Temple Destruction in Early 20th Century China: A Case Study of the Ba County, 1900-1936

by

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Defense Date: March 25th, 2024

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Anna Sun

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Asian/Pacific Studies Institute in The Graduate School of
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Around the turn of the 20th century, under the influence of the West, China experienced a major shift in the paradigm of thinking and managing its religious scene: from Confucian fundamentalist or anticlerical to anti-superstition. The latter paradigm quickly gave rise to wholesale temple destruction.

Inspired by Durkheim's theory of ritual, this topic--Temple Destruction--is broadly defined in this thesis. Any actions that impede temples from carrying out their rituals are categorized here as "temple destruction". Mainly relying on the Ba County Gazetteer published in the Republican era, this thesis explores the situation of temple destruction in this county from the Late Qing to 1936. It reveals that it was temples of local cults that faced the most severe blow. These destroyed temples can be further divided into two categories: one type, exemplified by the City God Temple, was open to the entire territorial community, while the other type, like the Yuwang Temple, functioned as immigrant provincial guildhalls 会馆, which were open only to members from their respective provinces. This thesis consists of two main chapters, each of which explores the history of the destruction of one type of temple. It argues that the destruction of temples was both an action and a consequence: as an action, it was not only a blow to the temples themselves but also undermined the social bond among members of the local society; as a consequence, it reflects the decline of the social organizations behind the destroyed temples. By looking at these two episodes of history together, we can see that the history of temple destruction is actually a history of the impact of modernization on traditional local community life.

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1. Introduction:

1.1 Historical Context

1898 was undoubtedly a memorable year in Chinese history: the Qing regime was in its twilight, and the country's future was still unknown. This year also marked the beginning of the religious reform in modern China. In May of 1898, the reformist leader Kang Youwei 康有为 wrote to the Guangxu Emperor (*qingchi gesheng gai shuyuan yinci wei xuetang zhe* 请饬各省改书院淫祠为学堂折). The phrasing of this memorial was taking over by the emperor's edict, known as "*shangyu* 上谕", which was seen by many contemporaries as the declaration of religious reform.[1] In the memorial Kang proposes to turn local illicit temples into schools. Using his home province Guangdong as an example, he writes: “At local, there are inevitably many (illicit) temples, and these temples inevitably possess communal property. If all these temples are transformed into schools and their communal property is converted into public funds...then schools will be widespread."[2] This proposal to use temple property to finance a modern educational system was also shared by the minister Zhang Zhidong 张之洞, who put forward a similar plan in his influential essay "Exhortation to Build Schools (quanxue pian 劝学篇) two months earlier. In it, he proposed specific percentages for temple levy: each county should convert seven tenths of its temples into schools, and for those temples that were converted into schools, their estates could be "used by schools for seven(ty)

[1] Vincent Goossaert, "1898: the Beginning of the End of Chinese Religion?" *The Journal of Asian Studies,* 65 2 (2006): 307.

[2] Youwei Kang, "qingchi gesheng gai shuyuan yinci wei xuetang zhe 请饬各省改书院淫祠为学堂折," in *Kang You-Wei Quan Ji*, ed. Yihua Jiang and Ronghua Zhang, 1st ed., vol. one (Zhongguo ren min da xue chu ban she, 2007), 324.

percent, while the monks and Taoist use the remaining three (ty) percent".[3] Zhang's project diverged from Kang in that he aimed to appropriate the resources of Buddhist and Taoist temples instead of illicit temples 淫祠 to build modern schools. The two also differed significantly in their attitudes toward the temple community involved in their project: Zhang only wanted to extract money from Buddhist and Taoist facilities, with no intention to destroy their belief systems, while Kang sought to destruct the entire field of illicit cults. With that being said, one viewpoint they shared is that neither of them used the religion/superstition binary to discuss the religious question. In this sense Kang's and Zhang's discussions on the matter of *miaochan xingxue* can be classified under the category of the pre-1989, anticlerical and fundamentalist discourse, a classification of Goossaert's. This discourse carries debates about who should run temples and how, but seldom questions the temple-based religious organization of Chinese local society in the way that the post-1898, anti-superstition discourse does.[4]

Although the 1898 temple confiscation edict was as short lived as the Hundred Days' Reform, and its underlying logic remains traditional compared to the subsequent anti-superstition discourse, its impact on the religious landscape of China was not insignificant. After all, the edict "introduced and popularized the idea of nationalizing temples to build the infrastructures of a modern nation-state".[5] This idea began to be implemented on a larger scale later after the New Policies (*xinzheng* 新政) following the Boxer Uprising in 1901, and

[3] Zhidong Zhang, "Quanxue pian 劝学篇," 维基文库，自由的图书馆, November 27, 2018, https://zh.wikisource.org/zh-hans/%E5%8B%B8%E5%AD%B8%E7%AF%87_(%E5%BC%B5%E4%B9%8B%E6%B4%9E).
[4] Goossaert, "the Beginning of the End of Chinese Religion?" 320.
[5] Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 43.

dramatically accelerated with the abolition of the civil-service exam in 1905.[6] The trend to deconstruct temples persisted thereafter, despite a fundamental shift in the paradigm of managing religion with the introduction of neologisms such as "*zongjiao* 宗教" and "science" from Japan in the early 20th century, transitioning from "orthodox-heterodox" (正教-淫祀) to "religion-superstition" (宗教-迷信). It can be said that the destruction of temples remained a common theme from the New Policies to Communist China, spanning the majority of the 20th century.

1.2 Literature Review

Research centering on the destruction of temples in 20th-century China has been very fruitful lately. Rebecca Nedostup's book *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity* focuses primarily on the "Nationalist heartland"--Jiangsu, Anhui, and Zhejiang Province--to explore how the Nationalist officials strived to impose a new state-centered framework of public and private behavior and property onto the variety of temple relationships to the community.[7] Nedostup points out that the Nationalists' attack on temples were driven by multiple factors: not only because of their social underpinnings and the judicial-political function some of them held, but also because their religious character impeded the instillation of nationalist mentality in people's minds.[8] Drawing on sources produced not only by and in interaction with the nationalist government but also from outside the government, *Superstitious Regimes* demonstrates in detail the challenges the local temples

[6] Ibid, p47.
[7] Rebecca Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 69.
[8] Ibid, 71.

in the Jiang-Zhe areas faced under Nationalist rule.[9] Shuk-wah Poon's book, *Negotiating Religion in Modern China: State and Common People in Guangzhou*, explores the same subject as Nedostup. However, unlike Nedostup, who primarily focuses on the initiatives from Nationalist government, Poon is more concerned with how the communities surrounding the temples negotiated with these initiatives. Her account goes beyond the conventional "rejection-acceptance" dichotomy in explaining the reaction of the populace to the endeavors of the state, showing us that ordinary people in Guangzhou in fact managed to retain their autonomy in religious practice by adopting state-sanctioned rhetoric.[10] Other works that address the situation of temple destruction in early 20th-century China include Paul R Katz's "The Temple Destruction Movement in Modern China: Jiangsu and Zhejiang as the Center of Discussion and Gang Qi's Use Temple Property to Build Schools in the Wenzhou Area in the Qing Dynasty". Katz's article points out that the destruction of temples under the anti-superstition rhetoric was an intricate and uneven process, involving various actors such as modernized governmental institutions (for example, Police Department and the Bureau of Education), Christians, intellectuals, and local elites caught between the state and local.[11] He explored specifically the situation of temple destruction in the two cities of Ningbo and Wenzhou in Zhejiang, finding that the effectiveness of the temple destruction movement from the late Qing Dynasty to the Republican era was limited in both places. Compared to Katz's study, Qi's work has a narrower scope both in terms of time period and geographic coverage.

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[9] Ibid, 19.

[10] Shuk-wah Poon, *Negotiating religion in Modern China: State and Common People in Guangzhou, 1900-1937*, (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2011), 3, 153.

[11] Paul R. Katz, "Jindai zhongguo zhi simiao pohuaiyundong: yi jiangzhe diqu wei taolun zhongxin 近代中国之寺庙破坏，以江浙地区为讨论中心", in *Gaibian zhongguo zongjiao de wushinian 1898-1948 改变中国宗教的五十年 1898-1948*, ed. by Paul R. Katz and Vincent Goossaert (2015), 7-8.

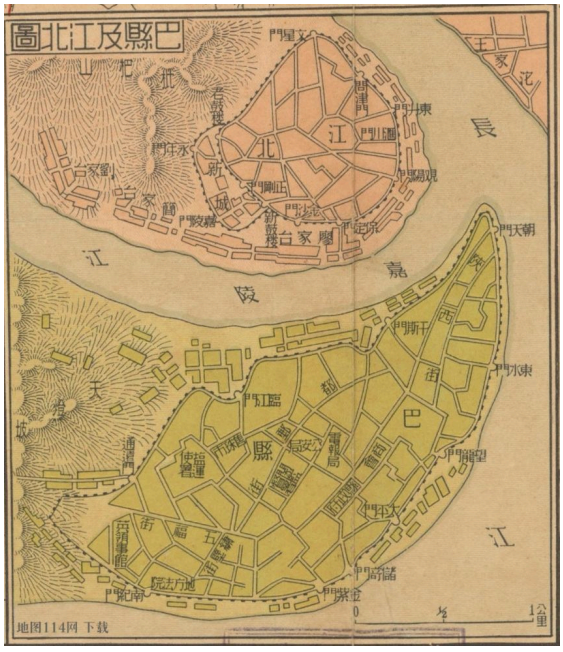
Qi focuses on the impact of the "Use Temple Property to Build Schools" movement during the late Qing period on the aera of Wenzhou. He not only examines specific aspects such as sectarian temples, school structures, and educational practices of the movement but also investigates and compares the conceptual understanding around temples among people from different social classes.[12] Qi's research reveals the social classes that dominated the movement varied from region to region, and these distinct classes employed different strategies and resources, leading to variations in the methods and outcomes of the movement.[13]

1.3 Approaches and Methodologies

It is noticeable that the above-mentioned studies on temple destruction are all confined to specific geographical areas. This makes sense, as regional variation is one of the fundamental characteristics of the temple destruction. This paper will employ such a regional approach to explore the transformation of China's local religious landscape as it pursued secular modernization, with a specific focus on temple destruction carried out from 1900 to 1936. The research indicates that during this period of rapid social change, it was the diffused form of religion that suffered extensive impact. The term "diffused religion" is deployed by American sociologist C. K. Yang to describe a form of Chinese religion that is "with its theology, rituals, and organization intimately merged with the concepts and structure of secular institutions and other aspects of the social order".[14] In terms of organizational structure, it diverges from the

[12] Qi Gang, "Qing ji wenzhou diqu de miaochan xingxueiqn 清季温州地区的庙产兴学", in *Gaibian zhongguo zongjiao de wushinian 1898-1948 改变中国宗教的五十年 1898-1948*, ed. by Paul R. Katz and Vincent Goossaert (2015), 40.
[13] Ibid, 52
[14] C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society,* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961),

Western normative model of religion, which is institutionalized. In imperial China, diffused religion held significant social importance as it participated in various organized aspects of community life, including charity, education, and the enforcement of moral discipline.[15] Therefore, attacks on diffused religion can hardly be said to have no affect local community life. By examining the phenomenon of temple destruction and delving into its historical context in a specific county—Ba County—in southwestern China, which was a part of Chongqing, this paper argues that the destruction of temples was both an action and a consequence: as an action, it was not only a blow to the temples themselves but also undermined the social bond among members of the local society; as a consequence, it reflects the decline of the social organizations behinds the destroyed temples. It is a modest attempt to address the gap in current research on temple destruction in early 20th century China, which tends to center more on Nationalist strongholds such as Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shanghai, and Guangdong, while paying less attention to the rest of the country.



20.

[15] Ibid, 339.

Figure 1: The Map of Ba County and Jiangbei during the Republic of China era

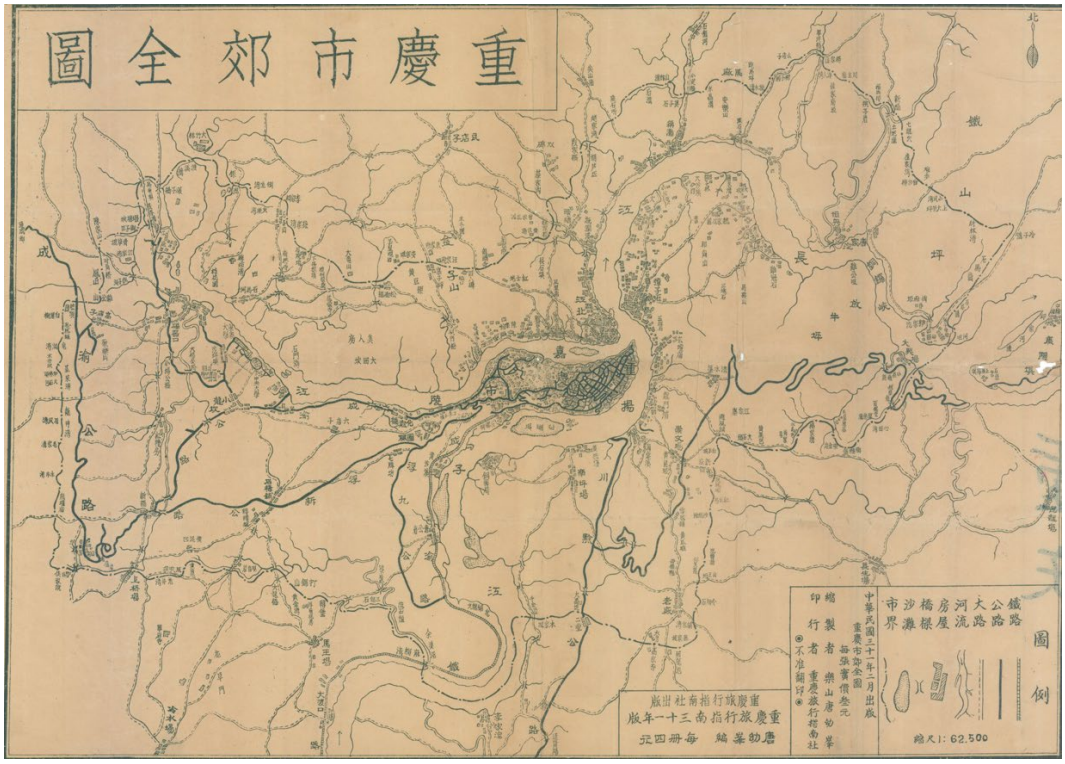


Figure 2: The Complete Map of Chongqing Urban and Suburban Areas

In analysis, this research focuses on the ritual aspect of religion. This emphasis on rituals is largely inspired by the French sociologist Émile Durkheim, who, in his great book *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* challenges the Protestant understanding of religion, which prioritizes belief over practice. Durkheim's ritual theory suggests that ritual is prior to belief and gives rise to it"[16], and the unity of the group or collectivity is sustained by the emotional arousal generated by rituals, what he calls "collective effervescence". In book 2, chapter 5 entitled "Origin of These Beliefs" he writes:

> Collective representations...presuppose that consciousnesses are acting and re-acting on each other; they result from actions and reactions that are possible only with the help of tangible intermediaries. Thus, the function of the intermediaries is not merely to reveal the mental state associated with them; they also contribute to its making. The

[16] Robert N. Bellah, "Durkheim and Ritual," in *The Robert Bellah Reader*, ed. by Steven M. Tipton and Robert N. Bellah (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 151.

