

From the end of Qing dynasty to the end of Republican (Nationalist) government, several campaigns have been launched:

- 1) “Build schools with temple property” (*miaochan xingxue* 廟產興學)
- 2) “Eradicating superstitions” (*bochu mixin* 破除迷信)
- 3) “Rectifying customs” (*fengsu gailiang* 風俗改良)

All these “mots d’ordre” are linked to New culture Movement (*xin wenhua yundong* 新文化運動) and New Life movement (*xin shenghuo yundong* 新生活運動) (See Paul Katz, *Religion in China and its modern Fate*, 2014)

About « temples », Nationalist Government issued a series of administrative rules (regulations) from 1915 onward, the most important are probably:

- 1) « Regulations for registering temples » (Simiao dengji tiaoli 寺廟登記條例) 1928
- 2) « Regulations for managing temples » (Simiao guanli tiaoli 寺廟管理條例) 1929
- 3) « Regulations for overseeing temples (Jiandu simaio tiaoli 監督寺廟條例) 1929

In 1928, a document made clearly what temples must be destroyed and those which can be maintained:  
« Shenci cunfei biao zhun » 神祠存廢標準:

From these standards there are 4 categories of temples:

a) temples dedicated to former sages (xian zhe 先哲)

b) temples with deities belong to « regular » religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam

These two temples categories can be preserved.

c) temples worship « ancient deities » (gushen 古神), ie nature deities and heroes, mostly linked to local cults)

d) Yinci 淫祠 temples: illicit/improper shrines

These last two categories are naturally to be eradicated.

There are laws, regulations, rules and their interpretation, their application and effects in reality.

Taking one point in « Regulations for registering temples »: the obligation to temples for opening (or sustaining) schools that would profess in part « normal » education, the so-called “Build schools with temple property” (*miaochan xingxue*):

Two kind of interpretation:

- a) some scholars have seen in this rule the wish to destroy temples;
- b) others prefer to see in these rule and edicts the Republican government’s wish to promote education throughout China.

It seems that regulation effects are varied and there are clear differences if we speak of Northern or Southern China, urban or rural places, “modern cities” and “traditional cities” and so on.

In fact, most studies have reached their conclusions on the basis of written rules and laws, official statistics and unfortunately far too few personal testimonies and primary source documentation.