, ed., *Xiandai Fojiao renwu cidian* 現代佛教人物辭典, 2 Vols (Taipei: Foguang, 2004), Vol. 1, 284c-288b.

correspondence begins in 1917, when Ding was studying Buddhist scriptural texts and completing manuscript versions of some of the books that would later be published as part of his collectanea. There are several instances in the letters where Yinguang mentions receiving draft copies of Ding's works, including his dictionary and the volume *Foxue chujie* 佛學初階 (Initial Stages in Buddhist Studies), several years before they were published. He offers advice regarding where certain scriptural source texts might be found; an indication that Ding had asked for his help in tracking down their location and provenance. Yinguang also observes that although Fayu Temple 法雨寺 on Mount Putuo possessed a Southern Ming and a Qing canon, few people ever actually read them.²⁰ There are instances of subtle criticism as well: he describes the publication of scriptures as an endeavor that takes much more careful thought than, say, publishing newspapers. When he contrasts the work of monks in ancient times, who would spend a decade or even an entire lifetime annotating a single text, to Ding's voluminous output in the past three years, it is possible to detect a hint of caution beneath Yinguang's unerringly polite and polished language.²¹

Yet Yinguang also displays a keen sense of the power of modern print technologies, as well as a knowledge of the concrete factors behind the production of printed texts. In one of his letters to Ding, Yinguang mentions how a group in Fuding 福鼎, north of Fuzhou 福州 in Fujian 福建 province, were having some trouble arranging dharma lectures and getting people to attend them regularly. He notes that if they were to give the people one of Ding's books to read, then that might be a much more effective strategy for spreading the Dharma.²² In another letter Yinguang relates how he had first become known beyond the confines of Putuoshan thanks to a

20 Yinguang 釋印光, *Yinguang fashi wenchao sanbian* 印光法師文鈔三編 (Taipei: Fotuo jiaoyu jijinhui, 2007), Yinguang to Ding Letter 5, 964-966.

21 Yinguang, Letter 1, 958-960; Letter 5, 964-966.

22 Yinguang, Letter 2, 960-961.

series of his articles that Gao Henian 高鶴年 (1872 - 1962) had published in 1914 in the periodical *Foxue congbao*, letters that appeared under the pen name "Ever-Ashamed" (Changcan 常慚). The publisher and editor Xu Weiru 徐蔚如 (1878 - 1937) read these early works and was motivated to discover the author's true identity, later publishing Yinguang's first book, which began a growing public profile and a correspondence with a wide range of people interested in Buddhism.²³ Yet Yinguang also critiques movable-type printing because "the ink has a lot of compounds added to it, and will fade eventually," whereas traditional woodblock printing produces a text that will last through the ages, something he says that he had discussed in correspondence with the publishers of *Foxue congbao*.²⁴ These letters reveal Yinguang as a person keenly aware of not only the impact and potential of publishing, but also limitations and benefits of different print technologies. That Yinguang was able to participate in this project through correspondence even though he seldom left Mount Putuo is also one indication that Ding's social and religious network extended beyond the circle of the Shanghai urban Buddhist elite.

We also see this reflected in the prefaces to the series that were contributed from 1918 to 1920, which include those by Li Xiang 李詳 (Li Shenyan 李審言, 1859 - 1931), Chen Jiadun 陳嘉遯 (d.u.), Wu Baozhen 吳保真 (d.u.) and Chanding 禪定 (1874 - 19??). Li Xiang was a prolific author associated with *kaozheng* 考證 (evidential) scholarship of the late Qing.²⁵ In his preface he notes that the words and intent of the Buddhist teachings are no different from those of the six classics of the sages, but while scholars have given careful attention to explicating the latter,

23 Yinguang, Letter 3, 961-962. Xu would later found scriptural presses in Beijing and Tianjin. See Shi Dongchu, Vol. 2, 730-730. Yu, *Xiandai Fojiao renwu cidian*, Vol. 1, 836b-838a.

24 Yinguang, Letter 3, 961-962.

25 For historical information on Li, see Li Xiang 李詳, Li Zhifu 李稚甫, ed., *Li Shenyan wenji* 李審言文集 ([S.l.]: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1989), 1447-1481.

