

北京古刹名寺

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ANCIENT TEMPLES IN BEIJING



中国世界语出版社

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北京古刹名寺

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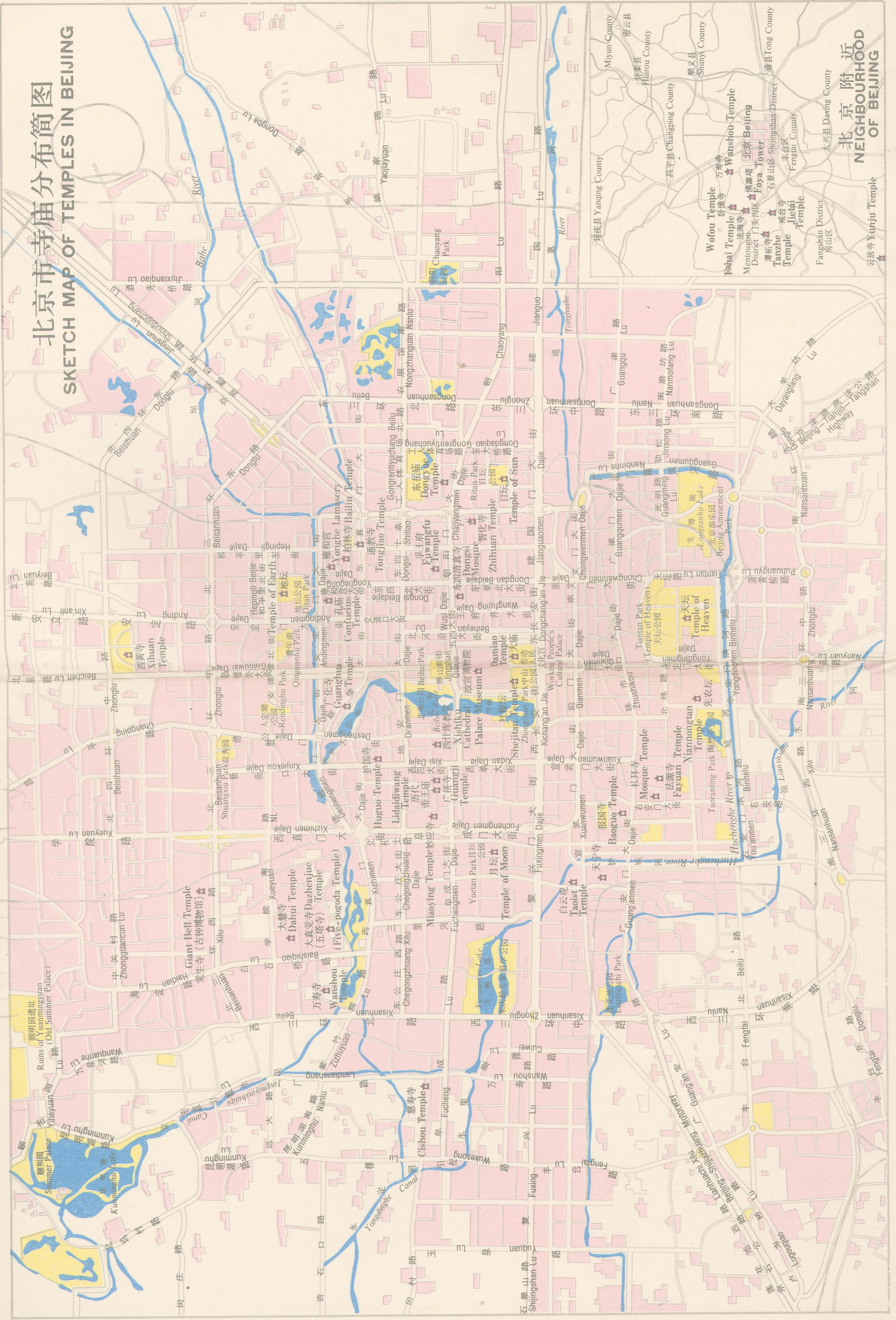
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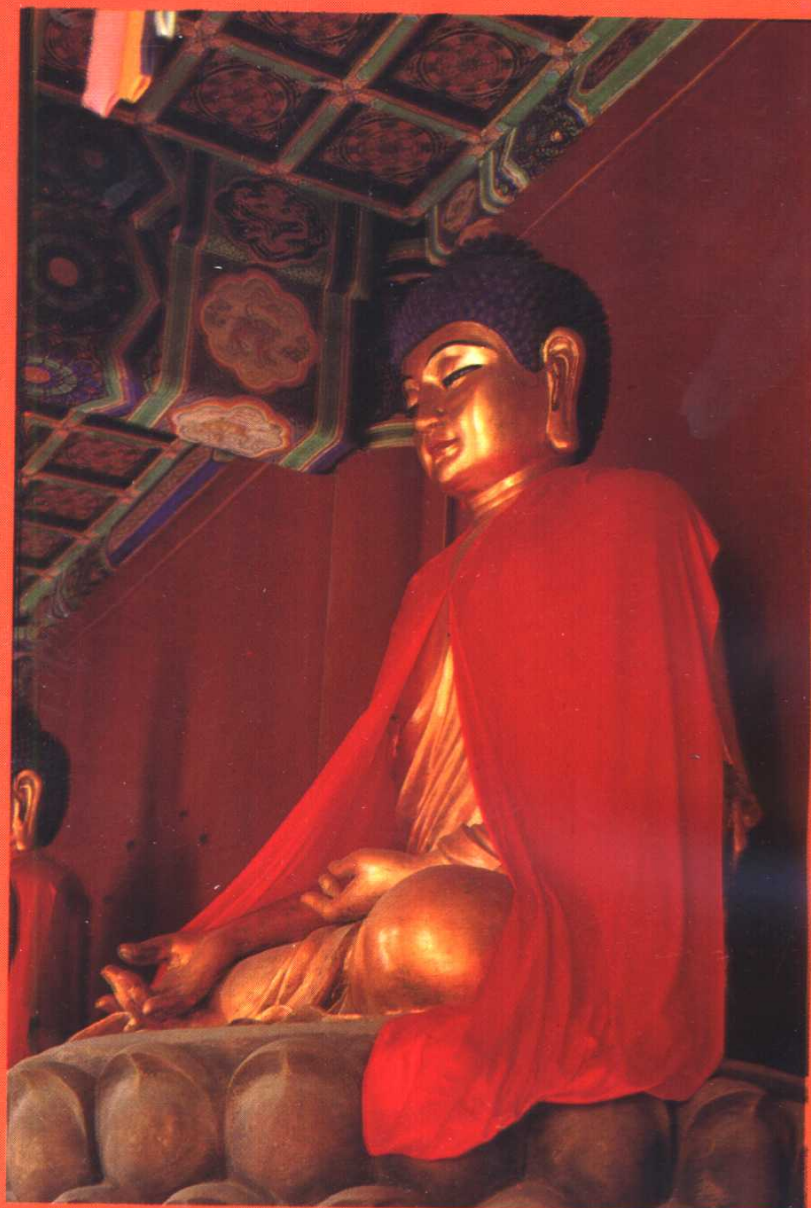
北京市寺庙分布简图

