

BUDDHIST MONKS AND CHINESE POEMS:  
SONG DYNASTY MONASTIC LITERARY CULTURE

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

AND THE COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES

OF STANFORD UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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MAY 2016

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes participation by Buddhist monks in the *shi* 詩 poetic tradition during China's Northern and Southern Song dynasties (960-1127; 1127-1279). This work shows the intersecting contexts in which monks composed and exchanged formal poetry. By focusing on monastic literary cultures, I demonstrate the limits of modern conceptions of poetry that are anachronistic to pre-modern Chinese Buddhism, and I offer an alternate set of interpretive strategies. Poems by monks were mostly social or occasional works written at particular events during regular monastic life. Rather than search for poems that fulfill modern ideals of Buddhist or religious poetry, this dissertation centers on the kinds of poems that were typically written, exchanged, and preserved. Throughout this work, I read individual poems against prescriptive monastic rules, scripture and Song era scriptural commentaries, and contemporaneous literary criticism. These competing contexts are integral to a robust understanding of monks' poetry as part of monastic literary culture rather than as Buddhist poetry.

This monastic literary culture was marked by anxiety over the production of poetry. Chinese monks expressed concern regarding tensions between Buddhist monastic ideals of equanimity and emotion-suffused literary conventions. I compare texts from prescriptive genres, including legislation against poetry in monastic legal codes (*li* 律 and *qinggui* 清規) and prohibitions on poetry in meditation manuals, to demonstrate a pervasive unease about the power of poetry in the monastic community. This monastic anxiety manifests in poetic topoi such as the “poetry demons” (*shimo* 詩魔) that interfere with progress on the monastic path. Despite prohibitions in prescriptive literature, monks wrote prodigious amounts of poetry.

Song era literary critics recorded comments on “monastic poetry” (*sengshi* 僧詩). This native category locates monks' poems at the margins of the Chinese literary tradition. The traditional disparagements expressed in Song era “remarks on poetry” (*shihua* 詩話) texts and in colophons to collections of monks' poetry have been uncritically perpetuated in modern studies of Chinese literature. Such biases distort our ability to understand the ways that monks used poetry. The category of ‘monastic

category' is important for understanding historical reception, but is unreliable as a term for critical analysis.

By contrast, I focus on monks' poems in terms of function, genre, and rhetoric. Poems written by monks in the farewell mode (*songbie* 送別) are among the most numerous. Using the set of parting poems in the *Yifanfeng* 一帆風 as an example, I explore how monks used wit and iconoclastic allusions to Buddhist sūtra in order to subvert the normal expectations that farewell poetry be sorrowful. These transgressions against genre norms are visible traces of a monastic culture using literary techniques to creatively negotiate religious impulses and rituals. Monks also wrote floridly emotional funeral songs (*wange* 挽歌), which contrasted sharply with monastic funeral liturgies and etiquette, and were the subject of debate.

My research shows that religious poetry as it was actually written was a vibrant site for lived religion that was simultaneously informed by, and at odds with, the norms expressed in prescriptive texts. By approaching monks' poetry as part of such a complex monastic literary culture, this dissertation contributes to our understanding of religious poetry from within and without historical China.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am profoundly grateful to the many people and institutions that supported my work. I thank first of all my parents, Fred and Susan Protass, for their love and unflagging encouragement.

Carl Bielefeldt shepherded me this last decade, showing me grandmotherly kindness and giving my nose a tweak as needed. Paul Harrison modeled the highest standards with characteristic generosity and wit. I am especially grateful for his counsel and the introductions he provided to the world of Japanese academia.

John Kieschnick guided me through the last years of research and writing. His suggestions in response to early drafts transformed the shape and scope of the project. I relied on his regular encouragement and recommendations. This dissertation would not have become what it is without his mentorship.

I have benefited from Ron Egan's publications and teaching, in addition to his thoughtful and meticulous readings of the poems found in this dissertation. Lee Yearley taught me to ask questions; Shahzad Bashir taught me to interpret; Fabrizio Pregadio taught me to do research; Stuart Sargent taught me to read poetry. I was fortunate to study with several visiting faculty at Stanford sponsored by a generous donation from the Shinnyo-en Foundation. John McRae read from Song yulu with me outside of class; T. Griffith Foulk pushed me to refine my research questions during my qualifying exams; Peter Gregory read and commented on my work.

I was lucky to belong to a cohort of wonderful young scholars. I learned to read together with Rafal Felbur. Molly Vallor provided intellectual, editorial, and moral support. Mira Balberg, Noreen Khawaja, and Jessica Chen challenged me to engage with broader fields of inquiry. Nicholas Witkowski has been a longstanding source of inspiration, irritation, and assistance. I am grateful to Alexander Hsu at University of Chicago for our frequent conversations and for commenting on drafts of each chapter. Tom Mazanec of Princeton enriched the chapter on *shihua*. Thanks also to Christopher Byrne, Lin Peiying, and Robban Toleno.

The Buddhist Studies graduate program at Stanford has been like an extended family. Numerous *senpai* have offered help and encouragement, including Megan Bryson, Michael Como, James Robson, and Zhaohua Yang. A special thanks to Benjamin Brose, who read drafts of my work and offered valued advice, and to George Klonos for a beloved 1990 Honda Civic.

This work would not have been possible were it not for an extended period of research in Kyoto, Japan from May 2011 to May 2013. Prof. Kida Tomoo 本田知生 of Ryūkoku University was my gracious host. He frequently made time to discuss my developing hypotheses and to guide me to important sources. Prof. Kida also introduced me to Prof. Kinugawa Kenji 衣川賢次 of Hanazono University. Kinugawa *laoshi* graciously shared countless hours to discuss matters of scholarship. I am particularly grateful to have had opportunities to write haiku together on train rides during annual overnight research trips to Imazu in Shiga.

My research agenda was transformed during a Fulbright year in Taiwan. Prof. Liao Chao-heng 廖肇亨, after a single chance meeting in *Kyōto-eki* (facilitated by Prof. Lin Yun-rou 林韻柔), invited me to the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy at Academia Sinica. Despite his many commitments, Prof. Liao welcomed me to his office,

encouraged me to tag along, and shared his encyclopedic knowledge of Chinese and Japanese scholarship. At Academia Sinica, I enjoyed late nights in Room 606 with Kid Lam 林熙強 and Araki Tatsuo 荒木達雄, each of whom provided assistance with primary and secondary materials.

I received feedback on earlier drafts of material in this dissertation, perhaps first at the Kyoto Asian Studies Group organized by Prof. Hillary Pederson. Prof. Baba Norihisa 馬場紀寿 invited me to University of Tokyo, where I received helpful criticism from Prof. Tsuchiya Taisuke 土屋太祐, Prof. Suzuki Tetsuo 鈴木哲雄, and Prof. Ogawa Takashi 小川隆. I received generous advice from learned audiences at Academia Sinica after presentations at ICLP and IHP. Thanks to Dr. Shang Haifeng 商海鋒, I was able to present material at Dharma Drum in absentia, from which he relayed valuable responses. James Benn kindly offered comments on a draft of a chapter. His comments, together with a conversation with Stephen Teiser, were the catalysts that helped this project take its final shape. My experience at the Daoist Studies 2011 NEH Summer Seminar run by Terry Kleeman and Stephen Bokenkamp nourished early ideas for this project. I am also grateful to Steven Heine for his support of my work, and to the Zen Reading Group at AAR. I am deeply indebted to Ven. Yifa and the Woodenfish Program in Taiwan for starting me on this path many years ago. I am grateful for the unstinting support of Dr. Irene Lin.

Genine Lentine worked with me to revise some of the translations. I return to our conversations for inspiration and direction. I will always owe Genine a debt of gratitude for introducing me to my wife.

This work was supported by fellowships and grants from Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai, Fulbright Taiwan, ACLS Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, Ho Center for Buddhist Studies at Stanford, Center for East Asian Studies at Stanford, Freeman Spogli Institute at Stanford, and the Department of Religious Studies at Stanford. I received vital assistance from Jill Covington.

Many thanks to my family and friends for supporting the peripatetic existence of a student. Adam and Vanessa Protass, Adam Mittleman and Ailey Crow, James Butler, Shyla and Richard Spear, Beth Fisher, Michael Owens and Holen Khan, Steve and Jane Onorato, Teah Strozer, and Amy Buzick and Sean Dagen all offered refuge of one kind or another.

No words can express my gratitude to my wife, Seguin Spear, for her companionship in our travels, demonstrating grace during times of uncertainty, and for the intelligence she has brought to reading my work. By contrast, our dog, Trumble, was of little help while I was finishing this dissertation, though she did induce me to go outdoors daily.

Finally, thank you reader for your interest in this doctoral research and for your patience with its shortcomings.

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## Chapter One – Introduction

### Trace and Tension

The Northern and Southern Song dynasties (960-1127; 1127-1279) formed a period of transformations in Chinese Buddhism, society, politics, and literature. Buddhist monks lived under new forms of monasticism, including the large Chan temples maintained by imperial patronage.<sup>1</sup> Though monks in China had written poetry and verse for nearly eight hundred years, beginning in this period, monks incorporated poetry into their everyday lives more than ever before. Our libraries possess a profusion of poetry written by monks from the Song onwards. I aim to understand this corpus by considering how monasticism and poetry intersected. I am interested in how Buddhist poetry and its creation by monks, became a site for the concerns of monks and literary critics alike. By considering Buddhist poetry in this way, I hope to see through, around, and beyond the

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<sup>1</sup> This research is indebted to earlier reevaluations of Song Buddhism, especially the 1999 collection of essays, *Buddhism in the Sung*. Peter Gregory, “The Vitality of Buddhism in the Sung,” p. 2, underscores the importance of overturning earlier misconceptions, stating that “far from signaling a decline, the Sung was a period of great efflorescence in Buddhism and that, if any period deserves the epithet of the ‘golden age’ of Buddhism, the Sung is the most likely candidate.” The Song witnessed not only a profusion of temples, people in monasteries, and literary projects, but also the qualitative development of new Buddhist poetics like those in the *Yifanfeng*. See also T. Griffith Foulk, “The ‘Ch’an school’ and its place in the Buddhist monastic tradition,” p. 5, on the importance of the Song as a period of religious creativity. Foulk expands this argument in “Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch’an Buddhism.” Among the many important works published on Song history, Beverly Bossler’s *Powerful Relations* and Peter Bol’s “The Sung Examination System and Shih” are particularly helpful for thinking about the education of young men destined to become monks. The literary education of a monk is considered in Miriam Levering’s “A monk’s literary education: Dahui’s friend with Juefan Huihong.”

idea that Chinese poetry was a vehicle for Buddhist liberation. My hypothesis is that an anxiety over Buddhist poetry runs throughout the literary output of monks. As a corollary, Chinese monks' poetry will make more sense when we understand how to interpret it simultaneously within both Buddhist religious and Chinese literary contexts.

The scholar John Felstiner, writing about the post-war German-language poet Paul Celan, wrestled with what he called “the question of coexistence between Jewishness and Germanness.”<sup>2</sup> Until then, scholars focused exclusively on Celan's participation in the high tradition of German literature, with its formidable conventions that weighed heavily on any author. Celan employed German literary forms, techniques, and allusions to find ways of poetic expression that appear impossible to translate from the German. Celan's poetry was, they held, primarily and essentially German, and only superficially Jewish. From this point of view, the insertion of Hebrew lexicon and the treatment of Jewish motifs were adornments on the Germanic substance of Celan's literary project. Pre-Felstiner critics explicitly and implicitly upheld the idea, even at the level of high poetry, that Jewish-ness and German-ness were fundamentally separate and incompatible traditions – how much more so after the war.

In pre-modern China, the ideals of Buddhist monasticism formed a renunciant tradition that encouraged its practitioners to renounce the world, abstain from beauty, and strive for equanimity. Poetry in China (especially the *shi* 詩 tradition), to the contrary, was the mode *par excellence* for expressing deeply felt experiences. How could Buddhist monastic religious commitments – an ascetic path to liberation from the suffering of

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<sup>2</sup> Felstiner, *Paul Celan: poet, survivor, Jew* (2001 ed.), pp. xvi-xviii.

births and deaths – coexist with the call to lyric poetry? Felstiner’s Celan may serve as a distant mirror in which to glimpse the contours of Chinese Buddhist monks’ poetry.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the tensions between Jewish-ness and German-ness, or more likely because of them, Felstiner insists that we think of Celan as “perforce and by choice a Jewish poet: that is, a poet and a Jew of his time, the two identities interpenetrating to such an extent that any other definition seems partial.” It is this aspiration to wholeness, an uncompromised vision of the religious poet as both religious and poet that I find inspirational. For Felstiner, the appearance of religion in poetry “means both the **trace** and the **tension** of it.”<sup>4</sup> By **traces** of Jewishness, Felstiner refers to the sudden insertion of Hebrew terms and overt allusions to the Old Testament. The traces of Buddhism in poetry by Chinese monks might refer to the insertion of transliterated Sanskrit – like *toutuo* 頭陀 from the Sanskrit *dhūta*, roughly “asceticism” – into lines of Chinese language poetry; and explicit quotations from and allusions to Buddhist scripture. Felstiner says that Celan also makes muted allusions and works against the grain of scriptures, testing whether ancient promises still hold true after the war. This is the **tension** within Jewish-ness of post-war Europe, a tension without explicit traces but which animates Celan’s poetry. This, I think, was Felstiner’s contribution to our understanding of Celan. We might think of what Felstiner has shown us as a kind of poetics, the poetics of Jewish-ness that were possible within the modes of German poetry.

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<sup>3</sup> The ‘distant mirror’ was a conceit used by Barbara Tuchman in *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* to show how the calamities of fourteenth century France reflect those of the mid-twentieth century. Here I allude to mirrors not to use as a model for historiography, but to reflect on the distance between two seemingly unrelated historical phenomena: in our knowledge of mid-twentieth century poet Celan we may see the categories by which we can know poetic monks of middle period China.

<sup>4</sup> From *Paul Celan: poet, survivor, Jew* (2001 ed.), pp. xvi-xviii; emphases added.

In the work that follows, I am interested in recovering the tension of Buddhist poetry in China. Moreover, I am convinced that such tension will reveal whatever poetics – a Buddhist poetics, perhaps – animated the poetry of monks.

In Felstiner's Celan, in this mirror far from medieval China, we can catch glimpses of how to read Chinese monks' poetry – perforce poetic and religious. Partisans of the Chinese poetic tradition, both its historical practitioners and modern scholar-critics, have been as closed-minded as the partisans for German literature that saw Celan in a limited and fragmentary manner.

To try to regain the tension, my method is to read poetry authored by monks alongside explicitly Buddhist genres of text. I am interested in how Buddhist precepts, scriptures, and commentaries were received by Song era monks, and how the ideal prescriptions, prohibitions, and anxieties of those Buddhist texts can be seen reflected in and grappled with in individual poems by these same Song era monks. Close-reading a poem is perforce different from closely reading a sūtra or commentary. As a cultural historian, I bring these poems to the center of our attention because I believe they reveal to us a more nuanced and accessible reality of Buddhist monasticism. I hope, by the end of this study, that it will seem obvious to the reader that to read Buddhist poetry as only one or the other – as just Buddhist, or just poetry – would be a partial interpretation.

### **Against Mystical Poetry**

Many books have been written about Buddhist poetry, and most authors begin with an assumption that Buddhism and poetry intermingled in China to produce spiritual

or mystical poetry. In thinking about this presupposition, William LaFleur wrote the following about medieval Japan: “The presupposition of many in this period was that at bottom the practice of poetry and the practice of Buddhism were fully compatible; but this had to be proved and demonstrated, not merely asserted.”<sup>5</sup> LaFleur could just as well have been speaking about our own modern times. Likewise, we today must illustrate how Buddhism and poetry may be compatible. The compatibility frequently presumed (and sometimes demonstrated) today, however, is unlikely to be the same as those in pre-modern China. This is not least of all because what poetry is here, now, is quite different from what poetry was and did in middle period China.<sup>6</sup>

Nonetheless, many modern scholars have gathered evidence to support our presupposition that poetry and Buddhism were at bottom compatible. Bernard Faure pronounced on the signal importance of the role of poetry within a Buddhist tradition associated with Song dynasty Chan, “literary” or “lettered Chan” (*wenzi chan* 文子禪): “A recurrent theme in ‘literary Chan’ is that, despite appearances, the words of poetry, being the expression of Chan awakening, have a higher status than ordinary language. They are not the language of a deluded subjectivity that would create a hiatus in the

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<sup>5</sup> *Karma of Words*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> I use ‘middle period’ in the sense implied by the “Conference on Middle Period China, 800-1400” conference held at Harvard in June, 2014. This periodization is more expansive than Tang-Song transition, a concept introduced by historian Naito Kōnan (1866–1934). I use middle period to refer to the late Tang, Northern and Southern Song, and Yuan dynasties. The middle period follows the medieval that endured until the late Tang; and then ends with the emergence of Late Imperial or Early Modern China in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Middle period is a contested periodization, but it seems useful for studying the history of Buddhism. The patterns of Buddhist monasticism, for example, that emerge from the late Tang and take shape in the Song seem to more or less hold sway until the early decades of the Ming dynasty. The revival and reinvention of traditions during the late Ming and early Qing appear to belong to another period of Buddhist history.

natural flow of things, but rather the language that nature speaks through man.”<sup>7</sup> I believe *wenzi chan* was exactly the opposite – a name for how literary language does not transcend the ordinary, deluded world. I will return to *wenzi chan* and its limitations in more detail below, especially because it has been the prevailing scholarly model.

Many of the ideas about Buddhist poetry in modern Western academic writing can be traced back to the erudite articles written by Iriya Yoshitaka, Japan’s mid-century authority on Tang (618-907) and Song dynasty Chinese literature and Chan. Iriya wrote a seminal article titled “Chinese Poetry and Zen,” which was then translated into English by Norman Waddell. In this article Iriya focused on poems by Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365–427), the civil-servant who retired to reclusion, wine, and poetry, as well as works attributed to Hanshan, a legendary mountain hermit whose curmudgeonly but wise persona resembles an admixture of Daoist adept, Buddhist monk, and learned classicist. Though Tao Yuanming lived long before the advent of Chan and Hanshan cannot readily represent the Chan tradition, nonetheless this allowed Iriya to foreground literary techniques that accorded with his understanding of Zen awakening.<sup>8</sup>

When Iriya does turn to poems written by historical monks, he remarks, “In the poet-priests of the Song dynasty we see neither Hanshan’s modesty and reserve toward poetry, nor his artless simplicity of utterance. Their inclination was more to adulation of the secular writers, or, in another direction, a propensity to ‘stink’ of Zen.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, Iriya’s essay about Chan poetry was concerned with poetic expressions of truth,

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<sup>7</sup> Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>8</sup> Expanding on Iriya’s work, Bernard Faure later glossed two of these techniques as “speaking the truth” and “poetical language in Chan.” See Faure, *Chan Insights*, pp. 201 and 205.

<sup>9</sup> Iriya, p. 65. In Chapter Three I will return to the idea that monks’ poems “stink,” as it was not Iriya’s invention, but rather one of the metaphors at the heart of debates by middle period critics about monks’ poetry (*sengshi* 僧詩).



and had very little to do with poems written by historical Buddhists. The point here is not that Iriya was incorrect. Rather, Iriya has been misinterpreted as a literary historian when in fact he was a literary theorist. Iriya was indeed an authority on colloquial Chinese language, producing nearly impeccable analyses of how to read late medieval texts. Nonetheless, his uncanny ability to decipher middle period Chinese language did not preclude his participation in the kinds of Zen projects that were important among post-war Kyoto intellectuals.<sup>10</sup> This trans-historical Zen is peculiarly modern, and, naturally problematic when taken as a historiographic principle. There is still much to admire in Iriya's work, but there are other approaches to reading the poetry of monks.

My purpose here is not to upend our interest in mystical poetry, but to recover the kinds of poetry that monks wrote in pre-modern China. I bear no enmity towards our modern poetic sensibility. To the contrary, I generally agree with the attitude voiced by David McMahan who focuses on how modern misconceptions of Buddhism have had positive impacts upon the arts.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, I have found it important to reflect on our modern sense of poetry in order to understand why middle period Buddhist poetry seems so alien to us now.

McMahan demonstrates that the foundations of modern Buddhist arts are found in Romantic ideas of “the artist as a lamp that illumines something new through the artist's unique vision and imaginative powers,” which displaced the ancient “job of the artist to

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<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Iriya's comments about Zen in an interview with Kinugawa Kenji, in the newly expanded edition of *Gudō to etsuraku* (2012), pp. 336-339, as well as Kinugawa's recollections of Iriya's encounters with Zen, on pp. 341-348.

<sup>11</sup> See especially pp. 76-87 and 117-147 of David McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*.

act as a mirror reflecting and imitating the world.”<sup>12</sup> This shift from mimesis to expression lived on and grew with Transcendentalist emphases on the relationship of man to nature, and a quest for achieving epiphanic oneness with natural existence. This is related to a conception in our modern society noted by Charles Taylor that an artist is like a shaman, “one who offers epiphanies,” and reveals truths that are otherwise inaccessible.<sup>13</sup> McMahan argues that this was the fertile ground upon which figures like D. T. Suzuki (and others, like Anagarika Govinda) were able to present “hybridized Buddhist-Romantic” concepts as Eastern traditions of creativity and spontaneity. The flowering of “Zen arts” in the decades since, demonstrates the vitality of this Buddhist modernism and its power to speak to moderns.

We might add to this conversation, the observations of Harold Bloom in his introduction to the anthology *American Religious Poems*. Bloom’s selections reflected the distinctly “American Religion” that has flourished in non-devotional poetry, especially Whitman and Dickinson. Bloom thus registers an American attitude, that “religious poetry, in the United States, has little to do with devotional creeds of the Old World.”<sup>14</sup> This redefinition of the “religion” of “religious poetry” together with an emphasis on the singular individual genius traces a similar trajectory as the Romantic-Transcendentalist transformation described above. Bloom notes that “so implicit and universal is the American religion that some of its poets can be unaware that they incarnate and celebrate it.”<sup>15</sup> Such a conceit is nearly unthinkable for the poetry of

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<sup>12</sup> McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, pp. 119-120, where McMahan draws on the mid-century work of historian Meyer Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*.

<sup>13</sup> On the Romantic sources of this notion, see Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 423.

<sup>14</sup> Bloom, “Introduction,” *American Religious Poems*, p. xxv.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxviii.

Buddhists from the middle period. In this sense, Chinese Buddhist poetry is unmistakably like that of the Old World; more Gerard Manley Hopkins (or at times George Herbert) than Walt Whitman.

Beyond this, Bloom also remarks that “God, whatever you take him (or her) to be, presumably prefers good poetry to bad.”<sup>16</sup> Bloom relishes the critic’s prerogative, the privilege of judging poetry to be good. I believe that this general sensibility has guided readers of Buddhist poetry (and perhaps some readings of Chinese poetry more generally) to seek to find the “good poetry” that reflects the creative genius of an artist-seer and for whom the religion is invisible, or worn so lightly that it is hardly recognizable as religion at all. In Chapter Three, I investigate the Song dynasty critics’ criteria for “good poetry,” and find their sentiments to be surprisingly similar to some of our modern preferences. Several modern scholars have criticized monks’ poetry on the basis of concerns similar to Song era critics, even to the point of repeating the same sarcastic metaphors used centuries ago. Instead, I situate these contemporary criticisms as another particular voice in the middle period discourse that coalesced around Chinese Buddhist poetry.

Our modern sense of poetry is inherited from Romanticism and enriches us in many ways, yet it hobbles us as readers of poetry from the distant past. To read poetry from the past, we have to develop new abilities. We might begin by noticing that our contemporary poets lament the general belief that poetry is special and a resulting loss of readership (though not necessarily its production).<sup>17</sup> It is important to remember that

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xlii.

<sup>17</sup> On a radio interview, the United States Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera answered questions from host Peter Sagal regarding the national news story that NBA basketball star Kobe Bryant had announced his retirement with a poem titled “Dear Basketball.”

poetry in pre-modern China was part of everyday life – and as a result poetry could be banal. Paul Muldoon, the somber Irish poet, has a mystical relationship with poetry and has remarked in interviews that, for him, poetry is revelation. “I’m interested in revelation, in what will be revealed through the poem, through me — not what I have to reveal, but what it has to reveal, if that makes any sense. So I have no revelations at all. I know nothing.”<sup>18</sup> Muldoon is speaking about the experiences of the author and the reader, both. He refers to the author as the “first reader.” For him, poetry is that which is channeled by the poet, who is likened to a shaman, vessel, or medium. By contrast, the poems of middle period Chinese Buddhism are mostly social and occasional poems, distinctly authored.

Robert Sharf once noted that “the ‘obscurity’ and ‘inscrutability’ often attributed to Zen writings is merely an indication that they were intended for an educated elite and presume familiarity with a vast and sophisticated literary canon.”<sup>19</sup> I think the same may be said of Buddhist poetry.<sup>20</sup> That Buddhist poetry appears to be mystical, irrational, and

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Sagal: “You’re trying to promote poetry in the United States. That’s your job as poet laureate. How does it feel, like, the most popular poem that we’re going to see maybe this century was written by Kobe Bryant?”

Herrera: “I feel good about it. You know, we need a new kind of poetry. We need the people that generally are not seen as poet becoming poets. I like that.”

Interview on *wait wait... don’t tell me* published on 5 December 2015; transcript accessed 24 December 2015 at: <http://www.npr.org/2015/12/05/458587629/panel-round-two>

<sup>18</sup> Paul Muldoon, Irish poet, is Poetry Editor at *The New Yorker* magazine and professor at Princeton, in an interview with Krista Tippett published by *On Being*, 22 December 2015; transcript accessed 24 December 2015 at

<http://www.onbeing.org/program/paul-muldoon-a-conversation-with-verse/transcript/8282>

<sup>19</sup> Sharf, Robert. “Review of *Eloquent Zen*.”

<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere Sharf has also pithily remarked that “little progress has been made in deciphering the doctrinal and exegetical intent of Chan *gong’an*; it would appear that scholars remain reluctant to treat *gong’an* as a form of exegesis at all. This reluctance may be due to the enduring legacy of an earlier apologetic mystification of the *gong’an* literature. The primary objective of this chapter is to demonstrate that such reluctance is misguided and that it is indeed possible to

inscrutable is a reflection of our distance from the intended audience. As demonstrated below, I would advocate a robust critical apparatus, with annotations, notes, and explanations of the contexts and allusions embedded in many poems. This is not to say that a poem is ever reduced to the sum of these techniques and contexts, but that what the poem itself is and does can best be made visible to us once we learn to see how its intended audience saw.

In contrast to the Romantic-Transcendentalist and Harold Bloom conceptions of poetry, I have found it useful to reflect on Viktor Shklovsky's idea that "making strange" or "defamiliarization" (*ostranenie*) is the key to what poetry does. For Shklovsky, poetic art counteracts habitual perception, makes things fresh or new again. It seems to be a nearly universal human experience to cease to be able to see the everyday. What is habitual becomes invisible. The job of poetry, then, is achieved by roughening language through poetic devices (such as rhyme, rhythm, and meter) and thereby to draw attention to objects anew; to make the world visible again.<sup>21</sup> More recently, Terence Hawkes revisited these ideas and observed that "the poem *is* its devices, it *is* its form."<sup>22</sup> This dictum resonates with what I have done here, by beginning with monks' poetry and observing its literary devices and forms. Then, working from the poems up (rather than from any theory down), I have reconstructed the literary and religious worlds that most likely produced the poems as they are.

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recover the original meaning and doctrinal purport of at least some of the cases. The task is not easy, however, as the cases are philosophically subtle and hermeneutically sophisticated, and the authors of the collections delighted in obscure allusions, clever puns, and deft wordplay." Robert Sharf, "How to Think with Chan *Gong'an*," pp. 206-207.

<sup>21</sup> See "Art as Device" in Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*.

<sup>22</sup> Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism & Semiotics*, p. 65.

## Buddhist and Poetry

Turning to the innocuous looking phrase “Buddhist poetry,” there lurk two insidiously complicated problems. First, what would make a poem “Buddhist”? Second, what “poetry”? A simple proposition: by Buddhist poetry I mean “monks’ *shi*.” In other words, by “Buddhist” I am focused on *seng* 僧, or monastic (both as an adjective and a noun), and by “poetry” I mean the genre of regulated *shi* 詩 poetry popular from the 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the backbone of the mainstream Chinese poetic canon. In terms of *seng* and *shi*, the question “is Buddhist poetry possible?” may be reconfigured “could *seng* (monastics) write *shi*?”

There are several reasons for a focus on monks’ *shi* poetry, rather than other Buddhist poetics, ranging from Buddhist influence on non-monastic poets<sup>23</sup> (such as the landscape poetry of Xie Lingyun<sup>24</sup> and the court poems of the Liang<sup>25</sup>) or Buddhist liturgical verse. Monks’ *shi* poetry is clearly authored, engages conventions of *shi*, expresses personal sentiments, and was written by people who most clearly embodied the

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<sup>23</sup> There have been many studies in this style, and a complete list is beyond the purview of a footnote. A few examples include Chapters Six and Seven in *Image Word Deed in the Life of Su Shih* by Ronald Egan; Beata Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited*; Chapter Four in *Stone Lake: The Poetry of Fan Chengda 1126-1193* by J. D. Schmidt.

<sup>24</sup> The matter of Buddhist influence on Xie Lingyun remains controversial, though it seems fair to say that the controversy is not whether there was influence, but rather the terms with which to discuss it. Timothy Chan provides a summary of earlier scholarship in *Considering the End: Mortality in Early Medieval Chinese Poetic Representation*, pp. 128-129.

<sup>25</sup> Xiaofei Tian, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, Chapter Five, argues that Palace Style poetry of the 530s and 540s “was profoundly influenced by Buddhist teachings”(p. 212).

daily disciplines of a Buddhist identity.<sup>26</sup> As a result of the competing pressures felt by monks who wrote *shi*, these poems – more than other Buddhist poetries – reveal the **tensions** between the ideals of Buddhist and poetic practices, and not just **traces**. Further, monk authors who consciously wrote into the tensions between monasticism and poetry generated especially meaningful examples of Buddhist poetry, and such examples can be found in Chapters Two, Four, and Five. Moreover, when middle period critics discussed Buddhist poetry, they most often wrote about *sengshi* 僧詩 (“monks’ *shi* poetry”) in particular, as I argue in Chapter Three. Unlike some of these critics, however, I think that taking *sengshi* as a generic category is a mistake. Many poems by monks are in no way obviously “Buddhist.” Now, I will explain the significance of each of these terms, *shi* and *seng*, one at a time.

I have said I focus on *shi* poems written by monastic Buddhists. Though this is a somewhat arbitrary boundary, as lay poets often used or were inspired by Buddhist ideas, icons, and texts, nonetheless, it is a significant departure from previous approaches to Buddhist poetry in China. By limiting myself to monastics, I can focus on the relationship between poetry and Buddhism as a living religion with rituals, practices, and guides to life.<sup>27</sup> Though the monks’ *shi* corpus is too voluminous to study in toto, I believe my

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<sup>26</sup> I think of Buddhist monasticism similar to how Agamben conceives of monasticism as a kind of “apparatus” in *The Highest Poverty*, together with his work on apparatuses in “What is an Apparatus?” as I will explain immediately below.

<sup>27</sup> Thinking of Buddhist monasticism as an apparatus provides a way to think about monks’ poetry in relationships to monastic codes, scriptures, and other disparate kinds of texts. Agamben shows us that monasticism as an apparatus is a heterogeneous set of linguistic and nonlinguistic discourses, institutions, architecture, daily routines (or, biorhythms), laws and regulations, rituals, clothes, and postures. Agamben is interested in how monasticism is a “form-of-life,” or a life inseparable from its form. However, monks’ poetry can reveal the space between an individual literary monk and the norms of the monastic apparatus. For example, Agamben writes, an apparatus “is **a set of practices** and mechanisms that aim to face **an urgent need** and to obtain **an**

corpus is more representative of monks' poetry than the selections of Buddhist poetry most often translated or taken as object of study, which select poems that can be bent to meet the ideals of the hybrid Romantic-Buddhism described above. By representative, I am speaking of quantities as well as qualities.<sup>28</sup> The vast majority of monks' poetry is preserved in the *yulu* 語錄 ("recorded sayings") texts found in the *Taishō* and *Zokuzōkyō* canons. Some *yulu* and other texts are found only in so-called *Gozan* woodblock editions.<sup>29</sup> Many monks' poems published in *difangzhi* 地方誌 ("local gazetteers") are not extant elsewhere. Other important sources include the separate *shiji* 詩集 ("collected poetry") texts of individual poet-monks, often preserved in woodblock editions or within imperially sponsored encyclopedic collectanea. Even a cursory glance at the kinds of poetry included therein reveals the central importance of the various types of occasional poetry.

One interesting witness to the state of affairs is a work by Japanese monk Gidō Shūshin 義堂周信 (1325-1388), who spent his life collecting Song and Yuan monks'

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**effect that is more or less immediate.**" (*ibid.*, 8; emphases added) In the case of Chinese Buddhist monasticism, then, the *set of practices* are recorded (whether prescriptively or incidentally) in a panoply of documents, including *qinggui* monastic codes, pilgrims' diaries, and prose inscriptions on architecture; the *urgent need* is what I refer to as monastic anxiety (whether it is a generalizable *dukkha*, or *ku* 苦, or a somewhat more specific concern with self-mastery over the emotions); the *effect that is more or less immediate* of monasticism is tied up with Buddhist soteriology (whether to improve one's karma and future lives with the hope of eventual release from birth-and-death, or liberation in one's present body).

<sup>28</sup> The editors of the *Song dai Chan seng shi jikao* (Zhu et al.) collected all monks' poems not already published in the *Quan Song shi* or in *Quan Song shi ding bu* 全宋詩訂補 (2005). At 735 pages of poetry, with roughly on average ten to twelve poems to a page, we can see that the order of magnitude of extant monks' poems (not already published in *Quan Song shi*) approaches ten thousand. I would estimate that another ten thousand poems by monks exist in the *Taishō* and *Zokuzōkyō* Buddhist canons.

<sup>29</sup> Huang Ch'i-chiang has recently published several Chinese language monographs studying Southern Song monks and their poetry based on texts preserved in Japan.



poems.<sup>30</sup> His collection, *Jōwa ruiju sōon renpōshū* 貞和類聚祖苑聯芳集 (“Jōwa-era [1345-1349] collection of verse from the ancestral garden,” hereafter *Jōwa-shū*), offers an interesting reflection of the situation. *Jōwa-shū* contains several thousand complete poems by Song and Yuan monks, mostly five and seven syllable *jueju*, organized into sixty-five sections. The *songxing* 送行 (“parting poem”) section has two hundred four poems, second only to the two hundred sixty-two *zan* 讚 (“encomia”). Compare these to the seven poems about *wudao* 悟道 (“awakening”). The sample of Song and Yuan poetry preserved in Gidō’s anthology appears representative of the trends preserved in other sources. One goal of this dissertation is to demonstrate the purposes this poetry served. That is, why might monks write so much occasional poetry?

On the topic of Japanese Buddhist poetry, I hasten to add a cautionary note. The role Buddhism came to play in Buddhist literature in Japan is quite different from that of China. For example, the Heian imperial court included in anthologies of *waka* 和歌 a section entitled *shakkyō-ka* 釈教歌 (*waka* on the teachings of the Buddha). This distinct sub-genre “would eventually contribute significantly to the concept known as *kadō soku butsudō* 歌道即佛道 (the path of poetry is none other than the path of the Buddha).”<sup>31</sup> No

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<sup>30</sup> Gidō’s colophon dated 1388 explains his lifelong endeavor to collect and organize Song and Yuan poems begun when he was a student during the *Jōwa* period. Future research will find in the *Jōwa-shū* many Chinese poems not preserved elsewhere. *Jōwa-shū* is most readily accessible in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho*, v. 143, though there are some textual errors. Several Edo manuscripts of *Jōwa-shū* also survive, including two at National Diet Library. An example of the unique poems in this collection is “The Dentist” (*Yiyao* 醫牙) by Chan Master Shuai’an 率菴, who is probably Xitan 希坦 (S. Song), whose collection of poems was lost early on in China. Though a brief text called *Shi Xitan shi* 釋希坦詩 is in the *Si ku quan shu*, it does not include the poems in Gidō’s *Jōwa-shū*. It includes the line, “With your eye true and mind clear you recognize the source of illness” 眼正心明識病源 (*Jōwa-shū*, p. 99).

<sup>31</sup> See Stephen Miller, *Wind from Vulture Peak*, p. 5.

such category manifested in China, however. The closest we come is *sengshi* 僧詩 (“monks’ poetry”) and the *sengti* 僧體 (“monastic style”), which were terms of criticism and seldom an anthologists’ genre.<sup>32</sup> When using Japanese texts to study China, we must be careful to distinguish between witnesses (like Gidō’s *Jōwa-shū* and *gozan* woodblock editions), however imperfect, and distinctly Japanese developments (like the works of Saigyō).

The Chinese word *shi* 詩 is often glossed in English as “poetry,” but those two words are not equivalents. The rise of the *shi* form has long been traced to the final years of the Han dynasty during the Jian’an reign (196-220).<sup>33</sup> The *shi* developed into a mature lyric tradition during the Tang dynasty. *Shi* poems are usually identified by the engagement with particular forms. The forms of *shi* poetry, not unlike the sonnet, are marked by strictly regulated prosody. Whereas iambic meter governs stressed and

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<sup>32</sup> Some of the exceptions (that prove the rule) are the *Zhongxing Chanlin Fengyue ji* 中興禪林風月集 (compiled in the 1230s or 1240s) and the *Sheng Song gao seng shi xuan* 聖宋高僧詩選 by Chen Qi 陳起 (mid- to late-Southern Song) – which includes the oldest extant copy of *Jiu Seng Shi* 九僧詩 (“Poems of Nine Monks”). For more on the Nine Monks, see Chi Kuang-yu, “Song chu jiu seng shi ji kao shu.” What follows is a summary meant to clarify some misconceptions. According to Chi, the original compilation of 110 poems is attributed to Chen Chong 陳充 (944-1013). The collection was expanded in the late Southern Song by Chen Qi 陳起 to total 134 poems; part of *Sheng Song gao seng shi xuan* 聖宋高僧詩選. That edition is the earliest and is well-regarded by scholars. Chen Qi’s recension formed the basis for all known Ming and Qing editions. An expanded edition in the mid-Qing, known as the *Yiqiuguan* 宜秋館 edition (available in *Congshujichen xubian* 叢書集成續編) was the basis for a late-Qing, further expanded edition known as *Shizhu Youlanshi* 師竹友蘭室, which, though marred with textual errors, is now widely available in *Chanmen Yishu xubian* v.1 (禪門逸書續編). That edition also gathered one hundred couplets by monk Huichong 惠崇 from various sources, which are thought to come from Huichong’s lost-work *Jutu* 句圖. Most of these couplets were also preserved in *Qingxiang zaji* 青箱雜記 (dated 1087) by Wu Chuhou 吳處厚, who suggests they are from the lost *Jutu*. Huichong was also a renowned painter and at least two extant paintings are attributed to him.

<sup>33</sup> Such origin tales are largely inherited from the Six Dynasties (220–589) compilers of the extant anthologies. See Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*.

unstressed syllables, in *shi* it is tonal patterns and counterpoint that establish the music of the language. Regulated *Shi* poems are in either penta- or hepta-syllabic lines with a total of either four or eight lines. Other meters are common, too, but none was so developed as, and carried the weight of, the regulated *shi*.

What makes a *shi* poem poetry, however, is more than forms of language. The *shi* was the preferred mode for the lyrical voice. Rarely narrative, *shi* tended towards intense expression. Even in the Song period known for developing the new *ci* lyric mode of poetry, the quantity of *shi* poetry preserved today outnumbers *ci* more than tenfold.<sup>34</sup> The *shi* remained the mode for serious poetic expression right up to the end of the imperial period in the 20th century. It should come as little surprise that when monks write poetry, they mostly choose to do so using the forms of *shi*.<sup>35</sup>

In the context of Buddhist poetry, the *shi* poem is often contrasted with *gāthā*.<sup>36</sup> The *gāthā* as understood in China referred to the verses contained within Buddhist scriptures. These verses often appear immediately prose and repeat the message and content of the prose.<sup>37</sup> To speak in general terms, the Chinese *gāthā* are scriptural verse, whereas *shi* are lyrical and personal poems. As scripture, *gāthā* are essentially authorless.

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<sup>34</sup> Though by no means a scientific measure, nor representative of the absolute quantities of *shi* and *ci* produced, it is nonetheless telling that the *Quan Song Ci* (Complete Ci of the Song) comprises five volumes to the *Quan Song Shi* (Complete Shi of the Song) seventy-two.

<sup>35</sup> The *ci* lyric had romantic undertones and probably was considered inappropriate for a monk. The exceptional Juefan Huihong is one of the few monks that wrote *ci*. Though these poems use the novel form, most of them rely on conventional Buddhist diction, though several, notably one *Xijiangyue* 西江月, which begins ‘ten fingers gently pull at sprouts of spring bamboo’ 十指嫩抽春筍, play with the language of desire. *Quan song ci*, pp. 710-714.

<sup>36</sup> Much has been written about *gāthā* in China. A summary may be found further on in this chapter.

<sup>37</sup> In addition to the sections of poetic retelling in a sūtra, *gāthā* can also refer to verses spoken by people or deities in the middle of the prose narrative. *Gāthā* have other uses outside of scriptural context.

By contrast, monks' *shi* poems are essentially authored. Poems with authors, more than anonymous works, bring to the fore monks and their self-representations. Monks' *shi* poems explore the personal experience of lived religion. If *gāthā* voice truths at the cosmic level, then *shi* address issues at human-scale.