Buddhist scriptures have not yet been studied in such a way, at least until now.²⁶ Li does not present himself as a Buddhist believer, but the level of his support for Ding's scholarship, method and approach is made very clear. Very little is known about Chen and Wu; Chen contributed some articles to Buddhist periodicals in the 1920s, and in his preface he mentions ordering some two hundred copies of Ding's books.²⁷ Wu also wrote a preface to Ding's dictionary, and he appears knowledgeable about Ding's published works, including his series on medicine, literature, and ethics. We know quite a bit more about Chanding, a monk in the Tiantai tradition who began his monastic career in Shanghai, and who later studied and worked at Guanzong Lecture Temple 觀宗講寺 in Ningbo 寧波 as well as in temples in Shaanxi 陝西 and Liaoning 遼寧.²⁸ His preface uses the image of the agada medicine (*ajiatuo yao* 阿伽陀藥) to link Ding's medical practice to the salvific powers of Buddhist texts, saying that his published works treat the body as well as the mind. Chanding also notes that Ding follows the classical model of exegesis to annotate Buddhist texts, and that reading these texts represents the first step in a process of acquiring religious knowledge that involves understanding, contemplation, and finally confirmation of one's insight.²⁹

Several religious, literary, and political figures also contributed to individual titles in the series. Yinguang, mentioned above, wrote a number of prefaces to introductory texts in the series. The Tiantai patriarch Dixian 諦閑 (1858 - 1932) contributed prefaces to two annotated sūtras, and Daojie 道階 (1866 - 1944) wrote one for the 1918 scriptural compilation Fojing

26 Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 1-8. Li's preface was also annotated by Ding with interlinear exegetical notes.

27 Ibid., 9-24.

28 Fang Zuyou 方祖猷, *Tiantai zong guanzong jiangsi zhi* 天台宗觀宗講寺志: 1912-1949 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2006), 54-55; Yu Lingbo, ed., *Xiandai Fojiao renwu cidian*, 1666-1667.

29 Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 27-28. The *agada* medicine is mentioned in Zhiyi's *Great Tranquility and Contemplation* (*Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T 1911) and the *Huayan Sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經). See Charles A Muller, ed., *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <<http://buddhism-dict.net/ddb>> [hereafter, DDB], article on “阿伽陀藥”; Foguang da cidian bianxiu weiyuanhui 佛光大辭典編修委員會, ed., *Foguang da cidian* 佛光大辭典 (Gaoxiong xian: Foguang chubanshe, 1988) [hereafter, FGD], 3617.

jinghua lu jianzhu 佛經精華錄箋註 (Annotated Essential Records of Buddhist Scriptures). Both of these figures were very active in Buddhist circles of the time, Daojie being especially well-known for his international connections with Buddhists overseas and Dixian for his teaching and voluminous writing.³⁰ The Buddhist layman Mei Guangxi 梅光羲 (1880 - 1947) played an important role in editing down and summarizing the quoted sections in the introductory texts. A number of figures without any particular connection to Buddhism also wrote prefaces for Ding's works. These include Wu Zhihui 吳稚暉 (1865 - 1953), eminent scholar, elder statesman of the Nationalist Party (*guomindang* 國民黨), and driving force behind the promotion of the *zhuyin zimu* 注音字母 phonetic system; Meng Sen 孟森 (1868 - 1937), who served briefly in the early Republican government before teaching at National Central and Peking Universities; and Sun Yuyun 孫毓筠 (1869 - 1924), a member of the Tongmenghui 同盟會 in Japan who later supported the monarchist aspirations of Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859 - 1916).³¹

The participation of these figures indicates the type of personal and professional networks that Ding was able to draw upon in his work, networks that connected monastic, lay, and elite members. Different participants found different aspects of this publishing enterprise to highlight: Wu Zhihui praised Ding's erudition and compassion, puzzled over problems of semantics when dealing with terms translated from the Sanskrit, and discussed the place of Buddhist scriptures in the history of civilizations;³² Meng Sen focused on the filial piety expressed in the *Ullambana Sūtra*;³³ Sun Yuyun praised Ding's work in providing solid scriptural evidence for the teachings in a time of End-Dharma (*mofa* 末法) and demonic sayings (*moshuo* 魔說).³⁴ Although these

30 On Dixian see Shi Dongchu, Vol. 2, 757-761; Yu Lingbo, *Xiandai Fojiao renwu cidian*, Vol. 2, 1621a-1624b. On Daojie see Shi, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, 825-828; Yu, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, 1386b-1388a.

31 See below for more on Mei. See BDRC Vol. 3, 416, 32-34.

32 Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 1231-1232, 1251-1254, 1303-1304.

33 *Ibid.*, 1605-1606.

34 *Ibid.*, 1523-1524.

contributed pieces are brief, they do hint at an appreciation of Buddhist texts on the part of Chinese scholars in the Republican period, at least in terms of their literary and cultural value, if not the religious messages. They also remind us that Buddhist, scholarly, and political networks were by no means separate, but were in fact connected via many types of personal and professional contacts. Perhaps most emblematic of this is Ding himself, whose interests linked together several different personal, professional, and conceptual spheres.

