Reassessing Printed Buddhist Frontispieces from Xi Xia

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Reassessing Printed Buddhist Frontispieces from Xi Xia

Shih-shan Susan Huang Rice University

Abstract:

This study uses printed Buddhist frontispieces to reevaluate Xi Xia visual culture and its connections to neighboring cultures—the Song, the Khitan Liao, and the Jurchen Jin. Many frontispieces, produced in large numbers with Chinese woodblock printing technology, have been excavated at Khara Khoto, Inner Mongolia, and sites in Gansu and Ningxia. Applying a visual approach, the author pays special attention to the uses of modular motifs across cultures. The production of Buddhist texts and frontispieces in early Yuan Hangzhou attests to the legacy of Xi Xia visual culture, which was promoted by Tangut monks active at the Chinese court and in the Jiangnan area. Far from being peripheral, Xi Xia’s visual culture participated in dynamic dialogues with its neighbors and deserves a reassessment.

Keywords: Tangut, Xi Xia, frontispiece, print culture, Buddhism

Recent archaeological discoveries have brought to light the diverse material and visual cultures of China’s Middle Period conquest dynasties. In particular, art historians have published sophisticated case studies of the Khitan Liao and the Jurchen Jin material cultures, drawing abundant artifacts from Liao and Jin tombs and Buddhist sites in northern and northeastern China. What deserves to be further studied is the visual culture

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of the Tangut Xi Xia (1038–1227), which has been characterized as peripheral to the overall visual cultures of Middle Period China. The Xi Xia kingdom was in fact a “lost empire of the Silk Road” that once played an important role in exchanging goods and cultural ideas with China, Tibet, India, and other places along the Silk Road. It was a multiethnic kingdom established by the Tangut people, also known as Dangxiang or Mi-nyag, a nomadic group originally from northeastern Tibet and the area around what is today Qinghai Lake, descendants of the ancient Western Qiang.


For the ground-breaking exhibition catalog featuring the Xi Xia artifacts discovered in Khara Khoto and now in Russian collections, see Mikhail Piotrovsky, ed., *Lost Empire of the Silk Road: Buddhist Art from Khara Khat (X–XIIIth Century)* (Milan: Electa, 1993). For a Chinese translation, see *Silu shang xiaoshi de wangguo: Xi Xia Heishuicheng de fojiao yishu* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1998). For Chinese introductions to Xi Xia relations with other groups, see Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, *Xi Xia yu zhoubian guanxi yanjiu* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2001); Gao Chunming, *Si Xia yishushi* (Shanghai: Shanghai Sanlian Shudian, 2010).

made Buddhism their state religion and enthusiastically sought Buddhist teachings and texts from neighboring cultures. Before the Mongol conquest in 1227, the Xi Xia had occupied for nearly two centuries a large territory in northwestern China, ranging from present-day Gansu to Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, and part of Shaanxi. Perhaps because very little of this was in the Chinese heartland, the Yuan did not compile an official history of the Xi Xia, leaving a blank that influenced all subsequent views of the Chinese past.

While a systematic comparison of Liao, Jin, and Xi Xia archaeological finds has yet to be conducted, suffice it to say there exists a fundamental difference between the Liao-Jin finds and their Xi Xia counterparts. First, while most of the former come from individual tombs in northern and northeastern China, most of the Xi Xia materials were found not in funereal contexts but in Buddhist sites in remote northwestern China, including Inner Mongolia’s Khara-Khoto and sites in Gansu and Ningxia.


Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhoubian 西夏與周邊, 1; Li Huarui, Song Xia guanxi shi 宋夏關係史, 3–4.

Very few Xi Xia tombs have been excavated. For a study of the royal tombs, see Steinhardt, “Tangut Royal Tombs.” The tomb inscriptions discovered in six Xi Xia tombs near Wuwei 武威, Gansu, in the 1970s suggest that cremation may have been a common practice in Tangut society. See Chang Lan 常岚 and Yu Guanjian 于光建, “Wuwei xijiao Xi Xia mu muzang tiji zhulun” 武威西郊西夏墓葬題記論述, Ningxia shehui kexue 2 (2014), 106–110; Wang Wei 王偉 and Ma Kehua 馬克華, “Cong Wuwei xijiao linchang Xi Xia mu tan Xi Xia de zhuti zangsu: huozang” 從武威西郊林場西夏墓塚西夏的主體葬俗—火葬, Lanzhou xuekan 蘭州學刊 4 (2000), 79–80.
murals, relief carvings, and metal artifacts so common in the Liao-Jin finds, what stands out among the Xi Xia materials is the numerous frontispieces—far more numerous than comparable specimens found in the Song, Liao, or Jin kingdoms—found at the beginning of individual Buddhist texts. These texts often take the form of folded paper scrolls printed using Chinese-inspired technology. Such frontispieces are the core primary sources for the following study.

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Past scholarship acknowledged Tibetan (or Himalayan) and Chinese styles as the backbone of Tangut Buddhist art. Rob Linrothe, furthermore, called such dualism “Buddhist heterotopia,” identifying it as a unique and positive feature of Tangut visual culture. At the time he wrote, in the mid-1990s, scholars of Xi Xia Buddhist art had tended to focus on the paintings discovered in Khara Khoto, linking their various styles and iconographies to the Tibetan tradition and saying little about the connection with China. More recent studies, however, have begun to question the Tibetan-Chinese dichotomy. According to Kirill J. Solonin, “Esoteric Buddhism was a substantial component of popular Buddhism in Northern China, and it probably incorporated both Tibetan and Chinese elements, thus emerging as a cult system partially independent from its Tibetan counterpart.” Solonin’s series of meticulous comparative studies indeed proved that Xi Xia Buddhism should be “put into a broader perspective of Tangut international relations during the 10–12th centuries,” that due to a shared experience and overlapping traditions “Tangut culture and religion should not be treated separately from those of the Khitan, Jurchen, and other peoples of the region.”

10 Kira Fyodorovna Samosyuk concluded that Tangut art “could not be distinguished from the Chinese or Tibetan originals.” See Samosyuk, “The Art of the Tangut Empire: A Historical and Stylistic Interpretation,” in Lost Empire of the Silk Road (see note 3), 66.


14 Solonin, “Khitan Connection of Tangut Buddhism,” 371; “Glimpses of Tangut Buddhism,” 70. In his erudite comments on an earlier version of the present paper, Daniel Stevenson also questioned the efficiency of the Tibetan-Chinese model of Buddhist transmission. He challenged the stereotype of a fixed and unchanging “Chinese Buddhism” and proposed to
Going beyond the fruitful Tibetan/Himalayan mode of inquiry that has enriched our understanding, the present study will explore the Chinese dimensions of Xi Xia art by placing a group of printed frontispieces in a context that includes Song, Liao, and Jin counterparts. Paying special attention to the modular motifs in mass-produced printed frontispieces found in all four cultures, I shall pursue a visual analysis faithful to the practices found in the different groups. In so doing, I hope to show how prints offer the researcher remarkable opportunities for answering transcultural and crossregional inquiries. As part of a mass-produced text (often in scroll format), the printed image was portable and accessible to large audiences spread across entire regions. Such mobile materials, however, pose special challenges for researchers, as many have come down to us detached from their original contexts. Furthermore, because new editions of woodblock prints were routinely made from stored blocks some time after they had been carved, dating such materials can be challenging and even impossible.

With the framework thus outlined, I begin with an introduction to Tangut archaeology. I then probe into the multicultural milieu of Buddhist printing in the Tangut kingdom, highlighting the contributions of the Tangut royal house and monks from a range of backgrounds. The core of the article examines the selected Xi Xia printed frontispieces, making connections to other print traditions, especially those of Song China, the Khitan Liao, and the Jurchen Jin. In my conclusion I examine selected works printed in the early Yuan period, specifically works linked to Tangut monks active in the Jiangnan area, to assess the legacy of Tangut Buddhist art and print culture.

**Tangut Archaeology**

In 1908 a Russian expedition led by the geographer Pyotry Kuzmich Kozlov traveled from northern Mongolia across the Gobi Desert to the mouth of the Edzin-Gol River in Inner Mongolia. This was the first group of foreigners to visit the ruins of Khara Khoto and take into account “the new infusions and iterations” mediated by “regional ‘Buddhisms’” in the northern corridor “stretching from Kashmir and Northwestern India, across the Himalayas to Xi Xia, Liao/Jin/Yuan, Korea and beyond.”

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16 For a map detailing Kozlov’s itinerary in Mongolia and Sichuan during 1907 and 1909, see Silu shang xiaoshi de wangguo, 30; for more on Kozlov’s first arrival in Khara Khoto in 1908, see 37, 39–40.
(Black Water), an ancient city that had stood in a large rectangular open space (roughly 385 × 325 meters) not far from a dry riverbed. As Kozlov’s diary noted, his team found “written documents (mainly in Chinese), paper money, vessels, and old weapons.” It “also found a small metal Buddhist statue, and a miniature booklet written in gold and exquisite Tibetan.” The following year, Kozlov’s team returned to Khara Khot and discovered in a Buddhist stupa one of the most exciting archaeological finds of the twentieth century—a treasure trove of thousands of printed books, manuscripts, portable paintings, statues, ceramics, Buddhist texts, and other documents. For the most part, these were products of the Xi Xia kingdom, but some objects were associated with other regimes—such as the Song, the Jin, and the Yuan. The range of styles and languages—Chinese, Tibetan, Uighur, and Mongolian—exhibited by the artifacts sheds new light on cross-regional exchanges in the Middle Period.

It took forty camels to transport more than eight thousand items out of the desert; they were added to the collection of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Saint Petersburg. Almost a century after their relocation to Russia, publication of these materials began. From 1996 to 2013 a joint effort by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Russian institute yielded twenty volumes of photographically reproduced documents.

17 Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan, Ecang Heishuicheng wenxian, 1: 7.
18 Some researchers argue that the artifacts were moved to the pagoda site after the Yuan occupied Khara Khot. For studies of the post–Xi Xia condition of Khara Khot, see Chen Bingying 陈炳熠 and Liang Songtao 梁松涛, “Heishuicheng feiqi de shijian ji yuanyin xintan” 黑水城廢棄的時間及原因新探, Ningxia daxue xue bao (renwen shehui kexue ban) 宁夏大學學報 (人文社會科學版) 31.2 (2009), 48–50, 68; Shu Xihong 舒锡红, “Heishuicheng ‘hebian data’ de xingzhi ji duandai—yi kaochadui de ditu he zhaopian wei zhongxin” 黑水城《河邊大塔》的性質及斷代—以考察隊的地圖和照片為中心, Xi Xia xue 西夏學 4 (2009), 157–164. Past scholarship noted Kozlov’s failure to keep meticulous stratigraphic records of the site before he relocated the artifacts. See Linothe, “Peripheral Visions,” 247 (esp. n39); Aurel Stein, Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-su and Eastern Iran (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), 2: 447; Kira Fyodorovna Samosyuk, “The Discovery of Khara Khoto,” in Lost Empire of the Silk Road (see note 3), 42.
19 Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yezhouhian, 3. Besides the famous double-headed Buddhist statue, which was sent to Saint Petersburg, most of the clay Buddhist statue greeting the Russian expedition at the pagoda site were too heavy to be carried away and thus were left buried under the sand and eventually disappeared from history. See Shu Xihong, “Heishuicheng ‘hebian data’ de xingzhi ji duandai,” 162.
20 Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan, Ecang Heishuicheng wenxian. For a recent study of the non-Buddhist documents collected by the Russian expedition, see Sun Jimin 孙继民, Song Kun 宋坤, and Chen Ruiqing 陈瑞青, Ecang Heishuicheng Hanwen fei fojiao wenxian zhengli yu yanjiu 俄藏黑水城漢文非佛教文獻整理與研究, 3 vols. (Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 2012).
In addition, Aurel Stein had visited Khara Khoto in 1914, taking away seven thousand additional items that were dispersed among the British Museum, the British Library, and the New Delhi Museum.  