> individual minds can meet and commune only if they come outside themselves, but they do this only by means of movement. It is the homogeneity of these movements that makes the group aware of itself and that, in consequence, makes it be. Once this homogeneity has been established and these movements have taken a definite form and been stereotyped, they serve to symbolize the corresponding representations. But these movements symbolize those representations only because they have helped to form them.[17]

Viewing through the lens of Durkheim's theory, temples as places for conducting rituals are of special social significance. They are places where individuals gather in the presence of symbols representing their group, where they act in unison, synchronizing their gestures, actions, and expressions, generating a climate of emotional fusion and revitalizing participants' feelings of group belonging and their faith in collective representations.[18] Regarding their unique social significance, temples in China are no exception. As Poon mentions in her book, in imperial China temples were "more than just religious spaces in which deities were enshrined and worship was conducted...A temple was also a social center..."[19] It is the social function of performing rituals that this paper is most concerned with temples. For this reason, the subject of this research--temple destruction--is broadly defined. Any actions that impeded temples from carrying out their rituals, whether they involved removing popular gods from local temples, refashioning temples into elementary schools and government offices, or exploiting temple assets on a large-scale leading to their bankruptcy, are categorized here as "temple destruction". This paper will interpret the information of destroyed temples from the following aspects: types of destroyed temples, the

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[17] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (1912; New York: Free Press, 1995), 232.

[18] Bernard Rimé and Dario Páez, "Why We Gather: A New Look, Empirically Documented, at Émile Durkheim's Theory of Collective Assemblies and Collective Effervescence", *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 18, no.6 (2023): 1306-07.

[19] Poon, *Negotiating religion in Modern China*, 5.

timing of destruction, their status up to the year 1936, and the rituals held in these temples before their destruction.

1.4 Sources, Preliminary Findings, and the Structure of the Thesis

The scope of this research is confined to Ba County, which is located in Choingqing, once part of Sichuan province. In investigating the local temple destruction from the early 20th century to the 1930s in this region, this paper primarily relies on a county gazetteer published in 1939, known as *Ba County Gazetteer Republican Edition* (*mingguo baxian zhi* 民国巴县志). As E. R. Hughes, one of the authors of *Religion in China* says: "...any study of a county gazetteer...will reveal enough material for a large size book on the local ancestral fanes, local deity shrines and Taoist and Buddhist temples, all there in addition to the temple in honor of Confucius."[20] Indeed, the information about local temples in this gazetteer is nothing short of comprehensive. Containing a total of 750,000 words and 8 maps, the *Ba County Gazetteer Republican Edition* consists of 23 volumes, each of which integrates relevant information on a particular topic. There are three volumes that contain information about temple destruction: Volume Two-Construction (*jianzhi* 建制),Volume Five-Rituals and Customs (*lisu* 礼俗) and Volume Seven-Schools. The "List of Temples" section of Volume Two provides detailed information of the local temples, including names, locations, dates of construction, and dates of reconstruction. Moreover, the List records the prevailing conditions of these local temples, such as whether they have been destroyed or not, in the Notes column (*beikao* 备考). Volume Seven contains a school table, which includes information about new-style schools within the

[20] Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society,* 22.

region since the late Qing Dynasty. The table shows that some of the schools utilized temple assets and occupied temple premises to operate. Since this paper places a strong emphasis on the ritual aspect, Volume Five-Rituals and Customs is also of interest because it details the history of local temples' rituals and how they have changed since the early 20th century.

The *Ba County Gazetteer Republican Edition* will be used in conjunction with the Ba County Gazetteer Qianlong edition (*Qianlong baxian zhi* 乾隆巴县志), which was compiled by the then county magistrate Wang Erjian 王尔鉴 in 1760, 179 years before the Republican edition was published. The latter edition was written based on the previous one, and the topics that are covered in the two are almost identical. Therefore, the Qianlong edition of the gazetteer is an ideal source for comparative reading with the Republican edition. This comparative reading aims to observe the rituals of temples that were destroyed during the early 20th century. Therefore, I will concentrate on "the Register of Sacrifices (*sidian* 祀典)" section of Volume Two-Construction, which documents the relative information.

Integrating the information from the two county gazetteers, we obtain the following results:

Table 1: List of Destroyed Temples in Ba County up to 1936

Name	Date of Destruction	Rituals	Current Situation	Notes
City God Temple 城煌庙	1928 (17th year of the Republic era)	Two official rituals, one held at the altar of nature spirits 风云雷雨山川坛, the other held at *litan* 厉坛. Besides that, there were multiple processions and festivals.	Turned into the model market 模范市场.	

Dragon God Temple 龙神祠	1928	Worship Dragon King of the East, West, South and North Seas. During the Qing era used the ritual of kneeling twice and bowing six times 二跪六拜之礼. In the 5th year of the Republic of China (1916), the ritual was changed to two bows. Completely abolished in 1928.		
Ma Wang Temple 马王庙	Not clear, some year during the Republic era.	Worship Lord of Horse 马王爷, who is the tiansi star 天驷星, in charge of celestial horses. Rituals were held annually in the spring and fall.		
Ba Zha Temple 八蜡庙	1922	Worship eight gods related to agriculture, celebrated by officials and people together.		
Fire God Temple 火神庙	1928	Worship the fire god 火德星君. In the second year of the Kangxi period (1663), it was stipulated that its rituals would be held on June 23rd every year, same as those for the Dragon God. In late Qing, every year in the middle of summer, "Sets up an altar and chant scriptures"建醮 (a type of Taoist ritual).	Turned into a police station.	

		The chosen day processions were “well attended, bustling with people, and the city was jammed up 人马塞途，男女聚观，熙熙攘攘于市”.		
Chaotian Kuan 朝天观	N/A	Taoist Rituals	Turned into the seat of Chongqing Municipal Government.	
Wenchang Temple 文昌宫	1912 (first year of the Republic era)	Worship Wenchang Emperor who was highly respected by literati; Sacrifices were performed using the rite of tailao 太牢, two kneeling and six bowing.		
Erlang Temple 二郎庙	1928	Worship hydraulic engineer Li Bing 李冰 and Erlang Shen 二郎神, both of whom were believed to have the ability to regulate floods.		
Eastern Peak Temple 东岳庙	1928	Worship Huang Feihu 黄飞虎, who was crowned as the Great Emperor of Dongyue 东岳大帝, the ruling god of the underworld 阴间.		
Fuyuan Temple 复圆寺	N/A	N/A	The Village Experimental Elementary School was built here.	

Juelin Temple 觉林寺	N/A	N/A	Turned into Chongqing Youzhi Factory.	
Huilong Temple 回龙寺	N/A	N/A	Turned into Huilong Elementary School.	
Lvzu Temple 吕祖庙	Not clear, some year during the Republic era.	Worship lv Dongbing 吕洞宾, who was ordained by imperial order and included in the imperial ritual code 祀典 in the eleventh year of the Jiaqing reign (1896).		
Daxing Temple 大兴寺	N/A	N/A	Turned into Shilong Elementary School.	
Wanshou Temple 万寿宫	1928	Worship Xu Zhenjun 许真君, who is the patron god of Jiangxi.	Turned into a middle school named Private Ganjiang Middle School (私立赣江初级中学校).	i.e. Jiangxi Guild Hall 江西会馆. The Jiangxi Association makes donation with its assets annually, contributing eight thousand yuan.
Sanyuan Temple 三元庙	1927	Worship Guanyu 关羽, patron god of Shanxi	Turned into an elementary school named Chongqing Second Elementary School (重庆市第二小学).	i.e. Shanxi Guildhall 陕西会馆. Every year, the municipal government allocates thirteen thousand nine

				hundred and fifty-seven yuan.
Yuwang Temple 禹王庙	1925	Worship Yu the Great, its worship is classified in the gazetteer under the column of rituals to gods who ward off calamities 御灾捍患诸神祀.	Turned into a private elementary school named Private Taiyi Elementary School (私立泰邑小学校) by the Jiangxi Association (江西旅渝同乡会). The school is founded by contributions from the association's assets.	i.e. Huguang Guildhall 湖广会馆. Every year, the Jiangxi Association allocates eight thousand yuan.
Shanxi Pavilion 山西馆	N/A	Worship Guandi 关帝, its worship is classified in the gazetteer under the column of rituals to gods who ward off calamities 御灾捍患诸神祀.		i.e Shanxi Guildhall 山西会馆
Wufu Temple 五福宫			It was demolished and rebuilt as a municipal hospital (市民医院).	It was one of the properties of "Guild Hall of the Eight Provinces" (八省会馆), a multi-provincial deliberative body formally established during the

				Jiaqing period.

Notes: This table does not include the Confucian Temple (*wenmiao* 文庙) because, despite being the location of some elementary schools, its rituals were reinstated in 1933.

The table above shows that, roughly one-third (six out of twenty) of the temples destroyed in the Ba County up to 1937 belonged to either Buddhism or Taoism. However, judging from the total number of temples of both religions recorded in the gazetteer (about two hundred), this number is quite small. On the other hand, the remaining two-thirds can be broadly categorized as temples of local cults 地方崇拜 (also termed as folk beliefs 民间信仰, folk religion 民间宗教 and popular religion 大众宗教, etc.). "Local cults", to use Poon's words, is an academic term coined by scholars to "categorize diverse religious cultures with no systematized beliefs and no sense of a religious entity, or even any agreed-upon collective name among portioners and believes...(during the imperial era) it was closely merged with the concepts and structure of social organizations such as kinship systems..."[21] In other words, within these local cults, religion takes on a diffused form. Under closer examination, it is observed that these destroyed temples of local cults can be further divided into two subgroups: one is territorial temples, which were public and open to members of the local community, while the other is provincial *huiguan* (会馆), which were private, closed, and only opened to members belonging to their organization.

[21] Poon, *Negotiating religion in Modern China,* 5.

The following parts of the thesis will examine these two types of destroyed local cults temples separately. The first part will be about territorial temples. More specifically, it will focus on the wholesale prohibition of the rituals of territorial temples that occurred in 1928. This part of research reveals that the crackdown on these rituals symbolizes the fundamental shift in the state's framework of managing religion, namely from "orthodox-heterodox" to "religion-superstition". It suggests that the prohibition of these rituals, and the "religion-superstition paradigm of managing religion in general, went hand in hand with the state's pursuit of secular modernity. The second part will be mainly devoted to recounting the history of the provincial *huiguan* in Chongqing, their emergence, their rise, and their destruction. Its primarily source of firsthand information is Dou Jiliang's 窦季良 work *A Study of Hometown Organizations* 同乡组织之研究, published in 1946. Amid the Anti-Japanese War, Dou sought refuge in Chongqing and assumed a role in the Ministry of Social Affairs of the National Government. Leveraging his position, he investigated the eight provincial guilds of Chongqing and compiled the *Hometown Organizations*. This work contains many of the monuments and inscriptions of the guilds that Dou had collected at the time, and which had disappeared permanently after the war. The history of the eight provincial guilds reveals another pattern of temple destruction: unlike the swift, simultaneous, and targeted crackdowns faced by territorial temples in Ba County in 1928, the destruction of provincial *huiguan* was a gradual, comprehensive process--a result of the gradual decline of the organizations behind the guildhalls, along with encroachments on their properties by various parties, collectively leading to their ruin. By looking at these two episodes of history together, we can see that the history of temple destruction is actually a history of the impact of modernization on

traditional local community life.

2. The Destruction of Territorial Temples in Ba County

2.1 The Abolition of the Rituals of Territorial Temples in Ba County in 1928

In the *Ba County Gazetteer Republican Edition,* we find that while the purposes of expropriating the sites of these territorial temples varied, the abolition of the rituals of these temples occurred intensely in 1928. In its fifth volume, Rituals and Customs, we often see descriptions of the rituals performed around territorial temples ending with the phrase "abolished in the 17th year of the Republic of China". However, these descriptions do not explicitly state the direct cause of their abolition. This leaves us with the following question: Is this temporal overlap merely a coincidence, or does it represent that they were abolished together due to the same decree? Given that these rituals were abolished in 1928, it is easy to speculate that their abolition was a result of the issuance of the "Standards for Maintaining or Abolishing Temples" (*shenci cunfei biaozhun* 神祠存废标准) by the Nationalist Government in that year, which classified most of the territorial temples into the category of "temples of ancient gods 古神" and stipulated that all worship of them should be abolished uniformly. However, we need additional historical evidence to confirm the validity of this speculation rather than treating it as an established fact. The step of confirmation is especially important because during this period, Ba County and the whole area of Chongqing were not at the core of the Nationalist's influence like Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Instead, they were under the direct control of Sichuan warlord Liu Xiang 刘湘. Although not completely isolated from the outside world, the area still maintained a certain level of immunity to influences from the

Nationalist party.

