

## **Monastic Biography in the Ming and Qing: The Case of Shi Zhenqing 釋真清 (1537–1593)**

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### **Abstract**

This article aims to delineate the relationship between the various versions of Xiàngxiān Zhēnqīng’s 象先真清 (1537–1593) biography as a case study for the production and reuse of Buddhist biographies in late imperial China. In total, we know of some ten “biographies” of Zhenqing. The introduction below compares and traces the relationship between these different accounts, with special emphasis on the relationship between the two earliest accounts: his stūpa epitaph contained in the Tiantai gazetteer of 1601 and his *zhuan*-biography in the *Ming gaoseng zhuan* collection (1617). Zhenqing’s stūpa epitaph is longer than his *zhuan*-biography. This is shown to be generally true for other cases where stūpa epitaphs of Buddhists have been preserved. However, although the epitaph is longer and more detailed, it was the *zhuan* that was widely copied and reused in later depictions of Zhenqing’s life. The second part of the paper presents a detailed comparison between the *zhuan*-biography and the stūpa epitaph as a case study of the differences and similarities between the two genres. Questions of genre aside, Zhenqing’s biography is in itself a valuable source for the activities of a late 16<sup>th</sup> century Buddhist master in China, whose interests straddled Pure Land, Tiantai, and Chan. We learn about his religious training, his personal practice, his teachings, and his relationships with monastic and literati friends. The *zhuan* also contains a detailed account of his death and cremation. Comparing Zhenqing’s *zhuan* with his stūpa epitaph shows again that it is best practice to consult the epigraphic evidence together with biographical literature.

**Keywords:**

Buddhist biography, stupa epitaph, stupa inscription, Ming-Qing Buddhism, Shi Zhenqing

# 明清佛教傳記與塔銘

## ——以釋真清（1537–1593）為例

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### 摘要

本文目的在於描述各版本的釋真清（1537–1593）傳記之間的關聯性，做為案例研究，亦藉此了解明清佛教傳記是如何產出以及如何再被使用。數量上我們知道有十餘部真清傳記。而以下的介紹比較及追溯了各版本的陳述，並特別留意最早的兩個版本之間的關聯：載於 1601 年《天台山外方志》中的墓誌銘（塔銘），以及 1617 年的《明高僧傳》。需留意的是，真清塔銘的內容比他的傳記長，而其它被保存下來的塔銘也是同樣的情況。然而，雖然「塔銘」較長且包含更多細節，但在較後來的對真清生平描述的部分，反而是「傳」被廣泛地複製和重覆使用。在這論文第二部分，以此做為案例研究，詳細地呈現並比較此主題在「傳」與「塔銘」兩種文體間的異同。而拋開文體的問題，真清的傳記本身就是十六世紀末葉中國佛教大師活動的寶貴資料來源，他的興趣橫跨了淨土宗、天台和禪宗。我們從中得知了他個人的宗教訓練、個人修行，他的教義以及他與當時僧侶及士人朋友之間的關係。這個傳記還詳細記載了他的死亡和火葬。我們在此透過對真清傳記與其塔銘之間的比較，再次證明了碑文證據與傳記文獻一同查閱的必要。

### 關鍵詞：

佛教傳記、塔銘、明清佛教、釋真清

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Biographical information in Buddhist historiography

The *zhuan* 傳 is the most common genre for biographic information in Chinese historiography. It makes its first prominent appearance in the *Shiji* 史記 (94 BCE) and has been used ever since to record biographic information in official dynastic histories as well as in local gazetteers. A *zhuan* begins by stating the names (family name, pen names, sobriquets, taboo name, etc.) and the place of origin of a person. Immediate family and clan members are often mentioned, as are teachers and students. Towards the end there often is a death date, information about the burial site, and, where applicable, works authored. The information is presented concisely, and although *zhuan* can vary in length, they are usually short enough to be read in one sitting. Daoists and Buddhists adopted and adapted the *zhuan* to memorialize eminent figures of their own traditions.<sup>1</sup> Whereas in official Confucian historiography a person's administrative appointments are highlighted, a Buddhist *zhuan* might focus on encounters with teachers and students, pilgrimages made, and works written. That the *zhuan* genre was adopted by all major traditions within Chinese historiography is in part due to its flexibility. Within the framework of largely factual names and dates, the *zhuan* allows the inclusion of short vignettes, mundane as well as supernatural. The *zhuan* covers a spectrum that ranges from relatively factual, biographic entries on the Confucian end, to largely legendary hagiographies on the Daoist end.

As a concise, “hagio-biographical” entry that usually forms part of larger collections, the *zhuan*-biography was extremely successful as a genre. A vast amount of biographical information is encoded in *zhuan*. In the case of Buddhism, for the first millennium four large *zhuan* collections constitute a large part of what we know about Chinese Buddhist communities during that time.<sup>2</sup> Other bits of biographical information can be gleaned from prefaces,

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<sup>1</sup> The earliest Daoist *zhuan*-type hagiographies are the *Liexian zhuan* (2<sup>nd</sup> century) and the *Shenxian zhuan* (4<sup>th</sup> century), the earliest Buddhist *zhuan*-collections are from the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>2</sup> The four are the *Biographies of Nuns* 比丘尼傳 (4 fascicles) c. 511 CE, the (*Liang* Dynasty Collection of) *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (梁)高僧傳 (14 fasc.) c. 530 CE, the *Continued (Collection of) Biographies of Eminent Monks (from the Tang)* (唐)續高僧傳 (30 fasc.) c. 665 CE, and the *Song Dynasty Collection of Biographies of Eminent Monks* 宋高僧傳 (30 fasc.) c. 988 CE. Other early Buddhist *zhuan* biographies can be found in the *Collection of Records*

sūtra catalogs, apologetic literature, and epigraphic sources, but the *zhuan* collections are the bedrock of our understanding of Chinese Buddhist history from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. Together, the four main collections from that period mention more than 6000 individuals, 4000 different places, and 2800 *dated* events.<sup>3</sup> No other genre provides that much information about Chinese Buddhism in the first millennium.<sup>4</sup> In the second millennium the picture is somewhat different. After Zanning’s *Song gaoseng zhuan* (988), no new collection of “biographies of eminent monks” appeared until 1617, when Ruxing completed his compilation of the *Ming gaoseng zhuan* 明高僧傳 (MGSZ), the “Ming Dynasty (Collection of) Biographies of Eminent Monks.”<sup>5</sup> The six-hundred-year gap between the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and Ruxing’s MGSZ is partly due to the drastic decline of institutional Buddhism in the early and mid-Ming, which is evinced in a decrease in the number of monastics, temple building activity, and textual production.<sup>6</sup> Another reason for the hiatus

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*from the Tripiṭaka* 出三藏記集 (ch. 13–15) c. 515 CE, and the *Excerpts from ‘Biographies of Famous Monks’* 名僧傳抄 (1 fascicle) c. 514 CE. In English Kieschnick (1998) remains the best introduction into the depiction of the ‘eminent monk’ in these sources. In his forthcoming work on the development of Chinese Buddhist historiography, Kieschnick also notes the *zhuan* genre’s “attention to dates, the adjudication of conflicting sources, and its fascination with prophecy” (forthcoming 2022: Conclusion). These characteristics remained constant even after the Song.

- 3 Based on counts over the digital editions of the *Biqiuni zhuan*, and the *Liang, Tang, and Song gaoseng zhuan* (<https://github.com/DILA-edu/biographies>).
- 4 The closest contenders are the large universal histories of Chinese Buddhism written during the Song and Yuan, such as Zanning’s *Seng shilue* 僧史略 (991) or Zhipan’s *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (1269). Although the universal histories often add interesting new facts (especially for the later centuries), they themselves often rely heavily on information from the major *zhuan* collections. See Welter (2018) for a first English translation of the *Seng shilue*, and Schmidt-Glintzer (1982) and Cao (2006) for “Buddhist universal histories.” Recently, Jülch (2019–2021) has continued the translation of the annalistic part of the *Fozu tongji* that was pioneered by Jan (1966).
- 5 The Song and Yuan dynasty saw a flowering of Buddhist historiography and there are numerous, so far little studied, *zhuan*-biographies included in works like the *Fozu tongji* (T 2035, fasc. 11–22 (biographies)) or the *Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代通載 (T.2036, biographies included throughout the annals). In spite of its promising title, the *Xinxiu kafen liuxue sengzhuan* 新修科分六學僧傳 (X 1522, dated 1366) is largely derivative of the earlier *gaoseng zhuan* collections, and adds only a few new biographies for the Song.
- 6 The decline in the number of Buddhist monastics during the early and mid-Ming is visible in the Historical Social Network of Chinese Buddhism

is the ascendancy of the Chan School and a resulting shift in genre. Centered on lineage and teacher-student transmission, the Chan school used other genres to record biographical information—especially “collected sayings” (*yulu* 語錄, lit. ‘record of sayings’) of Chan masters.<sup>7</sup> *Yulu* were, ideally, produced soon after the death of an eminent teacher. For the most part, *yulu* contain short dialogues between the master and his teachers or students in an attempt to capture one person’s spiritual journey and teachings in a series of encounters and exchanges. Although doubtless inspiring for practitioners, the actual sayings themselves are generally not very useful for historians. Likewise, the second most frequent type of text in a *yulu*—the master’s collected poetry—contains hardly any information regarding the history of events. More factual biographical information including place names and dates are sometimes found towards the end of the *yulu*, in biographical sketches (*xingzhuang* 行狀 or *shilue* 事略), or stūpa epitaphs (*taming* 塔銘 or *taji* 塔記).<sup>8</sup> Autobiography is rare and late, the first specimen by a Buddhist monk being Hanshan Deqing’s annalistic account of his life.<sup>9</sup> The shift from *zhuan* to *yulu* meant that instead of concise biographies of many, Buddhist historiography produced longer works on individual masters. Regarding the development within early *yulu* literature itself, which moved from “collected collected sayings” (such as in *denglu* 燈錄 literature) to *yulu* of individual masters. This trend was characterized by Christian Wittern as a move from recording “few statements by many, to many statements by few.”<sup>10</sup> This development becomes obvious when comparing the

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([https://github.com/mbingenheimer/ChineseBuddhism\\_SNA](https://github.com/mbingenheimer/ChineseBuddhism_SNA)), as well as Hasebe’s analysis of the *Xinxu gaosengzhuan* (Hasebe 1976: 216–219). Regarding the early Ming drop in temple building activity, see Eberhard (1964). Eberhard’s study is based on a relatively small sample of 43 counties and needs to be revisited and extended.

<sup>7</sup> More could be said about the ‘transmission of the lamp’ *denglu* histories, or *gong’an* collections. I focus on the *yulu*, because the *yulu* were often used as source for *denglu* and other collections. For a more sustained discussion of the emergence of Chan literary genres, see Poceski (2015, Ch. 4 & 5). For the overall implications of the turn to genealogy for Buddhist historiography in China see Kieschnick (forthcoming 2022: Ch. 5).

<sup>8</sup> See e.g., the stupa inscriptions for Jingci Huihun 淨慈慧暉 (1097–1183) (CBETA 2021.Q1, X 1428, 72: 150a5–b17) or Songyuan Chongyue 松源崇嶽 (1132–1202) (CBETA 2021.Q1, X 1377, 72: 109a6–c7).

<sup>9</sup> Wu (1975).

<sup>10</sup> Wittern (1998: 74–81). A recent study by Noguchi (2021) contains many interesting observations about the production of *yulu* in the Ming and Qing, especially with regard to authorship and agency.

c. 340 *yulu* of the Song to the Qing that are currently part of the the CBETA corpus, with the 790 *zhuan* biographies for the same periods that are contained in a single collection: the *Xinxu gaosengzhuan* 新續高僧傳 (1923). The *Xinxu gaosengzhuan*, compiled by Yu Qian 喻謙 between 1918–1923, has attracted little attention, but it is, in fact, the last flowering of the tradition of Buddhist *zhuan* collections.<sup>11</sup> Below, in order to better understand how *zhuan* biographies were created and (re)used in the Ming and Qing, we will investigate below how one particular biography was created in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, what information it provides, and how it was copied in various ways, until it was included in the *Xinxu gaosengzhuan*. The problem with case studies is that it is often unclear in how far the phenomena observed can be generalized. The advantage is that the focus on a single biography can foreground a rich number of issues which are lost in a larger sample. Since there is not a lot of research on late imperial Buddhist *zhuan*, a few more case studies may be needed before the general picture becomes clear.

