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CONTENTS

1  The Ideal Monastery: Daoxuan’s Description of the Central Indian Jetavana Vihāra
   *Puay-peng Ho*

19  Originating Instrumentality and the *Chen* Family
   *Scott Davis*

53  The Đôrbed
   Čeveng (C. Ž. Žamcarano)
   —translated by L. de Rachewiltz and J. R. Krueger

79  Colonialism and Ethnic Nationalism in the Political Thought of Yanaihara Tadao
   *Kevin M. Doak*

99  Populistic Themes in May Fourth Radical Thinking: a Reappraisal of the Intellectual Origins of Chinese Marxism
   *Edward X. Gu*

127  San Mao Goes Shopping: Travel and Consumption in a Post-Colonial World
    *Miriam Lang*
Cover calligraphy  Yan Zhenqing 颜真卿, Tang calligrapher and statesman

Cover picture  A reconstruction of the Hanyuandian in Tang Chang'an (from Chao Liyin, ed., Shaanxi gujianzhu (Xi'an: Shaanxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1992), p.98
Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667), a vinaya master, with a prolific translation and written output, is highly regarded as an important scholar-monk of the Tang dynasty. Among Daoxuan’s large corpus of written output is a short work written in the year he died, Zhong Tianzhu Sheweiguo Qihuansi tujing (Illustrated Scripture of Jetavana vihara of Śravastī in Central India), in which he describes in detail the layout of Jetavana vihara, located outside the city of Śravastī in present-day Sahet Mahet. This article aims to examine Daoxuan’s architectural delineation of Jetavana vihara found in the Illustrated Scripture and discuss the nature of this work: whether it is meant to be a factual account of the historical monastery or a fantastical construct based on Daoxuan’s sectarian convictions. Daoxuan’s sources for his account are a combination of Buddhist texts and travellers’ accounts, and must also include contemporary materials.

1 Lüshi 律師, one who is an expert in expounding the Buddhist scriptures on vinaya, monastic discipline or precepts, to be followed by all monks and nuns.
3 Vihāra, a hall for Buddhist meetings, later taken to refer to a monastery or temple.
4 中天竺舍衛國祇洹寺圖經 (hereafter referred to in the text as the Illustrated Scripture; and cited in notes as QHT), in Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku, Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō (The Tripitaka newly edited in the Taishō era), 100 vols (Tokyo: Taishō Issai-Kyō Kankō Kwai, 1924–33) (hereafter cited as ‘T’): 45, no.1899.
7 The historical monastery was visited by two great Chinese travellers, Faxian 法顯 and Xuanzang 玄奘. Visiting the site in the early fifth century, Faxian mentions that there were still some monks dwelling in the monastery, said to be located 1200 bu 步 (1.76 km) south of Śravasti city. See Zhang Xian, ed. and ann., Faxian zhuank (The life of Faxian) (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chuban­she, 1985), juan 3, pp.72–4. By the time Xuanzang visited the site, according to his report, the place was in ruins There remained only a few building foundations and the two pillars by the side of the east gate, recorded in 751/899 h.4–900 a.24. See also Sally Hovey Wriggins, Xuanzang (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1996), pp.94–5.
palatial and monastic architecture. With masterly literary skills, Daoxuan is able to create a coherent description of a monastic complex from these diverse sources while at the same time underscoring his primary concern: the provision of a model of the ideal monastery for the Chinese Buddhist church.

The Purpose of Daoxuan’s Writing

In the preface to the Illustrated Scripture, Daoxuan states:

In my opinion, Jetavana vihāra [was where] the Lord [Śākyamuni] dwelt for twenty-five years. Many great events took place in this monastery, such as the apparition of the Buddha for the teaching of all sentient beings, and one of the eight assemblies in seven locations. Sacred scriptures including the five volumes of vinaya-pitaka and the four āgama-sūtras were preached in this monastery. I therefore intend to search in the literature for descriptions of the monastery in order to compile a detailed account of it.9

Figure 1
Illustration of Jetavana monastery in Guanzhong chuangli jietan tujing (after T 45/812-13)
[For a selective key, see opposite:]

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8 Qichu bahuit七處八會, the holding of the eight assemblies presided over by the Buddha in seven locations for the preaching of the various sections of the *Avatamsaka sūtra*. The seven locations include three on earth and four in heaven; the eighth assembly is said to be held on earth in the Lecture Hall at Jetavana.