Additional Xi Xia materials have been discovered by Chinese archaeologists in Buddhist sites and royal tombs in Gansu, Ningxia, and Inner Mongolia since 1917, resulting in more of these artifacts, documents, and prints in Chinese libraries and museums; these materials were published from 2005 to 2008. Important finds that have shed much light on Xi Xia society and technology include Revised and Newly Endorsed Law Codes of the Tiansheng Reign (Tiansheng gaijiu xinding lüling 天盛改舊新定律令) written in arcane Tangut script, and texts printed using movable-type woodblocks—the earliest extant examples of this technology, invented by the Chinese in the Northern Song. Other documents from a variety of cultures point to the Xi Xia’s possible contact with southern, central, and western Asia. These portable items, together with the Buddhist cave temples, pagodas, and tomb sites discovered in the past century, have greatly compensated for the lack of an official history of the Xi Xia. All of the excavated artifacts and documents make up

21 Stein, Innermost Asia; Linrothe, “New Delhi and New England.”
22 Xibei di er minzu xueyuan 西北第二民族学院, Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, and Yingguo guojia tushuguan 英国国家图书馆, eds., Yingguo guojia tushuguan cang Heishuicheng wenxian 英国国家图书馆藏黑水城文献, 4 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2005).
24 Shi Jinbo 史金波, Nie Hongyin 倪鸿音, and Bai Bin 白滨, Tiansheng gaijiu xinding lüling 天盛改舊新定律令 (Beijing: Falü Chubanshe, 2000); Yang Jitang 杨储堂, Fadian zhong de Xi Xia wenhua: Xi Xia “Tiansheng gaijiu xinding lüling” yanjiu 法典中的西夏文化：西夏《天盛改舊新定律令》研究 (Beijing: Falü Chubanshe, 2003); Shi Jinbo 史金波, Ya Sen 雅森, and Wu Shouer 吴守勇, Zhongguo huozi yinshuashu de faming he zaoqi chuanbo: Xi Xia he Huihu huozi yinshuashu yanjiu 中國活字印刷術的發明和早期傳播：西夏和回鶻活字印刷術研究 (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenshuan Chubanshe, 2000); Niu Dasheh 牛达生, Xi Xia huozi yinshua yanjiu 西夏活字印刷術研究 (Yinchuan: Ningxia Remin Chubanshe, 2004); Shi Jinbo 史金波, Xi Xia chuban yanjiu 西夏出版研究 (Yinchuan: Ningxia Remin Chubanshe, 2004), 77–94; Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifen 阳福学 and Chen Aifeng 陈爱丰, Xi Xia yu zhoubian 6–7.
25 Major Buddhist cave temples built or rebuilt by the Tangut include several of the Mogao and Yulin grottoes in Gansu. See Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, Zhongguo shiku: Anxi Yulinku 中國石窟：安西榆林窟 (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1997); Wang Jingru 王静如, “Dunhuang Mogaku he Anxi Yulinku zhong de Xi Xia bihu” 敦煌莫高窟和安西榆林窟中的西夏壁画,
the primary sources for an emerging field known as Tangutology (Xi Xia xue 西夏學),
represented by two scholarly journals, Xi Xia Xue 西夏學 and Xi Xia yanjiu 西夏研究,
launched in 2006 and 2010.26

**The Multicultural Milieu of Xi Xia Buddhist Printing**

Most of the printed Buddhist texts discovered in Khara Khotó were sponsored by the Xi Xia royal family; print runs were large. From 1031 to 1073, the Xi Xia lodged six requests with the Northern Song for copies of the newly printed compilation of Buddhist texts—the Kaibao canon (Kaibao zang 闕寶藏).27 Major religious sites in the Xi Xia capital, Xingqing fu 興慶府 (today’s Yinchuan 銀川, in Ningxia), such as Gaotai Monastery (Gaotai si 高泰寺) and Chengtian Monastery (Chengtian si 承天寺), were built in 1047 and 1055 in part to house copies of the Kaibao canon.28 In addition, the Xi Xia may have

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27 Xi Xia offered to pay Song China seventy horses in exchange for every set of the printed Buddhist canon it delivered. Sometimes the Chinese took the horses, but at other times they provided a printed canonical free. For historical records documenting requests for Buddhist texts, see Sima Guang 司馬光, *Xu zishi tongjian changbian* 縱資治通鑑長編, 115.18, 179.7; Ouyang Xiu 欧陽修, *Ouyang Wenzhong quan ji* 欧陽文忠全集, 86.3; *Song shi* 宋史, 486.14009; Xu Song 徐松, *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿, li 62.40; Wu Guangcheng 吴廣成, *Xi Xia shushi* 西夏書事, 19.10–11; Zhang Jian 張堅, *Xi Xia jishi benmao* 西夏紀事本末, 20.5, 22.2. For a detailed examination of the sources and the identification of the Buddhist copies of the newly printed Kaibao canon, see Shi Jinbo, *Xi Xia fojiao shilue*, 59–63, 70–71. For more on the Xi Xia imperial patronage of Buddhism, see Linrothe, “Peripheral Visions,” 241–245.

28 Wu Guangcheng 吳廣成, *Xi Xia shushi jiaozheng* 西夏書事校證, ed. Gong Shijun 龔世俊.
acquired Buddhist texts the Khitan Liao printed in Chinese to assist in collating the Tangut translations of the canon. The latter half of the eleventh century, during the reigns of Emperor Huizong and Emperor Chongzong, was the heyday of translating sutras into Tangut, while further collating occurred during the reign of Emperor Renzong. Emperor Renzong and his wife, Empress Luo, were fervent patrons who sponsored a vast project of Buddhist printing. Temples printed texts in large numbers, and in the temples the imperially sponsored ceremonies associated with the distribution of these texts were acted out. Several governmental offices participated, including the Character-Carving Bureau (Kezi si) devoted to the printing of texts in Tangut script, and the Craft and Technology Bureau (Gong yuan), which specialized in movable-type printing.

A close comparison of the printed frontispieces accompanying four editions of the Maitreya Sutra (Guan Mile pusa shangsheng Doushuaitian jing 觀彌勒菩薩上升兜率天經) suggests that the works produced via this considerable apparatus may have been manufactured in a workshop fashion to meet the demands of a multicultural community. Among the three that were brought back to Saint Petersburg by Kozlov, two editions are in Chinese (TK 58 and TK 81/82/83; figs. 1, 2), while the third is in Tangut (Hhb 78; fig. 3). The fourth frontispiece (K.K. II. C17.s.IV; fig. 4), a fragment bearing Tangut script, is from an edition brought back to Saint Petersburg by Kozlov. The comparison is suggestive of a workshop approach to the manufacture of the printed books, which were intended for a multicultural audience.

(Lanzhou: Gansu Wenhua Chubanshe, 1995), 212; Shi Jinbo, Xi Xia fojiao shilue, 112; Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhubian, 294. For more on the Xia capital, Xingqing fu, see Dunnell, “Naming the Tangut Capital.”

No direct source confirms that the Xi Xia acquired the Liao Buddhist canon. My argument is based on scholars’ interpretation of the so-called northern scriptures (bei jing), which are referred to in a colophon as the Liao Buddhist canon. See Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhubian, 200–201. In addition, Chikusa Masaaki 芝沙雅幸 has identified a fragmentary text discovered in Khara Khoto as part of the Liao Buddhist canon; see Chikusa, “Kokusuijō shutsudo no Ryō kampō” 黑水城出土の遂刊本, Kyūko 涌古 43 (2003), 20–27.

Shi Jinbo, Xi Xia fojiao shilue, 73, 83. For more on Renzong’s patronage of Buddhist art, see Linrothe, “Xia Renzong.”

For more on the political history of Emperor Renzong’s reign, see Dunnell, “Hsi Hsia,” 199–205.

For example, Wenjia Temple 湛家寺 was responsible for printing the Jingang banruo boluo mi jing 金剛般若波羅蜜經 sponsored by Empress Luo in 1189. See Shi Jinbo, Xi Xia fojiao shilue, 121; Xi Xia chuban yanjiu, 110–111.

Shi Jinbo, Xi Xia chuban yanjiu, 109.

Shi Jinbo, Xi Xia chuban yanjiu 104–106; for other printing-related offices, see 102–104, 106–109.

Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan, Ecang Heishuicheng wenxian, 1: color plate no. 52 (unnumbered page); 2: 41–42, 307–308.
colophons, belongs to the collection of Aurel Stein finds now in the British Library.\textsuperscript{36} The frontispieces are quite similar, and when one compares how the block cutters handled the rising clouds at the bottom, the monkish figures in the middle, and the architectural detail on the upper register, it is evident that they share a common design.

The two Chinese editions bear a dedicatory prayer linking the mass production of printed frontispieces and texts to a special assembly in honor of Maitreya sponsored by Emperor Renzong and held in the Dadumin Monastery (\textit{Dadumin si} 大度民寺) in 1189, which Ruth Dunnell called “a year of changes in East Asia”.\textsuperscript{37} On that occasion, one hundred thousand \textit{juan} copies of the \textit{Maitreya Sutra}—some in Chinese and others in Tibetan—were distributed, along with fifty thousand \textit{juan} copies each of the \textit{Diamond Sutra} (\textit{Jingang jing} 金剛經) in Chinese, \textit{Chapter on the Vows of Samantabhadra} (\textit{Puxian xingyuan jing} 善賢行願經), and the \textit{Guanyin Sutra} (\textit{Guanyin jing} 觀音經). The printed texts in Chinese, Tangut, and Tibetan attest to ambitious translation projects staffed by Buddhist monks of various ethnicities.\textsuperscript{38} Other merit-accumulating events, such as feeding the monks and the poor, releasing animals and birds, and pardoning prisoners, went on for ten days and nights.\textsuperscript{39}

A frontispiece much studied by earlier researchers is \textit{Translating Sutras in Xi Xia} (\textit{Xi Xia yi jing tu} 西夏譯經圖) (fig. 5), now in the National Library in Beijing; it vividly exhibits a multicultural milieu.\textsuperscript{40} Symmetrically composed, the woodcut depicts a group of monks and laypersons in a palatial setting complete with rolled-up curtains, balustrades, and a painted folding screen. The most prominent figure—not least because he is nearly twice as big as any other—is the monk seated frontally at the center. According to the

\textsuperscript{36} For a plate, see \textit{Zhongguo banhua quanji} 中国版畫全集 (Beijing: Zijincheng Chubanshe, 2008), 1: 82.

