Navigating the Sea of Scriptures

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Chapter Three:
Navigating the Sea of Scriptures: The Buddhist Studies Collectanea, 1918–1923¹

1. Introduction

By the end of the 1910s, Buddhist publishing in China had undergone a substantial revival, one that combined the well-established print technology of xylography (woodblock; muban 木版) with the introduction of innovative publishing organizations such as the scriptural press (kejingchu 刻經處) and the Buddhist scripture distributor (Fojing liutongchu 佛經流通處), and the new genre of the Buddhist periodical printed by modern commercial presses.² Chinese Buddhist print culture in the first decade of the Republic featured extensive networks of text distribution and supply, and print catalogues listing over a thousand titles, yet most of these books would have been difficult for readers to comprehend without specialized training and the guidance of a capable teacher, owing to the linguistic particularities of their places and eras of composition, and the specialized semantics of Buddhist-classical Chinese. Without the skills to understand what they were reading, the texts would have a limited impact on readers, and while some introductory books and textbooks intended for classroom use did exist, they were few in number and their use in organized instruction was still very limited.³ The book series Foxue congshu 佛學叢書 (Buddhist Studies

¹ This chapter is adapted from the fourth chapter of Gregory Adam Scott, “Conversion by the Book: Buddhist Print Culture in Early Republican China” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2013). I am deeply grateful to my co-editor Philip Clart for his input and guidance, to the anonymous reviewer of this volume for their insightful suggestions, and to the participants and audience at the panel on “Publishing Religion, Negotiating the Party State: New Perspectives on Religion in Modern China,” held at the 2011 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion.
Collectanea), initially published in Shanghai between 1918 and 1923, was intended to address this need for guidance in Buddhist reading practices, teaching readers how to interpret and study the Buddhist scriptural canon for themselves, without the need of personal instruction. The editor and publisher of Foxue congshu, Ding Fubao 丁福保 (Ding Zhongyou 丁仲佑, 1874 – 1952), combined a love of reading, a background in textual exegesis and translation, and substantial experience in publishing to produce works that would enable readers to navigate the “turbid sea” of Buddhist scriptural texts.

Ding’s series marks a turning point in the development of Chinese Buddhist print culture in the early twentieth century, when authors began to increasingly focus on producing textual studies that empowered the reader to make use of the exegetical scholarship of the past, and helped to transform the text into the reader’s instructor in the study of Buddhism. Ding’s background in kaozheng 考證 (evidential) textual scholarship, an academic movement of the mid-to-late Qing that sought to uncover the original meanings of classical texts prior to later interpretations, led him to focus specifically on the lexicography of the Buddhist scriptures and the network of semantic relationships linking together scriptural and commentarial texts.⁴ The composition and structure of the series was strongly informed by three main features of Ding’s understanding:
1. That reading is a personal experience that brings the reader into direct contact with the author, and connects them to historical experiences of the past;
2. That religion functions as a type of medicine, prescribing treatments for diseases of the spirit, just as medicine treats diseases of the body; and
3. That reading religious texts functions as a type of self-education, for which the reader-as-student requires certain types of reference and guidance materials.

As will be described in the following section, each of these perspectives was quite clearly derived from Ding’s particular background as a bibliophile, physician, and publisher, but they also evidently resonated with several of his peers, with whom he collaborated on the editorship and composition of the works in his series. In this series we see how Chinese Buddhist authors and publishers in the early Republic began to embrace new roles for texts as teachers, and read-

⁴ On kaozheng see Benjamin A. Elman, From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China ([Cambridge, MA]: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1984).
ers as students, roles that would only grow in importance in the decades to follow.

2. Ding Fubao’s Background and the Structure of His Series

A lifelong book collector and bibliophile, Ding Fubao is best-known for his publishing and editing work. While many of his early publications were translations of medical texts from the Japanese, his initial scholarly training was in the study of Chinese classical texts. By 1929 he had amassed a personal collection of some 150,000 books, and it is estimated that from 1901 to 1941 he wrote, edited, translated, or annotated over three hundred titles. This extensive background in textual study and working with print was part of the foundation for his personal engagement with Buddhism, as well as the structure of his Buddhist collectanea. This book series includes several genres of texts, all of which are intended to help the reader comprehend Buddhist teachings through reliance on the texts alone. Such a pedagogical orientation also made his Buddhist series attractive.

5 Ding used the style name Chouyin jushi 疇隱居士 (Layman who Cultivates the Concealed), as well as the courtesy name Shouyi zi 守一子 (He who Guards the One). The reprint edition of the Foxue congshu series I consulted is Ding Zhongyou 丁仲祐 [Ding Fubao], Dingshi Foxue congshu 丁氏佛學叢書, collected by Cai Yunchen 蔡運辰 (Taipei: Beihai chuban shiye, 1970). The original pages are marked “Wuxi Dingshi cangban 無錫丁氏藏版 (Edition in the Collection of Ding from Wuxi). Principle sources on Ding’s biography include: Ding Fubao, Chouyin jushi ziding nianpu 疇隱居士自訂年譜 (1929), in Qingdai minguo cangshujia nianpu 清代民國藏書家年譜, ed. Zhang Aifang 張愛芳 and Jia Guirong 賈貴榮, vol. 6 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2004): 291–424; Ding Fubao, Chouyin jushi xueshu shi 疇隱居士學術史, in Qingdai minguo cangshujia nianpu, vol. 6: 425–658; Shi Dongchu 釋東初, Zhongguo Fojiao jindai shi 中國佛教近史, in Dongchu laoren quanji 東初老人全集, ed. Shi Dongchu, vol. 1 (Taipei: Dongchu, 1974), 647–650. Note that this last account by Dongchu relies exclusively on information presented in the introduction to the reprint edition of Ding’s series, written by Cai Yunchen.

6 Wang Xinsheng 王新生, “Wuxi jihui jinian Ding Fubao 無錫集會紀念丁福保,” Zhongguo qianbi 中國錢幣 (Jan., 1993), 76; Yang Qi 楊杞, “Jicang juanzhu wei yishen de cangshujia 集聚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 then 75-year-old Ding was still active in the publishing world. See Chen Yuanlin 陳元麟, “Wo jiandaoguo de Ding Fubao 我見到過的丁福保,” Shi jì 世紀 (Century) (March, 2007), 71–72. Ding also popularized the use of the zhengkai 正楷 font invented by the Commercial Press. Christopher Reed, Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), 310fn120.
both to those who may not have an interest in Buddhism but who valued the study of Chinese literature, and to those Buddhists who were seeking to reform education for monastics and laypeople. Although Ding’s project of editing and compiling Buddhist texts followed a model that had been part of Chinese textual culture since ancient times, his dual backgrounds in interpreting texts from the classical past and in publishing texts for the contemporary book market combined to produce a series that matched scriptural content with exegesis directed to a contemporary reader.⁷

Ding was from Wuxi 無錫 in Jiangsu province, and thanks to his family’s scholarly background he had an interest in books from an early age. In 1894 he worked as an instructor in a private school (shu 塾) run by the well-known book collector Lian Nanhu 廉南湖 (1868–1931), from whom he learned book collecting and textual exegesis. The next year he began studying at the Nanjing Academy 南菁書院 in Jiangyin 江陰, Jiangsu province, and while there received guidance from Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842–1917) on annotating classical texts.⁸ Eventually he began work as a teacher, but finding it difficult to live on a teacher’s salary, in 1902 he returned to school to study Chinese medicine under Zhao Yuanyi 趙元益 (1840–1912) at a Shanghai dongwen xuetang 東文學堂 (Japanese-language academy).⁹ In 1909 Ding placed first in the medical exams held in

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⁷ Daojie 道階 (1866–1934) lists the following as precedent examples to Ding’s works: Fayuan zhulin 法苑珠林 (Forest of pearls from the garden of the Dharma, 668 CE); Dazang yilan 大藏一覽 (The Tripitaka at a glance, Ming dynasty or earlier); Zongjing lu 宗鏡錄 (Record of the axiom mirror, tenth 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). Ding, Foxue congshu, 1360.


Nanjing, which for the first time were based on a mixture of Chinese and Western medicine; his success was likely due at least in some part to his experience as a student translating books on Western medicine from the Japanese. Dispatched to Japan by the Qing government, he observed their medical system and purchased medical texts, but the Republican revolution occurred before he could submit his findings to the Qing court.¹ When Ding returned to Shanghai he set up his own medical practice and began republishing edited and annotated versions of other authors’ works, including texts he had brought back from Japan. His books were initially issued through Wenming shuju 文明書局 (Wenming Books), the publishing house he had founded in 1902 with two fellow translators and editors, and which had gotten its start by publishing translations from European languages and the Japanese.¹¹ His series of translated medical texts Yixue congshu 醫學叢書 (The Medical Collectanea) was published by Wenming Books from 1908 to 1911, but from 1914 onward he used the imprint of Shanghai yixue shuju 上海醫學書局 (The Shanghai Medical Press), which he would continue to use for most of his later publications.¹² Income from his successful medical practice allowed Ding to acquire more rare and important books for his collection, helping to supply more source material for his publishing work.

Extant biographical sources describe a variety of circumstances behind Ding’s initial turn toward Buddhism. Although these stories range from the prosaic to the dramatic, a few key areas of contact between them make it possible to construct a tentative outline of his early engagement with Buddhism. Most accounts state that it occurred thanks to a meeting with the Buddhist lay publisher Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (Yang Renshan 楊仁山, 1837–1911) in Nanjing in 1903, and one source describes how in the following year a chance encounter with a copy

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and African Studies, University of London 57, no. 3 (1994), 567. Japanese-language academies were set up in the late Qing to prepare Chinese students to study abroad in Japan.

¹ Ding, Nianpu, 32; Zhao Pushan, “Ding Fubao,” 248.

¹¹ Lufei Kui 陸費逵 (1886–1941), who would later found Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, one of the three largest Chinese publishers of the Republican period, co-edited some unpublished textbooks with Ding and later joined the staff at Wenming from 1906 to 1908. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai*, 227–228.

¹² Ding, Nianpu, 316–317, 325–326; Zhao Pushan, “Ding Fubao,” 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 muju 中國近代現代叢書目錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai tushuguan, 1979), 13–15.
of the book *Shishi yulu* 業氏語錄 (Recorded sayings of the Śākyas) planted the seeds of an interest in Buddhism. His chronological autobiography (*ziding nianpu* 自訂年譜), however, instead recalls the influence of a devout Buddhist whom he had employed to instruct his children in 1911. By that time he had already acquired a number of Buddhist scriptures as part of his book collecting and read them often, but he had not yet put their teachings into practice.¹³ There is no evidence that Ding took formal refuge as a lay Buddhist (*guiyi* 皈依) at the age of 40 sui 岁 (i.e. 1913), as narrated in one of the prefaces to his series, but Ding does note that it was 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 (dao 道).¹⁴ The year 1913 was a turning point for several facets of his life and work. He would later recall that from this year he resolved to devote his energies to medicine and seek to make a lasting contribution in that rather than any other field, and he resolved to put all his efforts into publishing medical works and running his medical practice. Alongside his medical focus, however, Buddhism became a significant and growing interest. It was also from this year that he started to collect a great number of Buddhist scriptures and began to compile a lexicon of Buddhist terms. By the following year he was keeping a vegetarian diet, something he appears to have maintained for the rest of his life.¹⁵ Ding thus came to be interested in Buddhism primarily through reading and textual study, but unlike many others who had experienced a sudden and dramatic "conversion by the book" while reading a scriptural text, there does not appear to have been a single dramatic moment of realization that marked his turn toward

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¹³ Ding, *Chouyin jushi ziding Nianpu*, 318, 330. 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 with the Mechanized Press: New Buddhist Print Cultures in the Modern Chinese Print Revolution, 1866–1949,” in *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Print Culture in Transition, 1800–2008*, ed. Christopher Reed and Cynthia Brokaw (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2010), 193. Ding further notes in his preface to *Foxue qixin lun* 佛學起信論 (1919) and elsewhere that it was from the age of 40 sui that he became fond of reading Buddhist scriptures.

