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The British colonial administrator and scholar Sir Reginald Fleming Johnston (1874–1938) travelled extensively in the Far East, developing a keen intellectual interest in Chinese culture and spirituality. His fourteen-year posting to the relatively quiet port of Weihaiwei allowed him to indulge this interest and to travel to places not usually visited by Europeans. In 1918, he was appointed tutor to the young Puyi (1906–67), who had been China's last emperor before his forced abdication. Deeply interested in Mahayana Buddhism, Johnston played an important role in raising Western awareness of its philosophy and practice in China. This work, first published in 1913, provides valuable insight into the history of this branch of Buddhism as well as fascinating accounts of notable centres of Chinese monasticism. Among other works, Johnston's *Confucianism and Modern China* (1934) and *Twilight in the Forbidden City* (1934) are also reissued in this series.

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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

BUDDHIST CHINA

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Frontmatter
[More information](#)



KUAN-YIN.

(From painting by a Chinese monk.)

Frontispiece.

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Frontmatter
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BUDDHIST CHINA

BY REGINALD FLEMING JOHNSTON

AUTHOR OF
"LION AND DRAGON IN NORTHERN CHINA," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON :
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1913

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 諸 淨 善 惡
 佛 其 奉 莫
 教 意 行 作

*Abstain from all evil,
 In all things act virtuously,
 Be pure in mind :
 This is the religion of the Buddhas.*

—From the COMMANDMENTS SUTRA.

說 讀 行 做
 好 好 好 好
 話 書 事 人

*Be a good man ;
 Do good deeds ;
 Read good books ;
 Speak good words.*

—Inscription carved on rock near Buddhist
 monastery of Ku-shan, Fuhkien
 Province.

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Reginald F. Johnston
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

ABBREVIATIONS

- B.N. *Bunyu Nanjio's Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka.* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1883.)
- E.R.E. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings. (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark.)
- Har. The *Haroon* edition of the Chinese Buddhist "Canon."
(*See Preface.*)
- J.R.A.S. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
- S.B.E. *The Sacred Books of the East*, edited by Max Müller.
(Oxford, Clarendon Press.)

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Reginald F. Johnston
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFACE

THE early chapters of this book deal with the origin and development of some characteristic features of Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially in respect of the forms assumed by that branch of the Buddhist system in its Chinese environment. The sixth and seventh chapters are concerned with religious pilgrimages in China, and with those sacred mountains which are the homes of Chinese monasticism and the radiating centres of Buddhist influence. Of these favoured seats of religious activity, the six last chapters contain detailed accounts of two which are taken as typical—namely, the holy mountain of Chiu-hua, in the province of Anhui, and the holy island of Puto (Pootoo), off the coast of Chehkiang.

An accomplished writer on Oriental Art—the late Ernest Fenollosa—has observed that “a very large part of the finest thought and standards of living that have gone into Chinese life, and the finest part of what has issued therefrom in literature and art, have been strongly tinged with Buddhism.” The truth and justice of this remark

Cambridge University Press
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Reginald F. Johnston
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii

PREFACE

will not be gainsaid by those Western students who have succeeded in finding their way into the treasure-house of Chinese poetry, or have fallen under the potent witchery of Chinese landscape painting. Those of China's foreign friends who long to see not only the political regeneration of this great country, but also a brilliant revival of creative activity in art and letters, can hardly fail to take a keen and sympathetic interest in the fortunes of that wonderful creed, or system of creeds, which for at least fifteen centuries has exercised so powerful an influence—artistic and philosophic no less than religious and ethical—over the heart and mind of China.

It is too soon yet to say whether the forces set in motion by the Revolution—or rather the forces of which the political revolution was one of the manifestations—will bring about the total collapse of Buddhism in China. Judging from the present activity of the Buddhists themselves, it seems more likely that what we are about to witness is not a collapse, but at least a partial revival of Buddhism. Those Western observers who fancy that the Buddhist religion in China is inextricably associated with old-fashioned and discredited political and social conventions in general, and with the corruptions of the Manchu dynasty in particular, have a very imperfect knowledge of Chinese history and of the past relations of Buddhism with the Chinese body-politic.

PREFACE

ix

Buddhists had no cause to regret the overthrow of the Manchus, to whom they were bound by no ties of sympathy, gratitude, or self-interest; and if the rulers of the New China honourably adhere to their declared policy of complete religious freedom, there is no reason why the Buddhists should not look forward to taking a distinguished part in the future progress of their country in respect of its social, artistic, and spiritual interests.