\textsuperscript{37} Dunnell, “Hsi Hsia,” 205. The two Chinese editions both list the same content; see \textit{Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan}, \textit{Ecang Heishuicheng wenxian}, 2: 49, 315. For a study of the monastery, see Nie Hongyin 聶鴻音, “Dadumin si kao” 大度民寺考, \textit{Minzu yanjiu} 民族研究 4 (2003), 94–98. It has been noted that Buddhist texts were often printed or distributed by the Xi Xia state on important national dates. See Samosyuk, “Art of the Tangut Empire,” 241.

\textsuperscript{38} For a study of the translators, collators, and copyists who worked on Buddhist publishing projects under the Xi Xia, see Shi Jinbo, \textit{Xi Xia chuban yanjiu} 西夏出版研究, 121–132.

\textsuperscript{39} For a complete citation of the dedicatory prayer, see Shi Jinbo, \textit{Xi Xia fojiao shilue} 西夏佛教史略, 267–268.

\textsuperscript{40} This frontispiece accompanies the Yuan edition of \textit{Xianzai xianjie qianfoming jing} 現在賢劫千佛名經 in Tangut script. For a reproduction, see \textit{Zhongguo banhua quanji}, 1: 88. For studies, see Shi Jinbo, \textit{Xi Xia fojiao shilue}, 76–78; “Xi Xia yi jing tu jie” 西夏譯經圖解, \textit{Wenhxian} 文獻 1 (1979), 215–219; K. K. Keping 葛本 and Peng Xiangqian 彭賢前, “Xi Xia banhua zhong de Tufan he Yindu fashi xiaoxiang” 西夏版畫中的吐蕃和印度法師肖像, \textit{Xi Xia yanjiu} 西夏研究, 2011.3, 3–6; Chen Yuning and Tang Xiaofang, \textit{Xi Xia yishushi} 西夏藝術史, 163–164.
horizontal colophon at the upper border of the frontispiece, he is the state preceptor Bai Zhiguang 白智光, a multilingual Uighur (Huihu 回鹘) monk who had played a major role in translating Buddhist texts from Chinese into Tangut since 1038.41

Additional textual and visual sources shed light on the roles of Uighurs in shaping an international Buddhist print culture in the Middle Period. Because Uighur monks were noted for their linguistic and doctrinal sophistication, they were much sought after by the Xi Xia state and its neighbors.42 According to The Liao History (Liaoshi 遼史), a Xi Xia embassy charged with delivering tribute to the Khitan Liao included Uighur monks in 1050.43 Furthermore, little-known Uighur frontispieces, now in the Museum für Asiatische Kunste, Berlin, suggest that Uighur laymen were sponsors of printed Buddhist texts and frontispieces.44 The frontispiece considered here was commissioned by a Uighur merchant in Turfan (fig. 6).45 A colophon on the upper left corner of the frontispiece suggests that the three donors depicted may be the merchant and his deceased parents.46 More intriguing is that the same merchant may have subsidized the publication of a set of Buddhist texts in Zhongdu 中都 (today’s Beijing), the Jin capital, around 1188, then transported a copy back

41 The colophon can be translated as “the author of the capital translation gouguan, National Preceptor of Peace Bai Zhiguang” 都译勾管作者安國師白智光. See Shi Jinbo, Xi Xia fojiao shilue, 76. In 1038 Emperor Yuanhao tasked Bai Zhiguang and other monks with translating Chinese Buddhist texts; see Shi Jinbo, Xi Xia fojiao shilue. For more studies of Bai Zhiguang, see Dunnell, Great State of White and High, 65–67; Saliceti-Collins, “Xi Xia Buddhist Woodblock Prints,” 154–155.
42 For more studies of Uighur monks and Uighur culture in Xi Xia, see Yang Fuxue 楊富學, “Lun Huihu wenhua dui Xi Xia de yingxiang” 論回鶻文化對西夏的影響, in Song shi yanjiu luncong 宋史研究論叢, ed. Jiang Xidong 姜锡东 and Li Huarui 李華瑞 (Baoding: Hebei Daxue Chubanshe, 2003), 5: 279–294; Yang Fuxue 楊富學, “Huihu seng yu ‘Xi Xia wen dazang jing’ de fanyi” 回鶻僧與《西夏文大藏經》的翻譯, Dunhuang T ulufan yanjiu, 7 (2004), 338–344.
43 Chen Shu 陳述 and Zhu Zifang 朱子方, eds., Liao huiyao 遼會要 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2009), 1001–1002; Shi Jinbo, Xi Xia fojiao shilue, 149; Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhoubian, 198.
44 I would like to thank Dr. Klaas Ruitenbeek, Dr. Lilla Russell-Smith, and Dr. Ching-ling Wang for their assistance in acquiring study photographs of these printed frontispieces.
45 For plates and a classic study, see Peter Zieme, “Donor and Colophon of an Uighur Blockprint,” Silk Road Art and Archaeology 4 (1996), 409–424 (the frontispieces are reproduced in pls. 1, 3, 5). For a Chinese translation of this article, see Bide Jimu 布得吉姆 (Peter Zieme), Wei Wenjie 魏文捷, trans., “Yijian Huihuwen diaoban yinshuapin de gongyangren ji weiji” 一見回鶻文雕版印刷品的供養人及尾記, Dunhuang yanjiu 敦煌研究, 2002.5, 33–36.
46 For a translation of the names in the Uighur colophon, see Zieme, “Donor and Colophon,” 412–413.
to his hometown in Central Asia, where he commissioned this Uighur frontispiece.\textsuperscript{47}

In \textit{Translating Sutras in Xi Xia}, the monks surrounding Bai Zhiguang who assisted with translations are depicted, smaller than their master, four on each side. Judging from the colophons accompanying the figures, these are Tangut and Chinese monks.\textsuperscript{48} They are seated in front of long tables, on which brushes, ink cakes, books, and paper are provided. Behind the monks stand some laymen, who may work as assistant translators, polishing the translations.\textsuperscript{49} In the foreground are a man and a woman dressed in royal garments and seated at a long table with plates of offerings. The accompanying colophons identify the former as the “Emperor of Prosperity and Brightness” (\textit{Shengming huangdi} 盛明皇帝), in other words Emperor Huizong, the latter as his mother, Empress Dowager Liang (\textit{Mu Liangshi huangtaihou} 母梁氏皇后). As a whole, the frontispiece offers valuable information about the Buddhist translating activities sponsored by the Xi Xia court.

Textual records show that Tibetan (\textit{Xifan} 西蕃) monks stood at the apex of the Xi Xia hierarchy, with Uighur, Tangut, and Chinese monks occupying descending rungs.\textsuperscript{50} It was a Tibetan master, Dus-gsum mkhyenpa (1110–1193), whom Emperor Renzong invited to serve as his teacher in Buddhist matters. He declined the emperor’s invitation, sending instead his disciple Gtsang-po-pa Dkon-mchong seng-ge (?–1218), who later became the emperor’s preceptor (\textit{dishi} 帝師).\textsuperscript{51} The highest Buddhist rank in the Tangut state, first established in the late twelfth century and perpetuated under the Yuan, an imperial preceptor was the emperor’s personal teacher; he was also in charge of teaching, translating, and editing doctrinal texts, as well as presiding over Buddhist rituals.\textsuperscript{52} In addition to the imperial preceptor, the Tangut government also hired elite Buddhist monks to serve as national preceptor (\textit{guoshi} 國師) and “respectful preceptor” (\textit{shangshi} 上師),

\textsuperscript{47} Here I support Dang Baohai’s dating of the printed texts; see Dang Baohai 黟寶海, “\textit{Tulufan chutu Jinzang kao—jianlun yizu Tulufan chutu fojing canpian de niandai} 吐魯番出土金藏考—兼論一組吐魯番出土佛經殘片的年代, \textit{Dunhuang tulufan yanjiu} 敦煌吐魯番研究 4 (1999), 103–125; Li Jining, \textit{Fojing banben} 118. Peter Zieme dated the Jin printed texts accompanying the Uighur frontispieces to 1308; see Zieme, “Donor and Colophon,” 413.

\textsuperscript{48} For their individual names, see the translations of the colophons in Shi Jinbo, \textit{Xi Xia fojiao shilue}, 76.

\textsuperscript{49} Saliceti-Collins, “Xi Xia Buddhist Woodblock Prints,” 156.

\textsuperscript{50} Shi Jinbo, \textit{Xi Xia fojiao shilue}, 148.


\textsuperscript{52} Dunnell, “Hsia Origins of the Yuan Institution of Imperial Preceptor,” 99–100.
offices equivalent in rank to an upper-level bureaucrat.\textsuperscript{53}

A number of pictures exist of these elite monks in the employ of the state. For example, a portrait of a Tangut monk identified by the accompanying colophon as the national preceptor Zhihai 智海, active in the late period of the Xi Xia dynasty, appears on the west wall of Cave 29 at Yulin near Dunhuang.\textsuperscript{54} Both his garment and his pointed hat exhibit distinctive Tangut features. An inner garment covers his chest, partly revealed by an outer garment that cuts diagonally from the left shoulder to the right side of the chest. A portable painting of a Buddhist monk, somewhere between a Tibetan thangka and a traditional Chinese hanging scroll, was discovered in Khara Khto.\textsuperscript{55} For his portrait of a Tangut preceptor, the painter applied refined line drawing technique to detail sparse hair, a beard, and wrinkles on the forehead, the neck, and around the eyes.

**Printed Xi Xia Illustrations and Their Connections to Other Print Cultures**

A majority of the Xi Xia Buddhist prints excavated at Khara Khto share a distinctively Chinese style, and a significant amount of the frontispieces found there resemble others found in China. In what follows, I will compare selected Xi Xia frontispieces to counterparts produced in Northern Song Kaifeng, Northern and Southern Song Hangzhou, eleventh-century Liao Yanjing, and twelfth-century Jin Pingyang. The similarities that you will see attest to the cultural exchanges among these regions.

*Connections to Song Print Culture*

The Xi Xia frontispiece accompanying the *Sutra of the Thousand Buddhas* (*Xianzai xianjie qianfo ming jing* 現在賢劫千佛名經), a Chinese book now in the National Library of China, Beijing (B11.048) (fig. 7), depicts an exquisitely carved monk seated on a wooden chair (fig. 8), which links the print to a number of printed images from the Northern Song, particularly court productions.\textsuperscript{56} The accompanying colophon identifies

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\textsuperscript{53} Shi Jinbo, *Xi Xia fojiao shilue*, 144.