Two additional pieces of evidence suggest that wholesale prohibition of the rituals of territorial temples in 1928 is a result of the Standards for Maintaining or Abolishing Temples. The first one is a telegram exchange between Liu Xiang and the Ministry of the Interior regarding the Standards in January 1929. These two telegrams, one sent by Liu Xiang to the Ministry of the Interior and the other a reply from the Ministry of the Interior to Liu Xiang, are now stored as electronic copies in the database of the Academia Historica 国史馆 website. In the telegram sent by Liu, he requests the Ministry to send another copy of the Standards, and the reply from the Ministry indicates that it did so afterward. This telegram exchange indicates that around 1928, there was communication between Liu and the Nationalist government regarding the Standards. The second piece of evidence of evidence is more direct, which appears at the end of the "Superstition" section in Volume Five of the republic edition of the local gazetteer. The end of that section states:

> In September of the 17th year of the Republic, the Ministry of the Interior announced "Procedure for the Abolition of the Occupations of Divination, Astrology, Physiognomy, Magic and Geomancy" (*feichu bushi xingxiang wuxi kanyu banfa* 废除卜筮星相巫覗堪于办法) , in November "the Standards", and in the 19th year, "Measures to Prohibit the Sale of Superstitious Items" (*qudi jingying mixin wuping banfa* 取缔经营迷信物品办法), correcting erroneous customs, clearing absurdities, and make sure superstitions do not hinder evolution...The entire county followed these decrees, and the atmosphere in Chongqing also saw a revival.[22]

Having established that the abolition of these territorial temples rituals in 1928 was due to the Nationalist Party's legislation, it is time for a more detailed observation of this law. The Standards, in Goossaert and Palmer's words, was "the most important and famous anti-

[22] See *Ba County Gazetteer Republican Edition,* Volume Five, Page 59.

superstition law of the Nationalist government".[23] It comprises four sections: the first part narrates the origin of worship, the second part focuses on the prevalence of illicit temples, the third part lists the historical deeds of sages in dispelling superstitions, and the final part meticulously outlines the criteria for preserving and abolishing temples. Undoubtedly, the most important part is the final section. It divides temples into four categories: (1) temples that worship sages (*xianzhe* 先哲), including Confucius, Yu the Great, and Guan Yu; (2) temples belonging to religious organizations; (3) temples dedicated to ancient gods (*gushen* 古神), and (4) illicit temples. The standard stipulates that temples belonging to the first two categories should be protected, while those belonging to the latter two categories should be abolished.

The classification of temples in the Standards is worthy of consideration, as it reflects the shift in the state's approach to religious issues since the early 20th century. A closer look at the classification reveals that the Standards was a combination of two different approaches to Chinese religion, with one traditional and the other modern: orthodox-heterodox and religion-superstition. On the one hand, temples that worship sages and illicit temples were two of the major categories that imperial China had adopted in its definition of orthodox and heterodox beliefs.[24] On the other hand, the category of "temples belonging to religious organizations" did not exist in China before the 20th century because the concept of "religion" was absent from the Chinese conceptual framework at that time. The notion of "religion," which is a Western construct, gave rise to a brand new framework for managing religion known as the religion-superstition framework shortly after its introduction to China

[23] Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question,* 73.
[24] Poon, *Negotiating religion in Modern China*, 118.

via Japan. In sum, the classification and terminology in the Standards present a feeling of "neither a donkey nor a horse" (*feilv feima* 非驴非马) because this decree emerged amid the transition of state's framework of managing religion from the traditional to the modern. The following section will take a closer look at this transition and discuss how the modern religion-superstition framework fits into the state's modernization project.

2.2 From Orthodox/Heterodox to Religion/Superstition

The emergence of religion-superstition framework for managing religion was closely linked to the importation of neologisms from the West such as *mixin* (superstition 迷信), *zongjiao* (religion 宗教), and *kexue* (science 科学) at the beginning of the 20th century, behind which lay the ambition to reclassify the whole range of knowledge and socio-political practices.[25] Many of these neologisms serve as organizing concepts, convey notions related to knowledge, reason, argument, objectivity, and rationality. In this perspective, these neologisms are not "natural" or free-standing objects without history; instead, they come with paradigm and value judgements. Indeed, as demonstrated by the works of many scholars, the term *"zongjiao"* originates from the West and is based on the protestant model of religion. It is a direct translation from the Sino-Japanese word shūkyō. As Josephson delineates in his book, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, the term shūkyō was coined in Meiji Japan to translate the English term "religion". Prior to that, no words existed in the Japanese language equivalent to the English term, nor did any covering anything close to the same range of meanings.[26] In

[25] Vincent Goossaert, *"Republican Church Engineering: The National Religious Associations in 1912 China,"* in University of California Press Ebooks (University of California Press, 2019): 211, https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520916203-010.

[26] Jason Ananda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), 1.

China, following the importation of the term shūkyō (*zongjiao* in Chinese) at the beginning of the 20th century is the establishment of this Eurocentric understanding of religion as the normative model, which resulted in the conceptual reorganization of traditions across the nation.

Similar to the situation of Meiji Japan revealed in Josephson's book, in 20th century China the Western paradigm of religion did not map easily onto the practices of its indigenous traditions. This paradigm of religion is a post-Renaissance one, which views religion as a "coherent, exclusive system of thought and practice with a churchlike organization distinct from society".[27] In other words, this paradigm only considers institutionalized religions as legitimate ones. However, in late imperial China, institutionalized religions only constituted a relatively small portion of religious landscape. Chinese religion more generally took on a diffused form, meaning that it functioned as a part of the secular institutions. Empirically speaking, diffused forms of religion, including traditions of individual salvation, communal celebrations (cults of local saints and ancestors, death rituals), and three institutionalized religions (Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism), together constituted the religious system of imperial China.[28]

Traditionally this religious scene was managed based on the Orthodox (*zheng* 正)/Heterodox (*xie* 邪 or *yin* 淫) framework, which is constituted on the basis of Confucian righteousness and moral emperorship.[29] Although within this framework, instances of

[27] Goossaert, "the Beginning of the End of Chinese Religion?" 309.
[28] Ibid, 309-10.
[29] Rebecca Nedostup, "Ritual Competition and the Modernizing Nation-State," in *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*, ed. by Mayfair Yang (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 90.

government officials forcibly shutting down illicit temples (*yinci* 淫祠) are not uncommon, in doing so, they were "not denying that something was happening between worshipper and deity during the cult".[30] More importantly, the abolition of temple was not based on whether the temples were structurally institutionalized, as was the case with the destruction of temples carried out under the "religion/superstitious" paradigm. It was a matter of propriety. On the contrary, the young activists who use the religion/superstition paradigm to contemplate Chinese religion, who went into temples and smashing all the statues, wanted to show that these statuses were useless bits of mud or wood.[31] Sun Yat-sen, the father of the Chinese Republic and the soul of the Nationalist Party (KMT), was allegedly one of these young activists. In China, the story of him irreverently breaking off the finger of a statute of the Northern Emperor (*Beidi* 北帝) in his home village in Xiangshan 香山 (now *Zhongshan* 中山) county is still passed down to this day.[32] Although the authenticity of this story remains unknown, it illustrates an important aspect of the religion/superstition framework: within this framework, territorial temples, which once held a legitimate place with in Chinese religious system, had become intolerable.

The most interesting aspect of Sun's story is perhaps the target of his vandalism: not the statue of Jesus or the statue of Sakyamuni, but the statue of the Northern Emperor. Northern Emperor is also called Zhenwu 真武 and Xuanwu 玄武, and is a revered deity in Chinese religious system. It originated from Xuanwu in the north, initially taking the form of a divine tortoise, and later evolving into a combination of a tortoise and a snake.[33] The cult of

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[30] Goossaert, "the Beginning of the End of Chinese Religion?" 325.
[31] Ibid, 326.
[32] Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 68.
[33] Zuo Pan, "The Origin and Evolvement of the Worship of Zhenwu 真武信仰的渊源与流变研究," PhD diss.,

Northern Emperor has gone through three stages of development. Before the Tang Dynasty, it was considered a "divine creature (*shenshou* 神兽)"; during the Five Dynasties (907-960), it was personified, becoming the ultimate representative of the northern deity system; by the Song Dynasty, it was officially honored by Emperor Zhenzong as the "True Martial Efficacious True Lord" (*zhenwu* lingying zhenjun 真武灵应真君), with "efficacious" (*lingying* 灵应) becoming a primary feature of the Northern Emperor cult.[34] Later, during the Ming and Qing periods, temples dedicated to the worship of Northern Emperor were scattered across the country, reaching a point where almost everyone was aware of the Northern Emperor.[35]

There is reason to believe that Sun in the story chooses to attack the cult of Northern Emperor is precisely because of its "efficacious" feature, for in the eyes of modernizers, the belief that deities are "efficacious" is superstitious, deviating from science and contradicting the rationality expected of modern citizens. Indeed, in the writings of intellectuals who went against superstition, they often juxtapose superstition and rationality, arguing that the latter cannot be established without first eliminating the former. This is true for Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, the founder of the Academia Sinica and the president of Peking University. In one of his "Thirty Articles on Moral Education (*deyu sanshi pian* 德育三十篇)", titled "Rational Belief and Superstitious Belief (*lixing yu mixing* 理信与迷信)", Cai calls on people to dispel superstition and embrace rationality.[36] He began the article by stating that both rationality and

(University of Lanzhou, 2019), 3.

[34] Ibid, 248.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Cai Yuanpei, "Lixing yu mixing 理信与迷信," in *Cai Yuanpei Quanji*, ed. Gao Shupin, 1st ed., vol. two (Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 433-34.

superstition help people establish causation. Following that, Cai detailed the differences between superstition and rationality: superstition is the absurd attribution of the outcome of events to the will of unknowable gods, and the consequent performance of various rituals of worship in the expectation that gods will give them the results they desire; rationality, on the other hand, establishes cause-and-effect relationships through the induction of countless experimental results.[37] Cai ends his article with a discussion on the theory of "evolution (*jinhua* 进化)", where he states: “Humans stand at the pinnacle of biological evolution because their abilities to observe nature and their depth of their affection for each other both surpass those of other organisms".[38] The invocation of evolutionary theory in discourses against superstition and championing rationality is a recurrent phenomenon. For example, Hu Shi 胡适 referenced this theory in his editorial "On the Elimination of Gods and Buddhas" (*lun huichu shenfo* 论毁除神佛) in 1908. In it, Hu presents several drawbacks of not eliminating superstition, with the third point being related to evolutionary theory: "If gods and Buddhas are not eliminated, there will always be those who seek divine intervention, and the awful ingrained dependence on providence (*kao tian chifan* 靠天吃饭) attitude among our compatriots will be unlikely to change, posing a significant obstacle to evolution..."[39] The close association between anti-superstition discourse and evolutionary theory, as revealed by the writings of Cai and Hu, suggests that the perspective of Chinese modernizers on religion closely aligns with Weberian and Hegelian teleological views, holding that religion (and the whole human society) is destined to progress from the irrational (superstition) to the rational.

[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid, 434.
[39] See page 35 of the edited volume Gaibian zhongguo zongjiao de wushinian 1898-1948 改变中国宗教的五十年 1898-1948.

Holding such a teleological view of history, Chinese modernizers perceived their country as backward and were deeply anxious about it. This apprehension is generated by the logic of Social Darwinism, which holds that if a country does not "evolve" (modernize, in other words) quick enough, it will not survive. In such an urgent pursuit of modernity, common people were "discovered" and deemed to be responsible for the fate of the nation.[40] As Hess noted, modernizers often attributed China's weakness its people's weakness and thus called for changing people's psyche.[41] This mindset is reflected in Sun Yat-sen's concept of "psychological construction" (*xinli jianshe* 心理建设) and his famous proclamation "to make revolution, we must uproot hearts-and-minds" (*geming xian gexin* 革命先革心).[42] People like Sun believed that, in order to construct a modern nation, people must be organized into a rational social body.[43] This construction of a rational modern citizen has remained at the core of China's modernization agenda. Since the "religion-superstition" framework of managing religion served the goal of combating superstition in people to foster their rationality, it is not surprising that Chinese modernizers have actively adopted this framework as they move forward with their modernization plans.

2.3 Assessing the Impact of the Destruction of Territorial Temples: Centering the Discussion on the City God

The upper two sections of this chapter first argue that the immediate cause of the 1928 wholesale crackdown on the rituals of territorial temples was a decree issued by the national

[40] Poon, *Negotiating Religion*, 4.
[41] Kate Merkel-Hess, *The Rural Modern: Reconstructing the Self and State in Republican China*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 1.
[42] Nedostup, *Superstitious regimes*, 228.
[43] Poon, *Negotiating Religion*, 4.

government that year, and then go on to discuss the two different paradigms for regulating religion that were reflected in that decree. This section aims to assess the impact of the destruction of territorial temples through the lens of Durkheim's theory. Certainly, there is a degree of heterogeneity among temples that were put under the category of "territorial temples". The discussion in this section does not intend to overlook or deny this heterogeneity. However, I believe that despite having differences, these territorial temples still share a degree of similarities, especially in the ritual aspect, which makes the conclusion drawn through the exploration of rituals in one local cult applicable to other local cults. This is the premise upon which the following analysis is based. The subsequent passage will use the rituals of the City God as an example to explore the social function of territorial temples in general.

The City God (*chenghuangshen* 城隍神) cult originated from the ancient worship of shuiyong 水庸, which is one of the eight agricultural gods. Over time, the City God underwent personification, becoming a mandated cult in the early years of the Ming Dynasty, with local officials thereafter being responsible for worshiping it.[44] As Shijie Luo 羅士傑 notes in his article, the City God enjoyed a high reputation among the common people and had significant influence in the political experiences of their lives.[45] Regarding the significance of the City God in the hearts of the people, there is mention in Qu Tongzu's 瞿同祖 book *Local Government in China under the Ch'ing*:

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[44] Vincent Goossaert, "The Shifting Balance of Power in the City God Temples, Late Qing to 1937, *Journal of Chinese Religions,*" Journal of Chinese Religions 43:1(2015): 7.