SKETCH MAP OF TEMPLES IN BEIJING



北京附近
NEIGHBOURHOOD
OF BEIJING

北京古刹名寺 
ANCIENT TEMPLES IN BEIJING



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北京寺庙古今谈

“先有潭柘，后有幽州”

北京西郊潭柘山中，深藏着一座佛寺，它背倚翠峰，面对平野，东、西、北三面环列着九座峰峦，古人形象地称之为“九龙戏珠”、“碧莲花里梵王宫”。这座选址绝妙的寺院就是建于晋代（公元265—420年）的潭柘寺（初建时名嘉福寺），它是北京地区最早出现的寺庙。一句广为流传的民谚说“先有潭柘，后有幽州”，正道出了这座寺庙建造年代的悠远。

北京地区出现城邑约在公元前十一世纪，当时名蓟，是一方国都城。潭柘寺创建时，蓟城是统一的西晋王朝（公元265—316年）的辖地幽州的治所、北方的军事重镇。公元七世纪初，唐王朝（公元618—907年）兴建，新王朝为图兴求治，大力整修、加固蓟城城垣，在城内划分街坊，营造官署。此时蓟城虽然仍为幽州治所，但是，幽州城却成了它的别称，其位置在今北京市区西南部，有的街道方位至今未变。

潭柘寺创建之时，正值佛教在蓟地开始流行，这时距佛教传入中国和中国第一座佛寺的建立已经两个多世纪了。

佛教于公元前六至五世纪时创立于印度，并在本土得以传播、发展，至公元前三世纪开始向境外传播。公元前一世纪佛教随着骆驼商队经由古丝绸之路从印度传至中亚细亚和中国的新疆，而后进入中国内地。传说佛教在中国流传得力于汉明帝刘庄（公元58—75年在位），他受了梦的启示，派遣十几

名大臣出使天竺，访求佛法，使臣们行至大月氏（今阿富汗、中亚一带）时，遇到天竺高僧摄摩腾、竺法蓝，并得到佛像和佛经，遂邀同二高僧，用白马驮负佛像、佛经，于公元67年共返汉都洛阳。

二位高僧抵达洛阳后，刘庄在洛阳东郊仿照天竺佛寺的样式修建了一座僧院，供他们居住。为了纪念背负经像的白马，取名为白马寺。

“寺”本是中国古代官署名称，其建筑之豪华，门禁之森严，地位之尊崇仅次于帝王居住的宫殿。供奉佛像和安置天竺高僧的处所被视为与官署等同的神圣之地，所以命名为“寺”，这便是中国有佛寺之始。

隋窟唐寺

西晋王朝的统一局面只维持了半个世纪，于公元316年被北方匈奴贵族集团所灭。第二年晋朝皇族司马睿在建康（今江苏南京）称帝，建立了偏安江南的东晋王朝（公元317—420年）。从此，中国陷入无休止的战乱之中。北方各族纷争，呈现分裂割据状态；南方朝代更迭频繁，皇族间互相杀戮。当时，下层百姓自是苦不堪言，就连皇家贵族也感到生死无常，荣辱瞬变。佛教宣扬“因果报应”、“生死轮回”，劝导人们安生知命，寄希望于来生，因而召来了众多信徒，广泛流传开来，随之建寺凿窟之风大兴。

西晋之后，蓟城所处的北地，虽然政权

屡易其主，但大多数当政者对于佛教都采取扶持的态度。至北魏（公元386—534年）末，北方寺院多达三万余。至今在北京海淀温泉附近，尚留存一尊北魏时雕刻的石佛像。像高2.2米，是北京现存最古老的石雕佛像。今广安门外的天宁寺也是北魏时创建的，当时名光林寺。

隋（公元581—618年）、唐时期，中国南北归于一统，两朝帝王为利于王朝的统一和巩固，大力扶持、提倡佛教，并加强管理，使佛教发展达到极盛。那时北京地区分别称涿郡和幽州，均为幽州治所。这一时期兴建或重建于此的寺、塔主要有云居寺、弘业寺（即北魏时的光林寺）、悯忠寺（今法源寺），以及道教寺院天长观（今白云观）等。

云居寺位于今北京西南石经山西麓，隋大业年间（公元605—617年）僧人静琬（公元？—639年）在石经山腰开凿石窟，埋藏所刻石板经，后又在山下建寺。静琬此举缘起于隋以前的两次废佛事件。公元446年和574年，北魏太武帝和北周（公元557—581年）武帝诏令僧尼还俗，“废法灭佛”，佛教僧众称之为“法难”。静琬的师父慧思大师经历了北周武帝灭佛之劫以后，决意将经文镌刻在石板上，封藏于岩壑之中保存。而在此以前经文都抄写在绢帛和皮纸上，极易被毁。静琬为了却师父的遗愿，自七世纪初，至公元639年逝世，三十余年刻经不止，将所刻的石经“藏诸室内，每一室满，即以石塞门，熔铁锢之”。静琬去世后，他的弟子们相继主持镌刻。此项工程经隋、唐、辽、金、元、明，延续至十七世纪，共刻经一千余部，现存完好的刻石14278块，成为国之重宝。

