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The Revered Master Deep Willows and the Hall of Deep Willows

WU YANKANG

TRANSLATED BY FREDERICK W. MOTE

TRANSLATOR’S NOTE: This translation article is based directly on an essay with the title “Shenliu dashi yu Shenliutang” (The Revered Master Deep Willows and the Hall of Deep Willows) written by Wu Yankang of the Jinling kejingchu (Jinling Buddhist Press). His article was published in Fayin (The Voice of Dharma) 2 (2001). Other passages are drawn from Wu Yankang’s manuscript “Yang Renshan yu Jinling kejingchu” (Yang Renshan and the Jinling Buddhist Press), also published in translation in the current number of the East Asian Library Journal. The translator has also drawn on other articles by Wu Yankang and other sources, as noted. The translation of Wu’s essay is in Roman; other portions of this article that are in italics include abbreviated paraphrases of other passages from Wu’s articles or represent additional material provided by the translator. The translator’s intention, respecting that of the author, is to emphasize the place of Yang Renshan’s Jinling Buddhist Press in the history of book printing and of Buddhist scholarly activities in the late-imperial and early-Republican eras (1911–1949). At the same time, the translator has attempted to supplement the original material in ways to meet the needs of readers who may be less familiar with the Chinese scene.

In the original essay, the subject, Yang Wenhui (Renshan) is usually referred to as Renshan jushi (Renshan, the Buddhist lay devotee) or simply as jushi (Lay Devotee) in keeping with Chinese Buddhist usage. In this translation, in most cases he will be called Yang Renshan or Renshan.
A line from a Tang-dynasty poem provided an eminent Buddhist lay devotee with the name for his garden. The name also became one of the literary courtesy names for the man himself. The Tang poet is Liu Shenxu, who was active during the brilliant Kaiyuan reign period (713–741 CE). The Buddhist lay devotee is Yang Renshan, who lived from 1837 to 1911. The line of poetry can be translated:

The idle gate looks out to the mountain road;
Deep in the willows is a hall for studies.

Xianmen xiang shanlu;
Shenliu dushutang.

It suggests an ideal of seclusion for serious study, but Yang Renshan, although a serious scholar, was anything but a recluse. He was the founder of the Jinling Buddhist Press in Nanjing, which in 1866 started extensive reprints of Buddhist writings from newly cut printing blocks. In 1897, the Jinling Buddhist Press moved from earlier locations in Nanjing to a large walled enclosure in Yanlingxiang (Yanling Lane), in the very center of Nanjing, which also included the residence of the prosperous Yang family. (For images of the Jinling Buddhist Press today, see figures 1 and 2.) The name given to the expansive gardens and commodious residences was “Shenliu dushutang” (Deep Willows Hall for Studies). From that, the name “Shenliu dashi” (Master of Deep Willows) was bestowed on Mr. Yang by his followers as a term of high respect for a revered teacher.

The Hall of Deep Willows: Commitment to Buddhist Publishing

Lay devotee Yang Renshan’s formal name was Yang Wenhui; Renshan was his courtesy name. He was a native of Shidai county in Anhui province, today’s Shitai county. He was born in the two-hour period chou [between one and three a.m.] on the sixteenth day of the eleventh lunar month of the seventeenth year of the Daoguang reign [13 December 1837] at Yangjiaacun (the Yang-family village), some thirty li [about ten miles] southwest of the county seat. The village lay at the foot of the
Ranglingshan (Rangling Hills). Beginning his schooling at age nine, he proved to be exceptionally intelligent.

Early in 1853 the Taiping rebel forces abandoned Wuchang [the capital of Hubei province] to push eastward and broke through the defenses of Anqing [the capital of neighboring Anhui province]. In fighting there, the governor of Anhui . . . was killed, and rampaging soldiers left deep scars on the countryside. The entire Yang household, including about ten family members young and old [along with servants and attendants], led by their father [Yang Chizao, 1800–1863, jinshi of
1838], known by his courtesy name Puan xiansheng (Master Puan), were forced to commence what would be ten years of wandering existence. They moved back and forth through Anhui, Jiangxi, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang, frequently encountering adversities. But in all such instances [the young] Yang Renshan’s military foresight was effective, and they evaded disaster. During those years Yang Renshan also took service under the military leaders Zhang Fei (1814–1862, jinshi 1835) and Zhou Tianshou (d. 1863). Yang Renshan was noted for his courage in battle. He personally led other officers and soldiers, and on one occasion he attacked rebel agents in bloody combat. Though he was recommended for rewards and advancement, Yang firmly refused to accept.

In her biographical accounts of her grandfather’s life, Yang Buwei (1889–1981), the wife of the eminent linguist Zhao Yuanren (Yuenren Chao, 1892–1982), has pointed out that Yang Renshan was not drawn to studying for the civil service examinations or joining the bureaucratic elite of his time. He even went so far as to question, in the presence of his father and the great hero of the
anti-Taiping military campaigns, Zeng Guofan (1811–1872), why Chinese
should fight to save the alien Manchu dynasty. Zeng Guofan and Yang Chizao
were tongnian, that is, they were fellow winners of the jinshi degree in the year
1838 and had become close friends. Concerned that Yang Renshan’s seditious-
sounding remarks could bring him to grief, Zeng had the young man transferred
to a post in Hangzhou, where the Yang family made their temporary home in
the 1850s, to be away from the battle front of that time. Later, Zeng Guofan told
his eldest son, Zeng Jize (1839–1890), that Yang Renshan was an exceptional
man who should be given the opportunity to serve in important capacities even
though he was unwilling to enter the civil service. Yang Buwei stresses that her
grandfather remained a man of intellectual independence, not only deeply inter-
ested in Western science and government, but also one who held revolutionary
ideas and who covertly supported the revolutionary movement of Sun Yat-sen
(Sun Yixian, 1866–1925) in the early years of the twentieth century.

Yang Buwei was twenty-two years old when her famous grandfather died
in 1911. She had been very close to him and remembered intimate conversations
with him over the years, as well as the experience of residing in the grounds
shared with the Jinling Buddhist Press.

After the fighting came to an end [in 1864], Yang Renshan
described in a poem the desolate scene at that time, showing that the
cruelties of war and the sufferings of ordinary people affected him deeply.
At the same time, the seeds of his subsequent studies of Buddhism were
planted in his heart. In 1862 when the Taiping Rebellion’s armies gave
up their hold on Anhui province, Yang Renshan was twenty-five years
old. He led the Yang family back to Anhui, making their residence in
Anqing, the provincial capital. There he made his first contacts with
Buddhist teachings. A brief biography of Yang Renshan published in
1912 states, “Previously an elderly nun of unknown identity gave him a
copy of the Jin’gangjing (Vajracchedikā; Diamond Sutra), which, on re-
turning home, he opened and read. He felt it difficult to comprehend yet
marvelously subtle. He carefully stored it away as something to be
valued.” Subsequently in a book store in the Anhui provincial capital he
bought a copy of Dacheng qixin lun (Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda śāstra; Mahayana
Treatise on the Awakening of Faith), which he placed on his desk, but
he found no time to time to look into it.

In 1864, when Yang Renshan was twenty-seven years old, ex-
hausted from long years of stress, he had the misfortune to contract the plague and was sick for a long time. One biographical account has this record.

After his illness he took up various books but on getting into them found them to be of no interest. Then he read the *Qixin lun* (Awakening of Faith) and could not put it aside. After reading through it five times, he began to discover its profound import, and from that time he widely sought out other Buddhist writings. From that time forward, lay devotee Yang Renshan was resolutely set on his course of formal Buddhist studies. In her Chinese autobiography (1967), Yang Buwei writes,

> [while the family was temporarily residing in Hangzhou in the 1850s,] one day while walking about aimlessly, he saw in a peddler’s sidewalk display of used books a copy of the “Mahayana Treatise on the Awakening of Faith” which he took up and began to read seriously. Later I heard that people had said grandfather had first encountered this book while at Anqing, but I do not believe that.

More emphatically, in her brief life of her grandfather (1960), she inserts a parenthetical remark: “According to one view, he had bought it in a bookstore in Anhui; that is incorrect.” From that experience, she wrote elsewhere, he decided on his own to make the study of Buddhism his life work. She also stressed, “Grandfather was not the sort of person who was led by superstitious belief to take up the study of Buddhism.” The English language rendering of the autobiography, Autobiography of a Chinese Woman, “put into English by her husband, Yuenren Chao [Zhao Yuanren],” and published in 1947, departs considerably from the Chinese text as later published in 1967 (preface dated 1966); her two recollections of her grandfather published in Chinese in 1960 and 1963, as well as the full Chinese text of her autobiography, all express her mind more directly than the 1947 English version. Note, for example, that in the English 1947 version this event is described as follows:

> Grandfather would wander alone in the streets of Hangchow [Hangzhou] after office hours. One day he picked up a volume of Lengyen Ching
[Lengyan jing] or Śūranga [Śūrangama sūtra]. He had always been interested in science, philosophy, and religion, and this Buddhist work was such a great find that he kept reading, standing in the old bookshop, quite forgetting where he was.