In general, *shi* poetry is recognized by formal qualities – an engagement with fixed meter and tonal patterns. Most poems by monks of the Song and on are *shi*, with the most common probably the heptasyllabic *jueju* 絕句 (a four-line *shi* poem observing tonal regulations, with seven words to each line). However, by the Song period, monks' *shi* were often referred to as *gāthā*. I believe this appropriation of the term *gāthā* as a naming practice was done in order to confer religious authority, and may have been a reaction to criticism from literati critics. The reasons for, and implications of, this nominal distinction are quite significant. It is the purpose of this study to demonstrate the benefits of reading these poems as engagements with the *shi* tradition. I adopt a formalist stance and regard such works as *shi* poetry and situate the naming practices of anthologists within the broader middle period discourse about monks' poetry.

A study of literature authored by monastics of this period necessarily emphasizes that of monks, whose writings survive. There is little nuns' poetry that survives.<sup>38</sup> It would be difficult to do with Song era nuns' poems what Grace Fong has demonstrated

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<sup>38</sup> Beata Grant has explored nuns' literature of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries in several publications. *Eminent Nuns*, pp. 13-17, summarizes what can and cannot be known of nuns and nuns' literature before the 17<sup>th</sup> century. What Grant is able to do with the relative abundance of material from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards offers an interesting comparison with the important essays by Miriam Levering focused on women Chan masters of the Song dynasty and Grant's translations of Song era nuns' poems included in *Daughters of Emptiness*, which are based on the fragmentary record of Song era women's writing.

can be done with women's poems of the late Ming.<sup>39</sup> With these recent advances in foregrounding women's literature, our study of monks' poetry benefits from Fong's demonstration of how we can read literary widows of the Ming and Qing, who "engage with the poetic subgenre of mourning, both to inscribe personal emotion and commemorate their husbands' lives, and in the process, record their own life histories."<sup>40</sup> In some ways like women, monks too were peripheral yet ubiquitous. Though middle period monks' literature was shaped by needs radically different from those of women in late imperial China, nonetheless monks' engagement with genre similarly used and departed from literary conventions as they negotiated their identity as Buddhist monastics.<sup>41</sup>

A poem is a literary composition, and is always at least one step removed from an 'actual experience.' We cannot read monks' poetry as diary, or as unbiased historical records. However, we can read monks' poetry as expressions of possible experiences that were plausible to a writer and his imagined audience. We can read monks' poems as literary accounts tacking between conventional and novel expressions of plausible daily monastic experiences. By reading monks' poems in this way, rather than as expressions of mystical experiences, we approach something of a prosopographic view of what it meant to be a Buddhist monk in middle period China.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See for example Grace Fong's "Private Emotion, Public Commemoration."

<sup>40</sup> Fong, "Private Emotion, Public Commemoration," p. 20.

<sup>41</sup> Fong, "Private Emotion, Public Commemoration," p. 22, poses a series of model questions, such as "What figurative conventions does she [a given poet] draw on, and how does she depart from them and initiate different practices?"

<sup>42</sup> Prosopography was defined by Lawrence Stone as "the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives. The method employed is to establish a universe to be studied, and then to ask a set of uniform questions – about birth and death, marriage and family, social origins and inherited

Monks availed themselves of the power and charisma that the *shi* form bestowed on its elevated language, and yet monks also broke some conventions of the *shi* genre. It was Iriya Yoshitaka, naturally, who captured the tension for monks who wrote poetry. Iriya noted that poets committed to Buddhist teachings were torn between “two conflicting laws, devotion to Buddhism on the one hand, and an unconquerable attachment to poesy on the other, the latter involving nothing less than a violation of the Buddhist precept against ‘foolish words and flowery language.’”<sup>43</sup> This conflict between

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economic position, place of residence, education, amount and source of personal wealth, occupation, religion, experience of office and so on. The various types of information about the individuals in the universe are then juxtaposed and combined, and are examined for significant variables. They are tested both for internal correlations and for correlations with other forms of behavior or action.” (Stone, p. 46.) It is not dissimilar from approaches to hagiography first advocated by Peter Brown and later developed by John Kieschnick.

<sup>43</sup> Iriya, “Chinese Poetry and Zen,” p. 65. Iriya’s interpretation is at odds with that of most modern scholars, including LaFleur (p. 8), Faure (p. 205), and Pollack’s *The Fracture of Meaning* (pp. 134-136) and his *Zen Poems of the Five Mountains* (p. 53).

Iriya was discussing the Tang poet Bai Juyi in particular, yet this insight can be applied to monks’ poetry as well. This application was anticipated by Burton Watson (another of Iriya’s translators) in “Zen Poetry,” in *Zen: Tradition and Transition*, pp. 112-115. It is important to note that Iriya foreclosed on the idea that Bai Juyi had somehow resolved this tension. Iriya cites the poem *Wei dao* 味道 as evidence that only in Bai’s juvenilia did he attempt to make poems about personal religious experience (“Chinese Poetry and Zen,” 65-66).

The phrase “wild words and fanciful phrases” was reinterpreted to hold great importance in Japanese Buddhist poetics. However, there is almost no evidence to suggest it ever had a similar influence on the historical Chinese imagination. If it were ever important in China, such a tradition was later abandoned and forgotten; a search of the Chinese Buddhist canon reveals that Bai’s phrase *kuangyan qiyu* does not appear even once.

Iriya suggests that “wild words and fanciful phrases” is a play on *wangyan* 妄言 and *qiyu* 綺語, two of the ten Buddhist evils, or unwholesome activities. The list is ubiquitous in both mainstream and Mahāyāna Chinese Buddhist literature. Two of the four types of unwholesome speech are: false speech *wangyan* 妄言 (also sometimes written *kuangyan* 誑言 or *kuangyu* 誑語, both are of which are graphically similar to Bai’s “wild speech”) and “fanciful phrases” *qiyu* 綺語 (according to *Fa yuan zhu lin* 法苑珠林, T. 53, no. 2122, p. 804, b8-19, *qiyu* includes inappropriate entertainment such as singing and dancing, untimely chit-chat, and flattery).

poetic creation and Buddhist precepts is at the heart of the question, is Buddhist poetry possible?

### **The Problem of the Emotions**

The conflict between emotions and Buddhist monasticism will be a leitmotif in this study of monks' poetry.<sup>44</sup> More specifically, this tension is between Buddhist monastic ideals of equanimity and Chinese literary conventions of emotion-laden expression. A similar tension may be familiar to readers of Father Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889). The poet burned copies of his early poetry when he ordained as a Jesuit priest.<sup>45</sup> Though later encouraged by his rector, Hopkin's poems were rejected by Jesuit publications. His syncopated lines, the so-called "sprung rhythm" that would influence early 20<sup>th</sup> century poets, were thought to be "metrical oddities" by the conservative institution, and inappropriate.<sup>46</sup> Excepting his juvenilia, Hopkins never saw

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<sup>44</sup> A similar tension between monastic education and the emotions revealed through poetry can be detected in other Buddhist cultures. On how "Buddhist religious norms shaped and enriched how 'the condition of being a poet' was imagined" in medieval Sri Lanka, see Hallisey, "Works and Persons in Sinhala Literary Culture," pp. 703-706. For example, at least one text says that the subject of poetry should be the lives of the Buddha; an unimaginable restriction compared with what was expected of Sanskrit *kāvya*. For another take on poetry among later medieval Sri Lankan Buddhists focused more on reader and audience response, see Berkwitz, *Buddhist History in the Vernacular*, 233-234. Another take on the "balance [of] aesthetic sentiments with religious ones" in Buddhist poetry is explored in Berkwitz, *Buddhist Poetry and Colonialism*, 3, 81-84, 109. Throughout this monograph, Berkwitz's analysis relies on a dichotomy between appeals to poetic or aesthetic sentiments and narrative, moral, or religious elements.

<sup>45</sup> Gardner, *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, in the "Introduction to the fourth edition," p. xxi.

<sup>46</sup> See Gardner, p. xxii for rejection by Jesuit publication, xxvi on posthumous publication, and xxix on sprung rhythm, and xxxvii for the 'Hopkins cult' and influence.

his own poems in print.<sup>47</sup> His biographers have remarked, “There was, deep down, some conflict between aesthetic and ascetic ideals.”<sup>48</sup>

Ronald Egan gauged a related tension in mainstream poetry of the Song dynasty, and aptly labeled it “the problem of the emotions.”<sup>49</sup> Egan identified a strain of thought in Su Shi’s 蘇軾 (1037-1101) poetry concerned with the unreliability of the senses, and by extension one’s feelings. The “problem of the emotions” emerges, however, as the result of assumptions on the part of readers trained by the conventions of *shi* poetry. Egan links this to the time-worn debate of the relative worth of Tang and Song era *shi* poetry, each respectively stereotyped as emotional or intellectual. For his part, Su Shi is a paragon of Song poetry and unsurprisingly has been accused of writing discursive poetry at the expense of the emotions. On this, Egan remarks that “the belief that the emotions (*qing*) are fundamental and intrinsic to poetry was too well established for the question to go unasked.”<sup>50</sup>

The problem of the emotions identified in Su’s poetry can be transposed onto our study of monks’ poetry. Whereas Su was concerned with the undesirable impacts of the emotions on literary creativity, the problem for monks was that writing poetry worked at cross-purposes with Buddhist salvation. Nonetheless, there are some explicit points of contact. The principal text in Egan’s study is a well-known poem by Su Shi written to

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<sup>47</sup> Gardner, xiii.

<sup>48</sup> Gardner, *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, xxxv, and citing Jean-Georges Ritz’ *Le poète Gérard Manley Hopkins*. Gardner continues to hypothesize that there was also “reconciliation and fusion,” and this leads him to call Hopkins, “a religious, not merely a devotional, poet.” Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> The section titled “The Problem of the Emotions” appears in *Word, Image, Deed*, pp. 197-206.

<sup>50</sup> Egan, *Word, Image, Deed*, p. 198.



send off a monk, Daoqian 道潛 (1043 – *after* 1111) also known by his sobriquet Canliao 參寥. Daoqian was a poet as well as a monk, and was a lifelong friend of Su Shi.<sup>51</sup>

In the poem “Seeing off master Canliao” (*Song Canliao shi* 送參寥師), Su Shi responds to an important statement by Han Yu of the Tang dynasty.<sup>52</sup> Han Yu argued that the arts of calligraphy can communicate all the emotions of the world; and he thus criticized the monk Gaoxian’s 高閑 ‘cursive script’ for its dispassionate sensibility – *for lacking emotions*.<sup>53</sup> To the contrary, Su takes up a monk’s emptiness and quietude as informing a profound perspective from which to observe the world and create subtle poetry.<sup>54</sup>

A monk studies suffering and emptiness,	上人學苦空
<sup>2</sup> the myriad worries are cold ashes in his mind.	百念已灰冷
[...]	[...]
If you want your poetic phrases to be marvelous,	欲令詩語妙
<sup>20</sup> do not be averse to emptiness and quietude.	無厭空且靜
With quietude you comprehend all movement,	靜故了群動

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<sup>51</sup> The best study of Daoqian’s life remains Kong Fanli’s “Song shiseng Daoqian shengping kaolüe.”

<sup>52</sup> I return to Su Shi and his view of Han Yu in a poem that is central to Chapter Three, *Zeng shiseng Daotong* 贈詩僧道通. Qian Zhongshu, in his essay “*Yi chan yu shi*,” in *Tan yi lu*, pp. 2.738-752, especially the final sections, shows how widespread are the ideas expressed by Su.

<sup>53</sup> Han Yu, “Song Gaoxian shangren xu” 送高閑上人序 *Hanchanglijì* 21.28-29; translated in full in Hartman, pp. 222-223. See also Egan (1994) pp. 198-99 and Egan (2008) pp. 313-15.

<sup>54</sup> Adapted slightly from Egan (2008) 313-15. The poem was also translated with some variation in Egan (1994), pp. 198-99, in Lynn “The Sudden and the Gradual in Chinese Poetry Criticism” p. 385, and again in B. Grant, *Mount Lu*, pp. 99-100.

- 22 With emptiness you receive ten thousand things.<sup>55</sup> 空故納萬境  
 You observe the world as you go among men, 閱世走人間
- 24 You examine yourself resting on a cloudy peak. 觀身臥雲嶺  
 The salty and sour are enjoyed by the many ordinary types,<sup>56</sup> 鹹酸雜眾好

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<sup>55</sup> The word *jing* here has two possible meanings, one from Chinese poetics and the other from Buddhist writing. James Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, p. 84, described the history of using *jing*, or *shijing* 詩境, as ‘a world’ expressed by articulating the inward emotions and outward scene (*qing jing* 情景). Something like this appears to inform Egan’s translations. My translation understands *jing* as a Buddhist technical term for objects of perception. The common phrase *wanjing* means ‘all phenomena.’ To support this reading, it is worth noting that the line in question by Su Shi contains echoes of the ‘dharma transmission verse’ attributed to the 22<sup>nd</sup> patriarch *Monaluo* 摩拏羅 (Skt. \*Manorhita). That verse is first found in *Baolin zhuan* 5.19b (p. 93), but was probably known in Song times from its inclusion in *Jingde Chuandeng lu* (T. 51, no. 2076, p. 214, a24-25).

The mind turns following ten thousand *jing*; / that which turns in truth is the mystery.

Going with the flow, one recognizes the nature [of mind] / is without happiness or sorrow.

心隨萬境轉，轉處實能幽。隨流認得性，無喜復無憂。

For a gloss on the first couplet, see Iriya and Koga, *Zengo jiten*, p. 226, and on the second couplet, see p. 240. See also the entry for *rende* 認得 on p. 366. The first couplet of this verse is commonly found repeated in Song era Chan texts.

<sup>56</sup> This line has given translators more trouble than the others. I interpret this line as discussing the ordinary flavors that are liked (*hao*) by all the various, ordinary types. This is how Egan first took the line (1994:199), but later reversed himself (2008:313-15) to take *za* as a verb indicating that the flavors are mixing. I follow the earlier Egan and take *za* as modifying *zhong*, and *zhong* either in the Buddhist sense of ‘the masses’ or simply as *zhongsu* – the ordinary people. The poem has already demonstrated facility with Buddhist terminology as well as a personal understanding of what is at stake in such comments. By way of comparison, we might note that the German word *gemischte* originally denoted mixed and came to denote something inferior. Similarly, *za* first means to mix (and in the midst of gastronomical metaphors this is a good guess), but in Buddhist discourse *za* also refers to the intermingling of the pure and impure and *za* comes to denote that which is inferior, polluted with impurities. The phrase might mean ‘inferior ordinary types,’ perhaps related to *suzhong* 俗眾. From this, we might note one of the less common meanings of *za* as ‘great variety; various, sundry’ (繁多) seems to fit here, giving “various ordinary types.” This trajectory of *za* tracks well with examples from the Buddhist canon. The term *zazhong* appears in the earliest Chinese Buddhist texts meaning impure, and then in later texts clearly came to mean ‘various.’

- 26 It is the center where there is an ultimate flavor that endures. 中有至味永  
Poetry and Buddhism are not incompatible, 詩法不相妨
- 28 I submit this view for your consideration. 此語更當請

The poem begins by describing an ideal monk; the elided middle section engages closely with Han Yu; then, the final section makes suggestions to Daoqian. The poem has been analyzed deftly by Egan, and he focuses on Su's innovative ideas. This poem surely is a marvelous example of a poetic mind at play with Buddhist ideas. By contrast, I wish to emphasize the audience of this poem, that is, the monk Daoqian. We can infer from Su's proposition that he believed Daoqian held the view that poetry and Buddhism *are* incompatible. We may thus reinterpret the significance of this poem and emphasize its importance as a witness to the ongoing monastic anxiety over poetry, felt even by literary monks like Daoqian.

This poem, though brilliant and significant for mainstream poets, seems to have had little impact on mainstream Buddhism. This poem was written during Daoqian's three-month long sojourn at Su Shi's official residence in Xuzhou during autumn 1078. During this period, the two men took several day-trips and during these occasions they wrote many poems addressing one another. We can see the traces of an extended conversation recorded in this set of poems. It seems very likely that Su knew perfectly well the position that Daoqian held.

Daoqian continued to write poems throughout his life in this mainstream poetic style, and not in a more monkish style as Su suggested here in 1078. Daoqian also continued to inscribe the problem of emotions into his poems, examples of which are included in Chapters Two and Five. Moreover, the views we can impute to Daoqian

cleave to what we can know were the views of many mainstream Buddhist monastics in the period. The problem of the emotions was not limited to Daoqian.

I am especially interested in reading monks' poems together with other kinds of Buddhist texts. Rather than seeing poetry as some magical other kind of language, it is part of a continuum of expression. Monastic codes legislated against poesis. Meditation manuals include cautions. These prescriptive kinds of text operate at a different linguistic register from poetry, and form the subject of an extended analysis in Chapter Two. I will show how we can read these prescriptive texts as reflections of social norms and expectations, and not necessarily actual practice. In order to read prescriptive texts together with poetry, I have found it useful to speak of the problem of the emotions for monks' poetry as a kind of anxiety. This is a strategy for dealing with diffuse textual traces. Many different types of text registered some trace of the anxiety. Thinking of this problem as an anxiety allows us to read beyond the surface of the repressive impulses recorded in monastic codes, meditation manuals, and poems themselves. Harold Bloom wrote that "Freud, revisiting himself, at last concluded that it was anxiety that produced repression and not repression that produced anxiety."<sup>57</sup> In other words, when we see that monastic codes legislated against poetic rumination, this does not mean that Buddhism (as some monolith) was against poetry. Instead, we can see that such rules were a response to an underlying anxiety. Our task, then, is to correctly interpret these symptoms (of repression) in order to diagnose the source of the anxiety.

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<sup>57</sup> Bloom is writing about Wallace Stevens and the impacts on style of an anxiety over indebtedness to "the entire Romantic tradition ... Emerson as well as Whitman," in "Askesis," *Anxiety of Influence* (2nd edition), p. 135.

Though I have adopted a psychoanalytic metaphor, I hasten to add that my purpose is not therapeutic. My goal is to uncover structural anxieties in order to examine how they play out in the poetry of individuals. As an interpretive tool, anxiety often signals some kind of danger.<sup>58</sup> The danger for monastics is not poetry *per se*, but that poetry is associated with luxuriant feeling and beauty. Poetry is sensual. These temptations threaten the viability of the religious occupation of a monk, whether as a ritual specialist who depends on his charisma or as an aspirant to liberation from the suffering of births and deaths. I will explore the specific concerns articulated by monastic authors in Chapter Three. There, I discuss anxiety manifested on two levels. First, there are structural anxieties, such as monastic regulations against personal poetry. Evidence of structural anxieties includes playful poems that reflect an awareness of these incompatibilities, but which do not seem to cause the author any personal anxiety. Second, there are personal anxieties, which reveal the struggle of an individual to harmonize poesis and religious occupation.

The problem of the emotions will be developed across the remaining four chapters that form the main body of this dissertation.<sup>59</sup> Taken all together, these chapters present a case for the primacy of a fundamental tension between Buddhism and poetry in pre-modern China. Many details of my conclusions are necessarily limited to Song dynasty phenomena, but I believe insights gleaned here will be applicable to other times, places,

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<sup>58</sup> In Freudian terms this is “signal anxiety.” Anxiety as signal was the subject of Lacan’s seminar in 1962-63.

<sup>59</sup> I will argue, in Chapter Two, for the relevance of prescriptive monastic regulations in Song dynasty re-interpretations. The biting comments by Song era critics that constitute Chapter Three concern the blandness of Buddhist poetry, and reflect a secular response to the ascetic attitude to the emotions. Likewise, monasticism and emotions is an explicit and implicit topos running through the monks’ poems that are the subjects of the final two chapters.

and situations. I have thus included evidence from other Buddhist cultures (and some more far-flung comparisons) that is suggestive of a basic human problem.

I believe the primary, default, and mainstream metanarrative in Song era China was that Buddhism and poetry, at best, co-exist in an irreconcilable tension; and that attempts to resolve the tension (which are many, but a minority) are secondary and in response to the primary incompatibility of Buddhist religious profession and literary endeavor. I think what I mean by monastic anxiety, and its implications for how we read Buddhist poetry, will become clear with a few examples.

### **Reading Between Lines**

Here, let's briefly delve into the Buddhist corpus in order to recover that tension between Buddhism and poetry mentioned above, as well as certain assumptions about Buddhist poetry in quite the other direction. Embedded in modern writing is the notion that poetry and Buddhism (especially Chan Buddhism) work together hand in glove.<sup>60</sup> I have signaled that I will argue against such a presupposition, even though the belief seems to have been promulgated by the tradition itself.

The following sermon from the Southern Song, attributed to the relatively unknown Chan master Yunju Fancong 雲居梵琮 (fl. 1219-1228), offers an amusing yet explicit parable about Chan and poetry.

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<sup>60</sup> For example, see Charles Egan, *Clouds Thick, Whereabouts Unknown*, p. 5-6, and the above quotation from Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, pp. 210-211. Faure's work was informed in part by Du Songbo, *Chanxue yu Tang Song shixue*. Many of these same ideas appeared in essays by Ba Hutian, later republished in *Chan gu shi xin ji*.

[The master] ascended the hall [for a sermon, and said:] “One day, these two monks met. The first monk said, “I am able to write poetry.” The second monk said, “I am able to explain Chan.” The monk who could explain Chan laughed at the monk who wrote poetry and said, “You are only able to make novel phrases, and you don’t know the higher grip of the ancestral masters.”<sup>61</sup> The monk who wrote poems laughed at the monk who could explain Chan and said, “You are familiar with the ancestral masters’ higher grip, but don’t know anything about the eyes within poetry.” The two men quarreled over this without stop. The master pacified them, saying, “There is Chan in poetry: ‘When the waves on East Lake reach the sky, a small skiff breaks the dawn fog.’ And, there is poetry in Chan: ‘Grabbing my raven-cane and heading out the door; the falling flowers and flowing water don’t understand one another.’<sup>62</sup> On what basis are Chan and poetry divided?” As he sent the two monks out of his temple, he casually intoned *li-la-le*.<sup>63</sup>

上堂。一日二僧相訪。一僧云。我能作詩。一僧云。我能說禪。說禪僧。笑作詩僧云。你但做得尖新語句。不知祖師向上巴鼻。作詩僧。笑說禪僧云。你但識得向上巴鼻。不知詩中眼目。二人爭之不已。庵主和會曰。詩中有禪。

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<sup>61</sup> *Xiang shang ba bi* 向上巴鼻 is a fairly common fixed expression. The phrase *xiang shang* denotes a superior or ultimate quality. The *ba bi* 巴鼻, also written *ba bi* 把鼻, was the ring put through the nostrils of cattle that could be used to lead them.

<sup>62</sup> The poetic couplet, which is not extant elsewhere in the Chinese literary canon, appears to be an original composition by Fancong. The falling flowers and flowing water both are images of impermanence and the passage of time. These phenomena should be able to communicate this truth between one another. In the context of this story, this line seems to suggest that the two monks, one who knows poetry and one who knows Chan, should likewise be able to understand how these things (poetry and Chan) can both point towards awakening.

<sup>63</sup> The first and last words, though both pronounced *li* in modern Mandarin, are not perfect rhymes in reconstructed Middle Chinese.

東湖湖上浪滔天。一葉扁舟破曉煙。禪中有詩。手把烏藤出門去。落花流水  
不相知。禪與詩何所為斷。送二翁出門去。得閑唱箇哩囉囉。<sup>64</sup>

In this previously unstudied story, the master Fancong settles a debate between two stereotyped characters. One monk is familiar with only Buddhist ideas, the other is partial to literature. It is the third monk, the master, who can recite a poetic couplet that illustrates the two truths of ultimate and conventional reality (distinctions between lake and sky are erased) and who can supply a Chan saying that is infused with poetic imagery. He thus demonstrates the interpenetration of Chan wisdom and poetic language.

On the surface, a story like the above suggests that the Chan master is one who is adept at discoursing equally well on Chan as well as poetry. The message would seem clear: Chan and poetry are both important, and one should not prefer one to the exclusion of the other. Nonetheless, we can also conclude that dividing poetry and Chan as discrete and potentially incompatible realms was itself a familiar idea for the presumed audience of this text. Such tales about Chan and poetry speak from within particular historical conversations, and as readers we need to attend not only to the surfaces of these texts, but also to the deep historical and social contexts.

We might note, for example, that a Chan abbot of the Song dynasty rose from his peers of elite monastic officers, and these elite monks did not represent the majority of monks in temples. We might also recall that in the Southern Song it was members of the

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<sup>64</sup> From *Shuai'an Fancong Chanshi yulu* 率菴梵琮禪師語錄 (*The recorded sayings of Chan master Fancong of Shuai'an*), XZJ 121, p. 119, b7-13. Though the title of the text is given as *Shuai'an* 率菴, the name used most often within the text is *Zu'an* 卒菴. The two characters are frequently confused. Later anthologists of poetry collections also used *Shuai'an* to refer to Fancong. I have not been able to consult the mountain gazetteer *Yunju shan zhi* 雲居山志, based in part on an early Qing document.



local elite, itinerant scholar-officials, or the imperial court that controlled appointments to the state-administered temples. Command of poetry was a necessary tool for winning support from any local or imperial patron. Further, as this tale from a *Recorded Sayings* is part of a religious text, the parable ultimately seems to indicate that poetry is subordinate to Chan. It is possible that the message is not about poetry at all, and the parable could be glossed as: “a monk’s ideas of Chan shouldn’t prevent him from seeing Chan everywhere he looks, even in poetry.” Perhaps Poetry and Chan are not separate because Chan encompasses poetry, but not because they are equals or because poetry has a special purchase on the of expression truth. When we as readers today engage with texts as foreign and distant as Chan sayings, it is especially important to bring historical contexts from outside the text to bear on our reading of the text.

Just as we sometimes unintentionally carry our modern assumptions into our reading, the incidental details in a historical text, especially those details that go least remarked upon, suggest historical realities that informed the pre-modern authors and editors. Such details may have made this story plausible to its Song dynasty audiences. For example, the two monks who are bested by the master are curious caricatures. A monk who can write poetry but who cannot explain Chan is introduced without explanation. It seems that monks skilled at poetry but incompetent at doing Chan discourse were commonplace enough that they could be stock characters by the time this text was compiled.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> The other monk, too, is curious exactly because he is a stock character. Why would an orthodox Buddhist text like this *Recorded Sayings* not look kindly on a monk who single-mindedly focused on its own tradition? The iconoclastic message here will be familiar to students of Chan. Excessive attachment to the Buddhist teachings may itself become an impediment to

## Returning to Cold Mountain

A touchstone in the study of Buddhist poetry has been the verses of Hanshan, or Cold Mountain. The Cold Mountain poems have long played a beloved role in the history of Chinese poetry. Already in the Song dynasty, poets and monks alike wrote “poems in imitation of Cold Mountain” (*ni Hanshan shi* 擬寒山詩).<sup>66</sup> Interest in Cold Mountain has long been an international phenomenon.<sup>67</sup> I mentioned above Iriya’s fondness for the Hanshan corpus. In recent decades, Cold Mountain has become the most widely recognized representative of Buddhist poetry.

I would like to return to a Cold Mountain poem cited by Faure (among others) as an example of poetic language in Chan.<sup>68</sup> This poem attributed to Shide, the hermit compatriot of semi-legendary Hanshan, is also cited by the Taiwan scholar Xiao Lihua as evidence of the unitary purpose shared by poets and Buddhists in premodern China.<sup>69</sup>

My poems are too poems,

我詩也是詩

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understanding the import of the teachings. The message is not that one should not study. Quite to the contrary, this monk becomes a comic figure because students should be pious and earnest.

<sup>66</sup> For a comprehensive overview of the “imitating Hanshan” phenomenon beginning in the Late Tang, see Huang Jingjia, “Cong Song dai (10-13 shiji) chanshi ni Hanshan shi lun Hanshan ti de neihan zhuanbian.” See also the deft introduction followed by an analysis of Zhongfeng Mingben’s cycle of “Imitating Hanshan Poems” in Heller, *Illusory Abiding*, pp. 320-327.

<sup>67</sup> Hakuin’s commentary on the Hanshan corpus is most interesting and recently served as the intellectual scaffolding for Paul Rouzer’s thought-provoking *On Cold Mountain*.

<sup>68</sup> Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, p. 206. He cites Iriya, “Chinese Poetry and Zen,” translated by Norman Waddell.

<sup>69</sup> For example, the poem is cited in Hsiao, *Wenzi Chan*, p. 30; Iriya, *Kyūdō to etsuraku*, pp. 81-82. I have profited from the previous translations of Jerome Seaton, *Cold Mountain Poems*, p. 77, and by Red Pine, *The Collected Songs of Cold Mountain*, p. 277. See also Seaton, p. 20, where he uses this poem as the coda to his introduction.

2	though some call them <i>gāthā</i> .	有人喚作偈
	Poems or <i>gāthā</i> , it's all the same;	詩偈總一般
4	you must read with care.	讀時須仔細
	Gently, carefully crack them open;	緩緩細披尋
6	you mustn't think it so simple. <sup>70</sup>	不得生容易
	If you study and practice like that,	依此學修行
8	some funny things might happen.	大有可笑事

Shide writes in response to “some people” who refer to his verses as *gāthā* (a term I explore in depth in the next section). Shide defies such critics by collapsing the categories of poetry, more specifically *shi* 詩 poetry, and *gāthā*. The otherwise silent, critical voice of the other is embedded in this response. Shide’s response seems to double as a concession that even though his poems are too poems (*shi*), still they do not obviously fit within the bounds of *shi* poetry, and may ultimately be used for study and practice.<sup>71</sup> On the surface, poems like this one suggest that already in the Tang dynasty (618-907),

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<sup>70</sup> The 1970 annotated translation by Iritani Sensuke and Matsumura Takashi, pp. 436-437, tentatively noted that *sheng* 生 here should not mean “life” or “to live,” as the phrase has often been translated, but rather *shengre* 生熱 “to give rise to.” The *Tang Wudai yuyan cidian* gives several other possibilities, including *shengshu* 生疏 (here, perhaps, “to know not well”), and *shen* 甚 (“very”). This last suggestion yields the line, “It couldn’t be so simple,” which I prefer and give in a second translation below. Related examples of *sheng* as a verb are widely attested in Song dynasty *yulu*, such as the expression *mo sheng rongyi* [xin], *zhi gang yongxin* 莫生容易[心], 志剛用心 (“do not give rise to thoughts that it is easy, resolve to fortify your intentions”).

<sup>71</sup> This seems to be how Iriya reads the poem in *Kyūdō to etsuraku*, 81-82. (Cf. Waddell’s translation, “Chinese Poetry and Zen,” 58-59.) Iriya only translates the first half of the poem. In his comments, he notes that there is something humorous here, but he leaves little hint of what he found humorous. See also Iriya’s *Kanzan*, pp. 157-159, for another poem by Shide.

mountain-dwelling hermits had perceived the profound harmony of poetry and Buddhism, a single stratum running beneath the two traditions.

Hanshan poems are popular with lay readers of Buddhist poetry and have also long been taken seriously by scholars. These rough and talky poems have been studied as repositories of Tang era vernacular diction. It is generally agreed that several unique tongues are represented in the corpus and therefore the poems were likely written by more than one hand. This complicates any attempt to discuss the authorial voice as that of a single, historical Hanshan.<sup>72</sup>

The Hanshan corpus has also been the subject of what we might roundly call religious studies scholarship. Nishitani Keiji argued for the validity of a Zen approach to Hanshan's poems. Barrett pithily summed this up with a remark that it is not that Hanshan was a follower of Chan, but rather Chan that followed after Hanshan.<sup>73</sup> The duo of Hanshan and Shide was described by Bernard Faure as a pair of tricksters, in just such a tack.<sup>74</sup> Iriya Yoshitaka, introduced above, had a particular affection for Hanshan's and Shide's poems.<sup>75</sup> He placed them together with Tao Yuanming at the apex of the

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<sup>72</sup> See Timothy Barrett, "Hanshan's place in History," pp. 125-128, and Paul Rouzer, *On Cold Mountain*, pp. 32-40.

<sup>73</sup> See p. 136 of Timothy Barrett's "Hanshan's place in History." Nishitani Keiji "Kanzan shi." Not enough has been made of Stephen Bokenkamp's suggestion that we follow Hong Mai's reading of Hanshan's poetry in light of late Tang Tiantai thought, in "Reviewed Work: The Poetry of Han-shan"

<sup>74</sup> Faure suggested that the tricksters displaced thaumaturges in Chan traditions over the Tang-Song transition. He notes that eventually the pair of Hanshan and Shide occasionally eclipsed the austere founding fathers Bodhidharma and Huineng. Faure, *The rhetoric of immediacy*, 117.

<sup>75</sup> Iriya wrote "Han-shan fully understood the uncompromising nature of poetry, and the formidable ground of poetic expression. As for his prudence and honesty, I regard it as a priceless jewel. It is a quality totally absent in the religious verse of the Zen priests of the Song dynasty." "Chinese Poetry and Zen," p. 64.

dalliance between China's poets and Chan in his oft-cited essay "Chinese Poetry and Zen," introduced above.<sup>76</sup>

Standing against these weighty assertions, there is another reading of that poem by Shide advanced by the Meiji and Taishō period scholar and Tendai monk Shaku Seitan 釋清潭.<sup>77</sup> Shaku Seitan read the last two lines as a different twist to the poem. He suggests that Shide's pronouncement in the first line, which is explored in the middle couplets, has overstated the identity of *gāthā* and *shi* poetry.<sup>78</sup> At the end of the poem Shide thus backpedals and undermines the simple assertion. Such give and take is typical in the Hanshan corpus.<sup>79</sup> The reader can even find hints of this give and take already in the third couplet. To translate the poem again accounting for Shaku Seitan's interpretation, only the second half of the poem changes.

My poems are too poems,	我詩也是詩
<sup>2</sup> though some call them <i>gāthā</i> .	有人喚作偈
Indeed, poems or <i>gāthā</i> are the same	詩偈總一般
<sup>4</sup> in that you must read with care.	讀時須仔細

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<sup>76</sup> First published in the *Kōza Zen* series, the essay was included as the title essay of Iriya's collection *Kyūdō to etsuraku*.

<sup>77</sup> Shaku Seitan was a professor of Sinology at Tōyō Daigaku. He authored many of the early *kokuyaku* editions of Chinese classics, including the *Shijing* and *Chuci* as well as separate volumes of annotated translations of poems by Tao Yuanming, Wang Wei, and Su Dongpo. His writings were influential among early post-war scholars, including Hata Egyaku 秦慧玉. After decades of neglect, several books by Shaku Seitan have been reissued in last two decades. Most relevant here is a newly annotated edition of *Wa-Kan kōsō meishi shinshaku* 和漢高僧名詩新釈, Shaku Seitan's original anthology of monks' poetry spanning about one thousand years.

<sup>78</sup> See Shaku Seitan, *Kanzan shi shinshaku*, 233-234.

<sup>79</sup> Though Iriya translated only the first half of the poem, he suggested that the final couplet was a joke of some sort, but he did not explicate what.

But if you gently, carefully crack them open,	緩緩細披尋
<sup>6</sup> it couldn't be so simple.	不得生容易
Try to use them for religious practice,	依此學修行
<sup>8</sup> and some funny things might happen!	大有可笑事

In this interpretation, much to a reader's surprise, the last line restores the distinction between *shi* poetry and *gāthā*. The difference turns on the phrase *yici* 依此 (“on this”). In the earlier readings, “this” refers to the *idea* that *shi* poetry and *gāthā* are all the same, an idea expressed in Line 3. Shaku Seitan suggests that “this” refers to Shide's poems (whatever you want to call them), which is the subject of the entire poem. Shaku Seitan's interpretation makes more sense of Lines 5 and 6, and the poem as a whole flows and coheres. This is especially true when we recognize that *sheng* 生 in Line 6 cannot mean “to live,” as suggested by some translators, but rather must be something more vernacular, as I have taken it.<sup>80</sup> For our interpretation, I suggest we follow Shaku Seitan.

In his commentary, Shaku Seitan points out the distinction between *shi* poetry and *gāthā* becomes significant when we think about how they are used. The recitation of *gāthā* generates religious merit (*gongde* 功德), while a *shi* poem is a literary thing and has no such numinous effect. Shide teases those who call his poems *gāthā* and begs them try to recite his verse for religious ritual. Shide's witty proposition is in response to the unvoiced views of his contemporaries, who presumably used the phrase *gāthā* to refer to

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<sup>80</sup> As noted in a footnote to the earlier translation, *sheng* can either be a verb or an adjectival amplifier. The former is suggested in the 1970 annotated translation by Iritani Sensuke and Matsumura Takashi, pp. 436-437. Shaku Seitan gives a similar reading. The vernacular dictionary *Tang Wudai yuyan cidian*, p. 335, offers several possibilities. I prefer to take *sheng* as an adverbial modifier (like *hen* 很, per *Hanyu da cidian*, or *shen* 甚 as given) for the final phrase “simple” *rongyi*.

Buddhist poetry regardless of whether it was a merit-making activity. In the earlier readings, the phrase *kexiao* 可笑 (“funny”) is thought to mean some kind of Zen wisdom; following Shaku Seitan, we come closer to the literal meaning of *kexiao* as laughable, or ridiculous.

Hanshan’s and Shide’s poems are single voices among many in a long conversation about Buddhism and poetry. The insistence on identity between *shi* poetry and *gāthā* at the beginning of Shide’s poem may turn out to be a relatively radical voice in that conversation, unrepresentative of the mainstream. By viewing the greater tradition as polyvocal, we might begin to see the underlying concerns that animated the broader discussion about Buddhist poetry.

For now I suggest we skirt around questions concerning Hanshan, or any individual author, and instead head into the broader conversations behind such poems. Why, for example, was the author of Shide’s poem so upset that some people thought of his verses as *gāthā*? What did *gāthā* denote?

### **Origins of Chinese *Gāthā***

The earliest Buddhist verses in China appeared as integral parts within the translation into Chinese of Indic Buddhist texts. One way the canon of Buddhist scripture has been organized is into three broad categories: *sūtra* (the discourses and sermons of the Buddha; Ch. *jīng* 經); *vinaya* (the laws set down by the Buddha for the monastic community; Ch. *lǜ* 律); and *śāstra* (the treatises; Ch. *lùn* 論). Texts in each category, or basket, include both prose and verse. There are also some works entirely in verse, such as

the *Therīgāthā* – an early collection of poems attributed to the first Buddhist nuns.<sup>81</sup>

Perhaps more than other scriptures, sūtra were accorded special reverence as the revelations of the Buddha. Sūtra texts often consist of prose narrative (Skt. *gadya*, Ch. *changhang* 長行) as well as verse referred to as *gāthā*.

The word *gāthā* itself appears in many texts and was translated into Chinese. The Chinese expression for *gāthā* best known today is *jisong* 偈頌, even though it was not the first Chinese name. The early translator An Shigao 安世高 referred to *gāthā* as *jue* 絕 (and at least once as *jueci* 絕辭).<sup>82</sup> The Indic word *gāthā* has two syllables and was also transliterated as *gatuo* 伽陀 and *gata* 伽他, as well as *jituo* 偈陀 and *jita* 偈他. Chinese transliterations perforce refer to Indic Buddhist verse. Once in Chinese, a natural tendency toward elision erased the common final consonant *ta*. The character *ji* 偈, a transliteration of the first syllable of *gāthā*, remained to connote Buddhist verse. As for the binomial expression *jisong*, it may have resulted from the penchant in Chinese for two character phrases. The word *song* 頌 is a good old Chinese word, appearing as both a verb (to eulogize) and a noun (cum *eulogia*). The compound *jisong* combines one graph for transliteration with a native Chinese word.<sup>83</sup> As a phrase, *jisong* conveys the alien Indic aura (*ji*) of verses written with Chinese words (*song*).

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<sup>81</sup> A new translation by Charles Hallisey was published recently as part of the Murty Classical Library of India.

<sup>82</sup> A widely accepted explanation for the shortening of *jieta* 偈他 or *gatuo* 伽陀 and appending a native term (in this case *song* 頌), is laid out in Saitō, *Kango Butten ni okeru ge no kenkyū*, pp. 166-174. I say more on this topic immediately below.

<sup>83</sup> Zürcher refers to these as “hybrid compounds,” *Buddhism in China*, p. 612, n. 6; see also a note on pp. 644-645 in which Zürcher declared a related phenomenon rare. Erik Zürcher has written extensively on Chinese compound words in early Buddhist translations, most notably “A New Look at the Earliest Buddhist Texts” and “Late Han Vernacular Elements,” both in *Buddhism in*



The formal developments of how *ji* were used to represent foreign verse did not occur in a linear process.<sup>84</sup> The limitations inherent in translation were a matter of great debate during this early period in Chinese Buddhist history. Kumārajīva is reported to have quipped to his amanuensis Sengrui 僧叡 (352?-436?) that making Chinese translations from Sanskrit was like serving someone already chewed food.<sup>85</sup> Some translations sought fidelity to the literal meaning of the Indic texts.<sup>86</sup> Some translations sought to reproduce the sound of the Indic text, a process today referred to as transliteration (even though no ‘letters’ were involved) wherein strings of Chinese characters approximate foreign pronunciations. The most highly regarded translations sought to convey the spirit of the elegance of Indic prose and the dignity of its poetry, and developed analogous Chinese literary techniques, some of which had no direct counterpart in Indic language.<sup>87</sup>

The Chinese literary tools available included line length (how many characters per line), writing in couplets (or not), and rhyming (or not). The regulation of tonal meter is suspected to have been developed by translators seeking to imitate the regular long-

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*China*. For details and well-reasoned speculation about each early Chinese translator’s decisions, see Saitō Takanobu, *Kango Butten ni okeru ge no kenkyū*, 147-198. For a summary of the line length and rhyming preferences of some early translators, see Jan Nattier, *A Guide to the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Translations*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>84</sup> The following is based on the comprehensive study by Saitō Takanobu, *Kango Butten ni okeru Ge no kenkyū*.

