

incapable of shooting
only for signing their
fing without proper
times, by inheriting
government and be-
ters of great fortune
, they sit with foolish
At public and private
or a poetry competi-
tching, unable to say
into the ground for
dy so that they might

anywhere. In these
though low-bred for a
edge and study of the
a noble heritage dat-
grooms because they
time, how can you not
few hundred volumes

once in preserving the
the survival and welfare
others (foreigners) and

CONTRASTING VIEWS

The Reception of Buddhism in East Asia

185

10.4 | Yan Zhitui, *A Confucian Scholar's Dedication to Buddhism* (589)

We have already encountered Yan Zhitui's *Family Instructions* (see Document 10.3), in which Yan strongly urged his sons to remain steadfast in their studies and achieve mastery of the Confucian classics. Yet like many of his contemporaries among the Chinese aristocracy, Yan also professed devotion to Buddhism, which Yan embraced without any sense of contradiction with his deeply cherished belief in Confucian norms and traditional values. In the following excerpts, also from *Family Instructions*, Yan addressed some of the principal arguments raised against both Buddhist doc-
trines and the Buddhist clergy.

It is traditional in our family to turn our hearts (to Buddhism), you should not neglect it. Its profound theories are fully explained in the *sūtras* (basic discourses) and *abhidharma*s (treatises by later masters). I cannot again briefly praise and narrate them here. Nevertheless, fearing that you are not yet firm in your faith, I therefore repeat my little advice and persuasion....

The two religions, the Inner (Buddhism) and the Outer (Confucianism) are, however, fundamentally the same. Gradually they became very different from each other in depth and shallowness. At the entrance to the Inner scriptures there are five prohibitions which correspond to the humanity, justice, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity of the Outer scriptures. Humanity corresponds to the prohibition against taking life. Justice corresponds to the prohibition against stealing. Propriety corresponds to the prohibition against depravity. Wisdom corresponds to the prohibition against lust, and sincerity corresponds to the prohibition against falsehood. As for hunting and fighting, feasting and punishment, the original characteristics of the people cannot be eradicated all at once, but should be restrained from excess. To turn to the Duke of Zhou and Confucius and reject Buddhism is foolish indeed!

The common slanderers (against Buddhism) usually make five points; first, they regard things beyond this world and the boundlessness of divine transformations as absurd and unreliable; secondly, they regard good luck or bad, disaster or happiness, since these sometimes are not in line with retribution, as deceitful and cheating; third, they regard the conduct and acts of monks and nuns, since many of them are insincere and impure, as immoral and hypocritical; fourth, they regard the waste of money and treasure, and loss in taxes and labor services as harmful to the state; fifth, even though there is a causality which commands retribution,

they wonder how the painful exertions of the man of today can benefit the man of a future generation; thus he is an atypical man. Let me now explain these points as follows.

In explanation of the first point . . .

All human beliefs depend only on eyes and ears; whatever is outside that which is not seen and heard is to be doubted. . . .

People living amid mountains do not believe that there are fish as large as a tree—people dwelling on the seashore do not believe that there are trees as large as fish. . . . When western barbarians saw brocade, they did not believe that the material came from a worm that eats leaves and spins silk. Formerly when I was south of the Yangtze I did not believe there were tents that could shelter a thousand persons; when I came north of the Yellow River, I found there were people who did not believe there were ships that could carry twenty thousand piculs. These are all practical examples. . . .

In explaining the second point, . . . [s]ometimes, because people's devotion and faith are not sufficiently earnest and the causality of karma has not yet been effected, it appears that the time of fulfillment has been deferred or delayed; but eventually the due retribution will be received. Good or evil acts bring disastrous or fortunate consequences. The Nine Schools and the Hundred Philosophers all agree upon this theory. Are the Buddhist scriptures alone to be held as untrue and unreliable? . . . If, when you see those who do good occasionally suffering a disastrous result or those doing evil sometimes rewarded with good fortune, you complain and consider the Buddhist doctrine to be a lie and a cheat; then the theory of emperors Yao and Shun may be said to be false, and the Duke of Zhou and Confucius are also untrue. What then would you like to believe and rely upon as the guide of your life?