This intention to gain an understanding of Buddha’s activities on earth through an examination of the architecture of Jetavana vihāra where they took place seems to accord with the tradition of Chinese scholar-historians committed to the investigation of the monuments of past ages in order to gain a better understanding of historical writings, in which the imperial palace was the

1. Sanguo xueren sidi zhi yuan: Cloister of Students of the Four Noble Truths
2. Waidao yu chujia yuan: Cloister of Non-Buddhists Wishing to Enter the Priesthood
3. Wuchangyuan: Cloister of Impermanence
4. Yushiyuan: Cloister of Bath Rooms
5. Xixiang: Western Lane
6. Waimen: Outer Gate
7. Zhongmen: Central Gate
8. Qian Fodian: Front Buddha Hall
9. Qichongta: Seven-Storied Pagoda
10. Hou Fo shoufa dadian: Rear Great Hall where the Buddha Preaches the Dharma
11. Sanchonglou: Three-Storied Tower
12. Sanchongge: Three-Storied Pavilion
13. Fanghuaci: Square Lotus Pond
14. Jingtai: Scripture Platform
15. Zhongtai: Bell Platform
17. Fo wei biquni jie jietan: Ordination Platform erected for bhiksuni by the Buddha
18. Xi Foku: West Buddha Treasury
19. Fo wei biqu ji jie jie zhi tan: Ordination Platform erected for bhiksu by the Buddha
20. Dong Foku: East Buddha Treasury
21. Fojingxing yuan: Cloister where the Buddha Strolls
22. Foyifu yuan: Cloister of the Buddha’s Wardrobes
23. Dongxiang: Eastern Lane
24. Guoyuan: Orchard
25. Jingting: Well Pavilion
26. Liangchi: Lotus pool
27. Jingchu: Clean Kitchen
main arena. That Daoxuan should have been engaged in this activity is hardly surprising, as he was born into a family of high-ranking officials and was steeped in Confucian teaching from a very young age.

Daoxuan's illustrated description is presented as a thorough investigation into the historic monastery, yet it is apparent that at the same time it was his intention to put forward a model monastic plan by employing the famed Jetavana vihāra as a prototype. This can be clearly discerned in the preface where Daoxuan states that monastic architecture should follow a building code that specifies the sizes of buildings and the materials to be used in their construction, to ensure the maintenance of a proper hierarchy within the Buddhist establishment and to provide a dignified built environment so that all may be attracted to the faith. This desire to supply a standard monastic building code is also attested to in another of Daoxuan's works in which an engraving of Jetavana monastery is used to illustrate the setting of the ideal ordination platform (Figure 1). Daoxuan's work on Jetavana was apparently revered by later generations as providing a model for monastery building. The Japanese monk Sōkaku 宗覚 states in his foreword to the Illustrated Scripture written in 1681 that Daoxuan's work was invaluable as a model for the construction of monasteries and pagodas in Japan, as the art of monastery building had long been lost. Sōkaku went further and attributed the lack of Buddhist piety and devotion among the populace to incorrect monastic buildings. This may have been an exaggeration, but the importance this Japanese vinaya monk attached to the work of Daoxuan, a vinaya master, on Jetavana monastery indicates its paradigmatic nature.

Daoxuan's Sources

The literary sources cited by Daoxuan for his work are mainly Sigao寺皓 and Shengji ji 聖跡記 by the Sui master Lingyu 灵裕 (518–605), both of which are now lost. Additional sources that Daoxuan may have used include the great accounts of Indian monasteries by Faxian and Xuanzang, as he had never been to India himself. The architectural descriptions found in Daoxuan's Illustrated Scripture may also have been derived from palaces and monasteries in China itself besides the records of the Indian monasteries. As regards the literary records, it is evident that Daoxuan did not follow Lingyu's accounts fully, since they are only cited in the first section of the description which deals with the general layout of the monastery, and Daoxuan even stated that he had used Lingyu's work mainly for its comprehensiveness. As for the travellers' accounts, probably only Faxian's was useful, for by the time Xuanzang visited the site not much of the monastery was left standing. Daoxuan in fact concludes that much of Lingyu's Shengji ji is based on Faxian's work.
What was the main source for Daoxuan's architectural description? It is clear that to have relied merely on the sketchy account by Faxian of the Indian monastery would have been insufficient for composing this lengthy and detailed work. Daoxuan must have based his description on Chinese monastic complexes. Alexander Soper asserts that [Tao-hsüan's description of the Jetavana monastery portrayed] a type [of monastic plan] which seems to have been generally superseded by the seventh century in China proper. ... Tao-hsüan, writing in 667, was using a collection of earlier Chinese descriptions, of which one was a so-called “Record of Holy Sites” (Shengji ji), by the Sui dynasty monk Ling-yü. The architectural form given of the Jetavana in his final compilation must therefore have been that which was the standard and ideal of earlier centuries in China.20

It is beyond dispute that Lingyü, active in the geographic region of Yecheng and Xiangzhou (modern Anyang), would have witnessed the glory of some of the famous monasteries around Yecheng during the prosperous period of Buddhism patronised by emperor Gao Yang of the Northern Qi. Thus Shengji ji, which was meant to be a record of sites in the Indian ‘Holy Land’, may have contained elements of monastic design based primarily on large Chinese monasteries of the sixth century.

