Qinglong Temple: A Nexus for The Exchange and Integration of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism

Zhonghao Cui

College of Archaeology and Literature, Jingdezhen University of Ceramics, Jingdezhen, China

czh18170832877@outlook.com

Abstract. The Qinglong Temple, located in the ancient capital of Xi'an, is an important temple of Chinese Buddhist Tantric Buddhism, whose history can be traced back to the Sui Dynasty. The purpose of this paper is to explore the unique position of Qinglong Temple as an important link between Chinese and Japanese Buddhist exchanges and its far-reaching influence, and to reveal its contribution to the dissemination of religious culture and ideas. By exploring the history of the development of the Qinglong Temple, its architectural form, related cultural relics and historical figures, the paper discusses ways to promote friendly and peaceful exchanges between China and Japan, and finally proposes measures that can be taken by the relevant authorities to protect the site of the Qinglong Temple, which reveals the unique contribution of the Qinglong Temple to the promotion of the integration of Buddhism between China and Japan. Through the study of the Qinglong Temple, we can better disseminate Chinese and Japanese culture, exchange Buddhist ideas, protect related cultural heritage, and promote the prosperity of culture. Therefore, it is necessary to study and explore the Qinglong Temple and its cultural connotation.

Keywords: Qinglong Temple; Tantric Buddhism; Buddhism; Japan; cultural diversity.

1. Introduction

Seiryu-ji Temple got its name during the Sui and Tang dynasties, when Japan was in the Nara period and was actively learning from the Tang dynasty about political and economic systems, art and culture, and religion. Buddhism also began to flourish under the support of the state. Qinglong Temple is one of the ancestral courts of Chinese Buddhist Tantric Buddhism. Tantric Buddhism is one of the eight major Buddhist sects in China, of which the True Word Sect is an important one. After returning from his studies at Qinglong Temple, the Japanese monk Kūkai propagated Tantric Buddhism in Japan and established the Zhenyan Sect, whose temple, Yuanxing Temple, was also established. The Qinglong Temple has an important historical significance for Japanese Buddhism, not only for its architectural style of influence, but also for the inheritance and promotion of Buddhist thought. During the Tang Dynasty, Japan sent many envoys to China to study science and technology, ideology and culture. Among them, to learn Buddhist thought, sent many monks by boat across the sea to China's major temples to learn Buddhism. Two of the most famous of these monks were Kōkai and Saichō.

Kūkai, posthumously known as Master Kōbō, was the founder of the Shingon Sect of Buddhism in Japan. In order to more thoroughly understand the difficult Buddhist teachings of Tantric Buddhism, in the 23rd year of Emperor Huanwu's reign (804 A.D.), as a learned monk, he accompanied the 18th Tang Dynasty envoy to Tang to exchange Buddhist teachings, and after several twists and turns, he arrived in Chang'an in the following year. During his stay in Chang'an, he first stayed at Ximing Temple. He visited monks all over the world and exchanged the Avatamsaka Sutra with local monks at the Liquan Temple and exchanged Siddhanta Sanskrit with Tuanzhen.

In the following year, he studied at the East Pagoda of Qinglong Temple under the Chinese Tantric Master Huiguo, and received the true transmission of the Tantric Sect of Chinese Buddhism, inheriting the two pure Tantras of the Vajra Sector and the Tirthankara Sector, and obtaining the position of Tantric Authenticity as a direct disciple of the Tantric Sect, as well as the status of a transmitter of the teachings to the future generations. 806, after completing his studies, Kong Hai returned to China, bringing with him a large number of Buddhist scriptures, Buddhist artifacts and a

large number of poetic and calligraphic works. Upon his return to Japan, Kūkai founded the Shingon Sect of Buddhism (Eastern Tantra) and compiled the Seal Scripts and Names of Ten Thousand Images. This book was the first Chinese dictionary in Japan and played an important role in the spread of Tang culture in Japan. Another of his important works, the Bungyo Shifu Monographs, not only promoted the understanding and absorption of Tang culture in Japan, but also served as an important source for understanding the history of Chinese literature in the Han and Tang dynasties. After his return to China, Kūkai started to establish the True Word Religious Order, gradually formed a clear Tantric sect, and continued to improve the Tantric theory and ritual system. Kung Hai first established the centrality of "instant Buddhahood" in the Tantric practice system and put forward the theoretical system of the "six major, four phases, and three secrets", which facilitated the transformation of Tang Tantra into Eastern Tantra.