To explain the third point, I say that from the creation of the universe, the bad people have been numerous and the good ones few. By what means can we urge them all to be devoted and pure? Seeing an eminent good monk with high conduct, people leave him unmentioned; if ordinary monks imbued with vulgar habits are seen, slander and defamation immediately arise. When a student is not diligent, is it his teacher's fault? How does the study of *sūtras* and discipline texts by ordinary monks differ from studying the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of Rites* by secular students? If one takes the teaching of the *Odes* and *Rites* as a standard in judging courtiers and ministers, few will be found with perfect conduct; if one takes the prohibitions from the *sūtras* and discipline texts to check those who have given up their families (i.e. monks), can we blame them that none is faultless? Moreover, officials lacking good conduct still seek for higher salaries and posts; why should monks who have broken the prohibitions be ashamed to receive presents and supplies? Their conduct undoubtedly violates the prohibition, yet once they have put on the monk's robe they are living in the monastery, where every year if we count the number of days they devote to fasting, preaching and chanting, they are much more (lit. like mountain and sea) pious than the white-clothed

Xuda (Sudatta) and Liushui (Jalavāhana), it is not necessary to shave the beard and hair. How could one demand that all the land be exhausted to build monasteries or all the people be registered as monks and nuns? (That this happens) is all due to the inability of the government to restrain illegal monasteries from obstructing the people's farm work and idle monks from decreasing national taxation. . . . A faithful minister who dies for his lord will disregard his parents; a filial son who brings peace to his family will forget his nation. Each has its virtue. There were Confucianists who did not bow to king or noble but loftily carried out their own way; there were hermits who gave up a kingship or resigned from a prime ministership to retire from the world into mountainous forests. Can we make the matter of taxation a basis for condemning them as guilty? . . .

To explain the fifth point, I would say that though the body dies, the soul is still preserved. When a man is alive in the world, it seems inappropriate to look for future existence; but after death the relation to former existence resembles that of old age to youth or morning to night. There are not a few cases in society where souls have appeared in dreams, descending upon the body of concubines or inspiring a wife or maid to ask for food or request a blessing. Nowadays people, if poor, humble, sick or sorrowful, without exception blame themselves for not cultivating virtuous deeds in a former life. From this point of view, how can one not prepare for a good place in the future life? . . . If you, my sons, want to plan worldly affairs and establish families, and cannot leave your wives and sons to become monks, you should nevertheless cultivate your pious conduct, observe the precepts and pay attention to chanting and reading the scriptures in order to provide a passage to your future stage of existence. The opportunity for human life is difficult to get; do not pass it in vain.

10.5 | Han Yu, *Memorial on the Bone of the Buddha* (819)

Han Yu (786–824), a renowned poet and writer, was one of the forefathers of the reinvention of the Confucian tradition known as Neo-Confucianism. Han saw himself waging a lonely battle, defending the essential moral values of Chinese civilization against the corruption of foreign influences, especially Buddhism. In 819, the Tang emperor Xianzong (r. 805–820) ordered that a holy relic—a finger bone of the Buddha—be put on public display in the capital. Han wrote a scathing denunciation of the emperor's action, prompting the emperor to banish him to the farthest southern frontier of the empire.

Your servant begs leave to say that Buddhism is no more than a cult of the barbarian peoples which spread to China in the time of the Later Han. It did not exist here in ancient times. . . . When Emperor Gaozu [founder of the Tang dynasty] received the throne from the House of Sui, he deliberated upon the suppression of

Buddhism. But at that time the various officials, being of small worth and knowledge, were unable fully to comprehend the ways of the ancient kings and the exigencies of past and present, and so could not implement the wisdom of the emperor and rescue the age from corruption. Thus the matter came to naught, to your servant's constant regret.

Now Your Majesty, wise in the arts of peace and war, unparalleled in divine glory from countless ages past, upon your accession prohibited men and women from taking Buddhist orders and forbade the erection of temples and monasteries, and your servant believed that at Your Majesty's hand the will of Gaozu would be carried out. Even if the suppression of Buddhism should be as yet impossible, your servant hardly thought that Your Majesty would encourage it and on the contrary cause it to spread. Yet now your servant hears that Your Majesty has ordered the community of monks to go to Fengxiang to greet the bone of Buddha, that Your Majesty will ascend a tower to watch as it is brought into the palace, and that the various temples have been commanded to welcome and worship it in turn. Though your servant is abundantly ignorant, he understands that Your Majesty is not so misled by Buddhism as to honor it thus in hopes of receiving some blessing or reward, but only that, the year being one of plenty and the people joyful, Your Majesty would accord with the hearts of the multitude in setting forth for the officials and citizens of the capital some curious show and toy for their amusement. How could it be, indeed, that with such sagely wisdom Your Majesty should in truth give credence to these affairs? But the common people are ignorant and dull, easily misled and hard to enlighten, and should they see their emperor do these things, they might say that Your Majesty was serving Buddhism with a true heart. "The Son of Heaven is a great Sage," they would cry, "and yet he reverences and believes with all his heart! How should we, the common people, then begrudge our bodies and our lives?" Then would they set about singeing their heads and scorching their fingers, binding together in groups of ten and a hundred, doffing their common clothes and scattering their money, from morning to evening urging each other on lest one be slow, till old and young alike had abandoned their occupations to follow Buddhism. If this is not checked and the bone is carried from one temple to another, there will be those who will cut off their arms and mutilate their flesh in offering to the Buddha. Then will our old ways be corrupted, our customs violated, and the tale will spread to make us the mockery of the world. This is no trifling matter!