\textsuperscript{54} For a plate, see Gao Chunming, *Xi Xia yishu yanjiu* 西夏藝術研究, 218; Xie Jisheng, *Xi Xia zanghuan huihua* 1: 266–267; Wang Jingru, “Dunhuang Mogaoku he Arxi Yulinku,” 52. Shi Jinbo categories Zhihai as a Tangut whose origin was linked to the Xianbei 善始; see Shi Jinbo, *Xi Xia fojiao shilue*, 149.

\textsuperscript{55} For a plate, see Piotrovsky, *Lost Empire of the Silk Road*, 238–239. For more on this painting, see Xie Jisheng, *Xi Xia zanghuan huihua*, 1: 166, 169–170.

\textsuperscript{56} The center of the frontispiece presents an unusual scene: a group of bodhisattvas and other devotees assembled around the Universal Buddha in a circular frame; for a plate, see Chen Yuning and Tang Xiaofang, *Xi Xia yishushi*, 142 fig. 2.93–3. For more on the reception of the Nagariuna Patriarch in the Northern Song, see 141, 143.
the figure as the Nagariuna Patriarch (*Longshu zushi* 龍樹祖師), the Indian founder of the Madhyamaka school of Mahayana Buddhism, whose teachings were influential to the *Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra* (or *Banruo boluo miduo jing* 般若波羅蜜多經) so frequently reproduced in the Tangut state.

Extant images from the Northern Song, both original prints and copies made in neighboring states, bear strong resemblances to this Xi Xia design. First, it is comparable to a popular motif—a standardized convention or template—repeatedly used in printed illustrations accompanying Northern Song (fig. 9) and Korean (fig. 10) editions of *Imperial Commentary to the Buddhist Canon* (*Yuzhi Mizang quan* 御製秘藏詮). The commentary was originally commissioned by the court of Emperor Taizong and possibly related to part of the Kaibao canon, the same collection that the Xi Xia state had acquired from the Northern Song. 57 In addition, what appears to be an oval cushion on the chair in the Xi Xia frontispiece calls to mind a similar detail in an image of the Fourth Chan Patriarch, originally carved for a commission from the Northern Song court in 1054, and subsequently copied in a thirteenth-century Japanese plain-linear (*baimiao* 白描) drawing entitled *The Six Patriarchs of the Bodhidharma Sect* (*Chanzong liuzu xiang* 禅宗六祖像), now in Kōzanji 高山寺, a temple in Kyoto (fig. 11). 58 A similar motif of a monk seated on a refined wooden chair is preserved in a fragment of a carving on the back of a woodblock (fig. 12), which is said to be one of the earliest extant blocks found at Julu 巨鹿, Hebei, and now in the Spencer Collection of the New York Public Library. 59

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59 This image was first published in Tsien Tsuen-hsuin, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 5, *Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Part I: Paper and Printing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Selected Xi Xia frontispieces also share formal similarities with frontispieces associated with Hangzhou, one of the most prominent printing centers at that time. Six prints from a Xi Xia Chinese-language *Lotus Sutra* dated 1146 serve as good examples (e.g., fig. 13). A colophon at the end of the seventh *juan* indicates that “all dining expenses were paid by the imperial house,” suggesting that this printing project was sponsored by Emperor Renzong. The colophon also identifies the four men who carved the woodblocks for the text; two appear to have been Chinese—Wang Shanhui 王善惠 and Wang Shanyuan 王善園. With several Song copies of passages from the *Lotus Sutra* discovered in Khara Khoto, it is reasonable to assume that the carvers working for the Xi Xia court may have used such texts as models.

As shown in a recent publication, these *Lotus Sutra* frontispieces produced in Xi Xia are comparable to *Lotus Sutra* frontispieces printed in Hangzhou by two Northern Song publishers, the Yan 晏 family (e.g., fig. 14) and the Qian 钱 family, among the city’s earliest commercial printers. Although the overall compositions of the Xi Xia prints are simpler and the carving style is rougher, many individual elements, such as the motif of a preaching monk seated on a dais framed by a screen and a “returning-home scene” showing two farmers dressed in raincoats in front of a fenced house (fig. 13), mirror...

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60. Six prints from the same set are the frontispieces of *juan* 1 to *juan* 4 (TK1, TK 15, TK 3, TK 4), *juan* 6 (TK 10), and *juan* 7 (TK 11); see Zhongguo shenhu shu yuan he, *Ecang Heishuicheng wenxian*, 1: 1, 17, 32, 241, 257, 310. The *Lotus Sutra* was translated into Tangut in the early period of the Xi Xia dynasty. Printed and manuscript versions circulated; see Shi Jinbo, *Xi Xia fojiao shilue*, 160–161.


elements in the Hangzhou frontispieces (e.g., fig. 14). Again, it is likely that the designers in Xi Xia had access to Hangzhou frontispieces. Archaeological sources support the historical accounts of Song printed texts in Xi Xia. A frontispiece to an edition of the Lotus Sutra found in Khara Khoto, for example, bears a colophon connecting it to the “Yan family of Hangzhou” (杭州晏家).

The Jin defeat of the Northern Song placed an impediment between the Xi Xia and the Southern Song, and communication suffered. In spite of the determination of both Xi Xia and Southern Song to overthrow them, the Jin may have served as an intermediary between the two, transmitting artifacts via officially sanctioned trade routes or smuggling. The literary evidence is scanty, but straightforward comparisons of frontispieces printed in Xi Xia and the Southern Song suggest that the former were aware of—and imitated—the latter.

Let us take the Southern Song Lotus Sutra frontispieces designed by Wang Yi as an example. In a previous study, I relied on formal comparisons rather than contemporaneous documentation to link this set to Hangzhou print culture. Wang’s monk seated at a short-legged desk and a second monk on a raised platform with an attached screen bearing either calligraphic or pictorial designs (fig. 15) resemble the same elements in a Xi Xia frontispiece from the Huayan Sutra (Huayan jing, also known as the Avatamsaka Sutra) that accompanied Chapter on the Vows of Samantabhadra (Puxian)

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65 For studies of these Hangzhou prints, see Cui Wei, “Shandong sheng Shenxian Song ta chutu Bei Song ta fojing” Shandong sheng Laiyi xian Bei Song Laiyi jing wenwu, 1982.12, 40–41; Shih-shan Susan Huang, “Early Buddhist Illustrated Prints in Hangzhou,” in Knowledge and Text Production in an Age of Print: China, 900–1400, ed. Lucille Chia and Hilde De Weerdt (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 135–165.

66 In an earlier publication I discussed the motif of a cluster of long leaves that appears behind the halo of a multiarmed icon in the frontispiece to an edition of the Sutra of the Peacock King, see Huang, “Media Transfer and Modular Construction,” 147. A similar design is found in another Xi Xia frontispiece accompanying the Tantric sutra Damizhou zongchi jing; see Chen Yuning and Tang Xiaofang, Xi Xia yishushi, 139.

67 For more on this print, see Huang, “Media Transfer and Modular Construction,” 146–147. This may be a Xi Xia print based on the Yan family frontispiece; see Zhongguo banhua quanji, 1: 33.


69 For plates, see Gugong bowuyuan bianji weiyuanhui Miaofa lianhua jing tulu (Taipei: Gugong Bowuyuan, 1995), 19–21.

70 For more on the frontispieces designed by Wang Yi, see Huang, “Media Transfer and Modular Construction,” 147–154.
xingyuan pin 普賢行願品), hereafter referred to as the Samantabhadra frontispiece (TK 98) (fig. 16). The latter, an exquisite work, comprises scenes depicting the visits of Child Sudhana (Sancai tongzi 散財童子) to sages, and it features garden rocks, plants, and balustrades that call to mind similar designs and narrative content illustrated in the Southern Song Illustrated Eulogies of the Guidance by Wenshu (Wenshu zhinan tuzan 文殊指南圖讚) (fig. 17), printed by the Family of Official Jia (Jia guanren zhai 賈官人宅), a commercial publisher located near Hangzhou’s Zhongan Bridge.

Besides the aforementioned similarities, the Samantabhadra frontispiece possesses what appears to be a unique narrative design. One episode serves as a rare visual example of the devout blood writing practice recorded in the textual history of Buddhism. It shows Child Sudhana cutting his left arm and allowing the blood to drip into a bowl. Behind him, seated at a desk, is a scholar official copying a text. The accompanying colophon reads, “Blood drawn is used as ink for transcribing classical texts” (cixue wei mo, shuxie jingdian 剝血為墨 / 書寫經典), suggesting that the scholar has been equipped with a rather special ink.

A printed fragment entitled The Transformation Tableau of the Huayan Sutra (Da fang guang fo Huayan jing bianxiang 大方廣佛華嚴經變相, hereafter referred to as the Huayan Sutra fragment) (TK 114) (fig. 18), possibly an incomplete frontispiece accompanying the Huayan Sutra, offers an additional opportunity to test the links between Xi Xia and Southern Song Buddhist print culture. The image presents a poetic vision of the Huayan cosmology, of the Lotus Repository World (lianhua tai zang shijie 蓮花臺藏世界), where a number of miniature buddhas are seated in profile, each enclosed in a

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71 The dedicatory prayer at the end of the sutra text indicates that Empress Luo commissioned the publication to commemorate Emperor Renzong’s death three years earlier. This suggests that the production may be dated around 1196. For the dedicatory prayer, see Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan, Ecang Heishuicheng wenxian, 2: 372–373.


74 On the popularity of Huayan Buddhism in Xi Xia, see Shi Jinbo, Xi Xia fojiao shilue, 156–157.
lotus petal floating in the ocean.  

Near the center is an image of Child Sudhana bowing to a seated buddha inside a handsome pavilion. This image is comparable to the presentations of Sudhana in the Samantabhadra frontispiece (fig. 16).

The Huayan Sutra fragment is strikingly comparable to a little-studied Southern Song frontispiece accompanying the Brahma Net Sutra (Fanwang Sutra 梵網經), now in the Saidaiji 西大寺 collection in Nara (fig. 19, hereafter referred to as the Saidaiji frontispiece). Also grounded in the Huayan cosmology, the Brahma Net Sutra is an apocryphal text, possibly dating between the third and fifth centuries, that celebrates Vairocana Buddha and “numerous buddhas as his incarnations in innumerable worlds.”  

The Saidaiji frontispiece and the Huayan Sutra fragment are the two earliest extant frontispieces to exhibit a new conception of the Lotus Repository World. Departing from stereotyped representations found in the pre-Song transformation tableau paintings (jingbian 經變 or bianxiang 變相), engravings, and sculptures studied by Dorothy Wong and others, the new compositional strategy is horizontal, integrating Vairocana’s assembly with the grand lotus against a seascape. The lotus motif thus takes an innovative form.