## 1.2 Tracing biographical sources on Xiangxian Zhenqing 象先真清 (1537–1593)

Zhenqing is a good candidate for a case study for several reasons. First, he is neither too famous nor too marginal. Highly influential people like his contemporaries Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546–1623), Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲祿宏 (1535–1615), or the slightly later Miyun Yuanwu 密雲圓悟 (1567–1642), have a complex biographical record. Sources include letters, annals, autobiographic sketches, and various inscriptions, sometimes collected in different, competing *yulu*. Even in the case of a relatively minor figure like Zhenqing, the use and reuse of his biographical information are fairly complicated. Second, Zhenqing witnessed and was an active agent in the late Ming revival of Buddhism, when monastic Buddhism recovered some of its vitality, after a long hiatus. Reading his biography helps us to understand what the life of a monastic leader was like during those years. Third, Zhenqing, like

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<sup>11</sup> Created some three hundred years after the MGSZ (1617) and the *Buxu gaosengzhuan* 補續高僧傳 (1641), the *Xinxu gaosengzhuan* is especially relevant for Qing Dynasty monastic biographies. Apart from Hasebe (1976) I was not able to find any other study that made use of this humongous, 65-fascicle work. It was only recently added to the CBETA corpus, and so far, remains unpunctuated. In a separate project, we made the Ming and Qing biographies of the *Xinxu gaosengzhuan* available in a punctuated version, marked up for person names, and SNA connections (<https://github.com/DILA-edu/biographies>).

Deqing and Zhuhong, was no sectarian figure. He was trained in Chan meditation, but also steeped in Tiantai teachings and promulgated Pure Land practices. Although eminently learned, he did not leave any written works himself. Without even so much as a poem by him, his life can only be approached through biography.

Fortunately, our sources contain a number of biographical accounts of Zhenqing. However, later accounts mostly copy and paste information from earlier ones; only rarely is new information added. *Zhuan*-biographies of Zhenqing appear in the *Ming gaoseng zhuan* 明高僧傳 (MGSZ) (1617), the *Gaoseng zhaiyao* 高僧摘要 (1654), and the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* 新續高僧傳 (1923).

Within the MGSZ, Zhenqing's *zhuan* is somewhat of an outlier in terms of length; of the 112 biographies in the MGSZ, most (104) consist of less than eight hundred characters (without punctuation) and only three biographies—those of Yiyun Datong 一雲大同, Zhenqing, and Yueting Mingde 月亭明得—have more than a thousand characters. Both the *Gaoseng zhaiyao* and the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* are clearly derivatives of the MGSZ version. They are more or less verbatim copies of the MGSZ with the occasional difference in the use of variants or particles. However, whereas the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* (c. 1360 chars) is a copy of similar length to the MGSZ (c. 1390 chars), the *Gaoseng zhaiyao* version (c. 660 chars) is much abridged. The *Gaoseng zhaiyao* is a short work of four *juan* and its compiler Xu Changzhi 徐昌治 (fl. 1628–1660 CE) omitted two large sections from the second half of the MGSZ version, perhaps in order to save space (none of the biographies in that fascicle of the *Gaoseng zhaiyao* is longer than c. 1000 chars). The *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan*, on the other hand, is a close copy of the MGSZ version and is of similar length. Passages where textual variation in the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* leads to information loss are pointed out in the annotations to the translation below.

**Table 1. Biographic sources for Zhenqing**

Title of the biography / biographic entry	Contained in	Composed before / contained in a work dated (CE)	Length (in characters, without punctuation and white space)



象先禪師塔銘 <sup>12</sup>	天台山外方志 13	1597 <sup>14</sup>	1670 chars
象先真清法師 <sup>15</sup>	天台山外方志	1601	210 chars
天台慈雲寺沙門釋真清傳(寶珠 荊山 月溪) <sup>16</sup>	明高僧傳	1617	1390 chars
象先禪師 天台慈雲寺 <sup>17</sup>	釋鑑稽古略續集	1638	260 chars
釋真清 <sup>18</sup>	高僧摘要	1654	660 chars
明釋真清 <sup>19</sup>	法華經持驗記	1659 <sup>20</sup>	290 chars
真青[sic] <sup>21</sup>	淨土全書(重輯)	1664	180 chars

<sup>12</sup> Chuandeng (2013: Vol.2, 499–502).

<sup>13</sup> The *Tiantaishan fangwai zhi* 天台山方外志 was first printed in 1601. In total, some 20 gazetteer-like accounts were written about the Tiantai Mountains (see the list in Chuandeng 2013: Vol.1 XVIII–XXI). Chuandeng’s *Tiantaishan fangwai zhi* is the one most relevant to Buddhist studies.

<sup>14</sup> The inscription was probably composed soon after Zhenqing’s death in 1593, but certainly before the 1597 death of Lu Guangzu, one of its creators. The *zhuan* (§21A) mentions that the stūpa, and presumably the inscription, was moved in 1602.

<sup>15</sup> Chuandeng (2013: Vol.1, 182).

<sup>16</sup> CBETA, T 2062, 50: 913c15–914c14. These texts are usually dated by the last date found in the prefaces of the first printing. The text is quoted and referenced to the CBETA corpus Ver. 2019 Q1.

<sup>17</sup> CBETA, T 2038, 49: 952a9–24.

<sup>18</sup> CBETA, X 1626, 87: 296c05–297a13.

<sup>19</sup> CBETA, X 1541, 78: 87a20–b10.

<sup>20</sup> One short introduction that is prefixed to both the *Fahuajing chiyan ji* 法華經持驗記 and the *Guanshiyinjing chiyan ji* 觀音經持驗記 (X 1542) says that both were compiled after a previous collection of miracle stories surrounding the Diamond sutra that was published in 1658 (戊戌秋。予輯金剛持驗。已有流通小引。敬懇同人。茲刻淨土·法華·華嚴·觀音持驗諸紀。(CBETA 2021.Q2, X 1542, 78: 91c4–5)). Another preface to the 觀音經持驗記 is dated to 1659 CE (順治己亥 (CBETA 2021.Q2, X 1542, 78: 91b9)). This would be an approximate date for the 法華經持驗記 as well.

<sup>21</sup> CBETA 2019.Q2, X 1176, 62: 170c21–171a6. Compiler’s preface dated 1664 (Kangxi 3), but included material until 1672 (Kangxi 11). Includes abridged passages of Wang Rixiu’s 王日休 (1105–73) *Jingtu wen* 淨土文 (CBETA, T 1970, 47).

真清 <sup>22</sup>	宗統編年	1689	82 chars
真清 <sup>23</sup>	淨土聖賢錄	1783	361 chars
明天台慈雲寺沙門釋 真清傳(寶珠 荊山 月溪) <sup>24</sup>	新續高僧傳	1923	1360 chars

Besides the MGSZ biography and its two, more or less verbatim, echoes, there is a short biographic mention of Zhenqing 真清 in the *Shi jian jigulüe xuji* 釋鑑稽古略續集 (c. 260 chars) that is of little interest, and a short, but somewhat interesting, biography in the *Fahuajing chiyANJI* 法華經持驗記 (c. 290 chars). The *Shi jian jigulüe xuji* of 1638 does not add any new information beyond what is known from the MGSZ. Zhenqing's biography in the *Fahuajing chiyANJI*, a collection of miracle tales related to the Lotus Sutra, highlights his use of the Lotus Sutra. However, Zhenqing's Lotus Sutra practice is not mentioned in the MGSZ, and we must therefore assume that Zhou Kefu 周克復 (fl. 1659), the author of the *Fahuajing chiyANJI*, had read the stūpa epitaph (s.b.), which alone records Zhenqing's use of this text. Zhenqing's death together with some information on his life, is also mentioned in a short entry in the annalistic *Zongtong biannian* 宗統編年.

In addition, Zhenqing appears in two collections of Pure Land related stories and biographical sketches: the *Jingtu quanshu* 淨土全書 (c. 180 chars) and the *Jingtu Shengxian lu* 淨土聖賢錄 (c. 361 chars). The former presents only those elements of Zhenqing's biography that relate to the dream prediction of his rebirth in the Pure Land. Inexplicably, his name is misspelled 真青. The somewhat longer *Jingtu shengxian lu*, by Peng Xisu 彭希涑 (1761–1793), the son of the famous Buddhist layman and biographer Peng Shaosheng 彭紹升 (1740–1796), gives more details about Zhenqing's Pure Land practices and his use of Pure Land texts, but nevertheless is a mere pastiche of verbatim excerpts from the MGSZ.

<sup>22</sup> CBETA 2019.Q2, X 1600, 86: 287b3–8. Last entry 1689.

<sup>23</sup> CBETA 2019.Q2, X 1549, 78: 266b1–20. Dated 1783.

<sup>24</sup> CBETA, B 151, 27: 84a01–85a18. Dated 1923.

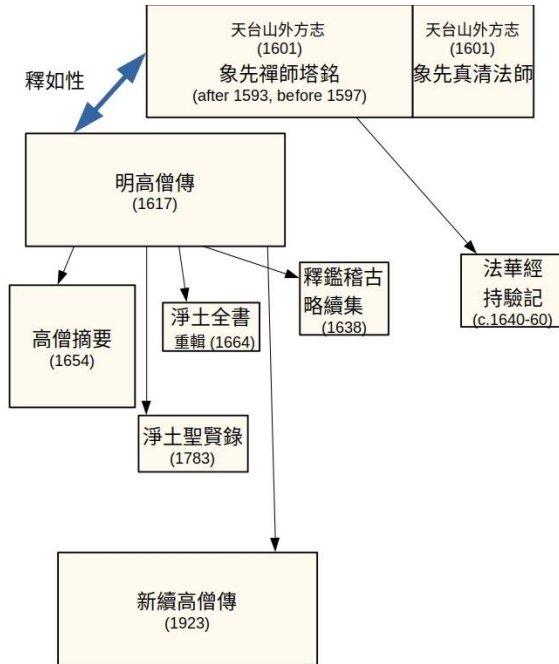


Fig. 1: Stemmatic relationships

Zhenqing’s MGSZ *zhuan*, as illustrated in Chart 1, was the most successful account in the sense that it was reproduced most often. However, the earliest, longest, and most detailed source on the life of Zhenqing is not his *zhuan*-biography, but rather the commemorative inscription on his stūpa, titled *Xiangxian chanshi taming* 象先禪師塔銘. It is transcribed in the Tiantai gazetteer *Tiantaishan fangwai zhi* 天台山方外志 (dated 1601) and, according to the byline, a collaboration between three *jinshi* holders.<sup>25</sup> The three constitute an extraordinarily elite group of scholars and officials, who all at one point held power at a national level. The inscription’s main author was Yuan Huang 袁黃 (1533–1606), *aka* Yuan Liaofan 袁了凡, whose famous *Liaofan sixun* 了凡四訓 is still read today.<sup>26</sup> The seal script

<sup>25</sup> I do not know whether the stone bearing the inscription has survived *in situ*, and was unable to find a rubbing. I consider the contemporaneous transcription contained in the gazetteer a close enough substitute for either, despite some obvious errors (cf. §10B, §12B, §22B). While tomb epitaphs (*muzhiming* 墓誌銘) in late imperial China were sometimes commissioned without being actually carved and entombed (Huang 2018: 31), stupa inscriptions (*taming* 塔銘) were generally on the outside of stūpas, i.e. visible to visitors.

<sup>26</sup> Yuan Liaofan became a *jinshi* relatively late in life (1586), but did enter government service and rose to become Secretary in the Ministry of War. Yuan was widely accomplished, but is mainly remembered for his *Liaofan’s Four Lessons* 了凡四訓, perhaps the most popular morality book of the late Ming and

calligraphy for the stone tablet above the main inscription was done by Lu Guangzu 陸光祖 (1521–1597).<sup>27</sup> Wang Shixing 王士性 (1547–1598) was responsible for the calligraphy of the main text, which he wrote in red ink in preparation for the carving.<sup>28</sup> The inscription is 20% longer than the MGSZ account, and often offers additional information, but, as we will see below, the MGSZ too adds information not mentioned in the inscription. One must assume the different tasks in creating the inscription were usually remunerated, although in the case of a close personal relationship with the deceased, the literati might have contributed their efforts *pro bono*. In any case, it speaks to Zhenqing's fame as well as to the influence of his student Ruxing, that the latter was able to gather three eminent *jinshi* holders—former ministers and vice-ministers—to collaborate on the inscription. It might be important in this regard that Zhenqing's early achievements as recommended licentiate (§3) made him a *bona fide* literatus, who was able to communicate with them as a member of the same class.

The dual role of Ruxing 如惺 (fl. 1590–1617) is interesting for this particular constellation of biographies. He was both the author of the MGSZ *zhuan*-biography and, as Zhenqing's dharma heir, was also presumably at least

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Qing. Even today, the *Four Lessons* has a certain influence on ethical discourse. It is still studied (Lehnert 2004), and widely available in modern editions (e.g., Huang and Chen 2014). In modern China and Taiwan, the figure of Yuan Liaofan occupies an interesting position between a modernist assertion of individual agency and an affirmation of the traditional ideal of the virtuous learned gentleman. There are a number of feature-length films and at least one TV series (*Liaofan de gushi* 了凡的故事) about his life.