Now Buddha was a man of the barbarians who did not speak the language of China and wore clothes of a different fashion. His sayings did not concern the ways of our ancient kings, nor did his manner of dress conform to their laws. He understood neither the duties that bind sovereign and subject, nor the affections of father and son. If he were still alive today and came to our court by order of his ruler, Your Majesty might condescend to receive him, but it would amount to no more than one audience in the Xuanzheng Hall, a banquet by the Office for Receiving Guests, the presentation of a suit of clothes, and he would then be escorted to the borders of the nation, dismissed, and not allowed to delude the masses. How then, when he has long been dead, could his rotten bones, the foul and unlucky remains of his body, be rightly admitted to the palace? Confucius

said, "Respect ghosts and spirits, but keep them at a distance!" So when the princes of ancient times went to pay their condolences at a funeral within the state, they sent exorcists in advance with peach wands to drive out evil, and only then would they advance. Now without reason Your Majesty has caused this loathsome thing to be brought in and would personally go to view it. No exorcists have been sent ahead, no peach wands employed. The host of officials has not spoken out against this wrong, and the censors have failed to note its impropriety. Your servant is deeply ashamed and begs that this bone be given to the proper authorities to be cast into fire and water, that this evil may be rooted out, the world freed from its error, and later generations spared this delusion. Then may all men know how the acts of their wise sovereign transcend the commonplace a thousand-fold. Would this not be glorious? Would it not be joyful?

Should the Buddha indeed have the supernatural power to send down curses and calamities, may they fall only upon the person of your servant, who calls upon High Heaven to witness that he does not regret his words. With all gratitude and sincerity your servant presents this memorial for consideration, being filled with respect and awe.

10.6 | The Chronicle of Japan (*Nihongi*) (720)

First introduced to Japan from Korea in 552, Buddhism received a mixed reception from Japan's ruling clans. Soga no Umako, head of the powerful Soga family, championed the adoption of Buddhism, but his rivals objected to worship of a foreign faith. After gaining official endorsement from Empress Suiko (r. 593–628) and her regent, Prince Shōtoku (573–621), Buddhism quickly won favor among the aristocratic elite. The following records of the introduction of Buddhism are taken from the *Chronicle of Japan* (*Nihongi*), an official history of Japan since the time of creation that was compiled at the Japanese imperial court circa 720.

552, Winter, 10th Month

King Seong (r. 523–554) of the Korean kingdom of Paekche dispatched Nuri Sachi of the Ji clan and other retainers to Japan. They offered as tribute a gold and copper statue of Sakyamuni Buddha, ritual banners and canopies, and several volumes of sutras [scriptures] and commentaries. In a separate declaration, King Seong praised the merit of propagating and worshipping the dharma [Buddhist teachings], stating, "This dharma is superior to all others. It is difficult to understand and difficult to attain. Neither the Duke of Zhou nor Confucius was able to

William E. Deal, trans., "Buddhism and the State in Early Japan," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 218–220,

223–224; and W. G. Aston, trans., *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (London: Kegan Paul, 1896), 126.

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comprehend it. This dharma can produce immeasurable, limitless karmic merit, leading to the attainment of supreme wisdom. It is like a person who has a wish-fulfilling gem whose every desire is granted. The jewel of this wonderful dharma is also like this. Every prayer is answered and not a need goes unfulfilled. Moreover, from distant India all the way to China this teaching has been followed and upheld. There is no one who does not revere it. Accordingly, I, King Seong, your vassal, have humbly dispatched my retainer, Nuri Sachi, to the Imperial Kingdom of Japan to transmit and propagate this teaching...."