Soper’s remark may also have been derived from Daoxuan’s statement that a seven-storied pagoda was located between the south gate of the central cloister and the Great Buddha Hall (see Figure 7 below), similar to the layout of Luoyang Yongningsi of the Northern Wei. However, there is a conspicuous lack of detail in Daoxuan’s description of the pagoda compared with that of the other buildings in the cloister. Could the reason be, as Daoxuan claims, that he had forgotten the detail of the pagoda when he came to write down the narration given to him in a dream,21 or that the pagoda was included merely as an idealised feature in the perfect monastery—one with a spatial arrangement of which, by Daoxuan’s time, there were not many earthly examples? Clearly the latter would seem to be more plausible. Daoxuan was therefore only a proponent either of an ideal monastic plan, possibly based on sixth-century practices, or perhaps of a plan formulated to emphasise the spirituality of the cloister. This is underscored by his description of the pagoda as containing the ūparis, relics of Buddhas, such as hair or bones, which are revered by the Buddhist church.22

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21 QHTJ, T 45/887 a.5–6.
22 ūparis, relics of Buddhas, such as hair or bones, which are revered by the Buddhist church.
I use the terms monastery and vihāra interchangeably to refer to the entire Buddhist site at Śrāvasti. The monastery has many cloisters within its site, which in turn are made up of several individual buildings.

Calculation of area based upon a Tang foot (chi) is equivalent to 0.294 m. Wu Chenglou, Zhongguo duliang hengshi [History of Chinese measurements] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1957).

This is compared with the corresponding area of the Tang imperial palace at Chang' an, which was around 345 hectares.


The Architecture of Jetavana Vibhāra

The monastery is said to have covered a ground area of 80 qing, or about 432 hectares. However, in another sentence, Daoxuan states that the monastery had a frontage of about 10 li from east to west and more than 700 bu from north to south, giving an area of around 609 hectares. This discrepancy may be due to the use of two different sources, the 80 qing being derived from an earlier source, the Shijia pu by Sengyou of Southern Qi, and the latter set of figures probably taken from Lingyu’s Shengji ji. Daoxuan himself explains that there had been many rebuildings of the monastery since it was founded which accounts for the enormous variation in the measurements. This is indicative of the way Daoxuan attempts to accommodate many literary sources. The monastery is said to have contained 120 cloisters, of which 72 cloisters are fully described by Daoxuan in his Illustrated Scripture.

The Spatial Layout of the Monastery

In Daoxuan’s description, the monastery was said to consist of a central Buddha cloister surrounded by a great number of subsidiary cloisters all contained in a walled compound. There were six great avenues running in the north-south and east-west directions criss-crossing one another. The two main axes of the monastery were said to be the central north-south avenue that led straight into the central Buddha cloister and the central east-west avenue that ran just to the south of the Buddha cloister between the east and west central gates. On the outer walls there were said to be nine gates in all,
three each to the east, south and west. The Buddha cloister was said to be located at the centre of the monastery facing the great east-west avenue. There were also subsidiary cloisters surrounding the Buddha cloister on three sides (Figure 2).

Without ever visiting the site, how did Daoxuan arrive at such an elaborate architectural scheme for Jetavana vihāra? Its spatial organisation with intersecting avenues may have been modelled on the design of the capital city of the time, which was derived from the model contained in the *Zhouli*. Sui and Tang Chang'an was planned with avenues in a grid-iron pattern and with twelve gates in the city walls, three in each of the cardinal directions. The palatial city, which includes Taijigong, Yetinggong, and Donggong, known collectively as the *gongcheng*, bordered the northern wall of the city. To the immediate south of the palatial city was *huangcheng*, the imperial city in which were housed the imperial temples, the earth and grain altars and the offices of the government departments. Within the *huangcheng* were two main avenues, the *hengjie* that separated the *huangcheng* from the *gongcheng*, and the great south avenue, Chengtianmen jie, that ran along the central axis of the *huangcheng* connecting Chengtianmen to Zhuquemen and continuing south to the south gate of Chang'an city (Figure 3).