[45] Luo Shijie, "Chenghuang shen yu jindai wenzhou difang zhengzhi 城隍神与近代温州地方政治," in *Gaibian zhongguo zongjiao de wushinian 1898-1948 改变中国宗教的五十年 1898-1948*, ed. by Paul R. Katz and Vincent Goossaert (2015), 101-39.

> Among the local deities the city god occupied a particularly important position. In the minds of the traditional Chinese, there was a similarity between this deity and the magistrate: both were concerned with the people's welfare and with justice in the territory under their jurisdiction. One was appointed by the emperor; the other was appointed by the supreme god...The magistrate was responsible for things within the range of human power, while the gods were responsible for what was beyond human power.[46]

We will see later that this civic veneration of the City God was reflected in the rituals they performed for him. In the state's ritual system, the City Gods were only worshipped in their own temples but also in two official open-air altars: the altar of natural spirits (feng yun lei yu shan chuan tan 风云雷雨山川坛) and the litan 厉坛:

> First, the City God received official sacrifices on the altar for nature spirits (feng yun lei yu shan chuan tan 風雲雷雨山川壇, located outside the walled city) on auspicious days of the second and eighth month. He was also in charge of controlling the deceased of his jurisdiction, in particular the grievous and dangerous orphan souls (*ligui* 厲鬼). These souls were offered sacrifices three times a year (at Qingming 清明, on 7/15, and 10/1) at the litan 厲壇, another one of the official open-air altars.[47]

The records in the two Ba County Gazetteers are generally consistent with the above summary provided by Goossaert. In recording the rituals of the City God , the Qianlong edition is more detailed. It includes not only the information recorded in the Republican edition, but also details such as the expenditure for the worship, the specific rituals performed (in the *yizhu* 仪注 column), the toasts (zhuwen 祝文), and the furnishings (*chenshe* 陈设). Noteworthily, the Qianlong edition points out a difference in worships conducted in the two altars that is not made obvious in Goossaert's account: worships at the *litan* were dedicated specifically to the City God, while the ones at the altar for nature spirits worshiped the City

[46] Qu Tongzu, *Local Government in China under the Ch'ing*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1988), 165-66.
[47] Goossaert, "The Shifting Balance of Power," 7.

God along with other deities.[48]

Significant as these two official worships may be, for the people, they were not the core of the matter; the grand tour of the city by the god, the purifying and demon-expelling virtues of the procession, and the entertainments associated with the processions were.[49] Although the City God processions developed around the two official worships, most elements in them were not justified by those worships in any way.[50] Therefore, the processions consistently remain in the gray area between official permission and explicit prohibition. They took place multiple times a year, organized by and for territorial communities such as villages, neighborhoods, wards, and higher-order alliances.[51] Local officials generally did not interfere much in these processions, and the strictest measures usually involved only reducing the number of sedan chairs (*jiaozi* 轿子), guard of honor (*yizhang* 仪仗), and sedan bearers in the processions.[52] The rituals of the City God procession, along with activities such as opera performances and trade fairs, collectively constituted the City God temple festival (*chenghuang miaohui* 城隍庙会), making the cult "a place of effervescence, crowds, and massive celebrations".[53]

Records of City God temple festivals in Ba County can be found in the Republican Edition gazetteer, though not many. For instance, in Volume Five, Section Rituals, we find the following sentence: "The local community takes May 11th every year as the birthday of the

[48] See page seven and nine of Volume Two of *Qianlong Baxian zhi* 乾隆巴县志.
[49] Goossaert, "The Shifting Balance of Power," 14.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Goossaert, "Wanqing ji minguo shiqi jiangnan diqu de yinshen saihui 晚清民国时期江南地区的迎神赛会," in *Gaibian zhongguo zongjiao de wushinian 1898-1948 改变中国宗教的五十年 1898-1948*, ed. by Paul R. Katz and Vincent Goossaert (2015), 86.
[53] Goossaert, "The Shifting Balance of Power," 13.

City God and holds a grand festival to celebrate it."[54] It is a great pity that neither gazetteer provides a detailed description of the festivals in Ba County. Fortunately, there are many accounts about the City God festivals in the Sichuan-Chongqing region where Ba County is located, which can help us image what the ones in Ba County look like. Below is a description of how the City God festival in Chongzhou 崇州 County used to unfold:

> The City God festival took place in the middle of the eighth month of the lunar calendar, coinciding the Mid-Autumn Festival. According to the local tradition, the City God procession is the City God accompanying his wife, Chenghuang niangniang 城隍娘娘 to return to her parents' home. The procession began on August 12 and ended on August 15, lasting for three days. . .During this time, the head 会首 would hold the "book of merits (gongguo bu 功果薄)" and go from door to door to collect money... (for opera performances). Taking the festival in the year of 1924 as an example, the city was adorned with lanterns and colored streamers, various commodities were available, and opera performances were held for sixty days, equivalent to two whole months, making it a truly grand celebration.[55]

The City God festival mentioned in the *Ba County Gazetteer Republican Edition* should be similar to the "May Day Fair"(*wuyue taihui* 五月台会)" held in Hongya County, Southern Sichuan, both of which took place on the City God's birthday. The Hongya May Day Fair was listed as an intangible cultural heritage in Sichuan Province (四川省非物质文化遗产) in 2009, resumed and now held every year.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Li Xianglin, "Bashu diqu de chenghuang xinyang yu minsu xiju 巴蜀地区的城隍信仰与民俗戏剧," *zongjiao xue yanjiu 宗教学研究,* no. 1 (2015): 265.

Figure 3: May Day Fair in Hongya County

The following is a first-hand account from a scholar who was there in 2013:

> At around 11 o'clock, I witnessed a gathering crowd holding colorful streamers, beating gongs and drums, as a massive procession approached from a distance. Leading the way was the City God. Three statues were carried by people—a young woman with a fair face (Chenhuang niangniang), an elderly woman (reportedly the mother of the City God), and the City God adorned in a red official uniform. Following the City God statue, numerous women held bamboo fans, diligently fanning the City God in the sweltering heat of the procession. The parade also featured vibrant vehicles adorned with opera decorations, including characters like Baogong 包公, the Cowherd and Weaving Maiden 牛郎织女, among others. The festivities embraced various performances, including Dragon Dance, Mussel Shell Lanterns, and Waist Drums.[56]

Records regarding the City God's processions and festivals in the Sichuan-Chongqing area are generally similar to the two accounts mentioned above in terms of content. Here, we will not enumerate them one by one. The takeaway here is that there were multiple cyclical rituals centered around the City God belief, providing opportunities for all members of the territorial community within the jurisdiction of the City God in procession to gather. Indeed, the City God processions were occasions in which even local women, who were largely excluded from

[56] Li, "Bashu diqu de chenghuang xinyang yu minsu xiju 巴蜀地区的城隍信仰与民俗戏剧," 266.

public social life, participated.[57] Viewed through the lens of Durkheim's ritual theory, the City God cult undoubtedly played a significant role in maintaining the social bond among members of the local society.

While the cult of City God has its unique aspects, in terms of its regional nature and the widespread participation of members of the local community in its rituals, it is similar to other religious traditions that also fall within the category of "territorial cults". Hence, there is reason to believe that concerning its ability to evoke collective consciousness among local (territorial) community members, the differences between the City God cult and other territorial cults are mainly a matter of degree. From this perspective, the destruction of territorial temples as an action was not only an attack on the temples themselves but also seriously undermined the community bonds of the local society.

[57] Goossaert, "Wanqing ji minguo shiqi jiangnan diqu de yinshen saihui 清民国时期江南地区的迎神赛会," 86-88.

3. The Destruction of the Eight Provincial Guildhalls

As demonstrated in the Ba County Gazetteer Republican edition, besides the territorial temples, there were also provincial guilds accessible only to their members that were destroyed. This chapter focuses on the history of these provincial *huigua*n 会馆. The first section will explore the religious aspects within these guilds and argue that religion played a prominent role in their life and organization, with guildhalls essentially being temples. The following three sections will roughly outline the formation, rise, and decline of the provincial *huiguan* in chronological order. This part of history demonstrates that the destruction of the provincial guildhalls was a gradual process, corresponding to the gradual decline of the significance of these guild organizations in the local society.

3.1 Eight Provincial Guildhalls as Religious Sites

Existing research on Chongqing's *huiguan* tends to focus more on their commercial functions, while neglecting the religious elements within the organization. However, it is important to note that within the eight provincial guilds, religious elements held a central position. The eight guildhalls were essentially eight temples. As Dou states based on his field investigation: "Each guildhall was located within its respective temple, or it could be said that each temple was within its respective guildhall. The architecture of the guildhall and the temple was one and the same."[58] This section brings the religious aspect of guilds back to attention, exploring how religion played a prominent role in the life and organization of the eight provincial guilds.

[58] Dou Jiliang, *A Study of Hometown Organization 同乡组织之研究*, (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1943), 45.

The most direct evidence that provincial guildhalls were also temples lies in the fact that each one of them enshrines the patron god(s) of its respective region. These patron gods had a strong connection with the areas they protect, with their deeds in that place widely circulated among the local populace through myths and folklore.[59] Take Mazu, the patron god of Fujian province, for example:

> According to the Daqing Huidian 大清会典, Linfei 林妃 was initially titled as “Lady Linghui 灵惠夫人” and later, during the Yuan and Ming dynasties, was additionally titled as “Tianfei 天妃” or "Tianhou 天后". The Putian County Gazetteer records: "Tianhou's surname is Lin, and her family has lived on Meizhou Island (located in Fujian Province) for generations...On the day she was born, the earth turned purple, emitting auspicious light and a strange fragrance. She was very psychic and knew spells. She also had the ability to foresee fortunes and misfortunes. Villagers who confided in her about their illnesses always immediately recovered. She used to cross the sea with a straw mat 尝能乘席渡海...People referred to her as the goddess 神女, and also called her the dragon lady." These are roughly the life events of this deity. The Qingyuan County Gazetteer of Guangdong also records: "The deity...manifested after death in the sea 死而著灵海上. Whenever people on boats encountered dangers such as storms, they immediately called out to ‘Holy Mother 圣母', and then there would be flames and fragrant flowers appearing on the water's surface. Those people would then safely navigate the peril."...[60]

We can often discern which patron god(s) these guildhalls worshipped from their names, as they were typically named after their respective gods. The table below lists the names of the eight provincial guilds and their corresponding patron gods:

Table 2: The Names of the Eight Provincial Guilds and the Deities They Primarily Worship

	Name	Patron God Enshrined Within
Huguang Guildhall 湖广会馆	Yuwang Temple 禹王庙	Yu the Great 大禹
Jiangnan Guildhall 江南会馆	Zhunti An 准提庵	Cundi 准提
Guangdong Guildhall 广东会馆	Nanhua Palace 南华宫	Huineng, commonly known as the Sixth Patriarch 六祖

[59] Ibid, 47.
[60] Ibid, 50.

Zhejiang Guildhall 浙江会馆	Liesheng Palace 列圣宫	Wu Zixu 伍子胥，Qian Liu 钱镠，etc.
Jiangxi Guildhall 江西会馆	Wanshou Palace 万寿宫	Xu Xun 许逊
Fujian Guildhall 福建会馆	Tianhou Palace 天后宫	Linfei 林妃, i.e. Mazu 妈祖
Shaanxi Guildhall 陕西会馆	Sanyuan Temple 三元庙	Guan Yu 关帝
Shanxi Guildhall 山西会馆	Shanxi Guildhall 山西馆	Guan Yu 关帝

The shrines (*muzhu* 木主) of these patron gods were typically placed at the center of their respective guildhalls. The floor plan of the Hunan Guildhall in Shanghai, depicted in the following image, provides us with an illustration:

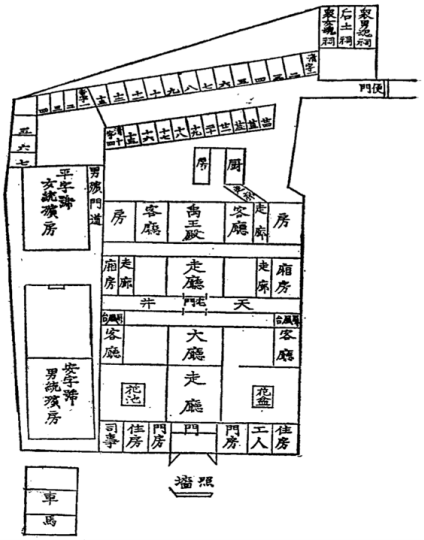

Figure 4: Floor Plan of the Hunan Guildhall in Shanghai

As the shown in the figure, the location of the shrine dedicated to its patron god--Yuwang Temple 禹王殿, was situated approximately at the intersection of the longitudinal and transverse axes of the guildhall. Guildhalls, as a type of architecture, are a form of material culture. Like any other form of material culture, they encapsulate thoughts, ideas, and consciousness of their creators. From this perspective, it can be said that the central positioning of these patron gods in space reflects their core importance within their communities. Indeed, scholars of *huiguan* consider that patron gods (referred to as "*Xiangtu shen* 乡土神"in Chinese scholarship) served as collective representations for these

organizations.[61] On this point, Dou dedicates an entire chapter, the third, of his work to an extensive discussion. Meanwhile, Wang makes the following comment: "Patron gods, as a part of *huiguan* associations, hold significance not only in themselves but crucially in their existence, which established a collective symbol for the association."[62]

The collective existence of the guilds symbolized by the patron gods is deeply reflected in the rituals, both large and small, surrounding these deities. Large rituals occurred annually (or biannually), such as the sacrifice to Yu the Great on June 6th at the Huguang Guildhall[63], while small rituals include ad hoc patron god processions[64]. These rituals were often conducted based on a series of regulations. The following document, appended to the CIMC Decennial Report (1891), illustrates the regulations concerning sacrifices at the Jiangnan Guildhall in Chongqing:

Rules adopted in connexion with the Memorial Chapel erected in the Kiangnan Guild to Worthies from the Province of Kiangnan.[65]

(1.) It is resolved that there shall take place, in the chapel recently erected in the precincts of the Kiangnan guild, in commemoration of the worthies and co-provincials Chu and Yen, two sacrifices every year, viz., in spring and in autumn, the 12th of the 2nd moon being fixed for the vernal and the 12th of the 8th moon for the autumnal sacrifice.