<sup>85</sup> T. 55, no. 2145, p. 101, c6-13. In Sengyou’s *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 under the header *Jiemoluoshi zhuan* 鳩摩羅什傳 (which is the source for Huijiao’s *Gao seng zhuan* 高僧傳). A translation of the *Gao seng zhuan* passage, which introduces a few variants that do not improve the text, can be found on pp. 382-383 of Victor Mair and Tsu-lin Mei, “The Sanskrit Origins of Recent Style Prosody.” For a stimulating reevaluation of Sengrui, we await the dissertation of Rafal Felbur.

<sup>86</sup> This is reflected in the debates over whether to emphasize *zhi* 質 or *wen* 文 in translation.

<sup>87</sup> This is the contentious argument of Victor Mair and Mei Tsu-lin, “The Sanskrit Origins of Recent Style Prosody.”

short-syllable meter of Indic poetry. Glancing through the Chinese canon of Buddhist translations, some *gāthā* have long lines and others short. Some were translated without rhyming lines; others with rhyme. Phrases in *jisong* run through caesura more often than in regulated poetry, and likewise the rhythm of classical translated *gāthā* tend not to fall where a modern Chinese reader would expect. The *jisong* in some translations, like sections of Kumārajīva's *Lotus Sūtra*, do a marvelous job of observing the caesura that give structure to a line's rhythm.<sup>88</sup> Nonetheless, even within a single text, translators regularly availed themselves of variations on these formal considerations.<sup>89</sup>

Moreover, a *gāthā* is not merely a literary form. *Gāthā* appear in text associated with certain authors, uses, and contexts. If we note how *gāthā* appear in scriptural narrative, it is not just the narrator who speaks in them to recapitulate events – the Buddha and characters are portrayed speaking and offering them, especially when praising, lamenting, reflecting on previous actions, teaching, or questioning. It is possible that the uses of *gāthā* verses in Buddhist literature, as much as the forms, may have stimulated new uses of poetry in China.

Richard Robinson in his now-dated study *Chinese Buddhist Verse*, limited himself to what he called the “Chinese Buddhist *gāthās*.”<sup>90</sup> His selections emphasized Chinese

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<sup>88</sup> For examples, consult the charts in Saitō, *Kango Butten ni okeru ge no kenkyū*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>89</sup> Most of the above discussion is drawn from two sections in Saitō, *Kango Butten ni okeru ge no kenkyū*, pp. 76-126 and 127-143. On the point of different meters within a single translated text, this presumably sometimes reflected the variety of meters in the Sanskrit.

<sup>90</sup> Robinson, *Chinese Buddhist Verse*, p. xi-xii. A collection of twenty “hymns,” most of Robinson's selections are from early translations, such as *Fo suoxing zan* 佛所行讚 (T. 4, no. 192) by Dharmakṣema 曇無讖 (a translation of Aśvaghōṣa's *Buddhacarita*); several passages from translations of the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha Sūtra*. Robinson's collection concludes with a poem by Japanese monk Shinran, and the *Xinxinming* 信心銘 attributed to Sengcan 僧璨. These choices are explained in the translator's introduction, pp. xxi-xxii.

translations.<sup>91</sup> Robinson's narrow definition of Chinese *gāthā* does not explain the later practices of monks, compilers, and literary critics; late Tang practices that became widespread norms during the Song era. Though *gāthā* in China have their roots in translations of Buddhist scripture, the genre of *jisong* branched out and grew far beyond the hands of translators. *Jisong* (as *Chinese gāthā*, and not *simply gāthā*) eventually developed as an independent and creative genre within the Sinitic language and cultural sphere.

I prefer to refer to later, original, non-translated verses as *jisong* or “Chinese *gāthā*,” and reserve the word *gāthā* (without qualification) for verses in sūtras (which were translated). A *gāthā* that is written using Chinese graphs resonates with Chinese cultural connotations. To call such verses by a Sanskrit name is misleading. The Chinese-language binomial expression *jisong*, on the other hand, elicits the complexity of Buddhist phenomena in China: exotic Buddhist verses (*ji*) in comprehensible Chinese language (*song*).

### ***Jisong* (Chinese *Gāthā*) and Poiesis**

By the Song dynasty, verse authored by monks was frequently referred to as *jisong*, or Chinese *gāthā*. *Jisong* no longer referred to ancient scripture in verse form, but was something living Chinese Buddhists could write using Chinese poetic forms. Often monks' *shi* was called *jisong*, and this reflects another anxiety about Buddhist poetry.

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<sup>91</sup> Though Robinson states a desire “to document a spiritual movement in terms of the hymns it has produced,” (xi) it is unclear what particular movement this eclectic collection is meant to represent.

Some monks wrote that *jisong* were *shi* in form but Buddhist in spirit.<sup>92</sup> Such a definition, naturally, breaks down at the edges, but it is a helpful starting place for considering the relationship between *shi* and *jisong*. We can see that *jisong* is not a poetic genre defined by form or technique. The *shi* poem necessarily participates in certain forms and conventions. A *jisong* may be a *shi* in form, but to approach it as a *shi* is to miss the point, some medieval monks tell us.<sup>93</sup> In this way *jisong* and *shi* are not mutually exclusive

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<sup>92</sup> For example, the preface by Qiji 齊己 (860-940) to a collection of poems by Longya Judun 龍牙居遁 (835-923) states, “although [Longya’s works] are the same as *shi* poetry in form, their purport is not that of *shi* poetry.” 雖體同於詩厥旨非詩也; in *Chanmen zhu zushi jisong* (XZJ 116, 921.a13). See similar sentiments in the entries for *jisong* 偈頌 (from glosses on *Yunmen guanglu*) and *gatuō* 伽陀 (from glosses on *Fayan lu*) in *Zuting shiyuan* (XZJ 113, 10.b14-11. a10; 183.b9-15)

<sup>93</sup> Such a remark is attributed to Daoqian, friend of Su Shi discussed above, by another contemporary, Chen Shidao 陳師道 (1053-1102). Chen was another associate of Su Shi, and a well-regarded poet in his own right. Daoqian and Chen enjoyed correspondence on and off over the decades. Daoqian visited Chen in Xuzhou towards the end of 1098, after some twenty years apart. When Daoqian was departing, Chen wrote a *xu* 序 to mark the occasion of parting once again. Beyond lavishing praise on Daoqian, the central message of the *xu* is an insight Chen gained while debating the value of monks’ poetry with Daoqian. Per Chen’s record, Daoqian concluded his argument by saying “deftness and mediocrity [with language] are insufficient grounds to find [monks’] poetry wanting.” The full text of this section reads:

In the evening we discussed things together until arriving on the subject of Tang dynasty poet-monks. Master Canliao said, “As for [poet-monks] Guanxiu and Qiji, our generation has little regard for their lines [of poetry]; but if we regard their outstanding spirit, their world-transcending will, [then we see that] even when winning widespread fame and honors from kings, dukes, generals and ministers alike, still they were servants for master Shishuang, never leaving him until his end – how could they be people who focus their energies on poetry? It is a mistake to criticize them on the grounds of literary skill.” From this [statement] one can know that what I value is what Canliao regards as superfluous and discards, and that I am the kind of man considered shallow!

夜相語，及唐詩僧，參寥子曰：“貫休、齊己世薄其語，然以曠蕩逸群之氣，高世之志，天下之譽，王侯將相之奉，而為石霜老師之役，終其身不去，此豈用意于詩者？工拙不足病也。”由是而知余之所貴，乃其棄餘，所謂淺為丈夫者乎！

From “*Song Canliao xu*” 送參寥序, in Chen’s *Houshan ji* 後山集 11.11b-12a. A nearly identical text is also found as “*Gao seng Canliao ji xu*” 高僧參寥集跋 in the Song edition of Daoqian’s *Canliaozi shiji*. Most likely this *xu* was added to the earliest editions of *Canliaozi shiji* as its

alternatives. *Jisong* generally was deployed by anthologists, post facto, to signal to future readers the intended mode for how to read a poem, regardless of whether it was a *shi*. On occasions such as monastic funerals, Buddhist abbots intentionally wrote *jisong* using the *shi* form. In the end, not all monks' *shi* were *jisong*;<sup>94</sup> and not all *jisong* are *shi*. The majority of monks' poetry written in the Song and on, however, was in the *shi* form and was referred to as *jisong*.

The conceptualization of monks' *shi* poetry as *gāthā* (or as *jisong*, to be precise,) is evident in the editorial practices of the compilers of *yulu* ("recorded sayings") texts. A *yulu* purported to record the sayings and activities of a master, and came to be a composite of the many distinct genres employed by an abbot in the course of carrying out their religious profession. During the Song era, monks' poems were included in *yulu*, usually in the concluding fascicles, under the header *jisong*.<sup>95</sup> As I described above,

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preface some decades after its composition; however, the content makes clear that a preface was not its original purpose; Chen's *conclusio* in his letter states, "at his departure, I give this account [*xu*] in response" *yu qi xing, xu yi xie zhi* 于其行叙以謝之; and the title in Chen's collected prose is "An account [*xu*] to send off Canliao" *Song Canliao xu* 送參寥序. The master Shishuang is Shishuang Qingzhu 石霜慶諸 (d. 888). Qingzhu's passing is mentioned in a poem by Guanxiu: see Kobayashi, *Zengetsu*, pp. 50-51, and the annotations in *Guanxiu ge shi xinian jianzhu* 2.449. Though some now question the historical accuracy of the statement here, nonetheless Song era tales regarded Quanxiu and Qiji as each having some sort of Chan encounter with Qingzhu. See for example *Zuting shiyuan* XZJ 113, p. 183, b1-8 and *Liandeng Huiyao* 聯燈會要 XZJ 136, p. 794, a5-14. Regardless, the rhetorical point for Daoqian (which Chen found compelling) is that a monk adheres to his monastic and religious commitments before thinking about literary considerations.

<sup>94</sup> In general, as texts survive today, collections in Buddhist canons use *jisong*; separate collections for individual poet-monks use *shiji* 詩集 ("collected *shi*") or *waiji* 外集 ("collected outer writings"). For more on the distinction between inner and outer writings, see Protass and Byrne.

<sup>95</sup> The *yulu* genre emerged in the early Northern Song and continued to develop well into the Ming and Qing periods. Much has been written about *yulu*, but a good place to review the history of *yulu* remains Yanagida Seizan's concise summary of his larger argument, in "The 'Recorded Sayings' Texts of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism."

*jisong* here only loosely refers to Sanskrit *gāthā*. However, beginning in the Tang, *jisong* was used creatively as a label for the Chinese poems (often *shi* carefully observing tonal meter) written by well-regarded teachers.<sup>96</sup> This conferred on those poems the same religious reverence accorded Indic verse.<sup>97</sup> Even the placement of a master's poems at the end of a *yulu*, following the teaching recorded in prose, appears to be homologous to the classical structure of a *sūtra* in which the Buddha's teachings are first given in prose and then in verse.<sup>98</sup>

To have reached the above situation in the Song dynasty, the development of *jisong* as an independent and creative genre available to Chinese writers did not advance along a single, linear vector.<sup>99</sup> To speak of the general trajectory, however, we may refer

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<sup>96</sup> The earliest unambiguous designation of *shi* poetry as *ji* that I am aware of is in the *Platform Sūtra*. Shenxiu's verse is a perfectly regulated *jueju*; the prosody of Huineng's response is in shambles. For five-syllable lines with rhyme in early Chinese Buddhist texts, see Saito Takanobu's *Kango Butten ni okeru ge no kenkyū*. The use of Chinese *gāthā* (not *shi*) as an independent creative genre of Chinese poetry begins at least in the Tang. Bai Juyi wrote a series of *ji* in four-syllable lines. On the other hand, the early poet monks' *shi* were not called *gāthā*.

<sup>97</sup> In consideration of the widespread practice during the Song, one may note the theoretical advances in the 10<sup>th</sup> century that made such naming practices plausible; see Yanagi, *Eimei Enju to Sugyōroku no kenkyū*. Another possible explanation is that the naming practice was an editorial decision by the compilers of *yulu* in reaction to literati who frequently looked down on the poetry of religious teachers as doggerel. By reframing *shi* poems by one's master as *jisong* verse, the criteria of excellence could have been withdrawn from the hands of lay poets and planted firmly inside the walls of the monastery.

<sup>98</sup> This observation from Shang, "Xuedou lu Song Yuan ben jiu mao xin tan," 8.

<sup>99</sup> Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai Zenshū shi*, pp. 557-559, outlines seven likely causes of the rise of *jisong* as an independent genre, which serves as the foundation for my discussion here. Kaji, *Chūgoku Bukkyō bungaku kenkyū*, the final two chapters on Chan and poetry, as well as Section Three on 'emergence and genres' (興起と文體), to be foundational for how I conceived of this project. In all, I found both of these accounts more useful than the history given by Du Songbo, pp. 197-204. Du in general more closely approaches literary theory than literary history. Though such a constructivist approach to Buddhist poetry is not in fashion, nonetheless Du's analyses of individual poems are inspiring.

to what one scholar has creatively dubbed *shihua* 詩化 (“*shi*-poetry-ification”).<sup>100</sup> This neologism is a conceptual model similar to the Sinification of Buddhism.<sup>101</sup> Though these concepts are gross instruments with limitations, they allow us to conceive of the differences that accrue over a *longue duree*. The Sinification heuristic, in which Chinese Buddhism grows less and less to resemble the Indic Buddhism first introduced, culminates with the fully-fledged Chinese styles of Buddhism that flourished during the Song dynasty.<sup>102</sup> Likewise, it was during the Song period that the majority of *jisong* compositions began to follow the strict rules governing *shi* poetry. Indeed, much of our evidence suggests that the *shi*-ification of the *jisong* category was complete by the early Song.<sup>103</sup>

Any long historical process such as *shi*-ification, however, would not have progressed along a steady and regular evolution, and lasting transformations probably took place in fits and starts. Even as late as the composition of the *Zutang ji* 祖堂集 during the Five Dynasties period, a great majority of *jisong* were being composed in

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<sup>100</sup> See Tan Zhaowen, *Chanyue shihun*, pp. 7-15.

<sup>101</sup> See Peter Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*.

<sup>102</sup> At least two shortcomings of this model need be addressed. First, this does not account for the pre-Song ‘poet-monks,’ such as Zhi Dun (314-366), who inscribed religious themes in non-religious poetic genres. For example, see Choi, *The Wandering Sage*, pp. 287-306. My understanding is that these early poet monks were not thought by contemporaries to be writing verse within an essentially religious genre like *jisong*, but were embedding religious ideas into non-religious literary forms. Another shortcoming is revealed if one compares this with John McRae’s periodization of Chan in *Seeing through Zen*. Any model that reaches an apex in the Song dynasty (as opposed to the Tang) risks denigrating the rich developments of the Liao, Yuan, Ming, Qing, and modern periods.

<sup>103</sup> Further below I cite late Tang and early Song texts that refer to *jisong* as *shi* in form only. On the naming practices of anthologists who refer to *shi* as *jisong*, see Christopher Byrne, PhD, 2015.

many different meters.<sup>104</sup> Further complicating an evolutionary model of development, the apparently retrograde movement toward archaic forms is a literary technique that persists to today.<sup>105</sup> What the *shi*-ification model is meant to capture, nonetheless, is the disparity between the seemingly artless nature of didactic *jisong* and the Song dynasty consolidation of *jisong* with the *shi* form. In this way, *shi*-ification marks the adaptation of line-length, tones, rhymes, and scansion, as well as a movement from authorless Buddhist hymns to poems with personal voices.

Several through-lines of historical development are especially noteworthy. Firstly, several religious or ritual verses composed by Buddhist monks were referred to as *jisong*. These include the *chuan fa ji* “dharma transmission verses,” which first appear in the Dunhuang *Platform Sūtra* but which become integral to the narrative of mind-to-mind transmission in the *Baolin zhuan*.<sup>106</sup> Transmission verses were part of the mythopoesis of

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<sup>104</sup> There are extensive charts and formal analysis in the monograph by Cai Rongting, *Zutangji Chanzong shiji yanjiu*.

<sup>105</sup> The contemporary poet Zhou Mengdie 周夢蝶 (1921-2014), known for poetry at once cosmopolitan, post-Freudian, and rife with Buddhist and classical allusions, once published a peculiar poem about visualizing Amitābha. Unlike his usual blank verse, he wrote this poem in couplets with neatly paired four-character lines – the archaic kind of lines one finds in sūtra translations – and titled the poem a *shiji* 詩偈: “Yao ji Zhang Qiao jushi xiangjiang, shi wei shiji siyan yi shi er yun; jian shi Daopu” 遙寄張巧居士香江，試為詩偈四言一十二韻，兼示道普 (Sent afar to the layperson Zhang Qiao in Xiangjiang, an attempt at a *gāthā* in twelve couplets, with four-syllable lines, also shown to the Daopu). *Zhou Mengdie shi wen ji*, 3.142-143.

<sup>106</sup> For an authoritative review of Chan transmission verses, see Ishii Shūdō, “Denpō ge.” For more on the structure and influence of the *Baolin zhuan* verses, see Yanagida, *Shoki Zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, pp. 396-397. Another important review of the topic is found in Tanaka, “Zenshū tōshi no hatten,” pp. 108-113. For more in English on the history of the transmission verses, one may consult Wendi Adamek, *The Mystique of Transmission*, p. 163 and p. 292, as well as Elizabeth Morrison, *The Power of Patriarchs*, pp. 72-76. One should note that on this subject Christoph Anderl made a few egregious errors in “Zen Rhetoric: An Introduction,” p. 15 note 25. Several of his assertions are not reflected in the sources he cites to support the claim that dharma transmission verses were a living practice. William Bodiford, “Dharma Transmission in Sōtō Zen,” does not mention poetry at all, and Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*, 174-



historical Indian ancestors (and pre-historical buddhas) and were seldom practiced by living Buddhists. The Song dynasty practice of death-bed verse, on the other hand, continued a long-standing tradition known alternately as *yiji* 遺偈 (“deathbed *gāthā*”) or *cishi ji* 辭世偈 (“*gāthā* on departing the world”).<sup>107</sup> Other early examples of original Chinese poetry referred to as *ji* are the early anonymous Pure Land verses as well as those by Shandao 善導 (613-681).

Japanese scholar Kaji Tetsujō 加地哲定 (1890-1972) emphasized *zan* 讚 as one of the most easily defined contributions of Chinese Buddhism to Chinese literary history.<sup>108</sup> Whereas pre-Buddhist *zan* were “the means by which the historian discussed his standards of judgment, problems of credibility and the like,” the Buddhist *zan* were verses of praise.<sup>109</sup> The practice of writing *zan* was irrevocably altered by the use of *zan* to refer to the praise of buddhas and bodhisattvas in Buddhist translations.<sup>110</sup>

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175, explicitly states that portrait encomia were never proof of dharma transmission, but perhaps homologues that transmitted charisma.

<sup>107</sup> See Paul Demiéville, “Stances de la fin.” Cf. Yoel Hoffmann’s *Japanese Death Poems*, which probably is the most well-known work on East Asian death poems. Hoffmann’s work includes a thorough introductory essay surveying the entire history of the death-poem practice in Japan. In another article, Demiéville took the practice as an imitation of the Buddha’s final sermon. That scene would have been well-known to Song communities from the *Fo yijiao jing*; see *Choix d’études Sinologiques*, p. 280. The *Fo yijiao jing* was recited in Chan temples as part of the annual observance of the Buddha’s nirvāṇa, according to extant *qinggui*.

<sup>108</sup> Kaji, *Chūgoku Bukkyō bungaku kenkyū*, pp. 29-36. For a discussion of the contentious topic of Buddhist presence in and/or influence on Liu Xie and the *Wenxin Diaolong* with special note of *zan*, see Victor H. Mair, “Buddhism in The Literary Mind and Ornate Rhetoric,” pp. 70-71, especially note 20. (Pagination corresponds to the original article, pp. 54-55, n. 19.) More recently, Antje Richter reviews the debate in, “Empty Dreams and Other Omissions: Liu Xie’s *Wenxin diaolong* Preface.”

<sup>109</sup> Quote from Wright, “Biography and Hagiography,” 391. Shaku Seitan, *Kozen rishi*, p. 10, notes the philological distinction between 讚 and 贊 (also written 贊); the latter maintains the pre-Buddhist meaning of *lunzan* 論贊. In practice, however, the characters were used interchangeably.

By the Song era, *zan* were written with tremendous frequency and on a great variety of subjects – for gods and men, for the living as well as the dead. *Zan* were written about buddhas, arhats, and bodhisattvas (especially Guanyin), on semi-legendary people such as Hanshan and Shide, as well for historical teachers of the near past. A great many *zan* were written as *shi* in the *jueju* form; many are written with irregular line-length; others in four-syllable lines. Famous teachers were frequently asked to inscribe a *zan* upon a portrait (*zhen* 真) prepared by a disciple, honored guest, or donor.<sup>111</sup> By the end of the Northern Song, it was extremely common for such portraits to be of the master

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The problem is further compounded by the modern simplified character 赞 used for both 讚 and 贊.

<sup>110</sup> Verses of praise pre-date Buddhism, of course. Ban Gu 班固 in *Han shu* wrote *zan* that are short prose essays of “appraisal” that appear at the end of each section. Separately, Ban Gu also wrote *shu* 述 in rhymed four-character lines, one to address each individual section of *Han shu*, but they do not follow prose sections and instead are found all together in the final fascicle of *Han shu*. Centuries later, when Fan Ye 范曄 (398-445) composed the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, he too wrote alternately rhymed four-character lines similar to Ban Gu. (See p. 346, n. 14, of Ronald Egan, “The Prose Style of Fan Yeh.”) However, Fan referred to these elements as *zan* and positioned each one at the conclusion of the corresponding chapter. Similarly, in the *Longxin Diaolong*, prose sections are followed by a capping verse referred to as a *zan* 贊. This use of *zan* surely was the model for Huijiao’s *Gao seng zhuan*, introducing a countercurrent in the trajectory of influence. Nonetheless, these latter examples of placing a *zan* capping verse seem to have been antedated by the appearance of a distinct use of *zan* in Buddhist sūtra translations.

In early Chinese Buddhist texts, *zan* was often used as a verb, as in the expressions “use a *ji* to *zan* the buddha” (以偈讚佛, or 以此偈讚頌如來). In a generalized Buddhist worldview, the dedication of aesthetically pleasing objects, including beautiful language, to buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other worthy beings, was an important form of veneration. Honoring a worthy object with rhymed and metric speech could generate karmic causes leading to liberation, or merit (*gongde*). *Zan* also was used as a noun, as can be seen in the title of the *Fo suoxing zan* 佛所行讚. For an overview of *zan* as found in Dunhuang literature, see Wang Fanzhou, “*Zan zhen*.” For another interpretation of Wang’s article, see Cartelli, p. 87-88.

<sup>111</sup> Often indicated by the words *qingzan* 請讚 or *qiuzan* 求讚. See Foulk and Sharf, “On the Ritual Use of Ch’an Portraiture in Medieval China,” beginning on p. 196, for an analysis of what inscriptions can tell us about the uses of portraits. It is worth repeating that the extensive survey of *zhenzan* “failed to uncover a single instance in which an abbot presented his own portrait to an advanced disciple as a certificate of enlightenment or dharma transmission.”(ibid., p. 200)

himself (and such *zan* known as *zizan* 自讚, “self-encomia,” deploy self-abasing language).<sup>112</sup> If quantity is any indicator of significance, it may be worth recalling that *zan* poems make up the largest single mode of poetry in *Jōwa-shū* anthology.<sup>113</sup> I generally agree with, and have drawn inspiration from, previous studies of *zan*. Foulk and Sharf, “On the Ritual Use of Ch'an Portraiture in Medieval China,” described the general ritual and social contexts in which *zan* were written; Winfield has demonstrated the poetics between word and image in at least some *zan*.<sup>114</sup> As *zan* have already been written about elsewhere, I will focus my comments on other kinds of monks’ poetry.

In addition to poems by monks, a second through-line in historical development focuses on lay poets that began writing poems that either imitated sūtra literature, or adapted genres newly infused with Buddhist symbolism such as the *ming*, *zan*, and *jisong* itself. For example, Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385-433) composed *Fo ying ming* 佛影銘, and Bai Juyi (772-846) late in life composed six *ji* 偈 using archaic four-character lines and conventional images.<sup>115</sup> Quite apart from his other poetry, Bai’s preface states that he wrote these verses and would recite them before the Buddha in order to generate sufficient karma to be born in his next life as a Buddhist.<sup>116</sup> Participation in Buddhist

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<sup>112</sup> Zhang Peifeng, *Song shi yu Chan*, includes a deft analysis of the poetry of *zizan*.

<sup>113</sup> It is also clear from material evidence that the middle period Chinese practices of inscribing *zan* on portraits spread to Japan. Inscribed portraits of Chinese and Japanese masters are found in Japanese museums and temple libraries.

<sup>114</sup> An interesting analysis of Dōgen’s extant *jisan* can be found in Chapter Four of Winfield, *Icons and Iconoclasm in Japanese Buddhism*.

<sup>115</sup> See Kaji, *Chūgoku Bukkyō bungaku kenkyū*, pp. 38-41. For a tentative translation of Xie’s *ming* see Chan, *Considering the End*, pp. 139-141; see also Cartelli, p. 49.

<sup>116</sup> *Zimen jingxun* 緇門警訓 T. 48, no. 2023, p. 1073, c26-29. Waley’s original translation of one of Bai’s dedications (that did not use *kuangyan qiyu*, nonetheless,) comes close to this interpretation. Bai is not equating his poetry with Buddhist literature; he is repenting for his sins, and pleading for better karma in the worlds to come. For more on similar performative language

genres by charismatic members of the literati surely played some part in establishing *jisong* as a creative mode.

A third historical through-line is a tradition of popular verses that developed alongside the higher literary traditions. Rhyming verses seem to have enjoyed the widest circulation. These verses are often known as *ge* 歌 or *yin* 吟, while *ming* 銘 (inscription) and *zhen* 箴 (admonition) are somewhat less common.<sup>117</sup> What most clearly distinguishes these verses as popular songs, as opposed to the high poetry of *shi*, is that they have irregular meters, irregular rhyme patterns, and include vernacular speech.<sup>118</sup> Though the popular song is considered a low and vernacular genre, it can be important to recall that these may have been the most widespread poetry. One could approach these anonymous

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in Buddhist ritual vows, see Stephen Teiser, “The Literary Style of Dunhuang Healing Liturgies.” Compare this with how Bai refers to his poetry as “an addiction;” analyzed by Owen, *The End of the Chinese Middle Ages*, pp. 104-106 and 119.

<sup>117</sup> There is copious secondary literature on the popular songs of Dunhuang. Kaji, *Chūgoku Bukkyō bungaku kenkyū*, pp. 186-216, provides a good overview of the Dunhuang song materials with Buddhist themes. See also Tanaka, “Shūdō ge – ichi,” 259-261. For a historical overview of *ming* and *zhen* associated with Chan Buddhism, see Tanaka, “shudō ge - ichi,” 246-251. The final fascicle of the *Jingde Chuandenglu* is titled *ming, ji, zhen, ge* 銘記箴歌, and includes the *Xin xin ming* 信心銘 attributed to the third Chan patriarch. *Zhen* was not an oft-used genre. The best known *zhen* is likely the *Zuo chan zhen* 坐禪箴 by Hongzhi Zhengjue, translated in Carl Bielefeldt, *Dōgen’s Manuals of Zen Meditation*, 199-203. Bielefeldt plays with the oldest meaning of *zhen* as a needle when he renders the title “Lancet of Seated Meditation.” Many such *ming* and *zhen* verses were found in documents from Dunhuang, including the anonymous *Juexue zhen* 絕學箴, which appears to be a relatively early example. The genres of *ming* and *zhen* were existent before the advent of Buddhism in China. *Ming* are rhyming couplets with four-character lines that were inscribed in stone. Inscribed *ming* can be found independently as well as at the end of a prose inscription. Early on, the *ming* inscription was transformed into a metaphor: a verse to be inscribed in the heart. *Zhen* are less numerous, seem to have indefinite lines, and employ irregular end-rhyme.

<sup>118</sup> Well-studied examples of songs with Buddhist themes include many of the *shi'er shi* 十二時歌 (“Songs of the twelve [120-minute] periods of the day”) and the *wu geng zhuan* 五更轉 (“Songs of the Five watches of the night”). For example, see Kawasaki Michiko, “Shūdō ge – ichi,” 263-280.

verses as sources for a prosopography and reconstruct an anonymous monk.<sup>119</sup>

Nonetheless, the examples that survive today necessarily were written down and fixed.

The distinction between high and low is further complicated by the valorization, a near fetishization even, of vulgar speech in later Chan literature. By the time of the Song, these popular songs were old-fashioned genres for a Buddhist monk.<sup>120</sup>

The presence of major through-lines in the Song dynasty is visible in the final two fascicles of the *Jingde Chuandenglu* 景德傳燈錄 (“Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Lamp”). The *Chuandenglu* was arguably the most widely read text in the “Lamp Records” genre, the first of five such genealogical anthologies published in the Song dynasty. As the earliest of the five Lamp Records, the *Chuandenglu* soon achieved scriptural status. The final two fascicles of the *Chuandenglu* collected one hundred sixty-five poems by earlier, mostly Tang, masters, and established these verses

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<sup>119</sup> Many verses circulated at least as far as Dunhuang to the northwest and to Japan in the east. The titles of many now-lost songs and verses are found in Ennin’s 圓仁 catalog of documents retrieved from his voyage to China, *Nittō shingu shōgyō mokuroku* 入唐新求聖教目錄 (T. 55, no. 2167). Jia Jinhua has an interesting theory about Baozhi’s 寶誌 (ca. 418–514) putative authorship of the *Shi’er shi song* 十二時頌 beginning on p. 89 of *The Hongzhou School of Chan*. She instead views the poems as the works of an anonymous Hongzhou monk or monks, which were then attributed to the famous Baozhi. Her conclusions are based in part on rhyme finals that rhyme during the mid-Tang, did not rhyme when Baozhi lived in the Qi-Liang. See the table on p. 92.

<sup>120</sup> These are the songs imagined to emerge spontaneously from the joy of the way (literally, a *ledao ge* 樂道歌). Famous examples include *Zhengdao ge* 證道歌. There are myriad essays, books, and sermons in several languages concerning songs of awakening. Among them, Sun Changwu’s essay “Xuansi yu ledao” 玄思與樂道 in *Chansi yu shiqing*, 293–315 gives inspiring readings of interesting sources as a survey of these kinds of poems from the late Tang, early Song and in Dunhuang. A *ge* may have rhymed and followed basic rules by which we today might refer to it as a poem, in the general sense. However, these *ge* were written to be useful for students and followers of the way. They were not the poetry of an individual. In this way, they are generally conventional and show little variation.

as Chan classics.<sup>121</sup> The *Chuandenglū* provides us knowledge of pre-Song Buddhist poetry from the perspective of an authoritative early Song text. Though scholars have worked to reconstruct pre-Song history and literature, in our case, we also want to understand what Song Buddhists thought about Buddhist poetry.

Among the classic poems, the *Jingde Chuandenglū* included eighteen poems by Longya Judun 龍牙居遁 (835-923).<sup>122</sup> A set of ninety-five poems together with a preface authored by the monk Qiji 齊己 (860-940) – one of the most famous poets of his generation – survives in a later Song anthology of monks' poetry.<sup>123</sup> Though Longya's poems also circulated without Qiji's preface, we can see that Qiji's preface too was known in Song texts even before the publication of the *Chanmen zhu zushi jisong*.<sup>124</sup> In this preface, Qiji's standing as a monk and poet gave him a double authority. The heart of Qiji's appraisal is the epigrammatic comment: "although [Longya's works] are the same

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<sup>121</sup> One might go so far as to say, with the important exceptions of Dunhuang materials and Heian Japanese pilgrims' texts like Kūkai's *Bunkyo hifuron* 文鏡秘府論, that most of what we know today about pre-Song Buddhist poetry comes to us through the hands of editors and compilers of the Song dynasty. In addition, to the anthology of poems found in the final fascicles, there are also scattered poems and couplets found within dialogues; see Feng Guodong, *Jingde Chuandeng lu yanjiu*, chapter five.

<sup>122</sup> Under the header *Longya heshang judun song* 龍牙和尚居遁頌 (T. 51, no. 2076, p. 452, c23-p. 453, b2)

<sup>123</sup> The preface and ninety-five poem set is in *Chanmen zhu zushi jisong* (XZJ 116, 921.a13). On the relationship between the poems in the *Jingde Chuandenglū* and the Southern Song text *Chanmen zhu zushi jisong*, see Shiina Kōyū, "Zenmon shososhi geju no bunken-teki kōsatsu."

<sup>124</sup> In addition to Longya's poems in *Chuandenglū*, seven poems are found in *Zutangji*, and four poems in Dunhuang manuscript S.2165. (The manuscript shows three poems followed by an insertion of lines from *Zhengdaoge* 證道歌 followed by a fourth poem erroneously attributed to Zhenjue.) One more poem is found in *Chanlin Sengbaozhuan*. There is a good summary of the traditional accounts of Judun's life in Kirchner, *Record of Linji*, pp. 99-100, no 31. (I have been unable to consult Shiina's article.) Qiji's preface, too, was known, as evidenced by a citation in *Zuting shiyuan*, printed in 1108.

as *shi* poetry in form, their purport is not that of *shi* poetry.”<sup>125</sup> Qiji was compelled to point out that the verses by Longya, which appear to be *shi* poetry by any formal or apparent measure, is in fact not a *shi* poem. Rather it is a *gāthā*.<sup>126</sup> We’ve come full circle

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<sup>125</sup> The preface is marked *xu* 序, and opens the passage *Longya heshang jisong (bingxu)* 龍牙和尚偈頌(并序). I provide a complete translation here:

The transmission of *gāthā* in the Chan tradition beginning with the 28 patriarchs of India came to a stop with the sixth Chinese ancestor, and once abandoned the practice was forgotten. Ever since, venerable worthies from all corners have frequently written verse to intone and propagate the profound principles; they are not just non-Buddhist [*gewai*] studies, nor using language [words and phrases as synecdoche the basic units of language] to make conjectures. Since the beginning of the Xiantong reign (860-874), the works of great masters [Dongshan of] Xinfeng and [National Teacher Huizhong 慧忠國師 (675-775), disciple of Huineng, from] Baiya [of Dengzhou, Nanyang 南陽鄧州白崖山] have circulated widely in Chan temples. Although [these works] in form are similar to *shi* poetry, their purport is not that of poetry. Is it not that ignorant people look at them and find them laughable? Now, the disciples of Longya have risen; they gathered together the verses of their master and requested I write a preface for it. Longya transmits [the way of] Dongshan. All told, Longya lodged [*tuo* 託 and *ji* 寄] [in these poems] forms and mysteries; surely these contain great significance. It is like a pearl from the dragon’s mouth, or beams of light at the bottom of the ocean; if you try to scoop a handful of its refined flavor, you will only sense that its spirit is clear and even [澄蕩]. As though wandering the firmament, each one is not merely a literary object.

禪門所傳偈頌。自二十八祖止於六祖。已降則亡厥。後諸方老宿亦多為之。蓋以吟暢玄旨也。非格外之學。莫將以名句擬議矣。洎咸通初,有新豐、白崖二大師所作。多流散於禪林。雖體同於詩。厥旨非詩也。迷者見之而為撫掌乎。近有陞龍牙之門者。編集師偈乞余序之。龍牙之嗣新豐也。凡託像寄妙,必舍大意。猶夫驪頰蚌胎。爛耀波底。試捧翫味但覺神慮澄蕩。如遊寥廓。皆不若文字之狀矣。

<sup>126</sup> In *Lebang yigao* 樂邦遺稿 there is a most amusing exemplum, not related to the problem of emotions, of what happens when Song era readers began to regard these poems as religious verse. Zongxiao’s *Lebang yigao* includes one *Ping Longya chanshi song* 評龍牙禪師頌 (“Critique of Chan master Longya’s verses”): “According to the [*Jingde*] *Chuangdenglu*, a verse by Chan master Longya [Zhi]dun goes:

Those who become buddhas are few, while those who *nianfo* are many;  
When a thought comes, before long it becomes a demon [mara];  
If you, sir, wish to become a buddha easily,  
The mind of no-thought is not much at all!”

成佛人稀念佛多。念來歲久却成魔。君今欲得自成佛。無念之心不校多。

The author felt that Longya’s verse was not only misleading, but was commonly used by Chan teachers to oppose practitioners of *nianfo* and accuse them of attachment to appearances

from that poem by Shide discussed above. Shide wanted to draw a distinction between poetry and *gāthā*, in order to demonstrate that his poem is too a poem (and cannot reasonably be thought of as a *gāthā*). Qiji has taken the opposite tack. The early *Zuting shiyuan* published in 1108 cites Qiji's passage approvingly, concluding that *shi* and *gāthā* could hardly be more different.<sup>127</sup> The anxiety that animates Qiji's insistence seems to have had some purchase on later generations during the Song.

We find evidence that this distinction between *gāthā* and *shi* was oft repeated in the Song dynasty. For example, the monk Zhenjing Kewen 真淨克文 (1025-1102) wrote two poems that he sent to one Ye Tui 葉推 (d.u.). We can see from the content of the first poem, that Ye was quite pious, and Kewen's epistolary poem reads like a response to some inquiry. The relevant couplet here is: "One who is able to express the meaning of awakening will only write *gāthā*, / no longer voicing sentiments and composing *shi*."<sup>128</sup> This couplet brings a subtle irony to the poem. Each of the fifty-six words in Kewen's eight lines is written in perfect observance of the tonal patterns of *shi* form, and yet the poem insists that it can only be *ji* (*gāthā*).<sup>129</sup> In another couplet, Kewen encourages the

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(*zhuoxiang* 著相). The only remedy for this situation was to write a responding poem that reversed many of Longya's lines. See T. 47, no. 1969B, p. 237, c20-29; cf Longya's poem in *Chanmen zhu zushi jisong*, in which *zichengfo* 自成佛 is *yichengfo* 易成佛 and *bujiaoduo* 不較多 is *bujiaoduo* 不較多 (XZJ 116, p. 924, a12-13). *Lebang yigao* is the second of two compendia by Shizhi Zongxiao 石芝宗曉 (1151-1214). For more on Zongxiao and his place in the Song era Tiantai and Pure Land projects, see Daniel Getz, "Rebirth in the Lotus." Cf. also Pan's translation in *Painting Faith*, pp. 241-242.

<sup>127</sup> XZJ 113, p. 183, b9-15.

<sup>128</sup> From the first of two poems "Sent to minister Ye Tui" *Ji Te Tui guan* 寄葉推官, in *Guzun suyulu*, XZJ 118, p. 759, a2-7.

<sup>129</sup> For analysis, I rely on David Branner's reconstructed Middle Chinese (based on the Song dynasty *Guangyun* rime book) accessible on his *Yintong* website; and use Stuart Sargent's method for metric analysis explicated in the introduction to his *The Poetry of He Zhu*, 8-10, which is based on the system by Qi Gong in *Shi wen sheng lü lun gao*. Following Sargent, I used



layman to strive to be like Vimalakīrti, who “transcended the category of laity” 超俗類 (like this poem). We cannot know what the layman understood from this, but regardless, we can see that Kewen proposed that he stop writing *shi* poems about his feelings (*qing*), and instead become more pious, or rigorous.

Many historical through-lines can be traced from early medieval China across the Tang and into the Song dynasty. There was also a growing anxiety over the production of poetry by monks. The creative endeavor had become suspect, with its ability to leave one rapt, ruminating, in pursuit of perfectly evocative language. This anxiety itself would eventually become a topic within monks’ poems, a topic to which we will return.

To sum, the word *ji* was used in China to refer to verses in Buddhist scripture, to the verses from venerated ancestors as found in Chan texts, and to the verses from a living teacher. A *ji* was not so much genre or specific corpus, but a mode that denoted religious writing and . A *ji* was not necessarily a poem in the *shi* form.

### Revisiting *wenzi chan* (part i)

The relationship between Buddhism and literature in the Northern Song has often been conceived of with the term *wenzi chan*, closely associated with the well-known figure of Juefan Huihong 覺範惠洪 (1071-1128). Several prominent scholars have tried

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Qi Gong’s tables on pp. 45-60 to look up each of the eight lines in Kewen’s poem. The following combinations of letters and numbers describe the tonal pattern of each line from Kewen’s poem: A2; B1; C1; D4; A1; B1; C2; D4. (A 非 would denote the presence of a violation – there are none.) As Sargent explains, tonal violations do not make a poem unregulated. To the contrary, artful violations and complimentary adjustments in surrounding lines were techniques requiring subtle skills. Kewen’s poem, on the other hand, from the point of tonal patterns is entirely conventional.

to find some ideology behind *wenzi chan* and to fit it into the general contours of Buddhist doctrinal developments in the Song. Shortly after Huihong, the eminent monk Dahui Zonggao supposedly pronounced the death-knell for *wenzi chan*, burning the original woodblocks of his master's *Biyuanlu* collection of *gong'an* and advocating *kanhua chan*. Scholars have sought for reconciliation between the Chan polemics of *buli wenzi* 不立文字 with Huihong's apparent advocacy of *wenzi chan*.

Robert Gimello wrote that the Northern Song was a period in which Chan was not marked by “simple rejection of traditional Buddhist text, doctrine, and path but its intensification, enhancement, and experimental fulfillment of the orthodoxy conveyed therein.”<sup>130</sup> He describes this as two sides to a story, two vectors in a tension. We are still much more familiar with the story of Chan as a renegade school of Buddhism. On the other hand, “the strains of Chan predominant during the eleventh and early twelfth centuries in one way or another rejected extreme or literalist interpretations of the standard Chan self-image as ‘a special transmission outside the theoretical teachings.’”<sup>131</sup> He remarked that the term which best captures this “sober Chan conservatism” is *wenzi chan*. He wrote, “the term ‘Wenzi Chan’ is especially associated with the life and thought of the late Northern Song Linji Chan monk Huihong, who used it to characterize his own combination of Chan practice, Buddhist learning, and secular belles lettres.”<sup>132</sup> In this article, Gimello performed an important intervention against the unsavory reputation of *wenzi chan*, which he attributed to the judgments by later Japanese Zen reformers against

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<sup>130</sup> Gimello, “Mārga and Culture,” p. 377.