¹⁴ Ding, *Chouyin jushi xueshu shi*, 522. Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 29. Yu Lingbo 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 instead records his mother dying in March 1920. Ding, *Chouyin jushi ziding Nianpu*, 381.

Buddhist teachings. Indeed he never committed himself exclusively to Buddhism, and would later shift the focus of his textual studies and publishing efforts to other religious traditions.

Ding’s engagement with Buddhism through the 1910s and early 1920s culminated in the compilation of his Buddhist Studies collectanea, first published from 1918 to 1923. Ding had published a number of book series before, including his medical collectanea mentioned above, as well as two other collections: Wenxue congshu 文學叢書 (The Literary Collectanea, d.u.), and jinde congshu 進德叢書 (The Advancing Morality Collectanea, 1912–1925?). Of these, the Medical Collectanea was likely the largest, with forty-six titles that can be dated to 1918 or earlier. His Buddhist collectanea consists of annotated Buddhist scriptures, books for beginners, dictionaries, and printed images, and was initially published through his Shanghai Medical Press. The series eventually grew to number thirty core titles, based on those listed in Ding’s preface and afterword to the series, and those included in the 1970 reprint edition edited by Cai Yunchen 蔡運辰 (Cai Niansheng 蔡念生, 1901–1992). Most of these titles were first issued between 1918 and 1921, and Ding continued to add new titles and imprints to the series as late as 1923. For the most part, the content of the collectanea was originally composed by other authors, with Ding’s contribution being mainly editing, annotation, and his extensive prefatory and commentarial notes. With an ever-growing personal collection of books, a keen eye for rare and important texts, and his background in textual and translation studies, Ding was well-suited to this type of compilation. In his earlier series, Ding had translated and annotated Japanese medical knowledge; in his Buddhist series, he either translates the difficult and

\[16\] See the introduction to Scott, “Conversion by the Book,” for more on this trope in Chinese Buddhist biographies.

\[17\] Shanghai tushuguan, ed., Zhongguo jindai xiandai congshu mulu 中國近代現代叢書目錄, 13–15. Many of the books in the Medical Collectanea are translations of Japanese texts, which were themselves originally translations from European-language works. Ding’s editing and translation work emphasized the importance of making these cutting-edge medical and scientific concepts easier for the reader to understand. See Zhao Pushan, “Ding Fubao,” 248–249.

\[18\] Cai selected the titles to include in his reprint edition based on the 1918 series catalogue appended to Fojing jinghua lu jianzhu 佛經精華錄箋註 (Annotated essential records of Buddhist scriptures), reproduced on p. 1520 in the reprint edition of Foxue congshu. The catalogue also lists planned titles in the series that would be published in the years to follow. See Ding, Foxue congshu, preface, 5. For a later published catalogue of the series, see “Foxue congshu” 佛學叢書, Shijie Fojiao jushilin linkan 世界佛教居士林刊 1 (1923), reprinted in Huang Xianian 黃夏年, ed., Minguo Fojiao qikan wenxian jicheng 民國佛教期刊文獻集成, vol. 14 (Beijing: Quanguo tushiguăn wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2006) 397–404. Huang is hereafter cited as MFQ. Cai did not include Foxue da cidian in his reprint due to its size and the fact that the Huayan Lotus Society (Huayan lianshe 華嚴蓮社) in Taiwan had by that time already issued a reprint edition.
often obscure language of the Buddhist scriptures, or presents evidentiary material cited from the textual corpus in order to support the doctrines of those scriptures.

Table 1: Works published in Ding’s Buddhist Studies Collectanea from 1918 to 1925

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Title translations based on those in the Digital Dictionary of Buddhism 電子佛教辭典, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/>, or those currently in common use.


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Gregory Adam Scott
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1919  *Foxue qixin bian*

Awakening of faith in Buddhist studies

*Foxue zhinan*

Guide to Buddhist studies

*Liudao lunhui lu*

Records of transmigration through the six kinds of rebirth

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22 Worldcat [http://www.worldcat.org/](http://www.worldcat.org/) has an entry with a preface dated to 1924, but I have not been able to track down its original library catalogue source. Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) no. 33955802.
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23 Full title of the original text: **Liuzu dashi fabao tanjing**. 六祖大師法寶壇經.
24 Cited bibliographic entry is for the fifth edition published in 1926.
### Bibliography Entries and Reprint Editions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location of Source in Canon</th>
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Essential meaning of the method of quiet sitting

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Location of Source in Canon</th>
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Annotated record of the Tathāgata Śākyamuni attaining the way

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<th>Location of Source in Canon</th>
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Sūtra of impermanence

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Location of Source in Canon</th>
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Shortcut to studying Buddhism

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Location of Source in Canon</th>
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Great dictionary of Buddhist studies

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<th>Location of Source in Canon</th>
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<td>T09 no. 263</td>
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Phrasal understanding of the lotus sūtra

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<th>Title</th>
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<td>T39 no. 1795</td>
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Brief outline of the sūtra of perfect enlightenment

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<th>Title</th>
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<th>Bibliography Entries and Reprint Editions</th>
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Annotated Vimalakirti sūtra

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25 Unfortunately I have not been able to find any examples or descriptions of these images. A later catalogue from 1934 lists 16 types of printed images for sale. *Chuban mulu* 出版目錄, no. 7 ([Shanghai]: Shanghai yixue shuju, Sept. 1934), in *Minguo shiqi chuban shumu huibian* 民國時期出版書目彙編, ed. Liu Hongquan 劉洪權, vol. 14 (Beijing: Guojia Tushuguan Chubanshe, 2010), 744–745.

26 Cited bibliographic entry is for a 1925 edition.

27 Full title: *Weimojie suoshuo jing* 維摩詰所詣經.
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<td>Sihou zhi shenpan&lt;br&gt;The judgment after death</td>
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<td>Sanzang fashu&lt;br&gt;Categories of dharmic concepts in the Buddhist tripitaka</td>
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The structure and style of the volumes in the series reflect Ding’s orientation toward engaging with Buddhism as a form of education, a theme that was very much at the forefront of Chinese Buddhist publishing of the late-Qing and early-Republican periods. Ding’s publishing house and his earlier medical series both incorporate the term yixue 醫學 (medical studies, medicine), while many of
the titles in his Buddhism series use *Foxue* (Buddhist Studies). Both terms were then newly introduced to Chinese, and both had initially appeared as reverse loan-words from the Japanese, in the case of *yixue* as a translation for foreign terms meaning “medicine.” The origins of *Foxue* date back to around 1895 in Japan, and 1902 in China.²⁸ It is one of a number of words adopted from the Japanese in the decade that followed the First Sino-Japanese war (1894–1895), when many Chinese scholars studied in Japan in order to learn the techniques by which Japan was able to modernize its military, economy, and political system.²⁹ The short-lived *Foxue yanjiuhui* (Association for Buddhist Research) established in 1910, and the periodical *Foxue congbo* (Buddhist Studies Magazine) first issued in 1912 both used the term, but otherwise it is not often seen in Buddhist titles until the publication of Ding’s series.³⁰ Ding does not explicitly address his use of this term, but by denoting his subject with *Foxue* rather than an alternative term such as *Fojiao*, *Fofa*, or *Fohua*, he may have been trying to avoid some of the negative associations that late-Qing scholars had attached to these latter terms in their criticisms of Buddhism and other religions as corrupt and superstitious.³¹ By giving Buddhism the connotation of a field of study, Ding adroitly links it to an educational milieu, placing it on the same semantic field as science (*kexue*), mathematics (*shuxue*), and medicine. Modern education and fields of knowledge had a great deal

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²⁸ Read as *futsugaku*, the first character was first used in Japanese as a combination phonetic-semantic term (parallel to *rangaku*) meaning French Studies, with the first character used for its sound and devoid of any connection to Buddhism. The first instance of the term being used as *butsugaku* (Buddhist studies) that I have found is Saeki Hödō’s *Butsugaku sansho: ka-kushiku* (Kyōtō: Hōzōkan, Meiji 28 [1895]). The earliest use of *foxue* in the title of a Chinese book that I have found is the 1902 catalogue from Yang Wenhui’s *Jinling Scriptural Press, Foxue shumu biao*. See Yang Wenhui, *Yang Renshan quanji* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2000): 344–368. Also see Gabriele Goldfuss, *Vers un bouddhisme du XXe siècle. Yang Wenhui (1837–1911), réformateur laïque et imprimeur* (Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, 2001), 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.


of cultural power in the late Qing and early Republic as the centuries-old examination system was abolished and public and private schools proliferated, and it was especially important for Chinese publishers, the largest of which built their business on textbook publishing.³²

The prefaces written for Ding’s Buddhist Studies Collectanea, of which there are five written from 1918 to 1920, reflect this orientation toward pedagogy both in their content and in the background of their authors.³³ Li Xiang 李詳 (Li Shenyan 李審言, 1859–1931) was a prolific author who, like Ding, was associated with kaozheng scholarship of the late Qing.³⁴ In his preface he argues that the messages of the Buddhist teachings are at their core no different from those of the six classics of the sages, but notes that while scholars have given a great deal of careful attention to explicating the latter, before the advent of Ding’s series, Buddhist scriptures had not been studied in the same exacting manner.³⁵ Li does not present himself as a Buddhist believer, but instead lends his support to Ding’s use of textual exegesis to interpret Buddhist scriptural texts. Little is known about Chen Jiadun 陳嘉遠 (d.u.) and Wu Baozhen 吳保真 (d.u.), authors of the following two prefaces. Chen wrote a handful of articles for Buddhist periodicals in the 1920s, and in his preface he mentions ordering some two hundred copies of Ding’s books, while Wu also wrote a preface to Ding’s Buddhist dictionary, discussed below.³⁶ The author of the fourth preface, Chanding 禪定 (1874–?), was a monk in the Tiantai tradition who began his monastic career in Shanghai, and who later studied at Guanzong Lecture Temple 觀宗講寺 in Ningbo 寧波, which was under the leadership of the Tiantai patriarch Dixian 諦閑 (1858–1932), as well as at temples in Shaanxi 陝西 and Liaoning 遼寧.³⁷ His preface evokes the images of the agada medicine (ajiato yao 阿伽陀藥), a powerful panacea mentioned in Buddhist scriptures, to link Ding’s medical practice to the salvific powers of Buddhist scriptures, saying that his published works serve to heal the body as well as the mind. This trope of “Buddhism as medicine”

³² Reed, _Gutenberg in Shanghai_. Also see Reed’s “Introduction” to _From Woodblocks to the Internet_, 8–10.

³³ These prefaces introduce the series as a whole, while individual titles often have their own prefaces, notes, and other prefatory and explanatory material.

³⁴ On Li, see Li Xiang 李詳, Li Zhifu 李稚甫, eds., _Li Shenyan wenji 李審言文集_ (S.l.: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1989), 1447–1481.

³⁵ Ding, _Foxue congshu_ 富貴丛书, 1–8. Li’s preface was also annotated by Ding with interlinear exegetical notes.

³⁶ Ding, _Foxue congshu_ 富貴丛书, 9–24.

would be invoked throughout the works in the series. Chanding also notes that Ding follows the classical model of exegesis to annotate Buddhist texts, and that the act of reading these texts represents the first step in a process of acquiring religious knowledge that will lead one toward understanding, contemplation, and finally a confirmation of one’s insight. Chanding himself was just then in the process of acquiring a set of the complete Buddhist canon from Beijing for the Guanzong Temple.

Several prominent religious, literary, and political figures of the day contributed prefaces to individual titles in the series. The monk Yinguang (1862–1940) wrote a number of prefaces to books for beginners in the series; Dixian, mentioned above, contributed to two annotated sūtras, and Daojie (1866–1944) wrote one for the scriptural compilation *Fojing jinghua lu jianzhu* (Annotated essential records of Buddhist scriptures, 1918). These three figures were all 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.