(2.) Sacrifice shall be made on each occasion of a pig and a sheep (either provided by the

[61] The role of patron gods as collective representations has been discussed in various works such as Wang's *The Link of the Native Soil: Guildhalls in the Ming and Qing Dynasties and Social Change* and Dou's *A Study of Hometown Organization*. My investigation to date has shown that there is currently little research questioning this aspect.

[62] Wang Rigen, *The Link of the Native Soil: Guildhalls in the Ming and Qing Dynasties and Social Change 乡土之链：明清会馆与社会变迁*, (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chuban she, 1996), 281.

[63] Dou, *A Study of Hometown Organization,* 54.

[64] Liang Yong, *Guilds and Local Power Networks: Eight Provincial Guilds in Chongqing from Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China 会馆与地方权力网络：清至民国重庆八省会馆*, (Beijing: Social Sciences Literature Publishing House, 2023), 113.

[65] Reports from Chinese Ports: Chungking, written by H.E. Hobson, collected in China Imperial Maritime Customs Decennial Reports 1882-1891 (also known as CIMC-Decennial Reports), 120-22. Access: https://www-cnbksy-com.proxy.lib.duke.edu/search/detail/20e0f7db8024d5cab67ed571d2e157a0/7/66318ab523b0997bb5d1f57b.

guild or contracted for).

(3.) The days of sacrifice shall be celebrated by a theatrical representation, a distribution of sacrificial wine and meat, and an early and a mid-day meal.

(4.) All natives of Kiangnan, whether officials, clerks in public offices, graduates, or merchants, shall be communicated with by the head of the guild three days previous to the event, and should notify their intention if they wish to be present.

(5.) Those who have already subscribed to the funds of the guild shall be free to avail themselves of the joss sticks, etc., provided by the guild, while a charge of 5 mace per head shall be collected from non-subscribers...

(6.) The sacrificial vessels and other furniture required for occasions of sacrifice shall be entrusted to the care of a guardian, who shall have a complete inventory thereof. Such furniture is to be used only in connexion with the ceremonies referred to, and is on no account to be removed from the premises. For any loss or damage the guardian shall be made responsible.

(8.) The spring and autumn sacrifices shall be conducted according to rule and precedent, and any irregularity or extravagance of expenditure the head of the guild shall be called upon to make good.

(14.) For maintenance of the perpetual lamp in front of the shrine, joss sticks, candles, etc., the guardian shall receive an allowance of 12,000 each per annum.

(15.) Women shall not be allowed to enter the chapel. Offences against this rule shall be laid before a meeting, which will either inflict a fine or prosecute the guilty in the district court.

The above 15 rules have been adopted by common resolution, and in the hope that the feeling of unity among co-provincials may thereby be more and more strengthened. In case of infraction, a petition for punishment will be lodged in the Magistrate's yamên.

The excerpted regulations above are evidently about the annual major rituals of the Jiangnan Guildhall--the Spring and Autumnal Sacrifices. It reveals to us the following information about the rituals of provincial guilds. First, these rituals, particularly the major ones, were held periodically, with strict regulations and high degree of standardization. These regulations covered everything from the timing of the ceremonies to the offerings and procedures (Rules

1, 2, 3, 4, 8). Second, guilds had a well-established organizational and management system for conducting rituals. The head of the guild was responsible for notifying members in advance to attend the ritual and ensuring that the expenses adhered to conventions and were reasonable (Rules 4, 8). The guardian(s) were tasked with storing and registering the sacrificial utensils, as well as maintaining a continuous burning of incense in front of the shrine (Rules 6, 14). Finally, state authorities were involved in enforcing the ritual regulations of the guilds, as reflected in Rule 15 and the conclusion. It is clearly stated in these sections that violators of the regulations would be punished by the guild with the assistance of the local government (yamên 衙门) .

The rituals held by the provincial guilds to worship patron gods not only had the characteristics mentioned above but also often involved substantial expenses. For instance, during the Guangxu period, a prefectural guild affiliated with the Jiangnan Guildhall in Chongqing spent eighty taels of silver in just two days on the worship of their patron god: "On the seventh and eighth days of the second lunar month, offerings, lamp and candles, banquets, and opera performances for worshipping the Cishan Emperor 祠山大帝 cost a total of eight taels of silver."[66] Such considerable expenditure on worshipping evidently became feasible only due to the substantial financial resources of the guilds. However, the lavish spending on patron god rituals was by no means an incidental act by the guilds after accumulating consider wealth. On the contrary, there is ample evidence to suggest that one of the initial reasons for the guilds to acquire properties was to raise funds for the expenses

[66] A Report on Fundraising for the Repair and Maintenance of Jiangnan Guildhall Submitted by the Employees of Jiangnan Shoushi, including Hong Xingwu 江南首事职员洪星武等具禀筹款培修江南会馆房屋及银两收支卷, Baxian Achieves File Number: 6 - 6 - 6416, cited in Liang's *Guilds and Local Power Networks*, page 115.

associated with these rituals. Here, I will just cite one example. In the Ba County archive, there is a petition from the leader of the Huguang Guildhall during the Qianlong period, submitted to the county official, detailing a dispute between the guildhall and the tenant leasing its houses. The beginning of the petition states:

> Yi, originally from the Sanchu 三楚(i.e. Huguang area), has been doing business in Chongqing for many years. In the past, Yi donated a portion of money to purchase land in Chuqi xiang 储奇厢 area, where houses were built and rented out to tenants. Yi and others collect the rent, which is used to cover the costs of theatrical performances during the guild's annual ceremonies for the God of Good Fortune on the eighth day of the second lunar month and for the worship of the Wangye God on the fourteenth day of the sixth lunar month. This practice has remained unchanged for many years.[67]

Chongqing's provincial guilds, whether in formulating regulations for the worship of their respective patron gods or in their extravagant expenditure on these rituals, unequivocally demonstrated their reverence for these patron gods. These rituals, particularly the annual ones, were among the few occasions when the entire guild membership was brought together.[68] Form Durkheim's perspective, these annual ceremonies of worship, along with subsequent feasting and theatrical performances centered around patron gods, served as a bond that strengthened the connections among guild members. Interestingly, in Dou's report, his analysis of these rituals is very Durkheimian, although he never mentions Durkheim by name throughout his work, neither do we know whether he had read Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms*. Dou writes:

> The communal worship before the gods was originally a primitive occasion for the unity

[67] Submission of a Petition by leaders of Sanchu Association Ou Pengfei and others on the Twentieth Day of the Eighth Month in the Fifty-Seven Year of the Qianlong reign 乾隆五十七年八月二十日三楚会首欧鹏飞等禀状, collected in *Selected Compilation of Baxian Archives from the Qing Dynasty Reigns of Jiaqing, Qianlong, and Daoguang.* 清代嘉乾道巴县档案选编, page 267.

[68] Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 74.

> of the crowd. Because during the solemn rites, it has the ability to strengthen the sense of "belonging to this group" among the masses participating in the ritual. Moreover, the patron gods (worshipped in the guilds) were devoutly revered among the members of the guilds. This unanimous belief in their patron gods, coupled with the effect that rituals have in uniting human consciousness, further strengthened the cohesion of the guilds.[69]

Notably, the guilds were aware of the effect of patron gods' rituals in uniting their members, and this was one of the main reasons they held these rituals. This awareness was reflected in an inscription on the stele erected after the renovation of a Huguang Guildhall in Sichuan during the Tongzhi period: "Pacifying the spirits on a supernatural level and strengthening the bonds among fellow countrymen on an earthly level 上以安神灵，下以敦乡谊."[70] It demonstrates that, at that time, the purposes of "pacifying the spirits" and "strengthening the bonds" were seen as intertwined and inseparable within the rituals of worshipping patron gods. A successful worship achieves both purposes simultaneously, while an unsuccessful one fails to achieve either. This helps to explain why guilds would establish meticulous and strict regulations to ensure the smooth conduct of patron gods' rituals.

After the above discussion, it should now be clear that during the worship, patron gods served as "collective symbols" of the guilds, enhancing their solidarity, and impressing upon their members their distinctive group existence. However, we would underestimate their importance within the guilds if we think that patron gods were prominent during the rituals dedicated to them only. In fact, the presence of them permeated all aspects of guild activities. For instance, as Dou points out, when the guilds organized charitable activity for the benefit

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[69] Dou, *A Study of Hometown Organization*, 68.

[70] Preface to the Reconstruction of the Yuwang Temple by the Da County of Huguang Huiguan During the Tongzhi Era 同治年间达县湖广会馆重建禹王宫序, cited in Dou's *A Study of Hometown Organization*, page 67.

of their members, they were held in front of the altars of patron gods.[71] Matters related to patron gods affected whether the descendants of guild members could receive sponsorship from the guild for their imperial examination: In the Jiangxi Guild in Chongqing, it was stipulated that "those who have never participated in the worship of patron gods are not entitled to receive sponsorship from the guild 素未祀神者, 不得滥予."[72] Additionally, expressing reverence to these deities remained an essential part of the general gatherings of the guilds. This point is affirmed by Mrs. Archibald Little's firsthand description. Mrs. Little, residing in Chongqing between 1887 to 1907, visited guilds as a guest during this period and subsequently documented her observations and experiences in writing. In her two written accounts of guild gatherings, patron gods are prominently featured. The more significant one appears in *Intimate China: The Chinese as I Have Seen Them,* where it is written:

> And though we reckon the Chinese people such an irreligious race, and the guild-houses are naturally only frequented by men, chiefly by merchants (for the Chinese are a nation of traders), yet in every guild-house there is a temple. And before every great banquet part of the ceremony of marshalling the guests to their seats (and a very stately ceremony it is) is pouring a libation of wine before an altar in the banqueting-hall, before which also each guest bows in turn as he passes to the place assigned him.[73]

Mrs. Archibald Little's text above shows that during the regular social gatherings in guilds, such as banquets, there was still a procedure for paying homage to the patron gods, even though the main purpose was not the worship of these deities. And from the CIMC Report of 1891, we learn that such social gatherings were quite frequent among the eight provincial

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[71] Dou, *A Study of Hometown Organization*, 69.

[72] From the Inscription on the Erected Stele from the Chongqing Jiangxi Guild Hall, on the tenth day of a certain month in the fourth year of the Tongzhi reign 重庆江西会馆同治四年某月初十（树立的石碑的）刊立碑记, cited in Dou's *A Study of Hometown Organization*, page 69.

[73] Mrs. Archibald Little, *Intimate China: The Chinese as I Have Seen Them* (London: Hutchinson, 1899), 541.

guilds: the Jiangnan Guildhall had the most, with as many as 300 gatherings in 12 months, while even the least frequent guilds gathered 70 to 80 times during the same period.[74] Putting these two pieces of information together, it is evident that patron god were extensively involved in the daily activities of the guilds.

At the first glance, *huiguan*, as an organization being both hometown-based and profession-based, appears to be entirely secular. Indeed, as will be demonstrated in the following sections of this chapter, historically, provincial guilds had assumed quasi-governmental functions.[75] However, this does not mean that the concept of transcendence was absent within the guild organization. In fact, the sacred--patron gods--were "collective symbols" of the guilds, which held core significance in maintaining guilds' existence as organizations. These deities were not only highly revered during the ceremonies dedicated to them, but they were also omnipresent in the daily operations of the guilds.

3.2 The Formation of Eight Provincial Guildhalls

The emergence of the eight provincial *huiguan* in Chongqing was closely linked to the population situation in Sichuan during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. After decades of warfare, including the Yang Yinglong Rebellion (1596) and the Zhang Xianzhong Uprising (1644), the Sichuan region had become a sparsely populated and desolate land. According to research by Lan Yong's 蓝勇, the population of the entire region in the early Qing Dynasty was only around 600,000, equivalent to the population of a medium-sized county in Sichuan

[74] CIMC Report, Chongqing Volume, 120.
[75] Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853-1937*, (Berkely, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1995), 118.

today.[76] After 1663 (the second year of the Kangxi Emperor's reign), Governor Li Guoying 李国英 of Sichuan initiated the reconstruction of the walls of Chongqing, marking the beginning of the urban development process in the city.[77] This development was accompanied by a series of measures taken by the Qing court to encourage immigration.[78] For example, in the tenth year of the Shunzhi Emperor's reign, Sichuan's uncultivated land was allowed to be reclaimed by the people; during the Kangxi and Yongzheng periods, it was further stipulated that once the barren land was reclaimed by immigrants, it could permanently belong to those immigrants.[79] As a result, during the early Qing Dynasty, there were waves of immigration in Chongqing and the entire Sichuan region.

Immigrants greatly contributed to the population growth of Chongqing. By the Yongzheng era, Chongqing had already become a place where "military personnel and civilians gathered, with many households" (兵民聚处，户口实繁).[80] It is worth noting that the migration of population to the Chongqing region persisted into the mid-Qing dynasty. This migration process, spanning from the Kangxi period to the early Daoguang period, can be divided into two phases characterized by differing occupational backgrounds and the regions to which migrants moved:

> In the first phase, from the early Kangxi era to the early Qianlong era, was a period of large-scale migration, during which the majority of migrants were landless peasants. The migration primarily occurred between rural aeras, resulting in relatively little increase in

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[76] Lan Yong, "Qianjia kenzhidui sichuan nongye shengtai he shehui fazhanyingxiang chutan 乾嘉垦殖对四川农业生态和社会发展影响初探 [Investigation of the Impact of Reclamation on Agricultural Ecology and Social Development in Sichuan during the Jiaqing and Qianlongera]," *zhongguo nongshi 中国农史*, no.1 (1993): 19.

[77] Liang, *Guilds and Local Power Networks,* 12.

[78] Zhou Yong, ed., *The General History of Chongqing 重庆通史* (Chongqing: Chongqing Press, 2002), 229.

[79] Ibid, 197.

[80] Cai Yurong, "Levies," in Volume 10 of *Gazetteer of Sichuan Kangxi Edition 康熙四川总志*, ed. Cai Yurong (1673), 39.