Despite such variations in place, and time, and the name of the first Buddhist work to enter his consciousness, as encountered in these and other Chinese sources, all the writings about him show that Yang Renshan was a man of the broadest interests and that he was attracted to Buddhism as one more field of intellectual endeavor, albeit the one that would dominate his life from this time forward.

In 1866 [following his father’s death in 1863, which made Yang Renshan the head of the family], Lay Devotee with his entire family moved to Nanjing. Nanjing, since March of 1853 the Taiping Rebellion’s Heavenly Capital, had fallen to the Chinese imperial forces under the command of Zeng Guofan’s younger brother, Zeng Guoquan (1824–1890), on 19 July 1864, leaving a demolished city awaiting the vigorous reconstruction that commenced almost immediately. Yang went there on assignment from Zeng Guofan to supervise large, government building projects. In that same year, the Lay Devotee’s first publication, *Jingtu sijing* (Four Sutras of the Pure Land School) was produced there. The appearance of this book marked the establishment of the Jinling kejingchu, the Nanjing Buddhist Press.

The Jinling Buddhist Press is China’s first publisher in modern times to have been created and managed by private individuals for the purpose of engraving printing blocks, printing books from them, distributing those publications, and carrying on research, all in one unified Buddhist publishing institution. After the Jinling Buddhist Press was established, Buddhist publication activities also were established one after another at Rugao, Changshu, and Yangzhou [all in Jiangsu] and at Hangzhou [in Zhejiang].

In 1878 when Zeng Jize, was appointed envoy plenipotentiary to England and France, he invited Yang Renshan to accompany him as counsellor at the new Chinese Legation in London and later in France. The following year, in London, he first made acquaintance with Nanjō Bunryū (1849–1927), a Japanese scholar in Buddhist studies (then studying at Oxford University); they became lifelong friends, maintaining
thereafter a continuing close relationship. Lay Devotee entrusted Nanjô Bunryû to acquire in Japan and Korea writings by eminent past worthies of Sui and Tang times (sixth to tenth centuries) to send back to China, in all more than three hundred items. Among those were many that had long ceased to exist in China. Yang Renshan selected the most valuable of those to be engraved, printed, and circulated. In that way, he enabled important works of the Consciousness Only [Weishi], Three Treatises [Sanlun], Avatamsaka [Huayan, or “Garland Sutra”], Pure Land [Jingtu], and other schools of Buddhist teaching to again become known.

This aspect of Yang Renshan's work in promoting Buddhist studies in confirmed in other sources. Kenneth K. S. Chen's standard work, Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey, says of him:

[The] movement toward lay Buddhism was to reach its highest point during the closing years of the Ch’ing [Qing] dynasty, when the leading roles were enacted by such people as Yang Jen-shan [Yang Renshan].

During the T’ai-p’ing Rebellion (1851–1865) Buddhism suffered one of its most crushing blows. The T’ai-p’ing leaders, in their campaign against all idolatrous worship, wrought their greatest damage to the Buddhist sangha by their wholesale destruction of Buddhist images, libraries, and temples in all the areas which they overran. The revival of the religion after that holocaust was engineered mainly through the dedicated leadership and activities of such men as Yang Jen-shan [Yang Renshan]. With the destruction of the sutras the Chinese Buddhists found it difficult to obtain reading materials. To alleviate this shortage, Yang concluded an agreement with the Japanese Buddhist scholar Bunyiu Nanjio [Nanjô Bunryû], who had just returned from Europe, through which he could obtain from the Japanese books to take back to China for publication. He organized the Chin-ling Sutra Publishing Center [i.e. the Jinling Buddhist Press] in Nanking to print and distribute the mass of literature he thus obtained from Japan. All in all, it is estimated that during his lifetime he distributed over a million [copies of] Buddhist tracts, comprising both Hînayāna and Mahāyāna texts. More than anyone else Yang was responsible for the revival of Buddhist literature through his publication endeavors.
On the fourth day of the sixth lunar month of the twenty-third year of the Guangxu reign period [3 July 1897], Lay Devotee Yang with his entire family moved into their newly-built residence in Nanjing’s Yanling Lane. This was the fourth move of the Jinling Buddhist Press. It was at that time that Yang Renshan, in consideration of the need for the Jinling Buddhist Press to have a permanent location in order to assure its future development, had purchased a piece of land of something over six mu near his home at Huapailou, on which he built his new residence of more than sixty rooms (jian). His mother, née Sun, at that time gravely ill, wanted to see the new home for herself, so even before the rooms had been painted, he had her carried half-reclining, half-sitting up in a wicker chair into the new dwellings to look around. The main entrance into this residence faced east onto Yanling Lane. The house number later added to it was Yanling Lane number 49. Over the main door were five large Chinese characters “Jinling kejingchu,” and on the right side of the entrance were the four characters “Chizhou Yangzhai” (Residence of the Yang family of Chizhou).

Yang Renshan gave orders that all of the printing blocks that had been engraved through the years, together with the entire printing operation, should be moved into the new place of residence. The front parts of the residences and gardens were given over to the Jinling Buddhist Press, while the rear portion became the residence of the family. Lay Devotee himself resided in a separate one-storey building in the farthest western corner of the residential garden area. In front of it was a pond, and all around it he had willows planted and gave it the name “Deep Willows Hall for Studies” (Shenliu dushutang), the name he had taken from the Tang-dynasty poem. (For a bird’s-eye-view of the western end of the grounds of the Jingling Buddhist Press as it appears today, see figure 3.) This was the place where Lay Devotee made his textual studies of the Buddhist sutras, did his writing, and taught. The Deep Willows Hall was divided into three rooms—to the east was his bedroom, in the middle was his parlor, and to the west was his study. The Jinling Buddhist Press served as the entire foundation for all of Yang Renshan’s Buddhist undertakings, and from the time he moved into this new setting, the engraving and printing of Buddhist texts, as well as the lecturing and teaching activities, entered into an entirely new stage. And
3. Photograph (from the south) of the western end of the grounds of Jingling Buddhist Press, showing the reconstructed Shenliutang (Hall of Deep Willows) at the center with Yang Renshan’s burial site behind it, the large, two-story woodblock storage building at the rear, and two buildings to the right containing administrative offices and rooms for woodblock printing, collating, book binding, and text composition. Image reproduced from Li Jiazhen and Xiao Yongming, comp., Jinling kejingchu (Jinling Buddhist Press) ([Nanjing]: [Jinling kejingchu], [after 1996]), p. 2.

thus, all the Buddhist activities carried on during the final fourteen years of his life were to be inseparably linked to this Deep Willows Hall.

In the summer of 1897 Yang Renshan’s mother died at the age of ninety-seven. After the family had emerged from mourning, he gathered his eldest son Yang Zixin, his second son Yang Zichao, and his fifth son Yang Fuyan [i.e. all three of his surviving sons] to meet at Deep Willows Hall to tell them about his intention that they should set up separate households, in his desire to donate the entire property at Yanling Lane to the Jinling Buddhist Press to be its permanent place of operations. . . .
In the course of that perhaps surprising announcement to his sons, Yang Renshan reminded them that from the time he had first encountered the Buddhist teachings at age twenty-seven, it had been his strong desire to become a monk. Now his mother has died at an advanced age, and he himself was declining in physical strength, well past the time when he could assume the duties and discipline of monkhood. He said that the entire residential section as well as the buildings housing the Buddhist Press would become “the common property of the boundless Buddhist realm” (shifang gongchan) and that worldly concerns would no longer burden him. Four years later, in the spring of 1901, he convened a second meeting with the sons to have them all affix their signatures to a written record of the division of the household. Because the Buddhist Press had never operated on a for-profit basis, it had acquired debts totalling 3,810 silver taels, Yang Renshan told his three sons to divide that sum among themselves and repay it to the press out of their incomes.  

The Deep Willows Hall was not only the place where the Lay Devotee carried on his studies and his other work, it was also the place where he normally received friends and old acquaintances, as well as his students and followers. Most of those were Buddhist scholars, but there also was no lack of persons associated with the modernization movement [of Kang Youwei, 1858–1927] and members of the Revolutionary Party [of Sun Yat-sen]. Noted personages in China’s modern history such as Tan Sitong [T’an Ssu-t’ung, 1865–1898], Ouyang Jian, [1871–1943, courtesy name Jingwu], and Su Xuanying [1884–1919, courtesy name Manshu] among others, each developed a relationship with the Hall of Deep Willows.  