The layout of Jetavana monastery as described by Daoxuan may be compared to Chang'an: the central Buddha cloister corresponds to the palatial city and the southern cloisters the imperial city. There are other similarities too. Just as the central dominant axis of Chang'an was Chengtianmen jie, the central axis in Jetavana monastery as described by Daoxuan must have been its grand north-south avenue. A series of gates is said to have been aligned along the north-south avenue: the outer south gate, a *wutoumen*, a central south gate, then finally, after several magnificent bridges, the Duanmen of the Buddha cloister. This elaborate series of gates along the central axis may be compared to the series of gates along Chengtianmen jie in Chang'an's *huangcheng*, starting with the southernmost gate, the Zhuquemen, followed by the Chengtianmen of the imperial palace, the Jiademen, and finally the Taijimen, the gate of the cloister that contained the most important building of the palace, the Taijidian (Figure 4). The four gates along the central axis of Jetavana monastery correspond neatly with the four gates along the central axis of the imperial palace in Chang'an as described in the literary sources. It is thus clear that, whether consciously or unconsciously, Daoxuan was employing the spatial organisation of the Chang'an city in his description of the layout of Jetavana monastery. This is hardly surprising, as one was the seat of the earthly monarch, and the other that of the Universal Monarch.
The Nine Gates of the Monastery

According to Daoxuan, the number of the monastery’s gates is variously given in the literary sources: in Shengji ji, only an east and a north gate are mentioned; and in Sigao, it is said there were four gates in the cardinal directions with two main avenues intersecting at the centre of the monastery. The accounts of Faxian and Xuanzang mention only an east gate. The layout Daoxuan settled on is neither of these but a schema of nine gates in three directions (see Figure 2), closely modelled on Tang Chang’an. The outer southern central gate-tower is described as a three-storied building with five jian, or bays, constructed by Prince Jeta. There were said to be five bridges in front of the gate. The two gate-towers to either side of this central gate were also of three storeys but smaller in size with only three jian. Outside the gate-tower were said to be groves of flowering trees. The west gates are not described fully as it is said they were only used for the carriage of deceased monks to their burial-place outside the monastery.

The most extravagant of the nine gate-towers of the monastery described by Daoxuan was the great east gate, through which the main east-west avenue of the monastery was said to run. The gate was a twelve-storied structure with seventeen archways in the lower storey. For the east gate to have been the loftiest of all is contrary to the normal Chinese practice of making the central south gate of a city or a building complex the most important. The reason
Daoxian gave for this deviation is that this was the gate used by all pilgrims to enter the monastery as they dared not use the central south gate, the main entrance to the monastery reserved only for the Buddha. It is also possible that Daoxuan is following the account of Faxian, who states that Jetavana vihāra had only an east gate facing the southern highway that came from the city of Śrāvasti. According to Xuanzang’s account, the only relic left standing when he visited the site were the two pillars of the east gate. To accommodate the factual accounts by the travellers of the Indian monastery, Daoxuan may have felt obliged to enhance the importance of the east gate in his narration.

The Subsidiary Cloisters of the Monastery

As we have noted, apart from the large central Buddha cloister, the Illustrated Scripture describes only 71 subsidiary cloisters, of which 49 were said to surround the central Buddha cloister, while 20 were placed to the west of the central group. These cloisters may be divided into two groups according to their function, which is reflected in their names. The first group of 29 cloisters in the southern half of the monastery are associated mainly with Buddhist cultivation, for example: the Cloister of Students of the Four Noble Truths (Xueren sidizhi yuan 學人四諦之院), and the Cloister of Non-Buddhists Wishing to Enter the Priesthood (Waidao laichujia yuan 外道來出家院). The second group of nineteen cloisters, surrounding the central Buddha cloister, was said to be frequently used by the Buddha, and included, for example, the Cloister where the Buddha Strolls (Fojingxing yuan 佛經行院), and the Cloister of the Buddha’s Wardrobes (Foyifu yuan 佛衣服院). There is thus a clear demarcation of the cloisters in the monastery used for the cultivation of the faith, and those more intimately related to the Buddha’s daily life.