In August 1920 when books in the series were being reprinted for the first time, Ding added a preface and afterword reflecting on the path that brought him to undertake such a project. He recalls that at the age of forty *sui* (i.e. late 1913 to early 1914) he realized that his studies of medicine, mathematics, literature and other subjects were not leading him toward an understanding of the Way. He thus turned to the study of Buddhism, collecting more than 10,000 fascicles of Buddhist texts, books that, he claims, hold meanings not present in worldly (*shijian* 世間) texts.³⁵ Ding's account of reading Buddhist scriptures describes an experiential immediacy, whereby through the medium of text he felt as if he were hearing the sermons with his own ears, and seeing the events described within with his own eyes. Although he was motivated to share these texts with the world, he recalls being concerned that the sheer number of available titles and the complexity of their content would overwhelm readers, leading them to give up before making any real progress. In response he vowed to produce annotated and exegetical editions of scriptural texts, as well as introductory books for beginners so that one need not be a specialist to engage in the study of Buddhism.³⁶ Taking a vow to complete a religious task has a strong history in Buddhist literature, and the fact that Ding's publishing ventures were above all a religious enterprise cannot be overemphasized.³⁷

35 Ding Fubao, *Foxue congshu*, editor's preface 自序, 29.

36 Ibid., 30.

37 Ding never sought to make a profit from his Buddhist Studies series, instead reinvesting any excess funds back

Ding's view was that the Buddhist scriptures were simply too numerous and complex for most people to comprehend, and indeed this would become the central problematic that propelled his publishing efforts. He explores this at some length in his preface to the 1919 book *Foxue zhinan* 佛學指南 (Compass of Buddhist Studies), in which he reviews the history of scriptural printing:

In our country, since the time of Emperor Ming of the Eastern Han dynasty when the scriptures were brought to the Eastern lands on the back of a white horse, there was the Kaiyuan Bibliography of Buddhist Teachings 開元釋教目錄 written by Zhisheng 智昇 [669-740] in year ten of the Kaiyuan era of the Tang [713-714], which listed 5,418 fascicles of scriptures, vinaya and commentary. This was the beginning of numbering the contents of the canon. Afterward there was the Song canon of 5,714 fascicles, and the Yuan canon of 5,397 fascicles. Since the Song dynasty, there have been more than 20 additions to this among state and private publishers.... Recently the canon printed by the Kalavinka Hermitage 頻伽精舍 [1908] has 8,416 fascicles. Also the Japanese Extended Canon 日本續藏經 [1912] has more than 7,800 fascicles.

Numerous, numerous! The sea of scriptures! Take one step into it, and it's a vast [expanse] without a shore. All who see the vast sea of work to be done simply sigh with despair. It is as if we are in a boat on the ocean and encounter a sudden storm of angry waves. One glimpse at the limitlessness, and all the passengers look at each other in fear. But the boatmen who know where it is peaceful, and who in calm control finally lead the boat to the other shore, how could they not have something called a compass 指南鍼? Piloting a boat is like this, how could navigating the sea of scriptures be any different?³⁸

While scriptural publishers like Yang Wenhui were concerned that there were not enough copies of the Buddhist sūtras in circulation, from the standpoint of Ding, who had access to many of these texts thanks in part to the efforts of those publishers, the most urgent problem was how to read and understand them without becoming lost in their complexity. This sentiment is echoed in the prefaces contributed by Dixian and Daojie, mentioned above. Both of them, while aware of

into printing. Most of the money required to print the books came from donations, and the retail price of the books was usually only enough to cover one third of the cost of their production. See Yu, *Zhongguo jinxiandai Fojiao renwu zhi*, 425; Anonymous, "Ding Fubao qishi 丁福保啟事," *Haichaoyin* 海潮音, Vol. 2, no. 3 (Feb. 20, 1921), MFQ 150:118.

38 Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 377.

the many attempts in the past to provide guides to and interpretation of the scriptures, were glad to see this new effort to address the “differing capacities of sentient beings” and “bridge the sea” of scriptures.³⁹ Key to Ding's effort was the production of scriptural editions that included punctuation and explanations, texts with a built-in compass to help those who wished to navigate this difficult but rewarding sea of texts.

ANNOTATED SCRIPTURES

Texts from the scriptural corpus of the Buddhist canon were the first titles that Ding published in his *Buddhist Studies Collectanea*. Every title issued in 1918, the first year of the series, was an annotated Buddhist scripture, and he continued to issue titles of this type throughout the run. If we omit the multi-volume dictionary *Foxue da cidian*, annotated scriptural texts make up the bulk of the collection; in the reprint edition they constitute two of the three largest volumes, and of all the titles published in the series between 1918 and 1924, just over half are annotated scriptures. The texts chosen for annotation and republication are some of the most central works in the East Asian Buddhist canon, including the Heart Sūtra 般若波羅蜜多心經, the Diamond Sūtra 金剛般若波羅蜜經, the Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch 六祖壇經 and scriptures relating to Amita Buddha 阿彌陀, and Guanshiyin 觀世音 and Puxian 普賢 Bodhisattvas. Most of these texts had already been published by either Yang Wenhui's Jinling Scriptural Press 金陵刻經處 or other scriptural presses in the late Qing period, but they rarely included a modern author's exegetical gloss.⁴⁰ In itself this was not a novel approach - annotated scriptures and commentaries on scriptural texts were already an established part of Buddhist literature, but

³⁹ Ibid., 1361, 1654.