The further discussion of Yang Renshan’s relationship with Tan Sitong can be briefly summarized here. It should be noted that Tan Sitong became a close associate of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao (1873–1929) during the “Hundred-Days Reforms” of 1898. When that attempt to transform China into a modern constitutional monarchy collapsed, Tan was captured by the vengeful empress dowager and, with five other prominent associates, was beheaded. They became known as the Six Martyrs of 1898 (Wuxu liu junzi), that is, martyrs of Kang Youwei’s brief Hundred-Days’ Reform. Tan could have fled, but stayed on to be arrested, explaining that revolutions can be successful only when some are
willing to sacrifice their blood and that he was eager to contribute his blood to that great cause. Long before he became associated with the reformers, he had already established a reputation as an unconventional scion of a highly-placed official family—he was a skilled swordsman and military strategist and had traveled widely throughout China seeking new knowledge. It may well be that Tan Sitong was drawn to Yang Renshan not only to learn something about Buddhist doctrine, but also because he knew that Yang had spent a total of six years in two terms as counselor to the Chinese Legation in London, during which time Yang had traveled throughout Europe buying scientific equipment, such as maps, globes, cameras, surveying equipment, telescopes, and astronomical observation instruments, and that he had unconventional views on women’s education, the new fields of learning, and the like. Tan spent a year and a half in Nanjing, from the summer of 1896 to early in 1898, much of it in the company of Yang Renshan and notables assembled at Yang's Deep Willows Hall for Study. On departing Nanjing early in 1898, Tan presented a valuable set of red-sandalwood furniture from his Nanjing residence to Yang for use in his Deep Willows Hall, as token of his respect; it remained there for many years. After Tan’s execution, the imperial government followed up on the activities of Tan and other revolutionaries, and the Yang residence at 49 Yanling Lane was thoroughly searched. Despite this, the Yang's had many close contacts within the official establishment in Nanjing, and being forewarned, the police searches of the Yang residence turned up no evidence against them.

Tan Sitong's studies with Yang Renshan informed him about Buddhist concepts in ways that influenced his major philosophical work, the posthumously published Renxue (A Study of Benevolence). That work was written largely in 1896 and published in 1897 during the time that Tan spent in Nanjing, as Yang's student. Tan was a radical thinker whose fundamental commitment was to set people free from all kinds of bonds and restrictions, leading him to formulate a series of seven steps by which the “nets” that bound the Chinese people should be broken. He enumerated those in the following way:

First we must burst through the net of profit and emolument; then to burst through the net of [China's] vulgar learning such as evidential scholarship and literary forms; next to burst through the net of all the world's factional schools of learning; next to burst through the net of imperial rule; next to burst through the net of [Confucian] three bonds and five norms [of social relationships]; next to burst through the net of
Heaven; and finally to burst through the net of Buddhadharma [the laws and practices of Buddhist doctrine].

Tan Sitong was perhaps the most original and clear-minded individual involved in the reform movement of 1898. It is interesting to speculate that he may have been drawn to Yang Renshan because they shared views that Tan subsequently expressed in his seven steps for gaining human freedoms. Yang clearly agreed with several of the points listed, possibly even the last one. The tone of iconoclasm conveyed by the expressed need to break through the net of Buddhist pieties and formalities had been a feature of radical Chan-Buddhist thought in earlier centuries; as such, it may have expressed both Yang’s and Tan’s intuitive awareness, as men of high philosophical attainment, that the formalities of Buddhist practice can be transcended, making them irrelevant. If so, this broadens our understanding of Yang Renshan’s intellectual commitment and may explain other aspects of his unconventional and modern-oriented outlook.

The circle of visitors to Deep Willows Hall shows that Yang’s followers included many who were important in the revival of Buddhism at that time. Gui Nianzu (1869–1916), alternate formal name Yi, courtesy name Bohua, was a native of present-day Jiujiang in Jiangxi province. In his youth, together with Xia Jingguan (1875–1953) of Xinjian in Jiangxi, he became a student of Pi Xirui [1850–1908, a classical scholar who favored modernizing trends advocating changes in education along Western lines].

Gui thus acquired a firm foundation in classical and literary studies. After attaining the juren degree in the provincial examinations of 1897, Gui joined the 1898 political reform movement of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. . . . When the reform movement collapsed, Gui had to hide out at his Jiangxi home, his life in great danger. Subsequently, while recovering from a long and debilitating illness, he came across a copy of the Diamond Sutra. Studying it obsessively, he is said to have experienced enlightenment.

Recovering from his illness, Gui Nianzu went to the Buddhist Press in Nanjing to meet Lay Devotee Yang, asking to become his student in Buddhism. Yang engaged Gui Nianzu in conversation and determined that he possessed talent for learning. Shortly thereafter, Gui returned to his home in Jiangxi but continued to correspond with Yang Renshan about issues in Buddhist learning. Subsequently, through Gui
Nianzu’s introduction, Li Duanfu (dates unknown), Ouyang Jian, and Mei Guangxi (1879–1947) all became Yang Renshan’s students and followers.

Concerned about Gui Nianzu’s economic circumstances and knowing him to be serious in his studies, Yang Renshan wrote to him offering assistance and inviting him to come to Nanjing.

I have a friend who is willing to offer you support in the amount of six silver taels per month on condition that in addition to your continuing studies of texts of the Yinming [the Hetuvidyā school of Buddhist logic which the Chinese monk-pilgrim Xuanzang (ca. 596–ca. 664) had brought from India to China in the seventh century CE] and Weishi [the Vijñapti or Consciousness Only school of Buddhist metaphysics, also introduced into China by Xuanzang], you will spend three hours a day collating texts [for publication]. If this seems suitable, you may come to Nanjing and make your regular residence in my humble home.²²

The “friend” referred to was no doubt Yang Renshan himself. After receiving this letter, Gui Nianzu [and his wife] arrived in Nanjing early in the second month of 1902, also bringing his mother, younger sister, and younger brother’s wife, in all a family of five who moved into the Buddhist Press premises.²³ ... After two years, Gui and a younger brother went on to Japan to seek further studies in Buddhist texts and were subsequently joined by other family members.

Mei Guangxi, courtesy name Xieyun, was a native of Nanchang, Jiangxi province. In 1897 he passed the provincial examinations to become a juren. In 1901, on the introduction of Gui Nianzu, he went to Deep Willows Hall to meet Yang Renshan, attended Yang’s lectures on the Qixin lun (The Awakening of Faith), and became a convert to Buddhism. In 1909 Mei completed his Xinjing qianshi (Elementary Commentaries on the Heart Sutra) and asked Yang to critique it. Yang’s evaluation, “Xinjing qianshi tici” (Introductory Remarks on Elementary Commentary on the Heart Classic), was placed at the front of the book.²⁴ Lay Devotee Yang believed the Xinjing (Heart Sutra) to be succinct in language yet profound in import and knew that those who recited it were many. However, while commentaries on the sutra were numerous, it
remained a work of ancient subtlety difficult to comprehend, and for that reason Mei Guangxi’s *Xinjing qianshi* (Elementary Commentaries on the Heart Sutra) provided beginning learners with a bridge of access into it.

Gao Hengsong (1872–1962), courtesy name Henian, courtesy name Yinchen was a member of a family originally from Guichi in Anhui, later generations of which moved first to Xinghua [in northern Jiangsu province] and still later to [nearby] Liuzhuang, which became their fixed residence. Among Buddhist lay devotees [associated with Yang Renshan], he is the one and only one who traveled on foot as a pilgrim to seek out all the famous Buddhist sites. Late in 1902 Gao Hengsong took up residence at the Jinling Buddhist Press and studied Buddhism with Yang Renshan. When early the following year he called on Yang Renshan at Deep Willows Hall to ask leave in order to resume his wandering pilgrim way of life, his teacher gave him advice that included this admonition: “When you go about to visit places, you must keep your eyes open. One’s learning must penetrate in order for one to gain enlightenment; one’s access must be by way of knowledge to avoid going astray. . . . To understand this is not so hard; to practice it is most difficult.”

Ouyang Jian, courtesy name Jingwu, was a native of Yihuang in Jiangxi province. In 1890 he passed the examinations for *xiucai* status [the lowest level in the civil service examinations] and then entered the Jingxun shuyuan (Jingxun Academy) to further his studies. There he was a fellow student of Gui Nianzu. Through Gui’s introduction, he became a student of Buddhism under Yang Renshan. In 1904 when Ouyang Jian was thirty-four years old, he went to Peking where, on the basis of his having been awarded senior licentiate status, he could sit for the examinations to become a tribute student (*gongsheng*). Enroute back to Jiangxi, he passed through Nanjing, where he called on Yang Renshan at the Deep Willows Hall, and after being enlightened through conversation with him, Ouyang Jian returned to his home to take charge of Zhengzhi xuetang, an academy in that place.