> urban population...The second phase, from the mid-Qianlong period to the early Daoguang era, saw an increase in Chongqing's population primarily driven by commercial immigration...(in this phase) the population growth rate of Chongqing city was higher than the overall growth rate of the region.[81]

Taking a comprehensive view of this entire period, we find that the population of Chongqing city increased in number while its demographic composition underwent changes: the proportion of the commercial population had been increasing.[82] Moreover, by this time the city had become a place primarily focused on entrepot trade and commerce.[83] In the Ba County gazetteer Qianlong edition we can find the following description: "Ba County is extremely important for Sichuan, serving as gathering place for goods. The number of boats is high, clustering together like an anthill, with various merchandises converging here from all directions."[84] It is in this context that *huiguan*, immigrant organizations founded by merchants, emerged.

In Chinese, the term "*huiguan*" refers to both the buildings constructed by the immigrant associations and the associations themselves. In this thesis, for the purpose of clarity, the term "guildhall" is used when referring to buildings constructed by the immigrant associations, while "guild" is used when referring to the associations themselves. To be noted, *huiguan*, the immigrant associations, were not identical to "guilds" in Western societies. One notable difference is that *huiguan* served not only as professional organizations but also as community organizations based on geographical ties. As Bryna Goodman puts it, *huiguan* can be seen as "institutional expressions of native-place sentiment".[85] In other words, compared

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[81] Zhou, *The General History of Chongqing*, 236.
[82] Ibid, 237.
[83] Ibid, 239.
[84] Wang Erjian, "Circumstance," in Volume 1 of *Ba County Gazetteer Qianlong Edition 乾隆巴县志*, ed. Wang Erjian (1820), 50.
[85] Goodman, *Native Place,* 38.

to Western guilds, *huiguan* had an additional layer of regional emphasis. The notion of native-place was highly prominent and closely tied to the concept of kinship, which was one of the most important principles of social organization in imperial China. In a city of immigrants such as Chongqing, where kinship ties were difficult to maintain due to geographical distances, the idea of the native-place had become a potent organizing principle. Indeed, many scholars have noted the correspondence between *huiguan* and kinship organization. For instance, Wang Rigen argues in his work *Chain of Native Place* (乡土之链) that "*huiguan* is a type of social organization that is modeled after kinship organizations yet transcends them".[86] Goodman's viewpoint aligns with Wang's on this matter. She notes that in late 19th century Shanghai, *huiguan* fulfilled to some extent the function of a substitute kin network.[87] The extent of overlap between *huiguan* and kinship organizations, as well as their interactions, are open questions that necessitate specific research for answers, which will not be elaborated on here.

In Chongqing, the majority of immigrants were originated from eight provinces: Jiangxi, Jiangnan, Huguang, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Shanxi, and Shaanxi. These Immigrants, organized themselves by province, each established their own guildhall in the city, known as eight provincial guildhalls (八省会馆). These guildhalls were beautiful, spacious, and elaborately decorated buildings, forming a stark contrast with the surrounding stilted houses. Those tourists who visited Chongqing during the mid to late Qing were all deeply impressed by these remarkable structures. For instance, Archibald John Little, an English merchant who lived in China from 1887 to 1907, residing in Chongqing for part of that period, wrote in his

[86] Wang, *The Link of the Native Soil,* 320.
[87] Goodman, *Native Place,* 115.

travelogue:

> On this day I visited the Shansi Guildhall (in Chongqing)--a handsome, spacious, highly decorated building, situated just within the wall, and facing the picturesque hills on the opposite bank. The view from the terrace between the hall and the city wall, and on a level with the embrasures in the latter, is thus magnificent; but nothing of it is seen from the interior of the building, which is, as usual, entirely enclosed in four lofty walls...The same contrast between the glory and magnificence of the public institutions and the comparative squalor of the homes.[88]

The following two pictures of Chongqing guildhalls were taken by his wife, Mrs. Archibald Little. From them, we can see the grandeur of the eight provincial guildhalls, displaying the immense wealth possessed by their owners.

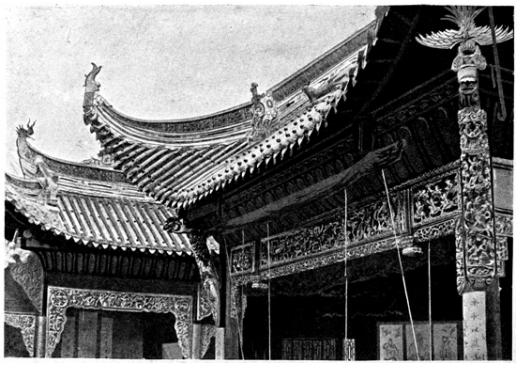

Figure 5: The Interior of a Guildhall in Chongqing by Mrs. Archibald Little

Figure 6: Jiangxi Guildhall in Chongqing by Mrs. Archibald Little

[88] Archibald John Little, *Through the Yang-tse Gorges or Trade and Travel in Western China* (London: Sampson Low, Marston &Company, 1898), 201.

As for location, all of them were located in the lower half of the city, which was not only home to major commercial streets such as Shaanxi Street, Xinfeng Street, and Xinjiekou, but also housed various levels of government offices in Chongqing. Below is a map of the city of Chongqing that appears in the CIMC-Decennial Report published in 1891. As the map shows, four out of eight provincial guildhalls, namely Huguang Guildhall, Jiangnan Guildhall, Guangdong Guildhall, and Zhejiang Guildhall, were located adjacent to the administrative offices of the East-Sichuan zone 川东道, Chongqing prefecture 重庆府, and Ba county 巴县. We will discuss later how this geographical central position, in fact, corresponds to its central position within the local power network during the Xianfeng and Tongzhi reigns.

Figure 7: Rough Sketch of the City of Chongqing

Current research on the earliest appearance of guildhalls in Chongqing has not reached a consensus. Dou believes that most of these guildhalls were built during the Kangxi era, while Liang, drawing information from local gazetteers across Sichuan, deduces that they were mostly constructed during the Yongzheng era. What we can ascertain is that, following the Yongzheng and Qianlong eras, Sichuan entered a peak period of guildhall establishment.[89]

This ambiguity regarding the timing of guildhalls' appearance reflects the fact that their

[89] Liang, *Guilds and Local Power Networks,* 23.

constructions actually underwent a process. Dou, based on his on-site investigation, concluded: "the initial form of guildhalls (in the city of Chongqing) was extremely diverse."[90] He finds that some guildhalls evolved from caravansary (*shangzhan* 商栈)--before the Qianlong era, there were three caravansaries 三栈 in Chonqing known as Gugang Zhan 古岗栈, Shunde Zhan 顺德栈, and Guangnan Zhan 广南栈.[91] These caravansaries were jointly funded by merchants from the same hometown who pooled their resources to purchase land and build them...The number of contributors ranged from twenty to thirty if many, just a few, if scant...These contributors also allocated a portion of the funds for communal expenses within the caravansary.[92] Dou believes that these caravansaries were one of the earliest forms of guildhalls.[93] Another early form of guildhalls was guesthouse (*binguan* 宾馆), which was used to accommodate fellow townsmen from outside the area, as well as to conduct funeral ceremonies for those who had deceased.[94] In conclusion, although the earliest forms varied, the development of these guildhalls generally involved two steps: first forming the hometown association and raising funds, then purchasing real estate and land.

The purpose of establishing the provincial guildhalls can be summarized in the following sentence: "Narrate hometown sentiments and unite hometown friendships (*xu xiangqing, lian xiangyi* 叙乡情，联乡谊)." In the bustling commercial city of Chongqing, "uniting hometown friendships" was not merely about alleviating the sorrowful emotions of leaving one's hometown, but also served practical purposes, especially in commercial terms. Additionally,

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[90] Dou Jiliang, *A Study of Hometown Organization 同乡组织之研究* (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1943), 22.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid, 23

in terms of economic functions, the eight provincial guilds served various roles, including setting industry standards (*hanggui* 行规) and mediating commercial disputes. The following will use a document from the Ba County achieve as an example to illustrate.

As mentioned in the preceding text, *huiguan* (the organization), like Western guilds, were a form professional organization. This characteristic of "being both hometown-based and profession-based (*tongxiang you tongye* 同乡又同业) demonstrates the fact that in Chongqing the professions engaged in by immigrant merchants often had a correlation with their places of origin. As summarized by Liang:

> In the entire Sichuan region, merchants from Shaanxi mainly engage in pawnbroking, fur and leather products, mountain products, and textile industries. Merchants from Hubei and Hunan mostly operate in cotton, dyeing mills, while merchants from Shanxi are mainly involved in ticket shops...The Jiangxi merchants mostly engaged in medical herbs, mountain products, and cloth trade. Immigrants from Zhejiang mostly engage in porcelain business...[95]

In this context, it is not surprising that the leaders (*kezhang* 客长) of the eight provincial guilds usually also held positions as directors (*huidong* 会董) in associations representing industries deeply entrenched in their respective provinces. For instance, during late Qing, the head of the Jiangxi guild concurrently served as director of the "Four Saints Association (*sisheng hui* 四圣会)" and the "God of Wealth Association (*caishen hui* 财神会) in the textile industry.[96] These *kezhang* positions were often held by elderly individuals with a good reputation, who had made significant contributions to the finances of their guildhalls or held prestigious titles.[97] In the Qianlong era, the heads of the eight provincial guilds in Chongqing

[95] Liang, *Guilds and Local Power Networks,* 91.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Dou, *A Study of Hometown Organization,* 25.

were officially designated as "Eight Provincial Kezhang", marking the formation of a cross-provincial joint deliberative body encompassing the eight provinces (its title is "Eight Provincial Guilds", the initial letters are capitalized to avoid confusion).[98] This body extensively participated in the formulation of commodity trading rules in Chongqing's market. This aspect is reflected in the Ba County achieve. In this collection, we can find a notice (*gaoshi* 告示) published in Ba County in April of the sixth year of the Jiaqing era. The main content of this notice is as follows:

> In March of the sixth year of the Jiaqing era, a complaint was filed by customers against dyers' households due to discrepancies in silver and weight measurements. Subsequently, the county government decided to let Eight Provincial Kezhang and the dyers' households coordinate and negotiate before reaching a final decision. On the 18th of the same month, the Eight Provincial Kezhang invited dyer's households and costumers to a public meeting at the City God Temple (*fumiao* 府庙). After deliberation, a decision was reached, with both parties agreeing to adhere to the existing regulations (*jiugui* 旧规). The Ba County government acknowledged the outcome of the negotiation and stipulated that future dyers' households failing to comply with this decision would face severe punishment and will not be forgiven (*yiping yanjiu, juebu gukuan* 以凭严究,决不姑宽).[99]

This notice reveals that by the Jiaqing era, the Eight Provincial Kezhang collectively acted as a regulator in commercial activities in Chongqing. This role was not only recognized by the local government but also authorized by them.

The eight provincial Guilds, as a collective entity, coordinated commercial activities in Chongqing while also individually providing support for the livelihoods of immigrants from their respective provinces. As pointed out by Dou, the mutual assistance provided by the

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[98] Liang, *Guilds and Local Power Networks*, 70.

[99] Sichuan sheng dangan guan, and Sichuan daxue lishi xi, ed., *Selected Compilation of Archives from Ba County during the Qing Dynasty, Reigns of Qianlong, Jiaqing, and Daoguang 清代乾嘉道巴县档案选编*, (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chuban she, 1989), 238.

provincial guilds included the following aspects: hosting funerals and properly burying the deceased (*sangzang* 丧葬), conducting memorial services for the deceased, providing medical services, entertainment, education, as well as caring for the elderly, nurturing children, and aiding the impoverished.[100] Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect among these is education, as it later became one of the major causes for the destruction of the eight provincial guildhalls. However, during this period, the establishment of education differed from that of the late Qing dynasty and early Republic. It did not pose much of a threat to the existence of the guildhalls, as running schools was voluntary instead of being pressured, and educational resources were only accessible to children from the respective provinces. Most of the guilds in Chongqing hosted community-run schools, providing places for children from the same hometown to enroll and study.[101] Dou found the following regulations on a stele erected in the Jiangxi guildhall in the fourth year of the Tongzhi era (1865):

> Students of our province in Chongqing who are going to take the tongshi 童试 each will be sponsored two thousand wen 文, those are goint to take the xiangshi 乡试 each will be sponsored twenty tales of silver, and forty tales of silver will sponsor those who take the huishi 会试. (In the future,) when the number of students increased, discussion will be held to determine study allowances and to organize gatherings for academic exchanges (*wenhui* 文会).[102]

In summary, before reaching its peak during the Xianfeng-Tongzhi era, the eight provincial Guilds which emerged to meet the needs of the hometown community had actively participated in the social life of Chongqing, especially in commercial activities. However, during this period (until the Daoguang era), the main function of the guilds remained serving

[100] Dou, *A Study of Hometown Organization,* 71.
[101] Ibid, 72.
[102] From an inscription of the Jiangxi Guildhall in Chongqing erected on the Tenth Day of a Certain Month in the Fourth Year of Tongzhi, cited in *A Study of Hometown Organization,* page 72 and 73.

the members of their respective provinces, rather than becoming the center of local development as they did later.

