Asia Pacific Science Press

*Asia Pacific Buddhist Studies*
*ISSN(O):3135-1107*
*ISSN(P):3135-1093*
*Vol. 1 No.3 (2026)*

# Protecting the Country and Saving the Nation: The Adjustment of Doctrines in Chinese Buddhist Circles during the Period of the All-out Anti-Japanese War and Its Contemporary Significance

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**Abstract:** The relationship between compassion and abdication from killing and resisting violent enemies is a moral issue that the Chinese Buddhist community must confront directly during the period of the All-out War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. This article examines the ideological process of the Buddhist community in transforming the tradition of protecting the country into a mobilization for national salvation from three aspects: classic basis, interpretation by eminent monks, and the debate on "killing bandits". The idea of protecting the country in classics such as the "Golden Light Sutra" provides a theoretical foundation. Tai Xu established the salvation of the nation through the three branches of almsgiving, Yin Guang explained the protection of the country by reciting the Buddha's name through cause and effect and collective karma, and Hong Yi connected the recitation of the Buddha's name with the character "enlightenment", completing the interpretation of The Times from different approaches. The debate on the meaning of "killing the thief" resolves the moral tension between abstaining from killing and defending against the enemy. This adjustment established the modern tradition of loving the country and the religion, promoted the worldly shift of humanistic Buddhism, and also provided intellectual historical resources for contemporary adherence to the Sinicization of religions in our country.

**Keywords:** Buddhism Thought of Protecting the Country; War of Resistance Against Japan; Patriotic Love for Religion; Buddhism on Earth; Religion China

**Published:** Oct 29, 2026

**DOI:** https://doi.org/10.62177/apbs.v1i3.1717

## 1. Introduction

The Chinese people's War of Resistance against Japan is a life-and-death battle against the invasion of foreign enemies since modern times.[1] Buddhism is based on compassion and gives priority to abstinence and killing. Monks and nuns abandon their homes and leave the world to those who are regarded by the world as outsiders. However, at a time when Japanese militarism launched a full-scale war of aggression against China and the national crisis was imminent, Buddhist disciples could not be moved or acted without action, and their actions must first establish their principles-- the religion of abstinence and the war against the enemy, the compassion of saving people and the decisiveness of killing the enemy, and how to resolve the tension in the meantime is a righteous examination question in front of the Buddhist circle. During the eight years of the

full-scale Anti-Japanese War, Chinese Buddhist circles answered not only with rescue, propaganda, Dharma Society and other actions, but also with classical interpretation and moral discrimination, and completed a profound moral adjustment. With regard to the transformation of modern Buddhist thought, academic studies mostly focus on the theoretical construction of human Buddhism and the Buddhist innovation movement[2-4].

## 2. The Classic Basis for Protecting the Country and Loving Religion

The tradition of protecting the country of Han Buddhism is deeply rooted in the Sutra. The Prajna Polomi Sutra, translated by Yao Qin and Morosh, is famous for protecting the country and has been regarded as the basis of the town ashram in successive dynasties, and its meaning has long been integrated into the jungle to pray. Among the sutras, the one who is the most prepared to protect the country is the Jin Guangming Sutra.[5] This Sutra "the King of four days" makes it clear that if the king can respectfully respect the three treasures, accept the Dharma, and normalize the world, then the four Heavenly Kings and the families of countless ghosts and gods will often come to protect their country, so that their homeland will be safe, when the wind and rain will be smooth, and foreign enemies will not invade. The sutra combines the abbot of the Dharma and the tranquillity of the land into one: to protect the Dharma, the country will be protected, and if the Dharma is correct, the disaster will rest by itself. Tongjing also contains the story of the elder son saving fish with water and saving his life.[7] The heart of rescue is pushed into folly with spirit, and the righteousness of protecting students and the meaning of protecting the country have the same source