Su Xuanying, whose formal name originally was Yuanying and who was most commonly known by his courtesy name Manshu, was a native of Xiangshan (today’s Zhongshan) in Guangdong province. In 1907 while in Japan, he received from Chen Duxiu (1879–1939) a copy
of a work in English, which he used as his base-text for completing a work in Chinese translation which he called *Fanwen dian* (Foundations of Sanskrit) in eight *juan*. Early in 1908 he joined his name with that of Zhang Binglin (1868–1936, literary cognomen Taiyan) in issuing two documents “Jinggao sifang Fo dizi qi” (An Open Letter of Warning to Disciples of Buddha throughout the World) and “Gao zaiguan baiyi qi” (An Open Letter to Office Holders and Common People). Within Buddhist circles these aroused considerable influence. In the same year, Yang Renshan opened, on the premises of the Jinling Buddhist Press, a school which he called the Zhihuan jingshe (Jetavana Hermitage), [where Buddhist monks and laymen studied together not only Buddhist writings but also the English and Sanskrit languages and Chinese and English literature]. Yang wrote urgently to Su Xuanying inviting him to take on the teaching responsibilities for English and Sanskrit. The school prepared to open its first classes in October, and Su arrived at the Jinling Buddhist Press on the evening of 13 September. In idle hours after his arrival, he regularly went to the Hall of Deep Willows to audit Yang Renshan’s lectures on various Buddhist sutras. He held Yang in the highest regard. In a letter to a friend, Liu Tianmei, he wrote:

> While at this place, I frequently can attend the venerable Renshan’s lectures on sutra texts and find boundless pleasure in that. The venerable Renshan is more than eighty years old (actually seventy-two years of age), his body is strong, and his voice is clear and resonant. In embodying the lingering glow of our Lord Buddha, resplendent as the sun setting beyond the Yanzi Mountains, the venerable Renshan today stands alone.27

Su Xuanying’s health was not good, and teaching proved to be excessively exhausting, bringing on spates of coughing up blood. He was able to teach at the Jetavana Hermitage for only a month or so, and at the beginning of December he departed.

*Su Xuanying has been called a “Sino-Japanese genius.” He was born in Japan to Chinese parents and returned there to study early in the twentieth century when many Chinese began to go abroad to Japan to study, in many cases, to avoid the controls of the imperial government. Sun Yat-sen’s revolutionary party, the Tongmenghui, was formally organized in Tokyo in 1905. Zhang
Binglin, known as the “democratic classicist,” resided in Japan from 1906 until after the success of the revolution in 1911 and in Tokyo edited Sun Yat-sen’s revolutionary party newspaper, the Minbao, printed in Chinese for distribution among the thousands of Chinese students then in Japan, as well as for other overseas Chinese communities in Asia. Zhang was pre-eminent as a classical scholar and critic of the new trends in political thought. He wielded strong influence over younger Chinese students such as Su Xuanying, as well as Tan Sitong (discussed above), Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Chen Duxiu. Along with many of the radical-minded intellectuals of that era, including all the persons named above, Zhang Binglin took a deep interest in Buddhism as a field of learning important for the understanding of alternatives to Confucian state orthodoxy and as a source of popular belief and ethical concepts.

In addition [to Su Xuanying], there were other members of the Tongmenghui, such as Yu Tongbo (dates unknown) and Sun Yuyun (1872–1924), who regularly came to the Deep Willows Hall to meet with Yang Renshan to increase their understanding of Buddhism. Yu Tongbo had resided at the Jinling Buddhist Press for a long time, studying Buddhism with Yang Renshan. When Sun Yuyun returned to Nanjing from Japan in 1906 to agitate within the imperial New Army [which the revolutionaries had been able in some small measure to infiltrate], in response to the abortive revolutionary uprising at Pingxiang [in western Jiangxi] and at Liling [in the adjacent region of eastern Hunan or at nearby Liuyang], those activities became known to the authorities, and Sun Yuyun was arrested. After his arrest, his family members took refuge by hiding in the Jinling Buddhist Press, where Yang Renshan took care of them.

**Jinling Buddhist Press and Yang Renshan’s Legacy**

In the sixth month of 1911 Nanjing was flooded [when the Yangzi river rose following heavy rains]. Yang Renshan led all his household members out to view the flooding. The day was unusually hot, and he suffered heat stroke. His condition worsened day-by-day. At that time, his students Ouyang Jian, Mei Guangxi, Kuai Shoushu (courtesy name Ruomu, d. 1945), and others were in Nanjing. They sought out the best physicians of their day, in Nanjing and Shanghai, practitioners of both
Western and Chinese medicine, to come to treat his illness, but his condition failed to improve. One day, he said to Kuai Shoushu who waited in respectful attendance on him:

Among the generation of my grandchildren there are several to whom you must, within the limits of your abilities, give special care and attention. The first is my third granddaughter (note: this refers to Yang Buwei), for though she is a female, her will to succeed in fact surpasses that of a man. She hopes to go abroad to study medicine in order to benefit her age. The second is my fifth grandson, whom I hope will study Sanskrit in order in the future do research on Buddhist sutras.

On hearing those words, Kuai Shoushu promised that he certainly would take care of that.

Lay Devotee, realizing that he had contracted a serious illness from which he probably would not recover, one day called Chen Yi (d. 1952) into his presence and said to him:

My illness, I fear, will not be overcome, and I therefore must entrust the Buddhist Press to others. It is my wish that Chen [Jingqing] Xi’an, Ouyang [Jian] Jingwu, and you, the three of you jointly bear that responsibility. You must write to Chen Xi’an (at that time residing in Shanghai), and you also must consult with Ouyang [Jian] Jingwu (at that time staying at the Buddhist Press) to gain their agreement.

Chen Yi and Ouyang Jian, after talking it over, accepted Yang Renshan’s proposals and went together to meet with him. Yang Renshan was greatly comforted and offered some thoughtful admonitions. Then he added: “My concerns all disappear, having reverted to you three who will assume their management. I can now concentrate on the Buddha with all my heart, undisturbed by extraneous affairs.”

On 2 October 1911 Yang Renshan instructed that the Buddhist Research Society should be called into emergency meeting, to be held in Nanjing on the eighth and ninth. The meeting would discuss the means to maintain and protect the Jinling Buddhist Press; receive the message that the affairs of the press had been entrusted to three persons
and follow up on that with further discussion in order to show that the society approved; and also [to learn] that Yang Renshan had resigned as director of the society and therefore to nominate and select a new director.\textsuperscript{16} At that time the society’s principal members lived at various places from Nanjing to Shanghai, and in the urgency of the moment it was difficult to get them all together. Chen Yi suggested postponing the meeting, but Yang Renshan countered that the date must not be postponed. In consequence, urgent letters and telephone calls went out asking that all gather at the appointed time, and by the evening of 7 October all those in Nanjing and Shanghai had assembled. They agreed to meet on the following day at two in the afternoon at Kuai Shoushu’s residence in Beitingxiang (Beiting Lane). At close to noon on that day, Yang Renshan, with Chen Yi at his side to transcribe the message, gave his oral instructions about the agenda to be delivered to the meeting place. Just before leaving for the meeting place, Chen Yi went again to Yang’s room to ask for further instructions. Yang said suggested that Chen get the meeting room set up somewhat early. At that time, Yang’s manner and appearance were completely natural, without the least alteration. None would have guessed that at a little after three o’clock, before the meeting had ended, a person from his residence would rush to the meeting place to announce that the Lay Devotee has already gone West [i.e. to the Buddhist paradise].\textsuperscript{17} The society members at the meeting room, on hearing those words, moaned in grief as they rushed back to his place.

On the evening of Yang Renshan’s death, the Buddhist Research Society members continued their meeting at the Kuai residence, to discuss the organization of the Jinling Buddhist Press board of directors, nominating . . . eleven persons to serve on the board. Following that, they conferred on the establishment of the board and drafted the regulations for the management of the press. In accord with the wish of Lay Devotee Yang, they stipulated the responsibilities of the three directors: Chen Jingqing would be responsible printing and circulation, Ouyang Jian would be responsible for collation of sutra texts, and Chen Yi would be in charge of relations with outside parties; when a matter involved the entire operation, the three would jointly make management decisions. At the same time, they made arrangements for adding Yu Tongbo to be
in charge of social-intercourse arrangements. On 10 October when the revolution broke out at Wuhan, Yu Tongbo went to Shanghai that same night to attend to events unfolding there, and [his planned appointment] was abandoned.