今宣武门外的法源寺初建于唐代，是北京的名刹之一。唐代初期，太宗李世民（公

元627—649年在位）进兵辽东，并亲自前往督战，结果久战不胜，伤亡惨重，回师途经幽州时，他下令在城中建佛寺悼念阵亡将士，以安抚军心。寺至696年建成，赐名悯忠寺。据史籍记载，唐代寺内曾有一座悯忠阁，高耸巍峨，民谚说“悯忠寺阁，去天一握”。由于年代久远，悯忠阁连同初建时的殿宇均已毁圮，当年的旧貌已不可知。但是，从文献记载中，以及国内一些得以幸存的唐寺殿宇，可以得知唐时佛寺的布局、规模，乃至建筑风格，较之佛教初传入时所建的寺院有了很大的变化。

中国早期佛寺的平面布局仿印度式样，塔建于寺的中心，内藏舍利，供信徒礼拜，四周配置僧房、佛殿。建于一世纪中叶的第一座佛寺白马寺采用的就是这种格局。寺的主体为一大型方木塔，居寺中心，四周围以殿廊僧房。后来渐渐融入中国宫殿、官署常采用的以中轴线布署的院落式格局。一般前有寺门，门内建塔，塔后建佛殿，内供佛像。随着时间推移，供奉佛像和僧侣诵经的殿堂升至与塔并重的地位，二者在寺中的方位也由塔在殿前而变为塔殿并列。时至七世纪的唐代，僧人道宣（公元596—667年）根据中国传统建筑布局的特点制《戒坛图经》，将佛寺的布局改为以佛殿为中心，塔的位置退至寺旁、寺后，或另建塔院。

唐代以后，中国建筑讲求迂回曲折、步移景换和有林泉之奇、山居之妙的造景艺术。佛寺建筑也受此影响，在保持对称统一格局的同时，另在寺内营建有园林之胜的景点。

印度传入的佛寺就这样被逐步中国化了。

“僧居之寺，冠于北方”

十世纪初，崛起于内蒙古高原的契丹族建立起辽朝，势力扩至华北北部。公元938

年，幽州城成为辽朝的五座京城之一，称作南京，又名燕京。

辽代的当权者为使人心归附，大力提倡佛教，优礼僧徒，在辖地建寺造塔，汇刻佛经。笃信佛教的王室权贵、豪门富户广施金钱、庄田给寺院。此时燕京城内外庙宇相望，据记载仅城内规模较大的庙宇就有36座。那时城内外供帝王居住游赏的宫殿苑囿尚寥寥无几，这些建得雄伟弘丽的寺庙成了主要名胜。故而《辽志》说燕京的“僧居之寺，冠于北方”。可惜当时的寺庙，今日已无从窥见，仅能透过残留的古塔断碑，追思昔日的繁盛。

位于西郊赐台山间的大觉寺，其前身为辽代创建的清水院，至今该寺仍保留初建时背西面东的方位，这是契丹族朝日习俗的遗痕。

北京建清真寺起于辽代。公元996年，一位从阿拉伯来中国传教的法师之子，在回族聚集的牛街建立一座清真寺，这便是至今尚存的北京规模最大的牛街礼拜寺。

相传辽代时曾在燕京城的五方各建一塔，塔分五色，青、黑等四塔后来毁于兵燹，唯白塔独存，即今日阜成门内妙应寺白塔的前身。建于辽代留存至今的寺塔尚有今广安门外的天宁寺塔、云居寺塔等。

塔是重要的宗教建筑之一，也是从印度随佛教传入中国的，印度的塔有两种，一种是埋藏佛和高僧的舍利、骨齿遗骸的坟墓式塔，称窣堵波。早期的窣堵波为覆钵式大土冢，上有伞盖，底部有台基和围栏，前面设有供上下的阶梯。妙应寺白塔的形制即与此一脉相承。印度的另一种佛塔是建在石窟内的，称为支提，传入中国后发展成立于石窟中央的塔柱。中国的佛塔是由覆钵式窣堵波与中国传统的建筑形式融合、演变而成的。其质料有木、石、砖、金、银、铜、铁、

陶、琉璃等，其平面形状分为四方形、圆形和六角、八角、十二角形等，其结构形式有楼阁式、亭阁式、密檐式、覆钵式、金刚宝座式，以及花塔、过街塔等。它们的种类和功能远远超过了印度的佛塔。