The format used by Daoxuan to describe the cloisters in the monastery is basically the same for all cloisters. Each one is simply described as an enclosed courtyard with an entrance that housed a hall or other structures. (Figure 5). Differences between the various cloisters are found in the direction of the gate-house, the buildings other than the main hall contained in the cloister, and various miraculous events said to have taken place in the cloister. Daoxuan specifically states that the 29 cloisters to the south of the great central avenue adopted this basic standard plan. This pattern may have been derived from an Indian spatial arrangement, but it is more likely a typical Chinese plan.
The Central Buddha Cloister of Jetavana Monastery

The central Buddha cloister located at the heart of Jetavana monastery was said to be the most important complex in the architectural organisation of the monastery, underscored by the grandiose gateways placed along its approach route.\(^{36}\) Within the central Buddha cloister, many buildings were located along the central axis. From the south, these were: the inner south gate, a large square lotus pool, the Great Buddha Pagoda, the Great Buddha Hall, a Second Great Hall, and a Storied Pavilion.\(^{37}\) Each of the four buildings was accompanied by two symmetrically-placed side buildings. Daoxuan also states that the triads of buildings appeared to increase in grandeur along the axis. At the four corners of the central cloister were located the east and west ordination platforms\(^ {38}\) and the east and west treasuries. The whole compound thus contained numerous buildings that varied greatly in form and size (Figure 7).

The sacred precinct was fully enclosed by a high wall, the only access being through the inner south gate. Within the cloister, the first building was a seven-storied pagoda constructed purely of 'strange stones'. Crowning the pagoda were dew plates and below it were deposited the saññas of Kaśyapa Buddha, the Buddha of the past. Many golden bells were said to have hung

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36 QHTJ, T 45/886 c.-890 c.
37 The sequence of buildings in the central cloister is described differently in Jietan tujing, which places the pagoda behind the front Buddha hall. Furthermore, behind the pagoda is said to be a hall where the Buddha preached, a three-storied tower, and lastly a three-storied pavilion. Thus the Jietan tujing's description has an additional three-storied tower. However, as QHTJ was written before Jietan tujing, (T45/812 c.1), it would seem that that the layout as given in QHTJ, which is a more complete account, is Daoxuan's intended schema.
38 The first ordination platform is said to have been built in the south-eastern corner of the outer cloister of Jetavana vihāra, as instructed by the Buddha.

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**Figure 7**

Schematic diagram of the central Buddha cloister based on Daoxuan's description (author's reconstruction)
DAOXUAN’S DESCRIPTION OF THE CENTRAL INDIAN JETAVANA VIHĀRA

from the eaves of the pagoda. To the left and right of the pagoda was a pair of bell platforms. The next group of buildings to the north, possibly the most important group in the monastery, was composed of the Great Buddha Hall and its accompanying towers. The hall was reputed to have been so lofty and broad that it surpassed all other buildings in the monastery. Buddha was said to have preached the dharma in this hall. However, no actual dimensions are given for this imposing building. The next group of buildings to the north was said to be even more majestic than the former group, contradicting his earlier assertions about the Great Buddha Hall. The function of this group of buildings, centred on the Second Great Hall, is not clearly stated. The eaves of the buildings are described as stacked one on top of another. ‘Flying corridors’ (feilang 飛廊) were used here to link the hall with the seven-jewelled towers on either side. The grandeur of this pair of five-storied towers must have surpassed that of the complementary towers flanking the Great Buddha Hall, which were a mere three storeys high.

The final group of buildings was centred on a three-storied pavilion (cbongge 重閣), with great jewelled towers (da baolou 大寶樓) on either side. The pavilion was said to be where the Tathagata (rulai 如來) dwelt for twenty-five years. The great jewelled towers, said to have been linked to the central pavilion by flying corridors, were erected by the Maha-Brahma Raja (Da Fanwang 大梵王) and Devakaja (Tian Di 天帝). This group of buildings was again said to have been even loftier than those to its south. The increasing

Figure 8
Detail of the illustration of Amitabha paradise from Dunhuang cave 217 showing a bell platform (after Xiao Mo, Dunhuang jianzhu yanjiu [Architectural research on Dunhuang grottoes] [Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1989], p.66). The bell platform is the third building from the left.

39 A bell platform can be seen in the illustration of the Amitāyurdhyāna sūtra, on the north wall of the early Tang cave 217 in the Dunhuang grottoes. In this depiction, the bell platform is seen to the left of the main hall (Figure 8).

40 Again, ‘flying corridors’ are frequently depicted in Dunhuang paintings, such as that found in the sūtra illustrations of the high Tang cave no.148, dated to 776 (Figure 9).
However, the sūtras that speak of the “storied pavilion and lecture hall”—Mahāsāsaka-vinaya, the Samyuktāgama, and the Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra—all state that the building was located in the Vaiśāli kingdom beside the Markaṭṭa river, rather than in Jetavana monastery.