Two further items of pertinent information come from Yang Buwei and her family. The first relates to the circumstances of the Jinling Buddhist Press and Yang-family residence in Nanjing in 1936. Yang Buwei and her husband Zhao Yuanren, moved with the re-located Academia Sinica to Nanjing in 1934, expecting it would be their permanent home thereafter. By 1936 people there were gravely concerned that the menace of Japanese invasion and war would interfere with all of China’s plans for the future, and in 1937 that happened. With great difficulty the Zhao family evacuated Nanjing in the fall of 1937 and did not see it again until thirty-five years later. Prior to that, in the mid-1930s Yang Buwei was dismayed that, despite the agreement reached between Yang Renshan and his three sons in 1901, discussed by Wu Yankang above, members of her generation of the Yang family were still occupying large portions of the property bequeathed to the Jinling Buddhist Press. In her brief Chinese account of her grandfather’s life published in 1963, Yang Buwei wrote:

One day in 1936, having returned to live in Nanjing with my husband Zhao Yuanren [of the Division of Linguistics in the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, in Nanjing], I was discussing family matters with my various older and younger brothers and cousins [survivors among Yang Renshan’s twenty-two grandchildren]. The men of our father’s generation were all dead, so some of us of our generation would have to bring to fruition the wish Grandfather had in the past expressed. For although we did not have the means to continue the engraving of printing blocks, the real property should be handed over [to the press] in the hope that it might encourage others among the population who might make vows to have sutra printing-blocks made [as an act of Buddhist good works]. For if [the turnover] were delayed until the next generation, there would be no persons remaining who with their own ears had heard Grandfather’s final instructions. All the assembled brothers, sisters, and cousins agreed with my proposal, but they insisted that I solemnly declare that while the [costs of making the] printing blocks had come from donations made by believers throughout the world
of Buddhism, the land and buildings had been donated as Grandfather’s private property. This real property, which thus had not been passed on to his heirs, in no circumstances could be considered anyone’s personal property and must, therefore, belong to the Jinling Buddhist Press in perpetuity.

In consequence, on 29 June 1936 in our home at 24 Lanjiazhuang the property deed was brought out, and Ouyang [Jian] Jingwu, Kuai Shoushu, Mei Guangxi, and Li [Yizhuo] Zhenggang all were invited to be present. [All were longstanding directors or staff members of the Jinling Buddhist Press, identified above in Wu Yankang’s essay.] Everything was managed and declared, in complete accord with Grandfather’s testamentary instructions and intentions. Moreover, to serve as legal evidence, my nephew Yang Shifeng [Y. R. Chao’s student and colleague at the Academia Sinica in linguistic field work] recorded each person’s statements on a specially prepared phonograph recording. That recording probably still exists in the archives of the Academia Sinica, but I would not know whether it still is playable. The deed documents were registered at the offices of the municipal government. In 1946, after the return of government offices following the victory in the war, Chen Yi carried out a re-registration of the documents at the municipal government. In consequence, the Jinling Buddhist Press became public property in perpetuity by my action in acknowledging a miniscule portion of the obligation I owed to Grandfather’s long-cherished wishes.38

Whether that action greatly benefited the Jinling Buddhist Press during the ensuing destructive years of the War of Japanese Resistance Against Japan is difficult to judge.

By the end of 1946, the Board of Trustees selected originally in 1911 had more or less ceased to exist; the only members remaining Chen Yi, Mei Guangxi, Li Yizhuo, and Pu Boxin. At that time the financial difficulties of the Jinling Buddhist Press moved steadily toward disaster, most of the residences and rooms had been rented out, and staff of the workmen and employees had been disbanded. In a few cases workmen who had been dismissed but had not yet left the premises went out every day to peddle bamboo baskets to keep themselves in food and came back in the evening to sleep. By 1948 there were more than thirty households
living in the large courtyards of the Buddhist Press. Trees had fallen and walls had collapsed; refuse was scattered everywhere. Even the iron bars on the windows of the vast storage room where the printing blocks of the sutras were kept had been sold off by some persons. The partition walls within those rooms had been taken away, and thick layers of dust had accumulated. The more than forty thousand printing blocks were scattered in disorder, and some of the blocks that had been attacked by boring insects had been taken away for use as firewood. At the very end, there was only Chen Yi alone, living in a one small room and guarding the printing blocks. His economic circumstances were so bad that it was even very difficult for him to meet his expenses for food and daily living needs, yet he still could not forget the final deathbed charge put to him by the venerable Yang Renshan. He remained all alone trying desperately to hold things together until poverty and illness combined to bring about his death on the night of 15 March 1952. In a letter sent to him in December 1948, Yang Renshan’s granddaughter, Yang Buwei, wrote:

You, sir, now at this advanced age, remaining faithful to my late grandfather’s personal charge to you, still try to make the best of the desperate situation. Truly, not only should the children and grandchildren of the Yang family be immeasurably grateful to you, people everywhere who value the Buddhist Press also should be extremely grateful.39

In the final evaluation, it must be counted that Chen Yi labored for more than forty years, during which he made vast contributions to protecting and maintaining the Jinling Buddhist Press.

Yet, the consequences of Yang Buwei’s ensuring that Yang Renshan’s wishes with respect to ownership of the Jinling Buddhist Press were fulfilled were of significance thereafter and undoubtedly contributed to the recognition of its special status after the Communist government came to power in 1950. An event bearing on that issue is briefly recorded in Zhao Yuanren Nianpu (Chronological Biography of Zhao Yuanren), compiled by his second daughter Zhao Xinna and her husband, Huang Peiyun, both professors in China since the late 1940s. The following notes appear there under the year 1973: “Between 16 April and 28 May, Zhao Yuanren and his wife returned to China to reunite with family members and make visits to academic institutions.” One of the events recorded
there took place on 13 May, when the Zhaos, two of their daughters and their husbands, and a few other family members and friends were invited by premier Zhou Enlai to a social meeting. Zhou’s guests included Guo Moruo, head of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Zhou Peiyuan, president of Beijing University; Zhao Puchu, president of the official Chinese Buddhist Association (Zhongguo Fojiao xiehui); and a number of linguists and other old scholar friends, as well as Dr. and Mrs. Zhao and their party.

The meeting was held in a room in the Great Hall of the People. It began a little after nine o’clock in the evening. . . . It also included a lavish midnight supper. . . . During the meeting the conversation turned to many subjects. . . . Premier Zhou was profoundly aware that paramount in Mrs. Zhao’s mind on this return visit to China was her concern over the recent conditions of the Jinling Buddhist Press which had been founded by her grandfather, the lay devotee Yang Renshan. He therefore asked the president of the Chinese Buddhist Press, lay devotee Zhao Puchu, to discuss its recent circumstances. [Zhao Puchu’s response was simply], “The Jinling Buddhist Press has come under the supervision of the Chinese Buddhist Association.”

Whether Mrs. Zhao had asked urgently about the matter thereby leading to the official response offered by Zhao Puchu or whether Zhao’s reply also included a factual review of matters concerning the Jinling Buddhist Press is not recorded. Zhao’s single sentence, as quoted, says nothing that was not commonly known by all present. But its import under those circumstances and moreover that Premier Zhou Enlai obviously had anticipated the question and thus had Zhao Puchu present, added to the significance. These facts indicated that the government had adopted a favorable attitude toward the honored Nanjing institution, perhaps regarding it as one of the “old culture’s” monuments requiring special protection during the destructive years of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). However that may be, the conditions at the Jinling Buddhist Press in the years following 1973 appear to have improved.

Lay devotee Yang Renshan devoted forty-five years of his life to propagating Buddhism, editing and engraving more than twenty thousand printing blocks, printing and circulating more than a million chapters of Buddhist sutras and classical writings, engraving the blocks for 211 sutras in 1155 chapters (juan), and for engraving the blocks for printing
twenty-four images of Buddha and bodhisattvas, and printing and circulating more than one hundred thousand imprints of those image blocks. . . . Yang Renshan’s own writings number eleven titles, and his compilations include ten large works. (For a list of these titles, see Appendix One.)