It may be that the present activity of the Chinese Buddhists has been inspired to some extent from Japan, as for example in the matter of the recent creation of a central organization (the *Fo-chiao Tsung Hui*) which has been established for the purpose of protecting the legitimate interests of the Buddhist faith. But the admirably-edited Buddhist magazines, the *Fo-hsüeh Tsung-pao* and the *Fo-chiao Yüeh-pao*, which have made their appearance during the past year, furnish ample evidence that the movement (which is very largely a *reform* movement) is genuinely and fundamentally Chinese; and this is confirmed by the fact that the creation of the *Tsung Hui* itself (which might be described as a National Buddhist Synod or Representative Church Council) has met with the hearty approbation of Buddhists in all parts of the empire, and that in many localities branch Councils (composed, like the parent Council, of both laymen and ordained monks) have been already successfully established.

Though it is too early to say whether this movement will lead to any permanent results, it is certainly not of mushroom growth; nor can it be said to be a mere by-product either of revolutionary excitement or of reactionary caprice. Evidence of this may be found in the fact that during the past decade an influential group of Chinese Buddhists has been quietly at work producing a new complete edition of that prodigious collection of Buddhistic literature which is usually but inaccurately referred to as the Chinese Buddhist Canon. This great work, having occupied a large staff of editors and printers for several years past, has been quite recently (1913) brought to a happy conclusion.

Perhaps the most prominent among the learned and able Buddhists whose names are honourably associated with this undertaking is a native of the district of Ch'ang-shu, in Kiangsu. He entered the Buddhist monkhood at the age of twenty-one, and was given the monastic name of Tsung-yang. He is a man of varied culture, has travelled widely in both China and Japan, and is a writer of vigorous prose and graceful verse. Like all true Buddhists, he shows himself tolerant, charitable, and courteous towards those whose religious beliefs are different from his own. He belongs to the Monastery of Ch'ing-liang, on the Wu-mu-shan—a mountain not far from Soochow; but since 1903 his various duties have required him to reside in

PREFACE

xi

Shanghai, where he and his colleagues have been the guests of well-known Shanghai residents—Mr and Mrs S. A. Hardoon.

If it is mainly through the inspiring influence of a small group of enthusiastic monks and laymen that the republication of the “Canon” has been successfully carried out, the thanks of all Buddhists, and of all students of Buddhism, are also due to Tsung-yang’s munificent hosts and patrons, who not only provided accommodation for himself and his colleagues, amid the flowers and trees that are dear to the hearts of all Buddhists, but also ensured the success of this very costly undertaking by their generous donations and financial guarantees. The completed work, which is frequently referred to in the following pages under the name of the “Hardoon” edition of the Buddhist scriptures, deserves to find its way into the hands of all serious students of Chinese Buddhist literature.

The author is glad to record his grateful appreciation of the unvarying courtesy and hospitality extended to him by the abbots and monks in whose romantic mountain-homes he has spent the happiest days of his fifteen years’ sojourn in China. Whatever may be the ultimate fate of Buddhism, he earnestly hopes that neither his kindly hosts nor their successors will ever be driven away from the quiet hermitages which they so justly love; and that it may continue to be China’s glory and privilege to provide,

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-08033-0 - Buddhist China
Reginald F. Johnston
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

xii

PREFACE

amid the forests and crags and waterfalls of her
cloistral mountains, homes or resting - places
for all pilgrims to the shrines of truth and
beauty.

R. F. J.

WEIHAIWEI,
15th April 1913.

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE “THREE RELIGIONS” OF CHINA	1
II. BUDDHISM UNDER AŚOKA AND KANISHKA	20
III. EARLY BUDDHISM AND ITS PHILOSOPHY	36
IV. THE IDEALS OF HĪNAYĀNA AND MAHĀYĀNA	56
V BUDDHIST SCHOOLS AND SECTS IN CHINA	82
VI. PILGRIMAGES AND THE SACRED HILLS OF BUDDHISM	122
VII. “THE PILGRIM’S GUIDE”	149
VIII. TI-TSANG PUSA	170
IX. THE PRINCE-HERMIT OF CHIU-HUA AND HIS SUCCESSORS	207
X. MONKS AND MONASTERIES OF CHIU-HUA	230
XI. PUTO-SHAN AND KUAN-YIN PUSA	259
XII. THE MONASTIC HISTORY OF PUTO-SHAN	312
XIII. THE “NORTHERN MONASTERY” AND “BUDDHA’S PEAK”	356
INDEX	391