75 For a plate, see Chen Yuning and Tang Xiaofang, Xi Xia yishushi, 151 fig. 2.100.
76 For a plate, see Zhongguo banhua quanji, 1: 55. For the text, see Fanwang jing 梵網經, T. 24.1484, 997–1003. There are extant Korean painted frontispieces as well as Japanese printed frontispieces that share a similar template. For more study of the Brahma Net Sutra, see Youn-mi Kim, “Eternal Ritual in an Infinite Cosmos: The Chaoyang North Pagoda” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2010), 5–6, 96, 102–103.
78 Dorothy Wong examines pre-Song representations of the Lotus Repository World, including a hanging scroll at the Musée Guimet, the murals of the Huayan transformation tableaus in Dunhuang Mogao Caves 12 and 61, and the engraving on the lotus pedestal of the bronze Buddha statue at the Tōdaiji 東大寺; see Wong, “Huayan/Kegon/Hwaom Paintings in East Asia,” 338–344. Youn-mi Kim studies the statues of the Cosmological Buddha produced in the Liao, tracing to a Tang prototype at Fengxian 奉先 Monastery in Longmen 龍門 grotto; see Kim, “Eternal Ritual in an Infinite Cosmos,” 91–100.
assuming a central position in the composition. It now looks like an all-encompassing mother ship, carrying numerous pedestal-shaped vessels, which in turn enclose miniature buddhas. We are witnessing the birth of a new pictorial design created by frontispiece artists; it went on to become a new paradigm, spawning similar Korean, Japanese, and Chinese images.

The Liao Connection

Historians have shed light on the complex relationship among the Xi Xia, the Liao, and the Song. Intermarriage between Xi Xia and Liao royal houses, wars, tributes, and interstate trade defined their interactions. The Xi Xia-Liao border markets established in the eleventh century operated in today’s Datong in northern Shanxi, and other places in Inner Mongolia. As touched upon earlier, the Xi Xia sent Uighur monks, golden statues, and Indian scriptures to the Liao as diplomatic gifts. Furthermore, discovered in the Liao Buddhist ruins at Huhehaote 呼和浩特, Inner Mongolia, a Xi Xia coin bore the Chinese phrase “Tianyou baoqian” 天祐寶錢 (lit., treasure coin of the Tianyou reign) rendered in Tangut script; Buddhists from the Tangut territory may have visited Liao temples.

Communication along Xi Xia-Liao trade routes went both ways, as Liao pilgrims visited Xi Xia Buddhist pagodas.

More research on this paradigm is needed. For a Qing frontispiece similar to the Southern Song and Xi Xia frontispieces (figs. 18, 19) commissioned by the eunuch Liu Shifang 利世芳 during the Kangxi reign and based on an old block carved in Hangzhou, see Zhangguo banhua quanjji, 1: 190. Scholars have noted the similar pedestal designs in the Tang and Liao statues of Vairocana, although no picture exists comparable to the Southern Song and Xi Xia frontispiece designs. See Kim, “Eternal Ritual in an Infinite Cosmos,” 94–100.


Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhoubian, 82.


Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhoubian, 203; Yang Fuxue 杨富学 and Chen Aifeng 陈爱峰, “Xi Xia qianbi de liubu quyu ji xiangguan wenti” 西夏錢幣的流布區域及相關問題, Xi Xia yanjiu 西夏研究, 2012.4, 3–28; Zhang Yu 张術, “Huhehaote jiaoqu Liaodai fosi feixu jiemi” 呼和浩特郊區遼代佛寺廢墟揭密, Neimenggu wenwu kaogu 內蒙古文物考古 11.2 (1994), 75–79. The Tangut script was disseminated around 1036; see Dunnell, “Hsi Hsia,” 182.

Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng speculated that the Liao may have feigned a religious impulse, visiting Xi Xia Buddhist sites when their true interest was scouting out Xi Xia territory; see Yang and Chen, Xi Xia yu zhoubian, 199–200.
K. J. Solonin’s series of studies of the Buddhist connections between the Liao and the Xi Xia shed further light on the impact the former had on the latter. According to Solonin, the Tangut went beyond translating Liao Buddhist texts: they intended to duplicate the entire textual corpus of Liao Buddhism, internalizing teachings and practices associated with Chan, Huayan, and esoteric Buddhism. As Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng pointed out, the Tangut court may have acquired the Buddhist canon compiled by the Liao (Qidan zang 契丹藏) in 1062 as additional reference material for collating the compiled Tangut Buddhist texts, which were in turn based on the Song Kaibo canon.

Chikusa Masaaki and others realized that different editions of the Agama scriptures (Ahan jing 阿含經) discovered at Khara Khoto and previously labeled as Xi Xia products were part of the Liao Buddhist canon printed in Yanjing (today’s Beijing). One such text, Foshuo chang Ahan jing di si fen shiji jing Axulun pin 佛說長阿含經第四分世紀經阿須倫品 (TK 274), bears a fragmentary frontispiece (fig. 20). Depicted is a figure, identified by the accompanying colophon as “the law-protecting divine guardian” (hufa shenwang 護法神王). This design resembles an incomplete frontispiece found in the timber pagoda of Fogong Monastery (Fogong si 佛宮寺) in Yingxian 應縣, Shanxi (fig. 21).

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85 Solonin, “Khitan Connection of Tangut Buddhism”; “Glimpse of Tangut Buddhism”; “Buddhist Connections between the Liao and Xi Xia.”

86 Solonin, “Buddhist Connections between the Liao and Xi Xia.”

87 Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhoubian, 200–201, 205. For other Khara Khoto manuscripts that may be commentaries written by Liao Buddhist monks, see 201–202. For comparative studies of the Qidan canon and the Kaibao canon, see Luo Shao 羅紹, “Qidan zang’yu ‘Kaibao zang’ zhi chayi 《契丹藏》與《開寶藏》之差異,” Wenwu 文物, 1993.8, 59–65; Xu Shiyi 徐時儀, “‘Kaibao zang’ he ‘Liao zang’ de chuancheng yuanyuan kao 《開寶藏》和《遼藏》的傳承淵源考,” Zongjiaoxue yanjiu 宗敎學研究, 2006.1, 45–50.

88 The two editions of the Agama scriptures discussed by Chikusa are Zengyi Ahan jing 增壹阿含經 (T. 125) and Foshuo chang Ahan jing 佛說長阿含經 (T. 1); see Chikusa Masaaki, “Kokusuijō shutsudo no Ryōkanpon,” 23–24; Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhoubian, 201–203; Fu Xianzhan 府嚮展, “Dunhuang wenxian bianyilu 敦煌文獻辨疑錄,” Dunhuang yanjiu 敦煌研究, 1996.2, 89.


Khto fragment of a guardian image may thus be part of a Liao frontispiece.

Chikusa’s examination of the Liao Agama fragments calls to mind another Liao edition found in the Yingxian pagoda, the Zhong Ahan jing 中阿含經. That work’s thirty-sixth juan has a complete and exquisite frontispiece (fig. 22), whose design is identical with the frontispiece accompanying the thirteenth juan of the Dharani Sutra of the Great Torch of the Dharma (Da fa ju Tuoluoni jing 大法炬陀羅尼經) (fig. 23), another printed sutra found in the Yingxian pagoda. It is possible that a pictorial convention related to these two Yingxian frontispieces circulated in the Xi Xia since, as we will see in the next section, a modular motif they share appears in later frontispiece designs.

The Jin Connection

Before the early twelfth century, the Tangut state did not cultivate relations with the Jin because of its close ties to Jin’s fierce rival, the Khitan Liao. But after the Jin conquered the Liao and the Northern Song in 1125, things changed. Interstate borders were redrawn, making the Jin an immediate neighbor of Xi Xia and enhancing relations between the two. In 1154 Xi Xia sent envoys to Jin to purchase Confucian and Buddhist texts. From 1162 to 1189, Jin sent annual envoys to participate in Xia Emperor Renzong’s birthday celebration.

Most of the markets the two states established along their border in the twelfth century were in what are today northern Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, and Shaanxi. These were often the same locations where the Xi Xia had set up markets to trade with the Liao and the

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92 Based on the very few extant Liao printed frontispieces discovered in Yingxian, Shanxi, it is important to note that they are stylistically very different from the mainstream Xi Xia frontispieces. For further comparisons of the Liao and Song frontispieces, see Huang, “Media Transfer and Modular Construction,” 143–146; Huang Shih-shan, “Tang Song shiqi fojiao banhua,” 420–423.

93 Tuotuo 脫脱 et al., Jin shi 金史 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1975), 60: 1408. See also Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhoubian, 205.


95 Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhoubian, 63–99.
Northern Song in the eleventh century. Among the most popular trade goods were precious stones and falcons from Xi Xia, and textiles and iron from Jin; both bought each other’s horses. They also traded goods obtained from elsewhere, and the Jin eagerly snapped up the exotic spices, gems, and jades that the Xi Xia had acquired along the Silk Road. Likewise, the Jin traded the tea, silk, rice, and (perhaps) books obtained from the Southern Song. Additional cultural exchanges took place along unofficial and often illegal channels.

Archaeological finds offer more concrete examples of cultural transmission. A Buddhist ritual banner discovered in the Xi Xia Hongfo pagoda (Hongfo ta 宏佛塔) in Yinchuan, Ningxia, bears a dedicatory prayer written in ink that identifies the donor as the layman Zhao Zhong 趙仲 and his family, who lived in the Jin state’s Zhenrong Prefecture (today’s Guyuan 固原, Ningxia), an area close to the Xi Xia border. This banner has been dated between 1190 and 1227.