Yang Renshan exerted a huge influence on recent and contemporary China’s revival of Buddhism. The eminent monk Taixu (1889–1947, who had been one of Yang Renshan’s pupils] wrote in his Zhongguo Fuoxue (Chinese Buddhism) that Yang was: “the one figure of the greatest significance in the revival of Chinese Buddhist studies.”42 Taiwan scholar of Buddhism Lan Jifu has written: “Viewed from the century-long development of Buddhism, Yang Renshan is the pivotal figure in bringing about Buddhism’s revival from near death to renewed life.”43 Zhao Puchu [1907–2000] wrote:

For the clarification of Buddhist teachings and stimulus to the study of principles, Lay Devotee’s contributions rank first. . . . Yang Renshan’s writings opened up an era in the character of Buddhism’s existence, allowing the source on which he drew in his writings to make the largest possible contribution to the development of Buddhism in our country in recent times.44

Yang Renshan, in addition to his engraving of printing blocks and reprinting and circulating Buddhist texts, also trained and fostered Buddhist learning in a very large number of talented persons. Because the impact of his disciples, who exerted large influence in Buddhist circles during the Republican era, was so great, the American scholar Holmes Welch has praised Yang Renshan as the father of Buddhism in modern China. One can thus perceive the significance of his place in history.

Although no phrase with exactly the meaning cited above has been located in the authoritative writings of the late Holmes Welch, his book The Buddhist Revival in China (1968) indeed opens with an account of Yang Wenhui (Yang Renshan) and the various aspects of his deep impact on the character of Buddhism in modern China. Welch fully acknowledges the scope and the weight of Yang’s achievements. This point is reinforced by many references to Yang in other writings on Chinese Buddhism. In addition to the opinion of Kenneth K. S. Ch’en, Buddhism in China (1964), quoted above, one also could cite Wing-tsit Chan, Religious Trends in Modern China (1953), and many others.45
To quote from the English version of Yang Buwei’s autobiography: [Yang Renshan] made Yenling Hsiang [Yanling Lane] a meeting ground of scholars. Many even came with their families to stay at Yenling Hsiang, with its endless courtyards. There were classical scholars . . . , students of Buddhism . . . , revolutionaries . . . , and many more who came for shorter visits. Among foreigners who frequented Yanling Hsiang were . . . Timothy Richard [1845–1919], Gilbert Reid [1857–1927], and John C. Ferguson [1866–1945]. . . . With Richard, [Yang Renshan] was co-translator of Asvaghosa’s The Awakening of Faith, Shanghai, 1907.

While any discussion of Yang could turn on that range of his contacts among Chinese and foreign personages in China, or on doctrinal issues, on Buddhist education, on his role as teacher and author, or on his affinity for the revolutionary movement in late-imperial China, our interest here must focus on his large achievements in publishing Buddhist texts. In that work, his scholarly capacities are made evident in the care with which he located and evaluated rare works deserving of reprinting, the meticulous collation and critical editing of the works he published, the excellent design and format of his publications of which the East Asian Library at Princeton holds hundreds of volumes, and the manner in which he shared in and contributed to the scholarly spheres of activity in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century China. He truly must be credited with having created a large chapter in the recent history of the traditional Chinese book.

**Appendix One: Yang Wenhui (Renshan)’s Writings**

**Monographs and Annotated Texts**

- *Chanjiao bian* (1 juan) 禪教編 (一卷)
- *Dazong dixuan wenben lunliü* (4 juan) 大宗地玄文本輪略 (四卷)
- *Deng budeng guan zulu* (8 juan) 等不等觀雜錄 (八卷)
- *Fojiao chuxue keben* (1 juan) 佛教初學課本 (一卷)
- *Guanwuliangshoufo jing lüelun* (1 juan) 觀無量壽佛經略論 (一卷)
- *Lun Meng fayin* (2 juan) 論孟發隱 (一卷)
- *Shizong lüeshuo* (1 juan) 十宗略說 (一卷)
- *Tanjing liuoshi* (1 juan) 壇經略釋 (一卷)
Tiandiqiu tushuo (1 juan)
Wuliangshou jing yuansheng jielüeshi (1 juan)
Yinfu Chongxu Daode Nanhua sijing fayin (4 juan)

COMPILATIONS
Dacheng qixin lun shujie huibian
Dazang jiyao (460 zhong, 3300+ juan)
Foijiao zhongxue guwen keben (jia, yi, bing, ding 4 bian)
Huayan zhushu jiyao (29 zhong)
Jingtujing lun (14 zhong)
Shishi shisan jing
Shishi shisan jing zhushu
Xianshoufa ji (22 zhong)

Notes


2. Zhang Fei was a native of Shaanxi. He was appointed governor of Jiangxi in 1842 and subsequently placed in command of defenses against the Taiping rebels at various locations in Anhui. Zhou Tianshou, from Sichuan, held a sequence of military posts responsible for defenses against the Taiping rebels. After many successes, while serving on Zhang Fei’s staff, he eventually lost his life in the unsuccessful defense of Ningguo in southern Anhui. See Zhao Erxun (1844–1927) et al., comp., Qingshi gao (Draft History of the Qing), 536 juan (Beijing: Qingshiguan, 1928), juan 405, p. 4a and juan 408, p. 4a.

3. See Yang Buwei, Yige nüren de zizhuan (One Woman’s Autobiography), Zhuanji wenxue congkan 7 (Taipei: Zhuanji wenxue chubanshe, 1967), esp. chapter 16, “Zufu” (Grandfather). This Chinese text was the basis of Buwei Yang Chao, Autobiography of a Chinese Woman (New York: The John Day Company, 1947), the text having been “put into English by her husband Yuenren Chao.” See also, Zhao Yang Buwei, “Xianzu Renshan gong zhi shengping” (The Life of My Late Grandfather Renshan), a brief article that appeared in a special issue of the Buddhist journal Putishu (Bodhedrum) 59 (November 1960), pp. 6–9, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Yang Renshan. Although published seven years earlier than Chinese version of Yang Buwei’s autobiography, based on internal evidence, this 1960 article
appears to have been written after the Chinese text of the autobiography. For an expanded version by Yang Buwei of that brief fiftieth-anniversary biographical account, see Zhao Yang Buwei, “Wo de zufu” (My Grandfather), Zhuan ji wenxue (Biographical Literature) 3.1 (1963), pp. 17–21. This last article appears to be the latest of Yang Buwei’s various writings on this subject and is most useful.

4. See “Yang Renshan jushi shilüe” (A Brief Biography of Lay Devotee Yang Renshan), Foxue cong bao (Collected Publications on Buddhist Studies) 1.1 (1 October 1912), pp. 1–5. No author’s name is given there, but it is said that the writer was Pu Boxin, a member of the Foxue yanjiuhui (Association for the Study of Buddhism) and the first director of the Jinling Buddhist Press [following its formal establishment in 1911, at the time of Yang Renshan’s death].

5. See [Pu Boxin], “Yang Renshan jushi shilüe” (A Brief Biography of Lay Devotee Yang Renshan), p. 84.


9. Ibid., p. 83.


11. The Jinling kejingchu changcheng (Regulations Governing the Jinling Buddhist Press) were formulated in 1868 in open consultations by the organizers Yang Renshan, Yang Xihua, and others—in all sixteen noted lay devotees—and were put into final form by Yang Renshan. However, to state that the Jinling Buddhist Press came into being in 1866 is based on the fact that in that year Yang Renshan had blocks engraved from which he had his first Buddhist sutra, the Jingtu sijing (Four Sutras of the Pure Land School), printed. This Buddhist sutra collection therefore is counted the ancestral publication of the Jinling Buddhist Press, and thus the year 1866 can be taken as the initial founding date of the press. This view was proposed by the first post-Libera tion director of the Jinling Buddhist Press, the lay devotee Xu Pingxuan, and has been so used since that time.


13. In 1866, after Yang Renshan with his entire family moved to Nanjing, they first rented for a number of years the house of Zhou Fu, courtesy name Yushan, a native of Jiande in Anhui, who had previously served as governor of Shandong province and as governor general of Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces. That was at present-day 45–47 Changfuju (Changfu Street). In 1868 a printing-block storehouse for the Jinling Buddhist Press was set up at Beijige on Jimingshan (Jiming Hill) in Nanjing. Later, in 1874, because at that location the place for the storage of the printing blocks was coveted by others,
Yang Renshan had all of the printing blocks moved into his residence at Changfu Street for storage. Later on, when Yang Renshan and his entire household moved to Huapailou, the entire collection of stored printing blocks was moved with them. Thus, following the establishment of the Jinling Buddhist Press in 1866, the places at which it had been set up were: Yang Renshan’s residence at Changfu Street, at Beijige on Jiming Hill, his residence at Huapailou, and the new residence built in 1897 in Yanling Lane.

14. The actual measurement of the land surface is 6.265 mu, approximately one English acre. This statement differs from Yang Buwei’s in her Yige nüren de zizhuan (One Woman’s Autobiography) (1967), p. 89, where she states that the property measured seventeen and one-half mu, and that the buildings comprised 132 rooms (jian). This statement does not appear in the English version of her autobiography. The differences remain to be clarified.