⁴⁰ See the 1902 catalogue “Foxue shumu biao 佛學書目表” in Yang Wenhui, *Yang Renshan quanji*, 344-368. Based on that catalogue, the *Heart Sūtra*, the *Sūtra of the Deathbed Injunction*, the *Diamond Sūtra*, the *Amida Sūtra*, the *Sūtra of Unlimited Meanings*, and the *Sūtra of the Meditation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* had all already been reprinted by that year.

usually the interpretation was a product of the author's insight or realization. What Ding was attempting with his own series was to provide an exegetical gloss to the scriptures that was based only in textual evidence, with Ding acting as a guide to the material rather than an authority on its meaning.

Ding's *Annotated Diamond Sūtra* 金剛般若波羅蜜經箋註 contains many of the features of the other annotated scriptures; it has a preface that introduces the theme of the text and notes bibliographic considerations such as different extant translations, a set of miscellaneous notes on annotation (*jianjing zaji* 箋經雜記) that outlines the larger exegetical context, and a record of miraculous events (*lingyi ji* 靈異記) associated with the sūtra.⁴¹ Reading this particular work we can get some idea of Ding's approach to the other texts of this type in the series. In this case it begins with prefatory material that guides the reader through the historical and interpretive context of the sūtra, including listing bibliographic information on its six commonly cited translations.⁴² Ding notes that much confusion and misunderstanding has arisen from using any of the five translations other than that of Kumarajiva (Jiumoluoshi 鳩摩羅什, 344 - 413), which is the one that he uses, but that all the translations must be compared in order to properly understand the text. He also identifies three key concepts present in the text: essence (*benti* 本體), practice (*xiuxing* 修行), and the “final [goal]” (*jiujing* 究竟). Ultimately all these concepts return to the four “cases” of existence, non-existence, not-existence and not-non-existence (*wuyou*, *feiwuyou* 無有, 非無有), something cannot be described with language and words (*yuyan wenzi*

41 Ding's *Great Dictionary of Buddhist Studies* defines *lingyi* 靈異 as “an abstruse, inconceivable phenomenon.”

See Ding Fubao, *Foxue da cidian* 佛學大辭典 (Taipei: Huayan lianshe, 1956 [1921]). In using this term rather than the more conventional *ganying* 感應, he may have been following the ninth-century Japanese text *Record of Miracles in Recompense to Good and Evil Manifesting in Japanese Lands* (Nihongoku genhō zenaku ryōiki 日本国現報善惡靈異記). See FGD, 1452. The *Diamond Sūtra* is also one of the most often read and quoted scriptural texts that is included in the series, only excepting the *Heart Sutra*, which is discussed below

42 Ding also notes another translation in one fascicle cited in the *Record of the Dharma-Jewel through the Generations* (*Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記) but which is no longer extant.

語言文字).⁴³ Ding proceeds to explain this with reference to the three types of Buddha nature postulated by Zhiyan 智儼 (602 - 668) in his exegesis of the Huayan Sūtra 華嚴經, giving copious citations of sections in the Diamond Sūtra where these concepts might be found.⁴⁴ His aim in exploring these issues is to argue that that names and labels for concepts obscure their true nature, and that recognizing this is the beginning of insight into the perfection of wisdom (prajñāpāramitā).

Ding then relates how during his annotation and exegesis of this scripture he had a purified mind and body, cut off all extreme thoughts, and took extreme care with each individual character and meaning. This is one of the only indications we have that he performed his writing and editing work in a ritual manner, but more than anything else this reiterates a recurring message in his work: that every single character and nuance of meaning in the scriptures is significant and should be examined. He expresses the hope that in doing so he has not only improved on the annotations of the past, but has also preserved the teachings passed down by the ancients without corrupting them with his own words.⁴⁵ This is followed by a series of notes on the issues encountered during his work annotating and explicating the text, where he observes that previous annotated editions were either basically good but relied too much on specialized Buddhist vocabulary, or were easy to understand but full of mistakes, in either case too confusing for a beginning student of Buddhism.⁴⁶ Finally he offers a series of stories drawn from historical texts that demonstrate the power of the sūtra to produce miracles and unusual occurrences, ranging from the extension of one's lifespan, to the granting of sons, to banishing ghosts and

43 Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 2575. The four cases are the four logical possibilities of all things and phenomena, expounded in Madhyamika thought.