The degree of grandeur of the halls along the central axis culminating in the storied-pavilion is a clear demonstration of the Chinese preference for spatial depth with an accompanying augmentation of majesty as one proceeds through the architectural complex. The magnificent ornamentation of the pavilion and its great height are said to have given the visitor the impression of being in heaven. Daoxuan also remarks that looking north from the courtyard of the central Buddha cloister, one would see a succession of buildings, each higher than the one before, in a sort of grand cascade that would have impressed all visitors. Thus, he claims, all these buildings must have been executed by divine hands to be used as immortal abodes. It is interesting that Daoxuan has shifted here from a description of the plan of the cloister to a description of its elevation, proclaiming that the layering of the halls and pavilions to be something not commonly seen in earthly architecture, and that the imagery of these buildings resembles the dwellings of the immortals. This additional information seems to assume the narrator’s presence in the courtyard of the central cloister and leaves the reader with no doubt that this view of the buildings towards the north was magnificent in the extreme.

The three-storied pavilion was said to be the residential chamber of the Buddha, containing many exquisitely ornamented, jewelled thrones. No image was housed in this pavilion, in marked contrast to the two front halls. The reason given by Daoxuan for this is that since it was used as a dwelling for the Buddha and other immortals, their images were not required. As this storied pavilion was so wonderful, the Buddha is said to have spent a great deal of his time there. The building is further identified by Daoxuan as the storied pavilion, mentioned so often in various sūtras, in which the Buddha is said to have dwelt. As we have seen, a pair of great bejewelled towers flanked the storied pavilion, which was also connected to the central pavilion by means of flying corridors (shown in Figure 7). These corridors, with carved handrails and ornate balusters, were supposedly used by heavenly beings to gain access to the storied pavilion. As in the description of the subsidiary cloisters, we see here a spatial pattern in Daoxuan’s description of the buildings in the central cloister which will be discussed in the following section.

Symbolism of the Jetavana Monastery Buildings

In more ways than one, Daoxuan indicates that he is concerned not just with the reconstruction of the monastery, which was an important stop in the Buddha’s earthly sojourn, but also with the setting up of a spatial schema in which the supremacy of the Buddha truth can be proclaimed. This is most strongly demonstrated in the architecture of the central Buddha cloister as described in the Illustrated Scripture. It not only occupied a spatially central
location, but was also the spiritual centre of the monastery where the Buddha is said to have dwelt and preached, and all elements in the monastery were organised around this centre. This is reinforced by the following devices Daoxuan used in his narration:

**Spatial Symbolism**

As has been demonstrated, the layout of the monastery is a clear indication that Daoxuan used the plan of Chang’an as a model. What is hard to demonstrate is whether or not he also modelled his description of Jetavana monastery on a comparably large Tang monastery or monasteries, as the physical evidence of such a structure is lacking.\(^4^3\) It is easier, however, to see the link between the plan of the central cloister and palace architecture. The progression of the building groups placed along the central axis of the central Buddha cloister—beginning in the south with a lotus pool, followed by a seven-storied pagoda, a Great Buddha Hall where the Buddha preached the *dharmā*, a Second Great Hall, and terminating with a storied pavilion where the Buddha resided—may have been modelled on the principle of *qianchao houqin* 前朝後寝 (front audience halls and rear retiring chambers) of imperial palaces.\(^4^4\) It is perceived as appropriate, not only in spatial terms but also symbolically, for the abode of the Universal Monarch to resemble the palace of the earthly monarch.

\(^4^3\) Large monasteries found in Tang literature include Dashengcisi 大聖慈寺 of Yizhou (modern Chengtu) which was said to contain 96 cloisters in late Tang, and Ximingsi in Chang’an, a large monastery of which Daoxuan was abbot for ten years, which consisted of ten cloisters. Archaeological evidence of Tang monasteries uncovered so far only shows single cloisters.