<sup>131</sup> Gimello, “Mārga and Culture,” pp. 377-378.

<sup>132</sup> Gimello, “Mārga and Culture,” p. 415, n. 17.

the flourishing artistic culture of Muromachi period Gozan Zen.<sup>133</sup> He proposed that Huihong may have coined the term before such derogatory connotations began to coalesce, and instead was originally intended to describe “the role of literature and learning in Chan practice.”<sup>134</sup> Gimello has placed his finger on one of the primary religious anxieties of Buddhism in the Song period. Nonetheless, several assertions may need to be qualified.

George Keyworth, in his 2001 dissertation, criticized Gimello for not going far enough in asserting that “fundamentally, Chan not only rejected the phrase ‘not setting up the written word’ [*buli wenzi*] but instead stood as a Buddhist school which did not reject the written word.”<sup>135</sup> Keyworth proposed that *wenzi chan* “implied that [monks] could openly engage in literary endeavors.”<sup>136</sup> Keyworth’s approach to *wenzi chan* ultimately led that author to the conclusion that “language was a cornerstone of Chan practice.”<sup>137</sup> I believe that Keyworth has brought together very interesting evidence, which supports a conclusion contrary to his own. By following this evidence, my reading also runs against some of the broader brushstrokes painted by literary historians. Ronald Egan remarked that “Huihong is of particular interest as the leader of the ‘Lettered Chan’ (*wenzi chan*) movement, which eschewed the traditional mistrust of words and writing of the Chan school and sought to reconcile Chan practices with scholarly reverence for texts of all kinds.”<sup>138</sup> I have not found evidence of a *wenzi chan* movement. Rather, *wenzi chan*

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<sup>133</sup> Gimello, “Mārga and Culture,” p. 417, n. 28.

<sup>134</sup> Gimello, “Mārga and Culture,” p. 409.

<sup>135</sup> Keyworth, “Transmitting the lamp,” p. 3.

<sup>136</sup> Keyworth, “Transmitting the lamp,” p. 4.

<sup>137</sup> Keyworth, “Transmitting the lamp,” p. xv.

<sup>138</sup> Egan, “The Northern Song (1020-1126),” pp. 426-427.

seems to have been a self-abasing phrase, and further evidence of the monastic anxiety over poetry.

All of this is not to say that Huihong did not love poetry, but rather that the term *wenzi chan* did not refer to a spiritual path. Moreover, I am not only claiming that *wenzi chan* is the wrong word for this idea of profound synergy between poetry and chan, but I also believe that the ideology constellated around the slogan *shichan yizhi* 詩禪一致 (“unity of poetry and Chan”) postdates the Song all together.<sup>139</sup> The way we have imagined *wenzi chan* was a retrospective creation of Ming dynasty monks and poets who did so for their own purposes.<sup>140</sup> I have carried out a careful reading of each usage of the phrase *wenzi chan* in Huihong’s own writings, which can be found at the end of Chapter Two. My conclusions are that it was a term of self-effacement. In Huihong’s writings, *wenzi chan* refers to poetry in which one is not yet liberated. To the contrary, Huihong took his poetry that arose from unceasing emotions as evidence of his non-liberation.

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<sup>139</sup> Kaji, *Chūgoku Bukkyō bungaku kenkyū*, pp. 261-278, shows that Wang Shizhen 王士禛 (1634-1711) in the Ming is the first to use this phrase, and possibly the first to posit an absolute equivalence between poetry and Chan. Kaji demonstrates that Wang himself believed previous comparisons between *shi* and *chan* to have been metaphoric, and hence insufficient. Prior to Wang’s *shichan yizhi* (and up until today), the phrase *yi chan yu shi* 以禪喻詩 was popular. Qian Zhongshu in his essay “*Yi chan yu shi*” (以禪喻詩) in *Tan yi lu*, p. 2.745, also discusses how that phrase is metaphoric. The distinction is significant. Metaphors subordinate one of the two clauses to the other. The locus classicus for the phrase *yi chan yu shi* is in a published letter *Da chu ji shu Lin’an Wu Jingxian shu* 答出繼叔臨安吳景仙書 by Yan Yu 嚴羽 (fl. Southern Song) written in defense of his earlier metaphoric use of Chan to describe poetry in *Canglang shihua* 滄浪詩話. In the letter, Canglang cites Dahui as the authority on which he rests his claim. Canglang’s sense of *chan*, however, is romantic and non-technical. James Benn (2015: 129-130) discusses another Buddhist term, *sanmei* 三昧 (Skt. *samādhi*), and the vernacular and non-technical uses of *sanmei* by literati to describe “a wonderful ability.” Benn concludes that “no doubt for some writers there is nothing especially profound lurking behind this phrase.” I think much the same can often be said for the use of *chan* in metaphors for poetry.

<sup>140</sup> Liao Zhaoheng, *Zhong-bian, shi-chan, meng-xi*, pp. 106-149, details the “creative reinterpretation” of Huihong and his work by a cast of monks and writers in the late Ming.

## General Outline

The rest of this dissertation makes two large movements. The first broad stroke is to establish what, exactly, was the conflict between Buddhist monasticism and poetry. Chapters Two and Three constitute this first movement. Chapter Two focuses on close-reading prescriptive texts (monastic law codes and meditation manuals) to understand what religious purposes were served by prohibitions against poetry. I provide examples of monks' poetry in which these prohibitions are explicit poetic tropes. These poems show both the **trace** and the **tension** of Buddhism.<sup>141</sup> Illuminating this poeticization of monastic prohibition is, I believe, the key to understanding how monks' poetry developed Buddhist poetics. These monks seem to be asking, "is Buddhist poetry possible?" To establish that this question approximates the discourse of Middle Chinese, I examine historical Chinese poetic criticism in Chapter Three. I focus on the *shihua* 詩話 genre of criticism, which first matured in the Song dynasty, as well as prefaces and colophons to collections of monks' poetry. In this survey, I found that some of the assumptions of modern scholars have changed little since the literati of the Song. I conclude with the suggestion that we set aside our preconceptions about what Buddhist poetry ought to be, turn to monks' poems as they are, reconstruct the milieu in which they were written, and then discover the value in these poetic responses to their environments.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> To hark back to the Felstiner, *Celan*, quote at the opening of this chapter.

<sup>142</sup> There is one particularly outstanding work in Japanese by Kaji Tetsujō that anticipates some of my methods, *Chūgoku Bukkyō bungaku kenkyū*. Though it was published at the relatively early date of 1965, it has not been followed by further similar research in Japan or the United States. Perhaps its breadth and depth were a product of the period (of Japanese colonialism) in which the

The second broad movement is to read specific genres or modes of poetry. I approach one genre each in Chapters Four and Five. In both of these chapters, I aim to show how monks responded to the problem of the emotions in poetry. I focus on the social and historical contexts in which monks live, which are essential to understanding how poetry worked in their lives. In addition, each genre of poetry engages with its own literary history and convention. In Chapter Four I examine parting poetry, in which humor, deferral, indirection, and iconoclastic allusion to scripture allow monks to play with the sorrow of parting. This is creatively antithetical to genre norms of parting poetry. Parting poems written from one monk to another on a ritual occasion in the life of a monastery, are a broadly representative type of Buddhist poetry. Funeral songs are the subject of Chapter Five. The *wange* express personal grief. These poems are floridly emotional. The emotional tenor contrasts with formal mourning, in which poetry is also involved. I show the different strategies monks use to explain (to themselves as much as to the reader, I believe) why they are writing something that they know they should not. These monks' poems of personal grief transgress the neat boundaries between *gāthā* and *shi*; between lay person and monk. The monks' *wange* is, still, animated by the religious identity of the author. These poems, though not especially prized by tradition, have been the most interesting to work with as "Buddhist poetry." They show the deep and

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author, in addition to being a well-trained Shingon-shū monk, had also lived in China for 15 years after receiving an education in sinology at Kyoto University. He settled as a professor at Kōyasan University, a Shingon college, and eventually served in leadership there. "Until now, the *gāthā* (*geju*) of Chan monks have been taken as expressions of the verification of awakening (*shōgo* 證悟), and as hints for guiding not-yet-awakened students (*unsui*). Of course there are such works by Chan monks, naturally there are works bearing the contents of awakening (*shōgo no naiyō* 證悟の内容), but these can also be viewed from the standpoint of literary studies. And among them, there are also many things of high literary value, as well as many such authors who themselves deliberately crafted literary work." (*Chūgoku Bukkyō bungaku kenkyū*, p. 217)

profound struggle of individual people, as they try to put the profound Buddhist religion into practice during difficult times. What could be more Buddhist, or more poetic, than that?

## Chapter Two – Monastic Anxiety

### Introduction

Is Buddhist poetry possible? In this chapter, I will examine what texts in the Buddhist tradition tell us. Buddhist Modernism presents the monk-poet as an exemplum of a carefree way of being.<sup>1</sup> I believe that while such an image does occur from time to time, it is not emblematic of Buddhism in the Middle Period or of its surviving literature. The romantic monk-poet is an image that emerges from a background of tremendous, widespread, and deeply felt monastic anxiety about poetry and poesis.

What is the anxiety Buddhist monks and laypersons felt about poetry? In the following Buddhist texts, we can see that poetry was conceived both as an affliction and as a technology for liberation. That is, poetry could be both *kleśa* and *upāya-kauśalya*. Buddhist texts present us with a dual, or polar, relationship towards poetry.

The problem of monastic poetry was broadly Buddhist, not limited to any one sect, style, or lineage, and not the problem of a discrete time and place. “Monasticism” defines itself through ascetic practices, the conscious rejection of the worldly and profane and conventionally beautiful. In this sense “monastic” identity defines itself *against* sensuous

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<sup>1</sup> McMahan, in *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* pp. 117-147, has outlined a compelling intellectual genealogy of the modern association of Buddhism with spontaneity and creativity. The work of D.T. Suzuki and his followers is especially well-documented, and McMahan makes clear how Suzuki was an avid student of Romanticism and post-Romanticism (especially the Transcendentalists). Suzuki incorporated the Romantic’s emphasis on epiphany in art, for example, into his modernist Zen. On this point, McMahan builds on the insights of Taylor’s *Sources of the Self*, especially “Part V: Subtler Languages.”



poetry and the role of the sensuous poet. The apparent conflict between literature and monasticism was pervasive.

A focus on the Song period offers heuristic advantages, as outlined in the preface. To approach Song era monastic anxiety about poetry, I began my research with Song texts, and noted the classical texts and ideas quoted therein. My purpose is to see how Song authors re-imagined these fragments of scripture.

### **The Propriety of Poetry**

The problem of monastic poetry was broadly Buddhist, not limited to any one sect, style, or lineage, and not the problem of a discrete time and place. The apparent conflict between literature and monasticism was pervasive. In monks' poetry itself, as well as across other kinds of Buddhist texts, are found traces of monastic anxiety over poetry. This reflects, and is reflected in, conceptions of poetry as one of many *waixue* ("outer learning," or "studies of things outside [the Buddhist tradition]").<sup>2</sup> The relationship

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<sup>2</sup> Cao Shibang 曹仕邦, *Zhongguo shamen waixue de yanjiu*, surveyed *waixue* in early Chinese Buddhist sources, and emphasized the upāya flavor in sources. The term *waixue* 外學 is defined fairly explicitly in some of the vinaya texts translated below. Conceptually, *waixue* is paired with *neixue* 內學 (inner learning), which denotes Buddhistic study. Eminent monks are often said to have thoroughly "penetrated both inner and outer" (*tong neiwai* 通内外). The pair 'inner and outer' in China naturally predates Buddhism, and was used to establish hierarchical relationships. Inner and outer also were used to refer to one's inner disposition and outer deportment. The word *wai* was also used in other Buddhist concepts, most notably *waidao*, often rendered as 'heretic' but usually referring to a follower of a non-Buddhist tradition and not a heretical follower of Buddhism (except as rhetorical). The *Sifen lü*, for example, defines *waidao* as a non-householder belonging to some other religious tradition (外道者在佛法外出家人, T. 22, no. 1428, p. 751, a14), similar to the Skt. *tīrthika* and *parapravādin*. Following this, when *waixue* 外學 is spoken about by the Buddha, the context is religious debates between ancient Indian philosophers. In Chinese texts, especially translated texts, *waidao* still refers to Indic non-Buddhists. More often,

between poetry and *waixue* for Song monks is especially well illustrated in anecdotes from *Song gao seng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, found on the following pages. But *waixue* also comes into the frame in consideration of the dominant field of learning in China: the Ruist classics and histories. Then it is often portrayed less ambiguously, and sometimes positively. In Buddhist *vinaya* codes, many activities are listed under *waixue*, including spell-craft and medicine. By focusing on how Song authors accounted for *vinaya* legislating of poetry as *waixue*, we can study the perpetuation of “monastic anxiety” and its connections to Song monks’ poetry.

By “monastic anxiety” I am referring to a tension that existed at the level of monastic ideals. An ideal of renunciation and communal living with the goal of liberation runs through many classical Buddhist texts. The textualization of that ideal into monastic legal codes, like the Indic *vinaya* and Chinese *qinggui* 清規 (“Rules of Purity”), preserves traces of monastic anxiety over certain practices. However, in what follows, I try to describe how these classical (and often Indian) Buddhist texts could have shaped the identities and behaviors of Chinese monks living some thousand years after the first monastic communities codified their laws. In order to understand how Buddhist scripture had impacts on the lives of Song dynasty monks, this chapter will excavate references to scriptural anxiety from important genres of monastic compositions of the Northern and Southern Song dynasties. These include biographies of eminent monks, scriptural commentary, encyclopedia, “universal history,” and *qinggui*. Such an archaeology of

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however, *waidao* was used to refer to Daoists and followers of Chinese non-Buddhist traditions. For an interesting example of how non-Buddhist books (some bequeathed by “shaven-headed householders” in return for elderly care) were handled by the monastic community, see Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, p 11, 50, 104, 119.

Song era knowledge will show the variegated ways in which elite monks in the period made use of precedents and perpetuated monastic anxiety.

The monastic legal codes were an important context for the biographers of monks. The relatively obscure monk Zhihui 智暉 (873-956), portrayed as a bare branch on the Chan family tree in the *Jingde chuangdeng lu*, also has a biographic notice in the *Song gao seng zhuan*, where he is categorized as a “merit rouser” *xingfu* 興福.<sup>3</sup> There, Zanning 贊寧 (919-1001) offers an introductory excuse for Zhihui to write poetry.<sup>4</sup>

I have understood the Buddha permitted one period (*yishi*) of each day for non-Buddhist study (*waixue*); Zhihui was rather good at poetic composition, and was accomplished in the style of [*Li*]sao and ya [*Shijing*] [i.e. *shi* poetry]. In addition to skill with a brush (i.e. calligraphy), he also excelled at painting (*xiaobi*), and on whitewashed walls would rise fast clouds and mountains from his hands. He remarked, “I admire the six techniques of painting of [the painter monks] Sengzhen and Daofen. It is a shame I am not their contemporary, or we would face the walls and our drawings would join together and every one would become a figure full of life.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> On the typologies of the *Gao seng zhuan* tradition of hagiographies, see Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*. For a brief note on Zhihui, see Paul Demieville, *Poemes Chinois d'avant la Mort*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>4</sup> *Song gao seng zhuan* (T. 50, no. 2061, p. 883, c23-27). I follow the Song and Yuan variant of *ya* 雅 for *tui* 推.

<sup>5</sup> Sengzhen is listed in fascicle seven of the Tang era *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記 by Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠. I did not find information for Daofen, though presumably he was of similar stature as a monk skilled at painting. “Six techniques,” or *liufa* 六法, refers to the six skills found in the *Gu hua pin lu* 古畫品錄 by Xie He 謝赫. In that text, the six techniques serve as an organizational scheme for pithy statements attributed to venerable practitioners. Zhihui speaks about *wuxiang* 物象 and *shengdong* 生動, which are two of the six skills in Xie’s preface (*xu* 序).

聞佛許一時外學。頗精吟詠得騷雅之體。翰墨工外小筆尤嘉。粉壁興酣雲山在掌。恒言。吾慕僧珍、道芬之六法。恨不與同時。對壁連圖各成物象之生動也。

Zanning's portrait of Zhihui shows that a learned monk might engage in the arts of poetry, calligraphy, and painting. However, these are *waixue*, "studies of things outside [the Buddhist tradition]." <sup>6</sup> In this biography we do not simply have the tradition speaking. Zanning seems to have regarded excelling at *waixue* as somewhat unorthodox and felt the need to search for a justification and insert his authorial voice. <sup>7</sup> This seems to be the impetus that led the narrator to recall that the Buddha himself had made an allowance that might cover Zhihui's behavior. <sup>8</sup> In the *Song gao seng zhuan*, Zanning included many other monks also versed in *waixue*; however, just one more example will suffice to illustrate the status of *waixue* in *Song gao seng zhuan*.

Zanning's *Song gao seng zhuan* also tells us the story of monk Xuanyan 玄晏 (743-800), a son of the famed calligrapher Li Yong 李邕 (678-747), who from a young age rigidly interpreted Buddhist vinaya, or monastic code. He became known for his adherence to the letter of the law. <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For more on the term *waixue* 外學, see previous footnote to this chapter.

<sup>7</sup> This is suggested by the previous sentence in Zanning's narrative, in which he prefaces the introduction of *waixue* with an admonishment that this eminent monk "had lived silently in mountains, never engaging in anything other than pouring through the canon, completely penetrating the teaching, *chan*, and the vinaya, every day intoning a hundred thousand lines until the flavor of their meaning had been tasted" (山中闕然曾無他事,唯鉤索藏教禪律亘通,日誦百千言義味隨嚼); T. 50, no. 2061, p. 883, c22-23. In other words, this hagiography alerts the reader that this saint became a *waixue* master only after a comprehensive and ascetic period of study of Buddhist materials.

<sup>8</sup> The likely scriptural sources for this assertion are discussed at length below.

<sup>9</sup> T. 50, no. 2061, p. 893, b3-7.

Later in life, when he learned that the vinaya-pitaka has an explanation for ‘one period of non-Buddhist study,’ he wrote a poem in which he gave free reign to his thoughts as though he were wandering alone beyond the world. Liu Changqing of Xuzhou, who is celebrated for his five-character poems, sighed in appreciation at his work. He would write a poem whenever he was inspired by the wind, clouds, grass, or trees, and every poem would then be intoned by those skilled at poetry.

《宋高僧傳》卷 29：「而聞律藏有一時外學之說。或賦詩一章。運思標拔孤遊境外。彭城劉長卿名重五言。大嗟賞之。由是風雲草木每有賦詠。輒為工文者之所吟諷也。」

The tale of Xuanyan’s piety makes for a rather humorous story. Xuanyan, though the son of a great artist, had absolutely avoided writing poetry, thinking it forbidden. When he discovers that there is a small dispensation for *yishi* (one period of the day), he began writing so many poems in such an unencumbered way that his work was popular with contemporary poets. This biography suggests that Xuanyan may have followed the letter of the law, but it is not clear whether he grasped its spirit.

The idea that poetry was an obstruction to practice is a motif found in hagiographies as well. The *Song gao seng zhuan* biography of Jiaoran 皎然 indicates that even this exemplar of poet-monks (*shiseng*) quit writing poetry for a period. According to Zanning, Jiaoran did so in order to recommit to religious goals.<sup>10</sup> This hagiographic topos appears to have had some purchase on monks’ own lives.<sup>11</sup> There are other examples of

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<sup>10</sup> See *Song Gao Seng Zhuan*, T. 50, no. 2061, p. 892, a5-15.

<sup>11</sup> In the case of Jiaoran, a similar sentiment is found in an epistle sent to Quan Deyu 權德輿 (759-818), “Da Quan congshi Deyu shu” 答權從事德輿書, now in *Quan Tang wen* 917, pp. 2b–3b. Cf. Yang, *Chan Interpretations*, 179, and Owen, *The Great Age*, 287-288.

literary monks abandoning their literary endeavors in order to single-mindedly pursue religious goals. For example, the monk Daoqian 道潛 had risen to prominence after an especially witty poem composed at a banquet with Su Shi.<sup>12</sup> Then, only a few years later in early 1080, he retreated to Mount Ayuwang, where he lived with the notoriously strict master Dajue Huailian 大覺懷璉 (1010-1090), and swore off poetry.<sup>13</sup> Though both

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<sup>12</sup> In autumn of 1078, Daoqian stayed for three months with Su Shi in Xuzhou, where he was then governor. Su Shi supposedly invited Daoqian to come to Xuzhou after hearing someone recite the latter's poem "On the Road to Linping" *Linping dao zhong* 臨平道中. A banquet was held in the governor's house, which Daoqian attended. Daoqian wrote a poem with the amply long title, "Su Shi from the head seat sent a singing-dancing-girl to seek a poem of me, and I offered this poem to play along" *Zizhan xishang ling gewuzhe qiushi, xi yi ci zeng* 子瞻席上令歌舞者求詩，戲以此贈. The acclaimed third line of the poem goes, "My Zen mind has already become a mud-soaked catkin" *Chanxin yizuo zhan ni xu* 禪心已作沾泥絮. Though many variants are in circulation, an authoritative version of the poem is in Daoqian's collected poems, *Canliaozi shiji*, which was compiled by his close disciple Faying (d.u.) and a first edition of which is extant. The incident is widely recorded.

<sup>13</sup> The immediate cause for Daoqian's retreat seems to have been the capital case against Su Shi, known as *wutai shi'an* 烏臺詩案, in which Daoqian was named as a conspirator. This comes from a letter by Qin Guan to Su Shi titled "yu Su xiansheng jian" 與蘇先生簡, in *Huaihai ji* v.30, in which he shares the following news with Su:

Daoqian went to live with Huailian on Mount Ayuwang, the place is most ideal for him. More recently a letter arrived in which said he had "completely stopped intoning poetry." I heard after that he had already broken his vow [to stop poetry]!

參寥在阿育王山璉老，處極得所，比亦有書來昨云已斷吟詩。聞說後來已復破戒矣。

In a letter to Daoqian *Yu Canliao dashi jian* 與參寥大師簡, Qin Guan quipped:

Recently I heard that you were not writing poetry, and I had a short poem I was going to send to tease you. Now you've already broken your promise! It seems [karma] that has ripened is difficult to forget.

頃聞公不作詩，有一小詩奉戲，又已復破戒矣。可謂熟處難忘也。

The phrase *shouchu nanwang* 熟處難忘 appears in many Buddhist texts from the Song on, and seems to a reference to the kinds of subtle karma that are difficult to uproot. For example, this same sentiment is the punch-line to a brief sermon about the late Tang literary monk Longya 龍牙; *Baiyun Shouduan chanshi guanglu* 白雲守端禪師廣錄 (XZJ 120, p. 426, a2-4).

Jiaoran and Daoqian seem to have made a public show of forsaking poetry – vowing abstinence from the brush – neither monk gave up poetry for long.<sup>14</sup>

From these examples we can see that poetry was ambiguously valorized in the *Song gao seng zhuan*. In both of the above biographies of Zhihui, for example, Zanning was sure to tell his readers that poetry is a form of *waixue*, or sanctioned but non-monastic (*qua* non-ascetic) activity. We know from Zanning’s other writings, like the entry for *waixue* in his *Song seng shi lue* 宋僧史略 discussed further below, that he understood *waixue* to be permitted only if it was an expedient for converting non-Buddhists.<sup>15</sup> As a result, poetry can be both *kleśa* and *upāya*. Further, the overall tendency of this discourse is towards anxiety. When poetry is thought of as *upāya*, this is an allowance; when poetry is thought of as *kleśa*, this is an exhortation. In all cases, the underlying assumption is that poetry does not square easily with monasticism.

### “Non-Buddhist learning,” or *waixue*

There is another early Song dynasty text that also refers to *yishi waixue*, and which reveals the many scriptural sources for this idea. Gushan Zhiyuan 孤山智圓 (976-1022), a prominent monk of the early Song, was an especially literate revivalist of Tiantai

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<sup>14</sup> See Owen, *Great Age*, pp. 287-288. Also see T. 50, no. 2061, p. 892, a22, where a reader of Jiaoran’s texts links his vow of abstinence to “the partial views of the lesser vehicle” *xiaosheng pianjian* 小乘偏見.

<sup>15</sup> The entry for *waixue* in *Da Song seng shi lue* 大宋僧史略 is at T. 54, no. 2126, p. 240, c19-p. 241, a5. The phrase “subduing non-Buddhists” *po waidao* 破外道 often specifically refers to converting high-profile targets in debate. Some common variations are *po waidao eyalun* 破外道惡邪論, *po wailunshi* 破外論師, and *po waidao jiangfu mojun* 破外道降伏魔軍. The verb *po* suggests annihilating other paths, more than turning someone towards the light.

Buddhism of wide-ranging talents.<sup>16</sup> He lived at Manao Yuan 瑪瑙院 (aka Baosheng Temple 寶勝寺) on Gushan. Zhiyuan was also an avid poet who associated with the recluse Lin Bu 林逋 (967-1028). Zhiyuan's poetic lamentations are the subject of a later chapter. The focus here is his erudite commentary to the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, known as *Weimojing lüeshu chuiyuji* 維摩經略疏垂裕記 (hereafter, *Chuiyu ji*).<sup>17</sup>

The *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* valorizes a secular figure, the layman Vimalakīrti, as an eminent authority on Buddhist salvation. One of Zhiyuan's concerns in his commentary *Chuiyu ji* was how the possibility of perfect awakening for laypersons had implications for monasticism as a religious practice. If Vimalakīrti was able to marry and live as a householder, then why should people of the Song dynasty continue to live as monastics? Zhiyuan suggested to his readers they not over-emphasize Vimalakīrti's secular behavior and thus overlook the underlying and perfect intention to save sentient beings. For example, though Vimalakīrti wears the clothes of a layperson, he upholds the pure

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<sup>16</sup> The best English language overview of Zhiyuan's life is Wai Lun Tam "The Life and Thoughts of a Chinese Buddhist Monk Zhiyuan." Zhiyuan is known today as one of the central representatives of the *shanwai* 山外 faction in the debates with Zhili's *shanjia* 山家. However, as Tam pointed out, Zhiyuan was not known as such in his own time. Zhiyuan lamented the decline of Tiantai teachings since Zhanran 湛然 (711-782) and styled himself as the heir to a Tiantai lineage. The lineage of Zhili 知禮 (960-1028) later came to be regarded as orthodox in Southern Song historiography. Zhiyuan himself does not mention any such debates in his autobiographical writings; see Tam, pp. 174-176, and Shinohara, "Illness and Self." Zhiyuan was best remembered by secular biographers as a literary figure. Buddhist biographers emphasized his calm demeanor before his end and the claim that his body did not decay for over fifteen years post-death. Tam, p. 156, hypothesized that Zhiyuan anticipated the *guwen* movement of the mid-11th century. I also notice that Zhiyuan was an advocate of *pingdan* 平淡 aesthetics in poetry, about one whole generation before Mei Yaochen 梅堯臣 (1002-1060). Zhiyuan used the term in prefaces to monks' poetry and in a poem about Tang poet-monk Qingsai 清塞 – also known as Zhou He 周賀 (fl. early 9th c.).

<sup>17</sup> T. 38, no. 1779. The text has been little studied in English. *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten* 11.133a-b includes an incisive survey of the text.



conduct of a śramaṇa.<sup>18</sup> It is in this context, trying to make sense of expedient means and the appropriate deportment of monks, that Zhiyuan discussed ideals for a monk's relationship with *waixue*.<sup>19</sup>

Zhiyuan asserted that the pursuit of *waixue* must be for the sake of subduing non-Buddhists.<sup>20</sup> To illustrate his point, Zhiyuan cited two vinaya texts, a somewhat ambiguously titled *Tanwude* 曇無德 (Skt. Dharmagupta) and the *Genben shuo yiqie youbu pinaiye zashi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 (\**Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu*), also known as *Pinaiye* 毘奈耶.<sup>21</sup> Both of those vinaya texts, according to Zhiyuan,

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<sup>18</sup> Zhiyuan enumerated his categories. These can be mapped to the text of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*. The discussion of *waixue* is part of Zhiyuan's eighth item (which begins at T. 38, no. 1779, p. 761, a26-27), which maps to the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* at T. 14, no. 475, p. 539, a23. This is also the topic of Zhiyuan's ninth item (beginning at T. 38, no. 1779, p. 761, b11).

<sup>19</sup> The entire passage is found T. 38, no. 1779, p. 761, a25-b9, and is translated in a note further below.

<sup>20</sup> I quote here a section of Zhiyuan's commentary. This is Zhiyuan's section titled "demonstrating identity with non-orthodox ways," (示同異道) and is a commentary on eight words: *shou zhu yidao, bu hui zhengxin* 受諸異道，不毀正信。

It is for the sake of overcoming things that the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* for bhikṣus permits one of the twelve [120 minute] hours of the day for non-Buddhist study. For the sake of vanquishing non-Buddhists, the \**Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* is very clear. Each day is divided into three times, and the latter part of a day is for such study. While lay people [rightfully] have their roots in homes, monks today have forgotten their [appropriate] roots and chase only the branches; though they look like ascetics, they have turned their backs on studying Buddhism [*Foxue*].

《維摩經略疏垂裕記》卷4〈方便品2〉：「八示同異道。為伏物故者曇無德部比丘於十二時開一時外學。為降伏外道故。鼻奈耶明。日分三時許日後分學。況今居士本在家眾。今世比丘忘本逐末形似沙門心背佛學。」(T. 38, no. 1779, p. 761, a25-b9)

This passage is followed by a quotation from Zhanran's *Weimojing shuji* 維摩經疏記, which is translated in full in the main text of this chapter. For more on the relationship between *Weimojing lüeshu chuiyujì* and its root texts, see *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten*, 11.133a-b.

<sup>21</sup> For a survey of vinaya in China, see Heirman, "Vinaya: From India to China." The *Genben shuo yiqie youbu pinaiye zashi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 (\**Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu*), also known as *Pinaiye zashi* 毘奈耶雜事, is Yijing's 義淨 (635-713) forty

promote the same “one period of non-Buddhist learning” referred to by Zanning in the biographies above.

The *Dharmagupta-vinaya* (according to Zhiyuan) divides each day into twelve periods, the *\*Mūlasarvāstivāda* each day into three.<sup>22</sup> I hasten to add that the former of

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fascicle translation of miscellany from the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*. This vinaya is the one used in Tibet. Only fragments of Sanskrit survive. Though Yijing’s translation in Chinese has long been included in the canon, it is thought to have been of little historical consequence.

<sup>22</sup> Here in Zhiyuan’s passage, it seems, we have evidence that it was known to some monks at the beginning of the Song. The following passage from the *Pinaiye zashi* appears to be the *locus classicus* for the Song dynasty idea of day divided into three periods.

Once, some bhikṣus heard that the Buddha, the world-honored one, had permitted the study of treatise literature, and asked if there was not a separate decision for dull people who wish to study non-Buddhist writings. The Buddha said, “It is inappropriate for the undiscerning dullards with little wisdom to study non-Buddhist writing. Those with self-knowledge, luminous wisdom, broad learning, and excellent memory who are able to rebuff non-Buddhists, only they are permitted such study.” As for monks with luminous wisdom who are always studying non-Buddhist classics and do not cultivate a superior character, the Buddha said, “It is inappropriate to always study non-Buddhist classics in such a manner.” Then the Buddha said, “There are three periods of time, and for every two periods spent reading Buddhist *sūtra*, one period may be spent studying the non-Buddhist classics.” Thereupon, some bhikṣus divided a year into three periods of [four] months. When this was told to the Buddha, he said, “A lifetime passes quickly, and each moment is full of uncertainty. It is inappropriate to divide a year into three periods of months. It is better to divide a day into three periods of time.” The bhikṣus then spent their mornings studying non-Buddhist classics and in the evening recited Buddhist scriptures. The Buddha said, “One should read Buddhist *sūtra* during the first period of the day through the latter half of the day. Wait until the evening period before opening non-Buddhist classics.” The bhikṣus thereupon would read quickly [i.e. peruse], but not recite the words, and so would forget them. The Buddha said, “You must recite.” For those who do not know what time it is appropriate to recite, the Buddha said, “The day is divided into three sections, and so too the night.”

《根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事》卷 6：「時諸苾芻聞佛世尊許學書論，遂無簡別愚昧之願亦學外書，佛言：「不應愚癡少慧不分明者令學外書；自知明慧多聞強識能摧外道者，方可學習。」諸明慧者鎮學外典善品不修，佛言：「不應如是常習外典。」佛言：「當作三時，每於兩時讀佛經，一時習外典。」苾芻遂於年月分作三時，以緣白佛，佛言：「人命迅速剎那無定，不應年月分作三時，可於一日分為三分。」苾芻朝習外典暮讀佛經，佛言：「於日初分及以中後可讀佛經，待至晚時應披外典。」苾芻即便暫時尋讀，不誦其文尋還廢忘，佛言：「應誦。」彼皆不知何時應誦？佛言：「如晝三節，夜亦三時。」」(T. 24, no. 1451, p. 232, b3-15)

Zhiyuan's citations is in error. The *Sifen lü* 四分律 (Skt. \**Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*) does not have a rule for one period of non-Buddhist study (or *yishi waixue* 一時外學).<sup>23</sup> The *Sifen lü* was the only vinaya upheld by monks in China since the Tang dynasty.<sup>24</sup> As the rule for one period of *waixue* is found only in the vinaya that are not practiced, it is

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<sup>23</sup> This curious case of *waixue* missing from the *Sifen lü* was noted by Cao Shibang, *Zhongguo shamen waixue de yanjiu*, 1-13. He argues that this is evidence for the influence of the *Shisong lü* 十誦律 (T 1435, \**Sarvāstivāda-vinaya*) based on the popularity of *waixue* among masters of other non-Sarvāstivāda vinaya, and concludes this influence occurred in the period before the sangha was united under Dharmaguptaka hegemony. Note that the *Shisong lü* does not specify how many periods in each day are permitted.

The *Sifen lü* may not include passages about *yishi waixue*, but it does include passages like the following, which carve out exceptions for monks who use magical spells in order to subdue non-Buddhists.

When is there no offense? If one recites spells to cure intestinal worms, or if one recites spells to cure digestive problems, or if one studies writings, or recites non-Buddhist (世俗) spells in order to conquer non-Buddhists, or if one recites spells to cure poison, and if one studies from books, like if one recites non-Buddhist spells to overcome non-Buddhists or if one recites spells to cure disease and protect oneself, then there is no offense.

《四分律》卷 27: 「不犯者, 若誦治腹內虫病呪、若誦治宿食不消呪、若學書、若誦世俗降伏外道呪、若誦治毒呪以護身故, 無犯。」(T. 22, no. 1428, p. 754, b6-9)

When is there no offense? If one studies spells in order to cure intestinal worms or to cure indigestion, or if one studies book or studies recitation, or studies mundane arguments in order to overcome non-Buddhists, if one studies spells of poison in order to protect oneself and not in order to make a living, then there is no offense.

《四分律》卷 30: 「不犯者, 若學呪腹中虫病, 若治宿食不消、若學書學誦、若學世論為伏外道故、若學呪毒為自護不以為活命, 無犯。」(T. 22, no. 1428, p. 775, a11-13)

The spirit of the law is present. It is permissible to do these non-Buddhist activities if one's purpose is in keeping with Buddhist principles. It seems odd that book-learning and debate are placed together with spells for digestive aid. The apparent organizing principle is that all of these kinds of learning are not Buddhist *per se*, and could be used for purposes other than that of a good Buddhist. However, protecting and extending one's life (for the benefit of other sentient beings) is an acceptable justification for studying *waixue*, and is together with learning the ways of one's opponents. Though there are exceptions for *waixue* in the *Sifen lü*, there is no mention of the Buddha granting periods of each day to dedicate to such study.

<sup>24</sup> Though the \**Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* is predominant in China, it does not survive in Tibetan or Sanskrit, save for fragments, and is known only in this Chinese translation.

somewhat surprising that the rule had any purchase among Song dynasty monks.

Nonetheless, this may serve as a small corrective to assumptions that the *Sifen lü*, the source of every Chinese monk's vows by virtue of which he is a monk as well as the fortnightly *prātimokṣa*, was the only vinaya of consequence in East Asia.<sup>25</sup> This same assumption about the importance of the *Sifen lü* may be why Zhiyuan, an erudite monk, made this error. A likely source text for the passage is Zhanran's 湛然 (711-782) *Zhiguan fuxing zhuan hong jue* 止觀輔行傳弘決.<sup>26</sup> This passage in Zhanran's *Zhuan hong jue* is

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<sup>25</sup> On the eclectic use of vinaya in China before Dao'an 道安 (312-385) won imperial recognition of the *Sifen lü* from the Zhongzong emperor sometime between 705 and 710, see Heirman, "Vinaya: From India to China," pp. 192-195. One conceit used by Daoxuan 道宣 in his *Sifen lü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔 (T. 40, no. 1804) was to make *Sifen lü* the base code for *prātimokṣa* and *karmavācanā*, but to supplement *Sifen lü* with texts from other vinaya traditions where the *Sifen lü* was silent or unclear – hence the phrase "repairing the lacks" *shanfan buque* 刪繁補闕 in Daoxuan's title. Many vinaya were reportedly followed, commented upon, and recompiled prior to the interventions by Daoxuan and Dao'an. I am grateful to Alex Hsu for pointing me to these sources.

<sup>26</sup> Zhiyuan, it seems, assumed Zhanran had quoted the *Sifen lü*, and overstepped in his zealotry to attribute the passage to a source text. A perfectly parallel passage appears in *Zhiguan fuxing zhuan hong jue*, which also quotes from the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (T. 46, no. 1912, p. 266, a20-24).

As for *waixue*: in the teachings of the little vehicle, among the twelve periods of the day one period of non-Buddhist study is permitted for the sake of subduing non-Buddhists. In the Mahāyāna, for a [first-stage] bodhisattva with beginner's mind [*waixue*] is completely prohibited. The *Vimalakīrti* says: "Those fond of motley phrases and rhetorical flourishes, most often are bodhisattvas that have only recently given rise to *bodhicitta*." That criticism thus prohibits *waixue*, however, if one advances on the path such that he reaches a station where all six faculties are clear, then [outer] learning would not encounter such troubles.

若外學者。小乘教中十二時許為伏外道一時習外。若大乘中初心菩薩一向不許。淨名云。若好雜句文飾者。多是新發意菩薩。此斥不許習外。且令進行至六根淨位。學應不難。

For the corresponding passage in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, see T. 14, no. 475, p. 557, a16-22, and Thurman p. 101. "Motley phrases" *zaju* 雜句 probably means inappropriate use of "impure" worldly speech.

also cited by later texts.<sup>27</sup> That Zhanran may be the source is fortuitous, as Zhiyuan's two vinaya citations are followed by a third quotation from a text explicitly identified with, and most certainly by, Zhanran.

Zhiyuan's latter quotation from Zhanran departs from vinaya per se and introduces an explicitly Mahāyāna interpretation of *waixue*. The quotation is from Zhanran's *Weimojing shuji* 維摩經疏記, fascicle nine, under the header "appropriate instruction for beginner's mind" (*chuxin ying shouxue* 初心應受學).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Though not the earliest source, Zhanran's text seems to have been the most influential. See, for example, a Qing era commentary on Zhuhong's 祿宏 (1535-1615) *Shami lüyi yaolüe* 沙彌律儀要略, at XZJ 106, p. 322, a7-9. The earliest extant reference is in a biography of Zhiyi's student Falin 法琳, *Tang hufa shaman Falin biezhuàn* 唐護法沙門法琳別傳 (T. 50, no. 2051, p. 204, c18-19). Another Tang text, the *Beishan lu*, also references the twelve-to-one (T. 52, no. 2113, p. 626, b25-27). *The Beishan lu* 北山錄 (*Record of North Mountain*) by Shenqing 神清, completed in 806, was among the sharpest critics of contemporary Chan movements of the Tang. On the *Beishan lu* as a critic of Tang texts *Lidai Fabaoji* and *Baolin zhuan*, see Adamek, p 3, and 276-283. The text was rediscovered and circulated by Tiantai monks in the 1050s. The text is well-known for injecting skepticism into Chan lineage claims during this revival in the mid-Northern Song; see Morrison, pp 133-134. Because of the Song era revival of the *Beishan lu*, it may be significant for our purposes here that the text attributes the twelve-to-one ratio for *waixue* to the *sapoduoshi* 薩婆多師 (Sarvāstivāda). The *Shisong lü* 十誦律 (T 1435, \**Sarvāstivāda-vinaya*), of which only the Chinese version is extant, does include a passage about *waixue*, which does not make explicit how much *waixue* is permitted in a given day.

There was a bhikṣu who had forsaken sūtra and abhidharma, abandoned the vinaya, in order to read non-Buddhist treatises, literary essays, and military tracts, thus departing from the Buddhist scriptures. The Buddha said, "Henceforth, bhikṣus, it is a duṣkṛta [a minor offense] if one studies or recites non-Buddhist treatises, literary essays, and military tracts." [...]

The Buddha said, "From hence forth, it is permitted, for the purposes of subduing the non-Buddhists, to read the books of non-Buddhists."