继辽之后，女真族所建的金朝（公元1115—1234年）迁都燕京，将其名改为中都。一批供皇室贵族居住游赏的宫室别苑在中都城內应时而建，修建寺塔之风盛于前代，都城之内，佛寺数以百计。著名的有弥陀寺、护圣寺、香山寺、圣安寺、隆恩寺、功德寺、香林禅寺、雀儿庵等。道观有玉虚、天长、崇福、修真等。

帝都名刹

公元1271年，蒙古族首领忽必烈（公元1260—1294年在位）建立了元帝国，并耗时二十年在金中都的东北郊筑建新城，作为国都，称之为大都。又于1279年和1234年分别灭南宋（公元1127—1279年）和金，中国重归一统，从此北京取代了长安（今陕西西安）、洛阳、汴梁（今河南开封）等古都的地位，成为统一的中央王朝的都城，并延至明（公元1368—1644年）、清（公元1644—1911年），时达640年。

元、明、清三代时的北京城内外，宝刹林立，香火旺盛。据记载明代北京共有寺院千余所。清代绘制的《乾隆京城全图》上标有胡同约1400条，而寺庙竟达1300余座，几乎每条胡同里都有寺庙。这一时期，许多寺庙经过多次扩建，成为闻名于世的巨刹。如元代耗巨资扩建唐兜率寺，冶铜25吨，铸成长5米余的卧佛，供于寺殿中，以致寺以佛闻名，被称为卧佛寺。此时寺庙建筑中出现了具有艺术水平很高的雕塑和绘画。今北京石景山区法海寺内的壁画、西直门外大

慧寺内的彩塑、五塔寺金刚宝座塔基座上的雕刻、觉生寺内铸造精美的巨钟，都是明代的杰作。清代在碧云寺内建造的金刚宝座塔和五百罗汉，成为该寺最精湛的建筑和雕塑。

元代尊佛崇道，朝廷明令蠲免道院、出家人的赋税，因此，道教徒甚众，道教盛极一时。

道教是产生于中国的宗教，创建于公元二世纪，奉春秋时期（公元前 770—前 476 年）思想家老子为教主，以其著作中有关“道”的内容作为根本信仰和制订教理、教义的依据。道教创立后在历史上曾几度盛行，元代极盛，明代继续流行，至清代渐渐衰微。

元时，藏传佛教（俗称喇嘛教）也得到皇帝的尊崇。

一时间中国境内各种宗教及其各教派同时流行，延续至明、清未变。因此，元、明、清三代，北京地区佛、道、藏传佛教的寺庙和伊斯兰教的清真寺并存，元时大都城内还开始建起了天主教堂。

元大都的道教观院都建得气势不凡。始建于八世纪的天长观，于公元 1227 年奉诏改名长春宫，后又重加修建，历时 20 年方告竣，工程之浩大，由此可见。大都齐化门外的东岳仁圣宫兴建于 1322 年，是道教正一派在华北地区的第一大观。

明代在北京创建或重建了 4 座著名的清真寺，即牛街礼拜寺、东四清真寺、安定门清真寺和锦什坊清真寺。

清代修建的几座喇嘛庙堪称京都名刹。其中最为壮观的首推雍和宫。它原是清世宗

雍正（公元 1723—1735 年在位）称帝前的府邸，建筑形制如同帝宫，改建成寺院自然不同一般。安定门外的东、西黄寺和西郊香山的宗镜大昭之庙也建于清代，寺内建筑融合了汉、藏和印度的建筑特色，风格特异。

中国佛教至近代急剧衰落，加之战火连绵和年久失修，北京寺庙有减无增。尽管如此，所存寺庙的数量仍居中国其他城市之首。人们无论漫步于市区，或出游京郊四野，都可见到古塔梵宇的踪迹：或是与现代化楼群并存的寺宇，或是耸立于立交桥畔的古塔，或是掩映在山林中的高阁红墙……

北京及其四郊宛如一座巨大的古寺博物馆，集中了 1500 多年间历朝所建的寺庙。近十几年来，有关部门在一些寺内辟建富有特色的陈列馆，如大钟寺古钟博物馆、正觉寺碑刻陈列馆、云居寺经版陈列馆、万寿寺艺术博物馆，以及正在筹建的报国寺商业博物馆，等等。它们成了北京这座古寺博物馆中的“馆中之馆”。