\(^4^4\) As pointed out by Yang Hongxun, the concept of *qianchao houqin* had already been employed in a Shang palace at Erlitou (Yang Hongxun, *Jianzhu kaogusue lunwen ji* [Collected essays on the archaeology of architecture] (Beijing: Wensu Chubanshe, 1987), pp.83–5). From Western Zhou times on, separate buildings were employed for the two functions. The evidence for this comes from the literary record of *Zhouli*. As He Yeju explains, the inner part of the palace served as dwelling space while the outer part was for holding audiences, with the *Lumen* 聲 [separating the two distinct functions (He Yeju, *Kaogongji yingguozhidu yanjiu* [Research on the system of capital-building in the Kaogongji] (Beijing: Zhongguo Jianzhu Gongye Chubanshe, 1985).
Taiji palace in Tang Chang’an was clearly laid out according to this classical principle of front audience halls and rear chambers (Figure 10). Audiences were conducted in three buildings of the imperial palace located along the central axis: the south gate-tower of the Chengtianmen, Taijidian, and further north, Liangyidian. The halls beyond this were used as residential chambers for the imperial family. The same spatial organisation can be observed in the central Buddha cloister of Jetavana monastery as described by Daoxuan. The succession of buildings south of the storied-pavilion may be compared with the audience halls of an imperial palace, while the storied-pavilion in which the Buddha dwelt would correspond to its residential chambers.

Another example of the use of imperial architectural symbolism can be seen in Daoxuan’s description of the Padmagarbha, or Lianhuazang, housed in the Great Buddha Hall as similar in appearance to a Chinese mingtang, or ‘hall of light’. This octagonal, seven-storied artifact said to have been placed on an enormous lotus was used in the ritual advocated in the Avatamsaka sutra. The mention of a mingtang in connection with this important artifact of the Buddhist monastery is intended not only to point up the use of a Chinese architectural form, but also to add a sense of regal symbolism and credence to the main hall which signified the authority of the

Figure 10
Plan of Taiji palace in Tang Chang’an (from Hiraoka Takeo, ed., Chōan to Rakuyō (Chizu) (Chang’an and Luoyang (Maps)), Tang Civilisation Reference Series (Kyoto: Jinbunkagaku Kenkyūjo, 1956), pl. 13)
Buddha, for the *mingtang* was an important symbol of imperial legitimacy and authority.

A further borrowing from imperial architecture may be seen in the triadic structures in the central cloister, described by Daoxuan as resembling blooming flowers complementing each other. The flanking towers were meant to serve as contrasting elements within the triad to the central imposing pavilion so that the group formed a harmoniously balanced entity—a conception central to Chinese aesthetics. While the triad of buildings with the storied pavilion at its centre was made up of a central high structure flanked by a pair of buildings of a lower height, the two triads to the south were the opposite, the central building being broader and lower than its flanking structures that were tall and slender. These triads of buildings may be compared to the Hanyuandian of Daming Palace 大明宫 in Tang Chang'an, constructed between 634 and 662 (Figure 11).

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48 As seen in paintings and other media, the Chinese aesthetic emphasises the centrality of the main object, assigning a supporting role to subsidiary objects. At the same time, a contrast between the elements was desired to show off the relationship between 'master' and 'subordinates'.

**Figure 11**
*A reconstruction of the Hanyuandian in Tang Chang'an* (from Chao Liyin, ed., Shaanxi gujianzhu [Ancient architecture of Shaanxi province] [Xi'an: Shaanxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1992], p. 98)
Numerology and Entry into the Faith

From the very beginning of the Illustrated Scripture, Daoxuan employs numeric symbolism when describing the number of storeys in gates. Thus, the three-storied great south gate is said to symbolise the three emptinesses, a state of mind necessary to achieve before entering the 'gate' of Buddhism. The monastery gate is thus taken as representing the gateway to the faith, and by inference, the inner sanctuary of the cloister the kernel of the Buddhist dharma. There were said to be five bridges leading to the gate-tower, which connoted the crossing over from the shores of a bitter sea into paradise. The great east gate of the monastery is described as having twelve storeys with seventeen gateways, a gigantic magnification of scale compared to the size of the central south gate with only five jian. This is meaningful in view of the quotation Daoxuan makes from Sigao which states that the majesty of this gate-tower symbolises the glorious entrance into the Buddhist faith. The stupendous scale of the building is justified precisely for its representation of the greatness of that faith. However, unlike the great south gate, in which the three storeys of the building signified an important aspect of the Buddhist faith, no symbolism was attached to the great east gate's numbers twelve or seventeen.

Having employed numeric symbolism in describing the entry point to the faith, Daoxuan does the same in denoting its centre. The seven storeys and seven doorways of the inner south gate of the central Buddha cloister represent, he says, "the Sapta-bodbyangani—the seven awakenings, meaning that the central cloister is intended exclusively for the Buddha, not to be shared with other monks." Here, numerology is again employed to endow an otherwise standard architectural element with religious meaning. It is clear that these devices were used to indicate that the monastery was the physical embodiment of the metaphysical truth for those who entered it.