Another expression of the idea of protecting the country is repaying one's debt of gratitude. Han Buddhism is known to report four Grace said, parents Grace, sentient beings Grace, the land grace, three Bao Grace, return to the land grace is reported to the state to nurture the grace. Peace and tranquility of the land, the spread of Buddhist Dharma; living the people, joy and industry, the practice of the Brahma side. Sutras so settled, then the defense of the country not only does not violate Buddhism, it is the Buddhist disciples of the business. Accordingly, the Mahayana classics of the world as shown by the will line, more rescue provides the basis on the heart. "The Bhaisajyaguru" features Tathāgata, a pharmacist, wishing to rid all living beings of illness, hunger and thirst, and to release them from punishment.[6]In "The Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva Pūrvapraṇidhāna Sūtra", the bodhisattva of earth-tibet, who has repeatedly made great wishes during the past tribulations, will make every effort to make the six paths of suffering for all sentient beings. When the oath of Hell is not empty, when it is moved to the time of national calamity, the enemy has not been expelled, the land has not been restored, and the wish of protecting the living has not been fulfilled by any reason. All this merciful spirit is in keeping with the act of saving the nation.

You can pay attention to, is the Buddhist sinicization process of the formation of the spirit of accession to the WTO. The sixth ancestor of the Zen sect, Huineng, said, "The Buddha's dharma in the world does not leave the world's consciousness. [7] Since the song and Ming dynasties, this spirit has fed on the Confucian tradition of Chinese Buddhism, forming an internal way of responding to the reality, and in modern times, the trend of human Buddhist thought has been carried forward by this tradition. In a word, the classical thoughts of protecting the country, repaying the debt and the spirit of joining the WTO constitute the three basic principles of Buddhism to deal with the National Calamity: protecting the country is a clear text of the classics, repaying the debt is an ethical duty, and joining the WTO is the custom of the imperial family. The three elements converge at the critical moment of national salvation, which provides the righteousness legitimacy for the practice of national salvation in the Buddhist circle.

## 3. The Interpretation of the Meaning and Principle at the Critical Moment of National Salvation

The scriptures are based on the interpretation of eminent monks, and each of them has a different path because of what they have learned. The interpretation of Taixu is most theoretical and systematic.[9]

He explored the six dimensions of Mahayana and placed national salvation in the method of almsgiving: during this national disaster, teaching the people to recognize the supremacy of the state and the nation is the greatest method; resisting aggression and driving out powerful bandits to achieve military victory is the first fearless method; concentrating all manpower and

material resources on the war of resistance is the most concise financial expenditure. The judgment of three kinds of actions is most precise and appropriate: dharma gives wisdom to people, fearlessly gives happiness to people, and wealth gives people resources for life. This is the path of Bodhisattva altruism. Now, to protect the country and protect the people, the three kinds of actions are fully performed at one time, so that the war of resistance not only does not violate the Buddha's precepts, but also is the actual development of Bodhisattva's actions. Taixu also advocated Buddhism on earth, advocating that the Buddha should be worshipped and completed in personality, and that man should become Buddha[8], and that the fate of Buddhism should be mixed with the rise and fall of the nation. In Taixu's ideological structure, salvation and revival are two sides of one thing. He thinks that the accumulated disadvantages of Buddhism in China are mainly death and death, and have nothing to do with real life; Buddhism in the world is designed to deal with these disadvantages, and when the autumn of national life and death, the solution to life problems lies first in salvation. Therefore, the cause of salvation does not hinder Buddhist innovation, but is the touchstone of the spirit of innovation. The academic circles argue that his innovation career is based on the three main points of tidying up the monk system, establishing Buddhism and building Buddhism in life, and the concern for salvation runs through each period.

The interpretation of Yin Guang starts with cause and effect and the Pure Land[10], which establishes the basis of the theory of mind and nature for protecting the country and reciting Buddhism. In the winter of 1936, the Shanghai Law Society for the Protection of National disasters, printed in order to invite customs clearance, announced every day and revealed its purpose on the first day: "the purpose of this meeting is to protect the country from disasters, but how can this goal be achieved? I think the fundamental way is to recite the Buddha."