<sup>27</sup> Lu Guangzu (1521–1597) (DDPersA: 4257) himself appears in the biography (§16). He served as Vice Minister of Public Works and Minister of Personnel. The header of the inscription, the so-called *bei'e* 碑額, a squarish section above the main stone slab of the inscription, was generally done in seal script in the late Ming. This was a common feature of Ming and Qing stūpa epitaphs. (See, e.g., the stūpa epitaph for Chan Master Xinyue 心月 dated 1584 (Xu et al. 1989, Vol. 57, p. 130; for other examples with similar layout and style see Vol. 57 p. 3, 7, 16, 21, 24).

<sup>28</sup> Wang Shixing was a member of a powerful clan and nephew to Vice Minister Wang Zongmu 王宗沐 (who is mentioned in Zhenqing's biography (§10)). He himself held various offices, including that of Censor, and was an inveterate traveler, whose collection of travelogues (including one of a journey around Mount Tiantai) has been reprinted several times. For an appraisal of his travelogues see Eggert (2004: 153–161). Either Wang or his uncle also appear in the text of the biography translated below (§15). Wang, who seems to have had a good hand, also contributed his calligraphy to another stūpa epitaph (dated 1592) on Tiantai (Chuangeng 2013: Vol.1, p. 314. Inscription: Vol. 2, p. 495.).

one of the main informants for Yuan Liaofan, who composed the stūpa epitaph. Ruxing was also Zhenqing's successor as abbot of the Ciyun Temple on Mt. Tiantai. According to the inscription, Zhenqing's cremation was postponed for two days because Ruxing had not yet arrived. After the cremation, Ruxing "collected the bones", and we must assume that as the new abbot he was involved in organizing the creation of Zhenqing's stūpa near the Ciyun Temple, including commissioning the inscription.<sup>29</sup> Finally, fascicle 8 of the 1601 Tiantai gazetteer contains another short biography of Zhenqing titled *Xiangxian Zhenqing fashi* 象先真清法師 (c. 210 chars), which is independent from the stūpa epitaph transcribed in fascicle 24. This biographic entry, not titled *zhuan*, was perhaps written by the compiler Chuandeng 傳燈 (1554–1628), who refers the reader to the stūpa epitaph for more information. Chuandeng probably knew both Zhenqing and Ruxing personally. Like them, he was closely associated with the monastic and lay-Buddhist circles on Tiantai.

### 1.3 On the relationship between stūpa epitaph and *zhuan*

Stūpa epitaphs have served as sources for *zhuan* biographies since the beginning of the genre. As Koichi Shinohara, Jinhua Chen, and Timothy Davis have shown repeatedly for the first millennium, whenever an epigraphic record is available, it should be brought to the reading of literary biographies.<sup>30</sup> Working on Tang Dynasty material, Chen (2007: 15) believed that the main advantage of epigraphic sources over other forms of text is its "unchanging nature." The juxtaposition of Zhenqing's *zhuan* and his stūpa epitaph shows that, even for later times where textual distortion might be less of an issue, the inscription adds a lot of detail. In the case of Zhenqing, the inscription is 20% longer than the *zhuan*, but how representative is this ratio? What can be said about the relationship between inscription and *zhuan* in general? The table below provides a somewhat larger sample.

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<sup>29</sup> As the MGSZ biography, translated below, says: "Shi Ruxing collected his [Zhenqing's] bones and built a first stūpa [for them] at the southern slope of Ciyun Temple." 釋如惺抱骨，初建塔慈雲之南岡。The entry for 慈雲寺 in the 1601 Tiantai Gazetteer says: "During the Wanli reign the monk Zhenqing lectured on the repentance ritual here. His student Ruxing continued the teaching and rebuilt [the temple]. Venerable Zhenqing's stūpa is at the foot of the temple's eastern peak." 萬曆間僧真清講懺於此，弟子如惺繼講業而重新之。清法師塔於寺左峯下。

<sup>30</sup> E.g., Shinohara (1988), Chen (2007: Ch.1), Davis (2015: Ch. 5).

Building on the openly available digital archives created over the last two decades, we can identify cases where both a *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* biography and a stūpa epitaph are preserved in a gazetteer. Once the texts are extracted and the punctuation removed, one can compare their length in characters to see whether the inscriptions are generally longer than their respective *zhuan*. I have limited my search to the Ming and Qing.

Person, DDPersA <sup>31</sup>	<i>Xinxu gaoseng zhuan</i> file <sup>32</sup>	Inscription in gazetteer <sup>33</sup>	Length in characters ( <i>Xinxu gaoseng zhuan</i> : Inscription)
Huizhao 慧照 (1290–1374) ID: A008277	2220huiZhao 慧照.xml	明州阿育王山志. 卷 8.大千照禪師塔銘	623:1700
Daolian 道聯 (1346–1409) ID: A014446	2071daoLian 道聯.xml	勅建淨慈寺志. 卷 12.王英：照菴靜公 禪師塔銘	544:950
Dahuo 大壑 (1576–1627) ID: A000069	2080daHuo 大壑.xml	勅建淨慈寺志. 卷 12.元津壑法師塔	707:961
Mingzhong 明中 (1711–1768) ID: A021881	2110mingZhong 明中.xml	勅建淨慈寺志. 卷 12.杭世駿：焚虛大 師塔銘	665:1207
Zhengyan 正岳 (1597–1670) ID: A016063	2262zhengYan 正岳.xml <sup>34</sup>	勅建淨慈寺志. 卷 12.馮溥：岳禪師塔 銘	476:1254

<sup>31</sup> The person IDs reference the Dharma Drum Authority database entries (available at: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/>).

<sup>32</sup> The *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* data used for the character counts are available here: <https://github.com/DILA-edu/biographies>. The marked-up biographies have been created from the digital edition of the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* in the CBETA corpus (CBETA 2020.Q1, B 151, 27).

<sup>33</sup> Character counts are based on the digital edition of the gazetteers here: <http://buddhisticinformatics.dila.edu.tw/fosizhi/>.

<sup>34</sup> The *zhuan* includes a reference to the stūpa epitaph in the gazetteer (毛奇齡為之塔誌並見寺志 (CBETA 2021.Q2, B 151, 27: 189b10)).

Zhuanyu 篆玉 (1705–1767) ID: A022491	2767zhuanYu 篆玉.xml	勅建淨慈寺志. 卷 12. 杭世駿：嶺雲大 師塔銘	529:1058
Benzhe 本哲 (1620–1686) ID: A010705	2105benZhe 本哲.xml	天童寺志. 卷 7. 山曉 哲禪師塔	603:1873
Yinzheng 印正 (1614–1691) ID: A001501	2658xingGuan 性關.xml	玉泉寺志. 卷 2. [蓮 月印正禪師塔銘]	121:1022 <sup>35</sup>
Benying 本瑩 (1635–1685) ID: A016614	2263benYing 本瑩.xml <sup>36</sup>	江心志. 卷 9. 江心 [[大]]雲禪師塔銘	407:955
Yuanzhi 原志 (1628–1697) ID: A016549	2292yuanZhi 原志.xml	三峰清涼寺志. 卷 13. 碩揆和尚塔銘補	698:2718
Tonglang 通朗 (1821–1885) ID: A042447	2699tongLang 通朗.xml	重修昭覺寺志. 卷 7. 明照朗禪師墓誌銘	559:720
Rusong 如嵩 (1570–1636) ID: A019263	2095ruSong 如嵩.xml	武林理安寺志. 卷 5. 重開山祖·明法兩 仲光禪師	821:867 <sup>37</sup>

In all of these cases, the inscription is longer, often significantly, than the corresponding *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* biography. Even though this small sample is not conclusive, it at least indicates that the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* provides a considerably abridged account compared to the inscriptions. Yu Qian, the compiler of the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan*, probably accessed the inscriptions through gazetteers and in at least two instances he explicitly says so.

I have not found a case where the inscription is shorter than the *zhuan*. Does that hold true for other *zhuan* collections as well? The average length of the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* biographies (467 chars) is similar to that of the *Buxu gaoseng zhuan* (494 chars), but longer than the average length of the *zhuan* in

35 As the character ratio suggests, this is a special case. Yinzheng's life is only briefly sketched in the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan*, appended to Xingguan's 性關 *zhuan*.

36 The *zhuan* includes a reference to the stūpa epitaph in the gazetteer (周天錫為之銘文具山志 (CBETA 2021.Q2, B 151, 27: 190a7)).

37 As the character ratio suggests, this is a special case. Here the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan zhuan* is almost a verbatim copy of the inscription, minus the *ming* eulogy.

the MGSZ (390 chars).<sup>38</sup> Thus, it is likely the MGSZ and the *Buxu gaoseng zhuan* condensed the Ming-Qing stūpa epitaphs available to them in a similar way, and the ratios observed in the above examples from the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* are predictive for them as well.

Although we now have some quantitative evidence that a person's stūpa epitaphs are generally longer than their *zhuan*, there are a number of issues that can only be answered by qualitative analysis, grounded in close reading. How, for instance, did the authors of the inscriptions insert themselves into the text? In the case of Zhenqing's epitaph, two of the creators, Lu Guangzu and Wang Shixing, are mentioned in the text itself (§16, §15), as is an older relative of Wang (§10). The main author, Yuan Liaofan, did not include himself, although it is likely that he too had known Zhenqing personally. As persons are usually mentioned by their sobriquets, computers will not help with this. More case studies are needed to understand the relationship of the inscriptions' creators and the people mentioned in the biographies. Do creators generally show up in the inscriptions they produce or is Zhenqing's case an outlier?

## 1.4 Conclusion

Reading Ruxing's MGSZ account of Zhenqing against the stūpa epitaph written some twenty years earlier, it is remarkable to see how complementary they are in terms of the level of detail. Overall, the stūpa epitaph is more extensive and clarifies many points which are only hinted at in the MGSZ. However, there also are passages where the MGSZ preserves information that is not found in the inscription, most notably, the sections describing Zhenqing's death and the nature of his *śarīra*, which Ruxing probably added from memory (§18–21). Even here, however, the inscription adds a detail in mentioning that Zhenqing "postponed" his death to wait for Ruxing, who "arrived late." This is omitted in Ruxing's own version of the account in the MGSZ.

In this case, the fact that the *zhuan*-biography contains information beyond the inscription can be explained by Ruxing's dual role as the (presumptive) informant for the inscription *and* the author of the MGSZ. In a way, he gets to write his teacher's biography twice. However, even under these exceptional circumstances, the rule holds that the stūpa epitaph served as an important source for the *zhuan*-biography.

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<sup>38</sup> Here, the average length is calculated as the total number of characters (without punctuation etc.) in a collection, divided by the number of its full biographies.



Perhaps *zhuan*-biographies in general should be considered abridged versions of existing, usually epigraphic, records. As shown above, inscriptions are generally longer and therefore likely to preserve more detail than *zhuan*-biographies. However, as a genre, inscriptions have their advantages as well as limitations. The main advantage is that the account is nearly contemporary and the author had access to eye-witnesses to the major events. The closeness to the subject, however, also can be a liability, as people mentioned are still alive, and the writers are remunerated by the friends and relatives of the dead, who have an interest in depicting events in a favorable light. The *zhuan* needs to be taken seriously as an account that (usually) has the advantage of temporal distance to its subject and which might include other information beyond epigraphic sources. Nevertheless, what follows from the work of Shinohara, Chen and others on the first millennium—that epigraphic evidence should be used wherever possible—holds true for the second millennium as well. For later periods, we are lucky to have many more surviving inscriptions and rubbings, and their transcriptions. Considering how much detail Zhenqing’s stūpa epitaph contributes to the overall picture of his life, we are reminded that only a small amount of Chinese religious epigraphy has been published so far, and hardly any editions are available digitally.<sup>39</sup>

Zhenqing’s case shows not only how a *zhuan*-biography was abbreviated when compared to the epigraphic record, but also how *zhuan*-biographies in turn were further abbreviated in later works, sometimes radically (as in the *Gaoseng zhaiyao*), sometimes minimally (as in the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan*), and often with a spin (as in the *Fahuaqing chiyANJI* or the *Jingtu shengxian lu*), focusing only on single aspects of a life. Against the tendency to narrow the view and assign a life to a single lineage or category, the joint view of the *zhuan*-biography together with its inscription yields a complex patterning across the Buddhist spectrum of Zhenqing’s time. Zhenqing is identified as a Chan Master (§1B,

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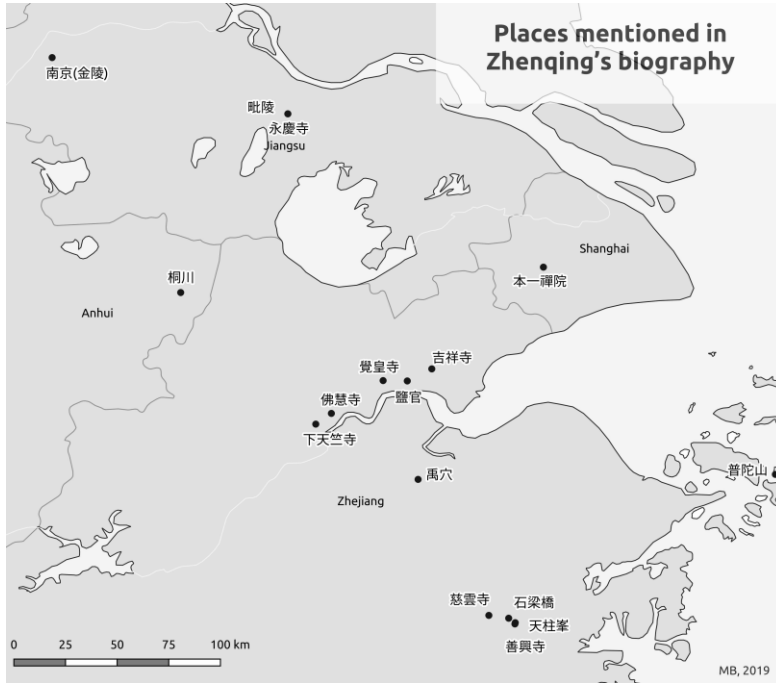
<sup>39</sup> An excellent edition of a hundred pre-Tang Buddhist stele inscriptions, with facsimile and careful transcription, has been published by Yan (2008). These have been made part of the CBETA corpus. For some regions in Fujian, Kenneth Dean and his team have collected and edited a large amount of epigraphic material from both Daoist and Buddhist sites, mostly from the Ming and Qing (Dean and Zheng 1995, 2003, 2019). Recently, Xu (2018) published 10 volumes of Buddhist stūpa and tomb inscriptions from all over China. This is a valuable contribution; however, Xu provides transcriptions only, without annotation or apparatus, there are no facsimiles of their stone, rubbing, or woodblock source, against which one could verify the readings, and the provenance given for each inscription is rudimentary. Xu also includes Zhenqings’s stūpa epitaph based on *Tiantaishan fangwai zhi* (Xu 2018: Vol. 8, p. 3215 ff).