《十誦律》卷 38：「佛在舍衛國。有比丘捨修多羅、阿毘曇、捨毘尼，誦外書文章兵法，遠離佛經，佛言：「從今諸比丘，若有學誦外書文章兵法者，突吉羅。」 [...] 佛言：「從今聽為破外道故誦讀外道書。」」 (T. 23, no. 1435, p. 274, a24-b10)

<sup>28</sup> The *Weimojing shuji* was based on Zhanran's notes from the period when he was compiling the ten-fascicle *Weimojing lüeshu* 維摩經略疏, which was a distillation of the twenty-eight fascicle

In the lesser vehicle, for the sake of subduing non-Buddhists, only ‘one period’ is acceptable. The Mahāyāna, for the sake of maintaining the teachings, has clear rules for beginners; as [*waixue*] impedes their entry onto the wondrous path, so they are not allowed to do [*waixue*]. Only a bodhisattva of the fifth *bhūmi* can begin to practice such mundane activities [*shiye*]. [As the *Fanwangjing* states,] “it is that which cuts off the seeds of buddhahood and obstructs the causes of awakening.”<sup>29</sup> Men of the cloth these days, when it comes to morality, meditation, and wisdom, do not cultivate these at all, and instead just mouth that they will subdue non-Buddhists [as an excuse for spending time studying *waixue*]; this is the same as [trying to wear one’s] clothes upside-down;<sup>30</sup> for whereas dyes will spread easily, the methods of the correct path are difficult to instill; [and as a result, these monks’] habitual pride grows while they oppose and belittle studying the fundamentals. What a terrible pity! Such men are quite mistaken. While they sit in cloisters of permanence;<sup>31</sup> wear donated robes; eat from the table of the pure assembly; and tread upon invaluable land [of the temple] – nonetheless they behave profanely in body, speech, and mind, and their fourfold deportment<sup>32</sup> is

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commentary by Zhiyi 智顓 (538-597) titled *Weimojing wenshu* 維摩經文疏. For more on the relationship between Zhanran’s texts, see *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten* 11.127d-128a.

<sup>29</sup> A quote from the *Fanwangjing* 梵網經, which itself cites one *Abitan zalun* 阿毘曇雜論 as the authoritative source of this passage. See T. 24, no. 1484, p. 1006, c19-23.

<sup>30</sup> I read this similar to the phrase *dao chang suo ling* 倒裳索領, a foolish activity contrary to one’s goals. See for example Zhiyi’s admonition in *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T. 46, no. 1911, p. 42, c27.

<sup>31</sup> These are the administrative wings of a monastery, so-called because they control the items which permanently stay with the monastery and are not the personal possessions of an abbot or officer.

<sup>32</sup> That is, deportment in the four activities of walking 行, standing 住, sitting 坐, and lying down 臥, or all human activity.

that of an ignoramus. If one wanted to imitate such [worldly behavior], why not aspire to the ten virtues [of a Confucian *junzi*]?

小乘破外，稍通一時。大乘標宗，初心明制，妨入妙道，故不令為，五地菩薩方修世業，是斷佛種障道因緣。今出家人，戒定慧心一無所修，而云伏外，義等倒裳；散染易流，道法難寄，增長慢集[=習]，反輕學宗，深可悲也。甚為謬也。況坐常住院，著信施衣，滄淨眾厨，踐無價地，而三業從俗，四儀拘迷。若欲倣之當思十德。<sup>33</sup>

In this passage, Zhanran contrasted the teachings found in the vinaya with what he considers to be a Mahāyāna view. Rather than permit *waixue* for the sake of missionary work, Zhanran states that it is prudent to regulate the study of *waixue* for beginners for the sake of their practice. Moreover, Zhanran accuses his contemporaries of abusing the standard dispensation, without adhering to the spirit of the law. Zhanran suggests that only a practitioner who has attained at least the fifth *bhūmi* on the bodhisattva path, one who has sufficient experience, possesses the wisdom and fortitude to engage in secular learning. Presumably, Zhanran's stipulation did not emerge from his concern over any individual's progress on the path, but rather out of his interest in making individual monks into suitable vessels for communicating the dharma.

Zhanran's stipulation restricting *waixue* to bodhisattvas of the fifth *bhūmi* is not found in any of the extant Mahāyāna precept texts.<sup>34</sup> If Zhanran had a scriptural source

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<sup>33</sup> *Weimo jing shu ji*, XZJ 28, p. 761, b7-13. As indicated above, the corresponding passage in Zhiyuan's *Chui yu ji* is preceded by quotations from several vinaya; see T. 38, no. 1779, p. 761, a25-b9. The text of Zhiyuan's quotation of *Weimo jing shu ji* is not identical with the extant *Weimo jing shu ji*; the latter is more comprehensible and is translated above.

<sup>34</sup> The *Fanwangjing* takes a hard-line view of non-Mahāyāna texts, absolutely prohibiting them. Two other Mahāyāna precept texts, the *Pusa shanjie jing* 菩薩善戒經 (T. 30, no. 1583) and *Pusa*

for this assertion, it seems to have been lost relatively early. This may be why the Song writer Zhiyuan cited Zhanran as his authoritative source.

The classical vinaya texts restrict the study and practice of *waixue*. The justification is that monks, especially the young and inexperienced, may be swayed to abandon the Buddhist teachings. However, in the \**Sarvāstivāda*- and \**Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* an exception is made so that monks, young monks too, become adept at debating and proselytizing. This is why there are injunctions to study *waixue*, but to not place store in its teachings. By contrast, the Mahāyāna precept texts are divided. The *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 prohibits non-Buddhist learning all together; the *Pusa dichì jing* 菩薩地持經 (T. 30, no. 1581), on the other hand, permits such learning for advanced practitioners who already possess an unshakably firm understanding of Buddhism (coming closest to Zhanran's interpretation).<sup>35</sup>

This patchwork of traditional regulations and justifications is visible in mainstream Song dynasty texts that would have been familiar to the sorts of literate

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*di chi jing* 菩薩地持經 (T. 30, no. 1581), both permit one period of *waixue* (out of three periods of a day, as found in the \**Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*). The first of these Mahāyāna precept texts, Guṇabhadra's 求那跋陀羅 nine-fascicle *Pusa shanjie jing* permits *waixue* for the purpose of subduing non-Buddhists; this is the same rationale found in all mainstream vinaya. The second, Dharmakṣema's 曇無讖 *Pusa di chi jing* permits *waixue* for those who are intelligent, with excellent memory, and who have already thoroughly penetrated the Buddha-dharma to the extent of obtaining *budong zhi* 不動智 (which is associated with the eighth *bhūmi*, e.g. in the *Shi di jing* 十地經; T. 10, no. 287). Possessing such wisdom presumably allows one to peruse non-Buddhist texts without backsliding, and implies the ability to employ non-Buddhist learning to liberate others. This seems closest in spirit to Zhanran's meaning. A parallel passage is found in Xuanzang's translation of *Yuqie shidi lun* 瑜伽師地論 (T. 30, no. 1579, p. 519, b2-3). See *Fanwangjing* (T. 24, no. 1484, p. 1006, c19-23); *Pusa Shanjie jing* (T. 30, no. 1583, p. 1016, c24-p. 1017, a1); *Pusa dichì jing* (T. 30, no. 1581, p. 915, b29-c5).

<sup>35</sup> See the above note for an explanation of passages in *Fanwangjing* (T. 24, no. 1484, p. 1006, c19-23); *Pusa Shanjie jing* 菩薩善戒經 (T. 30, no. 1583, p. 1016, c24-p. 1017, a1); and *Pusadi chi jing* (T. 30, no. 1581, p. 915, b29-c5).



monks that wrote poetry. For example, in the early Song era encyclopedia *Shishi yaolan* 釋氏要覽 by Daocheng 道誠 (fl. 1009-1019), one of the first entries in a section on *zhixue* 志學 (“devotion to studies”) concerns the matter of *kai waixue* 開外學 (“on studying things outside [of Buddhism]”).<sup>36</sup> Daocheng pulls quotes from \**Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* and *Pusa dichu jing* that portray *waixue* as the prerogative of exceptionally intelligent individuals.<sup>37</sup> In this text, Daocheng appears to have been encouraging talented, young men of the cloth to take up more ambitious programs of study.

Another early Song dynasty text offered a similar defense of *waixue*. Zanning, in his *Song seng shi lüe*, a text that offered historical background for contemporary practices, wrote an entry on *waixue*.

If “one must never tire of expanding one’s learning,”<sup>38</sup> then when it comes to things that one does not understand one should remain silent.<sup>39</sup> Our tradition

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<sup>36</sup> In the *Shi shi yao lan*, T. 54, no. 2127, p. 292, c24-p. 293, a2, *zhixue* concerns education, and includes a hodgepodge of entries. In all, Daocheng promotes a broad curriculum of learning for monks with intellectual talents. The term *zhixue* 志學 itself emerges from the Analects *Lunyu* 論語, and is what Confucius did when he was fifteen years of age (吾十有五而志於學). This may suggest a presupposed rudimentary literacy in Confucian classics. In his admonishments for *waixue*, and in addition to emphasizing the need for above-average intelligence, Daocheng reiterates that *waixue* is to be limited to “one period” each day. He also paraphrases a passage from Daoxuan’s *Zhong Tianzhu Sheweiguo Qihuan si tu jing* discussed immediately below as proof of the presence of *waixue* in ancient India.

<sup>37</sup> In his preface, Daocheng indicates that wrote this *yaolan* as a guidebook for novices, with definitions of technical terms and pointers for fulfilling the role of a monk in the early Song dynasty. Daocheng brought together classical vinaya and historical examples to exhort young monks of the Song to study literature but in the context of their monastic commitments.

<sup>38</sup> This four character phrase is found in the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, in the Annals of Emperor Suzong Xiaozhang. There, it is part of telling the story of Emperor Xuan who as a young man did not sufficiently understand the Confucian classics, and so engaged a teacher.

<sup>39</sup> An allusion to the *Lunyu*, 13.3. Confucius is arguing with Zilu, who thinks that the rectification of names should not be a priority for governance. Confucius calls Zilu “boorish” and insists that a

traversed great distances to convey the dharma of three vehicles. However, it has clashed with some demonic obstacles and needed to defend itself. In the arts of defense, nothing is as important as knowing one's enemy. That enemy in the Indic lands was [the Brahmanic] *Vedas*, whereas in the Chinese east it is the Confucian classics. Thus, at the Jetavana-vihāra there was a cloister for the four *vedas*,<sup>40</sup> for plumbing the principles of *waidao*, and a scriptorium that collected texts from all the different languages of the world.<sup>41</sup> The Buddha gave universal permission to read them in order to subdue non-Buddhists, but he forbade the adoption of their teachings. In our country, when virtuous and eminent monks were able to defeat the non-Buddhists, it was usually due to vast erudition. It is like the eastern *yi* and the northern *di* [tribes of ancient China], who did not speak a shared language, and did not share customs of food and drink. How could one communicate intentions or desires? And what of one who knows a little of the *hu* language? Immediately he is understood. That is why monk Dao'an was able to convert Xi

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gentleman would not have spoken about something he knew so little. Translation adapted from Slingerland, *Confucius Analects*, p. 139. Though the first four words paraphrase the *Lunyu*, the particular phrase here is also common in Chinese classics, such as in the *Zhongyong* 中庸: "Yet in its utmost reaches, there is that which even the sage does not know." 及其至也,雖聖人亦有所不知焉.

<sup>40</sup> The fourfold division of the Vedas represents the canon of Brahmanism, and here is metonymy for non-Buddhist knowledge. The four divisions are: the R̥g-veda; the Yajur-veda; the Sāma-veda; and the Atharva-veda. These are transliterated into Chinese in several different manners.

<sup>41</sup> A reference to Daoxuan's *Zhong Tianzhu Sheweiguo Qihuan si tu jing* 中天竺舍衛國祇洹寺圖經; see Tan, "Daoxuan's vision of Jetavana Imagining a utopian monastery in early Tang," pp. 333-34. Daoxuan appends a note to his description of the scriptorium full of *waixue* to let his readers know that "the Buddha permitted bhikṣus one period of reading for the sake of subduing non-Buddhists" (T. 45, no. 1899, p. 893, a29-b2).

Zuochi when using his wit.<sup>42</sup> Huiyuan charmed the likes of Zong Bing 宗炳 and Lei Cizong 雷次宗 using *shi* and *li* [Confucian classics].<sup>43</sup> Fuli softened Quan Wu'er (fl. 681) with the [*Shimen*] *bianhuo* [*lun*] (十門辯惑論).<sup>44</sup> And Jiaoran befriended Lu Yu 陸羽 with poetics.<sup>45</sup> All of these examples did not use any technique other than *waixue*.

夫學不厭博。有所不知。蓋闕如也。吾宗致遠。以三乘法而運載焉。然或魔障相陵。必須禦侮。禦侮之術。莫若知彼敵情。敵情者。西竺則韋陀。東夏則經籍矣。故祇洹寺中有四韋陀院。外道以為宗極。又有書院。大千界內所有不同文書並集其中。佛俱許讀之。為伏外道。而不許依其見也。此土古德高僧能攝伏異宗者。率由博學之故。譬如夷狄之人。言語不通。飲食不同。孰能達其志通其欲。其或微解胡語。立便馴知矣。是以習鑿齒道安以談諧而伏之。宗雷之輩慧遠以詩禮而誘之。權無二復禮以辯惑而柔之。陸鴻漸皎然以詩式而友之。此皆不施他術，唯通外學耳。<sup>46</sup>

By the beginning of Song China, though *waixue* referred to Chinese learning and not non-Buddhist Indian learning, it still retained the same religious justification seen above in the vinaya. Other than Zanning's martial metaphor of defense against "enemies," the logic of *fangbian*, or expedient means to teach people where they are, runs throughout. One interesting aspect of this passage is how Zanning reimagines authoritative sources

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<sup>42</sup> See Dao'an's biography in *Gao seng zhuan* 高僧傳, starting at T. 50, no. 2059, p. 352, b22). For more on Xi Zuochi, see Knechtges and Chang, *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature*, pp. 2.1428-1432.

<sup>43</sup> See Huiyuan's biography in *Gao seng zhuan*, starting at T. 50, no. 2059, p. 358, c18.

<sup>44</sup> See Fuli's biography in *Song gao seng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, T. 50, no. 2061, p. 812, c3-p. 813, a1.

<sup>45</sup> See Jiaoran's biography in *Song gao seng zhuan*, T. 50, no. 2061, p. 892, a24.

<sup>46</sup> T. 54, no. 2126, p. 240, c19-p. 241, a5.

for the justification for *waixue*. Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667) in his *Illustrated Sūtra of the Jetavana Monastery in Śrāvastī, Central India* (中天竺舍衛國祇洹寺圖經) revealed the original Buddhist community at Jetavana to have a scriptorium for *waixue*. Zanning creatively interprets this as justification for *waixue* of the Confucian classics. He gives several examples of famous Chinese monks who expertly deployed humor, Chinese classics, rhetoric, and poetry.<sup>47</sup> Even though Zanning appears unconflicted in his support of *waixue*, just as Daocheng above, he nonetheless made his endorsement with defensive language to justify exemptions for a restricted behavior.

The legislation of *waixue* in the Song was not limited to classical vinaya. Many *qinggui*, texts of house rules for large monasteries compiled by Chan monks to reflect the realities of contemporary monasticism, were first created in the Song dynasty.<sup>48</sup> The influential *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規 by Changlu Zongze 長蘆宗蹟 (fl. late 11<sup>th</sup> to early 12<sup>th</sup> c) included instructions for the “temple scribe” *shuzhuang* 書狀.<sup>49</sup> The temple scribe was a position held by a monk, responsible for drafting various official and religious documents. This monastic officer was responsible for all aspects of

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<sup>47</sup> This passage strikes a different chord from those in which Zanning seems to present a more profound harmony of Buddhism and Confucianism. It is possible of course that Zanning held different views at different stages of his life. However, another reading seems possible in light of the above passage. It seems likely that monks understood their proposals of harmony between Confucian and Buddhist teachings as a form of the *waixue* described here, which contrary to their appearances were intended to convert and, to borrow Zanning’s words, to subdue a rival.

<sup>48</sup> An overview of *qinggui* can be found in Foulk, “*Chanyuan qinggui* and Other ‘Rules of Purity’ in Chinese Buddhism.”

<sup>49</sup> Citations are to the *Chongdiao bu zhu Chanyuan qinggui* 重雕補註禪苑清規, XZJ 111, and to corresponding passages in Kagamishima’s modern Japanese translation, and Yifa’s English translation. A temple scribe is also known as *shuji* 書記, or *neiji* 內記, and sometimes the same as *shuzhuang shizhe* 書狀侍者, but which is sometimes the assistant to this monastic officer.

correspondence, from the composition to the presentation on the page and the folding of the envelope.

In addition, he must recognize what [language] is appropriate for superiors as opposed to inferiors, for the pure versus the defiled, for monks as opposed to lay people. He must not wantonly issue a letter, especially if corresponding with a government official.<sup>50</sup>

及識尊卑觸淨<sup>51</sup>僧俗所宜。如與官員書信，尤不得妄發。<sup>52</sup>

After many admonitions, Zongze goes on to describe the virtues of an excellent scribe.

He should read widely — through ancient and modern correspondence and petitions — in order to be more knowledgeable. If the scribe uses refined and solemn language and follows appropriate forms, then when sent a thousand miles away [his letter] will be radiant to every one of the most erudite of men.<sup>53</sup>

However, he must never intend to wield brush and ink to slight or bully his brothers, or otherwise engage in activities not for the Buddha-dharma. As for Guanxiu and Qiji, they were known merely as poet-monks, while Jia Dao and Tang Huixiu<sup>54</sup> drifted off to become secular officials. How could this be the purpose of ‘leaving home’?

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. the translation in Yifa, page 158.

<sup>51</sup> Reading *zhuo* 濁 for *chu* 觸, a common substitution in Song era texts. See also *Zengaku daijiten* 763.d. In this context, I think the pair of terms may refer to laypersons who either do or do not keep faith in Buddhism and observe lay practices.

<sup>52</sup> *Chongdiao bu zhu Chanyuan qinggui*, XZJ 111, p. 894, b3-4.

<sup>53</sup> *Meimu* 眉目 is synecdoche for learned men of exceptionally great talent. Translation adapted from Yifa, pp 158-159. See also her notes on pp 283-28, which made several improvements upon Kagamishima’s gloss, pp 127-129.

<sup>54</sup> Kagamishima, pp 127-129, misidentified Huixiu as the Tang vinaya specialist Huixiu 慧休. Yifa, p. 284, n. 78, noted that Huixiu is unlikely to refer to the vinaya specialist Huixiu of the *Xu*

古今書啟疏詞文字，應須遍覽，以益多聞。若語言典重式度如法，千里眉目一眾光彩。然不得一向事持筆硯輕侮同袍，不將佛法為事。禪月齊已止號詩僧，賈島慧休流離俗窟，豈出家之本意也。

The scribe must learn the literary conventions that allow his epistles to impress learned men; however, this is followed immediately by an exhortation to avoid misuse of these talents and resources. Overall, the tenor of this Song dynasty regulation is remarkably similar to the anxiety animating the legal case found in the classic *Shisong lü* vinaya dispensation for *waixue* discussed above.<sup>55</sup> This passage by Zongze is remarkable in its explicit naming of monks (famous for their poetry) who seem to have written too much poetry,<sup>56</sup> some even to the point of laicizing.<sup>57</sup> The point of Zongze's concern appears to have been that monks would study *waixue* and became proficient only in literary arts, and thus be – what we might translate as – “not Buddhist enough.” Zongze's own terms question if such monks understand the meaning of “leaving home” (*chujia* 出家), or ordination as a monk. Zongze had in mind some religious purpose to ordination that could not be fulfilled by monks who dedicated themselves to poetry.

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*Gao Seng Zhuan*, but did not offer an alternative. Huixiu surely is none other than the erstwhile monk Huixiu 惠休, better known as Tang Huixiu 湯惠休 or Tang Xiu 湯休. The celebrated poet Tang Huixiu was an early medieval monk who returned to lay life and had a lackluster career. His love of poetry is often cited as one of the symptoms of his dissatisfaction with cloistered life. See fascicle 71 of *Song shu* 宋書 for a standard biographic notice. At least eleven poems survive, and can be found in *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbei chao shi*.

<sup>55</sup> See T. 23, no. 1435, p. 274, a24-b10. Translated in a footnote above.

<sup>56</sup> The monks Guanxiu 貫休 and Qiji 齊己 were among the best known poets of their day. We expect the forthcoming dissertation by Tom Mazanec will explain the significance of each of these poet-monks.

<sup>57</sup> Jia Dao and Tang Huixiu were each monks as young men, but renounced their vows and returned to secular life. Though each had nothing more than a middling career, their literary works have long been passed down.

The prohibition on poetry was not limited to monastic codes (*vinaya* and *qinggui*). Another explicit reason for strict regulation is found in early Chinese meditation texts. Meditation manuals stated that creative writing hinders progress on the spiritual path because an obsession with creativity can be a distraction. One such admonition against creative writing occurs in Zhiyi's 智顓 *Xiuxi zhiguan zuochan fayao* 修習止觀坐禪法要, better known as the *Xiao zhiguan*.<sup>58</sup> Zhiyi arranges three types of obstructions: those of body, speech, and thought. Among the dangers of speech and thought, Zhiyi includes love of singing (好喜吟咏), worldly speech (世間語言), allowing one's feelings to be unrestrained (心情放逸), and ruminating on the literary arts (思惟文藝). These activities "smash the heart of a monastic" (破出家人心) such that he is unable to concentrate (不能定). Without the ability to concentrate, a practitioner will at times behave "like an out of control elephant drunk [with lust]" (如無鉤醉象). Not only will such practitioners be unable to meditate and make progress on the path, they will be a dangerous nuisance to themselves and others. Without any apparent irony, Zhiyi illustrated the point with a Chinese *gāthā*, a *ji* 偈. This hints at a distinction between religious verse and poetry, a point to which we will return below. Zhiyi's *ji* admonishing literary-minded monks concludes with the line, "One uninhibited and doing as he pleases misses the benefits of the dharma" (放逸縱情失法利).<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> T. 46, no. 1915, p. 464, b29-c9. Cf. Jingqing Yang, *The Chan Interpretations of Wang Wei's Poetry*, p 178.

<sup>59</sup> Zhiyi's *ji* does not follow the rules of prosody which would make it a regulated *jueju*. Nonetheless, it is a quatrain of seven-character lines, with closely rhyming even-numbered lines (食 in *qieyun* 以 / 船 division, *Guangyun* 志 family; 利 in the *Qieyun* 來 division, *Guangyun* 至 family). See Branner, "A Neutral Transcription System for Teaching Medieval Chinese," pp. 90-91.

Another early Chinese meditation text, the *Essential Methods for Curing Chan Sickness* (*Zhi chan bing mi yao fa* 治禪病祕要法), makes more explicit this same concern over poiesis. This text specifies that it is the pride that comes from creating beautiful sounds that is an impediment to concentration and the important monastic business of meditation.<sup>60</sup> The *Methods for Curing Chan Sickness* prescribes a series of macabre and gruesome visualizations as the cure for a karmic affinity for overly active

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汝已剃頭著染衣，執持瓦鉢行乞食，  
 仄仄仄平仄仄平，仄平仄仄中仄仄， Bf7 / Af4  
 云何樂著戲掉法？放逸縱情失法利！  
 平平仄仄中仄仄？仄仄中平仄仄仄！ Af1 / Cf6

<sup>60</sup> See Greene for an extended discussion of the *Methods for Curing* text in light of fourth and fifth century Chinese meditation texts. Details of textual matters begin on page 77. A good translation of this passage is found on pp 581-584, which is the basis for the slightly modified translation included here of just the opening section of “Method for curing those fond of songs, melodic chanting, religious poems, and hymns of praise<sup>a</sup>”. 治好歌唄偈讚法：

復次舍利弗，若行者好作偈頌，美音讚歎猶如風動娑羅樹葉。出和雅音聲如梵音悅可他耳。作適意辭。令他喜樂。因是風響\*。貢高憍慢。心如亂草。隨煩惱風。處處不停。起憍慢幢。打自大鼓。弄諸脈零。因是發狂。如癡獼猴採拾花菓。心無暫停。不能數息。當疾治之。

Further, Śāriputra, a practitioner may be fond of making *gāthā*. The beautiful sounds of his hymns of praise<sup>b</sup> are just like the wind stirring the leaves of the śāla tree. He may make harmonious, graceful noises that sound like the voice of Brahmā, pleasing to the ears of others. He writes lyrics that are amenable in order to make others feel happy. Because of this, his fame spreads, and so he becomes swollen with pride and arrogance. His mind then is like tousled grass blown by the winds of defilements. In all places and times, he raises the banner of his arrogance, beats his own drum, and plays bells;<sup>c</sup> Because of this there arises a craziness. It is like a dumb ape or monkey that gathers flowers and fruits. The mind is without even a moment of rest and one cannot count the breaths. This illness must quickly be cured.

(T. 15, no. 620, p. 338, a15-b6)

<sup>a</sup>These are four distinct genres of song. <sup>b</sup>Following the variant character 響 which conveys the sense of widespread fame. \**Meiyin* is used in translations of Buddhist texts to refer to the wondrous sounds such as the chirping of birds in a pure land and the voice of a buddha. *Zantan* 讚歎 is a two character compound used to refer to the genre of *zan* 讚. <sup>c</sup>Following the variant text here. This seems likely as the verb *nong* (to play) often is seen with *ling* (bells), as in one of the forbidden activities in the *Shisong lü*: 不得弄鈴 (T. 23, no. 1435, p. 290, c11).



literary creativity. In both of these examples, the practice of poetry becomes a deeply ingrained habit that emerges unbidden during inopportune moments of religious practice.

Considering all of the above examples, there seem to be several general reasons that are given for an anxiety about monastic poetry. Vinaya rules are based on situations in which poorly educated novice monks were unable to defend the Buddhist teachings against non-Buddhists. Zanning, too, admonished monks to “know your enemy” in order to defend the faith. Another vinaya rule was based on a monk spending all his time with non-Buddhist learning and completely ignoring the Buddhist tradition. Zongze, likewise, asked “is this the point of ordination?” Tiantai Zhiyuan (citing Zhanran) expressed concern over an individual’s ability to use *waixue* in a suitably wise manner – echoing the yoking together of upāya-kauśalya and prajñā. In general, all of these anxieties converge on the question of whether or not the practice of poetry is conducive to the goals of Buddhist monasticism, namely, liberation.

Despite these differences, all of the above texts discussed literary endeavors as *waixue* and never broke from the assumption that there existed a tension between literary forms of *waixue* and ascetic monastic commitments. In some texts, such as several vinaya and the *Chanyuan qinggui*, the tension is productive and empowers monks to proselytize. In *Fanwangjing* and Zhanran’s commentaries, literary endeavors are an obstacle to be avoided on the bodhisattva path. Meditation texts likewise describe the troubles of being overly fond of poetry and literary creation. Ideas and phrases in classical texts reappeared in Song dynasty biographies in *Song gao seng zhuan* as well as early Song encyclopedic primers. In these Song dynasty examples, we also can see that scriptural prohibitions and admonishments continued to have impacts on how monks in middle period China

imagined the relationship between poetry and monasticism. Also in the Song, this tension existed in Chan monastic codes as well as in Tiantai-style sūtra commentary. The problem of monastic poetry was not limited to any one sect, style, or lineage.

This pervasive anxiety about the unsuitability of poetry for Buddhist monks, I believe, is a fundamental substratum for Song dynasty Chinese Buddhist poetry. The perpetuation of norms and conventions was widely felt among the elite monks who wrote poetry, and constitute an important context in which poems were written. There are many cases in which this anxiety is not visible on the surface of poems; however, this next section demonstrates some of the explicit ways this problem was expressed in poetry.

### ***Waixue* as topos**

The mainstream view among most Buddhist monks throughout the Song dynasty remained that poetry was *waixue* and needed to be regarded warily. I propose that much of monks' poetry from the Song dynasty cannot be comprehended adequately without accounting for this monastic context. The examples here demonstrate that the notion of *waixue* and attitudes towards it were sometimes explicit influences on monks' poems.

There are several examples of monks' poetry which address as a topic the idea of poetry as *waixue*. The first set of examples here refer to two synonyms, *chan yu* 禪餘 and *chan wai* 禪外, which also appear in poems of the late Tang. These phrases are related to an old idea of studying during the time between monastic activities.<sup>61</sup> But *chan yu* and *chan wai* are uncommon ways of referring to this time. The terms are glossed in modern

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<sup>61</sup> Sengyou 僧祐, for example, worked on his catalogue "in gaps between the six periods" *liu shi zhi xi* 六時之隙; *Chu san zang ji ji*, T. 55, no. 2145, p. 90, b11.

Buddhist dictionaries, as “the spare time from being a monk”<sup>62</sup> and “in one’s spare time when not practicing zen.”<sup>63</sup> To my knowledge, Song dynasty dictionaries such as the *Zuting shiyuan* do not even gloss the term. This dearth of information may be because *chan yu* and *chan wai* are poetic topoi.<sup>64</sup>

The synonymous phrases *chan yu* and *chan wai* often appear in poetry, especially that by monks. Based on the many contexts in which the terms are used, we might gloss *chan wai* and *chan yu* as describing the free-time of a monk when not engaged in *chan*.<sup>65</sup> The meaning of *chan* in *chan yu* is not necessarily meditation, and sometimes conveys simply “professional commitments;” some poems clearly describe meditation.<sup>66</sup> The image of *chan wai* / *chan yu* that will be illustrated in poems below is homologous to *yifen waixue* (“one period of outer learning”). Qiji expressed this idea succinctly, in *Ziti* 自題, “When not engaged with *chan*, I search for poetry’s wonders” (禪外求詩妙). Such statements as these make explicit how poetry and *chan* (and Buddhism by extension) stand in opposition to one another. They are discrete occupations. These poems about *chan yu* or *chan wai* name poetry as something outside of *chan*. Poetry is relegated to the gaps between the rigors of a monastic life.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Bukkyō daijiten* (Oda), p 1069-1.

<sup>63</sup> *Zengaku daijiten*, p. 706-4

<sup>64</sup> See Hsiao Li-hua, *Tang dai shige yu chanxue*, p. 192.

<sup>65</sup> To try to translate *chan yu* and *chan wai* with consistency, I will use the phrase “engage with *chan*.”

<sup>66</sup> After reading through many examples, I have the impression that the *chan* in *chanwai* refers to meditation in many of the examples, but sometimes daily monasticism in general. On the wide-ranging lexical uses of *chan* in the Song, including meditation, prajñā, the Chan lineage, and bodhi, see Griffith Foulk’s *Histories of Chan*, pp. 5-7, 93-100, et passim. I believe the use of *chan* to mean daily monasticism was a form of metonymy and derived from one of the above primary meanings. Also note that the Tiantai monk Zhiyuan wrote a number of poems about *chanwai*. These include examples in which *chan* refers to meditation but not to the Chan school.

<sup>67</sup> These gaps are sometimes referred to as *xian* 閑 or *xi* 隙.

The same anxiety in the discourse of *yifen waixue* also coalesced around *chan yu / chan wai*. Poetry may be more than temporally separate from monasticism, and actively antagonistic to the ideals of monastic serenity. The following poem “Early Autumn Idle, sent to monk Yuzhao” (早秋閒寄宇昭), by one of the so-called “nine monks” of the early Song, Baoxian 保暹, makes this division explicit.<sup>68</sup>

Beneath the open window, my bedding illumined,	窗虛枕簟明
<sup>2</sup> I faintly sense that the morning chill broadens. <sup>69</sup>	微覺早涼生
Deep in the temple no one speaks,	深院無人語
<sup>4</sup> But the sound of rain dropping from tall pines.	長松滴雨聲
Poetry comes when I am not engaged with <i>chan</i> ,	詩來禪外得
<sup>6</sup> And melancholy intrudes when I am silent.	愁入靜中平
In my far-away memories of Xilin [temple],	遠念西林下
<sup>8</sup> Longing mixes with comfort. <sup>70</sup>	相思合慰情

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<sup>68</sup> *Quan Song shi* 3.1449. The monk Yuzhao in the poem’s title is elsewhere referred to as Jiangnan Yuzhao 江南宇昭. The nine monks were a motley and loosely confederated group of literary monks during the early Song. They lived in the Jiangnan region, corresponded frequently, and are generally believed to represent the range of Buddhist identities including Chan and Tiantai. They are mentioned in Ouyang Xiu’s *Liuyi shihua*. He lamented that all but a few lines of poetry had been lost in the decades since his own youth. Sima Guang later found and republished many of the poems. Some important sources on the Nine Monks include Ji Guangyu, “Song chu *Jiuseng shiji kao shu*” and the author’s dissertation, *Song chu Jiusengshi yanjiu*. See also Shaku Seitan, *Hochū Wa-Kan kōsō meishi shinshaku*, 99-111, for annotated translations of four *jueju* poems by Baoxian.

<sup>69</sup> Line one is similar to a line by Du Mu 杜牧 in the poem *Lüqing* 旅情.

<sup>70</sup> Xilin temple presumably is where Yuzhao and Baoxian last met. There is little reason to assume this Xilin is either of the well-known Xilin temples found on Mount Lu and Nanyue. The little biographic information about Yuzhao places him in Jiangnan.

The above is a poem about early morning moments, the first thoughts upon waking up. The poet wakes up to a wet silence: the courtyard is punctuated by the sounds of dripping water. The poet remarks in line five, it is when not actively practicing monasticism that poetic language comes to him, such as during this morning's first moments. Line six mirrors line five with parallel grammar. Where in line five there is poetry (*shi* 詩), in the same position in line six there is sadness (*chou* 愁) that comes upon the author when he is quiet. To read these lines together, it seems that when the author is not engaged in *chan* he finds his mind occupied with poetry; when silent and not engaging in poetry, the author is filled with sadness. In the final couplet, the poet reveals the source of this poetic anxiety. He thinks of the Xilin temple he once knew and his old friend Yuzhao. These memories are both a source of pain and of comfort in the quietest hours of the morning. Nonetheless, it is explicit in Baoxian's poem that poetry is not a part of the monk's professional monasticism. It is only when he is not engaged in *chan* that poetry comes to him. Baoxian further links this poetic inspiration with a sorrow that intrudes on his monastic equanimity.

The Northern Song monk Daoqian 道潛 (1043-after 1111), mentioned above for briefly renouncing poesis in 1080, often wrote about *chan yu* and *chan wai*. In the second of ten “Poems matched to the rhymes of monk Wenfu's *Autumn day on the lake*, in six-syllable lines,” Daoqian writes about going for a hike during his *chan yu*.<sup>71</sup>

Sometimes, when not engaged with chan, I climb up to the 禪餘偶登絕巘  
top of a peak,

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<sup>71</sup> *Ciyun Wenfu Hushang qiu ri liuyan* 次韻聞復湖上秋日六言, CLZSJ 10.1a.

- 2 Then settle on a rock to rest, yawn, and stretch. 據石聊為欠申  
 Tracks and bypaths divide the field of vision in vain; 眼界謾分畦畛
- 4 Who knows the Great Way has no partitions? 誰知大道無鄰

Hiking frequently appears in poems about *chan yu* or *chan wai*, and sets the scene for this poem. Daoqian describes a feeling of natural ease that comes from climbing up to some high place, another common trope. The second couplet focuses on what to make of a sprawling countryside crossed by roads, paths, and fences. Daoqian transforms the patchwork landscape into a metaphor to instruct the younger monk Wenfu. Though there are many roads below that may lead up to this peak, once at the top one should no longer be focused on the differences between those paths. There seems little irony intended between the first and second couplets – that Daoqian himself divides his time between *chan* and not *chan*.<sup>72</sup> In the end, Daoqian suggests that even when engaging in poetic explorations like this, one should still bear in mind “the great way.” This seems to erase the divisions between *chan* and poetry at the cost of making poetry subordinate to *chan*.

Daoqian plays with similar images in a longer *guti* poem with nine rhyming couplets, titled “Yuanzhai” 遠齋 (“The Far-reaching Studio”), written for the benefit of one Venerable Yu.<sup>73</sup> Judging from the context, “Far-off Studio” was a new ‘studio name’ that Yu plans to use as a pseudonym.<sup>74</sup> The poem by Daoqian explored and praised the virtues of the name (see Line 11), and its suitability for Yu, who himself enjoyed “far-

<sup>72</sup> The word *chan* here is indeterminate, and it is possible Daoqian used *chan* to refer to daily monastic commitments.

<sup>73</sup> *Yuanzhai* was a fairly common studio name. There is a note appended to the title, apparently from the author Daoqian (or added by the compiler, his disciple Faying), stating that the poem was written for one Venerable Yu. *Yuanzhai wei Yushangren zuo* 遠齋為玉上人作; CLZSJ, 8.3a.

<sup>74</sup> Daoqian was a much sought-after calligrapher, and there many poems like this among his extant works.

reaching visions that stretch from the top of Kunlun to the bottom of the eastern seas.”

Daoqian did not offer such praise of literature without caution. The concluding lines of the poem offer admonitions.

- Five-thousand scrolls of Indic books came from the west,<sup>75</sup> 西來竺書五千軸
- 14 I reckon you will spend months and years grinding away [at those books]. 期子歲月加磨礱
- There is really no need to read *Lisao* or *Chuci*, 離騷楚詞亦謾讀
- 16 What’s the need to craft language’s embellishments? 言語黼黻何必工
- Yet, when not engaged in chan, you still have karmic habits,<sup>76</sup> 禪餘習氣如未盡
- 18 And from time to time go lean on gully rock, intone the wind in the pines. 時倚澗石吟松風

The first couplet here is about reading Buddhist books. One could spend an entire lifetime trying to understand the vast canon. The second couplet is about *not* reading literary works. In the final couplet, we see that Daoqian was teasing the monk Yu, who perhaps would place this calligraphy in view from his writing desk. The monk sitting in the so-called Far-reaching Studio had literary works at hand, and surely tried his own hand at poetry. In Line 17 and 18, Daoqian states that so long as venerable Yu keeps writing poetry, it will remain evident that he still has some karma not yet extinguished.

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<sup>75</sup> I am unaware of a particular text or set of texts or tradition denoted by “five thousand.”

<sup>76</sup> Karmic habits, or residual karma, *xi qi* 習氣 also *canxi* 殘習, are the present result of previous delusion and remain after the affliction proper has ended, and are thus distinct from present, active afflictions. Residual karma is sometimes used to explain why bad things happen to good people, but here it seems to answer why even a monk who has renounced the world is still attached to poetry. At least, Daoqian is teasing Yu that as a monk this should be the case.

A similar distinction between monasticism and poetry is also found in a poem to a monk from the lay person Gu Feng 顧逢 (fl. late S Song and early Yuan), in the second of two “Poems presented to Guangchun Poyi” 贈廣淳破衣其二.<sup>77</sup>

When not engaged with <i>chan</i> you enjoy writing,	禪外親文墨
<sup>2</sup> And at year’s end you are ever more sentimental.	年來更用情
After sitting cross-legged beneath three rafters, <sup>78</sup>	三椽趺坐後
<sup>4</sup> And reading aloud in early dawn light,	徹曉讀書聲
You grind ink with rainwater gathered in the window,	破硯雨窗潤
<sup>6</sup> Under a lamp illumining your hermit’s den.	孤燈雪屋明
Once again studying the eminent elders,	更參諸大老
<sup>8</sup> Without planning to travel the myriad mountains. <sup>79</sup>	莫計萬山程

There are several markers of place and time given in the beginning of this poem. With the exception of the meditation hall, each time or place signals that the action of the poem

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<sup>77</sup> *Quan Song shi* 64.40000. There are no biographic records for a monk named Guangchun. I have taken Guangchun Poyi as the monk’s moniker; however, it seems likely that Gu Feng was sending *poyi*, tattered robes, to the monk Guangchun. The monk’s *kāśāya* was sometimes referred to as *huaiyi* 壞衣, and according to strict interpretation of the vinaya, should be constructed from despoiled cloth from charnel grounds. The first of Gu Feng’s two poems plays with the idea of *poyi*, or tattered robes, as a symbol of pious poverty that is belied by inner *chun*, or purity, a word which appears in Guangchun’s name (*QSS* 64.39999). There are an additional four poems by Wu Weixin 吳惟信 (fl. late Southern Song) also titled *Zeng Guangchun Poyi* 贈廣淳破衣 (*QSS* 59.37066-67), which portray Guangchun as a wild recluse, skilled at meditation and discoursing on emptiness. Wu’s poems mention that Guangchun “left the mountains to visit the wealthy;” and that his “hair is long and uncombed.” Wu’s poems make no mention of offering anything to monks, and quite to the contrary, portray him as a lapsed monastic who “burned his copy of the vinaya.” I think the *poyi* “tattered robes” may have been a moniker for Guangchun and his lot as an eccentric, in contrast to *shangren* 上人 or *daoshi* 道士.

<sup>78</sup> Taking this as short for the well-known phrase *santiao chuan xia* [*qichi dan qian*] 三條椽下[七尺單前], the regulation stipulating the size of a monk’s space in the meditation hall.

<sup>79</sup> I understand this couplet as a description of Guangchun after he has written the poems. He is imagined as returning to his monastic learning, and attaining a hermetic ideal.



takes place at liminal times in monastic life. The addressee, Guangchun, is envisioned as already done with his early morning routine of sitting in the meditation hall before reading secular books (not sūtras). It may be that the literature Guangchun reads aloud (Line 4) infuses his own writing (Lines 5 and 6). The writing studio is romantically humble, and spontaneously furnishes the water needed to grind ink. This poem does not chastise Guangchun’s practice of poetry as a violation of his monastic vows. Nonetheless, the poet draws a distinction between poetry and *chan*; this underlies the force of Line 2, Guangchun tends to write poetry – with more sentimental lines, no less – at the present time of year.<sup>80</sup>

In this next example, a most interesting idea is introduced in connection with *chan wai*. The poet Li Zhong 李中 (fl. mid 10<sup>th</sup> c) was a prominent figure in the brief Southern Tang kingdom 南唐 (937-975) and frequented Mount Lu. This is an excerpt from one of the poems, “Presented to Master Bai of Donglin” 贈東林白大師.<sup>81</sup>

You’ve long dwelled at Tiger Stream among sacred traces;	虎溪久駐靈蹤
<sup>2</sup> When you’re not engaged in <i>chan</i> , the poetry demon is still strong.	禪外詩魔尚濃
When night rolls away, to intone [poetry] throughout the day,	卷宿吟銷永日
<sup>4</sup> You rearrange your seat to face the thousand peaks.	移牀坐對千峰

Line one evokes the image of Huiyuan 慧遠, who repaired to Mount Lu and then did not emerge from the mountain again, always remaining on the other side of Tiger Stream.

