

BUILDING BUDDHISM IN CANADA

From the Ishikawa Hotel to the Four Great Sacred Buddhist Mountains Project

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There has been little research on the architecture of Buddhist temples in Canada. Even less attention has been paid to the roles these temples play and their significance for Buddhist communities in diaspora in the multiethnic and multicultural context of contemporary Canadian society. For Buddhists coming to Canada, temple architecture serves not only as a means of maintaining religious and cultural identity, but also as a vehicle enabling Buddhist beliefs and practices to take firm root in Canada, serving the spiritual needs of immigrants, converts, and future generations of their families. Within that general context, this essay proceeds in three parts. In broad strokes, "Building Buddhism in Canada" discusses the arrival of East Asian Buddhist immigrants in Canada and identifies locations illustrative of the establishment and diffusion of Buddhism across the country, beginning with the now lost Ishikawa Hotel in Vancouver. A second section, "The Cham Shan Temple and the Four Sacred Buddhist Mountains in Canada Project," discusses sites associated with the Buddhist Association of Canada (BAC), notably the Wutai Shan Buddhist Garden near Bethany, Ontario, the first phase of the BAC's Four Sacred Buddhist Mountains in Canada Project. A replica of the Great East Hall of China's historic Foguang Temple (857 CE), the main Dharma Hall of the Wutai Shan Buddhist Garden is of special interest.¹ An "Afterword" suggests further implications of the Four Sacred Buddhist Mountains in Canada Project and other research for Chinese Buddhist identity and heritage in Canada. Bringing to life in Canada an ancient example of Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhist architecture



FIG. 1. THE RAYMOND BUDDHIST CHURCH, 35 BROADWAY AVENUE, RAYMOND. | ALBERTA CULTURE AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT, HISTORIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, 2000: [HTTPS://WWW.HISTORICPLACES.CA/EN/REP-REG/IMAGE-IMAGE.ASPX?ID=8773#1], ACCESSED APRIL 5, 2021.