现存的北京寺庙同故宫、长城、十三陵等文化遗存一样，是中华民族璀璨文化遗产的一部分，它们的价值和功能早已超越了建造者们的本意。如今，这些寺庙虽然依旧是信仰者们从事宗教活动的场所，但是研究者们亦可从这里寻找到建筑、雕塑、绘画、文学和民风世俗等方面的实物资料；游赏者从这里得到美的享受，在浓重的宗教氛围中回顾、辨析历史。而那千百年历久不衰的庙会和异趣纷陈的宗教节日，又为北京市民的经济生活和文化生活增添了新的内容。

ANCIENT TEMPLES IN BEIJING

“TANZHE TEMPLE CAME BEFORE YOUZHOU CITY”

The Buddhist Tanzhe Temple in the Tanzhe Mountains in the western suburbs of Beijing is surrounded by nine peaks on the east, west and north and faces flat land on the south. In old times people described the temple as a “pearl played by nine dragons.” It was built during the Jin Dynasty (A.D. 265-420), making it the oldest temple in the Beijing area. People often say that “Tanzhe Temple came before Youzhou.”

The city of Ji, the capital of a small kingdom, was built in about the 11th century B.C. By the Jin Dynasty it became a strategic point under the jurisdiction of Youzhou Prefecture. In the beginning of the 7th century, the court of the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907) reinforced the city wall, planned the layout of streets there and built government offices within the city of Ji. As its importance rose Ji became commonly known as Youzhou. Its location is in the southwestern part of today's urban area of Beijing. The layout of some of the streets has remained the same.

Tanzhe Temple was built at a time when Buddhism had begun to spread in the Youzhou area, 200 years since Buddhism was introduced into and the first Buddhist temple was built in China.

Buddhism was founded in India between the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. In the 3rd century B.C. it began to spread to other countries. The religion was brought to China by merchants on the Old Silk Road to Central Asia, Xinjiang and further to the hinterland of China in the first century. Some history books attribute the propagation of Buddhism in China to Emperor Mingdi (Liu Zhuang, reigned between A.D. 58-75). Inspired by a dream he sent a dozen court officials to fetch Buddhist scriptures from India. When the envoys came to Darouzhi (present-day Afghanistan and Central Asia), they met two Indian monks, Kasyapa-matanga and Dharmaranyana. They invited the two monks to come to Luoyang, capital of the Tang Dynasty, in A.D. 68.

Emperor Mingdi built a temple of Indian style in the eastern suburbs of Louyang as the two monks' residence and to house the Buddha portraits and scriptures they had brought with them. The temple was named White Horse in honor of the white horse which had carried the Buddha portraits and scriptures.

In Chinese the character for temple is “si”, which means a grand mansion for high ranking officials, only less magnificent than the imperial palace. Emperor Mingdi named the residence for the two monks si to show how highly he respected Buddhism.

SUI GROTTOS AND TANG TEMPLES

The Western Jin Dynasty lasted only for 50 years. It was overthrown by the Huns from the north in A.D. 316. The next year, Sima Jun, a member of the Jin royal clan, set up the Eastern Jin Dynasty (A.D. 317-420) in Jiankang (present-day Nanjing in Jiangsu Province). China was plunged into chaos. In the north rival tribes fought constant wars; in the south one government replaced another quickly; members of the royal clan killed each other for power; common people led a miserable life and nobilities worried about the safety of their lives. Buddhism advocates "retribution" and "samsara", urging people to depend on fate and place hope on the next life. Frustrated in reality, many people went to Buddhism for consolation. Thus Buddhism spread quickly.

The north where Youzhou was located saw the change of power frequently. But most of the rulers supported Buddhism. By the time of the Northern Wei Dynasty (A.D. 386-534) the number of Buddhist temples in the north had reached 30,000. A 2.2-meter-high stone Buddha statue carved during that time near Wenquan in Haidian District is the oldest Buddha statue in existence in Beijing. Tianning Temple outside the city gate of Guang'anmen was built during the Northern Wei Dynasty, called Guanglin Temple then.