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<sup>80</sup> A reader may note the parallel use of “sentiment” 情 paired against “ink” 墨 in the first line that suggests some homologous relationship.

<sup>81</sup> The *qiyān lüshī* can be found in *Quan tang shi* 747.8508-09. Li Zhong wrote another *guti* titled *Ji Lushan Bai dashi* 寄廬山白大師, 747.8503-04.

Huiyuan was remembered for his involvement with poetry, among his many other accomplishments.<sup>82</sup> Here in Li Zhong's poem, however, religion and poetry actively clash. The poetry demon is always lurking, he says. One might repel the demon while in meditation, but he is waiting.

### The Poetry Demon 詩魔

The poetry demon (*shimo* 詩魔) is perhaps the most evocative expression of the tension between poesis and Buddhist salvation, and conveys the sense that poetry is an activity of Māra. The word *mo* is also the name of Māra, the temptor, wielder of illusions, and knower of desire.<sup>83</sup> Māra is embodiment of the enemy to progress on the Buddhist path. From an etymological perspective, the word *shimo* conveys many of the same connotations as *waixue*, or “studies of things outside [the Buddhist tradition].” In practice, the word “poetry demon” was often used as a name for an obsession with poetry, and at times even appears to have been used playfully to mean something like a muse. There are some cases in which it can be difficult to discern whether the author is confessing a sense of conflict about poetry or is taking pleasure in the obsession.

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<sup>82</sup> Huiyuan's preface known as the *Nianfo sanmei shiji xu* 念佛三昧詩集序 is found in *Guang hong ming ji*, T. 52, no. 2103, p. 351, b10-c7. From the preface it is clear that he subordinated verse to the needs of Buddhist salvation.

<sup>83</sup> On the use of the Chinese character *mo* in early Buddhist texts, see Funayama Tōru, *Butten wa dō kanyaku sareta no ka*, p. 185.

The earliest explicit reference to a “poetry demon” is thought to be in the writing of Bai Juyi, though some have traced the seeds of the idea to early canonical texts.<sup>84</sup> A “demon of poetry” also appears in works by Bai’s near contemporaries, like Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 and Yao He 姚合. Nonetheless, Bai’s demons were perhaps best known, and none better than that of “Leisurely Intoning” 閒吟.<sup>85</sup>

Ever since my assiduous study of the teachings from the	自從苦學空門法
gates of emptiness,	
<sup>2</sup> I eliminated many different lifelong [habits of] thought.	銷盡平生種種心
Only the demon of poetry is not yet vanquished,	唯有詩魔降未得
<sup>4</sup> Each meeting with wind or moon, I begin leisurely intoning.	每逢風月一閒吟

In this poem about poetry, Bai Juyi savors his love of verse. He cannot help himself when he happens upon a poetic scene. This deeply seated habit seems to be indomitable. Bai compares this “demon of poetry” with other states of mind. In his experience, various states succumbed to the wisdom of the Buddhist teachings of emptiness. This demon of poetry is not a canonical figure. Bai weaves together generic Buddhist language, such as *zhong zhong xin* 種種心, but does not allude to a particular scripture. Bai elaborated on the demonic aspect of literature in other writings as well.

Bai Juyi frequently wrote of his love for wine. As a young man, he found the Buddhist prohibition against drinking to be cumbersome. A late poem by Bai Juyi

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<sup>84</sup> Hsiao, *Wenzi Chan*, pp. 17-21 and 26-28, traces the idea of literary activity as “deluded activity” (*moshi* 魔事, lit. “the work of demons”), from Agamas and early prajnaparamita texts. See the discussion of *shimo* in the poems by Qiji, in Hsiao, *Tang dai shige yu chanxue*, pp. 186-192. See also Owen, *The End of the Chinese Middle Ages*, p. 118.

<sup>85</sup> Modified from Burton Watson, *Po Chü-i: selected poems*, p. 88; see also Jingqing Yang’s adaptation, *The Chan Interpretations of Wang Wei’s Poetry*, pp. 179-180.

explicitly compares his ability to quit drink with his inability to stop composing poetry. This poem is titled “Sending a poem to be inscribed on a wall of my old cottage on Mount Lu, and to be shown to the monks of the two [East and West] Forest Temples,” and it is thought to have been written in 841, after Bai took ill.<sup>86</sup> Bai contemplates the passage of time since he lived in his cottage on Mount Lu thirty years prior. The most significant couplet is this one:

I have gradually vanquished the demon of wine, and do not      漸伏酒魔休放醉  
get wildly drunk;

<sup>2</sup> But the karma of words remains; I have not abandoned      猶殘口業未拋詩  
verse.

Bai Juyi also developed this idea in a lengthy and well-studied letter, known as *yu Yuan Jiu shu* 與元九書 (“A letter to Yuan Zhen”).<sup>87</sup> Some medieval Japanese readers reinterpreted Bai’s works as establishing a resolution of the tension between poetry and Buddhism; however, there is no evidence that historical Chinese writers read in this way. Further, a closer reading of Bai’s corpus does not support this interpolation. I think Bai was writing directly along the fault-lines, giving poetic names to the unresolved tension between the profane urge to make beautiful language and transcendent liberation. The “poetry demon,” then, is one of Bai’s finest turns of phrase.

In the late Tang, the notion of the ‘demon of poetry’ continued to circulate among poets. It is perhaps not surprising that the most interesting engagements with “the poetry

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<sup>86</sup> *Ji ti Lushan jiu caotang, jian cheng er lin si daoli* 寄題廬山舊草堂，兼呈二林寺道侶, see *Bai Juyi ji* 3/35/804. Adapted from Waley, p. 207 and William LaFleur, *The Karma of Words*, p. viii.

<sup>87</sup> See Arthur Waley, *Life and Times of Po Chu-I*, beginning p. 107. Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779-831), a talented literary figure in his own right, was an intimate of Bai’s.

demon” came in the form of poems by the two poet-monks, Guanxiu and Qiji.<sup>88</sup> Of the two, Qiji seems to have developed the idea more richly.<sup>89</sup> In “Fond of Intoning” 愛吟, for example, Qiji used *shimo* as a playful name for poetic rumination itself.<sup>90</sup>

[Sitting] straight and tall, I concentrate my thoughts to retreat within the gates of <i>chan</i> ,	正堪凝思掩禪局
<sup>2</sup> But once again the demon of poetry afflicts [vexes] this monk. <sup>91</sup>	又被詩魔惱竺卿
I occasionally lean at the window, until the evening light,	偶憑窗扉從落照
<sup>4</sup> Then unable to sleep, snowy wind, until the hour before dawn.	不眠風雪到殘更
Jiaoran was not necessarily deluded by his karma;	皎然未必迷前習
<sup>6</sup> Zhidun, how could he not have grasped his next birth?	支遁寧非悟後生
Though when writing one will sometimes accord with the exemplars,	傳寫會逢精鑿者
<sup>8</sup> One also needs to know that these are songs of desultory sentiments.	也應知是詠閒情

This poem names poetry as a disturbance to serenity, and then works through the ramifications. We are given a hint of this in the title, where the word “fond” may also be

<sup>88</sup> For an example by Guanxiu, see *Guanxiu geshi xinian jianzhu* 2.524-525; also translated in Kobayashi, *Zengetsu*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>89</sup> Some of the following draw on examples given in Hsiao Li-hua, *Tang dai shige yu chanxue*, pp. 186-192.

<sup>90</sup> *Qiji shiji jiaozhu* 7.385-386.

<sup>91</sup> The phrase *zhu qing* 竺卿 is an eloquent reference to ‘a monastic official.’ I think the *Qiji shiji jiaozhu* is correct here that the line refers to Qiji himself. Another example in a poem by Guanxiu is in *Guanxiu geshi xinian jianzhu*, p. 497, n. 2.

read as “attached [to].” In contrast to poems written “while not engaged in *chan* (that is, *chan wai*), Qiji is struck by the poetry demon just as he begins to concentrate. He grows restless, looking through the window at poetic scenes outside, and then unable to sleep. The third couplet seeks refuge in the accomplishments of historical monks – Jiaoran and Zhidun are exemplary poet-monks. Surely Jiaoran was not trapped by delusion, just on account of his poetry! Qiji consoles himself in the final couplet, allowing that poetic precedents are such that sometimes he will write in genres and modes that are replete with profane sentiments.

Some decades after Qiji, monk Gushan Zhiyuan – the aforementioned author of the commentary on the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* known as *Weimojing lüeshu chuiyuji* – wrote a poem titled “Poetry Demon” 詩魔 with similar responses to a similar haunting.<sup>92</sup>

My <i>chan</i> mind is vexed by the poetry demon	禪心喧撓被詩魔
<sup>2</sup> With “the moon cold, a gentle breeze,” what am I to do?	月冷風清柰爾何
All night I try to subdue [the demon], but I cannot!	一夜欲降降不得
<sup>4</sup> [The demon’s] bewildering minions return repeatedly.	紛紛徒屬更來多

The poetry demon, a metaphor for an obsessive tendency towards poetic thoughts, afflicts the monk engaged in *chan*. Again, the monastic poet is so enamored with his ruminating mind that he is unable to sleep. Lines of poetry and fragments of phrases are portrayed as demonic minions, that will not leave this monk in peace (line 4). The repetition of these themes may suggest that this set of images had become a romantic trope. We begin to see the image of a monk haunted by the urge to compose poetry, but who must disavow this shameful obsession. Even if these topoi were becoming normative tropes, they are

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<sup>92</sup> *Xian ju bian* 閑居編 *juan* 46 (XZJ 101, p. 189, a2-4).

nonetheless important. These entextualized poet-monks both reflected accepted stereotypes and exerted power over their readers.

Qiji elsewhere uses “poetry demon” to refer to incessant thoughts. The unending turnings of the mind, Qiji says, are subtle vexations, and in “Quiet sitting” 靜坐, he says meditation can do nothing to render them silent.

Day after day there is only this churning,	日日只騰騰
<sup>2</sup> The machinery of thought, why does it spring?	心機何以興
The poetry demon vexes for nothing good;	詩魔苦不利
<sup>4</sup> How can the silence of meditation respond to it?	禪寂頗相應

Qiji wrote a poem about the exhaustion of an unending procession of thoughts, which are the result of an obsession with poetry. His loss of self-control of his thoughts has turned his mind into a machine that works for Māra. The title of this poem indicates that it is about seated contemplation.<sup>93</sup> The silence of this monastic practice is contrasted with the noise of poetry – recall that poems in Middle Period China were intoned and recited. The poet holds out his ideal of the quiet mind of meditation as a respite from his own thinking. Qiji elaborated on this theme in another poem, “Sent to minister Zheng Gu.”<sup>94</sup>

You still must laugh at me, for when not taming my heart 還應笑我降心外

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<sup>93</sup> I believe the phrase “silence of *chan*” (*chan ji*) references the title of the poem, and so I have taken *chan* (with a lower case ‘c’) as meditation, and not a reference to the Chan school.

<sup>94</sup> *Ji Zheng Gu langzhong* 寄鄭谷郎中

<sup>2</sup> I provoke the poetry demon who aids the false Buddha.<sup>95</sup> 惹得詩魔助佛魔

Qiji insists that we laugh at him. Even though he knows better, he cannot help but provoke the demon. He simply must write poetry.

In the above examples, Qiji invoked the poetry demon with exasperation. Elsewhere, Qiji explored different views on the relationship between Buddhism and poetry.<sup>96</sup> Regardless of which side Qiji came down on in any given piece of writing, however, all of his opinions about Buddhist poetry are within the framework of a general anxiety about poetry and monasticism.

Qiji was responding to and a participant in tenth-century culture, before the advent of the Song dynasty approached. Though Qiji's poems were read with some interest in the Song dynasty, Chinese literary history shifted quickly. Nonetheless, the fundamental incompatibility of Buddhist monasticism and Chinese poetry continued unabated. We saw above examples from early Song hagiographies and encyclopedia, as well as from mid-Song letters and poems. In light of this, we may revisit the predominant model of Buddhist poetry of the Song.

### Revisiting *wenzi chan* (part ii)

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<sup>95</sup> In canonical literature, *fo mo* often is two nouns, meaning “buddha and mara,” roughly translating to awakening and delusion. “Buddha demon” or “Demon of Buddha” as one noun is also widely attested, especially in medieval Buddhist literature. Demon of buddha may refer to a situation where buddha and dharma have been idealized to the extent that they become hindrances on the path to liberation. Nakamura in *Bukkyo go daijiten* glosses *fo mo* in this connotation as ‘seeking buddha outside oneself.’ See also *Zengaku daijiten* p. 1093.

<sup>96</sup> See Hsiao, *Tang dai shige yu chanxue*, pp. 182-196, and Sun, *Chansi yu shiqing*, pp. 324-328.



The term *wenzi chan* (“lettered Chan”) is closely associated with the monk Juefan Huihong.<sup>97</sup> Several prominent scholars have tried to find some ideology behind *wenzi chan* and to fit it into the general contours of Buddhist doctrinal developments in the Song.<sup>98</sup> The prevailing image today of Buddhism and literature achieving harmony in the Northern Song was not known as *wenzi chan* at least until Ming dynasty times.<sup>99</sup> My point is not that Huihong did not write a tremendous amount (152 fascicles by one count); nor that Huihong did not at times reflect on the relationship between wisdom and its expression through language. Nonetheless, Huihong did not advocate something called *wenzi chan*. There was no monastic institutional *wenzi chan* movement. Quite to the contrary, my reading of Huihong’s own uses of the term *wenzi chan* show that it was a term of self-effacement.<sup>100</sup> The term *wenzi chan* as used by Huihong mostly refers to poetry in particular and is yet another reflection of the attendant problem of the emotions.

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<sup>97</sup> The collection of Huihong’s collected poems and prose is titled *Shimen wenzi chan* 石門文字禪. It is generally thought to be the source of the phrase *wenzi chan*. In fact, both Huang Tingjian and the Tiantai monk Longjing Biancai had decades earlier used such a term. See Zhou, *Wenzi chan yu Song dai shixue*, page 32 for Huang Tingjian, and page 44 for the poem by Biancai.

<sup>98</sup> Though an incomplete list, consider Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, pp. 210-211; Gimello, “Mārga and Culture;” and Hsiao Li-hua, *Wenzi Chan*. See also Yanagida, “Sōsetsu” in *Zenrin sōbōden yakuchū*, pp. 110-111, in which after one hundred pages he calls Huihong and his *wenzi chan* a difficult kōan.

<sup>99</sup> This is based in part on Liao Zhaoheng, *Zhong-bian, shi-chan, meng-xi*, pp. 106-149, which details the “creative reinterpretation” of Huihong’s life and works by a cast of monks and writers in the late Ming. Liao did not go so far as to pronounce this understanding of *wenzi chan* anachronistic.

<sup>100</sup> Zhou Yukai, “Huihong wenzi chan,” p. 87, points to these same passages but reinterprets them out of their immediate context, using Huihong’s commentaries on the *Daode jing* and comments about learning *xue* 學.

One reason for this misunderstanding has been the eloquent and oft-referenced introduction to the collection *Shimen wenzi chan* 石門文字禪.<sup>101</sup>

If Chan is like spring, then *wenzi* are the flowers. Spring appears in blossoms, and blossoms in their entirety are spring; blossoms appear in spring, and spring entirely is blossoms. Likewise, how could Chan and *wenzi* be two separate things? 蓋禪如春也，文字則花也。春在於花，全花是春，花在於春，全春是花。而曰禪與文字有二乎哉？

Beautiful as this preface may be, it was written only in 1597, during Ming Wanli, by Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可 (1543–1603).<sup>102</sup> These ideas about Chan and language were articulated by Zibo Zhenke several hundred years after Huihong. Zhenke seems to have refashioned the image of Huihong in order to promote his own reform agenda. Until then, Huihong was revered by the Buddhist tradition as more of a historian than a literary figure. Zibo Zhenke's contemporaries were not united in support of reviving Huihong's writings to support Zibo's projects, such as Hanyue Fazang 漢月法藏.<sup>103</sup> Zibo, on the other hand, often held up Huihong as an early pioneer of a correct understanding of the profound compatibility of Chan and language.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Citations are given to the Jiaying edition (now also found in CBETA): JXZ 23, no. B135, p. 577, a9-11; and to the Beijing Zhonghua shuju critical edition based on the only complete annotated edition, done by Japanese Sōtō monk Kakumon Kantetsu 廓門貫徹 (d. 1730): *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan*, 1.1-2.

<sup>102</sup> The preface is signed the fifteenth day of the eighth month of *Wanli dingyou* 萬曆丁酉.

<sup>103</sup> See, for example, in *Sanfeng Zang heshang yulu* 三峰藏和尚語錄 (JXZ 34, no. B299) p. 160, b11-20.

<sup>104</sup> Zibo composed a ritual text for an offering at Shimen dedicated to Huihong, titled *Li Shimen Yuanming Chanshi wen* 禮石門圓明禪師文, and dated 1598 (*Wanli* 26). That ritual text concludes with honoring the idea of *wenzi chan*:

Zibo Zhenke may have had certain audiences in mind for his pronouncements.<sup>105</sup>

Wang Shizhen 王士禛 (1634-1711), for example, cited Zibo Zhenke's preface as evidence for his theory of "complete unity of poetry and Chan" (*shi-Chan yizhi* 詩禪一致). The mid-century Japanese scholar of Buddhist literature Kaji Tetsujō 加地哲定 (1890-1972) has already shown that the slogan "complete unity of poetry and Chan" was articulated only in the late Ming or early Qing.<sup>106</sup> As Kaji notes, when Wang argued for a complete correspondence of poetry and Chan, he denigrated the earlier Song era literary critics who had asserted no more than a metaphoric likeness between poetry and Chan.<sup>107</sup> As Richard Lynn has also shown, the Chan-poetry analogy was one in which poetry is said to be *like* Chan. In this view, poetic language and religious language have some kind of family resemblance because they both are heightened uses of language, but these are two distinct kinds of heightened language.

The disparity was more than a matter of metaphoric likeness versus literal equivalency. It is also a question of subordination versus co-equality. The Ming era

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Thus, [Huihong] Shimen used *Wenzi Chan* as the title of his work. *Wenzi* are the waves, and *Chan* is the water. If it were necessary to abandon *wenzi* in order to seek *Chan*, this is like being thirsty but refusing to drink waves, and pushing waves aside to seek water. 故石門以文字禪名其書。文字波也。禪水也。如必欲離文字而求禪。渴不飲波。必欲撥波而覓水。(Zibo zunshe quanji, XZJ 126, p. 887, a7-15)

<sup>105</sup> See Liao Chao-heng, *Zhong-bian, shi-chan, meng-xi*, pp. 28-36 for a *dramatis personae* of major literary monks in the period, and pp. 36-46 for their engagement with Huihong.

<sup>106</sup> Kaji, pp. 261-278.

<sup>107</sup> This material has been turned over by Richard Lynn in "Orthodoxy and Enlightenment" – which focuses on Ming interpretations, and includes further evidence of Wang's complicated relationship with Yan Yu – and in "The Sudden and the Gradual in Chinese Poetry Criticism" – which focuses on sources from the two Song dynasties. Though Lynn was careful to discuss "the Chan-poetry analogy" as a metaphor among critics, some of the statements and arguments in his essays have been taken out of context.

writers assert that poetry is a means to a religious achievement. The path of poetry is the equal of the arduous monastic path.

To further demonstrate that this understanding of *wenzi chan* is an anachronism to the Song dynasty, we may turn to Huihong's book *Shimen wenzi chan* itself and note how Huihong employed the term *wenzi chan* in his poetry and prose. The phrase *wenzi chan* appears in the *Shimen wenzi chan* only a handful of times.<sup>108</sup> For example, Huihong once wrote that *wenzi chan* is “the language for feelings not yet forgotten, such as after climbing up to heights and gazing out over the distance.”<sup>109</sup> These phrases are laden with conventional language. When Huihong wrote about not yet forgetting his feelings, he probably had in mind this story from the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, from “The Chapter on Grieving for the Departed.”<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> I counted only eight appearances, using a search in CBETA. One humorous example is in a poem rebuking a monk, “Venerable Xian wanted a *gāthā*” (*Xian shangren mi ji* 賢上人覓偈): “You have no interest in contemplating bones, / but love to study *wenzi chan*” 懶修枯骨觀愛學文字禪; JXZ 23, no. B135, p. 618, b26-27; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan*, 1.646. The first line refers to the ascetic practice of contemplating corpses and bones in order to grasp the nature of impermanence, also called, *bai gu guan* 白骨觀. Kakumon Kantetsu suggests this poem is to a nun, with cf. 1.642, note 2.

<sup>109</sup> See Zhou, *Wenzi chan yu Song dai shixue*, pp. 44-45. This particular passage in which Huihong uses both *wenzi chan* and *wei wang qing zhi yu* comes from the preface to an inscription, *Lan'an ming* 懶庵銘, in *Shimen wenzi chan*, JXZ 23, no. B135, p. 672, a23-b4; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan*, 2.1241-1242. In order to praise the master of “Lazy Hermitage,” Huihong strikes the tone of giving an admonishment to others not to try to imitate such dangerous approaches to spirituality.

“He has taken limping as his *vīrya*; ruckus for silence; and taken the language of feelings not yet forgotten, such as after climbing up to heights and gazing out over the distance, for his *wenzi chan*. This is why he sets up a hermitage and secludes himself, calling himself ‘lazy.’ This is dangerous and should not be done carelessly.”

以勃率為精進,以哆和為簡靜,以臨高眺遠未忘情之語為文字禪,然則結庵自藏而名以懶,殆非苟然。

<sup>110</sup> Chapter *Shangshi* 傷逝, number 17. *Shishuo xinyu jiao jian*, p. 349.

When Wang Rong lost his son (Wang Sui, d. ca. 275), Shan Jian went to visit him.

Wang's grief was such that he could not control himself. Jian said, "For a mere babe in arms, why go to such lengths?"

Wang said, "A sage forgets his feelings; the lowest beings aren't even capable of having feelings. But the place where feelings are more concentrated is precisely among people like ourselves."

Moved by his words, Jian grieved for him more than ever.<sup>111</sup>

王戎喪兒萬子，山簡往省之，王悲不自勝。簡曰：「孩抱中物，何至於此！」  
王曰：「聖人忘情，最下不及情。情之所鍾，正在我輩。」簡服其言，更為之慟。<sup>112</sup>

Huihong in all likelihood understood his statement about *wenzi chan* and not-yet-forgotten feelings as part of a broader discourse. If a sage forgets his feelings, then to have **not yet** forgotten feelings is a sign that one is not the equal of the sages of antiquity.

Had Huihong made recourse to this conventional language only once, it would be difficult to reach a conclusion. However, Huihong repeated the trope in several other passages. In an inscription known as *Ti zi shi* 題自詩, written on an album of his own poetry gathered by "some do-gooder," Huihong used the convention of "feelings not-yet-forgotten" to describe his "playing with language" (*xi wei yuyan* 戲為語言).<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Translation adapted from Mather, p. 347.

<sup>112</sup> This particular passage was important to Su Shi and Daoqian, who both frequently cited it when confronting feelings of grief. I detail this passage in poems by Su and Daoqian in a later chapter. The story is also found in the biography of Wang Rong 王戎 in *Jinshu* 晉書, the official dynastic history of the Jin (265-420), completed in 648 during the Tang.

<sup>113</sup> JXZ 23, no. B135, p. 707, b4-9; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan*, 2.1520, with slightly altered punctuation. On playfulness and poetry, see Zhou Yukai, "Youxi sanmei."

I did not at first intend to become skilled at crafting poems and *belles lettres*, but my karma from previous lives would not be washed away; and so, when I climb up to heights and gaze out over the distance, I am unable to forget my feelings; which from time to time I play with in words, not knowing whether I will write it down or toss it away.<sup>114</sup>

Some do-gooders managed to record my poems, and I saw their work at venerable Nanzhou Qi's place. When I gazed upon it, my face turned red with shame and I begin to sweat.<sup>115</sup> Even though my poems are improved by Qi's love of learning, the language is so ugly that I could not agree to show it, let alone speak about well-crafted poetry. Only because it has been presented to me, I inscribe this upon it.

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<sup>114</sup> Huihong writes more or less this same phrase in another colophon, *Ti Bi shangren suo xu shi* 題弼上人所蓄詩.

In Chan temples long ago, elders frequently regarded orally explaining principles as the core, and would berate monks who engaged with brush and ink. In my wandering this country, I stopped in communities. I have much residual karma that I cannot rub away; and from time to time I make that language of not-yet-forgotten feelings; sometimes I record it, and sometimes toss it away, because if people would laugh at it then it is better not to let them hear it.

往時叢林老衲多以講宗為心，呵衲子從事筆硯。予游方時，省息眾中，多習氣，抉磨不去，時時作未忘情之語，隨作隨棄，如人高笑，幸其不聞。

JXZ 23, no. B135, p. 707, a12-14; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 2.1518.

<sup>115</sup> In yet another colophon for the poetry of one venerable Baoshan Yan 寶山言上人, Huihong describes a similar affect and physiological response to sentiments that should be forgotten.

I, in this illusion and dream of living among men, at play with brush and ink, climb up to heights and gaze into the distance, then there come the words of feelings not yet forgotten, and I turn on my heel with shame and sweat.

予，幻夢人間，游戲筆硯，登高臨遠，時時為未忘情之語，旋踵羞悔汗下。

From the beginning of *Ti Yan shanreng suo xu shi* 題言上人所蓄詩, J 23, no. B135, p. 707, a18-20; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 2.1218-1519. In the end, Huihong redeems venerable Yan's collection of poems for being *bi* 鄙, "ugly" or "coarse." This is an interesting tactic often adopted by Huihong beyond the purview of this chapter.

予始非有意於工詩文，夙習洗濯不去，臨高望遠，未能忘情，時時戲為語言，隨作隨毀不知。好事者，皆能錄之，南州琦上人處見巨編，讀之面熱汗下。然佳琦之好學，雖語言之陋，如僕者亦不肯遺，況工於詩者乎，因出示輒題其末。

It is difficult to know to what extent Huihong meant any of these sentiments to be taken at face value. It would have been the height of arrogance to write anything other than such humble remarks on a copy of one's own poetry. Nonetheless, we see that Huihong continues to use the convention of not-yet-forgotten feelings which he elsewhere associated with *wenzi chan*. Huihong wonders here if the reason he is unable to forget his feelings is because of lingering karma leftover from a previous life. If he could wash himself of this karma, perhaps he would not feel called to sing in verse upon encountering beauty. For Huihong, talking about engaging with poetry and high literature, offered a way to narrativize how one is not yet liberated, rather than an expression of liberated wisdom.

In another colophon appended to one of his own poems and presented to a monk Daolong 道隆 (d.u.), Huihong again distances himself from his literary work as a youth before joking about his lethargy in old age.<sup>116</sup>

When I was young, I was crazy for the ornate and beautiful language of feelings not-forgotten, but in my dotage I laugh at myself, and I do not do make [such poems] anymore. Since I returned from Changsha to live at Long'an, there is nothing to do in the mountains, so I study the method of sleeping while seated: I

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<sup>116</sup> *Ti zi shi yu Long shangren* 題自詩與隆上人; JXZ 23, no. B135, p. 707, b17-26; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 2.1521-1522. For more on Fahua Daolong 法華道隆, see his biography in *Chan lin seng bao zhuan* 禪林僧寶傳 (XZJ 137, p. 519, b9-p. 521, b17).

eat my fill, lean back in my chair, and saliva flows from the corner of my mouth. I am pleased to say I have attained its mysteries. My neighbor is the monk Long, who has regularly shown me kindness. When long ago I took ill, he visited frequently, even on winter days, and never tired of inquiring after me. I can still recall what he did then. As I took up paper to write these several poems to present to [monk Long], I also teased him by saying, “Once, when Chan master Daguan lived in the capital, his literati interlocutors frequently interacted with him because of his ability to write poetry.<sup>117</sup> Daguan laughingly remarked:

‘To explain what is said in vernacular,  
Or to intone five-character verse;  
The two types are both good techniques,  
It’s just the money is slow to arrive.’<sup>118</sup>

Long responded, “That was expectable. I won’t respond.” Everyone seated nearby laughed at that. Long has the style name “Old Man Silence,” and is one of Xiang area’s superlative pure ones.<sup>119</sup>

余少狂為綺美不忘情之語，年大來輒自鄙笑，因不復作。自長沙來歸舍龍安，山中無可作做，學坐睡法、飽飯靠椅，口角流涎，自喜以謂得其妙。旁舍有道人隆公雅好予，昔所病者，時時過予，終日而未嘗倦問予，昔所作尚能尋繹乎。予引紙為錄此數篇以遺之，而戲之曰，「昔達觀禪師居京師，士大夫

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<sup>117</sup> For more on Daguan Tanying 達觀曇穎 (989-1060), see Huihong’s *Chan lin seng bao zhuan* (XZJ 137, p. 548, b5-p. 550, a3). Daguan was the author of the *Wu jia zong pai* 五家宗派, now lost.

<sup>118</sup> Another version of this poem is found in *Chan lin seng bao zhuan* (XZJ 137, p. 521, a17-18). The second line has *yin* 吟 instead of *yan* 言, which I translate here.

<sup>119</sup> The Xiang area corresponds with modern-day Hunan.



相從者，皆以能詩答話多之。觀笑曰，『解答諸方話，能言五字詩，二般俱好藝，只是見錢遲。』」隆公曰，「果爾，吾不復耳。」坐客皆笑之。隆字默翁，湘中清勝者也。

Far from being self-assured about the synergy of *wenzi chan* qua ‘feelings not forgotten,’ Huihong insists that he wouldn’t write such verse as effusive as his juvenilia anymore. In this colophon to his own poetry, he includes a story about a monk who was harassed for his poetry and wrote a poem in response. This story was meant to tease Daolong, we are told, and likely referred to the situation at hand in which Huihong had been asked to compose poetry. The poem Huihong included inside the colophon suggests that whether one communicates through poetry or not is secondary to whether or not one knows and is able to communicate religious truths.<sup>120</sup> Clearly, poetry offers no special access to Chan truths here. The placing of this particular message as paratext to frame a reader’s encounter with his own poetry (his *wenzi chan*, perhaps) thus undermines the authority of that poetry as monks’ poetry. The witty Huihong could not restrain himself from using a poem to lodge this critique of the special status of poetry, creating some irony. That there might not be a special relationship between Chan and poetry is underscored by the inclusion of Daolong’s terse and colloquial response. The reader is told this was the moment when this story became funny for anyone present and thus noteworthy.

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<sup>120</sup> A similar line appears in a poem by Song Boren 宋伯仁 of the late Southern Song titled *Zeng xie mei zhe* 贈寫梅者 (“Sent to a painter of plum blossoms”). The poem concludes with a line about a close friend who “I only fear does not yet understand” (*zhi kong zhiyin wei de zhi* 祇恐知音未得知). I am not aware of a source for a possible allusion in the final line.

Again thinking about his juvenilia, Huihong shared the following comments with a friend, writing “On Fojian’s copy of my *wenzi chan*.”<sup>121</sup>

When I was young, I only knew how to read for pleasure, but didn’t yet grasp its importance. I would pick up a brush to write like someone was pushing on my elbow, or like a mute person who, unable to communicate because of his heavy tongue, is laughed at by many. However, when I was sixteen and seventeen years old, I was the attendant to Dongshan Yun’an and learned the dharma that transcends the world.<sup>122</sup> Suddenly, I was filled with self-confidence and was without doubts. When I read seven thousand [lines] by Su Shi, I wrote a thousand of my own; small steps are reliable. Indeed, the advantage of studying the way is not just about the matter of life and death, but also profits literary language, and just so my self-confidence increased. Now, thirty-eight years later, I visit here in Xiang the master Fojian Jingyin, who was always beloved by master Yun’an, and we are both getting old!<sup>123</sup> Our friendship, however, does not feel old, and he brings out to show me some poetry lines from when I was young and we read them; it is like traveling back to revisit that old mountain forest spot. I intone the couplet by Bai Juyi: “As I sit facing the water, willow branch in hand, / I idly recall things past that seem like a previous life.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> *Ti Fojian xu wenzi chan* 題佛鑑蓄文字禪. JXZ 23, no. B135, p. 707, a1-10; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 2.1517.

<sup>122</sup> Alternately, *chushi* 出世 might refer to “coming out” as an abbot at one’s first appointment, which could denote the administrative and institutional tasks of a temple.

<sup>123</sup> Xiang is the name of a river in Hunan, and was by extension an old name for Hunan.

<sup>124</sup> From the poem *Lin shui zuo* 臨水坐 by Bai Juyi.

余幼孤知讀書為樂而不得其要，落筆嘗如人掣其肘，又如瘖者之欲語而意窒舌大，而濃笑者數數。然年十六七從洞山雲庵學出世法，忽自信而不疑。誦生書七千，下筆千言，跬步可待也。嗚呼，學道之益人，未論其死生之際，益其文字語言，如此益可自信也。今三十八年矣，而見雲庵平時親愛之人，佛鑑大師，淨因於湘中，頽然相向俱老矣，而故意特未老，又出余少時詩句讀之，想見山林之舊游處。誦白公詩曰「手把楊枝臨水坐，閑思往事似前身。」

In this case, the phrase *wenzi chan* used in the title refers to Huihong's own works.

Huihong looks on the poetry of his youth with nostalgia, but he is also clear-eyed about his personal limitations as a young man. As he grew older, he thought of these juvenilia as *wenzi chan*, the writings of a not-yet-liberated young man. The term *wenzi chan* provided Huihong a way to narrativize the literary output of his youth. Only once he had a religious insight, thereafter his writing gradually improved gradually. Huihong here states that it was his religious life that furthered his literary activities. His literary productivity was a welcome side effect of a religious practice. Nowhere in this inscription about his own *wenzi chan* does Huihong describe his poetry or literary practices as the activity that led to an awakening or spiritual achievement.

All of this is not to say that Huihong did not excel at poetry or at literary criticism, but rather that the term *wenzi chan* was not a spiritual path, and was certainly not a movement advocated (or founded) by Huihong. In Huihong's writings, *wenzi chan* may refer to poetry in which one is not yet liberated. This was also a name he used to refer to his juvenalia. Huihong used *wenzi chan* and “not-yet-forgotten feelings” to refer to poetry as expressions of unceasing emotions. In other words, *wenzi chan* as used by Huihong

denoted the exact opposite of how the term has been used by most modern scholars. This curious discrepancy was noted in one of the early publications by Zhou Yukai.

Zhou Yukai remarked that modern scholars use *wenzi Chan* “in a broad sense,” whereas Huihong himself used it only in “a narrow sense.”<sup>125</sup> Zhou then suggested that scholars nonetheless may continue to use *wenzi chan* in the broad sense because it is more useful.<sup>126</sup> The term *wenzi chan* in “a broad sense,” however, deviates from the way it was used by monastic writers of the Song, including Huihong. There was not a *wenzi chan* institutional movement within the Buddhist sangha. To the contrary, the term *wenzi chan* signals uneasiness with the relationship between Buddhism and poetry rather than their harmony.<sup>127</sup>

There were monks who excelled at poetry, but this was subordinated to their religious commitments. If there was a movement towards the harmony of Buddhism and poetry, then it was a trend among lay poets at least until the late Ming and early Qing when it was adopted by the reformers Zibo Zhenke and Hanshan Deqing. For these reasons, I suggest modern scholars refrain from using *wenzi chan* in the broad sense, as Zhou once suggested, and for the sake of clarity reserve *wenzi chan* for the title of Huihong’s collected works.

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<sup>125</sup> Zhou, *Wenzi chan yu Song dai shixue*, p. 46.

<sup>126</sup> I do not agree with Zhou’s suggestion that one may read the entire thirty fascicles of *Shimen wenzi chan* as an exercise in (religious) *wenzi chan* without evidence that Huihong himself used *wenzi chan* in the “a broad sense.” For Zhou, this assertion leads him to a discussion of so-called Chan poetry in the context of literati. That is well and good, but separates Huihong from the monastic institution and mainstream Chinese Buddhist history. In this sense, Zhou’s interpretation tends more towards the late Ming dynasty interpreters of Huihong than towards “a narrow” reading of the very examples he cites from Huihong’s writing.

<sup>127</sup> There was a religious ideal known as *youxi sanmei* 遊戲三昧 in which literature could be produced, but this was never equated with *wenzi chan* and the two should not be conflated. *Wenzi chan* in the Song was in many ways the opposite of *youxi sanmei*, and was the failure to rise above the fetters of language. Cf. Zhou Yukai, “Youxi sanmei.”

So if not *wenzi chan*, then what term is useful for studying Buddhist poetry in China's middle period? My suggestion, in the next chapter, comes from the language used in Song dynasty *shihua*, a prominent form of native literary criticism. There, the terms *sengshi* 僧詩 (monks' poetry, or monastic poetry) as well as *shiseng* 詩僧 (poet-monk) emerged as a pair of keywords for critical discussion.

## Chapter Three – Literary Critics

### Introduction

Is Buddhist poetry possible? In the previous chapter I demonstrated that the monastic apparatus – evidenced in legal codes, sutra and scriptural commentary, encyclopedia, and meditation manuals – exerted a tension on monks' poetry. For monks, the question of "Is Buddhist poetry possible?" centered on whether or not poetry was an obstruction on the monastic path. Most of the anxieties about poetry coalesced around what we are calling 'the problem of the emotions.'

The current chapter looks at monks' poetry from the outside of Buddhist sources. There is a large corpus of literary criticism written about monks' poetry. Secular literary critics too were concerned about circumscribing and limiting monks' poetry. The discourse among literary critics, however, generated a different proposition: a poem cannot be both good Buddhism and good poetry at the same time. Throughout literary criticism from the Song onwards, authors disparaged the poetry of monks by stating that it stank of Zen – that it was too crisp, or removed from the world, or without feeling. This chapter surveys these reasons, which in general reflect 'the problem of the emotions' – the conflict between the conventions of aesthetics and ascetic religion.

The wide-spread presence of a sustained discourse about monks' poetry in the secular literary canon demonstrates that something like "Buddhist poetry" would be not an anachronistic category for the middle period. I have not tried to exhaustively account

for what the “remarks on poetry” (*shihua* 詩話) literature says about monks, and about literati interacting with monks and Buddhist themes. Such an approach could reveal the borders and nuances of the categories in play for literary critics. My purpose, however, is to shed light on a blind-spot in modern scholarship.

I have been repeatedly surprised to discover so many modern scholars of Chinese literature that continue to perpetuate the same disparaging jokes that began almost one thousand years ago. A serious consideration of Buddhist poetry must first understand and then look beyond these witty insults. Until then, the literary qualities of monks’ poetry will continue to be passed over.

### **Stink of Zen**

Iriya once remarked that to look at monks’ poems from the standards of mainstream literary poetry, the monks’ poems stink of Zen.<sup>1</sup> This stink of Zen was not Iriya’s invention, but an allusion to a set of stories from the Song dynasty.

Chan Master Dajue [Huai]lian studied non-Buddhist [traditions] and was skilled at poetry. When Wang Anshi<sup>2</sup> was a young man, he traveled together with

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<sup>1</sup> Early on, Iriya had categorically remarked that “in the poet-priests of the Song dynasty we see neither Hanshan’s modesty and reserve toward poetry, nor his artless simplicity of utterance. Their inclination was more to adulation of the secular writers, or, in another direction, a propensity to ‘stink’ of Zen.” (“Chinese Poetry and Zen,” p. 65.) Iriya further developed his ideas in *Gozan bungaku shū*, pp. 327-331. There he suggested that there were two types of ‘poet-monks’ in China: one type (the majority) that wrote poems were so purified and removed from the world that they then had the stink of Zen; and a second type for those who mastered forms and used poetry to express something transcendent. Iriya was interested in identifying exemplars of the latter, which was for him the epitome of Zen religious poetry. I agree with Iriya up to this point; however, Iriya also associated the “stink” with monks who wrote poems that too closely resembled literati. This doesn’t seem to be what was meant by this literary criticism.

[Huailian], and once showed [Huilian's] poetry to Ouyang Xiu. Ouyang said, “This monk has made a bread bun stuffed with fatty liver.” Wang Anshi didn’t get Ouyang’s joke, so he asked what he meant. Ouyang said, “These poems do not stink at all of vegetables.”<sup>3</sup>

大覺璉禪師，學外工詩。舒王少與遊，嘗以其詩示歐公，歐公曰：「此道人作肝臟饅頭也。」舒王不悟其戲，問其意。歐公曰：「是中無一點菜氣。」

Hualian’s poetry is the recipient of a back-handed compliment. Ouyang was surprised to find a monk’s poem to be rich like fatty meat. This joke resonates in our knowledge that Buddhist monks in China were expected to keep a vegetarian diet.<sup>4</sup> There is humor in pointing out the disparity between this poem that is like fatty meat, and other poems by other monks that are not as rich. We cannot be sure that Ouyang always preferred the richness of meats to the subtlety of vegetables, but clearly the expectation of monks’ poetry is “vegetarian.” In general, this meant that monks’ poetry was aesthetically boring. Monks’ poems could be pious, repetitive, or tedious. Some related qualities are blandness or plainness. A blunted affect was manifest in diction and motifs, and both of these made monks’ poetry unsatisfying. These specifics were debated and refined for hundreds of years all the way up to the late Qing.

By the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the *shihua* (“remarks on poetry”) genre of criticism had developed substantially. Authors of *shihua* compiled witty, insightful

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<sup>2</sup> Wang of Shu (*Shu Wang* 舒王) was a polite name for Wang Anshi.