In terms of printing, specimens of Jin materials were found in Xi Xia sites. Among the oft-cited examples excavated at Khara Khoto are the exquisite single-sheet print entitled Four Beauties (Simei tu 四美圖) bearing a trademark of the Ji 姬 family. That commercial

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96 Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhoubian, 95–97; Qi Xia and Qiao Youmei, Liao Xia Jin jingqi shi, 238–239, 387–388.
97 Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhoubian, 95. Among the artifacts found at Khara Khoto and now in the Saint Petersburg collection is a colorful necklace of beads made from such materials as coral, glass, and gems; scholars have speculated that this necklace may have come from as far away as an Arab state. For a plate, see Piotrovsky, Last Empire of the Silk Road, 253. For more studies, see Yang Rui 姚瑞, “Xi Xia wailai shangpin xiaokao” 西夏外来商品小考, Ningxia shehui kexue, 2002.6, 70–73. For more on Xi Xia’s role in the Silk Road trade, see Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhoubian, 3–62; Li Xuejiang 李學江, “Xi Xia shiqi de sichou zhi lu” 西夏時期的絲綢之路, Ningxia shehui kexue, 2002.1, 91–96.
98 Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhoubian, 98–99. The Jurchens complained that the gems and jades traded by the Tanguts were worthless; see Dunnell, “Hsi Hsia,” 205.
99 Wang Kun, “Song yu Liao Xia Jin jian de zousi maoyi.”
100 Sun Jimin 孫繼民, “Ningxia Hongfota suouchu fundai Hanwen tiji kaoshi” 寧夏宏佛塔所出土帶漢文題記考釋, in Eexang Heishuicheng Hanwen fei fojian wenxian (see note 20), 3: 1038–1047, esp. 1041. For more on the Hongfo banner, see Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, Xi Xia yu zhoubian, 206–207. For more on the Hongfo pagoda and other pagodas built under Xi Xia rule, see Lei Ruize, Yu Cunhai, and He Jiying, Xi Xia fota.
publisher was based in Pingyang 平陽, Jin’s most prominent printing center, which was located in southern Shanxi not far from the Xia border.\textsuperscript{101} In addition, a rare specimen of the printed Jin text known as \textit{The Ballad of Liu Zhiyuan (Liu Zhiyuan zhu gong diao 劉知遠諸宮調)}, which may also have come from Pingyang, gives us an idea of the popular secular literature of the day.\textsuperscript{102} Among the other Buddhist texts printed in Jin that have been discovered at Khara Khoto are a copy of the \textit{Prajnaparamita Sutra} and the Vows of Samantabhadra chapter from the \textit{Huayan Sutra}.\textsuperscript{103}

Although very few of the Buddhist images printed under the Jin have survived, depictions of the Water Moon Guanyin (Shuiyue Guanyin 水月觀音) are similar in Xi Xia and Jin frontispiece designs.\textsuperscript{104} This is evident in the comparison of the Xi Xia example discovered in Dunhuang (fig. 24) and the Jin example, appended to the \textit{Avalokitesvara Sutra of King Gao (Gaowang Guanshiyin jing 高王觀世音經, hereafter referred to as the King Gao Sutra)} (fig. 25) discovered inside a Jin wooden statue now in the New Orleans Museum of Art (color plate. 12).\textsuperscript{105} A publisher’s stamp at the end of the text reads, “Publisher’s colophon by Wei Family Publishing from Hongdong County, Pingyang Prefecture” (Pingyang fu Hongdong xian jingfang Weijia yin zaoji 平陽府洪洞縣經坊家印造記) (fig. 26). The otherwise unknown Wei family enterprise thus joins the publisher of the famous \textit{Four Beauties} print on the short list of publishers known to have been based in Pingyang, Shanxi. Following the publisher’s colophon, a dedicatory prayer dated 1173 identifies the donors of one thousand \textit{juan} of the \textit{King Gao Sutra (yinzao Gaowang jing yiqian juan 印造高王經一千卷) as Yelü Gui 耶律珪 and his wife Woman Tai 大氏, the former a military official (chengxin jiaowei 承信校尉) from Hongdong County.\textsuperscript{106} The prayer indicates the twofold purpose of the sutra donation. In addition to accumulating merits

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\textsuperscript{101} The print was further framed by additional dark blue paper on the top and the bottom, mimicking the format of a hanging scroll painting. On this print and other early prints that were designed to imitate paintings, see Huang Shih-shan, “Tang Song shiqi fojiao banhua,“ 393–395.

\textsuperscript{102} For more about \textit{Liu Zhiyuan zhu gong diao}, see Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen, eds., \textit{The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1: 541. I would like to thank my colleague Qian Nanxiu for her input.

\textsuperscript{103} Yang Fuxue and Chen Aifeng, \textit{Xi Xia yu zhubian}, 206; Shi Jinbo, \textit{Xi Xia zhiban yanjiu}, 70.

\textsuperscript{104} For more on this topic, see Saliceti-Collins, “Xi Xia Buddhist Woodblock Prints,” 63–77; Huang Shih-shan, “Tang Song shiqi fojiao banhua,“ 415–416; Fan Lisha 樊麗沙, “Cong chutu wenxian kan Xi Xia de Guanyin xinyang” 從出土文獻看西夏的觀音信仰, \textit{Xi Xia yanjiu} 西夏研究, 2013.3, 49–54.

\textsuperscript{105} I would like to thank my colleague Qian Nanxiu for her input.

\textsuperscript{106} For a transcription of the colophon, see Han Qi, “Meiguo faxian de Jin keben fojing.”
for the living family, the gift participated in a postmortem ritual known as “pursuing the departed with benediction” (zhuijian 追薦), cultivating merit for the deceased to ensure a favorable destiny.\(^\text{107}\)

According to Han Qi, one of two other Buddhist texts discovered in the Jin statue is a printed edition of the *Heaven-Ascending Sutra* (*Foshuo shengtian jing* 佛說升天經) (fig. 27), a work unmentioned in any Buddhist bibliography.\(^\text{108}\) A precious dedicatory prayer printed at the end of the text gives the commission a date of 1155 and idenfities the donor as a certain layman Liu 劉 from Changming Village 長命村 (fig. 28). The frontispiece offers a curious scene showing Bodhisattva Dizang 地藏 standing at the entrance to an underground prison. This motif of the hell prison calls to mind a similar motif depicted in the Samantabhadra frontispiece discussed earlier (fig. 16); such images are also common in Song religious art.

*Modular Design: A Kneeling Figure with His Back to the Viewer*

A Jin fragment of the *Huayan Sutra* (B53: 1) (fig. 29) discovered in 1988 in the northern section of Mogao Cave B53, Dunhuang, may be linked to a Xi Xia frontispiece, that which opens a Chinese-language edition of *The Practices of the Vows of Samantabhadra* (TK 142) (fig. 30).\(^\text{109}\) In particular, both show a kneeling figure facing the central Buddha with his back turned to the viewer.

Both frontispieces represent a Buddhist assembly focused on the figure labeled “the Lord of Teaching, the Great Universal Buddha” (*Jiaozhu da biluzhena fo* 教主大毗盧遮那佛), widely known as Vairocana (or *Dari rulai* 大日如来), an embodiment of the Buddha central to Huayan teachings.\(^\text{110}\) Equally striking is the presence in both of a

\(^{107}\) For an explanation of this term and associated activities, see Eugene Y. Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 364.

\(^{108}\) Han Qi, “Meiguo faxian de Jin keben fojing,” 212, 214.

\(^{109}\) For a reproduction, see Zhongguo banhua quanji, 1: 64, 75. For more on the documents discovered in the northern section of the Mogao site, see Peng Jinzhang and Wang Jianjun, *Dunhuang Mogao zu beiqu shiku*, 1: 190–191; Peng Jinzhang, *Dunhuang Mogao zu beiqu shiku yanjiu*, 1: 246.

\(^{110}\) Vairocana looks much the same in the two prints: a jeweled crown, the same sort of garment, and the vajra mudra or “wisdom fist” (zhiquan yin 智拳印). A similar representation of Vairocana as a crowned buddha can be seen in a Xi Xia frontispiece accompanying the *Huayan Sutra* (TK 243). A similar Liao design is discussed in Lai, “Liao-Dynasty Buddhist Votive Mirror,” 189. For more on the iconographies associated with Vairocana and the *Huayan Sutra*, see Angela Falco Howard, *The Imagery of the Cosmological Buddha* (Leiden: Brill, 1986); Wong, “The Huayan/Kegon/Hwaom Paintings in East Asia;” Kim, “Eternal Ritual in an Infinite Cosmos,” 6, 7.
kneeling bodhisattva seen from the rear, to that figure’s right, a kneeling Child Sudhana. A cartouche identifies the bodhisattva in the Xi Xia frontispiece as “the Bodhisattva of Clear Eyebrows and Victorious Voices” (Meiming shengyin pusa). It is challenging to date the Jin fragment from Dunhuang. Based on the textual layout chosen by the woodblock carvers, Li Jining proposed that it was part of the Jin Buddhist canon (also known as the Zhaocheng canon or Zhaocheng zang), whose blocks were first carved in Tianning Monastery, in Xiezhou, between 1143 and 1173, and later transported to the Hongfa Monastery in Zhongdu around 1181. While I find Li’s argument convincing, the printed image attached to the Dunhuang fragment may not date to the Jin period. Textual sources suggest that reprints and additions of newly carved texts were made to the Jin canon several times in the latter half of the thirteenth century, and that such changes may have included new frontispieces.

To date, the earliest extant comparable kneeling figure with his back to the viewer, perhaps predating the example found at Dunhuang by as much as one hundred years, occurs in printed Northern Song and Liao frontispieces dated to the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. In particular, a Song frontispiece to an edition of the Huayan Sutra printed by the Northern Song Longxing Monastery in Hangzhou during the Chunhua reign period (990–994) is the closest potential model for the Jin and Xi Xia

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111 Li Jining, *Foijing banben*, 104–118, esp. 117 figs. 49–50; see also the explanatory text to pl. 94 in *Zhongguo banhua quanji*, 1: 32. Scholars have reacted to several fragmentary Buddhist texts discovered in Turfan and now in Berlin by speculating that the Jin Buddhist canon may have reached Turfan via the Xi Xia kingdom; see Zieme, “Donor and Colophon;” Dang Baohai, “Tulufan chuttu Jinzang kao,” Li Jining, *Foijing banben*, 118.

112 Hu Shixiang and Hu Xinhong, “Zhaocheng Jin zang’ shiji kao.”

113 A stele dated 691 that is now in the Shanxi Provincial Museum bears a relief carving of the nirvana of the Buddha; a seated monk with his back to the viewer appears at lower right. I thank Phillip Bloom and Eugene Wang for directing me to this source. For a discussion of this stele, see Sonya S. Lee, *Surviving Nirvana: Death of the Buddha in Chinese Visual Culture* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 81–82. Two more kneeling figures seen from the rear may appear in Huayan transformation tableau murals in Dunhuang Mogao Caves 12 and 61, although their overall presence in these ninth or tenth century works is not prominent; see Dunhuang yanjiu yuan 敦煌研究院 and Jiangsu meishu chubanshe 江蘇美術出版社, ed., *Dunhuang shiku yishu, Mogao ku di liuyi ku* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Meishu Chubanshe, 1995), pl. 100; *Dunhuang shiku yishu, Mogao ku di jiu ku di shi’er ku* (wan Tang) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Meishu Chubanshe, 1994), pl. 170; Wong, “Huayan/Kegon/Hwaom Paintings in East Asia,” 366 fig. 5, 368 fig. 7.
modular designs (fig. 31).\(^{114}\) That refined frontispiece depicts the classic Seven Locations and Nine Assemblies (*Qichu jiahuī* 七處九會), a subject with its roots in the high Tang period, when a well-known edition of the *Huayan Sutra* was translated.\(^{115}\) Among the nine scenes representing Buddha’s various assemblies, five rely on the same use of modular figures seen in the Xi Xia and the Jin examples discussed earlier. The Longxing Monastery image possesses a subtle detail seen in neither the Dunhuang fragment nor the Xi Xia example—two triangular outlines suggesting the outlines of the kneeling figure’s feet underneath the robe. Comparable, though not identical, modular designs are found in the two identical Liao frontispieces discovered in the Yingxian pagoda (figs. 22, 23); they were probably made before 1003.\(^{116}\) This particular modular design extends to the Yuan, Ming, and Qing periods, and even to Korea and Japan.\(^{117}\)

Going beyond the iconography associated with the *Huayan Sutra*, the kneeling figure may also be examined as a modular design reflecting the standard image-making method applied by professional artisans who adopted the methods of the workshop.\(^{118}\) From printed frontispieces to a wall painting in a Mount Wenshu 文殊 grotto, the same person

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\(^{115}\) For a study of the Dunhuang paintings (both murals and portable works) related to this theme, see Wong, “Huayan/Kegon/Hwaom Paintings in East Asia,” 338–344.