A number of figures without any particular connection to Buddhism also contributed prefaces for individual works in the series. These include Wu Zhihui (1865–1953), eminent scholar, elder statesman of the Guomindang, and driving force behind the promotion of the *zhuyin zimu* phonetic writing system; Meng Sen (1868–1937), who served briefly in the early Republican government before teaching at National Central and Peking Universities; and Sun Yuyun (1869–1924), a member of the Tongmenghui in Japan who later supported the monarchist aspirations of Yuan Shikai (1859–1916).

In their prefaces, each contributor highlights different aspects of the series: Wu Zhihui praises Ding’s erudition and compassion, puzzles over problems of semantics when dealing with terms translated from the Sanskrit, and discus-

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38 See the end of the following section for more on this.
41 See section three below for more on Mei. Also see Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, vol. 3, 416, 432–434.
es the place of Buddhist scriptures in the history of civilizations;\textsuperscript{42} Meng Sen focuses on the filial piety expressed in the \textit{Foshuo yulanpen jing} 佛說盂蘭盆經 (Ullambana Sūtra);\textsuperscript{43} Sun Yuyun lauds Ding’s work in providing solid scriptural evidence for the teachings in a time of End-Dharma (\textit{mofa} 末法) and aberrant teachings (\textit{moshuo} 魔說).\textsuperscript{44} The literary, historical, and cultural value of the Buddhist texts in Ding’s series is, at least in the context of their contributed prefaces, clearly held in high regard even by those with no particular personal connection to Buddhism.

In August 1920, some seven years after his “turning point” that led him to focus on medicine and Buddhist scriptures, and at a time when the first titles in the series were coming off the presses, Ding composed a preface and an afterword for his series reflecting on the path that brought him to undertake such a project.\textsuperscript{45} In it he relates the story outlined in his autobiographical chronology mentioned above that at the age of forty sui (i.e. late 1913 to early 1914) he realized that in spite of his studies of medicine, mathematics, literature and other subjects, “the Way was not illuminated, and virtue not established.”\textsuperscript{46} He thus turned to the study of Buddhism. He collected more than ten thousand fascicles of Buddhist texts, books that, he claims, hold meanings which mundane (\textit{shijian} 世間) works could not express.\textsuperscript{47} Ding’s account of reading Buddhist scriptures describes a vivid and experiential immediacy with their messages:

\begin{quote}
I often contemplated and saw with my own eyes, recollecting how after Śakyamuni attained the way he preached the \textit{Avatamsaka Sūtra} for thirty-seven days. ... At the time of his \textit{parinirvāna}, he preached the \textit{Nirvana Sūtra} for one day and one night. It was if I saw these matters with my own eyes, heard their voices with my own ears, and directly faced their pronouncements. After the Buddha entered \textit{nirvana}, for a period of seven days and nights Mahākāśyapa, Ananda, and others along with the five hundred Arhats assembled the \textit{tripiṭaka} of scriptural texts at Vulture Peak. I also saw everything distinctly as if it were
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{42} Ding, \textit{Foxue congshu}, 1231–1232, 1251–1254, 1303–1304.
\textsuperscript{43} Ding, \textit{Foxue congshu}, 1605–1606.
\textsuperscript{45} Ding, \textit{Foxue congshu}, 29–32, 3007–3008.
\textsuperscript{46} “道不明，德不立”，a reference to the \textit{Daxue} 大學 (Great Learning).
\textsuperscript{47} The length of a fascicle (\textit{juan} 卷) in characters or pages is not fixed, but roughly corresponds to a chapter of a modern work.
\textsuperscript{48} In Buddhist scriptures, Mahākāśyapa 摩诃迦葉 and Ananda 阿難 are two of the chief disciples of the Buddha, and are said to have helped assemble the Buddha’s teachings into written form as described.
the personal instruction of a teacher. It was also as if I entered the rooms of Kumārajīva and Xuanzang, and saw them translate the language of Brahma Heaven into the language of the lands of China, explaining the meaning and structure of the texts, then wetting the tip of their brush with the tip of their tongue and composing their thoughts.⁴⁹ I also entered the rooms of all the great exegetes and compilers since the Sui and Tang dynasties, discussed with eminent monks young and old, and I could hear their voices.

All of these absurd thoughts often appeared during a dawn storm, in the liminal time between darkness and light, and though I wished to dispel them I was unable to do so.

Although Ding uses a non-committal tone regarding the reality of his visions, calling them “absurd thoughts,” they are nonetheless evocative descriptions of his experience of reading, one that he wished to bring to a wider audience by sharing these scriptural texts with the world. This was an experience of immediate communication with the authors and characters in the texts, coming into direct contact with the teacher of the past through the act of reading. Yet Ding then goes on to recall his concern that the sheer number of printed works and the complexity of their content would overwhelm novice readers, causing them to give up before making any real progress. This prompted him to make a personal vow (si shiyuan 私誓願) to produce annotated editions of scriptural texts, as well as introductory books for beginners (chuxue rumen 初學入門) so that one need not become a specialist to engage in the study of Buddhism.⁵¹ The motivation for producing his Buddhist Studies series, as he describes it, was thus a religious rather than a commercial one, and indeed Ding did not seek to derive any profit from the sale of his Buddhist books, instead reinvesting any excess funds back into the printing enterprise. Most of the funds 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.⁵²

⁴⁹ Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (334 – 413) was a Central Asian translator monk who translated a number of important Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. Xuanzang 玄奘 (ca. 602 – 664) was a Chinese monk who made pilgrimage to India and brought back Buddhist scriptural texts to be translated.

⁵⁰ Ding, Foxue congshu, 29 – 30.

⁵¹ Ding, Foxue congshu, 29 – 30.

⁵² See Yu, Zhongguo jinxiandai Fojiao renwu zhi 丁福保事, Haichao yin, vol. 2, no. 3 (Feb. 20, 1921), MFQ 150:118.
Ding thus felt that he could not simply start reprinting original Buddhist texts as scriptural presses had done, since in their basic form they were simply too complex for most people to comprehend. This became the central problematic that propelled his editing and exegetical work on his Buddhist book series. He explores this issue at some length in his preface to *Foxue zhīnán* 《佛學指南》(Guide to Buddhist Studies), published as part of the series in 1919:

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 written by Zhisheng 智昇 [669–740] in the tenth year of the Kaiyuan era of the Tang [713–716], 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 Kalaviṃśa Hermitage has 8,416 fascicles. Also the Japanese Extended Canon has more than 7,800 fascicles. ...

Numerous, numerous! The sea of scriptures! Take one step into it, and it’s a vastness 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 limitless ness, 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 [zhīnán zhèn 指南針]?

After listing some of the major collections of Buddhist scriptures, including the then very recent Kalaviṃśa Hermitage (1913) and Japanese Zoku zōkyō [1912] editions, Ding laments that all of this publication work has only made it more difficult for ordinary readers to engage with the texts of the Buddhist canon. 54 While scriptural publishers like Yang Wenhui had been concerned that there were insufficient good-quality copies of the Buddhist sūtras in circulation, from Ding’s perspective, the most urgent problem was how to teach people to read and understand them in such a way that they would not be overwhelmed...
by their complexity. This sentiment is echoed in the prefaces contributed by Dixian and Daojie, mentioned above. Both of them, while aware of 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 to “bridge the sea” of scriptures.55

The relationship of Ding’s work to the concerns and interests of a wider social sphere of Chinese Buddhists is thus reflected in the prefatory notes by writers such as Dixian and Daojie. Ding also maintained written correspondence with Yinguang while the latter was living on Putuoshan 普陀山, in which Yinguang offers his advice and opinion on several aspects of Ding’s series.56 The correspondence begins in 1917, when Ding was still studying Buddhist scriptural texts and completing manuscript versions of some of the works 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 lexicon and 

Foxue chujie 佛學初階 (Initial stages in Buddhist studies), several years before they were to be published. Yinguang offers some advice regarding where certain scriptural texts might be found; an indication that Ding had asked for his help in tracking down the location and provenance of Buddhist texts. Yinguang also observes that although Fayu Temple 法雨寺 on Putuoshan had a Southern Ming (Nanzang 南藏) and a Qing (Longzang 龍藏) canon, few people ever actually read them.57 There are instances of subtle criticism as well, as when he notes that the publication of scriptures is an endeavour 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 an entire lifetime annotating a single text, to Ding’s voluminous output in the past three years, one may detect a hint of caution beneath Yinguang’s polite language.58

Yet Yinguang also displays an keen understanding of at least some aspects of modern print technology, as well as 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, were then having trouble arranging dharma lectures and getting people to continue attending, but if they

55 Ding, Foxue congshu, 1361, 1654.
56 Ding, Chouyin jushi ziding Nianpu, 375–376. Yinguang was known for his emphasis on scriptural study in addition to the recitation of Buddha’s name (nianfo 念佛). See Yu, Xiandai Fojiao renwu cidian, vol. 1, 284–288.
57 Shi Yinguang 釋印光, Yinguang fashi wenchao sanbian 印光法師文鈔三編 (Taipei: Fotuo jiaoyu jijinhui, 2007), Yinguang to Ding Fubao, Letter 5, 964–966.
58 Yinguang to Ding, Letter 1, 958–960; Letter 5, 964–966.
were instead to give people one of Ding’s books to read, then that might be a much more effective strategy for spreading the Dharma.⁵⁹ In another letter, Yinguang relates the story of how he had first become known beyond the confines of Putuoshan thanks to a series of his articles that had appeared in the Buddhist magazine Foxue congbao.⁶⁰ Yet he also critiques movable-type printing because “the ink has a lot of compounds added to it, and will fade eventually,” whereas traditional woodblock printing results in a text that will last through the ages, something that he had discussed in correspondence with the publishers of Foxue congbao.⁶¹ Even in the relative isolation of Putuoshan, Yinguang was still connected to the rapidly developing Buddhist print culture of the early Republic; critical of some aspects, but enthusiastically supportive of others. Connections such as this indicate that Ding’s project was indeed part of broader conversations about publishing among lay and monastic Chinese Buddhists, and that in spite of his lack of a formal Buddhist institutional or master-disciple relationship, Ding was receptive to input from Buddhists through his social connections.

3. Illuminating Scriptures with Exegesis, Awakening Faith with Evidence

Seeking to help those who wished to navigate the turbid sea of Buddhist texts, Ding produced two types of texts for his series: editions of Buddhist scriptures with punctuation, annotation, and explanations added by Ding; and books for beginners, which are primarily collections of evidentiary tales that describe people experiencing the truth of the Buddhist teachings first-hand. In the annotated scriptures, Ding provides an extensive exegesis that cites Buddhist and other classical texts to explain the meaning of passages and terms that would be unfamiliar to a novice reader. As editor and exegete, Ding refrains from presenting any personal insight into the doctrines expressed in the text, preferring instead to let the texts illumine each other. In the evidentiary tales, Ding addresses the

⁵⁹ Yinguang to Ding, Letter 2, 960–961.
⁶⁰ Described in Scott, “Conversion by the Book,” chapter three.
⁶¹ Yinguang to Ding, Letter 3, 961–962. 「鉛印雖便，究非久遠之計。以鉛印墨中，多加藥汁，久必褪落，宜刊木版，方可傳遠，印光上佛報館書，正為此事。」 Based on an original copy of Foxue congbao that I consulted in the library of the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy at Academia Sinica 中央研究院中國文學研究所, Yinguang’s concern may have been misplaced, since its text appears as vibrant and bold as it likely was when it was printed. Its pages, however, have become brittle from the presence of acidic materials used in the paper making process.
doubts he expects readers will have when encountering descriptions of supernatural phenomena in the Buddhist scriptures. To do so he cites passages selected from a wide variety of sources that describe the original author’s personal experience with phenomena such as rebirth and karmic retribution.