44 Ibid., 2576-2578. The cited passages all have to do with phenomena being simultaneously not themselves; for example, one passage states that when one sees that all characteristics are not characteristics, one sees the Buddha.

45 Ibid., 2578.

46 Ibid., 2579.

protection from weapons.⁴⁷

In this prefatory material, Ding has summarized the main ideas of this scripture and linked them to other important scriptural texts, highlighting what he considers to be the important teachings of the Buddhist canon. He also draws the reader's attention to the importance of understanding not only the terminology of this and other canonical texts, but also the history of their translation and interpretation. Finally, he positions his version as correcting the errors of the past, but at the same time as being authentic to the original teachings. In doing so, he guides the reader toward a particular orientation toward the text, which is to see it as one work within a network of texts, all sharing references and concepts, and which must be apprehended in relation to each other if they are to be understood at all. He also portrays this approach, the central project of what he calls Buddhist Studies, as getting closer to the original intent of the scriptures by avoiding the mistakes of past translators and exegetes.

All of this is in preparation for the annotated scriptural text itself. The exegesis and annotation (*jianzhu* 箋註) in Ding's works take the form of interlinear notes, printed in a font one quarter the size of the original text and arranged in half-columns that follow the phrase being discussed. In his preface to the series, Ding writes that his annotation is modeled upon the style employed for the Chinese classics (*xungu* 訓詁), following editions of the *Erya* 爾雅 and the *Maoshi* 毛詩 (Book of Songs with Mao Prefaces) in citing passages from a wide array of sources in order to explicate the main text.⁴⁸ This similarity to annotated editions of classical texts was apparently quite well-known; it is noted in the advertisement and book catalogue printed in the Buddhist periodical *Magazine of the World Buddhist Lay Association* 世界佛教居士林刊 in

47 Ibid., 2586-2610.

48 Yu Lingbo, *Zhongguo jinxiandai Fojiao renwu zhi*, 425.

1925, and elsewhere.⁴⁹ In practice it means that a phrase of the original scriptural text, sometimes as short as two characters, is followed by Ding's explanation of the phrase's terms and meaning, with citations of passages in related texts supporting the interpretation. These texts include other canonical scriptures, commentaries and other annotated editions, often noting the division or section (Ch. *pin* 品; Skt.: *varga*) of the work where the cited passage can be found, although page numbers are never used to cite passages since neither standard printed editions nor the numbering scheme of the Taishō tripiṭika had yet come into widespread use.

Ding's exegesis is extremely careful and thorough, assuming little to no previous knowledge on the part of the reader. For example, the first few phrases of the first section of the sūtra in Chinese and in Charles Muller's translation are as follows:

如是我聞。一時佛在舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園。與大比丘衆千二百五十人俱。

Thus I have heard. Once, the Buddha was staying in the Jetavana Grove in Śrāvastī with a community of 1250 monks.⁵⁰

With Ding's added interlinear notes, these two lines occupy about a full page in the reprint edition, with approximately 460 characters of exegesis for 29 characters of sūtra.⁵¹ The notes describe how the community of monks, led by Ānanda, assembled after the death of the Buddha to assemble the scriptures based on what they had heard him preach; how the *Fodijing lun* 佛地經論 (Treatise on the Buddha-bhūmi Sūtra) interprets the word “once” in two different ways;⁵²

49 Anonymous, "醫學書局佛學叢書", op. cit.

50 Chinese text from the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA) 中華電子佛典協會, <<http://www.cbeta.org/>>. English translation from <http://www.acmuller.net/bud-canon/diamond_sutra.html>, accessed Nov., 2010.

51 See Ding, *Foxue congbao*, 2612-2613. Even this level of detail is only an average; sometimes a single phrase of classical text is followed by over a full page of exegesis. In the 1920 work *Detailed Annotated Heart Sūtra* 心經詳註, Ding supercedes an earlier annotated version of the scripture, which he felt was too brief, with an even more detailed version where a single phrase is usually followed by several *pages* of annotations. See *Ibid.*, 2475-2478 for the preface to this work.

52 Specifically, as meaning either that the speaking and the hearing of the sūtra were separated by only a instant (*chana* 剎那), or that they occur at the exact same time.

that “the Buddha” refers to Śākyamuni Buddha; that Śrāvastī was a city in northern Kośala in central India, and so on. In addition, he offers a pronunciation guide for uncommon characters and readings of characters, such as 祇 (*qi*) when it appears as part of “Jetavana,” by noting a homophonous character, in this case 奇 (*qi*). The annotations included here also differ from those that would eventually be included in Ding's *Great Dictionary of Buddhist Studies*, indicating that he did not just apply whatever definition he had on hand, but rather sought to explicate each term within the context of the particular work.