3.3 Eight Provincial Guilds Served as the Center of Local Power in Chongqing City

In the preface to "Illustrations of Industries Managed by the Chongqing Eight Provinces Grain Office 重庆八省积谷办事产业图说" by Zhu Zhihong, one of the editors of the Ba County Gazetteer Republican edition, it is stated that "The Chongqing eight provincial guilds originated around the Kangxi era, but truly flourished during the Xiantong era 始于逊清康熙时代，而莫盛于咸同之际."[103] The rise of the eight provincial guilds was closely linked to the local political situation in Chongqing during this period, which was characterized by significant turbulence. This turbulence stemmed mainly from various military uprisings, such as the Yang Longxi Uprising, the Li Lan Uprising, and the Taiping Civil War.[104] General information and timeline of these military events has been summarized in *Guilds and Local Power Networks*, and therefore, it will not be reiterated here.[105] These frequent conflicts undoubtedly placed immense pressure on the local government, which became increasingly incompetent to cope with the challenges posed by these conflicts. Under such circumstances, it had no choice but to turn to the eight provincial guilds for assistance. The establishment of the "Yucheng Baojia Tuanlian General Bureau 办理渝城保甲团练总局" in the tenth year of the Xianfeng reign (1860), with its management undertaken by the Eight Provincial Kezhang,

[103] Cited in *A Study of Hometown Organization*, page 76.
[104] Liang, *Guilds and Local Power Networks,* 166.
[105] For more information, see page 166-172 of Liang's *Guilds and Local Power Networks*.

marked the formal entry of the Eight Provincial Guilds into the core of Chongqing's local power system.[106] The General Bureau was primarily financed by the levies (*xinli* 新厘) handled by the Eight Provincial Kezhang and was responsible for overseeing all militia training affairs in Chongqing.[107] During the time of emergency, Kezhang personally intervened to raise funds for the expense of the Bureau. For instance, in the tenth year of the Xianfeng reign (1860), when the Li Lan Uprising broke out and the General Bureau faced a financial shortfall, it was Eight Provincial Kezhang Zhang Xianzhao and Fu Yi, among others, who stepped forward to raise 1000 tales of silver to alleviate the urgent situation.[108]

Apart from playing a significant role in local militia training, the Eight Provincial Guilds also undertook many municipal administration tasks. Based on the preface by Zhu and the records in the Ba County Gazetteer, Dou categorized the public affairs in which this cross-provincial joint body participated into six types:

> 1) Security Matters: including Baojia 保甲, militia training 团练, city defense, and fire prevention.
> 2) Charitable Matters: including childcare, burial arrangements, providing medical assistance 救生, disaster relief 赈灾, aiding the improvised, food storage 积谷, and managing charity halls 善堂.
> 3) Public Utilities: Constructing the Jiumen Wharf.
> 4) Commercial Affairs: Establishing regulations for various commercial factions.
> 5) Levy Matters: including lijin 厘金 and doujuan 斗捐.
> 6) Production Matters: involving manage the sericulture cooperative 蚕桑公社 and establish mulberry orchards 开园育桑.[109]

The list above demonstrates that after the Xianfeng period, the eight provincial guilds ceased

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[106] Liang, *Guilds and Local Power Networks,* 169.
[107] Ibid, 168.
[108] "Petition for the Disbursement of Ten Thousand Silver Taels for Military Expenses by Prominent Merchants and Gentry Including Zhang Xianzhao from the Baojia Bureau, with Intent to Remit to the Provincial Authorities 保甲局绅商张先昭等申解军饷银一万两解省一案' Case, from the Ba County Archive, file number: 6-4-846, cited in *Guilds and Local Power Networks,* page 172.
[109] Dou, *A Study of Hometown Organization*, 76.

to be an exclusive organization primarily serving immigrants from their respective provinces. Instead, they integrated to some extent with the local society of Chongqing and became the focal point for community development in the city. The daily affairs handled by the General Bureau reveal that Chongqing provincial guilds not only assumed the function of social control, but also undertook the collection of taxes, specifically, transit taxes (*lijin* 厘金), a new type of taxation which emerged after the Taiping Civil War .[110] As Wang puts it, the work of the Eight Provincial Guilds at that time partially filled the gaps left by official management institutions within these domains.[111] This expansion of the managerial and political horizons of provincial guilds' networks was not necessarily unique to the Chongqing region. Bryna Goodman's research on native-place organizations in Shanghai shows us that *huiguan* there also underwent such expansion (specifically concerning tax collection) around the same period.[112] However, by 1930s, in the process of modernization, the local initiatives hosted by Chongqing's Eight Provincial Guilds were gradually transferred to the newly emerged state apparatus.

3.4 The Decline of the Eight Provincial Guilds

Regarding the gradual decline of the eight provincial guilds, Dou has the following commentary:

> The prosperity of a social organization is gradually accumulated, and its decline is always gradually worn away. During this process from prosperity to decline, the turbulent currents of social change gradually erode the functions of the organization itself, which serve as its main factors. Although the maintainers may attempt to adapt

[110] Liang Yong, *Immigrants, the State and Local Power: The Case of Baxian County in Qing Dynasty 移民、国家与地方权势--以清代巴县为例*, (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2014), 280.
[111] Wang, *The Link of the Native Soil,* 63.
[112] For more information, please see Chapter Four of Bryna Goodman's book *Native Place, City, and Nation*.

> to the changing social trends, consciously or unconsciously allowing the organization itself to change in order to preserve their privileges, they ultimately cannot withstand the relentless onslaught of new community political agendas and emerging powers.[113]

Dou attributes the weakening of the provincial guilds to social changes. While he is certainly correct that social changes contributed to their decline, it is important to note that they were not the sole cause. Instead, the decline of Chongqing provincial guilds resulted from the convergence of social, economic, and political changes. This process is notably marked by a complexity of causative factors. Indeed, if we carefully observe the history of the eight provincial guilds from the late Qing to the Republic era, we will find that unlike the destruction of the first group of temples, which was an immediate result of the single decree, the decline of the guilds was closely related to the various changes that the city of Chongqing itself underwent. One of these changes was the forced opening of Chongqing to foreign trade.

A crucial time point in the process of Chongqing's port opening was 1876, during which the Chefoo Convention 烟台条约 was signed by China and Britain. The treaty grants Britain the right of "stationing commissioners 派员驻寓" in Chongqing and opening Yichang 宜昌 as a port. Additional Articles to the Chefoo Convention 烟台条约续增专条 were signed by the two parties fourteen years later, which formally opened Chongqing to Britain as a treaty port. A few months later, Robert Hart, then Inspector-General of China's Maritime Custom Services (IMCS), appointed H.E. Hobson as the Commissioner of Chongqing Custom House to oversee the preparation of relevant matters.[114] In 1891, the Chongqing Customs was officially established, marking the formal opening of Chongqing as a port. And the

[113] Dou, *A Study of Hometown Organization*, 80.
[114] Zhou, ed., *The General History of Chongqing,* 283-84.

subsequent Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895 resulted in Chongqing being open to Japan as well.

After the opening of Chongqing as a port, with the influx of Western commercial capital, the old situation where commerce was dominated by immigrant merchants no longer exists. The following table provides us a glimpse of the impact of Western Capital on Chongqing.

Table 3: Imports and Exports in Chongqing, 1875-1895

Year	Value of Imports of Foreign Goods	Value of Exports of Indigenous Goods
1875	156000	N/A
1877	1157000	N/A
1879	2659000	240795
1881	4059000	N/A
1885	3612718	1056790
1890	4815932	2036911
1891	4360557	2027367
1895	5618317	1066124

From the table we can see that since the signing of the Chefoo Convention in 1876, a large number of foreign goods were introduced into Chongqing, and by 1890, the import of foreign goods in Chongqing increased nearly thirtyfold. The dumping of foreign goods has undoubtedly seriously challenged the economic influence of eight provincial guilds in Chongqing. What made things worse for the Eight Provincial Kezhang was that these imported foreign goods often overlapped with the commodities they managed. For instance, grass cloth, cotton, silk, and other clothing materials were predominately managed by the

eight provincial guilds, particularly merchants from Shaanxi and Hubei-Hunan.[115] By around 1898, approximately 67% of imported foreign goods were cotton goods, with cotton yarn being the most prominent among them.[116] This led to the rapid replacement of traditional Huguang local cloth by foreign yarn and cloth during this period.[117] In short, it is certain that the opening of Chongqing's port and the influx of foreign merchants severely squeezed the survival space of industries operated by the eight provincial guilds. This undoubtedly greatly weakened the Eight Provincial Guilds' influence in the city of Chongqing.

In addition to the aforementioned changes, the commercial sector in Chongqing during roughly the same period also underwent organizational transformation as a result of political reforms, specifically the late Qing reforms (*xinzheng* 新政). In the 29th year of the Guangxu Emperor's reign (1903), the Qing court established the Department of Business (*shangbu* 商部), overseeing various industries nationwide, including agriculture, animal husbandry, manufacturing, commerce, mining, and transportation.[118] The department established a series of regulations, collectively known as the *Department of Business Brief Regulations* (*shanghui jianming zhangcheng* 商会简明章程), which explicitly stipulated that Chongqing, like Shanghai, Tianjin, and other places, must establish a Chamber of Commerce (*zong shanghui* 总商会).[119] Consequently, the Chongqing Chamber of Commerce was established the following winter.[120] The Eight Provincial Chambers of Commerce (*basheng shangwu fenhui* 八省商务分会) were established simultaneously in Chongqing, with some members of the

[115] Liang, *Guilds and Local Power Networks,* 198.
[116] Wei Yingtao, ed., *Modern Urban History of Chongqing 近代重庆城市史* (Chengdu: Sichuan University Press, 1991), 123.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Liang, *Immigrants, the State and Local Power*, 317.
[119] Ibid, 318.
[120] Dou, *A Study of Hometown Organization,* 84.

eight provincial guilds joining this association.[121] At first glance, the establishment of these new institutions did not seem to threaten the dominant position of the provincial guilds in Chongqing's commerce; rather, it appears to have been a continuation of this monopoly.[122] However, some historical facts point in the opposite direction: the Eight Provincial Chambers of Commerce were short-lived, and several matters related to commerce that were previously managed by the Eight Provincial Guilds were transferred to the administration of the Chongqing Chamber of Commerce, such as the mediation of commercial disputes and the formulation of rules for various business associations.[123]

The above brief discussion reveals how the fate of the eight provincial guilds is closely intertwined with the changes in the city of Chongqing. The relationship between the two can be described by a Chinese proverb: "What is gained is also lost through the same means (*chengye Xiao He baiye Xiao He* 成也萧何，败也萧何)". Next, we will narrow our focus and redirect our attention to the guildhalls buildings themselves, to explore the various factors that had led to their destruction since the late Qing to the Republic of China era.

The first wave of large-scale destruction of guildhalls clearly occurred during the “Confiscating Temple Property to Set up Schools (*miaochan xingxue* 庙产兴学)" movement. In September 1901, the Qing government issued an edict announcing the establishment of modern-style schools across the country. A year later, it promulgated the "Authorized School Regulation 钦定学堂章程", Chapter 1, Section 8 of which stipulated that local authorities, when establishing schools, "may utilize local *gongsuo* 公所 and temples to save costs".[124]

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[121] Ibid.
[122] Liang, *Immigrants, the State and Local Power*, 318.
[123] Dou, *A Study of Hometown Organization*, 84.
[124] Xincheng Shu, ed., *Middle Volume of Materials on the History of Modern Chinese Education 中国近代教*

The Regulation quickly received a response form the local government in Sichuan. In the third issue of the Sichuan Official Newspaper in 1904, one can find a speech titled "On Encouraging the Establishment of Schools *劝办学堂说*." The speech says: "If we use the funds from local temples, deity associations...and community-run schools 义学 to establish modern-style schools... gathering small amounts sporadically will eventually accumulate into substantial funds."[125] Liang's research shows us that the eight provincial guilds were actively involved in the movement, although it is unclear to what extent this participation was motivated by the aim of "Establish Schools to Preserve Assets (*xingxue baochan* 兴学保产)".[126] However, there is no doubt that during this period, the eight provincial guilds' initiatives to establish new schools were not conducted voluntarily without external pressure as they had been in the past. Moreover, these newly established schools were no longer solely providing educational resources for students from the respective provinces.

In the thirty-fourth year of the Guangxu reign (1908), the Ba County government gathered information about local schools and compiled it into a table known as "The Brief Table of Urban and Rural Schools in Ba County" (巴县城乡学堂简明表), currently preserved in the Ba County Archive. Liang teased out the schools from the table that involved the utilization of provincial guilds' assets and compiled these schools along with their relevant information into the following table:

Table 4: Statistics on the schools established in urban and rural areas of Ba County utilizing guild assets[127]

育史资料中册 (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chuban she, 1981), 400.

[125] "On Encouraging the Establishment of Schools 劝办学堂说," *Sichuan Guanbao 四川官报,* no.3 (1904): 74. Cited in Liang Yong, "Understanding the Late Qing's 'Use Temple Property to Establish Schools' and the Reaction of Buddhist Groups through the Ba County Archive 从《巴县档案》看清末'庙产兴学'与佛教团体的反应," *Zongjiao xue yanjiu 宗教学研究*, no. 04 (2011): 94, https://doi.org/CNKI:SUN:ZJYJ.0.2011-04-018.

[126] Liang, *Guilds and Local Power Networks,* 207.

[127] The table shown here is just a part of it, for complete version, please see page 209-10 of Liang's book

Location	School Type	Sources of Funding	Founding Time
Yuwang Temple 禹王庙 in the fifth suo 所 of Gaoxie chang	Public Elementary School	The Wenchang Temple donated 100 thousand wen, various temple each donated 40 thousand wen, and various deity associations each donated 19 thousand wen.	The 32nd year of the Guangxu reign.
Wanshou Temple 万寿宫 in the thirteenth suo 所 of Mazong Chang	Public Elementary School	Guilds donated thirty taels of silver.	The 31st year of the Guangxu reign.
Wenchang Temple 文昌宫 in the twenty-fourth suo 所 of Lengshui Chang	Public Elementary School	The Yu Temple donated thirty-five taels of silver.	The 31st year of the Guangxu reign.
Tianshang Temple 天上宫 in the second suo 所	Public Elementary School	The Tianshang Palace, Yuhuang Temple, Wenchang Palace, Wanshou Palace, Sansheng Palace, and Wuxian Temple together contributed a total of ninety-five taels of silver	The 30th year of the Guangxu reign.
Guanyin Temple at the third suo 所	Public Elementary School	The Nanhua Temple, Guanyin Temple, Puzhu Temple, Baima Temple together contributed fourty-five taels of silver.	The 33rd year of the Guangxu reign.

The table above shows that all eight provincial guilds participated in the "Confiscating Temple Property to Set up Schools" movement. They not only provide site for these new-style primary schools but also contributed substantial finical support to the schools. According to

Liang's estimation, the elementary school operated by the guilds in the Ba County were more than those counted in "The Brief Table of Urban and Rural Schools in Ba County", because "at the time of the census, many schools were vaguely recorded as receiving funds from "deity associations 神会" or "guilds 会", potentially including assets from provincial guilds within them".[128] The table also provides a notable piece of information--all of these schools funded by the guilds were established around the 30th year of the Guangxu reign (1904), by which time Chongqing had already been officially opened as a treaty port for thirteen years. We can see that during this period, the situation faced by the eight provincial guilds can be described as "internal disturbance and foreign aggression" (*nei you wai huan* 内忧外患): on one hand, their existing assets were allocated by the Qing government to implement new policies, and on the other hand, they had to face commercial competition brought by foreign traders.