In Japan, Saichō read the three main sections of Tiantai and the Four Doctrines of Tiantai at Enryaku-ji Temple. Since then, he was deeply converted to Tiantai's wonderful teachings and developed a desire to enter the Tang Dynasty to seek the Dharma. In 804, with the approval of the Emperor of Japan, Saichō arrived in China with his disciple Yoshizane and others, along with Ishikawa Michiyoshi, Japan's twelfth deputy envoy to Tang. He went to Tiantai Mountain, the Guocheng Temple, and the Folong Temple to study with Xingman. He also copied a large number of Tiantai Buddhist texts.

When he returned to Japan, he brought back a number of chapters and volumes of sutras such as the Dharma Flower Sutra, as well as seventeen kinds of topographies of famous tablets and posters. After returning to Japan, he developed the Tiantai doctrine at Mount Birui and formally established the Tiantai Sect of Japanese Buddhism. The Longxing Temple became the ancestral home of the Tiantai Sect in Japan and has been admired and noticed by Japanese monks and followers for many generations. The Tiantai Sect was dedicated to incorporating other representative Buddhist ideas into the Dharma Flower Vehicle and establishing a major comprehensive system of Buddhism.

The Chinese Shingon Tantric Sect originated at the Chinglong Temple in Chang'an, where the Japanese monk Kōkai studied and then returned to Japan to find the Shingon Tantric Sect and establish the Nara Nishidaiji Temple. The Genkyoji Temple was the dojo of the Sangsang and Dharma-phase sects, which later became part of the Zhenyan Ruler's Sect. This paper discusses the question of the exchange and integration of Chingryongsa with Chinese and Japanese Buddhism through research and verification of the history of Chingryongsa, and through the search and reading of relevant literature.

2. Historical Background of the Qinglong Temple and the Development of Tantric Buddhism

2.1. Introduction to the Qinglong Temple

Qinglong Temple is a famous Buddhist temple in Chang'an, Tang Dynasty, whose construction history can be traced back to the second year of the Kaihuang reign of Emperor Wen (582) of Sui Dynasty, and which was initially named the Inspiration Temple. At that time, with the flourishing of Buddhism, the temple gradually became an important temple in Chang'an and reached its peak in the middle of the Tang Dynasty. In the second year of Jingyun (711), the name was changed to the Qinglong Temple, signifying its Buddhist beliefs and culture that soared like a green dragon.

The Qinglong Temple was the main Buddhist Tantric pathway, named for the teaching and promotion of Tantric Buddhism, which had an influence far beyond the Tang Dynasty's borders. As the fundamental dojo of Tantric Buddhism with the characteristics of Buddhist study and education, there were foreign monks studying in Japan, Silla, and Java at that time to learn the Dharma and be ordained. In the Tang Dynasty, the Qinglong Temple was not only a place for monks to preach and devotees to practice and worship Buddhism, but also an important platform for Buddhist exchanges between China and Japan [1].

The Qinglong Temple declined in the Northern Song Dynasty and was destroyed until 1963, when it was revived in an archaeological excavation. Inside the Qinglong Temple site, a large number of artefacts such as Buddha statues, statue monuments and ceramic pagodas have been unearthed, as well as a large number of poems written by poets of the Tang Dynasty on the theme of the Qinglong Temple. These poems truly reflect the religious and cultural culture in the Tang Dynasty, and show the importance attached to Buddhism by the rulers of the Tang Dynasty. The basic tendency of Buddhism and the development of Buddhist culture in Chang'an is also one of the strong textual pieces of evidence of our understanding of the Qinglong Temple.