\(^{117}\) For Yuan, Ming, and Qing examples, see *Zhongguo banhua quanji*, 1: 106, 117–119, 123, 127–128, 130, 132, 134–136, 175, 187, 195, 205.

has been rendered by Xi Xia artists, and not always in the context of the *Huayan Sutra*.\(^{119}\) The kneeling figure is sometimes a bodhisattva, sometimes a monk. For example, in a frontispiece that Xi Xia designers executed in the Tibetan style to match a sutra with Tibetan origins known as the *Shengmiao jixiang zhenshi ming jing* 聖妙吉祥真實名經 (TANG 63), a kneeling monk is shown (fig. 32).\(^{120}\) Beyond the printed frontispieces, this motif can be found in Song and Yuan temple murals in southern Shanxi, the earliest of which is the Northern Song mural of a Buddhist assembly at Kaihua Monastery 開化寺 in Gaoping 高平, dated 1096 (fig. 33).\(^{121}\) A similar motif also appears in a Northern Song Daoist stele entitled *Tableau of the Wondrous Scripture of Salvation from the Ninefold Darkness* (Taishang shuo jiuyou bazui xinyin miaojing xiang 太上說九幽拔罪心印妙經相), originally carved in 1102 for the Eastern Temple of the Sage Emperor (*Shengdi dongmiao* 聖帝東廟) located in Yaozhou 耀州, Shaanxi (fig. 34).\(^{122}\) Departing from the Buddhist context associated with the print and mural examples examined earlier, here the priestlike figure kneels in front of a Daoist altar dedicated to the pantheon of the three Heavenly Worthies (*Tianzun* 天尊). Commenting on a comparable modular design of a standing monk bowing before the altar of Vairocana depicted in the Yuan-era mural at the Qinglong Monastery 青龍寺, Jishan 稲山, Phillip Bloom interpreted this motif as “an avatar for the viewer-worshipper ... a model of how one should approach these exalted buddhas.”\(^{123}\) Borrowing Bloom’s observation, the kneeling figure in Liao, Song, Xi Xia, and Jin frontispieces may have been meant to stimulate viewers’ engagement with the frontispieces they gazed at.

**Coda: The Legacy of Tangut Print Culture in Early Yuan Hangzhou**

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120 For a plate, see Piotrovsky, *Lost Empire of the Silk Road*, 268.

121 Zhongguo siguan bihua quanji bianji weiyuanhui 中國寺觀壁畫全集編輯委員會, ed., *Zhongguo siguan bihua quanji* 中國寺觀壁畫全集 (Guangzhou: Guangdong Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2009), 1: 170 fig. 110. I would like to thank Jeehee Hong for calling my attention to this source.

122 For a plate, see Beijing tushuguan jinshi zu 北京圖書館金石組, ed., *Beijing tushuguan cang Zhongguo lidai shike tuoben huibian* 北京圖書館藏中國歷代石刻拓本匯編 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Guji Chubanshe, 1989), 41: 75.

In closing, a note on the afterlife of Xi Xia Buddhist print culture in the Yuan period may open up a direction for future study. According to Christopher Atwood’s *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*, the “Tangut ethnic group survived the Mongol conquest,” and under the new regime the group was admitted to the highest-ranking class: “people of assorted categories” (semu ren 色目人). By the early fourteenth century, Tanguts had risen to lofty official positions. Attesting to this change are the oft-cited multilingual inscriptions carved on the Cloud Platform arch (Yuntai 雲臺, also widely referred to as Guojieta 過街塔), built at Juyong Pass (Juyongguan 居庸關) in the 1340s. There the writings in Tangut stand out from those in Chinese, Tibetan, Phags-pa, Uighur, and Sanskrit—they occupy the largest portion of the stone arch.

We now know that Buddhist frontispieces previously taken for Xi Xia products were in fact printed in Yuan Hangzhou. This includes a well-known frontispiece accompanying the Tangut-script *Merciful Repentence Ritual* (Cibei daochang chanzuifa 慈悲道場懺罪法) dated 1302, discovered in Lingwu 靈武, Ningxia, in 1917 and now in the National Library of China (fig. 35). A precious signature at the right border identifies the carver as Yu Sheng 俞聲 (fig. 36), who also participated in the carving of the Puning canon (*Puning zang* 普寧藏) printed in Hangzhou from 1277 to 1290. Interestingly, researchers believe that the print may have been based on an earlier Xi Xia model. The Lingwu...
frontispiece appears to have served as the template for several Ming and Qing printed frontispieces (e.g., fig. 37) and paintings, attesting to the longevity and popularity of a design with roots in Xi Xia.\(^{129}\)

The text of *The Merciful Repentance Ritual* records a Buddhist repentance rite, said to have originally been commissioned by Emperor Wu of Liang (Liang Wudi 梁武帝) upon the advice of the monk Zhigong 志公.\(^{130}\) Repentance was being offered on behalf of the emperor’s deceased wife, Empress Chi 景, who had been punished for her frequent jealous outbursts by being reborn as a python (mang 蝮). The rite transformed her from a python back to a human, and finally she ascended to heaven.

The narrative scene in the left half of the frontispiece illustrates this story vividly (fig. 35). In a palatial setting decorated with a landscape screen, Emperor Wu is shown seated face to face with Zhigong. There they witness the empress’s magical transformation: she appears twice, first as a snake coiled on palatial tiles, second as a female soul dressed in fine garments ascending to heaven on clouds.

To understand why some Xi Xia–based frontispieces were reprinted in Yuan Hangzhou, we need to trace the careers of the Tangut monks who moved to Jiangnan after the fall of the Xi Xia.\(^{131}\) This elite group of Buddhists included the leading national and imperial

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\(^{129}\) For the 1545 frontispiece carved at Shuimu Temple 水目寺 in Yunnan and the 1652 version reprinted at Xiangling Temple 嶽玲寺 in Beijing, see *Zhongguo banhua quanji*, 1: 161, 177. Part of the narrative scene featured at the left side of these frontispieces is comparable to an imperially sponsored painting known as *The Origin of the Water-Land Retreat (Shuilu yuan qi tu 水陸緣起圖)* which bears the colophon of Empress Dowager Cisheng (Cisheng huangtaihou 慈聖皇太后) (1546–1614) and is now in the Capital Museum in Beijing; see Han Yong 彭, *Beijing wenwu jingcui daxi: fozaoxiang juan*, 2: pls. 37–38.

\(^{130}\) For a study of this text, see Yang Zhigao 杨志高, “Zhong Ying liangguo de Xi Xia wen Cibei daochang chanfa cangjuan xukao” 中英兩國的西夏文《慈悲道場儀法》藏卷敘考, *Ningxia shijian xueyuan xuebao* (社會科學) 31.1 (2010), 73–81. For the ten-juan *Cibei daochang chanfa* 慈悲道場儀法, see T. 1909, 45: 922–967. Emperor Wu of Liang is also said to have initiated the Water-Land Retreat (*Shuilu zhai 水陸齋*). For a recent study of the Song Buddhist visual culture associated with this ritual, see Bloom, “Descent of the Deities.” On Liang Wudi’s sponsorship of Buddhist rituals, see Jinhua Chen, “‘Pancavarsika’ Assemblies in Liang Wudi’s Buddhist Palace Chapel,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 66.1 (2006), 43–103.

\(^{131}\) Kubilai Khan downplayed Chan Buddhism, appointing the Jurchen monk Kangjixiang 元吉祥, the Tangut monk Yang Lianzhenjia 杨煉真伽, and other non-Han devouts to supervise Buddhism, playing up Tibetan Buddhism, and so on; see Chen Gaohua 陈高华, “Zailun Yuandai Hexi sengren Yang Lianzhenjia” 再論元代河西僧人楊煉真伽, *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中華文史論叢,
preceptors Yang Lianzhenjia 楊璽真伽 and Guan Zhuba 管主八.\textsuperscript{132} Both were involved in supervising and financing the publication of the three Buddhist canons during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries: the Tangut-script canon (Hexi zang 河西藏), the Qisha canon (Qisha zang 祁사藏), and the Puning canon.\textsuperscript{133} The majority of these texts were printed in the Temple of Longevity (Wanshou si 萬壽寺) in Hangzhou, a Buddhist temple rebuilt on the foundations of two Southern Song Daoist temples in the Gushan 孤山 area.\textsuperscript{134}

The career of Yang Lianzhenjia, who had enjoyed tremendous power as Jiangnan’s highest official supervising Buddhism (Jiangnan shijiao zongshe 江南釋教總攝 and Jiangnan shijiao zongtong 江南釋教總統) in the late thirteenth century, was well documented, and we now think of him as one of the most notorious figures in Yuan political and religious


\textsuperscript{133} For more on this publishing project, see Li Fuhua and He Mei, Hanwen fojiao dazang jing yanjiu, 252–374; Li Jining 李靜寧, “Guanyu Xi Xia kan Hanwen ban dazang jing” 関於《西夏刊漢文版大藏經》, Wenxian 文献, 2000.1, 139, 151–152; Chia, “Life and Afterlife of the Qisha Canon.”

history. A frontispiece accompanying the Huayan Sutra from the Qisha canon (fig. 38) bears a colophon that refers to Yang as the “Master of Forever Blessings” (Yongfu dashi 永福大師) and the print’s donor.135 Presumably it was made before Yang fell from power in 1291.136 Scholars have also noted that this image is almost identical with a frontispiece accompanying the Treatise on the Way to Attain Deliverance (Jietuo daolun 解脫道論, now in the collection of the Shanxi Library) included in the Puning canon, except that the inscription there lists the Tibetan Buddhist monk Danba 胡八 as the donor.137

The frontispiece deserves further examination. At left are a temple and, in front of it, working at long tables, a group of monks collating sutras. A tablet that reads “the Hall of Longevity” (Wanshou dian 萬壽殿) identifies the temple: we are looking at the center of Buddhist printing activities. The sutra-collating scene calls to mind Translating Sutras in Xi Xia (fig. 5), discussed earlier in this article. Both show an inverted-V-shaped composition, with the rows of seated monks converging on a presiding figure. It is likely that both frontispieces were produced in Hangzhou around the same period. Stylistically speaking, both the Wanshou image and the frontispiece accompanying The Merciful Repentance Ritual (fig. 35) exhibit a Chinese style; they form a sharp contrast with the eight to nine Himalayan-style frontispiece templates used again and again in the Puning, Qisha, and Tangut-script canons.138