Hong Yi's interpretation is the most concise, directly connecting the chanting of the Buddha's name with saving the country through the word "enlightenment". In his later years, the master lived in southern Fujian.[11] He wrote couplets and presented them to the foursts of assembly: "When reciting the Buddha's name, one must not forget to save the country; to save the country, one must recite the Buddha's name." He also wrote a postscript: "The Buddha is enlightenment." Only when one realizes the truth can one vow to lay down one's life, sacrifice everything, be courageous and diligent, and save the country. Therefore, to save the country, one must recite the Buddha's name. Although the postscript is short, its meaning is profound: The "Buddha" in reciting the Buddha's name is interpreted as "enlightenment", and thus reciting the Buddha's name means awakening the truth. Once one realizes the truth, one can vow to sacrifice one's life for the cause of saving the country - enlightenment is the essence, and saving the country is the function. When the essence and function are one, reciting the Buddha's name and saving the country are thus inseparable. From the perspective of its semantic structure, this postscript actually progresses in three layers: The first layer instructs the Buddha to be enlightened and establishes the cognitive status of reciting the Buddha's name; The second layer takes the realization of the truth as the basis for vowing to sacrifice one's life, and places the heart to die for the country in the truth rather than in blood and anger. The third layer boils down to saving the country and implementing the ultimate concern of the Pure Land faith as a responsibility in this world. In just a few dozen words, the small and large characters are interchanged, so meticulous. This interpretation directly transformed the Pure Land practice into an internal driving force for salvation, exerting a wide influence among the fourfold assembly. In his later years, he composed a verse about red chrysanthemums, using the deep red color of the chrysanthemums to symbolize his determination to sacrifice himself for the religion. The mutual understanding between the self and the object, the deeper his compassion and aspiration, fully demonstrated that his words were not false.

Great interpretation with a bright innovative color. When he was lecturing in Nanyue, he exhorted the monks and nuns: when the evil spirits were rampant and the lives were ruined, the Buddhists should send out a lion's roar to suppress evil spirits and eliminate evil spirits, so as to uphold justice. The lion roars a language, takes the Buddhist scriptures to perform the law dauntless meaning, will directly focus on the Buddha's virtue in the anti-aggression justification. Great Praise presided over the wartime training and propaganda, that is, the practice of this interpretation.[1] He later advocated the construction of New Buddhism, with the two major ends of production and scholarship[12], in order to turn Buddhism from the repentant jungle into a force serving the society, and the practice of National Salvation was the initial preview of this idea. The interpretation of the masters, either from the sixth degree, or from cause and effect, or from the conscious body, or from Weed, although the

path is different, the goal is the same: it is to prove that salvation is not a violation of the Dharma, but a development of the Dharma.

## 4. The Distinction between “Killing Thieves” and “Compassion”

After all, the practice of saving the nation cannot avoid all weapons. There were young monks armed with guns going to the enemy and rescue teams entering and leaving the frontline. As a result, the principles of not killing and defending against the enemy became tense and had to be addressed head-on in the end. This analysis constitutes the most profound section of the Buddhist doctrines during the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, and its resolution also unfolds in three layers.

The first heavy discrimination is in the original meaning of the word “kill thief.” Arhat is the fruit of fame, and its name has three meanings. The first one is “killing thieves”: those who kill are thieves of trouble_see the two puzzles that rob the dharmakaya and wisdom of living beings, so they are named thieves; those who cut off troubles are called thieves, and they are also named Yinggong and Wusheng[13]. To understand this, we know that the Buddhist scripture “killing thieves” originally means surrendering to self-worry, which has nothing to do with killing people. In the name of Arhat, killing thieves is juxtaposed with offering and non-living. Only those who kill troubles can be offered to heaven. The arrangement of this name itself shows that surrender and sorrow are one. The righteousness of resisting the enemy lies in eliminating the violence of life to protect all living beings, and surrendering troubles and thieves belongs to the same principle of protecting life.

The second most important part of discrimination is the difference between compassion and demons. Compassion is not indulgence. In the Buddhist scriptures, the Devil King destroys the right Dharma, and the Buddha rebukes it and breaks it, without being borrowed; the Jialan Dharma of all dynasties shows the appearance of mighty power, so it subdues violence and guards the ashram. Compassion is righteous to uproot bitterness for pleasure. If you sit by and watch the violent enemy slaughter creatures and keep silent, it is a name of ignorance and mercy, not true compassion; to stop atrocities is exactly what is necessary to protect the heart of life. The Diamond Sutra teaches Bodhisattva to walk six degrees away from the four phases[14]: “selfless, human, sentient, and longevous”