<sup>3</sup> *Lengzhai yehua*, p. 48. The joke in part turns on the two meanings of *qi* 氣 as both flavor and aroma.

<sup>4</sup> For an overview of the history of Buddhist vegetarianism in China, see Kieschnick, “Buddhist Vegetarianism in China.” Kieschnick notes “... one of the reasons given for vegetarianism is an aversion to the indulgence in sensual pleasure that eating meat represented.” (p. 193)



comments. The above conversation, for example, was attributed to Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072) and Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086), but was recorded posthumously many decades later.<sup>5</sup> In this telling, Ouyang judges the poetry of monk Dajue Huailian 大覺懷璉 (1009-1090?), a well-known literary monk famous for his close association with the Renzong emperor 仁宗 (reign 1022-1063).

This chapter discusses the history and significance of one of the prominent metaphors frequently used in medieval poetic criticism to debate Buddhist monastic poetry. This metaphor derived from monastic diet. It mocked monastic poetry for having the same “stink” *qi* 氣 as the temple kitchen, “a whiff of vegetables” *caiqi* 菜氣, “the flavor of cabbage and bamboo” *shusunqi* 蔬筍氣, or “the flavor of sour bun-stuffing” *suaxianqi* 酸餡氣. Writers played with the shades of meaning of the word *qi* 氣 as a flavor, a smell, and as a literary term to describe a style.<sup>6</sup> The metaphoric language of bland, sour, and acerbic flavors provides an incisive view into the competing expectations

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<sup>5</sup> *Lengzhai yehua* belongs to the genre of “remarks on poetry” and was written by monk Juefan Huihong 覺範慧洪 (1071-1128). This is the earliest telling of this popular tale. Ouyang Xiu died the year after Huihong’s birth, so the two men did not know one another. There is some debate about the historicity of this tale. Regardless, we can infer from the wide circulation and repetition of this story that it was considered both plausible and interesting. The message rang as true; most monks’ poetry seemed to have a vegetarian stink. Even if Ouyang Xiu himself never uttered these words, it was well to imagine that he did.

<sup>6</sup> Gao, “Shiseng zhi ‘shushenqi’ yu ‘suansouqi,’” expanded this to show the connection between vegetable *qi* and other critical terms like “*qi* of the begging bowl” (*bo yu qi* 鉢盂氣), “*qi* of robes” (*na qi* 衲氣), and “*qi* of mountain and forest [temples]” (*shan lin qi* 山林氣). Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity*, 42-44, is the first in English to give an overview. The topic is mentioned in passing in Sun Changwu *Chansi yu shiqing*, pp. 342-343. Some significant works, like Du Songbo’s *Chanxue yu Tang Song shixue*, focus on the Chan lineages and disregard medieval critics while others in the vein of Sun Changwu’s *Chansi yu shiqing* generally follow the contours of medieval critics but do not adequately challenge their medieval informants.

of what was thought to be good Buddhist poetry. It is hoped this will contribute to our understanding of both Buddhism and poetry in China.<sup>7</sup>

### **“Poet Monk” as a Normative Category**

In the norms of medieval Chinese monastic behavior, ideal monks did not eat meat, drink alcohol, or have sex.<sup>8</sup> Having left home, donned robes and shaved their heads, monks were expected to lead a life of reclusion and piety. This bloodless life could be symbolized, perhaps nowhere more viscerally, than in monks’ daily fare.

An educated critic in medieval China might have felt two conflicting expectations of poet monks. One expectation comes from the Buddhist side, and is conflated with the Chinese hermit tradition; it expects monks to be serene, calm, basically unemotional or dispassionate, and uninvolved in society. We might note that basic Buddhist doctrine regarding the passions strongly associate them with suffering, especially the three poisons of craving, hatred, and delusion.<sup>9</sup> Buddhist monastic rules, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, were understood in the Song dynasty as perpetuating the dispassionate serenity of an enlightened Buddhist saint.

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<sup>7</sup> Zhou Yukai has also written on this topic, *Zhongguo Chanzong yu Shige*, pp. 45-53.

<sup>8</sup> Many monks “openly” or “covertly” ate meat and drank wine, and the amusing excuses they made, see Qian Zhongshu, “Vegetarians with Impure Minds,” 405-411.

<sup>9</sup> This simplified view of early Buddhism is summarized well in Lamotte, “Passions and Impregnations of the Passions in Buddhism.” He translates *kleśa* with “the passions,” and goes on to describe their mechanisms. “The Pāli Nikāyas and Sanskrit Āgamas subject the *kleśa* to a study in depth and ... particularly emphasise craving, hatred, and confusion, the triple poison, those evil roots, which defile the mind, vitiate action and lead to the round of rebirth. The teaching of the Buddha has no other aim than to liberate beings from them.” (p. 91.)

The other expectation comes from the dominant strain of the Chinese poetic tradition, which holds that poetry is the expression of the passions, the stirrings of the heart and mind, which cannot find voice in ordinary language. This view is eloquently expressed in The Great Preface and prevailed in the Song Dynasty following Ouyang Xiu's successful "ancient style" *guwen* literary movement.<sup>10</sup>

To put it most simply, to many medieval Chinese writers it seemed that Buddhist ideals sought to quell the passions while Chinese poetry sought to give voice to them. Thus, being a Buddhist Chinese poet could be a tricky thing.

Under these constraints, could one be both a good Buddhist and a good poet? This tension was particularly acute concerning so-called "poet monks" (*shiseng* 詩僧). This tension led to a caustic discourse in medieval criticism about poet monks and especially their "monastic poetry" (*sengshi* 僧詩). Over time, the language of "vegetables and bamboo" began to refer to a set of particular criticisms. For example, the tale of metaphoric food at the beginning of this chapter reveals literati opinion about monastic poetry. By describing what monastic poetry "is," it tells the reader what it "should be." So long as writers continued to use this language, criticism of Buddhist poets would become trenchantly inscribed.

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<sup>10</sup> The Great Preface to the Book of Songs was the locus classicus for explaining poetic expression. I follow the rendition given by Stephen Owen (*Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, pp. 40-41).

The poem is that to which what is intently on the mind goes.  
In the mind it is "being intent";  
coming out in language, it is a poem.  
The affections are stirred within and take on form in words.  
If words alone are inadequate, we speak them out in sighs.  
If sighing is inadequate, we sing them.  
If singing them is inadequate, unconsciously our hands dance them and our feet tap them.

We can trace the history of the development of “vegetables and bamboo” by examining its repetition, as well as analyze how later usages either expanded upon or cut off nuances found in earlier texts. Some critics expressed negative views of Buddhist poetry, and, the language of these critics was in dialogue with those who expressed positive views of Buddhist poetry. There was an ongoing conversation about not only the legitimacy of monastic poetry, but how to appreciate its value. Further, this conversation continued to have a real impact on monks who sought the advice of literati.

In the next section of this chapter I will demonstrate that culinary metaphors were one of the central motifs for poetic criticism of monastic poetry. This discourse was particular to Buddhist poetry, and demonstrates that a discrete thing thought of as “monastic poetry” existed in the minds of critics. The monks and poems that these critics selected to write about often deviated from the monks and verses we as modern readers might have chosen. This study lets us glimpse what was of interest to medieval critics.

### **Reading *Shihua*: Beginnings of a Metaphor**

*Shihua* 詩話 (“remarks on Poetry”) is a genre of criticism, notes, and remarks about poets and poetry.<sup>11</sup> Though there are texts dating from the Tang that are referred to as *shihua*, as well as several composed by monks during the Five Dynasties period, it is

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<sup>11</sup> On the development of the *shihua* genre, its position in Song literary society, and qualities particular to the form, see Chapter Two of Ronald Egan’s *The Problem of Beauty*. Egan hypothesizes that it was the relative freedoms of the *shihua* as a new literary mode that made it so popular with literati. On the circulation and development of *shihua* across the Song, one must read two monographs by Zhang Gaoping, *Shiren yuxie yu songdai shixue* and *Tiaoxi yuyin conghua yu Song dai shixue dianfan*.

only in the mid-Song Dynasty that the genre matured and became widely practiced.<sup>12</sup> Its status as a respected genre was rendered, nearly single-handedly, by Ouyang Xiu. He composed a well-known *shihua*, known as *Liuyi shihua* 六一詩話 (“Remarks on Poetry from the Retired Scholar with Six Single Things”), that set a new standard for the developing form and became popular with mainstream men of letters.<sup>13</sup> Within only a few generations, *shihua* developed into “the principal vehicle for the adjudication of literary standards and taste, to which scores of critics avidly devoted themselves.”<sup>14</sup>

Beginning with Ouyang’s influential *Liuyi shihua*, the new, mature genre of *shihua* fostered particular discourses around poet monks. Ouyang recalls the poetry of the Nine Monks that he had heard in his childhood, but regrettably was not in circulation again in his lifetime.<sup>15</sup>

Among Buddhists at the beginning of our dynasty, there were nine who on the basis of their poetry achieved fame in their generation. In olden times they had a collection called “Poems of The Nine Monks.” This collection is no longer in circulation today.<sup>16</sup> When I was small I heard people often mention the name of

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<sup>12</sup> There is an interesting history of poetic treatises by monks. Tang poetic treatises by monks include *Shishi* 詩式 by Jiaoran and *Shige* 詩格 by Qiji. See Hsiao, *Wenzi Chan*, 69-97, for a comprehensive survey of literary criticism by monks. One can also consult Zhang Bowei, *Chan yu shixue*, 23-38, on *shige*. Zhang offers some interesting hypotheses on *shihua* and Buddhism in the chapters that follow. My impression is that there are fewer treatises by monks from the Song and after. The *Lengzhai yehua* by monk Huihong is exceptional among the transformed *shihua* genre after Ouyang Xiu.

<sup>13</sup> Sections of Ouyang Xiu’s *Liuyi Shihua* were translated in Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, with an introduction to the genre, pp. 359-389. A further history of *shihua* is included in the introduction to *Canglang shihua*, beginning on 391.

<sup>14</sup> Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, p. 62.

<sup>15</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quan ji*, pp. 1951-52.

<sup>16</sup> In fact, *Poems of The Nine Monks* survives today. A manuscript was discovered by Sima Guang in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, who republished the text. See Sima Guang’s *Xushihua* 續詩話, the

one, Huichong. As for the eight others, I have forgotten their names. Also, I vaguely recall some lines of their poetry: “The horse is set free just where I dismount; elegantly engraved plates, clouds afloat after the war;” and, “Spring is born beyond the cassia cliffs; people live west of the gates to the ocean.” Their well-turned phrases often were of the same type as these.

國初浮圖，以詩名于世者九人，故時有集，號《九僧詩》，今不復傳矣。余少時聞人多稱其一曰惠崇，餘八人者忘其名字也。余亦略記其詩，有云「馬放降來地，鷗盤戰後雲」。又云，「春生桂嶺外，人在海門西。」其佳句多類此。

Ouyang can only recall a couple of couplets. He concludes that all the best phrases, nonetheless, were just the same as these. In his *Shibi* 試筆, Ouyang repeats praise for the monks' excellent phrases, “*The Nine Monks' Poetry Collection* had many excellent lines” (近世有九僧詩極有好句) and goes on to conclude they are superior to his contemporaries: “Lettered men of today are not capable of writing such lines” (今之文士未能有此句也).<sup>17</sup>

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entry beginning “Ouyang said *The Collected Poems of Nine Monks* was already gone, but...” 歐陽公云九僧詩集已亡. Only late medieval editions survive, and appear to be fragmented. Some historical information about a few of the nine monks can be gleaned from historical records; see the comprehensive overview by Ji Guangyu, “Song chu *Jiuseng shiji kao shu*.” There is English translation of some of the poems by Paul Hansen republished in the anthology, *The Clouds Should Know Me by Now*, edited by Red Pine and Mike O'Connor.

<sup>17</sup> Under *Jiuseng shi* 九僧詩 in *Shibi* 試筆 *juan* 1; *Ouyang Xiu quan ji*, pp. 1980-1981.

The poetry of the Nine monks has been associated with the *kuyin* 苦吟 tradition associated with Jia Dao 賈島 (779–843).<sup>18</sup> The phrase *kuyin* had once meant “poetry of suffering,” but came to express “painstaking composition” (which poets spoke of as a pleasure).<sup>19</sup> For an advocate of the *kuyin* ideal, a long and arduous struggle to produce even a single line was a point of pride.

Despite this reverence for the literary talent of these monks, Ouyang also had reservations about their poetry. The couplets quoted are examples of the kinds of turns of phrase at which the monks excelled. But, already embedded in this comment is a hidden barb; either the monks did not excel when writing other styles, or they simply did not write on other things.

In *Liuyi shihua*, Ouyang continues to tell the story of an official named Xu Dong 許洞 (976-1015, *jinshi* 1000 CE) who attended poetry gatherings with poet monks. At such gatherings, a game was played where lots were drawn. The lots had instructions that determined the subject of the next poem to be written. At such poetry gatherings with monks, however, something was notably different.

In our present age there was the *jinshi* scholar Xu Dong, who excelled at literary arts. He was a truly outstanding official. He attended poetry gatherings with groups of poet monks, where they drew lots that said: “You must not use this

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<sup>18</sup> Such comments by a Song era writer are preserved in the Qing anthology *Quan Min shihua*, 11.23b, part of a large section gathering together comments on monks’ poetry and other Buddhist topics. On Jia Dao and *kuyin*, see Owen, *The Late Tang*, pp. 93-112. One often retold story about Jia Dao is a poem about spending years on a single couplet, translated in O’Connor, *When I find you again it will be in mountains*, p. 130, note for the poem on p. 107. *Jia Dao shiji jiao zhu*, p. 100.

<sup>19</sup> A fuller discussion of this transformation in Owen, “Spending time on Poetry.” See also Owen, *End of the Chinese Middle Ages*, pp. 24 and 119-121.

word [X].” The words belonged to types of landscapes, weather, bamboo and rocks, flowers and plants, snow and frost, celestial bodies, as well as animals and birds. At that, each monk put aside his brush.

當時有進士許洞者，善為辭章，俊逸之士也。因會諸詩僧分題，出一紙約曰：「不得犯此一字。」其字乃山、水，風、雲，竹、石，花、草，雪、霜，星、月，禽、鳥之類，於是諸僧皆閣筆。

Monks only write poems about topics found in nature, according to this passage. Aside from such topics, monks hang up their brushes, and do not write. Though Ouyang does not speculate why this is so, it does reveal the limits of his praise. Even if monks write well on such topics, they are a circumscribed set of themes. The otherwise praise-worthy talent of these monks begins to seem thin when compared with the robust talents of the scholar official Xu Dong.

Ouyang Xiu has begun to define a category of persons, *shiseng* “poet monks.” Remarkably, these monastics attend poetry gatherings, yet they are only interested in certain themes. The list does not include any worldly affairs or ordinary human concerns, like the family. It is a limited set of themes, but themes appropriate for monks. This marks a radical shift away from the poetry of monks of the earlier dynasties, who were often at court and writing about wide-ranging topics.<sup>20</sup> Poems on these topics correspond with Ouyang’s expectations for monks, and inform the expectations of his readers.

We have already seen one popular legend about Ouyang Xiu in Huihong’s *Lengzhai yehua* 冷齋夜話. That same story is repeated in the popular *Leishuo* 類說,

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<sup>20</sup> For some examples, see Martin, “Buddhism and Literature.”



completed in 1136. It recounts Ouyang Xiu's reaction to the poetry of monk Huailian.<sup>21</sup> No evidence to corroborate the historicity of this event can be found in Ouyang's own writing.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, from the wide circulation of this tale we learn that it was considered a likely enough story. Its popularity tells us it resonated with readers and writers of the time.

The earliest clearly datable comments are from this same period. They are found in a poem by Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), Ouyang Xiu's great disciple. Near the end of his

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<sup>21</sup> The earliest source is Huihong's *Lengzhai yehua*, p. 48, *juan* 6, under the sub-heading *Dajue chanshi qi huan shan* 大覺禪師乞還山 ("Chan Master Dajue begs to return to the mountains"). This passage is repeated in *juan* 55 of *Leishuo* 類說, but under the sub-heading *Daoren ganzang mantou* 道人肝臟饅頭 ("The monk's fatty liver *mantou*"). Both sub-sections include two tales; the one above; and another about Huailian's being retained in the capital by the Renzong emperor as abbot of Jingyin Chan Cloister 淨因禪院. Huailian submitted poems asking to be relieved of the post, begging to be allowed to return to a life of reclusion. This story is corroborated by a letter from Su Shi in 1090, *Yu Zhao Delin* 與趙德麟, no. 2 (*Su Shi wenji*, p. 1544; *Su Shi nianpu*, p. 943). Monk Huailian was a high ranking Chan monk in a Yunmen lineage. He frequently associated with lettered laity. The poet-monk Daoqian went to live with Huailian on Mount Ayuwang for about a year after the Raven Terrace Poetry Case, and was thereafter included among Huailian's disciples in the Yunmen lineage. Daoqian did not himself otherwise participate in or transmit a Chan lineage, and affiliated more closely with Tiantai monks.

<sup>22</sup> Though the above remarks attributed to Ouyang are among the earliest, we cannot say with certainty whether or not they were made by Ouyang himself. The dialogue between Ouyang Xiu and Wang Anshi first appears in monk Huihong's *Lengzhai yehua*, many decades after Ouyang died. Though there are no traces in Ouyang's collected works, it was supposedly on Ouyang Xiu's recommendation to the throne that Huailian be brought from Mount Lu to the imperial capital. The *Fozu tongji* cites a now-lost *Ouyang waizhuan* by Song monk Zizhi Zuxiu 紫芝祖秀 (fl. c. 1100-1130), also known as Shangfeng Zuxiu 上封祖秀. Zuxiu was a disciple of Huanglong Sixin 黃龍死心 (1043-1116) of Mount Lu, later lived in Kaifeng, and eventually authored *Huayang gong ji* 華陽宮記, an invaluable first-hand account of the Jin invasion. The *Ouyang waizhuan*, also known as *Ouyang Wenzhong Gong waizhuan* 歐陽文忠公外傳; Su Xiang 蘇庠 (1065-1147) wrote a preface, also lost. There are references and quotations from the *Ouyang waizhuan* throughout the Buddhist canon. The *Shishi jigu lüe* states the *Ouyang waizhuan* was an account of Ouyang Xiu's discussions with Yuantong Ju'ne about Buddha-dharma, touching on Han Yu's critiques of Buddhism (T. 49, no. 2037, p. 884, a21-22); for a summary of these debates see *Fozu tongji* (T. 49, no. 2035, p. 383, c1-p. 384, a23). A summary of Su Xiang's preface can be found in *Yunwo jitan*.

life, in 1101, Su Shi penned a poem “To the Poet Monk Daotong” 贈詩僧道通. Not much is known about monk Daotong, apart from what can be inferred from this poem. It is clear that Daotong showed his poetry to Su Shi and perhaps sought his advice. For the most part, Su had lavish praise.<sup>23</sup>

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| Your poetry is bold yet subtle; bitter yet savory;  | 雄豪而妙苦而腴 |
| <sup>2</sup> Until now there has only been <i>qin</i> [monk] Cong and honey [monk] Shu. <sup>24</sup>                                 | 祇有琴聰與蜜殊 |
| As for Li Bo’s “language like clouds in twilight,” few have ever attained it; <sup>25</sup>   | 語帶煙霞從古少 |
| <sup>4</sup> As for that whiff of vegetables and bamboo shoots, when it comes to you is there none.                                   | 氣含蔬筍到公無 |
| [Your poetry is like] entering a fragrant forest, where there is nothing but the joy of smelling <i>campaka</i> leaves; <sup>26</sup> | 香林乍喜聞薝蔔 |

<sup>23</sup> Su Shi’s poem, *Zeng shiseng Daotong* 贈詩僧道通 is dated to the first part of the year 1101, when Su was 66, the last year of his life (*Su Shi nianpu*, pp. 1392-1393). Kong Fanli identifies Daotong as Xuanmi 宣秘 of Lushan 廬山. The couplet in question is the second. Several original notes by the author are included. See *Su Shi shiji* pp. 2451-2452, and *Su Shi shiji he zhu*, pp. 2293-2294.

<sup>24</sup> Both monks were friends of Su Shi. Su remarked that Monk Cong was an impresario playing the *qin*, but gave it up to study poetry, and later gave up poetry to study the Way; thus he teases him with the name *qin* Cong. See Yang, *Dialectics*, 37-38. Monk Zhongshu 仲殊 was a talented writer, famous for composing *ci*; Su teases him because he kept a grain-free diet and often ate honey.

<sup>25</sup> According to a note by Su, Li Bai, the great Tang poet, used this language; Su Shi is comparing Daotong to the likes of Li Bai. Cf. Yang, *Dialectics*, p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> Su is probably recalling the passage in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* when falling flowers do not stick to the bodhisattvas but do stick to the Buddha’s disciples. Therein, the deva describes the ubiquitous joy of having heard the Dharma of the Buddha. The *campaka* tree is an aromatic tree with fragrant yellow flowers. *Zhanbo* 薝蔔 is one of several transliterations from Sanskrit.

It is like when a person enters a forest of *campaka*, he will only smell *campaka*, and will not smell any other fragrance.

如人入瞻蔔林，唯嗅瞻蔔，不嗅餘香。

(T. 14, no. 475, p. 548, a 25-26)

- 6 [Your words are] an old well, my only worry the windlass  
will snap. 古井惟愁斷轆轤
- In his responses, Han Yu would not give approval easily;<sup>27</sup> 為報韓公莫輕許
- 8 But hereafter, [when compared with you,] Jia Dao and Wuke  
will be mere servants of poetry.<sup>28</sup> 從今島可是詩奴

This poem showers praise on monk Daotong. He compares favorably with contemporary monks like the talented *qin* player Cong and the lyricist Zhongshu, who alone have achieved the rare feat of attaining a taste that is both astringent and savory.<sup>29</sup> Daotong is superior to past luminaries like Jia Dao and his cousin Wuke, despite their praise from the critical Han Yu. Daotong's poetry, Su says, has attained that rarity among poets, employing a metaphor employed by Li Bai. Reading it, Su suddenly feels transported to a magical forest, like in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, with the joys of sweet perfumes. His words, Su goes on, are like the clear and crisp water from an old, proven well. Su describes the anxiety of such pleasure and satisfaction, fearing that one day he will come to the well to find no windlass to pull the water up; he would only gaze down into its depths without tasting the refreshing purity of its waters.

<sup>27</sup> This is the famous *tuiqiao* 推敲 story of Jia Dao and Han Yu; a translation and discussion in English can be found in Owen, *The Late Tang: Chinese Poetry of the Mid-Ninth Century (827-860)*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>28</sup> Jia Dao was a monk, but defrocked to pursue an official career. Ke refers to Jia Dao's younger cousin, Wuke, who was a monk. QTS preserves poems by Wuke titled, *Qiu ji congxiang Jia Dao* 秋寄從兄賈島, *Ke zhong wen congxiang Dao you pujiang yin ji* 客中聞從兄島遊蒲絳因寄, and *Dao congxiang Dao* 弔從兄島, wherein Wuke consistently addresses Jia Dao as his maternal cousin *congxiang* 從兄. Jia Dao also wrote poems to Wuke, which do not indicate any familial relation, such as *Song Wuke shangren* 送無可上人, *Ji Wuke shangren* 寄無可上人, *Pi ju Wuke shangren xiang fang* 僻居無可上人相訪 and *Xi Wuke shangren you shan hui* 喜無可上人遊山回, but which corroborate the fact of some relationship.

<sup>29</sup> The particular word “savory *yu* 腴” stands out for first line end rhyme (in the *yu* 遇 rhyme family). This was important to a few astute critics – as discussed below.

In the midst of so much praise, it would seem clear that Su intended his remark in line four to be a compliment: “as for that whiff of vegetables and bamboo, when it comes to you is there none.” Perhaps both the grammar and pun were difficult, perhaps too original. For whatever reason, to clarify for his audience, Su appended a note, saying, “This means he does not have the *qi* of sour bun stuffing 無酸餡氣.” This metaphoric bun stuffing is similar to Ouyang’s play on bread bun stuffing. It equates clearly the flavor of vegetables and bamboo shoots with the tart stink of souring vegetable buns. The metaphor is quite visceral.

With a stroke of the brush, Su Shi painted the borders of critical discourse surrounding poet monks. Monks’ poetry is flat, clichéd, and pious. Both of the phrases put forward by Su, “*qi* of vegetables and bamboo shoots” and “*qi* of sour bun stuffing,” are found throughout many later *shihua*. Of course, if Su is praising his friend for not stinking like the temple kitchen, he is implicitly stating that the vegetable aroma hangs on the poetry of many monks. This opened the door for later critics to use these phrases as damning criticism of monks’ poetry.

### **Development of a Metaphor**

Though later writers chose to employ Su Shi’s particular metaphor, the spirit that crystallized in Su’s criticism was incipient among earlier critics. Many critical attitudes toward artistic endeavors of monastics can be traced far back into history –Su himself

disputed the views of Han Yu on monk Gaoxian's calligraphy.<sup>30</sup> This is not to say that there were not also those who praised the arts created by monks. The calligraphy of Huaisu 懷素, for example, has enjoyed perennial praise. But those who chose to criticize monks' poetry often did so in a categorical manner. That is, they did not just criticize it as bad poetry, but as representing a lamentable tendency in the poetry of monks in particular. An example from slightly earlier in the Song Dynasty reveals the kind of critical attitudes in the air when Su made his comments.

Just one generation before Su, Zheng Xie 鄭獬 (1022-1072) commented on the quality of monks' poetry. He dismissed monks' poetry for poetic cowardice. Zheng remarked that Buddhist teachers who enjoyed writing poetry were ...

fettered by their dogmas, without capacity for greatness or the unrestrained, and so use many distant, lonely, feeble, weak, withered and languid words.

縛於其法,不能闕肆而演漾,故多幽獨衰病枯槁之辭。

Zheng's descriptive statement about the lack of daring and reluctance of monastic artists is quite damning.<sup>31</sup> Monks are too pious to write good poetry, he says, and nowhere is this more clear than the delicacy of monks' diction. Though he is not using the metaphor of flavors, this criticism parallels the stink of vegetables. In both cases, critics valorize poetry with rich, flavorful imagery. We may regard this mid-11<sup>th</sup> century voice as an

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<sup>30</sup> As mentioned above, Han Yu's composition, "Song Gaoxian shangren xu," can be found at *Hanchanglij* 21.28-29. For more on Su Shi's disputation of Han Yu's views on Buddhist art and creativity, see Egan (1994) 198-99 and Egan (2008) 313-15, who follows Hartman, pp. 222-223. See also Grant 99-100.

<sup>31</sup> He concluded with the critical statement, "I once judged this poetry to be like a mountain without height, water not at hand – without the trace of even an idea to take flight. 予嘗評其詩,如平山遠水,而無豪放飛動之意." From *Yunxi ji* 鄖溪集, fascicle 40.

advocate for the prominence of feelings in poetry, and of poetry as a medium for expressing feelings as advocated in the Great Preface.

After Su Shi, men of letters began to use Su's phrases to describe what they disliked about monks' artistic endeavors, not just Buddhist poetry. Huang Bosi 黄伯思 (1079-1118, *jinshi* 1100), writing under Emperor Huizong, employed the term in his faint praise for a scroll of cursive calligraphy, "Postface to a Scroll of Grass-script Calligraphy from Jingfu Reign Period."<sup>32</sup>

The calligraphy on this scroll accords with precedent and follows the standards, but there are still traces of the models. In this way, as Buddhist calligraphy often has a whiff of vegetables, both past and present are much the same.

此卷作草書,應規入繩,猶有遺法.然.僧書多蔬茹氣,古今一也.

This composition is signed in 1110 CE, while the memory of Su was still alive.<sup>33</sup> Huang asserts that the student has not surpassed the level of imitating masterworks, and has not achieved mastery of the medium. And it is in this way, he says, that the stink of vegetables hangs over the work of monastics, past and present. His damnation pivots on what he perceives to be monks' slavish mimicry and restraint.

These examples describe monastic arts in negative terms, and reflect what Chinese scholar Zhou Yukai has summarized as the main points of the vegetable stink criticism. Zhou says the criticism referred to the perception that monks' poetry was

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<sup>32</sup> "A Postface to A Scroll of Grass-script Calligraphy from Jingfu Reign Period" 跋景福草書卷後 can be found in *Dongguan yulun* 東觀餘論, *juan* 2.

<sup>33</sup> Huang Bosi signed with his sobriquet Changrui 長睿 and the date: fourth year of *Daguan* reign, fourth month, eleventh day.

excessively plain, using language cautiously and with little variation, on a narrow set of themes.<sup>34</sup>

Other writers played with this metaphor to different effect, revealing the range of attitudes towards the practice of monastic poetry at this time. Another writer from this generation, Ouyang Che 歐陽澈 (1097-1127), has a poem preserved in his collection *Ouyang Xiuzhuan ji* 歐陽修撰集.<sup>35</sup> From the long title, it is clear that Che imagined this would serve one monk Qiong as instructions on writing poetry.<sup>36</sup> Although his advice was meant for this novice poet, it is striking because it presents his notion of an ideal Buddhist poet monk quite different from many other appreciators.<sup>37</sup>

瓊上人留意學詩,惑於多岐,未明厥趣,作四韻寤之。了此一話,則能詩三昧,不出  
箇中矣

Venerable Qiong is interested in studying poetry, but is confused on many points, and has not yet seen clearly its purport. I made a four-couplet rhymed poem to aid

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<sup>34</sup> Zhou Yukai (1992), pp. 45-53. See also Gao (2008).

<sup>35</sup> To spare the reader from confusing the three men surnamed Ouyang referenced in this chapter, I refer to Ouyang Che and Ouyang Shoudao by their personal names. In the case of Ouyang Che, the confusion runs deep; the title of this collection is very misleading. The following poem was already mistakenly attributed to the more famous Ouyang Xiu by the Southern Song. The misattribution can be found in SKQS, *juan 7* of Ouyang Shoudao's *Xunzhai wenji* 巽齋文集, p. 14; the passage in question is translated and discussed in the body of text below.

<sup>36</sup> A probable candidate for the identity of this monk is Deshan Qiong of Changde 常德府德山瓊禪師, disciple of Wenshu Xuanneng 文殊宣能禪師 and grandson-disciple of Letan Zhenjing 渤潭真淨克文禪師 who was a first generation disciple in the Huanglong Linji lineage; see *Jiataipudenglu* 嘉泰普燈錄 (X79n1558:278b29-c1). Based on the known birth and death dates of parallel branches of the Chan lineage, he would have been alive at the same time as Ouyang Che. Also, Zhenjing Kewen was an advocate of non-Buddhist learning for monastics; see both his collection of poetry, a note from Wang Anshi, and the preface to his Recorded Sayings found in *juan 45* of *Guzunsuyulu* (X68n1315:310a17).

<sup>37</sup> See *Ouyang Xiuzhuanji*, *juan 6*.

him. If he understands my words, it is because his ability to enter the poetry  
samādhi does not exceed his insight and experience<sup>38</sup>

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|--|---------|
| [The thoughts you] harbor in your breast should be<br>magnanimous, rich in the sentiments of the <i>Odes</i> .                 | 襟懷磊落富詩情 |
| <sup>2</sup> The phrases you polish should be honest and bright,<br>modeled after the melodies of the <i>Hymns [of Zhou]</i> . | 琢句端明法頌聲 |
| For form robust: remove any flavor of vegetables or<br>bamboo shoots;  | 格健要除蔬笋氣 |
| <sup>4</sup> For words well-crafted: bring in the clarity of snow and<br>frost.  | 語工須帶雪霜清 |
| Reverently imitate blue clouds [of parting] to preserve the<br><i>Airs</i> and <i>Elegantiae</i> [of the <i>Shijing</i> ];     | 碧雲矜式存風雅 |
| <sup>6</sup> Immerse yourself in yellowed scrolls to learn from matured<br>elders.   | 黃卷沈潛學老成 |
| Hammer and smelt to improve your poetry, take [Jia] Dao<br>and [Wu]ke as your teachers,  | 鍛鍊更能師島可 |
| <sup>8</sup> In the forests of Chan, there's no fretting about your name<br>being unrecognized.                                | 禪林無患不知名 |

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<sup>38</sup> The term “poetry samādhi” was seldom used, but is attested in other sources. It refers to the pleasure of composing poetry, and being swept up in concentration. See similar comments on Benn, *Tea in China*, p. 129. For other usages of ‘poetry samādhi’ see (1) the poem *Gubiao shangren liusu* 孤標上人留宿 (“Staying over with venerable Gubiao”) from *Shan min shi chao* 山民詩鈔 by the mysterious Zhen shanmin 真山民, in *Song shi chao* 宋詩鈔 *juan* 106, which says, “If I can penetrate the samādhi of poetry, what’s the need to understand the Single Vehicle” 參透詩三昧, 何須契一乘. (2) see the Yuan painting colophon by Huang Gongwang (1269-1354), referred to as *Yuan Huang gong wang jiang shan sheng lan tu* 元黃公望江山勝覽圖 in *juan* 86 of *Yuding peiwen zhai shu hua pu* 御定佩文齋書畫譜, which discusses the fusion of poetry and painting, saying “language then enters the samādhi of painting” 語却入畫三昧 and “brush strokes then enter the samādhi of poetry” 筆却入詩三昧; (3) the poem *Xiao wo* 曉幄 by Song poet Xu Yueqing 許月卿 found in *juan* 2 of his *Xiantian ji* 先天集, says, “My friend is the poetry samādhi; my downfall is drinking games” 我友詩三昧, 吾衰酒一中.



Ouyang Che advises “remove any flavor of vegetables” in poetic style (Line 3). If this accords with his exhortation to “gather rich poetic feelings” (Line 1), then the stink of vegetables and rich poetic feelings are mutually exclusive. For Che, inspiration comes from rich, potent feelings, and stale, bland language obfuscates the virility of inspiring feelings. Simultaneously, Che also strongly favors *qing*, which may be taken as either “clarity” or “purity” (Line 4). Some scholars have argued that an aesthetic coalesced around *qing* – a pure, bland style of expression – which was an ideal for poet monks.<sup>39</sup> It may be that Che advised Qiong to write a poetry “like snow and frost” from his station as a Buddhist monk. The remainder of his advice for monk Qiong is to study the classics, search for images that resonate across time, and work hard to imitate the poetic masters. In the end, Che concludes that it would be most appropriate for Qiong not to allow his artistic pursuits to interrupt his Buddhist commitments. Such indifference may even improve his poetry.

By the close of the Northern Song, two related, but not equivalent, criticisms of poet monks emerged. First, that monastic artistic output did not achieve individual greatness, but labored in imitation of masters.<sup>40</sup> And second, that it was necessary to excise vegetable *qi* – which sometimes referred to the former idea, but sometimes implied something more abstract. This culminated with the negative views of Ye Mengde 葉夢得

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<sup>39</sup> The *qing* aesthetics are discussed, for example, in Sun *Chansi yu shiqing*, 332-337, and 342. Gao, “Shiseng zhi ‘shushenqi’ yu ‘suansouqi,’” suggests the aesthetics of *qing* are homologous to those of *pingdan* 平淡. On the development of *pingdan*, see Chaves, *Mei Yao-ch’en*, 114-126. Jullien, *In Praise of Blandness*, 118-119 and en passim presents related materials in a comparative context. His account of how the poetics of *dan* and *qing* (Versano translated from the French as “limpid”) resolve oppositions and express non-dualism gives a grossly idealized Buddhist reading that glosses over the tensions that made these terms productive.

<sup>40</sup> The details of this point are somewhat differently presented by Zhou Yukai, in *Zhongguo Chanzong yu shige*, 45-53.

(1077-1148) who had a great impact on later critics. His terse summation of “the stink of vegetables” represents the negative connotation of this discourse in these generations.

Ye Mengde was an important figure situated among both Northern and Southern Song circles. He was outspoken and said many disparaging things about monastic poetry. His views in *Shilin shihua* 石林詩話 represent the way the above concepts ossified in this period. His comments further circulated by their inclusion in the Song Dynasty *shihua* compilation *Shirenyuxie* 詩人玉屑. Fascicle twenty of *Shirenyuxie* is devoted to poetry of the Chan tradition 禪林. It opens with this:

The names of Tang dynasty poet monks are quite visible beginning the middle of the dynasty, such that today those that are known are very many. But, not all of their poems were passed down. For example, “Sūtras that arrived at Baimasi, when monks came in the Red Crow year,” such couplets are only to be found in the records of men of letters.<sup>41</sup> The situation deteriorated down to the disciples of Guanxiu and Qiji – whose poems are extant, but not worth reading aloud.

Although Jiaoran’s poetry is most outstanding among these, it is merely because only his poetry collection is complete and not because he particularly exceeded others.

唐詩僧，自中葉以後，其名字班班，為當時所稱者甚多。然詩皆不傳，如「經來白馬寺，僧到赤烏年」數聯僅見文士所錄而已。陵遲至貫休、齊己之徒，其詩雖存，然無足言矣。中間，雖皎然最為傑出，故其詩十卷獨全，亦無甚過人者。

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<sup>41</sup> This couplet is attributed to Lingche 靈澈, but is found in Liu Yuxi's preface to his works (QTW 605.6113-6114; *Liu Yuxi ji jianzheng* 19.519-524). I am indebted to Tom Mazanec for alerting me to this.

The first half of this passage describes a situation much like Ouyang Xiu's recollection of two couplets by the Nine Monks. Though often the names of Buddhist poet monks are known, most Buddhist poetry was not preserved, and seldom circulated independently. Ye roundly dismisses the poetry of prolific monastic poets Guanxiu and Qiji. And he insults Jiaoran as mediocre, attributing his fame to the sheer good luck of having his collection preserved intact.<sup>42</sup> After disparaging past poet monks, he goes on to discuss his contemporaries.

In recent generations, the number of monks studying poetry has been a great many. All of them lack the *qi* of transcendent self-realization. And they often revert to gathering and imitating the discarded scraps of men of letters. What's more, the literati themselves make a manner of "monk style" regulated poetry that is coarse. It has been referred to as the "*qi* of sour bun stuffing." Su Dongpo had a poem "Sent to Huitong"<sup>43</sup> that said, "Since antiquity, rare is the language that carries fog and cloud; In Huitong's work, there is no whiff of vegetables or bamboo shoots," and once said to someone, "Don't you get what I mean by language of vegetables and bamboo shoots? It's not having any stink of sour bun stuffing!" Everyone who hears this surely laughs.

近世僧學詩者極多，皆無超然自得之氣，往往反拾掇模倣。士大夫所殘棄，又自作一種僧體格律，尤凡俗。世謂之酸餡氣。子瞻有贈惠通詩云：「語帶烟霞從古少，氣含蔬筍到公無。」嘗語人曰，「頗解蔬筍語否。為無酸餡氣也。」聞者無不皆笑。

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<sup>42</sup> This is in direct disagreement with *Canglang shihua*, that clearly states, "Jiaoran's poetry was the most excellent of all monks in the Tang." *Canglang shihua jiao shi*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>43</sup> *Huitong* is a well-attested error for *Daotong*.

Ye reports on something referred to as “monk style” (*sengti* 僧體) poetry and decries it as tasteless and crude. Ye refers to slavish imitation, vividly depicting monks gathering up discarded scrap paper to search for phrases to mimic. And, as for the *qi* of these poems, he decries their inability to achieve a self-possessed manner that transcends the ordinary. This is generally referred to as stink of vegetables and bamboo shoots, according to Ye, and this phrase has stuck because when one hears the story about Su Shi one cannot help but laugh.<sup>44</sup>

This analysis of the two generations after Su demonstrates the initial and rapid circulation of the idea of the vegetable stink. The loose play with the metaphor reveals that from early on it was used in a variety of contexts, including poetry coaching as well as calligraphy criticism. By the close of the Northern Song, the recorded opinions of Ouyang and Su on monastic poetry were canonized and replicated in poetic treatises. Many used these ideas, and few challenged them.

In the next section below, I will show that as the cluster of metaphors were interpreted, applied, and reinterpreted, they eventually began to live out the creative part of their careers. Nonetheless, the extent to which they were repeated is some measure of their broad purchase. Even as many were abandoning the playful edge of these metaphors, they continued to engage them.

### **An Ossified Trope: Beyond the World, Within the Metaphor**

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<sup>44</sup> Ye Mengde wrote more about monks and poetry elsewhere. He had some unfavorable things to say about many monks (see the variety of opinions expressed in *Bishu luhua*, *juan xia*). Nonetheless, he also had innovative ideas about the connections between Chan and poetry. He toyed with Du Fu’s poetry to illustrate the meaning of Yunmen’s three phrases (see *Chanzong lun yun[men] you san zhong yu ... Lao Du shi yi you ci san zhong yu* 禪宗論雲[門]有三種語...老杜詩亦有此三種語, in *Shilin shihua*, *juan 1*).

Several generations after Ouyang Xiu and Su Shi, the Chinese world was divided between those ruled by the Song imperial court in Hangzhou and the Jurchen rulers in the north. As opinions and debates about monastic poetry then resumed under these new circumstances, the figure of Su Shi cast a long shadow over the discourse. Though many of the authors in this period sought to reinscribe poet monks as otherworldly figures, incredible recluses, no matter what new points of view authors sought to present at this time, some chose to do so with reference to the culinary metaphors of Ouyang and Su.

One example of an intellectual who appreciated monastic poetry, but failed to escape the orbit of this metaphor is Southern Song literatus, Ouyang Shoudao 歐陽守道 (1208-1272). According to Shoudao's preface to the collected poems of his friend the monk Venerable Fu, Fu once said to him:<sup>45</sup>

[Fu said,] 'The literati I have traveled with often say that poet monks ought to toss off and discard the *qi* of vegetables and bamboo.'