Buddhist scriptural texts accompanied by Ding’s annotations and exegetical notes (jianzhu 籍注) make up the core of his Buddhist collectanea, both in terms of primacy—these were the earliest works published in the series—and majority.⁶ If we omit the multi-volume dictionary Foxue da cidian 佛學大辭典, annotated scriptural texts make up the bulk of the collection; in the reprint edition they fill 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 selected for annotation and republication are some of the most central works in the East Asian Buddhist canon, including Bore poluomiduo xinjing 般若波羅蜜多心經 (the Heart Sūtra), Jin’gang bore poluomi jing 金剛般若波羅蜜經 (the Diamond Sūtra), Liuzu tanjing 六祖壇經 (the Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch), and scriptures relating to Amitābha Buddha 阿彌陀佛 and Guanshiyin 觀世音 and Puxian 普賢 Bodhisattvas. Most of these texts had already been published by Buddhist scriptural presses in the late Qing, but they rarely included a modern author’s exegetical gloss.⁶³ At its core this was not a novel approach – annotated scriptures and commentaries on scriptural texts were already an established part of Buddhist literature, but usually the interpretation was highly informed by the author’s insight or realization. In his series, Ding instead presents his annotations by drawing upon a vast textual corpus and letting the interpretations of past exegetes and commentators speak to the reader, a product of his background in bibliographic and kaozheng scholarship.

In his essay “Jinggao zhu Fojing zhi jushi” 敬告注佛經之居士 (A Respectful Notice to Gentlemen Annotating Scriptures), published in 1921 as part of the prefatory material to his dictionary Foxue da cidian, Ding outlines his approach to annotation and his preferred techniques of interpreting and editing scriptural texts. He lists seventeen points that annotators are urged to follow, some of

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⁶ Ding preferred 注 over the alternate form 註, since it was the former that was used in the classics. See Ding, “Jinggao zhu Fojing zhi jushi” 敬告注佛經之居士, in Ding Fubao, Foxue da cidian 佛學大辭典 (Shanghai: Yixue shuju, 1921), prefatory material, 1.

⁶³ See, for example, 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 Yang’s Jinling Scriptural Press 金陵刻經處.
which specifically address Buddhist scriptures, others of which apply to all classical texts. Some of the central points are: do not make forced interpretations of the text, do not indulge in empty speculation, use scriptural sources to verify scriptural content, avoid spurious scriptures, don't argue with the ancients, and don't argue with contemporaries. The central theme of these comments is that editors should interfere as little as possible with the content of the texts, and that their personal influence on their interpretation should be minimized. While some Buddhist exegetes are mentioned in the explanations of these guidelines, for the most part he quotes from and refers to famous scholars of the Confucian classics, treating the exegetical task of annotating Buddhist scriptures as being equivalent to that of working with other classical texts.

Ding references many of these points in his “Jianjing zaji” (Miscellaneous notes on annotating [the] scripture), a series of essays that precede many of the annotated scriptures, in which he discusses bibliographic and interpretive issues relating to the text that they accompany.

Of the twenty annotated scriptural texts in the series, Jin’gang bore poluomi jing jianzhu (The Diamond of Perfect Wisdom Sūtra, annotated and explained), stands as one of the most preeminent texts in the East Asian Buddhist tradition, and Ding’s edition of it will be examined here as a representative example of the structure of most of the other annotated scriptural works in the series. The work opens with a preface that introduces the theme of the scripture and highlights bibliographic considerations such as different extant translations, followed by Ding’s notes on annotation that outline the larger exegetical context, a record of miraculous events (lingyiji 靈異記) associated with the sūtra, and finally the annotated text itself. The preface first guides the reader through the historical and interpretive context of the sūtra, providing bibliographic information on the six most commonly-cited translations of the text.

64 The full list of points is as follows: 『定書名宜法古人；注佛經宜用儒書內傳說；注佛經宜戒穿鑿；注佛經宜戒空談；注佛經宜取法李善文選注；注佛經宜考索名物典故；注佛經宜校讐之學；注佛經宜闢偽經；注經不可與古人相爭；注經不可與今人相爭；注經宜在每句下用雙行小字；結論。』 Punctuation added. Ding, Foxue da cidian, pp. 25–42.

65 Ding’s Foxue da cidian defines lingyì 靈異 as “an abstruse, inconceivable phenomenon.” In using this term to signify miraculous events associated with Buddhist teachings 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 senaku ryōiki 日本國現報善惡靈異記). See Foguang da cidian, 1452.

66 Ding also notes another translation in one fascicle cited in the Lidai fabao ji 歷代法寶記 (Record of the Dharma-Jewel through the Generations) which is no longer extant.
focusing on any translation other than that of Kumārajiva (Jiumoluoshi 鴕摩羅什, 344–413), which is the one that he has consulted, but nevertheless all of the extant translations must be compared to each other in order to properly understand the text. The central theme of the Diamond Sūtra is that conventional, discriminatory perception does not reflect ultimate reality, and that words and concepts must be set aside so that one may attain the perfection of wisdom (prajñāpāramitā). Ding guides the reader in their interpretation of the text by identifying the three concepts at the core of the scripture: bentī 本體 (essence), xiuxing 修行 (practice), and jiujing 究竟 (the final [goal]). He further explains these with reference to the three types of Buddha nature postulated by Zhiyan 智嚴 (602–668) in his exegesis of the Huayan jing 華嚴經 (the Avatāṃsakā Sūtra), giving copious citations of places in the Diamond Sūtra where these concepts might be found.

With the core concepts of the scripture outlined, Ding proceeds to describe to the reader his own role in annotating and explaining the text. He writes that while he worked he maintained a purified mind and body, cut off all extreme thoughts, and took great care with each individual character and meaning. 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. This is followed by the scripture’s annotation notes (jianjing zaji), where he observes that in the past annotated editions of the scripture were either good but relied too much on specialized Buddhist vocabulary, or were easy to understand but full of mistakes. In either case, they were too confusing for a beginning student of Buddhism. Finally he offers a series of stories under the title “Jin’gang jing lingyiji 金剛經異記 (Record of Diamond Sūtra miracles), in which stories are cited from historical sources that demonstrate the power of the sūtra to produce miracles and unusual occurrences in response to reciting or possessing the scripture, ranging from the extension of one’s lifespan, to the granting of sons, to banishing ghosts and protection from weapons. The examples include stories from Tang- and Song-dynasty collections of anecdotes, grouped under fourteen subject headings. As will be discussed in the latter part of this section, collections of evidence arguing for the reality of scriptural claims would be the central theme of most other titles in the series, but shorter pieces like this also appear as part of the annotated scriptures. In the prefatory material to his annotated Diamond Sūtra, Ding has

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67 Ding, Foxue congshu, 2575.
68 Ding, Foxue congshu, 2576–2578. Zhiyan was later recognized as a patriarch in the Huayan school of Chinese Buddhism.
69 Ding, Foxue congshu, 2578–2579, 2586–2610.
thus summarized the main ideas of this scripture and linked them to other important scriptural texts, and he has also drawn 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.

Following these extensive prefatory notes is the annotated scriptural text itself. The exegesis and annotation in Ding’s works are presented in the form of interlinear notes printed in a smaller font arranged in dual half-columns (shuang-hang xiaozi 雙行小字) that follow the phrase being discussed, a standard method that had already been widely used in xylographic annotated classical texts. In his preface to the series, Ding notes that his annotation is modeled upon the xungu 訓詁 (classical gloss) style employed for the Chinese classics, following editions of the Erya 尋雅 (The Literary Expositor), an early dictionary and encyclopedia dating from the third century BCE, 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.⁷⁰ The similarity of Ding’s annotation style to that of annotated classical texts was apparently quite well-known and was used as a selling point in at least one advertisement and book catalogue.⁷¹ In Ding’s annotated scriptures, each phrase of the original text, sometimes as short as a single character, is directly followed by Ding’s explanation of the phrase’s terms and meaning, with passages in related texts cited in support of the interpretation. These referenced texts include other canonical scriptures, commentaries and other annotated editions, often noting the division or section (pin 品) of the work where the cited passage can be found; since standard printed editions such as the Taishō Canon had not yet come into widespread use, page numbers are not used in citations.

Ding’s exegesis is quite thorough, and assumes little to no previous knowledge on the part of the reader. For example, the first few phrases of the first section of the Diamond 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 Śrāvasti with a community of 1250 monks.⁷²

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⁷⁰ Yu, Zhongguo jinxiandai Fojiao renwu zhi, 425.
⁷¹ “Foxue congshu” 佛學叢書, Shijie Fojiao jushilin linkan 世界佛教居士林林刊 3 (1925), MFQ 141:215.
Figure 1: Sample page from Ding’s Annotated Diamond Sūtra. Scanned from Foxue congshu, 2612.
With Ding’s added interlinear notes, these two lines occupy about a full page in the reprint edition, with approximately 460 characters of exegesis used to explicate twenty-nine characters of scriptural text.\(^7\) The extensive notes explain how the community of monks, led by Ānanda, assembled after the death of the Buddha to compile the scriptures based on what they had heard him preach; how the *Fodi jinglun* (Treatise on the Buddha-bhūmi Sūtra) interprets the word “once” in two different ways;\(^7^4\) that “the Buddha” refers to Śākyamuni Buddha; that Śrāvasti 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 歧 (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 later be collected in Ding’s Buddhist dictionary *Foxue da cidian*, indicating that in his annotation work, he sought to explicate each term within the context of the particular text rather than in the more broad and generic sense favored in a lexicographical study.\(^7^5\) In total, Ding’s annotated Diamond Sūtra runs to forty-five double pages, representing three quarters of the volume, with the rest being prefatory notes, but curiously the edition omits the thirty-three character zhenyan 真言 (mantra) that normally appears at the end of the text.\(^7^6\)

In total, Ding published fourteen annotated scriptures in 1918, the first year of the series’ publication, with several more published in the years that followed. From 1919 onward this genre of text is first joined by, then eclipsed in number by another, the introductory book (rumen shu 入門書) or book for beginning study (chuxue shu 初學書). With the inclusion of these titles, which are primarily collections of tales describing experiences of Buddhist merit, karma, and retribution manifesting themselves in the lives of the narrators, Ding demonstrates his concern with proving to the reader that the scriptures have had concrete effects in

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73 See Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 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 *Xinjing xiangzhu* 心經詳註 (The Heart Sutra, annotated in detail), Ding supersedes 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 Ding, *Foxue congshu*, 2475–2478 for the preface to this work.

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

75 The dictionary definition for yishi 一字, for example, cites instead the first fascicle of *Guan wuliang shou Fojing shu* 觀無量壽佛經疏 by Shandao 善導 (613–681).

76 The mantra is rendered phonetically, and is included in the Taishō canon edition of the scripture: 「那謨婆伽跋帝 胎嘌嚕 波羅謨多曳 唵 伊利尼 伊室利 輸嚕誦 毘舍耶 毘舍耶 莎婆誶。」 T08.235 p.752 c05–07.
the world throughout history. Similar thematic collections of miracle tales had been produced in medieval China by Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) and other authors, collections which themselves were often assembled from a range of other sources. Ding presents these tales for the novice reader in order to, as one of the titles in the series terms it, “awaken faith in Buddhist Studies.” To Ding, publishing Buddhist texts was thus not only a matter of making them legible and comprehensible to the readers, but also of establishing their relevance as objects embodying a very real super-normal power.

Buddhist books written for novices and based on the model of the educational textbook had begun 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 followed by brief articles in the Buddhist magazine *Foxue congbao* such as “Foxue qianshuo” 佛學淺說 (Elementary explanation of Buddhist Studies) in issue 1 (1912), and Yang’s “Shizong lüeshuo” 十宗畧說 (Brief explanation of the Ten Schools) in issue 4 (1913). More recently, commercial presses in Shanghai had begun to publish their own 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 Śākyamuni 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 in Shanghai by the Commercial Press (Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館) in 1917 and later reprinted in 1919 and 1926, was another example of this genre, written by Jia Fengzhen 賈豐臻 (fl. 1910s–1930s) who later also published an introductory book on philosophy and a history of lixue 理學 (Neo-Confucian

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78 The title is *Foxue qixin bian* 佛學起信編, which Ding references in his preface to *Foxue da cidian* as representative of the books for the beginners in general. The use of qixin in the title is likely a reference to the well-known text *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論 (Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith).