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-08033-0 - Buddhist China
Reginald F. Johnston
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-08033-0 - Buddhist China
 Reginald F. Johnston
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Kuan-yin (<i>from painting by a Chinese monk</i>)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Archway at the Pi-yün Temple, Western Hills	<i>Facing p.</i> 10
Archway at the Wo-Fo Temple, Western Hills	„ 10
Part of the Archway at the Pi-yün Temple	„ 20
Stüpa at the Pi-yün Temple	„ 30
Archway in Grounds of Old Summer Palace, Western Hills	„ 42
Pagoda, Western Hills	„ 42
Hsi-yü Monastery, Chihli	„ 50
Tombs of Monks, Hsi-yü Monastery	„ 50
Pagoda at Hsi-yü Monastery, Chihli	„ 58
Pavilion at Hsiao Hsi - t'ien (“Little Heaven”), Chihli	„ 70
In the Shang-fang Hills, Chihli	„ 70
Temples on the Shang-fang Hills, Chihli	„ 78
Bodhidharma	„ 84
The White-deer Grotto, Lu-shan, Kiangsi	„ 92
Images of Mencius and Tsêng-Tzŭ at the White-deer Grotto, Kiangsi	„ 92
Amitäbha Buddha	„ 98
The Ship of Salvation	„ 104
Form for recording utterances of the name of Amitäbha	„ 112
The Western Heaven	„ 120
Rock-carvings at Lung-mên, Honan	„ 132
Colossal figure at Lung-mên, Honan	„ 140
Colossal rock-cut figures at Lung-mên, Honan	„ 140
Rock-cut colossal figure of a Bodhisat at Lung-mên, Honan	„ 152
Lu-shan, Kiangsi	„ 162
Mountain and Stream, Southern Anhui	„ 162
Jizō (Ti-tsang Pusa)	„ 172
At the Southern Base of Chiu-hua	„ 182
A Mountain Stream, Chiu-hua	„ 182
Jizō (Ti-tsang Pusa)	„ 194
The Hearts of Men	„ 206

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-08033-0 - Buddhist China
 Reginald F. Johnston
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

xvi LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Charm used at Chiu-hua when offering prayers for offspring	<i>Facing p.</i>	220
Chiu-hua-shan (from the north-west)		234
Central cluster of Monastic Buildings, Chiu-hua (from the Eastern Ridge)	”	234
Eastern Ridge and T'ien-t'ai, Chiu-hua	”	240
The Pai-sui Monastery, Chiu-hua	”	240
Protective Charms from T'ien-t'ai, Chiu-hua-shan	”	244
Hui-chou city and Bridge	”	258
On the Ch'ien-t'ang River, Chehkiang	”	258
Sketch map of Puto-shan	”	264
The Fa-t'ang, Southern Monastery	”	268
T'ien-Hou, the Taoist Queen of Heaven, Puto-shan	”	268
Pavilion in front of Southern Monastery	”	276
Courtyard in front of Great Hall of Kuan-yin, Southern Monastery	”	276
Chun-t'i	”	280
A Hermit of Puto at the door of his Hermitage	”	280
Kuan-yin Pusa (drawn in blood by a Hermit of Puto-shan)	”	296
Kuan-yin as “Compassionate Father”	”	310
Inscribed Rock near summit of Puto-shan	”	320
The Chusan Islands, from Puto-shan	”	320
The Prince's Pagoda, Puto	”	328
The Hall of Imperial Tablets, Southern Monastery	”	328
The Kuan-yin-tung and other Temples, Puto-shan	”	338
A Pilgrims' Pathway, Puto	”	348
The Lotus-Pond of the “Southern Monastery”	”	348
The Yü-t'ang Road, showing rock-carved figures	”	358
The Lotus-Pond of the Northern Monastery	”	358
Within the grounds of the Northern Monastery	”	372
An alabaster image of Buddha, Puto-shan	”	372
The Grave of the abbot Hsin-chên	”	380
A P'u-t'ung-t'a (for the reception of the ashes of deceased monks)	”	380
A Monastery Garden, Puto-shan	”	388
Courtyard in the Northern Monastery, Puto-shan	”	388