Ding's annotated scriptures differed from other editions in a few critical ways, and it is in these differences that we get a glimpse of what the target audience he may have had in mind for these texts. Since Ding provides definitions for the specialized Buddhist scriptural terminology used in the texts, readers with a background in classical Chinese could easily make the transition to reading scriptures, relying on their experience with the annotation of other classical texts, the style of which is used here. The wealth of textual references and citations would also appeal to a reader who, as Ding evidently did, valued careful study and textual learning. Yet such a hypothetical reader would not need access to a Buddhist teacher or community of their own to start learning about Buddhism, at least not during its initial stages. These are texts that can simply be picked up off a shelf and read, with Ding's exegetical and prefatory material guiding the reader in lieu of a teacher. They are thus especially accessible to a reader who is educated in classical Chinese and interested in learning about Buddhist teachings, but who either cannot or does not wish to participate in a communal learning environment such as a temple or lay society. Somebody with a background in Buddhism but who may not fully understand all the teachings in a scripture could also benefit from the careful and detailed explanations provided.

Yet it was not enough to simply provide the teachings in an accessible manner - with the

inclusion of the miracle tales, Ding also demonstrates a concern with showing that these teachings are not only genuine, but have also manifested real effects in the world throughout history. In the section “Jin'gang jing lingyi ji” 金剛經靈異記 (Record of Diamond Sūtra miracles), he collects examples of strange and wondrous occurrences associated with reciting or possessing the scripture.⁵³ It includes stories from Tang- and Song-dynasty collections of anecdotes, grouped under fourteen headings. Thematic collections of miracle tales were produced by Daoxuan 道宣 (596 - 667) among others, which themselves were assembled from stories in a range of other sources.⁵⁴ For Ding to include these tales here indicates that for him, publishing the scriptures was not only a matter of making them available to an audience, of making them legible and comprehensible, but also of establishing their relevance as powerful centers of miraculous and significant experiences throughout history. This concern with evidence and proving the veracity of the Buddhist teachings is especially prominent in those books in Ding's collectanea that are intended as introductory texts for beginners in Buddhist study.

BOOKS FOR BEGINNERS

While the annotated scriptures and dictionaries in Ding's collectanea focus on an explication of the text for contemporary readers, the books for beginners that make up the balance of the titles in the series have a different orientation. In them Ding and his collaborators collected stories and tales from classical literature in order to prove the reality and significance of the Buddhist teachings, with a particular concern toward proving the existence of spirits and the law of karmic response, where immoral deeds are inevitably repaid with supernatural punishments. Similar

53 Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 2586-2610.

54 See Koichi Shinohara, “Dao-xuan's Collection of Miracle Stories about 'Supernatural Monks',” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* (April 1990), 319-379. Accessed from <http://ccbs.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-BJ001/koichi.htm>.

types of Buddhist introductory works began to appear in the late Qing with *Fojiao chuxue keben* 佛教初學課本 (Primer of Buddhism for Beginning Students), published by Yang Wenhui in 1906, and was soon followed by articles in *Foxue congbao* such as “Foxue jianshuo” 佛學淺說 (Elementary Explanation of Buddhist Studies) in issue one (1912), and Yang's “Shizong lüeshuo” 十宗畧說 (Brief Explanation of the Ten Schools) in issue four (1913).⁵⁵ More recently, commercial presses in Shanghai had begun to publish introductory Buddhist books. *Foxue dagang* 佛學大綱 (Outline of Buddhist Studies) by Xie Meng 謝蒙 (Xie Wuliang 謝無量, 1884 - 1964), published by Zhonghua Books in 1916, has one volume that surveys the history of Buddhism from the life of Śakyamuni to the formation of the Chinese Buddhist schools, with the second volume focusing on the foundations of Buddhist doctrine, epistemology, and ethics. *Foxue yijie* 佛學易解 (Simple Explication of Buddhist Studies), published by the Shanghai Commercial Press in 1917 and later reprinted in 1919 and 1926, was by Jia Fengzhen 賈豐臻 (1880? - 19??; fl. 1930s) who later published an introductory book on philosophy and a history of *lixue* 理學 (Neo-Confucian studies).⁵⁶ Such books were not only directed toward novices; in attempting to define the fundamentals of a subject, these books could also address those whose experience was great and urge them to reevaluate their understanding.