From the fall of the Qing government in 1911 until the declaration of Chongqing as the capital by the Nationalist government in 1937, for most of this period, external powers and military forces had little influence over the Sichuan region.[129] The region was controlled by different warlords, who fought among themselves, vying for territory. According to statistics, from the Xinhai Revolution until the end of the Battle between Liu Xiang 刘湘 and Liu Wenhui 刘文辉, the Sichuan region experienced a total of 400 wars.[130] These frequent battles undoubtedly compelled Sichuan warlords to exploit all possible resources within their reach,

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[128] Liang, *Guilds and Local Power Networks*, 210.
[129] Robert A. Kapp, *Szechwan and the Chinese Republic; Provincial Militarism and Central Power, 1911-1938 四川军阀与国民政府*, translated by Yin Zhonglai and Li Weijian (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chuban she, 1985), 3.
[130] Zhou, ed., *The General History of Chongqing,* 813.

while the establishment of the defense zone system 防区制 in 1918 made it possible for them to maximize resource extraction from the regions under their control.[131] As local social organizations in Chongqing with multiple assets, the eight provincial guilds naturally did not escape the fate of being exploited financially by warlords. During this period, in addition to continuing the trend from the Guangxu era of further exploiting the assets from the eight provincial guilds, the guildhalls were often forcibly occupied or appropriated by warlords' armies. For instance, in 1927, there were a conflict between Liu Xiang 刘湘, who was the de facto ruler of Chongqing from June 1926 to July 1935, and the guilds of Fujian and Shaanxi. The origins and development of this dispute were recorded in the monthly publication of the Chongqing Commercial Supervision Office 重庆商埠督办署, the municipal administrative authority of Chongqing at the time：

> Commander Jiang Yaojie of the 6th Division of the 21st Army of the National Revolutionary Army reported that one of the battalions of the 21st Army was currently stationed in a dilapidated location...Now, after investigation, it has been found that the Fujian Guildhall and the Sanyuan Temple (i.e. Shaanxi Guildhall) have spacious premises, (thus,) the army was prepared to station there. But these two guilds deliberately obstructed (the army's entry) by falsely claiming that their guildhalls were stacked with merchandise. Now seeking assistance from the Commercial Supervision Office and requesting the Office to order the leaders of these two guilds to comply with the army's wishes (to allow the army to be stationed there)...Upon investigation, the Office has found the situation reported by Commander Jiang to be true...Therefore, the leaders of the Fujian Guild Hall and the Sanyuan Temple are hereby ordered to comply with the military's wishes and allow the army to be stationed here.[132]

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[131] Zhang Jin, *Power, Conflict, and Transformation: A Study of Urban Modernization in Chongqing, 1926-1937 权力、冲突与变革: 1926-1937 年重庆城市现代化研究* (Chongqing: Chongqing chuban she, 2003), 74.

[132] "Decree: Ordering the administrative officer Wu Boren and the chief of security guard Pan Yinzhou to jointly command the Fujian Guildhall and Sanyuan Temple to vacate for the troops, without making excuses to prevaricate 谕: 谕本署总务处行政科员吴伯仁警卫队长潘银洲为会同往饬福建会馆及三元庙腾让驻兵地点毋得假冒搪塞文," *Chongqing shangbu yuekan 重庆商埠月刊*, no.7 (1927): 131-32.

The edict above reveals that the dispute between Liu's 21st Army and the two provincial guilds was adjudicated by the Chongqing Commercial Supervision Office. However, the "judge" in this incident, namely the Office, was not a fair intermediary. Instead, it was a community of interests with Liu's 21st army.

Chongqing Commercial Supervision Office was established in 1926 and served as the predecessor to the Chongqing Municipal Hall (1927), which was later changed to the Chongqing Municipal Government (1929). The entire process of this transition from the Supervision Office to Municipal Government, along with the municipal institutions themselves, were under the close control of Liu.[133] Since 1926, the municipal institutions in Chongqing have been led by Pan Wenhua 潘文华, a core member of Liu Xiang's military group. Pan stayed as the mayor of Chongqing until July 1935, during which period under his leadership, the city experienced a series of reconstruction and renovation projects, including constructing roads, establishing water supply plant, installing streetlights, and building parks.[134] The financial requirement for these massive, ambitious projects was undoubtedly high, as mentioned in Pan's own account. In the preface of his report "Chongqing Municipal Administration over Nine Year" (九年来重庆之市政), Pan summarized the difficulties encountered, with financial challenges listed among them. He writes:

> In summary, during these nine years, efforts were made both to advance urban modernization initiatives and to seek sources of funding. If we limit the expenditures within income (*liangru weichu* 量入为出), progress would be difficult to achieve; however, if multiple projects were advanced simultaneously, there was a concern about falling into a situation of "having pots but no fire to cook" (*xuanfu wuchui* 悬釜无炊)...Sometimes, we find ourselves in a situation where resources were insufficient

[133] Zhang, Power, *Conflict, and Transformation*, 148.
[134] See the volume titled "Chongqing Municipal Administration over Nine Year 九年来之重庆市政," compiled by Pan Wenhua.

(*qinghuang bujie* 青黄不接).[135]

During Pan's nine-year tenure, not only were the assets of the eight provincial guilds further exploited but, more significantly, the guilds even lost ownership rights to these assets. This process is outlined in Chapter Eight of the Fourth Compilation of Pan's report titled "The Eight Provincial Public Welfare Progressive Association 八省公益协进会":

> Following the central's directive to improve all public welfare and charity organizations within the city, the leaders of various provincial guilds were summoned to the government office to formulate a plan to consolidate all guild assets. On December 6th of the seventeenth year of the Republic of China, the Eight Provincial Public Welfare Progressive Association was established, and regulations were made...under the supervision of the Municipal Hall.[136]

After December 1928, the property of the provincial guilds, which had previously been allocated by the members, was transformed into public welfare expenditures for the entire city, to be distributed under the guidance of the Municipal Hall.[137] These expenditures include the construction of the Chongqing Municipal Hospital and relief shelters.[138] In the *Republican Edition of Ba County Gazetteer*, we find two other destinations for the assets of guilds: the construction of Chongqing University[139] and Chongqing Municipal Hospital[140]. The loss of property rights of the guilds was also reflected in the real estate lease contracts: after the establishment of the Eight Provincial Public Welfare Progressive Association, the

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[135] The Secretariat of the Chongqing Municipal Government, ed., *Chongqing Municipal Administration over Nine Year 九年来之重庆市政* (Chongqing: Chongqing Shizheng mishu chu, 1936), 10-11.
[136] Ibid, 85.
[137] Liang, *Guilds and Local Power Networks*, 280.
[138] The Secretariat of the Chongqing Municipal Government, ed., *Chongqing Municipal Administration*, 85.
[139] Xiang Chu, "Forest," in Volume 11 of *Ba County Gazetteer Republican Edition 民国巴县志*, ed. Chu Xiang (1939), 33.
[140] Xiang Chu, "Historical Sites," in Volume 3 of *Ba County Gazetteer Republican Edition 民国巴县志*, ed. Chu Xiang (1939), 17-18. The information on these two pages shows that during this period, the Wufu Temple 五福宫, which formerly belonged to the Eight Provincial Guilds, was demolished and rebuilt as a municipal hospital.

real estate lease contracts previously signed with the eight provincial *huiguan* were gradually replaced by contracts with the Chongqing Municipal Finance Bureau.[141]

What is significant about the Eight Provincial Public Welfare Progressive Association is that its establishment and demise were both closely related to the KMT's growing influence in Sichuan after the success of the Northern Expedition in 1928. This once again demonstrates the close association between politics and the issue of temple destruction. As the quote above from Pan's report shows, the association's establishment resulted from the Nationalist Government's directive to restructure public welfare and charity organizations. On the other hand, its demise occurred symbolically in 1943 when it lost a 15-year-long lawsuit against one of the newly emerging native-place associations--*tongxianghui* 同乡会--over the ownership of *huiguan* assets.[142] In the final verdict of this lawsuit, it was evident that the judicial decision of the Chongqing Municipal Government was heavily influenced by Liu Zhi 刘峙, a prominent military and political leader of the KMT and the military commander of Chongqing at that time, who clearly favored the *tongxianghui* over the Eight Provincial Public Welfare Progressive Association.[143] In short, the dissolution of the Public Welfare Progressive Association was closely associated with the changes in the local political landscape of Chongqing and the influx of a large number of Nanjing Nationalist Government civil and military officials after 1935: it lost the political support of the Liu Xiang clique.[144]

After the dissolution of the Public Welfare Progressive Association, the ownership of the

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[141] Liang, *Immigrants, the State and Local Power,* 142.
[142] For details about this lawsuit, please refer to pages 322 to 326 of Liang's *Immigrants, the State and Local Power.*
[143] Liang, *Immigrants, the State and Local Power*, 324-26.
[144] Ibid, 324.

guild assets managed under it became uncertain. As Liang observes, during the 1940s, disputes over these assets between *huiguan* and *tongxianghui* frequently occurred in Chongqing.[145] This point is reflected in Dou's account: in his conversation with the elders of the Guangdong *huiguan,* he found that they were very anxious about the attempt by the *tongxianghui* to take over their assets.[146] Although the outcome of these contested guild assets evidently varied in each case, it is reasonable to speculate that the general trend was the emerging *tongxianghui* gained the upper hand in these disputes, as they had closer ties to the Nationalist government, thus could often receive political support in these contests. Goodman's research reveals that state organs and state officials recognized *tongxianghui* in Shanghai in a multitude of ways, including licensing them, bestowing symbolic recognition, and attending their meetings.[147] This demonstrates that, compared to *huiguan,* the state's infiltration of the *tongxianghui* in Shanghai was undoubtedly comprehensive and profound. This also held true in Chongqing after the Nationalist Government took control of Sichuan in 1935: as Dou noted in his study that "Currently, in Chongqing, most of the honorary directors, directors, or chairpersons of various *tongxianghui* are either serving senior central government officials or individuals with significant political status."[148] In other words, after 1935, the state continued its trend of forcibly seizing the management rights of the Chongqing provincial *huiguan* over their assets by the state has continued. This trend of, to use Liang's term, is the trend of "nationalization of local public property"(地方公产国家化), and the *huiguan* assets were just one example among many of the nationalization of local public

[145] Ibid, 326.
[146] Dou, *A Study of Hometown Organization*, 39.
[147] Goodman, *Native Place*, 296.
[148] Dou, *A Study of Hometown Organization*, 65.

properties.[149]

In summary, over the approximately thirty-year period from 1900 to the 1930s, it can be said that the extent of destruction of the eight provincial guildhalls generally exhibited an upward trend. Through observation, we can find that this period was also the period when the eight provincial guilds, as a form of social organization, lost their relevance at the local level. Since the beginning of the 20th century, with the establishment of new state agencies such as the police department, many municipal functions previously overseen by the eight provincial guildhalls had been transferred to these new state agencies. This transferring process has undoubtedly been completed with the establishment of the Chongqing Municipal Government in 1929. We can see from the organizational chart of the municipal government depicted in Chapter Three of the First Compilation of Pan's report that Chongqing had by then established departments such as the Education Department, the Police Department, the Fire Department, the Health Department, the work overseen by which was previously managed by the Eight Provincial Guilds.[150] The destruction of temples, as a consequence, can be said to reflect the decline of the organizations behind them in local communities.

[149] Liang, *Guilds and Local Power Networks*, 284.
[150] The Secretariat of the Chongqing Municipal Government, ed., *Chongqing Municipal Administration*, 14-26.

4. Conclusion

This thesis explores the situation of temple destruction in Ba County in the early 20th century China. Based on the records of the *Ba County Gazetteer Republican Edition*, this study finds that the destroyed temples in the area were primarily temples of local cults. These destroyed temples can be further divided into two categories: one type, exemplified by the City God Temple, was open to the entire territorial community, while the other type, like the Yuwang Temple, functioned as immigrant provincial guildhalls 会馆, which were open only to members from their respective provinces. Despite their various differences, religion in both types of temples exhibits a diffused form structurally. In imperial China, the diffused religions constituted a relatively big portion of religious landscape, and held significant social importance as it participated in various organized aspects of community life. However, starting from the 20th century, with the newly emerged "religion/superstition" framework, the diffused form of religion which was once recognized by the state was labeled as "superstition" and experienced sever attacks. These attacks undoubtedly also struck the traditional community life as well.

The two chapters of the thesis separately examine the destruction of the two types of local cults temples in Ba County. The first one focuses on the wholesale prohibition of the rituals of territorial temples that occurred in 1928. This prohibition was a result of the Standards, a decree from the Nationalist government, which was a combination of two different frameworks of managing religion. This chapter subsequently takes a closer look at these two frameworks and discusses how the modern one, namely the "religion/superstition" framework, adopts Christianity as the normative model and fits into the modernization

project. At the end of this chapter, it assesses the impact of the prohibition of the rituals of territorial temples and argues that such prohibition was not only a blow to the temples themselves, but also undermined the social bonds among members of the local society. The second one begins with a discussion of the religious aspects within provincial guilds to demonstrate that religion played a prominent role in their life and organization, with guildhalls essentially being temples. The following three sections provide an outline regarding Chongqing provincial guilds' rise and fall. We can see that the destruction of provincial guildhalls was a gradual and comprehensive process, corresponding to the gradual decline of the significance of these *huiguan* in the local society.

As a regional study, this research does not pretend to generalize the case of Ba County to the rest of China. The findings of this work are indicative, but not conclusive, of the transformation of China's local religious landscape as it pursued secular modernization. The two episodes of the history of temple destruction delineate in this thesis in fact showcased the two forms temple destruction in early 20th century China: one being rapid, initiated by parties with modernist ideology; the other being a gradual process often involving various forms of erosion of temple property by different parties, not necessarily directly related to "anti-superstition" activities.

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