Discrimination of the third heavy, in the practice of verification. Since the righteousness is clear, the behavior of the monks and young people everywhere is no doubt[1]: or the formation of rescue teams in and out of the line of fire, or to the streets for anti-japanese war propaganda, North China monks and have to fight. It is the spirit of the bodhisattva that he upholds in his heart, not in his own purity, but in the safety of all beings. Of course, this argument is made in response to the extraordinary events of the aggressors, the so-called thieves, specifically refers to aggression and self-vexation in terms of violence, does not mean that the dharma allows violence to be replaced by violence; resist violence to stop violence, and ultimately to protect students. The significance of this discrimination lies in the connection between the Buddhist system of precepts and the modern national ethics of national salvation.

## 5. The Contemporary Echo of the Adjustment Of Justice and Reason

The historical results of this adjustment can be summarized in three aspects.[15] For eight years, the tradition of patriotism and religion has been shaped by the natural identification with the customs and emotions of Sangha, the promotion of patriotism to the theme of Buddhist practice should be the meaning, so the patriotic patriotic religion from the traditional condensed into a conscious position for the new Chinese Buddhist circles to inherit and carry forward. After 1949, the Chinese Buddhist Association held high the flag of patriotism and patriotism[15], and the Buddhist circle walked with the whole nation, which is the continuation of this tradition under the new historical conditions. The transformation of Buddhism on Earth is its main body: the conception of Taixu Buddhism on Earth has been widely tested in practice during the war, and the theory and practice tend to be unified from suspension, which lays the foundation for the development of Buddhism on Earth. The deepening of the sinicization of Buddhism is its destination: the Buddhist circle puts the national identity before the religious identity, and actively integrates the religious identity into the national destiny, this shift prepared the psychological and socialist mode of production conditionsu for the adaptation of Buddhism to the new society and the New World.

This ideological journey also offers methodological enlightenment for today’s Buddhist community in handling the relationship between faith and The Times. Firstly, responding to The Times must originate from the classics: All teachers

quote from the classics to ensure that the actions of The Times have a legitimate position in terms of doctrine, rather than being a momentary emotional impulse. Secondly, to innovate the principles and doctrines, one must be accompanied by a sense of responsibility: without the determination to sacrifice oneself to protect the Dharma, all interpretations are just empty talk. Thirdly, the direction of Sinicization has been consistent: from the understanding of the church to humanistic Buddhism, and then to contemporary practice, every self-renewal of Buddhism in China is an active response to the issues of The Times. Looking back eighty years later, the contemporary significance of this ideological adjustment remains clear-headed. It reveals that religion shares the destiny of the nation and the people, which is the fundamental fact of the two-thousand-year inheritance of Han Buddhism. The fundamental experience for the continuous development of Buddhism in China is that religion ADAPTS to and serves society.[15] In the new era, adhering to the Sinicization of religions in our country and guiding religions to adapt to the socialist society, it is precisely necessary to draw resources from this ideological history tradition: the righteousness of protecting the country can be transformed into the self-awareness of loving the country and the religion, the religion of repaying kindness can be transformed into the driving force for serving the society, and the spirit of engaging in the world can be transformed into the practice of benefiting the people. The historical ability of the Buddhist community to respond to the issues of The Times with its own ideological resources is precisely the most profound proof of its Sinicized character.

## 6. Conclusion

From the classic teachings of protecting the country and repaying kindness, to the eminent monks' theory of the Three Almsgiving and the theory of Enlightenment, and then to the unexpected enlightenment of the "killing the thief" debate, the adjustment of Buddhist doctrines during the full-scale War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression was interlinked and ultimately unified: placing salvation within the Dharma and pouring compassion into salvation. This is an interpretation of The Times that is not found in the scriptures but is in line with the essence of the scriptures. It is a vivid unfolding of the Sinicization of Buddhism at a time of national peril. The teachings of the sages of the past should be remembered by future generations: As long as the land remains, the Dharma will remain; as long as all beings are at peace, the number of Buddhas will increase day by day. Buddhist disciples in the new era should carry forward this tradition, adhere to the direction of Sinicization of religions in our country, consolidate the awareness of the Chinese nation as a community, and ensure that the torch of loving the country and the religion is passed down from generation to generation.

## Funding

No

## Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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