Apart from Ding himself, the person most cited in the collectanea's books for beginners is Mei Guangxi. Mei had studied under Yang Wenhui from 1902, and was later made one of the trustees of the Jinling Scriptural Press after Yang's death. In 1903 Mei was sent by then-Viceroy

55 MFQ 1:41-8, 2:21-27. Yang's textbook continued to be reprinted and sold through the 1940s. See MFQB 65:108, 377.

56 Xie was a school teacher and scholar of Chinese literature and Buddhist history. See the very short introduction to the reprint edition of his book in *Xiandai Foxue daxi*, Vol. 46. Xie uses 心理學 to describe the second field covered in the latter volume, and although this term is used to denote psychology in modern Chinese, I have translated it as epistemology because the section deals with theories of the *dharmalakṣaṇa* 法相, *prajñā* 般若, and *tathāgata-garbha* 如來藏 schools. Zhu Ziqing mentions Jia's book in his article “Maishu”, cited in chapter two. Jia also wrote an article on religion in education that was published in 1927 in the Buddhist periodical *Dayun yuekan* 大雲月刊. See MFQ 138:120-126.

of Huguang 湖廣 Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837 - 1909) to Japan to receive a military education, and after his return worked as a government official in various posts throughout the country. He was also a member of Xu Weiru's scriptural recitation society in Beijing, and a co-founder of the Beijing Scriptural Press 北京刻經處; he was particularly well-known for his studies of the Consciousness-only (*weishi* 唯識) school of Buddhist philosophy.⁵⁷ Although he was not directly involved in the project, Wan Jun 萬鈞 (Wan Shuhao 萬叔豪, fl. 1906 - 1936) is credited as the source of many of the stories included therein. Little is known of his biography; Wan was very active as an author and publisher, and he had annotated Yang's 1906 textbook, as well as the edition of Yang's *Fojiao zongpai xiangzhu* 佛教宗派詳註 (Detailed Annotated Buddhist Schools and Sects) that was published by the Shanghai Medical Press in 1921.⁵⁸

Of the eight titles in the series that can be classified as introductory texts, one of the earliest, *Foxue qixin bian* 佛學起信編 (Collection of Awakening Faith in Buddhist Studies, 1919), includes a preface by Ding that outlines the reasoning behind collecting the material for these works:

The aspects of the Buddhist scriptures that most cause people to doubt them are causality spanning the three periods [past, present and future], and rebirth in the six realms. Because of these, when beginners read the scriptures, they usually have suspicions. ... If one wishes to plumb the abstruse teachings of the Buddhist scriptures, one must take a mind of belief (*xinxin* 信心) as one's basis. Further, those who wish to obtain a mind of belief cannot not but first seek proof of causality spanning the three periods and rebirth in the six realms. This type of evidence is not something that kind be satisfied by empty words, not something that one could exhaustively obtain even after tens of years of reading.

57 See Dongchu, 2:650-660; XFRC, 1002-1004. See also the short eulogy by Fan Gunong 范古農 published in 1947, MFQ 89:235. *Haichaoyin* published a short article in 1945 on the occasion of his 65th birthday, MFQ 202:113-114. One of Mei's best-known works is *Essential Outline of the Faxiang School* 相宗綱要, first published in 1920 in Jinan 濟南 where Mei was posted at the time, and then in 1921 by Shanghai Commercial Press. See *Fozang jiyao* 佛藏輯要, 41 Vols (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1993), Vol. 21, 113-164. A supplementary volume later appeared in 1926.

58 See the section on scriptural presses below for more on Wan's publications and his publishing work in the 1930s. Note that the entry in XFRC for 萬鈞 refers to the pen name of a different individual.

Ding proceeds to relate how when he himself became fond of reading Buddhist scriptures in 1914, he searched for textual evidence to support those concepts that were difficult to believe, and how in this and other works he has collected relevant proofs from the scholars and literati of ages past to provide the reader with sufficient evidence to cultivate a 'mind of belief'.⁵⁹ Indeed, the books for beginners are overwhelmingly focused on evidential matters. Apart from offering evidence for causality and rebirth as mentioned in Ding's preface, the books offer stories as proof for the existence of various types of spirits, the underworld, and rewards for filiality and generosity, with most themes appearing in more than one title. They also have several sections that explore the historical development of Buddhism in Indian and Chinese history; a different type of evidence than that of narrative tales, but one which would become increasingly important in Buddhist publications.⁶⁰ Additionally, most of these books offer guidance on further reading, either by listing the titles and abstracts of Ding's annotated scriptures as does *Foxue chujie* 佛學初階 (Initial Stages in Buddhist Studies, 1920), or even more directly through advertisements for other publications by Ding's press, including the Great and Small dictionaries of Buddhist Studies.⁶¹

These issues of belief in the existence of spirits and the need for textual evidence are explicated most pointedly in the first chapter of *Foxue cuoyao* 佛學撮要 (Elementary Outline of Buddhist Studies), a brief but concise title in the series first published in 1920 and later reprinted in 1935. A publisher's note on the inside cover notes that the book was being offered for sale at four cents each, half the normal price, to help recoup the costs of printing the 4000 copies, but that reprinting and distributing the book would bring measureless merit. The first chapter

59 Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 2:147-148.