79 MFQ 1:41–8, 2:21–27. Yang’s textbook continued to be reprinted and sold through the 1940s. See for example *Foxue banyuekan* 佛學半月刊, issues 217 and 233, reprinted in Huang Xianian 黃夏年, ed., *Minguo Fojiao qikan wenxian jicheng buniban* 民國佛教期刊文獻集成補編, vol. 65 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 2008), 108, 377. This collection is hereafter cited as MFQB. For a broader survey of Buddhist books for beginners that includes part of the discussion presented here, see Scott, “The Publishing of Buddhist Books for Beginners.”
These works were intended for use not in a classroom setting, as with a textbook, but rather as self-study guides for the independent reader. As such they assumed minimal background knowledge on the part of the student. Ding’s books for beginners were structured in much the same way, with each title presenting a similar body of material in a different style, rather than building upon each other like a series of textbooks each designed for a different level of student or pedagogical stage.

Two lay Buddhist authors contributed to Ding’s books for beginners. The first, Mei Guangxi 梅光羲 (Mei Xieyun 梅擷芸, 1880–1947), 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 of Hu-guang 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 had also been a member of a scriptural recitation society in Beijing, and was a co-founder of the Beijing Scriptural Press 北京刻經處 along with Xu Weiru 徐蔚如 (1878–1937); he later became well-known for his studies of the Consciousness-only (weishi 唯識) school of Buddhist philosophy.

Mei was well-connected to the network of publishers and authors that had grown out of Yang’s press, but by the time Ding’s series was published he had moved to Ji’nan 济南 in Shandong province, somewhat removed from the Buddhist publishing centers of Shanghai, Nanjing, and Beijing. Although he was not directly involved in the project, Wan Jun 萬鈞 (Wan Shuhao 萬叔豪, fl. 1921–1936) is credited as the source of many of the stories included therein. Little is known of his biography, but Wan was active as an author and publisher; he was the an-

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80 Xie was a schoolteacher and scholar of Chinese literature and Buddhist history. See the very short introduction to the reprint edition of his book in Lan Jifu 蓝吉富, ed., Xiantai Foxue daxi 现代佛学大系 (Taipei: Mile chuban she, 1984), vol. 46. Xie uses 心理学 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 dharma-lakṣaṇa 法相, prajñā 般若, and tathāgata-garbha 如來藏 schools. Zhu Ziqing 朱自清 mentions Jia’s book in his article “Maishu 買書 (Buying Books) in Shuixing 水星 (Mercury) 1, no. 4 (Jan. 10, 1935.) 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.

Chapter Three: Navigating the Sea of Scriptures: Buddhist Studies Collectanea

As preface I will say that 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 they don’t take them to be myths of high antiquity, then they interpret them as parables of the philosophers. Among those whose mind of faith (xin faith) is not strong, there are many who stop halfway along the path. If one wishes to plumb the abstruse teachings of the Buddhist scriptures, one must take a mind of faith as one’s basis. Further, those who wish to obtain a mind of faith cannot but first seek proof of causality spanning the three periods and rebirth in the six realms. This type of evidence is not something that can be satisfied by empty words, nor something that one could exhaustively obtain even after decades of reading.

One must, from the writings of the great scholars of the past several hundred years, those such as Wang Yuyang 王宇洋 [1634–1711], Ji Xiaolan 紀曉嵐 [1724–1805], Yuan Zicai 袁子才 [1716–1797], Yu Quyuan 俞曲園 [1821–1907], Bo Shuyun 薄樹耘 [d.u.], and other masters, seek out the evidence which is sufficient to aid us in giving rise to correct faith in beginning students. [One must] organize and collate it, verify and categorize it, and only then can one person obtain the reading experience of several hundred years.

As prefacer of the edition of Yang’s Fojiao zongpai xiangzhù 佛教宗派詳註 (Detailed annotated Buddhist schools and sects) that was published by the Shanghai Medical Press in 1921,² he was also the founder of the Central Scriptural Press 中央經緯院 in Beijing in 1926.³ Most of the editing and annotations, however, are credited to Ding alone.

One of the earliest of the eight introductory texts in the series, Foxue qixin bian 佛學起信編 (Awakening of Faith in Buddhist Studies, 1919), includes a preface by Ding that outlines the reasoning behind collecting the material for this genre of book:

82 Note that the entry in Yu, Xiandai Fojiao renwu cidian, for 萬釗 refers to the pen name of a different individual.
83 See Scott, “Conversion by the Book,” chapter five, section four.
85 Ding, Foxue congshu, 2.447–148.
Ding identifies a lack of belief in karma (yìnguǒ 因果) and rebirth (lúnhuì 輪迴), two of the central doctrines underpinning Buddhist ethics, cosmology, and eschatology, as a major problem facing those who try to begin Buddhist studies. The solution is for readers to find evidence for these doctrines, but such evidence is scattered among countless texts and would require a lifetime to acquire; luckily, scholars of the past have already collected such evidence for us, and Ding suggests that if we rely on their insights then we can indeed find the evidence we need to foster a mind of faith.

The difficulties Ding sees among novice students of Buddhism are precisely those that he himself had faced during his initial foray into reading Buddhist scriptures. Later in this preface he relates how after he became fond of reading 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 faith.” Indeed, the books for beginners in his series are overwhelmingly focused on these types of evidentiary questions. Apart from offering evidence for causality and rebirth as mentioned in the preface above, the books offer stories as proof for the existence of different types of spirits, the underworld, and rewards for filiality and generosity, with most themes appearing in several titles. They also include several sections that explore the historical development of Buddhism in Indian and Chinese history; a different type of “evidence” than that provided by narrative tales, but one which would become increasingly important in Buddhist publications.⁸⁶ Additionally, most of these books offer suggestions for further reading, either by listing the titles and abstracts of Ding’s annotated scriptures as in 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 dictionaries Foxue da cidian, and Foxue xiao cidian by Sun Zulie 孫祖烈.⁸⁷

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. For example, the entire second section (bian 編) 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, 356–374, 433–488. Histories of Buddhism written by Chinese Buddhist authors would begin to appear in the 1920s and 1930s, with two of the most comprehensive being Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬, Zhongguo Fojiao shi 中國佛教史 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1933) and Huang Chanhua 黃懺華, Zhongguo Fojiao shi 中國佛教史 (Changsha: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1940).

⁸⁶ For example, the entire second section (bian 編) 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, 356–374, 433–488. Histories of Buddhism written by Chinese Buddhist authors would begin to appear in the 1920s and 1930s, with two of the most comprehensive being Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬, Zhongguo Fojiao shi 中國佛教史 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1933) and Huang Chanhua 黃懺華, Zhongguo Fojiao shi 中國佛教史 (Changsha: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1940).

⁸⁷ Starting to read Yiyue jingdian 宜閱經典 (Scriptures suitable for reading) is actually the eighth “stage” of beginning Buddhist studies described in the book. Ding, Foxue congshu, 755–766. Advertisements appear on pp. 680, 890.
要 (Elementary outline of Buddhist Studies), a brief but pithy title in the series first published in 1920 and later reprinted in 1935. A publisher’s note on the inside cover states 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, and that reprinting and distributing the book would bring measureless merit, indicating that it was not intended to produce a financial profit for Ding’s press, but rather fits into the model of meritorious publishing. The first chapter 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 sustained throughout the rest of the text, with Han posing questions and Ding offering responses supported by selected textual passages. Han brings up a passage from one of Ding’s published books on medicine which states that no spirit exists after death, and uses 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 twenty-five years previously, 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 at an early stage of study would deny their existence. As for the claims 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 evidence to prove their existence, and encourages Han to read certain books to see such evidence for himself. After a night of study, Han is converted from his erroneous views, and asks Ding to guide him further 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!”

88 On publishing for merit, see also the chapters by Wang and Katz in this volume. 89 Ding, Foxue congshu, 33–39. The frontispiece notes that the costs of printing were 160 yuan, of which 100 yuan remained to be raised. This is close to but slightly different from the story told in the opening chapter, mentioned below. One bibliographic entry for this title, S0194 in the Digital Catalogue of Chinese Buddhism, is listed 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. 90 Han also mentions that those who study new learning are all calling out loudly to expel these “absurd doctrines,” and that there are some who publish printed material that is spread to every province. The experts Ding mentions in response include one Yu Zhonghuan 俞仲瑲, 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.
Ding instructs Han to read four other works that appear in the Buddhist Studies series, as well as the essentials from Dengbudeng guan zalu 等不等觀雜錄 (Miscellaneous records of observing equality and inequality) by Yang Wenhui. The chapters that follow this exchange continue this theme of presenting evidence for the existence of spirits and other supernatural phenomena in order to satisfy Han’s questions regarding Buddhist doctrines.⁹¹

Ding’s books for beginners are thus focused, not on issues of language and explication as in his annotated scriptures, but rather on the problem of lack of belief and the need for evidence to support the claims made in the scriptural texts. These claims described phenomena that went beyond the material world described by science, the existence and nature of which were then subjects of intense and public debate in modern China. While the May Fourth era of the nineteen-teens brought calls for the study of “Mr. Science” (Sai Xiansheng 賽先生), in the open intellectual environment of the early Republic many groups were dedicated to the study of spiritualism (lingxue 靈學), inspired partly by its popularity in late-Victorian Europe and North America.⁹² From 1918 to 1920 Zhonghua Books published the periodical Lingxue congzhi 靈學叢誌 (Journal of Spiritualism) for the Shanghai lingxuehui 上海靈學會 (Shanghai Spiritualist Society), and advertisements and articles relating to the society appear in the Buddhist periodicals Jueshe congshu 覺社叢書, Haichao yin 海潮音, and Foxue yuekan 佛學月刊. This group, with which Ding Fubao was directly involved, sought to investigate and document spiritual phenomena by drawing upon a multitude of East Asian and European textual sources, and reflects a widespread openness toward the supernatural among the cultural and political elite of Republican China.⁹³ The Buddhist monk Taixu, in contrast, remained opposed to recognizing the supernatural aspects of the Buddhist tradition and stressed instead its human and social elements, a stream of thought that would later develop into Humanistic Buddhism (renjian Fojiao 人間佛教). Ding, like the spiritualists, insists on the truth of Buddhism’s extra-material aspects, and recommends that anyone who doubts them need look no further than the evidence recorded

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⁹¹ The texts are Foxue chujie 佛學初階, Foxue qixin bian 佛學起信編, Foxue zhi jichu 佛學之基 础, and Foxue zhinan 佛學指南. On Dengbudeng guan zalu, see Goldfuss, Vers un bouddhisme du XXe siècle, 231.


in textual sources. “Chuyue Fojing zhi xiashou chu” 初閱佛經之下手處 (Where to start when beginning to read Buddhist scriptures), a list of titles in his series accompanied by short précis, is appended at the end of Foxue cuoyao. The listed books include quoted endorsements by Yinguang—“This book is indeed able to open one’s mind and stimulate the thinking of the next generation; of all the books that [Ding] has written, the benefits of this one are the most comprehensive”—and one by Daojie, and each listing of an annotated scripture is accompanied by an outline of its content and history.⁹⁴ Books in the series similarly refers the reader to other titles in the series, either through references in the prefatory matter, or more directly through book lists such as this appended to the text.