2.2. The Development of Tantric Buddhism in China and Japan

Tantric Buddhism is one of the eight major sects of Chinese Buddhism, which was first founded by the senior monk, Monk One Line, and includes such sects as the True Word Sect, Vajradhatu Sect, and Viharayana Sect. As one of the Chinese Buddhist sects, Tantric Buddhism was firstly an Indian Tantric religion first fused with parts of Chinese Taoism, and was divided into two sects, namely, the Fetal Realm and the Vajrayana Realm.

Tantra, which can also be called Tantra, is one of the eight Mahayana sects. Tantra is a school of the seventh century in India appeared less than a century, by the good fearlessness, vajra wisdom and Bukong and other people in the Tang Kaiyuan years into China, and the formation of China's original "Tantra". Tantra's route of introduction, mainly South India and Ceylon as a starting point, circling through Java and then entered Chang'an, especially with the maritime Silk Road religious style and ethnic customs, including some Hindu components. Due to the military needs of the west of the river, especially after the Anshi Rebellion, Tantric Buddhism was taken as the protection of the army, the protection of the country and the protection of the body of the Dharma, the Tang Dynasty gave high hopes, and thus rose to become the most prominent sect at that time, and later with the relative stability of the Tang Dynasty and the decline of the relative stability of the Tang Dynasty.

After receiving the true transmission of the two schools, Master Yixing of the Tang Dynasty passed it on from Master Huiguo of the Qinglong Monastery to Master Kukai, a Japanese monk who travelled to China to study Buddhism. Through the return of Kukai and Saichō to Japan, the Japanese Tantric Sect gave rise to the Eastern Tantric Sect represented by Kukai and the Formosan Tantric Sect represented by Saichō, while the Zhenyan Sect mainly refers to the Eastern Tantric Sect of Kukai's school [2].

3. The Architectural Style of the Qinglong Temple and the Monument of Kūkai

3.1. The Architectural Style of the Qinglong Temple

It is mainly a wooden structure with an elegant and simple style. The core building of the temple, the Daxiong Hall, is mainly a wooden structure with a roof covered with green glazed tiles. The overall design is simple and atmospheric, and the interior is spacious and bright, which is a pious place for praying for blessings. The temple is also beautifully decorated with murals depicting classic Buddhist stories and the life of the Buddha in vivid colours. There are also numerous statues of Buddha, Bodhisattva statues and other sculptures in the temple, each in different forms and solemnity, so that people cannot help but be in awe.

The entire temple mostly adopts the structural form of the arch and flying eaves, which not only increases the stability and aesthetics of the building, but also reflects the exquisite skills and wonderful wisdom of the ancient Chinese craftsmen. The delicate carving of the arch and the lightness of the flying eaves complement each other, adding a lot of spirit and vitality to the whole Qinglong Temple. Qinglong Temple site found within the site of the Pagoda Yard, the tower site is in the western part of the Qinglong Temple, is a relatively complete surviving Jialan compound. Early building is the front tower after the temple to tower as the main body, this pattern is the main layout of the temple before the Tang form.

Since the beginning of the Tang Dynasty, the building of the temple to the main hall, the tower is reduced to a secondary position, the tower will be built in the hall or the hall of the left and right machines, as an ancillary building, such as Ci'en Temple and Recommendation of blessing temple is an example. Most of the Chang'an temple is a large area, composed of a number of courtyards. Related documents have recorded that Qinglong Temple also has several courtyards. Qinglong Temple had the Upper, Middle, and Lower Sutra Collection Courtyard, the East Pagoda Courtyard, and the Court of Transmission [3].

3.2. The Kūkai Monument and Its Significance

The Kukai Monument at Seiryuji Temple was built in 1982 to commemorate Master Kukai and to promote eternal peace and friendship between China and Japan. At the top of the monument, the "five chakras" symbolising Kukai are used. The idea of the "five chakras" came from India and passed through China to Japan, where the material universe was represented by forms, from top to bottom, as the five elements of air, wind, fire, water, and earth, and by primitive shapes such as circles, triangles, and squares. Simple shape to represent the Japanese Heian dynasty after the middle of this idea is widely spread, especially Kūkai as the originator of the Japanese Shingon sect, the best use of this modelling; around the fence panels using the wave shape, on behalf of Kūkai and across the sea to the Tang dynasty envoys and the sea waves; the centre of the tomb altar and monument as a whole, to the base of white alabaster monument body, and the inscription in gold, giving a person with the feeling of freshness and solemnity. It gives a sense of freshness and solemnity [4].