15. Chizhou was the prefecture in Anhui province to which their native county Shidai was subordinate.


17. The other five were Lin Xu, Yang Rui, Liu Guangdi, Yang Shenxiu, and Kang Guangren.


20. [Translator’s note] The term used here is “qunxue,” which I translate loosely as “factional schools of learning” in the sense in which it appears in the Songshu, the dynastic history of the brief Song dynasty (420–479 CE). See, Shen Yue, Songshu, 100 juan (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), juan 17, (“Treatise on the Rites,” part four), p. 470. I take this to be the locus classicus for this term, where it is used to refer to partisans of various schools of thought who disagreed over matters of ritual regulations. About the time when Tan Sitong was writing his Renxue, during the period 1896–1897, Yan Fu (1853–1921) was beginning to work on his translation of Herbert Spencer’s (1820–1903) Study of Sociology (1873), and although Yan Fu’s translation when published in 1903 used the term “qunxue” to translate the Spencer’s title, leading to its serving for a time as the standard translation of “sociology,” I do not think that Tan Sitong could have had that in mind when he used the term here. See Yan Fu, trans., Qunxue yiyan (Study of Sociology), by Herbert Spencer (Shanghai: Wenming shuju, 1903).

Tan’s Ren xue is translated here from the quotation of it in Xiao Gongquan

21. See Pi Xirui’s biography in Hummel, Eminent Chinese of the Qing Period, pp. 625


23. The buildings in the Jingling Buddhist Press were large enough and numerous enough to allow Yang Renshan to invite his friends and students to stay there while they pursued their study of Buddhism.

24. Mei Guangxi, Xinjing qianshi (Elementary Commentaries on the Heart Sutra) (Nanjing: Jinling kejing chu, 1909). Alternate title of this work is Boruo boluomiduo xinjing qianyi (Elementary Commentaries on the Prajña Paramitā Heart Sutra). For Yang Renshan’s essay, see ibid., pp. 1a-b. Yang Renshan’s essay may also be found in Yang Renshan quanji (Complete Collected Writings of Yang Renshan), p. 372.

25. See Gao Hengsong, “Jinling Jingkou zhushan youfang lüeji” (Brief Account of Travels to Various Mountains in Jinling and Jingkou), Mingshan youfang ji (Record of Travels to Noted Mountains), ed. Xu Zhijing (Shanghai: Foxue shuju, [1935]), juan 2, p. 3.


29. The details of Yu Tongbo’s life are not known for certain. It is known only that he was a member of the Tongmeng hui who had studied Buddhism under Yang Renshan, that he also was a member of the Buddhist Research Society (Foxue yanjiu hui), and that he died before 1914.

Sun Yuyun, courtesy name Shaohou, was a native on Shouxian, Anhui. He at one time lived at the Jinling Buddhist Press and, while there, studied Buddhism with Yang Renshan. In Japan in 1906, he joined the Tongmenghui and in that year returned to Nanjing where he was arrested and sentenced to exile for five years. He was released after the Revolution of 1911 broke out. In mid-October of 1911 the overall supervision of Anqing was turned over to him. In March of 1912 [when Yuan Shikai succeeded Sun Yat-sen as president of the new republic], Sun Yuyun was named Anhui provincial military commissioner. In July Sun Yuyun went to Beiping [today’s Beijing] where he was appointed a member of the Provisional Political Conference and in November was appointed senior consultant to the Office of the President. It is clear that Sun Yuyun, regarded as a longstanding supporter of Sun Yat-sen, had in fact defected to the camp of Yuan Shikai, who would soon make known his intention to repudiate
the revolution and attempt to become the new emperor of China. In 1915 Sun Yuyun joined Yang Du (ca. 1874–1932) in promoting the Chouanhui (Peace Planning Society). In July of 1916 [following Yuan Shikai’s death in June], Sun Yuyun was arrested; in March of 1918, he was granted amnesty; and in 1924 he died of an illness.

30. Kuai Shoushu, was a nephew of Kuai Liqing. He was one of Yang Renshan’s student followers in Buddhism, a member of the Buddhist Research Society, and one of the first board members of the Buddhist Press. In 1926 when Mei Guangxi resigned his position as head of the press’s circulation department, that post was then held by Kuai Shoushu until his death in the winter of 1945. He was fervently loyal to the work of the press as established by Yang Renshan, fully devoting his heart and his strength to it. Ouyang Jian praised him as “my dearly beloved, admired, and respected old friend.” See “Yu Kuai Ruomu” (To Kuai [Shoushu] Ruomu) in Jingwu xiaopin ([Ouyang Jian] Jingwu’s Informal Essays) in Jingwu neixiaxue, 31 vols. (Jiangjin, Sichuan: Zhina neixueyu, 1941), p. 10b.

31. Yang Buwei has written that what caused Yang Renshan’s death probably was intestinal cancer, in view of his frequent attacks of intestinal upsets. See Yang Buwei, Yige nüren de zizhuan (One Woman’s Autobiography) (1967), p. 94.

32. Ibid., p. 94.

33. Yang Buwei has written: “As for my going abroad to study, [Kuai Shoushu] did not respond in time to be of any help, but later on when I (opened) my hospital, he came forth with some money. As for fifth younger brother, he also gave some money to help him go to Japan, but fifth younger brother himself did not go. All in all, Kuai [Shoushu] Ruomu must be considered to have failed to live up to his responsibilities.” See Yang Buwei, ibid., p. 94.

34. See Chen Yi, “Jinling kejingchu zhi guoqu yu jianglai” (The Past and the Future of the Buddhist Press), Jinling kejingchu lishi ziliao dianzhai (Nanjing: Jinling kejingchu, 1946), p. 104. Chen Yi, courtesy name Yifu, was a native of Zhenjiang in Jiangsu. He was a disciple of Yang Renshan. From the year 1911, after Yang Renshan’s demise, at the press he held the post of director of the social relations department, and beginning in the winter of 1947 he also concurrently served as director of the circulation department.

Chen Jingqing, courtesy name Xi’an, a native of Shidai county in Anhui, was a disciple of Yang Renshan. Yang wrote to a friend in Japan, “Chen Jingqing . . . is a colleague here at my humble place in the editing of sutras.” See Yang Renshan, “Yu Riben Dingtian shu” (Letter to Machida in Japan), Yang Renshan quanji (Complete Collected Writings of Yang Renshan), p. 512. Yang Buwei wrote that Chen Jingqing had at one time served as Yang Renshan’s family tutor for his grandchildren. In 1911 when Yang Renshan died, he left a will stipulating that Chen Jingqing, together with Ouyang Jian and Chen Yi should be responsible for the affairs of the Jinling Buddhist Press and that Chen Jingqing should serve as the director of circulation. See See Yang Buwei, Yige nüren de zizhuan (One Woman’s Autobiography) (1967), pp. 27, 94. In fact, the work of the Jinling Buddhist Press was under Chen
Jingqing’s general charge all the way until 1919 when in July of that year he died.


36. After Yang Renshan’s death the Buddhist Research Society failed to elect a new director, and in the absence of this structure the society simply fell apart. Lay devotee Yang Renshan died on the seventeenth day of the eighth month of the third year of the Xuantong reign (8 October 1911 by the Western calendar), and two days later (10 October) the Chinese revolution of 1911 broke out. Before his death, Yang Renshan already knew that the nation was about to descend into great disorder and therefore left word to his family that his funeral must be conducted in the simplest and quickest manner with none of the usual ritual mourning practices. Moreover, he wanted all his family to depart Nanjing in the shortest possible time, while he himself wished to remain near the sutra workrooms and the printing-block storage rooms. He stipulated that wherever the printing blocks were, so should his grave be located. See Yang Buwei, Yi ge nüren de zizhuan (One Woman’s Autobiography) (1967), pp. 94–97.


39. Zhao Xinna and Huang Peiyun, comp. Zhao Yuanren nianpu (Chronological Biography of Zhao Yuanren) (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1998), pp. 482–483. The official Buddhist organization established early in the 1950s was called Zhongguo Fojiao xiehui, literally “Chinese Buddhist Cooperative Association” but usually is translated “Chinese Buddhist Association.” Somewhat confusing is the fact that the name of one major Buddhist association during the Republican era, the Zhongguo Fojiao hui, also is usually translated “Chinese Buddhist Association.”

40. That is borne out by this journal’s editor, who has visited the premises on four occasions in recent years, when she was warmly welcomed by Wu Yankang, met with other staff members, and walked through the grounds taking photographs that show how the Yang-family estate looks today. In short, the Jinling Buddhist Press clearly has been granted a reprieve, and its prospects look bright.