That very day the emperor heard this declaration and leapt with joy. He declared to the Korean envoys, "From ancient times to the present we have not heard of such a fine dharma as this. Nevertheless, we cannot ourselves decide whether to accept this teaching." Thereupon the emperor inquired of his assembled officials, "The Buddha presented to us from the country to our west has a face of extreme solemnity. We have never known such a thing before. Should we worship it or not?"

Soga no Iname humbly responded: "The many countries to the west all worship this Buddha. Is it only Yamato [Japan] that will reject this teaching?"

Mononobe no Okoshi and Nakatomi no Kamako together humbly responded: "The rulers of our country have always worshipped throughout the four seasons the 180 deities of heaven and earth. If they now change this and worship the deity of a foreign country, we fear that the deities of our country will become angry."

The emperor declared, "I grant to Soga no Iname the worship of this Buddha in order to test its efficacy."

Soga no Iname knelt down and received the statue. With great joy, he enshrined it in his home at Owarida and devotedly performed the rituals of a world renouncer [i.e., someone who has taken monastic vows]. He also purified his home at Mukuhara and made it into a temple.

Later, an epidemic afflicted the country and cut short the lives of many people. With the passing of time, more and more people died of this incurable disease. Mononobe no Okoshi and Nakatomi no Kamako together humbly addressed the emperor: "Previously, the counsel we offered went unheeded. As a result, this epidemic has occurred. Now, before it is too late, this situation must be rectified. Throw away the statue of the Buddha at once and diligently seek future blessings."

The emperor responded: "We will do as you have counseled."

The emperor's officials took the Buddha statue and threw it into the waters of the Naniwa canal. They then set fire to the temple in which it was enshrined and burned it to the ground. At this time, although the winds were calm and the sky cloudless, suddenly a fire broke out in the great hall of the Imperial Palace....

584, Autumn, 9th Month

Minister Kabuka returned from the Korean kingdom of Paekche, bringing with him a stone statue of Maitreya Buddha. Minister Saeki also returned with a Buddhist statue. The same year, Soga no Umako [son of Soga no Iname] requested these two statues. He then dispatched... [several persons named] to seek out and bring back practitioners of the dharma. It was only in Harima Province that

they discovered a former Korean monk who had returned to lay life by the name of Eiben. Soga no Umako made him his dharma teacher and allowed Shima, the daughter of Shimeadachito, to become a nun. She was eleven years old and took the Buddhist name Zenshin. Two of Zenshin's disciples also became nuns: Toyome, Ayabito no Yabo's daughter, who took the Buddhist name Zenzō, and Ishime, Nishikori no Tsubu's daughter, who took the Buddhist name Ezen. Umako, in accord with the Buddha's dharma, revered the three nuns....

602, Winter, 10th Month

A Paekche monk named Kwallik arrived and presented by way of tribute books on calendar-making, astronomy, and [geomancy], and also books on the art of invisibility and magic. At this time three or four pupils were selected and made to study under Kwallik...

623, Spring, 4th Month, 3rd Day

A monk took an axe and struck his grandfather. When Empress Suiko learned of this, she summoned the Great Minister, Soga no Umako, and issued the following imperial edict: "A world renouncer should earnestly take refuge in the Three Treasures [the Buddha, his law, and the clergy] and fully uphold the rules of monastic conduct. How can one, without repentance, easily commit evil acts in violation of the precepts? Now I have heard that there is a monk who struck his grandfather. Therefore, gather together all of the monks and nuns of the various temples and question them. If what I have heard is true, serious punishment must be meted out."

Accordingly, the monks and nuns of the various temples were assembled and questioned. The monk who had violated the precepts, as well as the other monks and nuns, were about to be punished. At this time the monk Kwallik from the Korean kingdom of Paekche presented a memorial to the empress, saying: "The Buddha's dharma came from India to China, and three hundred years later, China transmitted it to Paekche. A mere hundred years after this King Seong heard of the wisdom of the Emperor Kimmei and offered in tribute a statue of the Buddha and sutras. Since then, not even one hundred years have passed, so that at this time the monks and nuns have not yet learned the monastic precepts and easily violate them. As a result, the monks and nuns are afraid because they do not know what is right. I respectfully request that the monks and nuns who have not violated the precepts be pardoned and not punished. This would be an act of great merit." Thereupon the empress granted his request.