Guan Zhuba, who once served as the registrar of Buddhist monks in Songjiang Prefecture (Songjiang fu senglu 松江府僧錄), for which the court bestowed on him the honorable title “Master of Infinite Blessings” (Guangfu dashi 廣福大師), was another powerful Tangut monk who promoted Buddhist printing projects in the early Yuan. He was noted for his leadership in supervising and sponsoring the publication of the Qisha canon and the Tangut-script canon. According to the colophon (dated 1306) at the end of the third juan of Dazongdi xuanwen benlun 大宗地玄文本論, included in the Qisha canon (fig. 39), Guan Zhuba distributed copies of printed sutras in Tangut to temples in Ningxia and Yongchang—parts of northwestern China formerly ruled by the Xi Xia.139 He handed out more than one hundred copies of the Huayan Sutra, The Invaluable Repentance Ritual of Emperor Wu of Liang (Lianghuang baochan 梁皇寶懺)—a text that was likely identical to The Merciful Repentance Ritual—The Huayan Repentance Ritual (Huayan

135 For a plate, see Zhongguo banhua quanji, 1: 95.
136 Chia, “Life and Afterlife of the Qisha Canon.”
137 Li Fuhua and He Mei, Hanwen fojiao Dazang jing yanjiu, 330.
139 Wang Han, “Yuandai Hangzhou kanke ‘Dazang jing,’” 112 fig. 1.
Reassessing Printed Buddhist Frontispieces from Xi Xia

daochang chanyi (華嚴道場頌儀), and more than one thousand copies of the *Ritual for Offering Food to Hungry Ghosts with Burning Mouths* (Yankou shishi yigui 焚口施食儀軌). The archaeological discovery of a fragmentary printed text in the northern section of the Mogao grottoes seems to offer support to the claims made in the colophon. The Dunhuang fragment states that Guan Zhuba was the donor of the Buddhist canon deposited at the Manjustri Pagoda (Wenshu shili ta 文殊師利塔) in Shazhou 沙州, Gansu. This is the region where Marco Polo noted that he had seen Buddhist images worshipped by Tangut people.

According to Xiong Wenbin and others, the frontispiece templates routinely used to illustrate the Puning canon, Qisha canon, and Tangut-script canon printed in Hangzhou all demonstrate a strong Himalayan style; this in turn suggests the Yuan appropriation of Xi Xia art. A good example is the frontispiece design that appears in several copies of the Puning canon (e.g., fig. 40) and the Qisha canon, as well as in a number of Tangut-script Buddhist texts (e.g., fig. 41). The frontal bird face decorating the top of the throne,

140 According to Shi Jinbo, *The Huayan Repentence Ritual* may have been compiled by Xi Xia monks; see Shi, *Xi Xia fojiao shilue*, 102. Another scholar has gone further, naming as the monk responsible Huijue 慧覺; see Cui Hongfen 裴紅芬, “Sengren ‘Huijue’ kaoluè—jiantan Xi Xia de Huayan xinyang” 聖人《慧覺》考略—兼談西夏的華嚴信仰, *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究, 2010.4, 53–55. The colophon I refer to here is based on the version in the National Library of China, Beijing; see Wang Han, “Yuandai Hangzhou kanke ‘Dazang jing’ yu Xi Xia de guanxi,” 112 fig. 1.


143 Scholars have sorted out ten kinds of templates that have been used repetitively in these frontispiece designs; see Xiong Wenbin, “Cong banhua kan Xi Xia fojiao yishu (wu),” 89–93; Heather Stoddard, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, 2nd ed. (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2008), 43–49; Ge Wanzhang 葛雲翔, “Fushe yu huixiang: Mengyuan shidai de zangchuan fojiao yishu” 辯識與回向：蒙元時期的藏傳佛教藝術, in *Dahan de shiji: Mengyuan shidai de duoyuan wenhua yu yishu* 大汗的世紀：蒙元時代的多元文化與藝術, ed. Shih Shou-chien 石守謙 and Ge Wanzhang (Taipei: Gugong Bowuyuan, 2001), 265n108.

144 The illustration from the Puning canon shown here is from *Da ji piyu jing* 大集譬喻經, now in the Palace Museum, Taipei; see *Zhongguo banhua quanqi*, 1: 100. The illustration bearing the Tangut inscription is from the Tangut-script text *Beihua jing* 北華經, now in the National
the wavy lines used for figures’ eyes, the triangular headdresses of bodhisattvas, and the general three-quarter-view of the side figures are all reminiscent of the Himalayan style appropriated in Xi Xia frontispiece art (e.g., fig. 42).  

Nevertheless, in different hands the Himalayan style assumes quite different forms. For instance, the figures in the Xi Xia frontispiece are noted for their elongated torsos, dramatically narrow waists, and their thin and almost invisible clothing, all quite distinct from the Yuan example. The Himalayan prototype appears to have taken on Chinese elements after the designers and woodblock carvers of Hangzhou set to work with it. Scholars have identified the Chinese carver Chen Ning 陈宁, illustrator Chen Sheng 陈昇, and Yang 杨 family printing house located in the Zhong’an 衢安 Bridge district as participants who worked on these Buddhist texts and frontispieces. Familiar as Chinese artists and artisans would have been with their native aesthetic, they could be expected to render figures with rounder faces and heavier clothing, fleshing out the compositional blueprints they were asked to copy.

While Yang Lianzhenjia and Guan Zhuba were both powerful Lamaists active in the Yuan elite, a less powerful and little-known Tangut monk named Li Huiyue 李惠月, known as the “Chan Master of Brightness” (Guangming chanshi 光明禅师), also made significant contributions to the proliferation of Buddhist texts and frontispieces in the late thirteenth century. In his classic study of this subject, Li Jining identified Li Huiyue as a Xi Xia “leftover citizen” (yimin 遗民), who was relocated from the north to

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145 Piotrovsky, *Lost Empire of the Silk Road*, 268; *Silu shang xiaoshi de wangguo*, 268; *Zhongguo banhua quanqi*, 1: 41, 80; Stoddard, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, 38 fig. 23.

146 Xiong Wenbin, “Cong banhua kan Xi Xia fojiào yishu (xu),” 93.

147 On those who worked in the Hangzhou publishing enterprise devoted to the Qisha canon, see Chia, “Life and Afterlife of the Qisha Canon;” Su Bai, “Yuandai Hangzhou de zangchuan mijiao,” 65.

148 For colophons and seals bearing Li Huiyue’s name, see Li Jining, *Fojing banben*, 143 fig. 61; Wang Han, “Yuandai Hangzhou kanke ‘Dazang jing,’” 116 figs. 4–5.
the Jiangnan area after the fall of the Xi Xia. At least fourteen extant Buddhist texts—printed or hand-copied in the late thirteenth century—have colophons that identify Li Huiyue (by his given name or his sobriquet) as the donor of the texts, some of which bear exquisite frontispieces. For example, the illustrated *Bukong juansuo xin zhou wang jing* 不空倡導羣芳王經 from the Puning canon (fig. 43), now in the National Library of China, has a colophon at the end of the text that specifies the Chan Master of Brightness as the donor who contributed funds to print the Buddhist canon. Last but not least, Li Huiyue also commissioned a set of handwritten *Huayan Sutras* on indigo paper; dated 1298, they are now in the Kyoto National Museum. The frontispiece accompanying *juan* 71 of the set (color plate 13), for instance, depicts Child Sudhana’s pilgrimage against a landscape setting bordered by a pine tree at right in the style of Li Cheng and Guo Xi. There is also an eye-catching treasure-gathering jar (*jubao pen* 聚寶盆) glowing under the tree. Kanda Kiichirō, who first published these exquisite frontispiece drawings, called attention to an important colophon. It reads, “Artists from the bordering hill of Fengxi in Hangzhou Prefecture, Shen Jinghu and his son Yingxiang painted eighty-one *juan* of the *Huayan Sutra* (Hangzhou lu Fengxi jiefeng huashi Shen Jinghu tong nan Yingxiang huihua Huayan jing xiang bashiyi juan) 廣州路奉溪界峰畫士沈鏡湖同男應祥繪畫華嚴經像八十一卷, suggesting that the painters whose designs were used in the frontispieces were professional illustrators from the Hangzhou area. Kanda even speculated that these elegantly transcribed texts were copied by Korean monks, a group with a fine reputation for copying sutras.


150 Li Jining, “Guanyu ’Xi Xia kan Hanwen ban Dazang jing’.”

151 For a classic study of this set, see Kanda Kiichirō 神田喜一郎, *Kanda Kiichirō zenshū* 神田喜一郎全集, 3: 427–436. For plates, see the unnumbered pages between 430 and 431. On other manuscript copies of Buddhist texts sponsored by Li Huiyue, including a copy of the *Huayan Sutra* (without any illustrations) written in golden pigment on indigo paper; see Shi Jinbo, *Xi Xia chuban yanjiu* 西夏版本研究, 98–101; Chen Bingying 陈炳英, “Jinshu Xi Xia wen ’Dafangguangfo huayan jing’” 金書西夏文《大方廣佛華嚴經》, *Wenwu* 文物, 1979.5, 92–93.

Seen in this way, this preliminary study of the Buddhist frontispieces of Xi Xia has led to a reassessment of that culture’s role in the visual consumption and production of its neighbors. Far from a peripheral or isolated entity, Xi Xia was closely connected to the Song, Liao, Jin, and Yuan, contributing much to shaping the region’s rich and diverse Buddhist art. Future comparisons will allow us to make connections beyond China—a topic that awaits exploration.
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西夏佛教雕版扉畫重探

黄士瑶　莱斯大学

提　要:

本研究以20世纪以来宁夏、甘肃等地所发现的为数可观的西夏佛教雕版扉畫为主要材料，重新探索西夏视觉文化与周边中国文化（包括宋朝及其他构成中國史上的所謂征服王朝如遼、金、元等）的关系。本文以视觉分析为主要研究方法，透过對西夏及其它地区佛教版畫中被重複使用的格套、子模之識別及比較，探討佛教雕版扉畫在中古中國各文化圈的製作、傳播與交流。西夏的佛教視覺文化遺產，亦反映在元初由活躍在宫廷及江南地區的西夏僧人所主持、印行於杭州的佛經及扉畫作品上。從佛教雕版扉畫研究所見之西夏多元視覺文化為中古中國研究提供了新的視野。西夏在中國視覺文化研究上原本趨於邊緣的地位亦應被重新評估。

關鍵詞：西夏、版畫、佛經扉畫、印刷文化
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