§2B, §4, §5B), but is also associated with Pure Land scriptures and practices (§11, §12, §19), as well as with Tiantai texts and places (§11, §15, §16). He is reported to have defended a strict interpretation of the Vinaya (§14, §21B), and to have studied the Lotus Sūtra in depth (§3B). In the MGSZ and the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan*, his biography is included among “exegetes” (*jieyi* 解義) and his biography allows for this too (§9, §15). Although his biography is included in two prominent collections promoting the Pure Land movement, neither of them chose to mention the ambiguous dream message about rebirth in a wealthy family that is part of both the MGSZ and the inscription (§17). Thus, different strands of Chinese Buddhism—Chan, Tiantai, Pure Land, and Vinaya—have selected aspects of Zhenqing’s biography to claim him (non-exclusively) for their own history. In fact, however, Zhenqing’s multifarious practice was not unusual. The famous Zhuhong, for instance, combined in his teachings Pure Land, Vinaya, Chan, and aspects of esoteric Buddhism.<sup>40</sup>

One thing I did not expect was the degree to which Zhenqing drew inspiration from Buddhist figures of the tenth to thirteenth century (§9, §11B, §16). Were late-Ming Buddhist leaders in general more likely to be inspired by masters of the Song and Yuan Dynasty than by those of earlier periods? Connected with this is another aspect that stands out: how Zhenqing often connected with places because of their former or present inhabitants. Clearly, place and landscape played an important role in his religious *imaginaire*, but this landscape was that of the Jiangnan region, not the first millennium Buddhist heartland of Chang’an and Luoyang, not to mention the even more remote sites of Buddhist India. Although Zhenqing grew up in Hunan, he spent most of his life in the Jiangnan region, which, since the Song Dynasty, had become the Buddhist center of China. Within Jiangnan he traveled widely, but spent most of his time in the Tiantai mountains. The map below includes most places mentioned in the translation.

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<sup>40</sup> Yü (1981) and Eichman (2016). Esoteric Buddhism seems absent from Zhenqing’s life.



What emerges from the multiplicity of sources is a multifaceted life that defies simple categories based on school affiliation or practice. Perhaps we should assume that most of the hagio-biographies we encounter in Buddhist historiography are traces of lives lived this way, and that merely the foreshortening caused by genre limits, historiographical bias, and the loss of alternative accounts has reduced their complexity.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> This article has greatly benefited from the close reading of two anonymous reviewers, who spend their precious time to make detailed suggestions to both the translation and the overall argument. John Kieschnick has read through the post-review version and his feedback led to further improvements. The participants in our weekly Buddhist reading group at Temple University—David Carpenter, Yohong Roh, Lu Huang, Rouying Tang, Xiang Wei, and Rebecca Huang—helped me rethink many details in the reading of the Chinese text. The markup of Zhenqing's MGSZ biography was done by Po-yung Chang. Like the other TEI versions from the Buddhist biographies project at Dharma Drum it can be found at <https://github.com/DILA-edu/biographies>.

## 2. Annotated Translation & Comparative Edition

The table below juxtaposes Zhenqing's *zhuan* biography as contained in the MGSZ with the stūpa epitaph. Although the inscription is somewhat longer, I fully translate only the *zhuan*, firstly because the main focus of this paper is on *zhuan*-biographies and secondly because it was the *zhuan* text that was reused most often in later accounts of Zhenqing's life (s. Chart 1). There is too much overlap between the *zhuan* and the inscription to necessitate a full translation of the epitaph. Significant differences are **bolded**.<sup>42</sup>

The section divisions are my own. The fact that they align relatively well between the *zhuan* and the inscription shows that the texts are closely connected in spite of the many differences in wording.<sup>43</sup> If the texts had been created independently of each other, one would expect more differences. As it is, the events are mentioned, more or less, in the same order and to the same effect. There are, however, a sufficient number of minor details, where either the inscription or the *zhuan* preserve information not included in the other.

The constellation of similarities and differences supports the following scenario: After Ruxing succeeded Zhenqing as abbot of the Ciyun Temple, he organized the construction of the stūpa for Zhenqing's urn. This included commissioning an inscription. Yuan, Lu, and Wang had probably known Zhenqing personally, considering they all were patrons of the dense Buddhist network around the temples on Tiantai.<sup>44</sup> We cannot know for sure how Yuan gathered the information about Zhenqing's life before composing the inscription. To me, it seems likely that Ruxing or another student of Zhenqing provided Yuan with a written biographical sketch (*xingzhuang* 行狀). Otherwise Yuan pieced together the facts about Zhenqing from oral reports; perhaps it was a mixture of both. The stupa, and with it the inscription, was

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<sup>42</sup> What counts as significant is, as usual, somewhat subjective. I tend to focus on historical biographic information and disregard hagiographical conventions such as Zhenqing having "always harbored the intention of leaving the world of dust" (素抱出塵之志 in §2B). A scholar interested in rhetorical devices might consider that phrase significant.

<sup>43</sup> Sections §18 and §19, which relate details about Zhenqing's final days, are unique to the MGSZ. Ruxing would have known about these details and could have added them later from memory. The eulogy and the bylines of section §22, on the other hand, were specific to stūpa epitaphs, and had no place in the *zhuan*-biography. Rhymed eulogies or elegies were a firm part of funerary epitaphs since the Han Dynasty (see Davis (2015)). For translated examples, see Ebrey et al. (2019).

<sup>44</sup> This is attested by numerous other texts by these three in the Tiantai gazetteer.

probably created soon after Zhenqing's death in 1593. For the MGSZ of 1617, on the other hand, Ruxing wrote the *zhuan* based partly on his memory and partly on the inscription that he had (probably) helped to create some twenty years earlier. As is clear from the juxtaposition of the texts below, he did not simply copy and paste from the inscription, but followed its general outline and information content, sometimes adding details, sometimes omitting them. He might have had a transcript or a rubbing of the inscription, but considering the many minor differences, I imagine him one bright day walking over to his teacher's stūpa to reread the inscription, before returning to his desk and writing Zhenqing's *zhuan* for the MGSZ, which turned into one of the longest in the collection.<sup>45</sup>

	A) <i>Ming gaoseng zhuan</i> 明高僧傳 (~ <i>Xinxu gaoseng zhuan</i> 新續高僧傳)	B) Stūpa epitaph <sup>46</sup>
§1	天台慈雲寺沙門釋真清傳 (寶珠荆山 月溪)  Biography of the monk Shi Zhenqing of the Tiantai Ciyun Monastery (With remarks on Baozhu, Jingshan, and Yuexi)	象先禪師塔銘
§2	釋真清，號 <sup>47</sup> 象先，長沙 <sup>48</sup> 湘潭羅氏子也。生而穎異，脩幹玉立 <sup>49</sup> ，威儀嚴肅，不妄言笑。日誦經史數千言，終身不忘一字。父為河南縣尹，常對賓朋以大器期之。	象先禪師，長沙湘潭人也。父羅某，舉于鄉，為河南縣尹，母蔡氏。師生而穎異不羣，素抱出塵之志。

<sup>45</sup> Zhenqing has the second most extensive *zhuan* in the MGSZ. Only three of the 112 biographies in the MGSZ have more than a thousand characters; the great majority (104) of MGSZ *zhuan* consist of less than 800 characters (without punctuation).

<sup>46</sup> The text mainly follows the edition in the *Zhonghua fosizhi congshu* 中華佛寺志叢書 (Chuangdeng 2013: Vol.2, 499–501), which adds punctuation, identifies names, and provides some annotation. The gazetteer text is also (in an inferior version, without annotation) part of the CBETA corpus (CBETA, GA089).

<sup>47</sup> The MGSZ has 象先 as Zhenqing's 號, whereas the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* has this as his 字.

<sup>48</sup> *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* omits “Changsha.”

<sup>49</sup> *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* has 修幹玉成.

	<p>Shi Zhenqing, <i>aka</i> Xiangxian, was of the Luo clan from Xiangtan near Changsha [in Hunan].</p> <p>He was intelligent from birth, and grew to be tall and handsome. He was serious in his demeanor, did not speak or laugh without reason.</p> <p>Every day he read out several thousand words from the classics and histories, and throughout his life never forgot a single character.</p> <p>His father became the Magistrate of a county in Henan, where he often spoke of his great expectations for him in front of guests and visitors.</p>	<p>[The inscription identifies Zhenqing as Chan master, i.e., lineage member, which was an important qualification for a monastic leader in the late Ming. It also mentions the maiden name of his mother, which is not found in the MGSZ.]</p>
§3	<p>年十五，補邑弟子員。偶有異僧過，而目之曰：「此法門之良驥也。」</p> <p>十九因家難起，遂投南嶽伏虎巖，依寶珠和尚薙染、受具足戒。</p> <p>When he was fifteen, his name was added among the town's licentiates.<sup>50</sup> Once, an unusual monk passed by and characterized Zhenqing saying: "This is a champion for the Dharma."</p> <p>When he was nineteen, the family fell on hard times, and he went to the Fuhu Cliff on Nanyue, the Southern Marchmount, [in Hunan, where his father was from], where he took</p>	<p>年十五，補邑弟子員。博綜羣籍，為儕輩所推。有僧過而目之曰：「此法門良驥也。」</p> <p>十九投南嶽伏虎巖，依寶珠和尚薙染，名之曰「真清」，隨授具足戒。</p> <p>日持《法華經》，兼脩苦行。採汲負春，不辭勞役。人或侮置之，懼然不逆也。</p> <p>["He was recommended by members of his own cohort for his broad learning and erudition."]</p>

<sup>50</sup> 補邑弟子員 (= 生員). Zhenqing became a licentiate, the most basic qualification that would have allowed him to participate in further examinations in the imperial system (Miyazaki 1981: 33–37, Elman 2013: 5, 102). He did not take the exam, but, as the inscription says, was recommended and his name added to the roster of passed licentiates. This process was called *bugong* 補貢 'supplementing the tribute [of local licentiates to the court].'

	<p>tonsure with Master Baozhu and [soon after] was fully ordained.<sup>51</sup></p>	<p>This might be saying that his success in the lower ranks of the examination system was due to support from his peers rather than his father's connections.          "Every day he read the Lotus Sutra and practiced austerities. He drew water and husked grain tirelessly, without quitting. When someone insulted or blamed him for something, he always stayed friendly and did not contradict them."          This mention of Zhengqing's study of the Lotus Sutra is missing in the MGSZ.<sup>52]</sup></p>
<p>§4</p>	<p>令看「無字」話，自是一心參究，寒暑不輟。          至二十五從<u>珠</u>遊金陵、探<u>禹</u>穴。因舟觸岸有聲，忽有所省。<u>珠</u>大喜曰：「幸子大事已明，善宜保護。<sup>53]</sup></p> <p>After he was ordered to contemplate the [gong'an] phrase regarding the character <i>wu</i>, he concentrated on it fully and constantly, winter and summer. When he was twenty-five, he traveled with Baozhu to Nanjing, then</p>	<p><u>珠</u>閱其勤，授「無字」公案。師蚤暮參求，寒暑不輟。          二十五歲，從<u>寶珠</u>遊金陵、探<u>禹</u>穴、航海禮<u>普陀</u>大士，舟中忽有所省，侍坐間，因呈所見，<u>珠</u>然之。</p> <p>["Zhu encouraged him to strive on, and gave him the gong'an Wu."          "They crossed the ocean to pay their respects to the</p>

<sup>51</sup> He was nineteen and so could have become a monk one year later at twenty, normally the earliest age for full ordination.