According to the architect, the monument is modelled on the Big Wild Goose Pagoda, which is an expression of respect for the terroir of ancient Chang'an and the orthodox architectural style of the Shengtang period. In 2019, the Kukai Monument was named one of the fourth batch of "Twentieth Century Architectural Heritage" [5]. The significance of the monument is not only a deep remembrance of the historical figure, but also an affirmation and support of the friendly exchanges between China and Japan. The significance of this monument is not only a deep remembrance of the historical figure, but also an affirmation and support of the friendly exchange between China and Japan.

3.3. Protection Measures

Firstly, the government needs to strengthen the protection of the Qinglong Temple site, through the establishment of site parks and museums for the protection and exhibition of the site, and regular repair and testing of the site, to ensure that the temple is clean and tidy and the original appearance of the cultural relics; Secondly, the relevant departments can carry out more exhibitions and activities related to Buddhist culture in the site to attract tourists and scholars to come, through media publicity, social media promotion and other ways to increase the visibility of the Qinglong Temple to attract more tourists; Finally, strengthen the safety precautions for possible emergencies to develop contingency plans to ensure the safety of tourists and cultural relics at once.

Moreover, the relevant departments can carry out more exhibitions and activities related to Buddhist culture in the site to attract tourists and scholars, and increase the popularity of the Qinglong Temple through media publicity, social media promotion, etc. to attract more tourists; lastly, strengthen the safety precautions and formulate contingency plans for the emergencies that may occur to ensure that the safety of tourists and cultural relics can be guaranteed at the first time.

4. Conclusion

The Qinglong Temple, as one of the ancestor temples of Chinese Buddhism Tantric Buddhism, is not only of great significance to Chinese Buddhism but also an important witness and promoter of the exchanges and integration of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. Its rich history and deep Buddhist cultural heritage have built a solid bridge for the exchange and integration of Chinese and Japanese Buddhist culture. Many Japanese monks studied here, and after obtaining the true tradition, they

returned home to spread the Buddhist culture and religious thoughts they had learnt to Japan, which not only promoted the prosperity and development of Buddhism in Japan, but also enhanced the friendship and understanding between the people of China and Japan.

As a carrier of cultural exchange and fusion, the Qinglong Temple has promoted the exchange and fusion between China and Japan in the fields of religious philosophy and artistic style. This fusion has not only enriched the cultural connotation of China and Japan but has also made an important contribution to the development of cultural diversity in the world. As an important milestone in the history of Sino-Japanese cultural exchanges, the Qinglong Temple needs to be more deeply excavated for its cultural connotations and historical values, to strengthen the exchanges and co-operation between China and Japan in the field of Buddhism, and to jointly promote the prosperity and progress of world culture.

References

[1] Shi Kuanxu. The Early History of Qinglong Temple, the Ancestral Home of Tantric Buddhism. Dharma Voice, 2023, No. 461 (01), 22-32.

[2] Shao Zhenyu, Cao Mingjing. The Influence of Chang'an Qinglong Temple on Nara Nishidaiji and Yuanxingji. Western Journal, 2016 (13): 4.

[3] Jing Yayao, Yao Yilong. The Historical and Cultural Examination of the Qinglong Temple in Xi'an. Beilin Jijian, 2013 (00): 177-185.

[4] Yamamoto Tadashi, Li Keming. A Monument in Honour of Kukai of Choryuji Temple. Journal of Architecture, 1983 (05): 68-71.

[5] Jia Annyan. Cultural Heritage Value of Qinglong Temple Site in Sui and Tang Dynasty Chang'an City. Oriental Collection, 2021 No.144 (17): 60-62.