43. Zhao Puchu, “Jinling kejingchu chongyin jingshu tuxiang lüeji” (A Brief Account of the Jinling Buddhist Press’s Reprinting of Sutras and Images)
(1981), p. 1b. This essay was printed as an introductory explanation at the beginning of all works published by the Jinling Buddhist Press in 1981 to mark the second revival of the press's operations. Zhao Puchu was for many years the president of the official Chinese Buddhist Association which in 1981 founded the journal *Fayin (The Voice of Dharma)*. The article by Wu Yankang used as the basis for the present translation appeared in *Fayin (The Voice of Dharma)*, 2 (2001), pp. 29–34.

45. For Welch, see note 28 above. For Kenneth K. S. Ch’en, see note 12 above. For Wing-tsit Chan, see *Religious Trends in Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953).

46. Timothy Richard was a British missionary, and Gilbert Reid was an American missionary and newspaper correspondent. John C. Ferguson was an American missionary who founded important institutions of higher learning, including Nanjing University, Jiaotong University in Shanghai, and Yanjing University in Beijing. He frequently spent long visits in Nanjing in the last decades of the Qing dynasty. For this collaborative translation, see *Aśvaghosa, The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana Doctrine, the New Buddhism*, trans. by Timothy Richard in 1894 (Shanghai: Christian Literature Society, 1907).


**Glossary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anqing 安慶</td>
<td>Dacheng qixin lun 大乘起信論</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bei Jie 北極閣</td>
<td>Fanwen dian 梵文典</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beiping 北平</td>
<td>Fayin 法音</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beitingxiang 碑亭巷</td>
<td>Foxue congdao 佛學叢報</td>
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<td>Bohua 伯華</td>
<td>Foxue yanjiuhui 佛學研究會</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonuo bohomiduo xinjing qianyi 景若佛羅</td>
<td>Gao Hengsong 高恒松</td>
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<tr>
<td>蜜多心經淺義</td>
<td>Gao zaizhan baizi qi 告宰官白衣啓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changfujie 常府街</td>
<td>gongsheng 貢生</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changshu 常熟</td>
<td>Guichi 貴池</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chen Duxiu 沈獨秀</td>
<td>Gui Nianzhu 桂念祖</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chen Jingqing 沈鏡清</td>
<td>Guo Mojuo 郭沫若</td>
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<td>Chen Yi 陳義</td>
<td>Hangzhou 杭州</td>
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<td>Chizhou 池州</td>
<td>Henian 鶴年</td>
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<td>Chizhou Yangzhai 池州楊宅</td>
<td>Huang Peiyun 黃培雲</td>
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<tr>
<td>chou 丑</td>
<td>Huapailou 花牌樓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chouanhui 帖安會</td>
<td>Huayan 華嚴</td>
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jian  聞  
Jiande  建德  
Jimingshan  雞鳴山  
Jin’gangjing  金剛經  
Jinggao sifang Fo dizi qi  僊告十方佛弟子啓  
Jingtú  淨土  
Jingwu  竟無  
Jingwu xiaopin  竟無小品  
Jingxun shuyuan  經訓書院  
Jinling Jingkou zhushan youfang lüeji  金陵京口諸山遊訪略記  
Jinling kejingchu  金陵刻經處  
Jinling kejingchu congycin jingshu tuxiang lüeji  金陵刻經處重印圖像略記  
Jinling kejingchu zhangcheng  金陵刻經處章程  
Jinshì  進士  
Jiujiang  九江  
juan  卷  
juren  舉人  
jushi  居士  
Kaiyuan  開元  
Kang Guangren  康廣仁  
Kang Youwei  康有為  
Kuai Liqìng  轆禮卿  
Kuai Shoushu  轆壽樞  
Lanjizhuang  藍家莊  
Lan Jifu  藍吉富  
Lengyan jing  楞嚴經  
li  里  
Liang Qichao  梁起超  
Li Duanfu  黎端甫  
Liuling  體陵  
Lin Xu  林旭  
Liu Guangdi  劉光第  
Liu Shenxu  劉育虞  
Liu Tianmei  劉天梅  
Liuyang  瀏陽  
Liuzhuang  劉莊  
Li Yizhuo  李翊灼  
Manshu  曼殊  
Mei Guangxi  梅光羲  
Minbào  民報  
Mingshan fangyou ji  名山訪遊記  
mu  於  
Nanchang  南昌  
Nanjō Bunryū  南條文雄  
Ningguo  寧國  
Ouyang Jian  歐陽漣  
Pingxiang  萍鄉  
Pi Xirui  皮錫瑞  
Puan xiansheng  樸庵先生  
Pu Boxin  漢伯欣  
Putishu  菩提樹  
Qingshi gao  清史稿  
Qixin lun  起信論  
Queti  閩題  
qunxue  群學  
Qunxue yiyan  群學肄言  
Ranglingshan  穀嶺  
Renshan  仁山  
Renshan jushi  仁山居士  
Renzue  仁學  
Ruomu  若木  
Rugao  如皋  
Sanlun  三論
Shaohou  少侯
Shen Yue  沈約
Shenliu dashi  深柳大師
Shenliu dashi yu Shenliutang  深柳大師與深柳堂
Shenliu dushutang  深柳讀書堂
Shidai  石埭
Shifang gongchan  十方公産
Shitai  石臺
Shouxian  壽縣
Songshu  宋書
Su Manshu shiwen ji  蘇曼殊詩文集
Su Manshu shuxin ji  蘇曼殊書信集
Sun  孫
Sun Yixian (Sun Yat-sen)  孫逸仙
Sun Yuyun  孫毓筠
Su Xuanying  蘇玄瑛
Taiping  太平
Taixu  太虛
Taiyan  太炎
Tan Sitong  譚嗣同
Tan Sitong  譚嗣同
Tan Sitong zhuang  譚嗣同傳
Tongmenghui  同盟會
tongnian  同年
Wang Kejun  王克駿
Weishi  唯識
Wo de zufu  我的祖父
Wuchang  武昌
Wuhan  武漢
Wuxu liu junzi  戊戌六君子
Wu Yankang  武延康
Wu Yanzhou  武雁舟
Xia Jingguan  夏敬觀
Xi'an  椲廬
Xiangshan  香山
Xianmen xiang shanlu  深柳読書堂
Xianzu Renshan gong zhi shengping  先祖仁山公之生平
Xiao Gongquan (Hsiao Kung-ch’üan)  蕭公權
Xieyun  椳芸
Xinghua  興化
Xinjian  新建
Xinjing  心經
Xinjing qianshi  心經淺釋
Xinjing qianshi tici  心經淺釋題詞
xiucai  秀才
Xuankang  顯藏
Xu Pingxuan  徐平軒
Yan Fu  嚴復
Yang  楊
Yang Buwei  楊步偉
Yang Chizao  楊繼藻
Yang Du  楊度
Yang Fuyan  楊福嚴
Yangjiacun  楊家村
Yang Renshan  楊仁山
Yang Renshan jushi shilüe  楊仁山居士事略
Yang Renshan yu Jinling kejingchu  楊仁山與金陵刻經處
Yang Rui  楊銘
Yang Shenxiu  楊深秀
Yang Shifeng  楊時逢
Yang Wenhui  楊文會
Yang Xihua  楊西華
Yangzhou 揚州
Yang Zichao 楊自超
Yang Zixin 楊自新
Yanlingxiang 延齡巷
Yanzi 嶼嶼
Yi 亦
Yifu 宜甫
Yige nüren de zizhuan 一個女人的自傳
Yihuang 宜黃
Yinchen 隱塵
Yinming 因明
Yuan Shikai 袁世凱
Yu Guı Bohua Nianzu shu er 與桂伯華念祖書二
Yu Kuai Ruomu 與蒯若木
Yu Riben Dingtian shu 與日本丁田書
Yushan 玉山
Yu Tongbo 余同伯
Zeng Guo fan 曾國藩
Zeng Guoquan 曾國荃
Zeng Jize 曾紀澤
Zhang Binglin 章炳麟

Zhang Fei 張芾
Zhao Erxun 趙爾巽
Zhao Puchu 趙僑初
Zhao Xinna 趙新那
Zhao Yuanren 趙元任
Zhao Yuanren nianpu 趙元任年譜
Zhenggang 證剛 (正剛, 政剛, 正罡)
Zhengzi xuetang 正志學堂
Zhenjiang 鎮江
Zhihuan jingshe 祇洹精舍
Zhongguo Fojiao hui 中國佛教會
Zhongguo Fojiao xiehui 中國佛教協會
Zhongguo Foxue 中國佛學
Zhongguo zhengzhi sixiang shi 中國政治思想史
Zhongshan 中山
Zhou Enlai 周恩來
Zhou Fu 周馥
Zhou Peiyuan 周培源
Zhou Tianshou 周天受
Zhuànji wenxue 傳記文學
Zufu 祖父