<sup>52</sup> This passage is quoted and developed, however, by the author of the Fahuajing chiyANJI 法華經持驗記 (s. introduction), which highlights Zhenqing's involvement with Lotus Sūtra practice. Zhou must have read the inscription, perhaps in the gazetteer, and not merely the MGSZ.

<sup>53</sup> The *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* has 宜自持護.

	<p>visited the Tomb of Yu the Great [near Kuaiji].<sup>54</sup></p> <p>[During the journey,] the sound of the boat touching on the shore caused a sudden insight.</p> <p>Baozhu said with great delight: “Congratulations, you have now understood the Great Matter [of life and death]. Maintain and protect [this understanding] well.”</p>	<p>Bodhisattva [Guanyin] of Mt. Putuo...”<sup>55</sup> The inscription clarifies that Zhenqing’s enlightenment experience happened on a boat ride to Mt. Putuo. Instead of citing Baozhu’s words to Zhenqing, the inscription merely says he acknowledged his enlightenment.]</p>
§5	<p>珠以年高，自普陀棲隱於下天竺。時內臣張公永慕珠道行，密奏張太后，賜紫色僧伽黎衣以徵其德。</p> <p>Baozhu, already advanced in age, then went from Mount Putuo to retire at Lower Tianzhu Monastery [in Hangzhou].</p> <p>One time [many years earlier], the eunuch Master Zhang Yong (1465–1529)<sup>56</sup> had admired Baozhu’s practice, and petitioned the Empress Dowager Zhang (d. 1541)<sup>57</sup> in secret to bestow the purple robe on him as a testimony to his virtue.</p>	<p>珠道譽隆洽，僧俗咸歸。張太后聞其名，賜以紫衣。至是，以衣付師，曰：「吾道在汝矣。」且囑之遊方，以蕩滌情塵，保任大法。師以<u>珠</u>老，未忍即離。</p> <p>[“The Empress Dowager, having heard of Baozhu’s fame, had bestowed a purple robe upon him. [When Zhenqing attained enlightenment], he invested Zhenqing with that robe, saying: ‘My teachings are with you,’ and exhorted him</p>

<sup>54</sup> It was not uncommon for Buddhist pilgrims to visit non-Buddhist sites once they were on the road. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Ruhai Xiancheng visited many historical and literary sites as part of his travels (Bingenheimer 2016b). Yu the Great is moreover part of the Tiantai religious *imaginaire*. One of the prefaces to the gazetteer says that the legendary king designated the Tiantai range as the southern marches of his realm (Chuangdeng 2013, Vol.1: 5).

<sup>55</sup> Mount Putuo was among the most popular Buddhist pilgrimage sites in South China. On Mount Putuo, see Yü (1992, Ch.5) and Bingenheimer (2016a). Like the Lower Tianzhu Monastery in Hangzhou, which is mentioned in the next section, Mount Putuo was associated with Guanyin worship.

<sup>56</sup> DDPPerA: A008338, CBDB: 130349.

<sup>57</sup> DDPPerA: A023150, CBDB: 67352.



		<p>to travel widely in order to shake off all worldly desires, and [then] assume responsibilities for the great Dharma.”</p> <p>Here, the inscription provides a clear record of a Chan-style Dharma transmission from Baozhu to Zhenqing, which is omitted in the MGSZ.<sup>58]</sup></p>
<p>§6</p>	<p>珠忽一日命清曰：「吾欲觀化。無令人入。聞吾擊磬聲，當啟戶。」數日不聞動定，師密窺牖隙，見珠鼻柱垂地。越一日，聞磬，師方排闥而入，珠已泯然逝矣！</p> <p>One day, Baozhu suddenly ordered Zhenqing: “I shall enter my death meditation now. Do not allow anyone in. Only open the door when I strike the gong.”</p> <p>After several days had passed without a sound, Zhenqing peered in through the gaps of the window shutter and saw Baozhu’s head bent towards the floor.</p> <p>The next day Zhenqing heard the gong, and only then opened the door to the retreat and entered. Baozhu was already dead.</p>	<p>隨至杭之下天竺，珠閉戶習定，囑師云：「吾將觀化，汝聞吾擊磬聲，即啟鑰。」居數日，不聞動定。</p> <p>師密窺牖隙，見鼻柱垂地，已而漸縮。縮盡，擊磬一聲，師排闥而入，遂泯然而逝。因塔其骨於下天竺，今存焉。</p> <p>[The inscription adds that a stūpa for Baozhu’s remains was erected at the Lower Tianzhu monastery, and, at least until the 1590s, was still found there.]</p>

<sup>58</sup> The MGSZ, however, adds that Baozhu came to the attention of the Empress Dowager only through the intercession of the eunuch Zhang Yong, a detail which Yuan Liaofan decides not to mention in the inscription. Buddhism had not been welcome at the court of the Jiajing emperor (the son of Dowager Zhang); in fact, he enacted measures to suppress Buddhism during his reign. His mother, supported by the eunuch network, continued to provide some low-level support for Buddhist institutions, and the word “in secret” would have reminded literati readers of that. Chen (1995: Ch. 2) contains a good overview of how the Jiajing suppression affected institutional Buddhism. (The first part of this chapter was later published in Chinese in Chen (2011: 60–95).)

§7	<p>珠既化去，師乃訪鹽官古蹟，駐錫覺皇。俄患背疾。感雲長入夢，授藥病愈。</p> <p>After Baozhu had died, Zhenqing visited the old town of Yanguan [on the mouth of the Qiantang River], and took up residence in the [nearby] Juehuang Monastery<sup>59</sup>. One time, his back suddenly started to hurt. This moved [the protector deity] Guan Yu to appear to him in a dream and give him a medicine, which healed his illness.<sup>60</sup></p>	<p>時海夷嘯聚，師盤桓兩浙，入寶社，遊靈宇；隨緣化眾，即妄證真，舊黏蟬脫，新景亦消。因訪鹽官遺蹟，駐錫覺皇。俄而遭疾，恍見雲長授藥，語之曰：「汝至人也，請廣玄規，以醒末俗。」病尋愈，遂昇座講宗。</p> <p>[The inscription adds historical context, showing how Zhenqing's life was affected by the pirate incursions in the 1560s. The inscription also adds a plea by Guan Yu to explain his intervention: "[Guan Yu] said to him: 'You are a perfected one. Please promote the mysterious principle in order to awaken [us] lay followers.'<sup>61</sup>"]</p>
§8	<p>時佛慧寺月溪法師講《起信論》於吉祥，豔師乃率眾延唱<sup>62</sup>臨濟宗</p>	<p>時月溪法師在吉祥寺講《起信論》，率眾延師，</p>

<sup>59</sup> The Juehuang Temple (DDPlaA: 12836) still exists today.

<sup>60</sup> The *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* does not name the god and simply speaks of a deity 神. Guan Yu, who had many roles, is connected to the Tiantai School's founder Zhiyi (ter Haar 2017: Ch.2). The *Tiantaishan fangwai zhi* claims him as protector deity and contains several instances of Guan Yu appearing to Tiantai monks, including Zhenqing's vision (Chuangdeng 2013: Vol.1: 240–242). Guan Yu's appearance in the text might have indicated both his and Zhenqing's growing affiliation with Tiantai, and perhaps the 宗 in 遂昇座講宗 should be understood as Zhenqing teaching *Tiantai* teachings after his recovery. It is only since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century that Guan Yu became more widely considered a guardian of Buddhist monasteries (ter Haar 2017: 42, who also cites Zhenqing's story in this context).

<sup>61</sup> The terms 至人 and 玄規 in Guan Yu's appeal have a Daoist ring to it, but were at times used in Buddhist texts. 玄規 in particular was used as a literary term for "Vinaya rules", which might be the intended meaning here.

<sup>62</sup> Here reading 倡 following the HCD (s.v. 唱：「倡導；發起。後作倡。」)

旨，眾扣師室。師從容語之曰：「圓宗無象，滿教難思。我若有宗可講，非但法堂前草深一丈，即真空亦為緣慮之場；汝若有法可聽，豈特頭上安頭，實際却為聲名之境？三世諸佛、歷代祖師，不過以楔出楔，隨迷遣迷。是故會旨者山嶽易移，乖宗者錙銖難入。况《起信》之旨大徹宗乘，何須更煩切怛勉之？」眾皆稽首而退。

One time, the Dharma Master Yuexi of the Fohui Temple [in Hangzhou] lectured on the “Treatise on the Awakening of Faith” at the Jixiang Monastery. Out of admiration for Zhenqing he led his congregation to learn from him about the core teaching of the Linji School.<sup>63</sup> When they came to his door, Zhenqing calmly said:

“The perfect transmission is without sign, the full teaching difficult to discern. If I had a core transmission to lecture on, not only would the front yard of my Dharma Hall be overgrown with tall grasses,<sup>64</sup> but even true emptiness would become a site for ordinary thought. And if there was a

演暢宗旨。因赴其請，語之曰：「圓宗無象，滿教難思。我若有宗可講，即真空為緣慮之場；若汝有法可聽，即實際為名相之境。今者，以楔出楔，隨迷遣迷。會旨者山嶽易移，乖宗者錙銖難入。」

[The MGSZ account here adds two colorful similes taken from earlier *yulu* literature. Yuan Liaofan did not include them in the *stūpa* epitaph. Perhaps he found them too abstruse, or perhaps the text he was working from did not include them. We must assume they were remembered by Ruxing, who might have been a witness to the scene.

The MGSZ also mentions the temple where Yuexi used to reside in Hangzhou. That gives a sense of the route that Yuexi took on his lecture route.]

<sup>63</sup> Yuexi’s Fohui Temple (DDPlaA: 56334) was in Hangzhou. The Jixiang Temple must have been DDPlaA: 57351. (There are several 吉祥寺, but only this one is close to Haining.) The geography that emerges from these names is that Yuexi, the abbot (or at least a leading figure) from a temple in Hangzhou, went to a temple in Haining to lecture on the *Awakening of Faith* and then, probably on the way back home, led part of his audience to see Zhenqing, who resided in the Juehuang Temple near Yanguan (today’s Chang’an zhen), about midway between Hangzhou and Haining (see Map 1). The journey from Hangzhou to Haining would have taken less than 12 hours by boat.

<sup>64</sup> For the motif of the overgrown Dharma Hall, see CBETA, X 1512, 75: 243, a7–8.

	<p>Dharma you could listen to, would it not be like putting another head on your head? <sup>65</sup> And the ultimate, wouldn't it be the realm of sounds and concepts? The Buddhas of past, present and future, the line of patriarchs throughout history, have simply used wedges to remove wedges, following delusions in order to dispatch them. One who knows the principle can easily move mountains, one who deviates from it can't even begin to understand it.</p> <p>How much less does the meaning of the 'Treatise on the Awakening of Faith,' which pervades our tradition, need belabored explanations!" The group bowed, paid their respects and left.</p>	
§9	<p>師乃南遊天台，窮搜勝絕。懷無見觀之高風，誅茆其塔前三年。有荆山法師赴石梁之社，偕師至毘陵永慶，互以《楞嚴》參究。荆山歎曰：「某所講經，雖精微于佛語，聞師所論，誠出卷于塵中。」</p> <p>Later, Zhenqing went south to visit the Tiantai Mountains and their famous sites.</p> <p>Longing for Wujian [Xian]du's <sup>66</sup> (1265–1334) lofty presence, he built a</p>	<p>已而南遊天台，躋石梁，陟華頂，瞻雁宕，觀赤城。愛其山幽寂，鷲茨以居，率諸後學，精脩止觀。越三載，荆山法師邀赴海會，偕至毘陵之永慶，恆以《楞嚴》參悉，荆山言曰：「某甲講經，會精微於佛語；如師所論，乃出經卷于塵中。」</p>

<sup>65</sup> Elsewhere, Ruxing attributes this simile to Keqin Yuanwu (悟曰。頭上安頭 (CBETA 2019.Q2, T50, no. 2062, p. 916b19–20)). The earliest dated use of the phrase in the Buddhist corpus appears in a *yulu* of Huangbo dated to 857 (不可更頭上安頭嘴上加嘴 (CBETA 2019.Q2, T 2012B, 48: 385c12–13)).