North China was unified during the Sui Dynasty (A.D. 581-618) and Tang Dynasty. The rulers of the two dynasties all promoted Buddhism as a means to consolidate their power. Buddhism saw its heyday during this period. The Beijing area was divided into Zhuojun and Youzhou, both under the jurisdiction of Youzhou Prefecture. Main temples and pagodas built during this period include Yunju Temple, Hongyue Temple (called Guanglin Temple during the Northern Wei Dynasty), Minzhong Temple (today's Fayou Temple), and the Taoist

Tianchang Monastery.

The Yunju Temple is located on the Shijing Mountains southwest of Beijing proper. During the period of Dayue (A.D. 605-517) Buddhist monk Jingwan (?-639) began to dig caves in the stone mountainside to hide stone slabs inscribed with scriptures. He did so as a result of two suppressions which took place respectively in A.D. 446 and A.D. 574. Northern Wei Emperor Wudi and Northern Zhou Emperor Wudi ordered Buddhist monks and nuns to resume secular life. Buddhist followers called the two incidents as "disasters of the law". Monk Hui'en, teacher of Monk Jingwan, decided to carve scriptures on stone slabs and hide them in mountain caves. In earlier days the scriptures were written on silk or leather. Monk Hui'en died. Monk Jingwan carried on the project over 30 years until his death in A.D. 639. When he filled up a cave with stone slabs inscribed with scriptures he would block the cave mouth with stone and seal it with melted iron. His disciples continued the carving into the 17th century. More than 1,000 volumes of scriptures were carved on stone slabs. Now the 14,278 stone slabs that have been well preserved are national treasures.

The Fayou Temple outside the city gate of Xuanwumen is one of famous temples in Beijing. It was built in the beginning of the Tang Dynasty. Tang Emperor Taizong (Li Shimin, reigned between A.D. 627 and 649) led expedition troops to Liaodong. It turned out to be a protracted war. He suffered a lot of losses and was forced to withdraw. When he arrived in Youzhou he had a temple built and named it Minzhong in memory of dead soldiers. The temple was completed in A.D. 696. History books record there was a high tower in the temple, so high that people said "it could reach the sky within a distance of a fist." The tower and halls had been destroyed long ago. Temples built during the Tang Dynasty that have remained in other places show that the layout, size and architec-

tural style had changed a great deal since Buddhism was first introduced into China.

The earliest temples followed the style of those of India. There was a pagoda at the center of a temple to house relics. Monks bedrooms and the prayer hall were arranged on four sides around the pagoda. The White Horse Temple, China's first Buddhist temple built in the middle of the first century is of this layout: a wooden pagoda in the center and halls and houses around it. Later temples were much like Chinese palaces or government offices with main buildings arranged along a central axis. Usually within the front gate was a pagoda and behind which the main hall where Buddha portraits and statues were worshipped. As time went on the prayer hall became as important as the pagoda and thus was arranged to be next to it. In the 7th century Monk Dao Xuan (A.D.596-667) changed the layout to make the prayer hall as the center. The pagoda was located either on the side, in the back yard, or in a separate place.

After the Tang Dynasty, Chinese architecture stressed changing scenes with meandering paths, trees, fountains and hills. Influenced by the trend, Buddhist temples also had gardens within them. Thus the architecture of temples became total Chinese.

THE NORTH HAD THE LARGEST NUMBER OF TEMPLES

In the beginning of the 10th century, the Qidan tribes in Inner Mongolia founded the Liao Dynasty. Their influence gradually reached to the northern part of North China. In A.D.938 Youzhou was made one of the five capitals of the Liao Dynasty and was named Nanjing, also known as Yanjing.

To win the support of the people, the Liao rulers made great effort to promote Buddhism. They built temples and pagodas and distrib-

uted scriptures. Members of the royal clan and aristocrats donated money and land to temples. History books record 36 large temples within the city. At that time the city had few imperial palaces and gardens. Those magnificent temples looked very attractive. The History of the Liao Dynasty writes: Yanjing "had the largest number of temples in the north." But today only some pagodas and broken stone tablets have left from those days.

The Dajue Temple in the Yangtai Mountains in the western suburbs of Beijing was built on the site of Qingshuiyuan Temple of the Liao Dynasty. It faces east, a custom of the Qidan tribes who worshipped the rising sun.

The first mosque appeared in Beijing during the Liao Dynasty. In A.D. 996 the son of a rabbi from Arab came to China to spread Islam and built a mosque on Niujie Street where Moslems lived in a compact community. The mosque has survived and become the largest mosque in Beijing.

