

Buddhist Temples and Their Settlements in Southeast Shanxi: The Secularized Transformation of planning and design

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Dissertation Abstract

After introduced into China, the evolution of Buddhist temples shows the process of the early stage acculturation, which peaked in Tang and Song dynasties, with the building form influenced by Chinese high standard palatial architecture. However, there is also another aspect of the architectural evolution and cultural impact: the long-ignored secularization.

Instead of complying with the aesthetic preference of the ruling class and the systematic constructive regulations, the architecture design and planning of Buddhist temples in Southeast Shanxi are more vernacular, or secularized, with the transformation closely related to the settlements and the power of the local community. The secularization led to numerous architectural phenomena in the Buddhist building complex in this area. E.g., the new settings like Confucian academies, theaters, and dressing pavilions; the constructive fusion of timber frame and vernacular brick and stone structure; and the transformed central axis adapted to the surrounding settlement planning.

To have a thorough understanding of the secularization process of Buddhist temples in Southeast Shanxi, and further explain the transformation of the plan and design related to the development of the settlements, this dissertation will work on the following objectives:

- Conduct on-site surveys of existing Chinese Buddhist temples in Southeast Shanxi and collect materials from historical records, including inscriptions and local chronicles, to get a comprehensive outline of the secularized architectural and planning features in Southeast Shanxi.

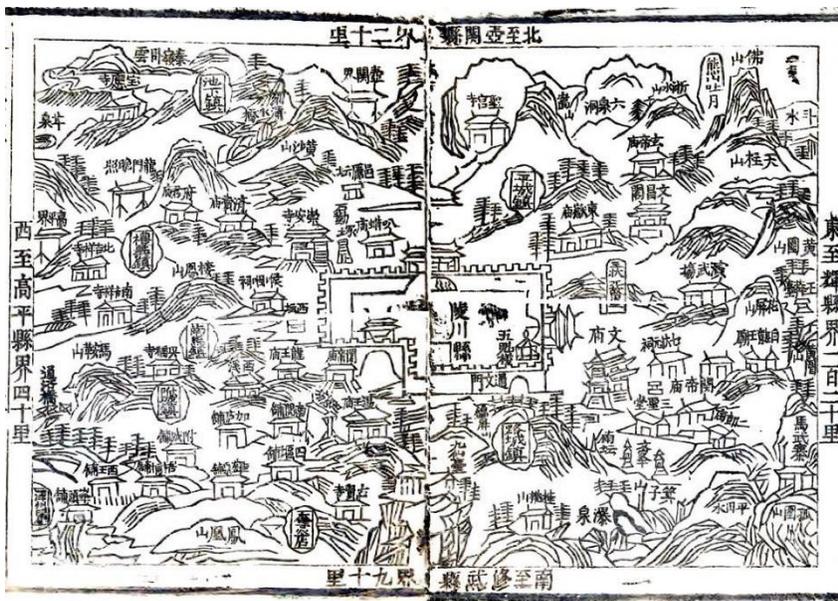
- Elaborate the transformation process of the Buddhist building complex with the three key cases, i.e., Chong'an Temple in Lingchuan (陵川崇安寺), Youxian Temple in Gaoping (高平遊仙寺), and Haihui Temple in Yangcheng (陽城海會寺).
- Understand how the secularization process of Buddhism impacted the building form of the temples and interaction between the temple design and the settlement plan.

Keywords: Architectural transformation, acculturation and secularization, temples and context



The deflected central axis, and the Confucian academies in Haihui Temple in Yangcheng.

From *Qianlong Yangcheng Xianzhi* 乾隆陽城縣誌



Chong'an Temple and the relevant settlement, Lingchuan City.

From *Qianlong Lingchuan Xianzhi* 乾隆陵川縣誌