<sup>66</sup> Wujian Xiandu 無見先觀 (1265–1334) DDPPerA: 325. Wujian has a biography in the *Buxu gaoseng zhuan* (CBETA 2019.Q2, T77, no. 1524, p. 460b01) and the *Tiantai shan fangwai zhi*. The gazetteer says his stūpa was next to the Shanxing

	<p>hut and lived next to [Xiandu's] stūpa for three years. [After that,] Ven. Jingshan [Yuanke] 荆山[圓珂], came to Shiliang [near where Zhenqing had built his hermitage],<sup>67</sup> and together they went to the Yongqing Monastery <sup>68</sup> in Piling, to study the <i>Lengyan Sūtra</i>. Jingshan sighed and said: “When I discuss the scriptures, I can expound the words of the Buddha with great subtlety, but only on hearing your explanations, are the texts truly lifted out of the ordinary.”</p>	<p>[The inscription lists ‘famous sites’ that Zhenqing visited on Tiantai, but does not mention him dwelling near Wujian Xiandu’s stupa. It clarifies that Yuanke <i>invited</i> Zhenqing to Piling.]</p>
§10	<p>師欲返初服，而禮部唐公荆川留結千日之期。已而，復歸天台古平田寺。臨海王司寇敬所入山訪道，訂為方外交。</p> <p>Zhenqing wanted to return to his former life [in the Tiantai Mountains], but Master Tang Jingchuan (?)<sup>69</sup> from</p>	<p>師欲反初服，而禮部唐公堅留閱藏。於是遍搜往誥，尤細閱台文。期終歸天台，敬所五[read王]<sup>72</sup>公入山探勝，訪師談道，累日不還，遂訂為方外交。</p>

Temple 善興寺 (Chuangeng 2013: 303). This might be the monastery Zhenqing depended on.

<sup>67</sup> Jingshan Yuanke 荆山圓珂 (DDPerA: 901). His only surviving work is an aligned edition of the three extant translations of the Lankavatāra Sūtra (CBETA, X 8, 1). Yuanke’s short biography in the Tiantai gazetteer says that he (like Zhenqing) was invested in both Chan and Pure Land practice (Chuangeng 2013: Vol.1, 199). The 石梁之社 here perhaps denotes the Shiqiao Hermitage 石橋菴 (DDPlaA: 14717) where Yuanke used to live, or otherwise just the district of Shiliang.

<sup>68</sup> Yongqing Temple DDPlaA: 9708. Zhenqing and Yuanke had to leave the Tiantai Mountains for this trip. Piling is in Jiangsu, about midway between Nanjing and Suzhou.

<sup>69</sup> The 禮部唐公荆川 (the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* has Jingzhou 荊州) was possibly Tang Wenxian 唐文獻 (1549–1605), who at one point served as Junior Vice Minister 右侍郎 in the ministry of rites (DDPerA: A011345, CBDB: 123861). The stūpa epitaph does not give the full name either, but supplies more information about why Tang required Zhenqing to stay.

<sup>72</sup> This seems to be a mistake in the gazetteer transcription of the inscription.

	the Ministry of Rites detained him at Jingzhou for 1000 days. After that he returned to the old Pingtian Monastery at Tiantai. <sup>70</sup> The Minister of Justice Wang Jingsuo of Linhai went into the mountains to ask for the Way, and they became friends. <sup>71</sup>	[The inscription clarifies that Tang wanted his help in reading Tiantai texts. The MGSZ, on the other hand, adds that Zhenqing stayed at the old Pingtian Monastery after his return.]
§11	<p>隨遷華頂天柱峰，修大、小彌陀懺六年。暇則敷演十乘，闡明三觀，故四方學者攀蘿而至者，戶外之履常滿。</p> <p>Later, Zhenqing moved to Tianzhu Peak in the Huading range<sup>73</sup> [of the Tiantai region], where he performed the longer and shorter Amitābha repentance ritual for six years.<sup>74</sup></p>	<p>未幾，諾構李龍淵之請，儒宗碩德望風參訪，戶外之履常滿。既而蘊空師請居萬年。</p> <p>越二稊，復入華頂。華頂南峯，高峙雲漢，世所稱天柱者。宋永明禪師曾禪定三旬于此。師高其風，廬于舊址。</p>

<sup>70</sup> This temple was first established in the early Tang. The 古 here indicates that Pingtian was the temple's former name. In Zhenqing's time, it was called the Wannian Temple 萬年寺 (DDP1aA:14782).

<sup>71</sup> This is Wang Zongmu 王宗沐 (DDPerA: 19240) (1524–1593), an influential historian and politician. The expression 方外交, translated here simply as “became friends”, more precisely denotes friendships between monastics and non-monastics. Wang was a distant uncle of Wang Shixing, the calligrapher of the stūpa epitaph, and the father of Wang Shichang 王士昌 (1561–1626) and Wang Shiqi 王士琦 (1551–1618), both of whom contributed to stūpa inscriptions on Mount Tiantai (Chuangdeng 2013: Vol. 1, p. 314) and elsewhere. According to Hucker (sub voc.), 司寇 is a colloquial name for “Minister of Justice,” perhaps a slight exaggeration—Wang Zongmu was “only” *vice* minister for a short time around 1575. He was also in touch with other influential Buddhists, e.g., had at least one Chan encounter dialogue with Yunqi Zhuhong (CBETA 2021.Q2, B277, J33:108a5, translated and discussed in Eichman (2016: 288–290).

<sup>73</sup> Probably staying at the Huading Temple at the foot of Tianzhu. The temple was established 936 by Deshao, who built and rebuilt several temples in the Tiantai mountains. Tianzhu Peak is also associated with Zhiyi, the *de facto* founder of the Tiantai School.

<sup>74</sup> While different versions of Pure Land repentance circulated in China and Japan (cf. Nara 1978), the Amitābha repentance rituals referred to here belong to a group of Pure Land repentance rituals used in the Tiantai school since the Song Dynasty. The rituals were supposed to help with obtaining a vision of Amithābha Buddha

	<p>Whenever he was free, he would explain the ten modes of contemplation [in Tiantai meditation] and the three observations.<sup>75</sup> Thus, learned men from everywhere would make the climb [up Tianzhu Peak]—his anteroom was always filled with the shoes [of visitors].</p>	<p>大眾雲集，師為結社，修大彌陀懺三年，復修小彌陀懺三年。鬼贊台宗，精敷五悔。</p> <p>[The inscription adds that he was invited to teach at the Longyuan Temple in Zuili (Jiaying).<sup>76</sup> It differs slightly from the MGSZ in that it says that it was here, not on Tianzhu, that Zhenqing had such great success with literati that “his anteroom was always full of shoes.”</p> <p>According to the inscription, Zhenqing was invited by the</p>
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and, eventually, entering his Pure Land. The Amitābha Repentance Rituals mentioned here were composed by Ciyun Zunshi 慈雲遵式 (964–1032), who was also called 慈雲懺主 “The Penance Master of Ciyun.” Stevenson (1999) outlines Zunshi’s life and his promotion of rituals among the laity. Zhenqing must have been acutely aware of Zunshi’s career, and there are many parallels in their biographies. Zhenqing practiced Pure Land Repentance according to Zunshi’s manuals and rebuilt Ciyun Monastery, which Zunshi had revived in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century (for penance rituals in early Tiantai, see Stevenson 1986: 72–75). The stūpa epitaph clarifies that the rituals were not Zhenqing’s individual, private practice, but communal rituals involving lay-people. Here too he follows Zunshi, who promoted the Tiantai ritual system, especially the repentance rituals, among a lay audience. Like Zunshi, Zhenqing fell sick and had a dream-vision of a guardian spirit (§7, cf. Stevenson 1999: 344). Like Zunshi, he established a Pure Land society (§11). Zhenqing followed his teacher Baozhu to Mt. Putuo and the Tianzhu monasteries in Hangzhou, the main site for Guanyin worship, which was also central to Zunshi’s practice (§4–5, cf. Stevenson 1999: 345–346, 358–359). Moreover, Zunshi had served as abbot in one of the Tianzhu monasteries from 1015 to 1032. Perhaps these are not mere coincidences and Zunshi, who is mentioned explicitly only once (§16B), was indeed a model for Zhenqing.

<sup>75</sup> Translation following Swanson (2018: Vol. 3, Glossary).

<sup>76</sup> DDPlaA: PL12703.

		<p>abbot Yunkong to stay at his Wannian monastery.<sup>77</sup></p> <p>We also see Zhenqing again (as in §9) staying at a site because he admired a former resident, in this case the famous Chan master Yongming Yanshou (905–976).<sup>78</sup></p> <p>With the regard to the repentance ritual, the inscription clarifies that three years were spent on the larger, and three on the smaller Amitābha repentance, and moreover that these rites were part of Zhenqing’s interaction with lay followers who attended as part of an association (<i>she</i> 社).<sup>79]</sup></p>
§12	<p>一夕夢琳宮綺麗，寶樹參差，見彌陀三聖。師方展拜，傍有沙彌，授與一牌，書曰：「戒香薰修。」寤，知中品往生之象也。</p>	<p>居無何，夢見琳宮綺麗，列坐彌陀三聖，師即展拜。有沙彌授一牌，書「成[read 戒]<sup>82</sup>香熏修」四</p>

<sup>77</sup> Mingzhao Yunkong 明照蘊空 (1533–1589) DDPPerA: 8019. The two must have found it remarkable that their teachers shared the same Dharma name. Mingzhao’s Baozhu lived a generation earlier on Mount Putuo. Mingzhao raised funds to rebuild the Wannian Monastery, which might have been an inspiration for Zhenqing’s own rebuilding projects.

<sup>78</sup> Yanshou’s dates are often given as 904–975. According to the *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (CBETA 2022.Q1, T 2076, 51: 422a17–19), however, he died on the 26th day in the 12th lunar month of 開寶八年, which would be 976.02.03 (proleptic Gregorian). Whether he was born in 904 or 905 is hard to say, both years are merely extrapolated from the information that he died with 72 (=71 + 1 虛歲).

<sup>79</sup> With the establishment of such societies, Zhenqing follows the past practice of Song Dynasty Tiantai monks such as Zhili and Zunshi (see Getz 1999).

<sup>82</sup> This seems to be a transcription mistake in the gazetteer; it is unlikely that this central phrase was misspelled by Yuan Liaofan.



	<p>One night he dreamed of a marvelous palace, surrounded by thickets of precious, bejeweled trees. There, he saw the Amitābha Triad.<sup>80</sup> As he was going to prostrate himself, a novice appeared at his side and handed him a plaque. The inscription said: “Steeped in the Scent of Precepts”.</p> <p>When he awakened, he understood this to be a sign that he had attained the fifth rank of rebirth in the Pure Land [out of nine].<sup>81</sup></p>	<p>字。寤，知中品往生之文，為眾述之。</p>
§13	<p>蓋師日勤五悔，密持《梵網心地品》及《十六觀經》為常課，是亦精誠之所感耳！</p> <p>This is because Zhenqing diligently practiced the penance the five elements of repentance<sup>83</sup> every day, and ‘in secret’ [i.e. for himself, not as</p>	<p>蓋師日持《梵網經》、《十六觀經》，寒暑不輟。</p>

80 In the classic Pure Land School constellation, this would be Amitābha flanked by Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta. The term 三聖 is a Buddhist appropriation of a Confucian term.

81 The phrase *jiexiang xunxiu* 戒香薰[read 熏]修 is from the explanation of the different ranks of rebirth in the Pure Land found in the *Guan wuliangshoufo jing* 觀無量壽佛經：「中品中生者，若有眾生，若一日一夜持八戒齋，若一日一夜持沙彌戒，若一日一夜持具足戒，威儀無缺。以此功德，迴向願求生極樂國。戒香薰修，如此行者命欲終時，見阿彌陀佛與諸眷屬放金色光，持七寶蓮花至行者前。」(CBETA 2019.Q1, T 365, 12: 345b18–24). The phrase also appears in Shandao’s commentary 《觀無量壽佛經疏》卷4：「次就中品中生位中，亦先舉，次辨，後結。即有其七……四、從戒香薰修下」(CBETA 2019.Q1, T 1753, 37: 275c14)]. Both works were widely used at the time and the implication of the phrase (i.e., his middling rank in the Pure Land) would have been clearly understood in Zhenqing’s circle. This ranking of Zhenqing in terms of rebirth in the Pure Land is alluded to again in §19. “Fifth rank” here should be understood as less than expected, making the dream public—the inscription adds “he told the assembly about it”—was perhaps a mark of humility, though perhaps other factors were at play.