During the Liao Dynasty there were five pagodas of five colors in five directions. Four pagodas were destroyed in war. Only the white pagoda has remained intact, which stands inside the Miaoying Temple inside the city gate of Fuchengmen. Pagodas that have remained from the Liao Dynasty today are those in the Tianning Temple outside the city gate of Guang'anmen and in the Yunjun Temple. Pagoda is a major part of the temple. There are two kinds of pagodas in India. One kind is called stupa for keeping the relics and remains of dead high monks. It is built like an overturned bowl with a canopy, raised base and balustrade. A flight of steps in front is used to walk up and down the stupa. The White Pagoda in the Miaoying Temple is of this kind. The other kind is built inside grottoes. In China this kind was eventually turned into the central pillar in a stone cave. Buddhist pagodas in China evolved from Indian stupas with strong Chinese traditional architectural features. They are

built of wood, stone, bricks, gold, silver, copper, iron, porcelain or glazed tiles. Their cross section is either square, round, hexagonal, octagonal or 12-sided. Their form is of tower, pavilion, with multi-eaves, in the shape of an overturned bowl, with a base of diamond seat, in the shape of flower. Some were built across a street. Their variety and function were much more diversified than those of Indian pagodas.

The Jin Dynasty (1115-1234) founded after the Liao Dynasty moved its capital to Yanjing and changed its name to Zhongdu. A number of imperial palaces and gardens were built. But the rulers were even more ardent in building temples and pagodas than the former rulers. At a time there were over 100 temples in the city. Among the most famous were the Mituo Temple, Husheng Temple, Xiangshan Temple, Sheng'an Temple, Long'en Temple, Gongde Temple, Xianglin Temple and Quer Temple of Buddhism and Yuxu Temple, Tianchang Temple, Congfu Temple and Xouzhen Temple of Taoism.

FAMOUS TEMPLES IN THE CAPITAL

In 1271 Mongol chieftain Kublai Khan (reigned between 1260 and 1294) established the Yuan Empire. He built a new city over 20 years in the northeastern suburbs of Yanjing and changed its name to Dadu. In 1279 and 1234 respectively he eliminated the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) and the Jin Dynasty to bring the country under a centralized rule. Beijing replaced the previous national capitals of Chang'an (present-day Xi'an in Shaanxi Province), Luoyang and Bianliang (present-day Kaifeng in Henan Province). It remained the imperial capital for 640 years through the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

During the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties Buddhist and Taoist temples were seen eve-

rywhere inside and outside of the city. History books note over 1,000 temples. A map of Beijing made in the Qing Dynasty marks out 1,400 side streets and 1,300 temples, almost one temple for every side street. Many temples were renovated on large scale. When the Doushuai Temple was renovated during the Yuan Dynasty, for example, a Buddha statue in an inclining posture was cast, using 54 tons of copper. Thus the temple was popularly known as the Sleeping Buddha Temple. The art of painting and sculpture reached a new height during this period. The murals in the Fahai Temple in Jingshan, colored sculptures in Dahui Temple outside the city gate of Xizhimen, the carvings on the base of the Diamond Pagoda in the Five Pagoda Temple and the giant bell in the Juesheng Temple are all master pieces of the Ming Dynasty. The Diamond Pagoda and 500 arhat statues made during the Qing Dynasty in the Biyun Temple are works of superb craftsmanship.

Taoism flourished during the Yuan Dynasty thanks to the support of the rulers. The court exempted taxes on the property of Taoist temples. Taoist followers increased in great numbers.

Taoism, a native religion of China, was founded in the 2nd century and follows the philosophy of Laozi who lived during the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.). Taoism prospered during several periods and saw its heyday during the Yuan Dynasty. It declined rapidly during the Qing Dynasty.

Lamaism (a sect of Buddhism popular in Tibet) was promoted by the central government during the Yuan Dynasty.

During the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties various religions including Buddhism, Taoism, Lamaism and Islamism coexisted in China. A Catholic church was built in Beijing during the Yuan Dynasty.

Temples built during the Yuan Dynasty were the most magnificent. The Tianchang Temple changed its name to Changchun Palace and