While annotated scriptures and books for beginners were both already important genres within the Buddhist textual corpus, in Ding’s series they were re-invented and intended to play new types of roles. The annotations in the scriptural texts rely not on the editor’s personal insight, but rather on guiding the reader toward cross-checking terms and teachings across several Buddhist texts, and investigating matters for themselves rather than following the religious guidance of an instructor. The Buddhist teachings, according to Ding, were inherent in the texts themselves, existing in the connections and relationships between the content of many different texts, and the core problem in understanding them lay in their great number and complexity. His exegesis sought to hew as close as possible to the grain of the text, even writing in formal, classical language rather than in print colloquial (baihua 白話), which was quickly spreading as an accessible print language in China.⁹⁵ His books for beginners, on the other hand, focused on problems of belief and evidence, rather than introducing the reader to a few select parts of the canon, or laying out the structures and patterns of the Buddhist tradition in easily understood terms, as earlier textbooks like Yang Wenhui’s had done. In this he pursued a parallel course to that of his earlier studies of medicine, where truth was to be found not in one’s interpretation of the material, but in studying what others had discovered and the evidence they have recorded to support their claims. In several instances Ding’s works liken Buddhism to a medicine for the mind, and the connection to hygiene and health was at times made much more directly: appended to Foxue cuoyao, for example, is a brief essay entitled “Weisheng yaoyu shize” 衛生要語十則 (Ten essential phrases for protecting life) that lists ten practices

⁹⁴『此書洵足以發聾振聵，啓迪後人，疇隱所著各書，惟此為益最溥。』 Ding, Foxue congshu, 131–140.
⁹⁵ A book from 1925, for example, presented the Diamond Sūtra with colloquial explanations, and was subtitled xinshi biaodian 新式標點 (punctuated in the new style). See its entry in the Digital Catalogue of Chinese Buddhism, S0474.
that address physical and mental health: sleeping eight hours per night, deep
breathing exercises, moderation in carnal desires, brisk walking exercises, and
so on.96 The books in Ding’s series were thus oriented toward providing the in-
dividual reader the tools they needed to study Buddhism for themselves, to ap-
prehend the teachings of the Buddhist scriptures without the help of an outside
instructor, and to build up their own hermeneutic strategies based on material
that Ding has selected from the Buddhist textual canon. The effect would be
like medicine on people’s minds, empowering them toward greater health and
understanding. This overall orientation is best exemplified in Ding’s dictionary
of Buddhist Studies, the largest single work in the series and the first of its
kind in modern China.

4. Buddhist Lexicography

Lexicography was at the core of Ding’s decade-long involvement with Buddhist
studies. As a bibliophile and book collector, he began compiling his own lexicon
of Buddhist terms to help him read and understand the scriptures that he was
adding to his collection. Textual exegesis is a central topic throughout his anno-
tated scriptures and books for beginners, and the publication of his Foxue da ci-
dian 佛學大辭典 (Great dictionary of Buddhist studies) in 1921 marked not only
the completion of the core of his Buddhist collectanea, but also the beginning of
a shift in his interests toward other religious traditions. His dictionary has since
become a key source for the study of Chinese Buddhist lexicography, having
been reprinted a number of times, most recently as a digital edition online.97
Apart from its legacy as a scholarly reference book, the dictionary is important
for a number of reasons. Like annotated scriptures and books for beginners, lex-
icographical works were already part of the Chinese Buddhist textual corpus, but
the provenance and structure of Ding’s dictionary were both unprecedented in
this context, introducing new organizational and exegetical features. Additional-
ly, the influence of Japanese Buddhist scholarship was a new factor, as Ding’s

96 Ding, Foxue congshu, 141–142.
97 Ding Fubao, Foxue da cidian 佛學大辭典, 16 vols. (Shanghai: Yixue shuju, 1921). Included in
the dictionary is Ding’s autobiographical chronology, Chouyin jushi ziding nianpu 畈隱居士自訂
年譜. A third edition was issued in 1929. The first post-1949 reprint was issued by the Huayan
lianshe 華嚴蓮社 in Taipei in 1956 in 4 volumes, and many reprints have followed. An HTML
version of the dictionary is maintained by the Shizi hou 師子吼 (Lion’s Roar) Buddhist Studies
Group of National Taiwan University at <http://cbs.ntu.edu.tw/dict/dfb/data/> , also currently
work is essentially a translation of a Japanese-language Buddhist dictionary first published in 1917. Previously, Buddhist texts from China had been widely disseminated in Japan, but for Japanese Buddhist scholarly works to make their way into China was, until the early Republic, much more rare. Finally, the dictionary was closely tied to Ding’s persona as an author and scholar, and more than any other work in the series seeks to exemplify the values and techniques that Ding saw as constitutive of “Buddhist Studies.”

The variety of methods, source texts, and exegetical strategies used by different Chinese translators of Buddhist texts in different eras gave rise to a large number of newly-coined and re-purposed Chinese terms through the Eastern Han (25–220) to the Tang (618–907) dynasties. One of the first efforts to standardize the meaning and pronunciation of this emergent Buddhist Hybrid Chinese was Yiqie jing yinyi (Sounds and meanings for all [the words in the] scriptures, 810 CE) by Xuanying (fl. mid. 7th c.) and Huilin (737–820). This lexicon provides explanations for individual characters and terms from 1,220 different Buddhist texts, corrects mistaken translations that were then in use, and provides phonetic Sanskrit original terms for specialist Buddhist words.⁹⁸ Similar types of lexicographic studies were produced throughout medieval and early-modern Chinese history, up to the compilation of Wuyi hebi jiyou (Essential collection of comparative translations from five languages) published during the Qianlong (乾隆 era (1735–1796) of the Qing dynasty. Reflecting the polyglot nature of the Qing state, this text presents translations of key Buddhist terms in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Manchurian, Mongolian, and Chinese.⁹⁹ In the nineteenth century no new major compilations of Buddhist lexicography were produced in East Asia, but from the first decade of the twentieth century Japanese Buddhist scholars began to publish dictionaries and other

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⁹⁸ Tso Sze-bong [Cao Shibang], “Lun Chen Yuan: Zhongguo Fojiao shiji gailun” 讀陳垣: 《中國佛教史籍概論》, Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal 中華佛學學報, no. 3 (1990): 268–270. <http://ccbs.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-BJ001/03_12.htm>. Xuanying, who assisted the great translator-monk Xuanzang (玄奘 ca. 602–664) in his translation work, starting compiling a lexicon but died before it could be finished, leaving a 25-fascicle manuscript. Huilin expanded Xuanying’s work and incorporated material from other authors, compiling it into his Huilin yinyi 慧林音義 in 100 fascicles. The work appears as T 54 no. 2128. Translation of title adapted from that in the Digital Dictionary of Buddhism.

⁹⁹ This dictionary was reprinted as Pentaglot Dictionary of Buddhist Terms in Delhi in 1961. See the entry in the Glossaries for Buddhist Studies collection of Dharma Drum Buddhist College, <http://buddhistinformatics.ddbc.edu.tw/glossaries/glossaries.php#pentaglot>, which also has a digital edition that omits the Tibetan for download.
types of specialized Buddhist reference books. One of the earliest was *Kaisetsu bongogaku* 解説梵語學 (Explication of Sanskrit linguistics), published in 1907 by the Jōdo-Shinshū-affiliated Buddhist Scholar Sakaki Ryōzaburō 梶原亮三郎 (1872–1946). Scholarly publications were part of a concerted effort on the part of Meiji-era Japanese Buddhists to argue for Buddhism’s status as a valid academic and scientific subject, and these dictionaries were one aspect of a much larger set of historiographical, philosophical, and exegetical works then being published in Japan. Modern dictionaries differed from earlier lexicographical works in having a more developed organizational structure, with indices so that readers can quickly find a particular term, and in the citation of a wide range of source texts as evidence for the editor’s interpretation.

Ding already had had a great deal of experience in translating Japanese-language medical texts when he selected *Bukkyō daijiten* 佛教大辭典 (Great dictionary of Buddhism, 1917) to translate as the basis for his Buddhist dictionary. Its author, Oda Tokunō 織田得能 (1860–1911), was, like many other Japanese Buddhist scholars of his era, a Jōdo Shinshū 淨土真宗 priest and a member of the Higashi Honganji 東本願寺 sub-sect. He traveled to different Buddhist lands, studying in Thailand from 1888 to 1891, visiting China in March 1900 and from there heading to India, returning home to Japan in April of the following year. He later applied his lexicographical skills to other projects, publishing an annotated translation of a commentary by Fazang 法藏 (643–712) on the *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論 (Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith) in 1910. His dictionary, however, which he began to compile in 1898 while still working abroad, was his magnum opus. A fictional and fairly melodramatic stage play based on his final days portrays Oda neglecting his priestly duties, his wife’s attentions, for an outline of some of these early works, as well as those that followed later in the Shōwa and Heisei eras, see Yu Chongsheng 余崇生, “Riben Fojiao gongju zhu bianji tese lüeshu 日本佛教工具書編輯特色略述, *Fojiao tushuguan guankan 佛教圖書館館刊*, no. 47 (June 2008): 98–102.

100 Oda Tokunō, *Bukkyō Daijiten* 佛教大辭典 (Tokyo: Ōkura shuten 大倉書店, 1917). An expanded and corrected twelfth edition was published in 1929, an original copy of which I was able to consult at the National Taiwan University library. The 1962 reprint edition has the same content and pagination as this edition in a smaller page and font size.

and his health to work on his manuscript.¹⁰³ The dictionary is a massive text: the 1929 expanded and corrected edition runs to over two thousand pages. Entries are ordered by the first syllable of their Japanese pronunciation, with an alphabetical index of Romanized terms, followed by a stroke-order index at the end. Sadly, however, Oda would die before its completion, leaving it to his friends and colleagues Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 (1866–1945), Haga Yaichi 芳賀矢一 (1867–1927), Ueda Kazutoshi 上田萬年 (1867–1937), and Nanjō Bunyu 南条文雄 (1849–1927) to complete and publish the work. Oda’s dictionary was a major production; Takakusu and Nanjō were two of the leading figures of Japanese Buddhist scholarship of that day, and Haga and Ueda were prominent scholars of kokugaku 国學, the study of nativist Japanese history, literature, and language.¹⁰⁴ Oda himself figures large as the authorial persona behind the work. An inset image in the prefatory material to the 1929 edition of his dictionary depicts him on pilgrimage to ancient ruins while revising his manuscript, a sample sheet of which is pictured in the background.

In China, the first decade of the Republic was a foundational era for modern scholarship on Chinese lexicography, and in publishing dictionaries for scholarly, official, professional, and general use.¹⁰⁵ Two important publications were both issued in 1915: Zhonghua da zidian 中華大字典 (Great Zhonghua dictionary), published by Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 (Zhonghua Books), lists the meaning and pronunciation for some 48,000 characters, and is based on the contents of the Kangxi zidian 康熙字典 (Kangxi dictionary) of 1716. The other, Ci yuan 辞源 (Origins of words), published by Zhonghua’s competitor Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館 (The Commercial Press), focuses on the definition of words of two or more characters, and includes more encyclopedic content. The appearance of these publications reflects both the ability of the print technology of the time to handle very large, complex, and dense texts, as well as the emergence of a

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¹⁰⁴ Takakusu was later involved in compiling and publishing the Taishō Canon; Haga and Ueda both served as president of Kokugakuin University 国學院大學 in Tokyo; Nanjō is mentioned in connection with Yang Wenhui in Scott, “Conversion by the Book,” chapter 1. Before Ding’s translation was published, Oda’s dictionary was not unknown in China. A brief translated section of preface and a few sample entries appear in the periodical Jueshe congshu 觉社叢書, no. 2 (Jan., 1919) and no. 4 (July, 1919), MFQ 7:249–250, MFQB 1:68–71.

growing market of literate readers in need of a guide to word meanings and origins. In the first decades of the twentieth century Chinese Buddhists, however, had not yet embraced lexicography as had Buddhists in Japan, and works such as *Fanyi mingyi ji* (Compilation of translated Buddhist terms) by the Song-dynasty monk Fayun (1088–1158) were still being reprinted.¹⁰⁶ Just three years before the publication of Ding’s dictionary, *Fo Erya* (The Buddhist literary expositor), written by the Qing jinshi official Zhou Chun (1729–1815), had been reprinted in Shanghai by the Guoxue fulunshe (Society to Support Discussion of National Learning). Like its classical namesake *Erya* (The literary expositor), *Fo Erya* is a dictionary-encyclopedia with pithy explanations of Buddhist terms and phrases grouped by type.¹⁰⁷

Figure 2: Oda Tokunō as depicted in his *Bukkyō Dōjiten*. Cropped image, scanned from a photocopy of the original supplied by the National Taiwan University Library.

¹⁰⁶ One edition of *Fanyi mingyi ji* was printed by the Jinling Scriptural Press in 1878. See Digital Catalogue of Chinese Buddhism, S2108.

¹⁰⁷ The term *mohe* 摩訶, for example, is glossed simply as ‘big’ *da*. Zhou Chun 周春, *Fo Erya* (Shanghai: Guoxue fulunshe, 1917 [original preface dated 1791]). Before this reprint was
Works such as these were valuable resources for the study of Buddhist lexicography, but they lacked the valuable indices of new-style dictionaries, and did not reflect the latest scholarship on textual origins, sources, and translation.