83 This is the Tiantai ritual mentioned as supplementary practice in the *Mohezhi guan* 摩訶止觀 (CBETA 2021.Q2, T 1911, 46: 98a13). See Stevenson (1986).

	part of a communal recitation] recited the <i>Fanwang jing</i> <sup>84</sup> and the <i>Shiliu guan jing</i> daily. <sup>85</sup> Thus, [the foretelling of his rebirth] is the effect of the seriousness of his practice.	
§14	<p>嘗示眾曰：「大乘八萬，小乘三千，實整六和之模範，出三界之梯航也。今世之高流，輕蔑律儀，惟恃見解，遂令後學不遵佛制，輒犯規繩。本自無愆，誤造深罪，饒他才過七步，辯若懸河，不免識墮鐵城，終未解脫。汝等勉之！」</p> <p>He once said to his audience: “The 80,000 practices of the Mahāyāna, the 3,000 regulations of the Hīnayāna, are all in fact guides and examples for the six harmonies [of correct behavior in the Vinaya]; they are a ladder, a ferry to leave the three realms. The elites of today make light of the precepts and solely depend on understanding by insight. This results in their students not respecting what the Buddha instituted [in the Vinaya] and thus deviating from the norm. Although this is not the fault of these [students], their misunderstanding causes them to commit grave sins. Even if they are able to preach</p>	<p>常語徒眾云：「大乘八萬，小乘三千，乃整六和之模範，出三界之梯航也。世之高流，信心輕戒，遂令初學觸事成非。是故性無穢淨，而且當順性行尸；法無持毀，而且當護法離妄。不得輕如來所制禁戒，令眾生妄起罪過也。」</p> <p>師平日悟境極玄，多諸妙應，皆絕口不談。而獨舉此者，欲人精持尸波羅蜜耳。其曰中品中生，亦謙言誘人也。其年，王公問道國清，自歎聞所未聞，遺以道衣寶香。</p> <p>[The inscription adds a characterization of Zhenqing, saying he was given to speak about deep experiences or supernatural events, but only extolled others to keep <i>śīla pāramitā</i>, i.e., the Vinaya.</p>

84 The apocryphal *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (T. 1484) describes itself as being merely the “mind-ground chapter” of a much larger work. *De facto* therefore the 梵網心地品 is the 梵網經, as corroborated by the inscription. (The *Fanwang jing* is translated by Muller & Tanaka 2017.)

85 The 十六觀經 is another name for the *Guan wuliang shou jing* 觀無量壽經 (T. 365) which describes a series of sixteen visualizations leading to rebirth in the Pure Land. The 常課 here seems to denote an extra recitation that he did in private beyond the communal recitation and rituals.

	brilliantly extempore <sup>86</sup> , their arguments mellifluous like a river, they will still go to hell, and in the end fail to attain liberation. Please make a strong effort [to act differently and keep the precepts].” <sup>87</sup>	The inscription also mentions an encounter between him and a Mr. Wang, either Wang Shixing, or his uncle Wang Zongmu.]
§15	<p>萬曆丁亥八月，蒙慈聖宣文明肅皇太后遣使降旨褒崇賜金紋紫方袍以寵之。</p> <p>十月，王太初居士因丁內艱，請師就永明禪室闡《妙宗鈔》，百日為期。</p> <p>時台郡王理邢某，親登雲嶠而設供焉。</p> <p>戊子歲儉，群盜蜂起，相戒無敢入師之室。</p> <p>In the eighth lunar month of 1587, the Empress Dowager Cisheng <sup>88</sup> , graciously sent a messenger and favored Zhenqing with a gold-embroidered purple robe.</p> <p>In the tenth month the mother of the layman Wang Taichu died,<sup>89</sup> and he</p>	<p>丁亥八月，蒙慈聖太后降旨褒崇，特賜金紫方袍，以旌其德。</p> <p>十月，太初居士命就其廬，演揚道旨。</p> <p>郡之理刑王公，亦親登雲嶠而設供為。</p> <p>戊子歲儉，羣盜蜂起，相戒無敢入師之室者。</p>

<sup>86</sup> *Cai guo qi bu* 才過七步. Alludes to a story told in (among other places) the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (Ch. *Wenxue* 文學), where a minister must compose a poem in seven steps to keep his head (Mather 1976 [2002]: 133–132).

<sup>87</sup> This call for a stricter interpretation of the Vinaya is in line with the concerns of some other contemporary figures, like Zhuhong, whose collected works contain numerous Vinaya texts. It also continues a historical concern within the Tiantai tradition, e.g., as seen in Yuanzhao 元照 (1048–1116), who also combined Pure Land practice while theorizing and revitalizing the Vinaya School from a Tiantai perspective (for an overview see Lai 2010: Vol. 9: 495–516).

<sup>88</sup> According to the compendium of posthumous titles of the Ming, the full title *Cisheng xuanwen mingsu huangtaihou* 慈聖宣文明肅皇太后 used here by Ruxing was bestowed by the Wanli emperor on his mother in 1582 (*Ming shiji huibian* 明謚紀彙編 Ch.4, p.8b [https://www.kanripo.org/text/KR2m0031/004]).

<sup>89</sup> This is again Wang Shixing 王士性 (1547–1598), *jinshi*, author, traveler, and patron of Buddhism, who also contributed to Zhenqing’s stūpa epitaph. DDPPerA:

	<p>entreated Zhengqing to teach the <i>Miaozong chao</i><sup>90</sup> at the Yongming Chan Room for a hundred days.</p> <p>At one time the Judicial Bureau official of Tai County, a certain Mr. Wang,<sup>91</sup> himself climbed up the cloudy peaks [of Tiantai] and brought offerings.</p> <p>In the year 1588 there was a crop failure, and the region swarmed with bandits. But they agreed among themselves that they would not dare to enter the master's room.</p>	
§16	<p>橋李五臺居士陸光祖虛芙蓉之席見招，辭不赴。</p> <p>忽謂眾曰：</p> <p>「桃源之慈雲，實懶融四世孫為開山，唐天寶賜額曰雲居山、曰安國。五代德韶國師中興，為第二道場，永明壽禪師鬚髮之所。今坐禪石，永明庵故址在焉！韶公常領徒五百，說法此地。」</p>	<p>五臺居士虛芙蓉法席見招，辭不赴。</p> <p>山中龍象，不期而會者常百餘人。雖茅舍數椽，儼如巨剎也。</p> <p>偶起蛟棟摧，道俗羣然欲新之，師拒曰：</p> <p>「茲山陰嵐昏霧，徒消施力，甯適長棲？吾愛桃源絕頂，山稱東掖，剎曰慈</p>

A013719, CBDB: 35066. Instead of the polite, but arcane 丁內艱, the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* has simply 母喪.

<sup>90</sup> This is the *Guan wuliangshoufo jing shu miaozong chao* 觀無量壽佛經疏妙宗鈔 (T 1751, different edition: X 407) in six fascicles by Zhili 知禮 (960–1028), a sub-commentary on Zhiyi's commentary on the *Guan wuliangshoufo jing*, the *Guan wuliangshou fo jing shu* 觀無量壽佛經疏 (T 1750). It is an interesting choice. On the one hand, it is about a Pure Land sūtra and therefore appropriate for the occasion. On the other hand, the *Miaozong chao* is more than a simple commentary, and dives deep into Tiantai doctrine. To read it with Zhenqing must have been like a master class for advanced students, and attests to the serious intellectual interest of Wang Shixing and his circle. It also indicates again Zhenqing's continued involvement in the teaching of Pure Land visualizations, already mentioned in §13.

<sup>91</sup> Probably Wang Daoxian 王道顯 (DDPerA: 8137). The *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan* mistakenly has 台郡邢主理 instead of MGSZ 台郡王理邢, perhaps reading 邢 as a family name (it is more likely an unusual variant, or perhaps a scribal error, for 刑). The inscription has 郡之理刑王公.

<p>昔螺溪寂法師請復台教，諦觀亦親禮足，皆此寺也。今為豪民奪之，將為掩骨之所。竊思，朝廷千數百年之香火，一旦為俗子葬地，誰之罪也？」遂罄衣鉢，贖歸之，將謀興建。</p> <p>The “Wutai Layman” Lu Guangzu<sup>92</sup> of Zuili once invited Zhenqing, preparing a Dharma Seat,<sup>93</sup> but he declined the invitation.</p> <p>One day, Zhenqing abruptly told his followers: “The Ciyun Monastery at Taoyuan,<sup>94</sup> was actually founded by a fourth generation student of [Niutou Fa]rong (594–657). In the Tianbao reign (742–756 CE) of the Tang it was bestowed an [imperial gate] plaque naming it ‘Yunju Shan 雲居山,’ and another plaque naming it ‘Anguo 安國’ [Monastery]. During the Five Dynasties, the National Preceptor</p>	<p>雲，即式尊者得道之所。鳴泉在澗，松影參差；綠蕨可摘，胡麻可食。今為俗子所有。倘得此地，予復何求？」於是攜錫吳壤，謀諸信士，得金一鎰。廢刹方歸，荆榛始闢，將圖營建。</p> <p>[The inscription gives some context to Zhenqing’s wish to rebuild or rather repossess the Ciyun Monastery. What in the MGSZ is an abrupt change of topic, is here occasioned by a suggestion to make the temporary quarters (probably on Tianzhu Peak mentioned above) permanent. Zhenqing replies that he would rather restore the Ciyun Monastery</p>
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<sup>92</sup> Lu Guangzu was involved in the production of the stūpa epitaph as well as other texts in the Tiantai Gazetteer.

<sup>93</sup> Taking the 芙蓉 in 芙蓉之席 (inscription: 芙蓉法席) as “lotus”. There is also the possibility that it denotes the place name Furong, in which case Lu Guangzu invited Zhenqing to Furong in Taizhou (DDPlA: 56964). Zuili is usually spelled 橋李 (DDPlA: 12746).

<sup>94</sup> DDPlA: 14697. There is a short entry on the Ciyun Monastery 慈雲寺 in the Tiantai gazetteer (CBETA 2019.Q1, GA088, no. 89, p. 160a4), which contains further information, but does not do justice to its importance for the development of both Tiantai and Chan Buddhism. Ciyun was the center for Deshao and his student Yanshou, the apex of the Fayan School within the Chan tradition. Deshao rebuilt the place in winter 936/937 CE, but the plaque naming it “Ciyun” was granted only in 1008. Xiji and his students used the monastery as a basis for the rejuvenation of the Tiantai School which culminated in Zunshi and Zhili. The temple was destroyed at the beginning of the Ming and again rebuilt by Zhenqing and Ruxing. This passage therefore describes the beginning of an important restoration project that Ruxing carried forward.

	<p>Deshao (891–972) restored it.<sup>95</sup> It was the second monastery he rebuilt [out of many at Tiantai]. This is where Yongming [Yan]shou took tonsure [with Deshao]. Today, there still are the ruins of Yongming’s hermitage at the ‘Stone of Sitting in Chan.’ Here, Deshao often led the assembly of his students [including Yanshou], to teach them Dharma.</p> <p>At this monastery, too, Dharma Master Luoxi [Xi]ji (919–987) once revived the Tiantai teachings, and [the Korean monk] Chegwan became his disciple here.<sup>96</sup> Today, some powerful local families have seized control of the land, and use it to bury their dead. I do ask myself, whose fault is it [but our own], that the site where the imperial incense fires burned for more than 1000 years, has now become a graveyard for commoners?”</p> <p>He then went about to sell his bowl and clothes in order to buy the site back, because he was planning to rebuild the monastery.</p>	<p>instead. This is also the only time that Zunshi is mentioned explicitly: the temple is praised as “the place where the Elder [Zun]shi attained the Way.” The MGSZ mentions different figures.]</p>
§17	<p>俄雲間 陸宗伯平泉聘說法于本一院。李方伯冲涵聘講於桐川。再畢返棹嘉禾龍淵，歛抱疾，告門人曰：「夜來神人啟我為魏府子，其富貴非吾所志也。」</p>	<p>雲間 陸宗伯、唐、董二太史，敦請闡法于本一禪院。講席再畢，馮太史、李方伯復有桐川之聘。至嘉禾</p>

<sup>95</sup> It was possibly destroyed in the 845 CE persecution of Buddhism.

<sup>96</sup> Luoxi Xiji 螺溪義寂 (919–987) (DDPerA: A010042) and Chegwan (fl. 960) (DDPerA: A001826) have been credited with acquiring lost copies of Tiantai texts from Korea. This claim is doubtful, however, and modern scholarship considers it more likely that the texts were recovered from Japan (see Shen 2000 and Brose 2008).

<p>遂付衣鉢，遺囑弟子如法闍維，盡發長物於五臺雲棲、西興，五處飯僧。</p> <p>[However,] just then [he was called away from Tiantai, when] first the Director of the Court of the Imperial Clan, Lu Pingquan<sup>97</sup> of Yunjian, invited him to teach at the Benyi [Chan]yuan [near Shanghai],<sup>98</sup> and then the Provincial Administration Commissioner Li Chonghan<sup>99</sup> invited him to lecture at Tongchuan [in Anhui].<sup>100</sup> Once done there, he went back via boat to the Longyuan Monastery in Jiahe, where he fell sick.<sup>101</sup> He told his followers: “At night in a dream a spirit came to me and revealed that I would be reborn as a son in a wealthy family with the surname Wei, but such fortune I do not</p>	<p>之龍淵，歛抱疾告眾曰：「夜神人啟我為魏府子，吾不往。」</p> <p>隨付衣鉢，約期以終。</p> <p>[The inscription adds three names of Hanlin officials who invited Zhenqing.<sup>105</sup> This provides additional information for a better understanding of his network. The itinerary is somewhat different in the inscription. While the MGSZ has Zhenqing falling ill on the way back from Tongchuan, the inscription seems to say he fell ill on the way to Tongchuan.]</p>
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<sup>97</sup> Aka Lu Shusheng 陸樹聲 (DDPerA: A004083, CBDB: 33843) (1509–1605).