Cultivation Method and Vinaya Practice

The architecture along the avenue leading from the great south gate to the central cloister, a path said to have been used constantly by the Buddha, is symbolic of the proper approach and cultivation leading to the attainment of nirvana. Daoxuan claims that when the visitor beholds from the south the layers of ornate and majestic gates repeated in succession along the central avenue, "his spirit will be awakened and [he will] find [his existence in the] defilement [of the world] alarming. If he cleanses his eyes and looks intently, he will be delivered from the snare of the five emotions." Thus, by passing through the majestic gates of the monastery, the devotee will obtain an impression of the awesome Buddhist truth. By walking along the central avenue, the devotee will undergo a transformation in which the influence of the world can be forsaken and supreme Buddhist truth, symbolised by the central Buddha cloister, embraced.
The names of the subsidiary cloisters placed to the south of the central cloister are also indicative of the cultivation method advocated by Daoxuan for the vinaya sect. The faithful would need to enquire of the dharma (wénfǎ 问法), and would be given an understanding of the way of the four noble truths (sidì 四諦), the twelve causal effects (shèr yǐnyuán 十二因緣), and the eight holy ways (bāshèngdào 八圣道). After this the faithful could proceed to listen to the dharma (tīngfǎ 听法), and meditate (chānsī 禪思). Thus the important steps of Buddhist cultivation are laid down comprehensively in Daoxuan's schema. Once the truth is realised, the bhikṣu or bhikṣunī can proceed to be ordained on platforms housed within the central Buddha cloister. The location of these platforms is again indicative of the Buddhist truth; that is, the devotees must reach the heart of the faith before they can be ordained. Ordination was an essential part of Daoxuan's vinaya teaching and the location of the platforms, being in the central cloister (see Figure 7), shows the importance he attached to the practice. Thus Daoxuan clearly intended to use the buildings, their location and names, to manifest the Buddhist cultivation needed to attain enlightenment. Vice versa, the architectural schema portrayed is intended by Daoxuan to inculcate in devotees the proper cultivation of vinaya.

**Conclusion**

It has been shown that although his description of the architecture of Jetavana monastery in the Illustrated Scripture may have been based on contemporary palatial and monastic architecture, Daoxuan's ultimate purpose was not the accurate portrayal of the Indian monastery, or even of Chinese monastic architecture, but the outlining of an architectural proposal that would ensure the proper conduct of the devotee—an ideal monastic plan. The fantastical elements in his description, particularly of the building ornamentation, serve to indicate that although the plan is heavily grounded in earthly architectural design, it is nevertheless an extravagant 'heavenly' model, which, in its very nature, parallels the purpose of the Buddha's earthly activities, as Daoxuan claims:

When the Buddha manifested a transformed [image on earth], it was done with a profound motive. Just as the form [of the transformed body] was different from the natural form, the dwelling [of the Buddha] was necessarily different from [those of] the profane world. Therefore a monastery and other living quarters were established [on earth] that were totally unlike ordinary human habitations, and images were created so strange as to stir the common heart to see [the Buddha truth]—so much so that when ordinary folk were made to hear of it, they would be shaken into knowing the words and the paths of the faith; when they were made to see, they would understand the form [of the monastery] and discern the extraordinary path [of deliverance].

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53 In 667, Daoxuan erected an ordination platform in Jingyesi 淨業寺 in Chang'an's suburb. In the same year, he wrote Guanzhong chuangle jietan tujing 關中查看更多天台圖經 to describe the origin of the ordination platform and its design. He also describes the design of a platform for the Chinese Buddhist church. Both the platform he erected and the literary work helped to establish the standard for platform design in China, and later in Japan.

54 QHTJ. T45/890 a.28-b.2.
Buddhist truth is thus clearly embodied in the ideal architectonic form described by Daoxuan. This is underscored by his statement that the written work resulted from a sudden awakening inspired by a hidden spirit. Further, a version of the illustrated scripture was said to exist in heaven. Although Daoxuan borrowed heavily from the Chinese conception of architecture in his delineation of the monastery, this borrowing was meant not so much to reflect the layout of contemporary monastery, but merely to serve as a tool for the manifestation of the dharma. There is in fact hardly any reference to the Indian form of the monastery, which further highlights the fact that Daoxuan was not concerned to make an accurate description but simply used the famed monastery to outline his ideal monastic form. In so doing, Daoxuan's Illustrated Scripture provides an illuminating example for the study of the iconology of architecture—in this case, the endowment of the architectural spatial conception with Buddhist symbolism.