The following edict was issued: "Even followers of the way violate the Buddha's law. How then can the laity be instructed? Therefore, from this time forward, we will appoint superintendents who shall oversee the monks and nuns."

17th Day

The monk Kwallik was appointed Superintendent of the Clergy and Kuratsukuri no Tokushaku his auxiliary. The same day, Azumi no Muraji was appointed Head of the Buddhist Law.

Autumn, 9th Month, 3rd Day

There was a review of the temples, and the monks and nuns. The reason temples were built, and the reasons why the monks and nuns entered the Buddhist path, as well as the year, month, and day of their entry, were recorded in detail. At this time there were 46 temples, 816 monks, and 569 nuns; in total, 1,385 people.

645, 8th Month, 8th Day

A messenger was dispatched to the Great Temple. Gathering the monks and nuns together, he pronounced an imperial edict: "In the 13th year of the reign of King Kimmei, King Seong of the Korean kingdom of Paekche offered the Buddha's dharma in tribute to Japan. At this time the ministers were united in their desire not to accept it. Only Soga no Iname placed faith in the Buddhist dharma. Thus the emperor decreed to Soga no Iname that he would be allowed to receive the dharma. In the reign of Emperor Bidatsu [r. 572–585], Soga no Umako, out of respect for the deeds of his father, deeply revered the Buddha's dharma. However, some ministers did not place faith in the dharma and tried to destroy it completely. Emperor Bidatsu issued an edict to Soga no Umako decreeing that he should revere the Buddha's dharma. In the reign of Empress Suiko, Soga no Umako constructed sixteen-foot embroidered and copper images of the Buddha on her behalf. He extolled the Buddha's teaching and revered the monks and nuns. We now wish to reiterate our desire to revere the Buddha's true teaching and to shine widely the light of this great dharma. Therefore we appoint the following priests as dharma teachers: the Korean dharma masters Pokuryang, Hyeun, Syangan, Nyōgun, and Hyechi, and the temple heads Sōnin, Dōto, Erin, and Emō. We separately appoint dharma teacher Emō the head priest of the Kudara Temple. These dharma teachers will thoroughly instruct the monastic community and lead them in the practice of the Buddha's teaching so the Buddha's dharma is properly followed. From the emperor to the managerial class, we will all assist in the building of temples. We will now appoint temple head priests and lay administrators. Temples will be visited to determine the actual situation pertaining to monks and nuns, their servants, and their rice fields. All findings will be presented to the emperor."

COMPARING THE EVIDENCE

1. What features of Buddhist teachings appear to have been most difficult for the Chinese to accept?
2. To what extent was Buddhism seen as a threat to native religious traditions and values in China and Japan?
3. Why was the Buddhist clergy often regarded with suspicion?
4. What reasons motivated rulers in China, Japan, and Korea to patronize the Buddhist faith and clergy?

10.7 | Conduct of the Well-Bred Townsman

Vatsyayana, *Kama Sutra* (c. 400)

Hinduism advocates an approach to life that balances obligations to family and society with the individual's quest of release from mortal existence (*moksha*). The place of *kama*, or the pursuit of pleasure, in Hinduism reflects the great importance attached to the role of the married householder. The *Kama Sutra*, written by Vatsyayana (c. 400), enumerates for the ideal householder—the well-bred townsman—the correct ways of enjoying pleasure and preventing its degeneration into self-indulgence. Vatsyayana also sets down rules for behavior for women, including wives, concubines, and lovers.

Note: In this translation Vatsyayana's text appears in roman type; the italicized text is taken from a thirteenth-century commentary.

Praised be the three aims of life: virtue [*dharma*], prosperity [*artha*], and love [*kama*], which are the subject of this work.

There are four social functions in this world, namely the priests, the warriors, the merchants, and the artisans, as well as the four stages of life, that of the student, the married man, withdrawal into the forest, and the mendicant monk. For Brahmins and others, so long as they are heads of a family, the search for spiritual realization is not practicable, and the aims of life are limited to three. The advocates of eroticism consider that love, given its results, is the most important inasmuch as virtue and prosperity both depend on it and without it they would not exist. . . .

During the one hundred years of his life, a man must pursue the three aims successively, without one being prejudicial to another.

Childhood must be dedicated to acquiring knowledge.

Eroticism predominates in adulthood.

Old age must be dedicated to the practice of virtue and spiritual pursuit [*moksha*]. . . .