<sup>98</sup> DDPlaA: PL8478. Near today’s Shanghai.

<sup>99</sup> DDPerA: A008359.

<sup>100</sup> Aka Guangde 廣德 (DDPlaA: PL17007) in eastern Anhui, also quite a bit away from Tiantai.

<sup>101</sup> Zhenqing has stayed at this temple before, as the inscription mentions in §11B.

<sup>105</sup> Probably Tang Wenxian 唐文獻 (see also §10), the famous painter Dong Qichang 董其昌 (DDPerA: A004662, CBDB: 35003), and perhaps Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎 (DDPerA: A007548, CBDB: 0030240). All these people knew each other and came from the same region (cf. CBDB for some of the textual connections between them).

	<p>desire.”<sup>102</sup> He then passed on his robe and bowl [to me, Ruxing,] and asked his disciples to cremate him according to the rules. All his other things<sup>103</sup> were to be taken, some to the Yunqi Monastery on Mount Wutai, the Xixing village [near Hangzhou, etc., in all] five places, to pay for the upkeep of monks there.<sup>104</sup></p>	
§18	<p>有勉服藥石者，師謝曰：「生死藥能拒乎？吾淨土緣熟，聖境冥現。此人間世固不久矣！」 是歲正月七日乃絕粒，惟飲檀香水而已。期於二十九日告終。每日雖米漿不入於口，與眾說無生法，誨諭進修而拳拳弗倦。</p> <p>Some urged him to take medicine, but he refused, saying: “What medicine is</p>	

<sup>102</sup> *Wei fu zi* 魏府子 “son of the Wei clan”. One reviewer suggested that this could be a reference to Weifu Dajue 魏府大覺, a first generation student of Linji Yixuan. The meaning of the dream could therefore be that he would rather not be reborn into a Chan lineage, but rather in the Pure Land. Considering that 魏府子 is used only here in the canon and 魏府 was not widely been used as a moniker for the Linji lineage, I prefer a more literal reading. This is the third dream related in the biography. The others are at §7 (Guan Yu) and §12 (attesting cultivation of the precepts). This last one does not seem to fit very well; usually dreams are only mentioned when they foretell events that actually occur. Here a spirit makes a prediction of rebirth that is rejected by Zhenqing. Like with a *lectio difficilior* in textual studies, I consider parts of the story that do not quite fit the narrative as rather more credible and likely to have occurred. They also attest to the personal nature of what was remembered about Zhenqing. Later accounts of Zhenqing’s rebirth in Pure Land compilations have edited out this inconvenient dream and focused on the prediction of rebirth in §12.

<sup>103</sup> 長物 (here *zhàngwù*) a Vinaya term for the surplus items a monk was allowed to have.

<sup>104</sup> I am unsure how to parse 西興五處. 西興 is probably the market town near Hangzhou, and if there was an 五處 temple there, 西興五處 would be parallel to 五臺雲樓. The stūpa epitaph does not mention the distribution of Zhenqing’s assets, and the sentence was probably added by Ruxing himself, who as Zhenqing’s successor would have arranged the distribution.



	<p>there against birth and death? My time to enter the Pure Land has come; the realm of the holy ones is appearing at the border of life and death. Surely, this human life is almost done.”</p> <p>After the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the first lunar month of that year he stopped eating grains and drank only some water perfumed with sandalwood incense. He announced his death for the 29<sup>th</sup> day (1593.3.1). During that period, although not even eating rice gruel, he expounded the Dharma of non-arising every day, and exhorted the assembly to keep practicing tirelessly.</p>	
§19	<p>至夕乃起別眾曰：「吾即逝矣，無以世俗事累我。」</p> <p>眾請曰：「和尚往生淨土。九品奚居？」曰：「中品中生也。」</p> <p>眾曰：「胡不上品生耶？」曰：「吾戒香所薰位止中品。」</p> <p>When his last evening came, he took his leave from the assembly, saying “I am going to leave now. Do not bother me with mundane matters anymore.” [Someone in] the assembly asked: “Going from here, which of the nine ranks will you assume when reborn in the Pure Land?” He said: “The second of the middle rank [i.e., rank five].” The assembly: “Why won't you be reborn in the upper ranks?” He said: “The ‘perfume of my precepts’ reaches only the middle rank.”<sup>106</sup></p>	

<sup>106</sup> This refers back to the dream prophecy he received earlier in his life (§12). Perhaps the point is reiterated here also to foreshadow the scents that different people smell at his cremation.

<p>§20</p>	<p>言畢泊然而逝，延五日顏色紅潤如生，手足溫軟，怡容可掬，吊者無敢下拜。荼毗日天色霽明，淨無纖翳，舉火之際，忽有片雲，如蓋凝覆其上，灑微雨數點。烟焰起時，異香充塞，內自殿閣僧房，外自路人船子，所聞種種，隨力不同。</p> <p>With these words, he passed away quietly. Five days later his cheeks were still rosy as if alive, his hands and feet warm and soft. His countenance was happy and so lifelike that the mourners hardly dared to bow down [as part of the funeral rites]. On the day of his cremation, the weather had cleared up, and not a cloud was in the sky. But the moment the fire was lighted, a little cloud appeared suddenly. It grew denser just above the cremation site, like a canopy, and gently sprinkled a few drops of rain. When the fire arose, an extraordinary scent filled the air, and everybody, those in the monastery halls and monks' quarters, as well as those outside, the people on the roads and in their boats, all smelled something different, according to their powers [of insight].</p>	<p>延五日，面如生。荼毘日，異香滿路。遠近聞香而至者，幾萬餘人。聞者或如旃檀，或如沉水，或如花氣濃郁，或如五穀芬芳，種種不齊。是日天大晴明，四際無翳。忽陰雲乍合，下雨數點，俄頃復晴。</p> <p>[The inscription details the different scents people smelled at the cremation, sandalwood, aloeswood, etc. The inscriptions states that more than ten thousand people came to the cremation. It must have been a major event for the religious community at Tiantai.]</p>
<p>§21</p>	<p>火餘骨有三色，而鏘鏘有聲。紅者如桃，白者如玉，綠者潤似琅玕<sup>107</sup>，猶香氣郁郁。師生於嘉靖丁酉十二月二十六日。清寂於萬曆癸巳正月二十九日，世壽五十七，臘三十八。如惺抱骨，初建塔慈雲之南</p>	<p>師生于嘉靖丁酉十二月二十六日(1538.2.5)，寂于萬曆癸巳正月二十九日(1593.3.1)。初約二十七日(1593.2.27)，候如惺未至，</p>

107 Read 琅玕.

	<p>岡。壬寅遷于寺西螺師山右，繡文溪之上。 武塘了凡居士袁黃撰銘。</p> <p>The bones remaining in the ashes were of three colors and made a clear sound [when tapped]. The red ones were red like peach blossoms, the white ones like white jade, the green was lustrous like green jade, all had a pleasant scent. Zhenqing was born on the 26th day of the twelfth lunar month in the Jiajing year with the cyclical signs <i>dingyou</i> (1538.2.5). Zhenqing died on the 29th day of the first lunar month in the Wanli year with the cyclical signs <i>guisi</i> (1593.3.1). He was 57 years old, and had been a monk for 38 years. [I,] Ruxing collected his bones and first built a stūpa [for them] at the southern slope of Ciyun Monastery. In 1602, it was moved to right side of Mount Luoshi west of the monastery, on the banks of the Xiuwen River. Yuan Huang, the lay-follower Liaofan from Wutang, wrote an inscription.</p>	<p>又遲二日而化。云壽五十七，臘三十八。 師性靈見卓，幾于生知，而參求綿密，至忘寢食。明知三千理具，不從法外求心，而虛己從人，無一德不師，無一善不採。明知五住性惡，不向真中斷妄，而嚴持戒律，一言一動，無不可為三界毘尼者。性耽靜謐，志在巖阿，而隨緣化導，不避塵穢。豈非如來所遣、行如來事者歟？ 弟子如惺，抱遺骨渡江，塔于天台東掖、慈雲之南崗。</p> <p>[The inscription lacks the description of the <i>śarīra</i>, but adds that Zhenqing died two days later than he had predicted, because Ruxing had not yet arrived.<sup>108</sup> The MGSZ, completed in 1617, notes that the stūpa had been moved. The inscription contains a closing description of Zhenqing's character, again emphasizing his strict maintenance of the Vinaya.]</p>
§22		<p>虔請予銘，銘曰： 天台之山兮雲樹茫茫 天台之水兮兼[read 兼]葭蒼蒼</p>

<sup>108</sup> This is not meant as criticism, but rather as praise of Ruxing, because it implies a parallel to the Buddha legend (where the Buddha could not be cremated until his successor Mahākāśyapa was present).

		<p>有伊人兮皎若冰霜          神遊沙界兮豈滯一方          虛空可裂兮不朽此藏          Respectfully we offer a          eulogy<sup>109</sup>:          “Ah, the Tiantai mountains          —their vast forests in the          clouds,          And the Tiantai rivers—their          reeds pale and grey,          There was that man, bright,          like icy frost          Wandering through worlds          without end, our souls, how          could they linger in one place          for long?          Still, may the skies be rent          asunder, before this stūpa          shall decay.”</p> <p>賜同進士出身<sup>110</sup> · 資政大          夫 · 太子太保 · 吏部尚          書 · 五臺居士陸光祖篆額  <sup>111</sup></p>
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<sup>109</sup> The eulogy is a variation on the *Shijing* 詩經 lines: 蒹葭蒼蒼白露為霜 所謂伊人在水一方, which Legge (1865[1991]: IV, 195) translates: “The reeds and rushes are deeply green, And the white dew is turned into hoarfrost. The man of whom I think, Is somewhere about the water.” (Considering the late autumn frost, 蒼蒼 might be better translated with something like “pale and grey” here.) The eulogy preserves the rhyme 蒼 – 霜 – 方, and continues it with 茫 and 藏. The 伊人 here is Zhenqing, of course. The *Shijing* poem, which literati readers would have known very well, continues: 溯洄從之 道阻且長。溯遊從之 宛在水中央。 “I go up the stream in quest of him, But the way is difficult and long. I go down the stream in quest of him, And lo! he is right in the midst of the water.” (*ibid.*)

<sup>110</sup> *Tong jinshi chushen* 同進士出身 = third *jinshi* grade. There were three grades of *jinshi*: the “*jinshi* with Honors” 進士及第, the “Regular *Jinshi* 進士出身, and the “Associate *jinshi*” 同進士出身.

<sup>111</sup> The [bei]’e [碑]額 is the top part of the tablet, which usually bears the title of the inscription and/or the name of the deceased. In the late Ming it was often written

		<p>The Associate <i>jinshi</i>, ... the Wutai Layman Lu Guangzu wrote the title of the inscription in seal script.</p> <p>賜同進士出身·前奉敕贊畫·經略薊遼保定山東等處軍務·加四品服兵部職方司主事·<u>了凡居士袁黃</u>撰</p> <p>The Associate <i>jinshi</i>, .... the lay follower Liaofan, <i>aka</i> Yuan Huang drafted the text.</p> <p>賜同進士出身·中憲大夫·太僕寺少卿·提督京營·河南按察司副使·前吏科右給事中經筵官·大[read 太]<sup>112</sup>初居士 王士性書丹</p> <p>The Associate <i>jinshi</i>, .... the lay follower Taichu, <i>aka</i> Wang Shixing, wrote the calligraphy in red letters.<sup>113</sup></p> <p>[The inscription ends with listing the literati involved in producing it. The MGSZ mentions only Yuan Liaofan, who composed the main body of the text.]</p>
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in the archaic seal script, in this respect echoing the cover stone of traditional funerary inscriptions *muzhiming* 墓志銘. Different from the openly visible stūpa epitaph, *muzhiming* were placed within graves, but otherwise in many aspects their production resembles that of stūpa epitaphs (see Ebrey et al. (2019: 6–9) and Davis (2015: 4–33) for the production and characteristics of *muzhiming*).

<sup>112</sup> Probably a scribal error by the editors of the gazetteer.

<sup>113</sup> See the introduction section 1.2, for more on these three. I omit the various titles that they held, which serve as a condensed CV.

## References

### Abbreviations

- CBDB: Chinese Biographical Database  
(<https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/cbdb/home>)
- CBETA: Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association  
(<http://cbeta.org>, <http://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw>)
- DDPerA: Dharma Drum Person Authority  
(<http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person>)
- DDPlaA: Dharma Drum Place Authority  
(<http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/>)
- HDCD: *Hanyu dacidian* 漢語大詞典
- MGSZ: *Ming gaosengzhuan* 明高僧傳 (T. 2062)
- T: *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經
- §: Reference to sections in the translation, §xA means the referenced content exists only in the *zhuan*, §xB means the referenced content exists only in the epitaph

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