60 For example, the entire second volume of *Foxue zhinan* 佛學指南 (Guide to Buddhist Studies, 1919) is a series of surveys of the historical and doctrinal outlines of Buddhism. See Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 2:356-374, 433-488.

61 "Yiyue jingdian" 宜閱經典 (Scriptures Suitable for Reading) is actually the eighth 'stage' described in the book. See Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 2:755-766. Advertisements appear on 2:680, 890.

explains the genesis of the book through a rhetorical conversation between Ding and fellow Wuxi native Han Xuewen 韓學文, and this conversational mode is continued through the rest of the book, with Han asking questions and Ding offering responses backed up with selected passages from classical texts.⁶² Han brings up a passage from a book on medicine that Ding had edited which states that no spirit exists after death, and extends this to argue that the teachings of the Buddhist scriptures, and indeed of all religions, are false superstitions that ought to be swept away. Ding replies that he edited that book some 25 years ago, and that back then his experience and learning were so narrow as to cause that mistaken view; he then cites a number of experts in different fields of learning who all believe in the existence of spirits, saying that only those who are still an early stage of reading and study would deny the existence of spirits.⁶³ As for the charge that such beliefs are superstition, Ding points out that superstitions are only so if they are not true, whereas spirits, karma, and rebirth all have definite proof, and encourages Han to read certain books to see the evidence for himself. After a night of study, Han is, of course, converted from his views, and further asks Ding to guide him in the reading of Buddhist scriptures, saying “Sir, you first used medicine to treat my body, then used scholarship to treat my soul. Once the body is exhausted, the soul lasts forever, how can I repay you!” The texts and selections that Ding had Han read were none other than those collected in this volume, namely four other texts that appear in the series, as well as the essentials from *Dengbudeng guan zalu* 等不等觀雜錄

62 Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 1:33-39. The frontspiece notes that the costs of printing were 160 yuan, of which 100 yuan remained to be raised. This is similar to but differs from the story told in the opening chapter, mentioned in note below. HY has an entry for this title, published in Wuxi in 1920 that is noted as being a seventh printing, raising the possibility that this or a similar work had been in print for some time, perhaps privately, before being published through the Shanghai Medical Press. Whether Han was a historical person is as yet unknown.

63 Han also mentions that those who study new learning are all calling out loudly to expel these “absurd doctrines”, and some publish printed material that is spread to every province. The experts Ding mentions in response include one Yu Zhonghuan 俞仲還, who twenty years previously had established the Three Equalities Academy 三等學堂 in Chong'an Temple 崇安寺, and who later also helped establish Wenming Books, the publishing house through which Ding had issued many of his early works.

(Miscellaneous Records of Observing Equality and Inequality) by Yang Wenhui. The chapters that follow continue this theme of presenting evidence for the existence of spirits and other supernatural phenomena to satisfy Han's questions regarding Buddhist doctrines.⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

My discussion here of the work of Ding Fubao, his Buddhist Studies Collectanea, and the participation of a range of contributors to the series has been far too brief, and I look forward to exploring these topics in more depth in my forthcoming dissertation. From this admittedly shallow survey of the issues at hand, however, we can glimpse some of the major features of Buddhist print culture in modern China during a critical period of maturation. Publishers and editors such as Ding who were interested in publishing Buddhist writings were confronted with an enormous body of texts, one that was still expanding thanks to scriptural presses and soon to expand even further thanks to Shanghai-based publishers. Though they believed that this corpus held some of the most important Buddhist teachings in the tradition, its difficulty and size were daunting, and they grappled with how best to equip readers to delve into this sea of scriptures. Traditions of textual exegesis were joined by new understandings of scientific, medical, and evidentiary knowledge to create hermeneutic frameworks for new generations of readers. Through the medium of print and aided by the quick turnaround of movable type presses, contributors from different locales in China were able to collaborate to produce these new texts that were, increasingly, being printed in Shanghai, an ascendant nexus of culture and technology. Dings collectanea and other similar efforts addressed a reader who, though literate, needed some help in navigating Buddhist terms and teachings, and being conversant with rubrics of evidential

64 The texts are 佛學初階, 佛學起信編, 佛學之基礎, and 佛學指南. On 等不等觀雜錄, see Goldfuss, 231.

scholarship and the supernatural, needed a wealth of evidence to convince them of the truth of the Buddhist teachings. In doing so, Ding and other editor-publishers helped change the face of Buddhist religiosity in modern China, helping to turn texts into teachers and readers into students.