Missionary and Orientalist scholars, meanwhile, were among the pioneers of compiling multilingual Chinese dictionaries to help in their publishing and research efforts. The groundbreaking Chinese-English dictionary by the Anglo-Scottish missionary Robert Morrison (馬禮遜, 1782–1834) was first published in Macao from 1819 to 1823 and reprinted in Shanghai in 1865, and Hua-Ying zidian 華英字典 (A Chinese-English Dictionary) by Herbert Giles (翟理斯, 1845–1935) was published in Shanghai in 1892 and in London in 1912.¹⁰⁸ By the late 1910s European and North American scholars were producing dictionaries specifically for religious terminology such as Xinyue Xi-Han-Ying zidian 新約希漢英字典 (Greek-Chinese-English Dictionary of the New Testament) by John Leighton Stuart (司徒雷登, 1876–1962).¹⁰⁹ While studies of Chinese lexicography were proliferating among Chinese and foreign presses, dictionaries were playing a central role in the growth of general literacy among the citizens of the new republic, and in the development of guoxue 國學 (National Learning). By the 1920s there were a few people who began to suggest that a newly-compiled Buddhist lexicon would be of great use to Chinese Buddhists, and that the lexicographical works of dynasties past were no longer sufficient.¹¹⁰

Foxue da cidian, translated and edited by Ding Fubao, was the first major newly-produced Chinese-language Buddhist dictionary since the mid-Qing. The work consists of several prefaces by Ding and others, a note on annotating scriptures,¹¹¹ a series of four photographic images of Ding Fubao, the main section of lexicographic entries, an autobiographical chronology (ziding nianpu 自訂年譜) covering Ding’s life up to 1921, a set of general remarks, and finally a


¹¹⁰ In 1920 a contributor to the periodical Xin Fojiao 新佛教 (New Buddhism) suggested compiling a Fojiao xin ciyuan 佛教新辭源 (New origins of Buddhist words), and even included a number of example definitions with textual citations in their articles, but the proposed project was evidently never realized. Zhulin 竹林, “Fojiao xin cidian” 佛教新辭源, Xin Fojiao 新佛教, no. 2 (March 25, 1920), MFQ 7:330–331, 345.

¹¹¹ Similar to those discussed in section 3, above.
list of stroke-number sections and an index. The front matter was first published separately in 1919, and individual pieces also appeared reprinted in several Buddhist periodicals in the 1920s. Although there is no publication information included in the book, references in advertisements in *Haichao yin* indicate that it was first published between February and May 1921, with another edition or a later print run issued in 1925 that has since become widely-cited as the earliest edition.¹¹² The first edition was printed across sixteen volumes and ran to more than 1,700 pages, while the later 1929 expanded edition was issued in four larger volumes. The entries are printed in three columns with key terms indicated by both overdotting and being enclosed in brackets, while the definitions are punctuated with both pauses (・) and full stops (。). Sanskrit words are sometimes included, rendered phonetically in Roman letters. Twelve prefaces open the first volume, three of which were written by Ding, with others contributed by Xianyin 頌陰 (1902–1925), a disciple and student of Dixian and graduate of his Guanzong Research Society; Xu Shaozhen 徐紹榛 (1861–1936), a revolutionary and official in the Guomindang; Wu Yanfang 伍延芳 (1842–1922), legal scholar and former Qing diplomat; Wang Xinsan 王心三 (1882?–1950), a former publisher and Tongmenghui member who had turned to Pure Land practice upon reading Yinguang’s letters; and Yan Xishan 閻錫山 (1883–1960), who had studied in Japan, participated in the 1911 revolution, and was then in effective control of Shanxi province.¹¹³ Apart from Xianyin, who was only eighteen at the time, the contributors were all prominent figures in the political, publishing, and scholarly spheres of Republican China.

Later in the prefatory materials are four photographic pages, each with an image of Ding in a different stage of his life. The earliest photograph depicts the author during his time of studying the humanities (*wenxue* 文學), and the accompanying caption explains his reasons in including these images of himself: that such has been the practice of recent literary collections, and in dictionaries written by authors both at home and overseas, and that by doing so he hoped to show how youth passes to maturity, and then to old age, in a mere instant.

¹¹² A list of “new publications” in the supplement to the December, 1920 edition of *Haichao yin* lists a *Fojiao da cidian* 佛教大詞典 as part of a *Foxue congshu* 佛學叢書 series. MFQ 149:120. The book list for Shanghai Medical Press published in *Haichao yin* in February 1921 lists the dictionary as being “in press” 在刊, while an advertisement for the dictionary in the May 1921 issue lists it for sale at 12 yuan, plus 63 cents for postage. MFQ 150:52, 464. For the 1925 citation, see *Digital Catalogue of Chinese Buddhism*, S0154.

Figure 3: Four Phases of Ding Fubao’s Life: Studying Literature, Studying Science, Studying Medicine, and Studying Buddhism. Ding, *Foxue da cidian*, vol. 1, unpaginated section. The four photographic pages have been combined here into a single image.
The second photograph, picturing Ding during his studies of mathematics and physiology and posed with full-sized models of the human skeleton and internal organs, takes up the anatomical theme in referencing a well-known exchange regarding Bodhidharma’s disciples attaining the “skin” of his teachings. The last two images, showing Ding first as medical student and then as student of Buddhist Studies, have no captions, but they imply a progression both of his physical state and his intellectual development, from youth and literature to advanced age and Buddhism. The inclusion of the medical models hints at the pervasive theme of Buddhism as medicine. The parallel to the depiction of Oda Tokunō in his dictionary cannot be ignored, but there were also Chinese Buddhist precedents in the front matter of several periodicals, Foxue congbao and Fojiao yuebao 佛教月報 for example, which featured lithographic images of living Buddhists and famous sites.

Secondary sources have often alluded to the fact that Ding’s work is a direct translation and adaptation of the content of Oda’s dictionary, but the brief comparison of a few sample entries outlined above demonstrates just how closely Ding followed the phrasing and terminology of the Japanese original. As illustrated in the table above, the key terms, part of speech, sentence flow, word order, and quoted passages are nearly identical except where grammatical differences between Japanese and formal written Chinese required an alteration. For the quoted passages, Ding simply removed the kaeriten 返り点 that had been added to the original which helped readers parse the phrases into Japanese word order. Above the level of individual entries, however, Ding did exercise an editorial influence; for example, he removed 「一人」, which in Oda which was a disambiguation entry for two other phrases, and added an entry on 「一人作虚」, which was not present in the Japanese original. Ding also excised several terms and phrases that were only used in scriptural texts composed in Japan. The core of Ding’s dictionary is thus derived from the lexicographical and bibliographic scholarship of Oda Tokunō, and only incidentally a product of his many years of researching Buddhist terminology, although it is this aspect of his experience that figures so prominently in several places in his published work.

114 The full passage is: 『道副師曰: 不執文字, 不離文字, 而為道用。遠師祖師曰: 汝得吾皮, 鸣乎! 皮亦豈易得哉。況由皮而得肉, 由肉而得骨乎。肉與骨尚可見, 而髓則不易見, 所以得髓者愈難。佛學大辭典, 皮外之皮也。余觀此圖之肉與骨, 而愈為惕然矣。若云可作白骨觀淺之乎, 視此圖也。』 Punctuation added. Ding, Foxue da cidian, unpaginated prefatory section.


116 These marks are not reproduced in the table above.

117 An abbreviated form of “一人作虚萬人傳實,” a gongan 公案 from the Konggu ji 空谷集, a Song-dynasty collection. See Foguang da cidian, [空谷集].
works. As mentioned above, when annotating Buddhist scriptures himself, Ding tended to formulate his own definitions and cite his own references rather than rely on those in Oda’s dictionary. Instead of forming the basis of Ding’s Buddhist scholarship, as one might assume given the size of the work and the importance of terminology in his series, it is more likely that his dictionary was instead composed primarily for others to help in their own self-directed studies.

Fouxue da cidian had a wide-ranging influence on contemporary and later Buddhist print media. It features in several Buddhist books and periodicals from the 1920s onward, in the form of reprinted sections, articles discussing

Table 2: Comparison of Sample Entries in Oda Tokunó and Ding Fubao

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<th>Oda, 1917 [292]</th>
<th>Ding, 1921 [295]</th>
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<td><strong>ブツ</strong> 佛 (術語) <strong>Buddha</strong> 佛陀的略。又, 佛陀, 佛陀, 佛陀, 佛陀, 佛陀。</td>
<td>**【佛】 (術語) <strong>Buddha</strong> , 佛陀略。又作休, 佛陀, 佛陀, 佛陀, 佛陀, 佛陀。</td>
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<td>**【宗派】 (術語) 大聖出世、説大小半戸の諸教説、撮化一切の機縁、滅後賢聖各教に依て宗を分ち、以て有縁を化益す。今列挙滅後三國の諸宗如下。… (1517) **</td>
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<td><strong>ヤウド</strong> 淨土 (界名) 證者所住之國土なり、五濁の汚染を離るに故に淨土と云ふ。梁譔の【譔論八】曰「所居之土無於五濁、如彼玻瓈珂等、名清淨土。」大乘義章十日日「經中或時名佛地、或稱佛界、或稱佛國、或云佛土、或復說為淨洲、淨土、浄土、浄土。」 (970)</td>
<td>**【淨土】 (界名) 證者所住之國土也。無五濁之垢染、故云淨土。梁譔之譔論八曰：「所居之土無於五濁、如彼玻瓈珂等、名清浄土。」大乗義章十日日「經中或時名佛地、或稱佛界、或稱佛國、或雲佛土、或復說為淨洲、浄土、浄土、浄土。」 (1976) **</td>
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*a The key term for each entry is here highlighted in bold for clarity. The page number in the original is given at the end of each entry.

*b Both entries are followed by similar passages defining Buddhist schools in India, China (Shina支那), and Japan.
the work, and in advertisements and lists of Buddhist books published by Ding's Shanghai Medical Press. One of its earliest appearances is in the series title *Foxue cuoyao* (1920), wherein the dictionary is praised as “the mouthpiece of the scriptures, feast of the discourses, distinguishing large from small, both profound and historical.”¹¹⁸ A short advertisement appears over several issues of the periodical *Haichao yin*, and the dictionary's General Remarks *liyan* (前言). Ding's first preface, and Xianyin's preface are also reprinted in issues of *Haichao yin* from 1921 and 1922. At the time Ding's Shanghai Medical Press, along with his Wenming shuju, were two of the three main distributors for the periodical in which the pieces appeared. Xianyin's preface was also printed in the periodical *Foguang yuebao* 佛光月報 (Buddha light monthly), a publication of Huayuan University 華嚴大學 based at Hardoon Gardens in Shanghai, and which was also retailed by the Medical Press.¹¹⁹ One series of articles by Xianyin on matters relating to Japan includes a short note on the relationship between Ding's dictionary and esoteric Buddhist teachings:

> The prosperity of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan is truly admirable. Tiantai followers transmitted esoteric teachings called *Taimi 台密*, and thus most of their teachings are in fact Esoteric writings. Oda Tokun 田辺恒, *Great Dictionary of Buddhism* 妙法辞典, translated and reprinted by Layman Chouyin [i.e., Ding Fubao]. I feel this is especially fine. It is truly an extremely good reference book for those studying the Esoteric canon. ... The prosperity of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan is truly admirable. Tiantai followers transmitted esoteric teachings called *Taimi 台密*, and thus most of their teachings are in fact Esoteric writings. Oda Tokun 田辺恒, *Great Dictionary of Buddhism* 妙法辞典, translated and reprinted by Layman Chouyin [i.e., Ding Fubao]. I feel this is especially fine. It is truly an extremely good reference book for those studying the Esoteric canon. ...

118 The full description is 「是書箋於纂經, 稽考於眾論, 續大識小, 亦玄亦史。華嚴如入天府, 瑰麗成人高贵, 大則黃鐘赤刀, 弘揚成就。小則蜚蜚眾說, 形色形形。奇奇奇怪, 闡著動心, 見者驚目。舉凡東西方與佛教有關係之學說, 悉貫注於斯, 海是名理之渾宏, 心王之獨選, 竄然為東西大小乘元氣浩瀚之一切經之總注也。其搜羅之廣博, 考據之精詳, 約此佛學小辭典多十倍。」丁氏, *Foxue congshu*, 160.

119 *Haichao yin* articles and advertisements appear in MFQ 150:52, 77–82, 464, 152:215–217, 236, 315–316, 470, 153:202, 347. The text of the first advertisement that features the dictionary on its own, that in the May 20, 1921 issue, MFQ 150:464, is very close in content to the précis printed in *Foxue cuoyao*. The *Foguang* article is from March 2, 1923, MFQ 12:82–84. See the listing of modern distributors found in MFQ 150:419. The third distributor was Taidong Books 泰東圖書局, also located in Shanghai. Advertisements were also published in 1924 and 1925 in *Shijie Fojiao jushilin linkan* 世界佛教居士林林刊, see MFQB 8:354, 9:66.

120 The latter part of the note, not translated above, is another indication that having a photograph of the author in a Chinese publication was still widely regarded as an oddity: 「丁氏
Xianyin’s identification of Oda and Ding’s dictionary as a valuable source for students may simply be in service of his personal quest to revive Esoteric Buddhism in China, a mission cut short by his untimely death at a young age, but it does reflect the fact that this work was a ready resource for different types of scholarly and doctrinal agendas among Chinese Buddhists.

The dictionary was widely advertised throughout the print run of *Foxue banyuekan* 佛學半月刊 (Buddhist studies biweekly), the periodical of Shanghai Foxue shuju 上海佛學書局 (Shanghai Buddhist Books), the largest specialist Buddhist press of the Republican era, which also sold the dictionary as part of its publication catalogue.¹²¹ The periodical ran from 1929 to 1941, and features advertisements both specifically for the dictionary and for the larger catalogue of Buddhist publications issued by the Medical Press. In January 1934 it also published an article by Chenkong 尘空 (1908–1979) that critiques and suggests corrections to the dictionary’s entry on *ba jingjie* 八敬戒 (the eight ethical precepts for nuns). Chenkong first quotes the entire entry, then points out that cited passage from *Sifen lü* 四分律 (The Four-Part Vinaya) is rendered incorrectly. He provides the correct passages from relevant sources, and argues that even if we put to one side the mistaken citation, the entry as published is still unclear, closing his article with a succinct list of each precept and an explanation of its meaning.¹²² Given Ding’s stated devotion to staying close to the original texts, the error described by Chenkong is quite surprising. Ordinarily a handful of mistakes編佛學大辭典，其卷首冠以肖影。華人士多非議之者，殊不知織田氏所編之佛教大辭典，其卷首固載有織田氏之肖影也。且東人士之著述，多冠肖影於卷首，不足為異，可笑華人士之少見多怪。見駱駝而曰馬腫背也。」Xianyin 蕭陰，"Liudong suibi" 留東隨筆，Haichao yin, year 5, no. 6 (July 21, 1924), MFQ 159:326–327.


¹²² The *Foxue banyuekan* advertisements were published between 1932 and 1934, and appear in MFQ 47:294, where Shanghai Buddhist Books is listed as a distributor, and MFQ 48:11, 474, 49:67. Chenkong’s article is from July 1934, MFQ 61:348–350. The dictionary is mentioned only a few times during the turbulent period of the Second Sino-Japanese War, when few Buddhist periodicals remained in print. See for example MFQ 55:51, MFQB 65:243, 386. An announcement in December 1943 informs the reader that one Master Bianneng 微能法師 intends to re-edit and publish the dictionary, while a very short advertisement for Ding’s edition appears the same month in the periodical *Huideng* 慧燈, MFQ 97:527; MFQB 74:134.
en citations in a work of hundreds of pages should not be cause for concern, yet the fact that the entire entry was judged deficient is an indication, albeit an isolated one, that there were more systemic problems with Ding’s work in the eyes of some of his contemporaries.

The dictionary did not spark an immediate flood of similar works, as sometimes occurred with successful publications in Republican China, and in fact for the remainder of the decade it would be older lexicons that would be reprinted most often. In 1923 in the same Buddhist Studies series, Ding published a reprint of Sanzang fashu 三藏法數 (Categories of Buddhist concepts from the Canon), a collection of definitions for numbered terms, such as the three realms (sanjie 三界) and the five skandhas (wuyun 五蘊), that was first compiled in the fifteenth century.¹²³ The ninth-century lexicon Yiqie jing yinyi 一 切經音義, mentioned at the start of this section, went through a number of reprintings and edited editions in the 1920s, including an indexed edition by Chen Zuolin 陳作霖 (1837–1920?) printed privately in Guangzhou in 1923 and in Shanghai by Ding in 1924, as well as reprints of the main and extended volumes also through Ding’s press, and another edition “with cited commentary and comments” by Tian Qian 田潜 (1870 – 1926) published in Beijing in the same year. Finally, in 1929 the Commercial Press, which printed very few Buddhist works under its own imprint, published the twelfth-century lexicon Fanyi mingyi ji 翻譯名義集 (Compilation of translated Buddhist terms) by Fayun 法雲 (1088 – 1158), also issuing a reprint in 1933.¹²⁴

There were a few newly compiled Chinese Buddhist dictionaries printed in the 1920s and 1930s. One of which, Foxue xiao cidian 佛學小辭典 (Concise dictionary of Buddhist studies) by Sun Zulie 孫祖烈 (Sun Jizhi 孫繼之, fl. 1910s–1930s), was issued as part of Ding’s series. This work is an abbreviated and simplified version of Ding’s larger dictionary, sparing the extensive explanations and citations in favor of short, simple definitions for terms. Shanghai Buddhist Books, which retailed Ding’s larger dictionary, also published its own Shiyong

¹²³ Its full title is Daming sanzang fashu 大明三藏法數. Ding’s preface to the work was reprinted in Shijie Fojiao jushilin linkan, nos. 1 and 2 combined issue, [1925?]. MFQB 7:78–79. See Digital Dictionary of Buddhism for title translation.

¹²⁴ Chen Zuolin, 陳作霖, Yiqie jing yinyi tongjian 一切經音義通檢 (Guangzhou: Jiangshi shenxiushulu, 1923; Shanghai: Wuxi Dingshi, 1924); Ding Fubao, ed., Yiqie jing yinyi zhengbian 一 切經音義正編, and Xilin, 希麟, ed., Xu yiqie jing yinyi 翻 一切經音義 (Shanghai: Wuxi Dingshi, 1924); Tian Qian 田潜, Yiqie jing yinyi yinshuo wenjian 一切經音義引説文箋 (Beijing: Wenkai zhai juan, 1924); Fayun 法雲, Fanyi mingyi ji 翻譯名義集 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1929). On the 1933 reprint, see Foxue banyue kan 佛學半月刊, no. 64 (Oct. 1, 1933), MFQ 48:474. Ding also published an ‘essentials’ edition of both volumes: Zheng xu yiqie jing yinyi tiyao 正繹 一切經音義提要, reprinted in Dong Lianchi 董蓮池, ed., Shuowen jiezi yanjiu wenxian jicheng 理文字研究文獻集 成 現當代卷, Vol. 8 (Beijing: Zaojia chuban she, 2008).
Foxue cidian 實用佛學辭典 (Practical Buddhist studies dictionary) in 1934, issuing three more reprints before 1950.¹² Abroad the production of Buddhist dictionaries continued, particularly in Japan, with works such as Hōbōgirin 法寶義林 (Forest of meanings of the Dharma jewels) by Sylvain Lévi (1863–1935) and Takakusu Junjirō, the first fascicle of which was published in Tokyo from 1929 to 1930, and a new Bukkyō daijiten 佛教大辭典 (Great dictionary of Buddhism) by Mochizuki Shinko 望月信亨, first published in 1932. Finally, Oda and Ding’s work would be one of main sources for the foundational English-language Buddhist dictionary translated by William Edward Soothill and Lewis Houdous published in 1937, and which since has been incorporated in digital form into the present Digital Dictionary of Buddhism edited by A. Charles Muller.¹²

The origins, composition, and legacy of Ding’s dictionary reflect the importance of Buddhist lexicographic studies, both in the narrow context of his book series and in the wider development of East Asian Buddhist scholarship. Ding’s Foxue da cidian, however, like Oda’s dictionary, was more than simply a reference book. The tragic story of Oda’s devotion to his task and the photographic and biographic representations of Ding’s personas in his dictionary attest to the importance of these works as products of a personal scholarly and religious devotion. By collecting the very terms of the Buddhist teachings and attempting to lay their meaning bare for the reader to access, lexicography was an essential part of Ding’s mission to help readers experience the immediate contact with the teachers and exegetes of eras past, as he himself had experienced when reading the scriptures.

5. Conclusion

Ding’s Foxue congshu series came to an end in 1924, when Ding felt that he had largely fulfilled the vow he made to reprint and distribute edited Buddhist texts.

¹²⁵ Sun Zulie 孫祖烈, Foxue xiao cidian 佛學小辭典 (Shanghai: Yixue shuju, [1919?]). There may also be a fifth edition from 1926. Foxue shuju bianji bu 佛學書局編輯部, Shiyong Foxue cidian 實用佛學辭典 (Shanghai: Foxue shuju, 1934, 1935, 1937, 1947). Note that the surtitle Shiyong is included in the title in some library and bibliographic catalogue entries but not others.

While a few more titles would later be added to the series, from this point onward Ding began to focus on other topics, including literature as well as Daoist religious texts. He continued to involve himself in Buddhist matters, however, joining the board of directors for the Shanghai Foxue shuju publisher, and his Buddhist book series remained in print, being widely advertised throughout the rest of the Republican period. The series also continued to exert an influence on its readership. For example, after the death of his father in 1921, Cai Niansheng 蔡念生 received a copy of Foxue cuoyao from a monk, sparking his interest in Buddhism. Since he was working in the provincial government of Fengtian 奉天 at the time, far removed from the publishing heartland of the Jiangnan region, Cai ordered Buddhist books through the mail, later becoming a well-known lay scholar of Buddhism. In a letter written in 1928, the Pure Land monk, scholar, and artist Hongyi 弘一 (1880–1942) praised the series and the dictionary, saying that they were especially suited for people who did not yet believe in Buddhism. Like the earlier efforts of monastic authors and lay publishers, Ding aimed to guide the reader of Buddhist scriptural texts through a difficult semantic and lexicographic landscape. Yet Ding’s series sought to pursue a rather new direction in Chinese Buddhist print culture, drawing upon established methods of exegesis but addressing itself to the independent, skeptical, and exacting reader of the modern era.

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127 Ding, Nianpu, 326, 388; Boorman, Biographical Dictionary of Republican China, vol. 3, 270; Liu Xun, Daoist Modern: Innovation, Lay Practice, and the Community of Inner Alchemy in Republican Shanghai (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 37.

128 See for example the advertisement in Luohan cai 羅漢菜 in October 1942, stating that free copies of Foxue cuoyao were available for the cost of postage, MFQ 88:241; another note regarding the distribution of the text appears in Jue youqing 覺有情, Oct. 1, 1942, MFQB 61:406.

129 See Yu, Xiandai Fojiao remwu cidian, 1583–1586; Yu, Zhongguo jinxiandai Fojiao remwu zhi, 431. Cai was the editor of the 1970 reprint of Ding’s series.

130 Lin Ziqing 林子青, ed., Hongyi fashi shu xin 弘一法師書信 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1990), 225. The series was also the target of some criticism, as in a 1923 article by Tang Xueyun 湯雪筠 (d.u.) which argued that the content of Ding’s books was not Buddhist at all. See Tang Xueyun 湯雪筠, “Yu Ding Fubao jushi taolun Foxue congshu” 與丁福保居士討論佛學叢書, Foxue xunkun 佛學旬刊, no. 26 (Jan. 4, 1923), MFQ 8:175–177.