予從士大夫游，多言僧詩宜脫去蔬筍氣。

From this we learn several significant things. First, we learn that a monk sought the advice and opinions of laymen. Second, we learn the advice that most struck this monk Fu is poets believe monks ought to remove the *qi* of vegetables from poems. And third, this passage also reveals the circulation of poetic comments between poets and monks, the result of which was an encounter between monk Fu and Shoudao that he stylized and represented here.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ouyang Shoudao *Xunzhaiwenji* 巽齋文集, p. 14.

<sup>46</sup> The encounters between poets and monks did not start in the Song. Consider, for example the story of *yi zi zhi shi* 一字之師 about Zheng Gu and Qiji.

Next, Ouyang Shoudao lays out his thesis that people succeed most when they write the kind of poetry that is suited to their position in the world. For comparison, Shoudao offers the example of a child from a wealthy family for whom it is impossible to understand the life of a pauper. And just so, he says, a monk should not pretend in his poetry to be something he is not. Therefore, he concludes:

The proper flavor for a monks poetry is vegetables and bamboo. Why is it necessary to toss it off and discard it?

蔬筍僧詩正味。何必他脫去耶？

Shoudao seems to believe he sees beyond the culinary criticism. Because vegetables and bamboo are the perfect flavor for the work of a poet monk, why should one work to get rid of it? Shoudao continues to explain that the concern with distasteful poetry was not just a preoccupation for poet monks, but had become a concern for poets as well:

It is not only monks' poetry, it is our whole generation that is worried about avoiding vegetables and bamboo, as it couldn't be pure if there were vegetables and bamboo.

且非特僧詩。吾輩正患不蔬筍。如蔬筍其何潔。

Ouyang Shoudao finds the whole preoccupation to be baseless. He goes on to describe the virtues of Fu's poems:

As for a piece about the height of early autumn, a monastic artist is of the highest caliber. Venerable Fu has already picked 'Bamboo Quarters' as his self-sobriquet. When I read the poems written about mountain and riverside dwellings from his scroll, it was as though I myself was suddenly among these places. Moreover, the things that Fu is able to articulate are things I am unable to articulate. If Venerable

Fu has completely reached a place of deep stability amid mountain green, sitting quietly in a single room, having completely tossed off the dust of the world and social interactions – then he has attained the lofty integrity of the joy of reclusion. He is far beyond outstanding. Among the four or five hundred years of intoning monks who reverently praised the buddhas and ancestors, there ought to be a distinct place of appreciation for him.<sup>47</sup>

絕頂新秋之章，僧家絕唱。福上人既摘「竹房」二字自號矣。予讀卷中，山宿溪宿之作，便恍然如身歷其間。而上人能道者，予不能道也。使上人遂得翠微深穩處，宴坐一室，而塵緣酬應之作盡罷，則高標幽韻。豈特傑出。四  
五百年吟僧向上佛祖，當別有點頭處也。

Ouyang Shoudao's solution is to embrace the qualities that make monks' poetry uniquely valuable. The strength of monks' writing, Ouyang Shoudao implies, is suited for the most refined aspects of seasonal change; and seasonal change is best represented by the strengths of a monk's poetry: "The things Fu is able to articulate, are things I am unable to articulate."

In the end, however, this passage reaffirms the notions that monastic Buddhists are recluses: aloof, transcendent, and not involved in the world of men. Their poetry belongs to the poetry of mountains and rivers, birds and flowers. Nonetheless, in the view of Ouyang Shoudao, the world is lucky to have just such a thing. This passage lays bare the assumptions of a late Song Dynasty reader of this poetry. Though Shoudao seems to have cleverly re-inscribed the *qi* of vegetables and bamboo as the most fit, the best, for

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<sup>47</sup> "Intoning monks" *yin seng* 吟僧 was used as early as the Tang to refer to monks who compose poetry.

describing vegetative and other natural scenes, he has barely moved beyond the ideas first presented by Ouyang Xiu in his *Liuyi shihua* a long century earlier.

By the Southern Song, the idea that monks were supposed to be otherworldly seems to be well-established in considerations of monastic poetry. And if the monastic poetry had a redeeming quality, it was offering a clear voice from that otherworldly realm. Nonetheless, Ouyang Shoudao observed that not all critics felt this way, and to the contrary, avoiding the vegetable stink had become a widely felt preoccupation.<sup>48</sup>

One critic from this same period, Yao Mian 姚勉 (1216-1262), had a very different perspective when writing a preface to his new selection of “Venerable Zhen’s Poems.”<sup>49</sup> He wrote that Venerable Zhen’s writing was simply too good to be considered monks’ poetry. This view stemmed from his belief that the composition of poetry should be a Ruist pursuit, and, likewise, the proper study of Buddhism ought to exclude poetry.

Further, it was once said of Zhen’s poetry, “This is outside of Chan. I don’t know why it is called Chan.” I have heard it explained that words should be cut off and thoughts cast aside. Even a single phrase or line of thought is no more than spots in the eye, dust on the mirror.

亦有一說真之詩藁，曰：“禪外，余不知所謂禪也。”然聞其說，絕文字，屏[摒]思慮。有一語文字，一毫思慮，皆目之眚也，鏡之塵也。

Yao Mian paraphrases the famous Chan dictum, “do not establish words and letters,” in support of his idea that Buddhism and poetry are incompatible. Nonetheless, this does

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<sup>48</sup> As translated above, Ouyang notes that “it is our whole generation that is worried about avoiding vegetables and bamboo shoots.”

<sup>49</sup> *Ti Zhen shangren shi gao* 題真上人詩稿 in *Xuepoji* 雪坡集,juan 41.



permit Yao to raise the interesting question of what a monk ought to be doing with his days:

And so to be able to spend whole days, for the shoulder of a heron or the mouth of a cricket, laying out and planning the phrases of a poem – to strain one’s thinking to until life grows thin; to strain one’s heart to the point of nausea – is this really okay?

而可終日，驚其肩，蝨其吻，營度詩句哉。苦思而緣之瘦，劇心而病之嘔，可乎否耶。

Yao raises the question of the propriety of a monk obsessing over poetry. Indeed, Venerable Zhen’s fine poetry – with focused depictions of heron shoulders and cricket mouths – belies a lot of time spent not doing certain other things, including daily monastic rigors! These carefully constructed lines of poetry perhaps participated in the tradition of “painstaking composition” (*kuyin* 苦吟), as suggested by the comparison with Jia Dao further below.<sup>50</sup>

In previous generations it was said that monks’ poetry was befallen with the stink of vegetables and bamboo shoots. Because of this, when monastics made poetry, all they did was worry about their type of flavor. The flavor of *this* monk’s poetry is not vegetables and bamboo shoots. *This* is not monks’ poetry. The poems of Zhen enter into the place of absolute clarity, like the rhymes of the wind in a pine, the moonlit cries of a crane, and when he writes about the place of remote stillness, it is like a perched goose in autumn reeds, a cold duck in the evening sun.

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<sup>50</sup> On *kuyin*, see Owen, *The Late Tang*, 93-112.

His continual development is without cease. Though he and Jia Dao are of different eras, they join in harmony.

前輩言僧詩患其有蔬筍氣。由是僧人作詩，惟恐其味之類。此僧詩味不蔬筍，是非僧詩也。真詩，入清絕處，如風松韻澗，月鶴唳臯；寫荒寂處，如宿鴈秋蘆，寒鴉晚日。益進不已。直與賈島異時同調也。

Yao is praising qualities in Venerable Zhen's poetry that are similar to the qualities criticized for being vegetable stink. Zhen's poems offer refreshing coolness "entering into a place of absolute clarity," and a resilient silence when "writing about the place of remote stillness." These are qualities sometimes associated with recluse poetry, but necessarily to monks' poetry. Yao Mian's argument seems to be that Zhen's poetry by definition cannot be monks' poetry because Venerable Zhen's work did not stink. In other words, the term monks' poetry simply could not be used for praise. The category of "the poet monk" *shiseng* had become saturated negative judgments. It was distasteful. Yao's colophon suggests some writers discerned that the term monks' poetry had become a predominantly derisive phrase.

These ideas were so compelling, even after many earlier writers had variously engaged with them, that writers in later dynasties often returned to them. In some passages from the late Ming and early Qing, we see evidence that the *qi* of vegetables and bamboo shoots was still widely discussed and debated. Ming and Qing interpreters of poetry repeated mechanically the unambiguously negative judgment. The important critic Yang Shen of the Ming, writing in his *Sheng'an shihua* 升庵詩話 about Tang monk Jiaoran, concurred "to not have the stink of 'sour stuffing' is most excellent" 無酸餡氣甚佳. Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 published in the Ming Dynasty about both Buddhist monastic

poetry as well as the poetry of religious Daoists. He referred to each by its *qi*: the Buddhists with “vegetable *qi*” 蔬茹氣; Daoists with “*qi* and flavor of rose-pink clouds” 煙霞氣味.<sup>51</sup>

More examples from the late imperial period show the sustained influence of this culinary metaphor. Prefaces for the *Zuying ji* 祖英集 and *Beijian ji* 北磻集, works by Song Dynasty Chan monks, were published in *Sikuquanshu* 四庫全書. The anonymous editors justified the inclusion of the work noting that its “structure and meaning are lucid and refined,”<sup>52</sup> explaining “they were not coarsely made like the sour stuffing language of the Chan house” 固非概作禪家酸餡語也.<sup>53</sup>

From these examples there are hints that as the gastronomic trope continued to be used there was little reconsideration of its specific language and to what it pointed. The acrid, tart, sharp, pungent, harsh flavors of the metaphor continued to structure the way many critics of monastic poetry composed their criticisms. This framework resulted in criticisms that fixated on the same qualities: monastic poetry is boring for being imitative, uncreative and undaring; monastic poetry is best when it attains lucidity or otherworldly qualities.

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<sup>51</sup> Found in *Shu shi hui yao*, *juan* 5. The above comes from a passage recognizable as a regurgitation of Huang Bosi’s criticism of a monk from the Jingfu reign period, though it appears Tao mistook Jingfu for the monk’s name. Tao included selections about the poetry of famous Daoist adepts, like Du Guangting 杜光庭, Liang Yuanyi 梁元一, and Yu Youxuan 魚又玄, using similar terms, such as “the *qi* and flavor of rose-pink clouds” 煙霞氣味 (reminiscent of Su’s citation of Li Bai). More common still are terms of otherworldliness, like “possessing an attitude transcending the world and cutting off the ordinary” 有超世絕俗之態, “not falling into the habits of the ordinary world” 不墮世俗之習, and “that which is not attainable by the ordinary world” 非世俗所能到.

<sup>52</sup> From the *tiyao* appended to *Beijian ji*.

<sup>53</sup> From the *tiyao* appended to *Zuying ji*.

Not all critics, however, mechanically repeated Su's originally witty comment. And in contrast, some writers throughout history tried to take the metaphor apart. As a result, they did not repeat the same criticisms seen above; more sophisticated criticisms disclose more nuanced appreciation of Buddhist poetry.

### **Moving Through and Beyond a Metaphor**

The associations of vegetable *qi* as the definitive mark of poet monks and monastic poetry congealed. Though some composed within the limits of these traits, others felt restrained by the binary questions: "Does this poetry stink of vegetables? Or, has it attained a level without a whiff of vegetables?" For those who felt constrained by such questions, the entire category of "poet monk" needed to be rethought.

In overcoming the limits of this discourse, several strategies were employed. The Jin Dynasty critic Yuan Haowen 元好問 (1190-1257) spoke with a fresh sense of joy in exercising that old criticism of monks. In "Preface for the Collected Poems of Mu'an" 木庵詩集序 he tried to breathe new life into the stale criticism.<sup>54</sup>

By this time, all monks and critics strove to eliminate the stink of vegetables from their poetry; a lack of vegetable *qi* had become a standard to be met. Speaking of Su Shi's criticism of Daotong, he says:

I alone call it a particular phrase of a single use by [Su Dong]po, and not some fixed principle.

予獨謂此特坡一時語,非定論也。

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<sup>54</sup> See *Yishan xiansheng wenji*, juan 37.

Without disrespect for Su Dongpo, Yuan finds it absurd that all critics since then have repeated Su's opinion. He unambiguously lays out the position such critics would need to uphold:

The poetry of poet monks sets itself apart from that of poets, exactly by the presence of the *qi* of vegetables and bamboo shoots.

詩僧之詩所以自別於詩人者,正以蔬笋氣在耳.

Yuan poses a hypothetical situation to illustrate the absurdity of such a statement. If a monk had written "Daybreak in Master Chao's Court, reading Chan Scriptures" 晨詣超師院讀禪經, instead of the actual author layman Liu Zongyuan, then would Su need to remark about the stink of vegetables? To remark on them only because the author was a monk would show that the stink of vegetables and bamboo shoots does not refer to some quality of the poetry but is a residue resultant from the fact of monastic authorship. Yuan preferred to discuss the qualities of Mu'an's poetry, not the mere fact of his monasticism.

At great length, Yuan describes the life and achievements of Mu'an, as well as why he was motivated to write this preface. He includes the titles of his favorite poems, and several couplets. Yuan does value the traits of a mountain hermit, just as many appreciators before him, but he uses new and specific language to describe Mu'an's achievement. He says,

In this world he employed a human form, but his awareness includes supernormal powers; thus he was able to wander in the preserve of brush and ink; he broke through the set patterns of the Buddhist institutions; and amid the vegetables and bamboo, he distinctly made the flavor of no flavor. This is what Jiaoran called,

“Beyond feelings and nature. The words of the unknowable.” There is much to be admired there.

境用人勝,思與神遇,故能游戲,翰墨道場,而透脫叢林科臼,於蔬笋中,別為無味之味.皎然所謂情性之外,不知有文字者,蓋有望焉.

This passage shows how Yuan valued originality, praising Mu’an for “breaking through the set patterns of Buddhist institutions.” Though Yuan valorizes this accomplishment, he is inherently accusing other members of those institutions of being constrained by tradition. The compound verb Yuan chooses to describe this breakthrough can be more literally translated as “moving through and getting free of” *toutuo* 透脫, and is a term found in many Buddhist texts, especially Chan literature, where it vividly describes liberation.

Yuan’s depiction of “flavor of no flavor” describes Mu’an’s attainment as being both among vegetable and bamboo, and yet not of it. This probably means that Mu’an’s poetry was written from the point of view of someone with monastic experience; nonetheless, the feeling upon reading it is transcendent. The poem does not leave the aftertaste of astringent hardships, the discomfort of monastic life. There is clarity, like water close to the source, a refreshing taste with no flavor. This is the highest compliment, and turns the culinary metaphor on its head.

Another critic also articulated the value of poets writing from their own experiences. Fan Xiwen 范晞文 (13<sup>th</sup> century) simply and clearly endorses Buddhists writing about monastic experiences. Moreover, in his straightforwardness he does not

describe monks as transcendent or other-worldly. From his selected quotations, it is clear that for Fan Xiwen monks simply are in the world. He writes:<sup>55</sup>

“A dove’s white feathers fall on a monk in meditation”; “A cold cicada emerges from my meditation robes”; “Sitting on a rock, birds suspect I am dead”; and “A firefly steals into the robes of a monk in meditation”; if these monks had not personally experienced these things, they would not be capable of articulating them.

Likewise, “Ten thousand *li* in eight, nine months; all over my body is that northwesterly wind,” “More than seven thousand *li* from my whole family, I myself walk before twelve peaks alone,” are works made after having gone wondering on foot [from master to master].

「鶴墜霜毛落定僧」，「寒蟿發定衣」，「坐石鳥疑死」，又「螢入定僧衣」，非衲子親歷此境，不能道也。若「萬里八九月，一身西北風」，「七千里外一家住，十二峯前獨自行」，行脚之作也。

Fan revels in the expression of experiences. For him, it is obvious that these lines are based in actual experiences of monks. They speak of things that for others are unspeakable, not because of unfathomable principles, but because the clarity and specificity of articulation requires personal experience. Fan favors monks writing about things they themselves experience, rather than try to remove traces of monastic experience from their poetry.

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<sup>55</sup> Fan Xiwen, *Duichuang yeyu*, *juan 5*, in *Lidai shihua xubian*, p. 446 (reading *jiang* 將 as *jiang* 蟿).

Zhang Yun'ao 張雲璈 (1747-1809), the prolific scholar of the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods most famous for his work on *Wenxuan* 文選, takes up the question of writing from experience and the culinary metaphor in “A Preface for Venerable Pinlian’s Posthumous Manuscript.” Zhang queries Su Shi’s famous remark and passionately defends the Pinlian’s poems. He quotes Su Shi’s couplet and comment, and then continues:<sup>56</sup>

Now, if we consider the equation of vegetables and bamboo with sour bun stuffing, then Su Dongpo’s words do not make sense completely. If there is poetry by a monk that is without the *qi* of vegetables and bamboo shoots, then his thoughts must have gone beyond his station, his words departed from the whole lineage. Not only would [such a monk] not be seeking after the depths of the principles of the Five Vehicles and Eightfold Path,<sup>57</sup> but he would be the same as a non-Buddhist, [seeking after] the inner purport of the Four Beginnings and Six Principles [of the *Odes*].<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> The piece *Pinlian shangren yigao xu* 品蓮上人遺藁序 by Zhang Yun'ao can be found in *juan* 5 of his *Jiansong caotang wen ji*; 1471.174. All passages on the next pages are from this text.

<sup>57</sup> The five vehicles and eightfold path are used here as synecdoche for the Buddhist path, and are not engaged on a technical level. In many Song era Chan texts, a series of numbered teachings is tossed off to gesture towards the vastness of Buddhist learning. There are a few variations on the list of the five vehicles, but it usually includes: the teachings of gods and men; of the śrāvaka, or arhat; of the *pratyekabuddha*; and of the bodhisattva. The eightfold path is one of the principle teachings of Śrāvakayāna, and is the fourth of the Four Noble Truths. Its goal is arhatship, a point that seems unrelated here.

<sup>58</sup> Again the pair of lists are a reference, this time to the *Shijing*. The Four Beginnings refer to four distinct sources that constitute the *Shijing*, *feng* 風 *xiao ya* 小雅, *da ya* 大雅, and *song* 頌, as given in the Great Preface. The Six Principles are given in the Great Preface as *feng* 風, *fu* 賦, *bi* 比, *xing* 興, *ya* 雅, and *song* 頌.



夫以蔬筍為酸餡，坡之言亦不達於理矣。僧詩而無蔬筍氣，則思必出位，語將離宗。不惟五行八正之旨，無所幽求。即四始六義之蘊，亦同外道。

In this first passage, Zhang raises the case of Su's story. He says that it doesn't really make much sense for two reasons. Firstly, he points out that vegetables and bamboo are not the same as sour bun stuffing. Such a thing may be witty to say, but it's not really true. Secondly, if one takes seriously the idea that the *qi* of vegetables and bamboo shoots is a mark of monastic poetry, then it would be very problematic to speak of monks that did not have it. Such monks would be no different from non-Buddhists at all. How much more problematic would it be to advise monks to stop behaving like monks! Zhang has shown the peculiar assumption that had been nestled within the guideline to remove the stink of vegetables. It's not that he wants monks to act in a particularly sour way. He goes on to explain that he too wants monks to write from their own experience:

Eating dusty gruel spread over rice, where is there a taste of vegetables and bamboo – is it in his bosom? Venerable Pinlian practices the way with great clarity. Although his poems are few, they are all absolutely lucid and effortlessly fluent; his intentions are high above the clouds; the *qi* of rose-pink mist hovers near the tip of his brush. In what place is there room for dust? This is the proper flavor of vegetables and bamboo. The flavor of vegetables and bamboo shoots is clear yet savory.

塵羹塗飯，豈復有蔬筍之味，在其胃次也？品蓮上人道行澄澈，詩雖不多，皆清絕滔滔，意在雲表，煙霞之氣，縈繞筆端。何處更容埃壘？此正蔬筍味也。蔬筍味之清而腴者也。

In this passage Zhang plays with the culinary metaphor. He first destabilizes the metaphor by pointing out that the monastic diet mostly entails gruel. If monks eat a lot of rice and few vegetables, it is not so accurate to speak of vegetable flavors. Zhang moves this metaphor into the abstract, asking if the *qi* of vegetables resides in the heart of the monastic poet. In his praise of monk Pinlian, he admires the *qi* that flows from the tip of the monk's brush. He describes it as clear, lucid, lofty, and wondrous. And, finally, Zhang reinvigorates the culinary metaphor. He declares the proper essence of vegetables is not only clear, but also savory *yu* 腴.

His word choice *yu* 腴, not only means savory, but is in the family of meanings for plump, rich, luxuriant. This critic is demonstrating his appreciation of monastic poetry by using this kind of robust, fatty vocabulary. This word, moreover, is at the end of the first line of Su Shi's poem: "Powerful yet subtle, bitter yet rich," 雄豪而妙苦而腴. It is not yet clear what it means to say vegetables are "clear yet savory" (*qing er yu* 清而腴). Zhang goes on to offer two examples of what he means:

I once packed my things and went into the mountains. I stopped by the house of a real country man. He offered me boiled sunflowers and roasted bamboo, and I accepted his gruel. Eating that rice was like feasting on heavenly offerings.

[Su] Dongpo wrote in a preface about planting vegetables, "Their flavor has the *qi* of lush soil; I am full of dew and frost." Clearly, he has deeply attained the truth of vegetables and bamboo.

Therefore, when arguing about the poetry of venerable persons, no one can say it's unfair, but it is absurd to call it sour bun stuffing.

予嘗襍被入山，止於野人之家。煮葵燒筍以爲供引羹。御飯如享太牢。東坡種菜詩序云：「味含土膏氣，飽霜露二語」，蓋深得蔬筍之真者。印以論上人之詩，誰曰不宜，豈酸飴之謂哉。

In the first of two examples, Zhang tells of a trip to the mountains he once made. On that trip, he ate the simple food of the country people. And, as anyone who has ever gone hiking can share, at the end of a day of exertion in the outdoors the sheer pleasure of food nears ecstasy. Hunger is the finest spice. In his second example, Zhang returns to another poem by Su Shi. This poem is probably from Su's days in Huangzhou when Su was farming for himself. Su celebrates the flavor of his homegrown food, which was seasoned by his personal experience; he knows the dirt, the frost and dew. Zhang praises this appreciation as the perfection of food, of gastronomy.

Zhang's remarks echo Fan Xiwén, who valued the poetry of Buddhist monastics because it gave voice to unique experiences. Fan supposed it was best that monks wrote about things that they themselves experienced. Similarly, Zhang's two examples demonstrating the truth of flavor are about his experience eating during a trek to the mountains, and the way Su's experiences planting vegetables affected the way they tasted.

Feeling that his point has been made, Zhang returns to the subject at hand to conclude his preface. He does not hesitate to lay blame for his having to write this tract in defense of the import of a poet monk.

Once venerable persons have died, their disciples will scheme, the various groups of sons and affines, relatives and good friends, will go about setting a text. And once venerable persons are dead, their karma is known from the page. What a pity

we never once sat together in Reverend Si's thatched cottage, together writing poems among tea and melon, pillow and mat.<sup>59</sup>

上人既寂，弟子將謀，諸梓介子戚好，屬為點定；既卒，業因識於簡端。惜乎！未嘗一坐已公茅屋同賦詩於茶瓜枕簟之間也。

Zhang blames Pinlian's disciples and the competing branches of institutional lineages for failing to understand the beauty and significance of his poetry. He laments the fact that just as he appreciates Pinlian's poetry now, he was never able to do so together with Pinlian while he was alive. The final line is an allusion to a poem by Du Fu. That poem in turn concludes with an allusion to the story of the Eastern Jin writer Xu Yun and the famous monk Zhidun (c. 314-366). Xu Yun and Zhidun were found to be each other's equals and able to keep on in dialogue. Stephen Owen notes that in Du Fu's poem, he "modestly claims not to be the equal of Xu Yun, while Reverend Si is comparable to Zhidun."<sup>60</sup> Zhang, for his part, laments that he could not even match Du Fu's modest claim of sitting together to "write new poems,"<sup>61</sup> let alone the ideal of Xu Yun and Zhidun.

There is also a significant echo of Yuan Haowen's comments in Zhang's preface. They similarly oppose a dogmatic repetition of Su's comment. Yuan refers to the flavor of no flavors in his description of the accomplishment of monk Mu'an. These attainments, in Yuan's description, are the result of his long experiences as a monastic.

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<sup>59</sup> This last sentence is an allusion to Du Fu's *Si Shangren maozhai* 已上人茅齋 ("The Thatched Study of Reverend Si"). *Yi* 已 should be *si* 巳. See Owen, *The Poetry of Du Fu*, 1.11 for a translation. The phrases "pillow and mat" as well as "tea and melon" are from lines three and four of Du Fu's poem. Tea and melons could both be offered to guests of certain religious persuasions.

<sup>60</sup> Owen, *The Poetry of Du Fu*, 1.11

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, line two.

The works of these authors represent a view held by some literati that poet monks and monks' poetry were somehow special and offered something unique to be appreciated. For these critics, the poetry of monks is well-distinguished. And what is most valuable and worth appreciating about Buddhist poetry is not gotten at by a fixed culinary metaphor. It was only by deconstructing or playing with gastronomical language that what was worth talking about could be discussed.

## **Conclusion**

Culinary metaphors were significant to poetic criticism of the Song Dynasty (960-1276). In "remarks on poetry" and in colophons on collections of monastic poetry, writers developed the metaphor of the stink of vegetables and bamboo shoots. Although this image was attributed to both Su Dongpo and Ouyang Xiu, the discourse emerging from Su's poem "To the poet-monk Daotong" is most visible in the written record.

The particular culinary metaphor can be located in the long history of gastronomical discourse in Chinese aesthetics as well as Buddhist literary history. And, the specific metaphoric language created in the Song shaped debates through the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. The evidence suggests these perspectives represent commonly held beliefs about monks.

The use of vegetable stink as criticism varied widely in the hands of different critics. There were those, like Ye Mengde, who saw monastic poetry as an aberration. The language of vegetables and bamboo well-captured their negative criticisms of poetry that was narrow in scope, imitative, and bland. Some supporters of Buddhist poetry also

labored under this assumption. Among such supporters, the critical phrase is often repeated as an admonition to rid the stink, or in praise of a monk who does not possess the stink.

Some critics identified vegetable *qi* as the very mark of what they conceived of as monks' poetry. Ouyang Shoudao, for example, states that it is the very flavor of vegetables that makes Buddhist Poetry uniquely identifiable. This assumption informs modern scholarship, often unnoticed, such as Zhou Yukai's careful analysis of the poetics of the term. This assumption results in a well-defined, technical term that represents one voice, albeit an influential one, in the reception of Buddhist poetry.

Each of the above critical interpretations of vegetables and bamboo continue to have currency in modern criticism of Buddhist poetry. Qian Zhongshu, for example, in his monumental *Tanyi lun* came to the conclusion that the successful poet monks "possess the feelings of wind and moon and lack the stink of vegetables and bamboo shoots." He then says that such persons cannot be said to be true monks; they are no different from those who defrock and become scholar officials. Qian Zhongshu embraces both aspects of the criticism. He praises poet monks for being free of vegetables and bamboo shoots flavors, while at the same time defining Buddhist poetry as exactly those qualities.<sup>62</sup>

In response, Sun Changwu raises a deceptively simple counterpoint: monks who continue to live as monks every day are different from those who defrock and become secular officials.<sup>63</sup> Monks live a rigorous monastic daily schedule and maintain codes of

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<sup>62</sup> Qian Zhongshu, *Tanyi lun*, p. 650. Section 69, *Suiyuan lun shizhong liyu* first published in the 1984 edition.

<sup>63</sup> Sun Changwu, *Chansi yu Shiqing*, pp. 316-317.

purity. Their very appearance, in robes and shaved heads, elicits a distinct response from the world that is different from the reception of a scholar-official. Even when monks are representatives of the state, they are distinguished by their monastic vows and lifestyle. These experiences are expressed in monks' poetry in ways not gotten at by an analysis of the flavor of vegetables and bamboo shoots.

A few critics saw beyond the limits of a vegetable *qi* critique and further employed culinary metaphors to resolve the perceived incompatibility of Buddhist and Chinese poetic ideals. These critics, like Yuan Haowen and Zhang Yun'ao, sought a positive expression of appreciative criticism to replace the inherently negative discourse of vegetable stink. These new criticisms express the coherent unity of Buddhist poetry as simultaneously Buddhist and Chinese.

Just like history's critics, modern readers also value natural, spontaneous, otherworldly qualities in Chan poetry. Questions about the assumptions underpinning debated metaphors shed light on what we regard as Chan and Zen poetry today, and how we regard it. Writing literary criticism, scholars today often follow the lead of earlier native critics. The impression that monks' poetry is bad poetry represents only part of the spectrum of criticism; the more colorful aspect of that spectrum explores how to measure and discuss the depth of monks' poetry.

This chapter offers three important additions to this discussion. First, it is useful to recognize the expectations established by the distinction between a secular and a religious world. Though monks themselves often invoked this special status, nonetheless it obscures both the history and artistry of monastic poetry. Instead, the category "beyond

the world of dust and defilement” as used by critics, and its corollary expectations, must be understood as part of the intellectual history of the period.

This chapter has also demonstrated that “vegetables and bamboo” is not just criticism, but is part of an ongoing conversation about the value of Buddhist poetry. It is important to see how usage varied, as many authors struggled successfully to wrest new meaning from tried clichés. Notably, the preface by Zhang Yun’ao engages with this trope and successfully generates positive criticism. Moreover, it is important to recall that the term was first used as a compliment, via its own negation. Though these terms emerged from a critical discourse, and were laced with barb, nonetheless, they were part of an ongoing conversation about the value of Buddhist poetry. If monastic poetry “lacked the stink of vegetables”, we should not agree with the conclusion that it is not monastic poetry. Instead, we can focus on how this term was used to isolate other traits that were valued and unique to monastic poetry.

Lastly, it is important to look beyond only those poems enshrined in major Chan collections, only the poems of the founders and early masters. If the judgment and taste of medieval critics is to be given any weight, then we ought to study the monastic poetry that they found either exemplary or outstanding. Indeed, the majority of monastic poetry written and read does not fall easily into any of the categories outlined by scholars of Buddhism thus far. A more comprehensive approach can only be realized by accounting for the vast occasional poems, or social poetry, written on some particular occasion or addressed to specific correspondents.



## Chapter Four – Parting

### Introduction

Is Buddhist poetry possible? In the previous chapter we saw how ideas about “good poetry” can impede readers from appreciating monks’ poetry. I suggested that instead of beginning with preconceived ideas of Buddhist poetry, we start by examining overlooked types of monks’ poems. Native discourse on vegetable stink rests on a shaky foundation that assumes that monks will naturally produce poetry that exhibits certain qualities, even if the circumstances and subject matter have nothing to do with Buddhism. The main methodological shift in this chapter is to turn away from this faulty presupposition.

In this chapter, I focus closely on a relatively small corpus of monks’ poetry in order to address as many facets of “Buddhist” as possible. The following poems were written by monks; addressed to monks; participated in a Buddhist monastic ritual; included explicit Buddhist diction; and employed a Buddhist grammar. My chapter will demonstrate ways we can read monks’ poetry as “Buddhist,” in order to understand the ways they are literary, poetic, and Buddhist.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In thinking about what makes a poem “Buddhist,” I have found it helpful to repurpose the tripartite schema in Patrick Diehl’s *The Medieval European Religious Lyric*, which divided analyses into three sections: function; genre or form; and rhetoric. I also benefited from Mary Gerhart’s critical contemplation of ‘the Catholic novel tradition,’ in “Generic Studies: Their Renewed Importance in Religious and Literary Interpretation,” pp. 317-318.

Parting poems in the Buddhist canon are numerous, appearing in almost every *yulu* 語錄 (“Recorded Sayings”). I believe the historical and traditional theorists, like Qiji 齊己 (860-940), would categorize these poems as *gāthā*.<sup>2</sup> Though I am working with a restricted corpus, I believe many of the insights will be applicable more broadly to monks’ poetry. My purpose here is to attend simultaneously to religious and literary aspects of these poems, to see what is gained from literary appreciation.

### **Genre: Parting Poetry**

Poems of parting, including *songbie shi* 送別詩, *songxing shi* 送行詩, and *zengbie shi* 贈別詩, are a well-known social and literary phenomenon of imperial China.<sup>3</sup> These are poems often written on the occasion of parting from friends, siblings, or lovers.<sup>4</sup> My focus here is the use of parting poems within Buddhist monastic communities

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<sup>2</sup> Parting poems by Xutang 虛堂 (1185-1269) are found in his *yulu* under the header *jisong* (Chinese *gāthā*).

<sup>3</sup> For a definitive discussion of the development of parting poetry from the late Six Dynasties to the mid-Tang, see Matsubara Akira’s *Chūgoku ribetsu shi no seiritsu*, which is now also available in Chinese translation from *Zhonghua shuju*. Some inspiration for the present essay was also drawn from Huo Songlin’s “Lun Du Fu zengbieshi.” For an excellent overview of “the flowering of a mature farewell culture” among Song dynasty itinerant scholar-officials, see Cong Ellen Zhang, *Transformative Journeys: Travel and Culture in Song China*, pp. 111-129. Zhang, throughout her study, makes use of the occasional poetry written before, during, and after traveling. In this chapter, she focuses on the significance and aesthetics of rituals of farewell, including the farewell banquet as evidenced by poems. Buddhist and Daoist monks make appearances in Zhang’s account, but receive no sustained analyses.

<sup>4</sup> These topics are introduced by Matsubara, and representative selections may also be found in a slender anthology of parting poetry in English translation by David Lunde, *Breaking the Willow*.

of the Song dynasty (960-1279).<sup>5</sup> I will demonstrate that a mode of poetry which was not the province of Buddhist monasticism, poems of parting, nonetheless was used by Buddhist monks within the monastery in novel ways in response to monastic commitments.

The first poem in the *Yifanfeng* 一帆風 collection of parting poems – to be examined in detail below – is by Tiantai Weijun 天台惟俊 (fl. 1245-1269).<sup>6</sup> Weijun was a prominent officer in the community of Xutang Zhiyu 虛堂智愚 (1185-1269), serving as Xutang’s assistant for many years.<sup>7</sup> Weijun was technically proficient at poetic composition. This poem by Weijun is a *jueju* quatrain and begins with a first-line rhyme before progressing in observance of regulated prosody:<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The ubiquity of parting poetry among Song and Yuan monks is conveyed by the *Jōwa ruiju soon renpōshū* 貞和類聚祖苑聯芳集, compiled by Rinzaï Zen monk Gidō Shūshin 義堂周信 (1325-1388). *Jōwa-shū* contains several thousand complete poems by Song and Yuan monks, mostly five and seven syllable *jueju*, organized into sixty-five sections. The *songxing* section has two hundred four poems, second only to the two hundred sixty-two *zan* 讚. Compare these to the seven poems about *wudao* 悟道.

<sup>6</sup> On the practices of collecting parting poems for travelers, see Zhang, *Transformative Journeys*, pp. 113-116.

<sup>7</sup> Weijun was also known as Dongzhou Weijun 東州惟俊 and was the compiler of one section of Xutang’s *yulu*, titled *Wuzhou Yunhuang shan Baolin chansi yulu* 婺州雲黃山寶林禪寺語錄. Weijun also wrote a poem to the Zen pilgrim Mushō Jōshō 無象靜照 (1234-1306), one of the matched-rhyme poems in the collection *Mengyou Tiantai ji* 夢遊天台偈, in Tamamura’s *Gozan bungaku Shinshu*, 6:640-641. Xutang wrote a farewell poem to Jōshō, in *Kamakura: The Art of Zen Buddhism*, no. 75, pp. 99 and 216. For other details concerning Weijun, see Satō Shūkō, “Kidō Chigu no Shihō monjin ni tuite,” pp. 65-70.

<sup>8</sup> All passages of poetry quoted from the *Yifanfeng* are based on a comparison of the Edo woodblock editions and the Daitō manuscript. I provide the name of the author and a poem number. Poem numbers follow the sequence in the woodblock editions and are written “poem #” for the first 44 beginning with Xutang’s verse as “poem #1”, and then “suppl. #” for the latter 25 supplemental poems. I use David Branner’s reconstructed Middle Chinese (based on the Song dynasty *Guangyun* rime book) accessible on his *Yintong* website, and Stuart Sargent’s method for metric analysis, based on that of the late Qi Gong 啓功 (1912-2005), explicated in the introduction to his *The Poetry of He Zhu*, pp. 8-10.

Tiantai Weijun 天台惟俊 / from poem #2

Since coming empty-handed from the East,	空手東來已十霜
ten winter frosts have passed,	
2 And now still empty-handed,	依然空手趁回檣
you sail home. <sup>9</sup>	

Though Weijun's poem is free of formal errors, the emotional timbre of this couplet is remarkably cheeky. It seems rude to tell a guest that he came with nothing, stayed a long time, and leaves empty-handed. The two-character phrase *kongshou*, "empty-handed," occurs twice within the initial eleven syllables. Though this could be a sign of a clumsy or rushed hand, it may also signal a clever play on words – a case for which is made further below.

What sense is to be made of this and the other *Yifanfeng* poems? I argue that meaning emerges through reading these poems as subversive participants in the broader genre conventions of Chinese parting poetry. If this is correct, then one might assert the *Yifanfeng* poems constitute a subgenre, "Buddhist parting poetry." However, I am not proposing genre analysis as a matter of classification or a clarification of affinities.<sup>10</sup> Genre is good to think with when it is not about pigeonholes so much as about the

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<sup>9</sup> In my translations, I frequently avail myself of internal line breaks denoted by indentations. These breaks roughly correspond with the caesura between the fourth and fifth syllable in the seven-syllable Chinese line. Whereas five-syllable lines tend to translate well, seven-syllable Chinese lines often become cumbersome in English. This is not an ironclad rule, however, and a line break will not improve every English line.

<sup>10</sup> As suggested by Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, pp. 247-248.

pigeons.<sup>11</sup> To this end, Carol Newsom observed that “texts do not ‘belong’ to genres so much as participate in them, invoke them, gesture to them, play in and out of them, and in so doing continually change them.” If we foreground the relationship between a text and a genre, “the point is not simply to identify a genre in which a text participates, but to analyze that participation in terms of the rhetorical strategies of the text.”<sup>12</sup> Following Newsom’s insight, to read the *Yifanfeng* poems as Buddhist parting poetry means to understand how they negotiate literary, social and historical, and Buddhological contexts.

### **Norms: Parting Poems in Song era Literary Criticism**

To some extent, the whole previous tradition of parting poetry may weigh on monk Weijun’s composition. The themes of parting are found in the earliest Chinese poetry, such as the heart-broken persona in the first of the anonymous lyrics known as *Gushi shijiu shou* 古詩十九首 (“Nineteen Old Poems”).<sup>13</sup> Later, parting poems were included in anthologies, subject to literary criticism, and constituted an important part of the Chinese literary canon. This *longue durée* approach is suggestive, but not in itself sufficient to interpret Weijun’s poem. Prescriptive texts written by literati of the Song

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<sup>11</sup> Alistair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, p. 37, in response to Graham Hough, *An essay on criticism*, p. 84; with a paraphrase of Claude Lévi-Strauss.

<sup>12</sup> Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> Nineteen Old Poems is the title given to the set anonymous poems brought together in the 6th century anthology *Wen xuan* 文選. Already in the Tang these poems were thought to date to the Han, and as such have long been held as the font of the five-syllable line, with caesura after the second character, and rhyming even-numbered lines. The first poem in the collection is *Xing xing chong xing xing* 行行重行行 (“Wandering and wandering, again wandering and wandering”), generally thought to be the voice of a wife longing for her beloved husband who is traveling far from home. A comprehensive bibliography of translations and scholarly studies can be found in David Knechtges, *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide*, 1.289-292.

dynasty, on the other hand, furnish readers with knowledge of the contours of genres and norms.

The genre literary criticism known collectively as *shihua* 詩話 (“remarks on poetry”) was introduced in the previous chapter. *Shihua* of the Song dynasty can reveal the contemporary expectations against which the *Yifanfeng* poems were written. However, with a few exceptions, *shihua* do not set out general theories of literature. Most authors of *shihua* set out seemingly desultory comments on topics that had previously been regarded as banal, frequently providing models for how poetry ought or ought not to be written.

Mature *shihua* often were organized by topic. One topic in *shihua* is social occasion of saying farewell and parting poetry. For example, in fascicle three of *Shiren yuxie* 詩人玉屑 (“Jade Chips of the Poets”) by Wei Qingzhi 魏慶之 (fl. 1240-1244) there are ten exemplary couplets from the Tang dynasty in a list titled *songbie* 送別 (“parting poems”).<sup>14</sup> *Songbie* poems are not formally distinct from other poems, but are a mode recognized by their topic and contexts that are often noted in a title or prefatory note. The *Shiren yuxie* list includes a couplet from Han Yu’s 韓愈 (768–824) poem “Arriving at Shitou Station, a poem sent to Minister Wang Ten”:<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Shiren yuxie*, *juan* 3, pp. 75-76. A comprehensive and creative study of the *Shiren yuxie* that extends to the book’s place within the *shihua* genre and relationship to print culture, circulation, and libraries, is Zhang Gaoping’s *Shiren yuxie yu songdai shixue*.

<sup>15</sup> *Ci Shitou yi ji Jiangxi Wang Shi zhongcheng gelao* 次石頭驛寄江西王十中丞閣老, see *Han Changli shi xinian ji shi*, pp. 1187-1188. This poem was written in 820 when Han Yu was returning to the capital from exile. In the poem he states that he has just passed *Yuzhang cheng* 豫章城, another name for Nanchang. There is a *Shitou Station* nearby in Jiangxi 江西 from which he sent this poem to Wang Zhongshu 王仲舒 (762-823).

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| A man sobs as he recalls your favor;            | 人由戀德泣 |
| 4 A horse, too, whinnies when leaving the herd. | 馬亦別羣鳴 |

This poem by Han Yu emphasizes that sadness is the natural response to parting. Though *Shiren yuxie* only gives the above first couplet, any learned person would know, or could easily discover, that the poem concludes as follows:

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| The cold sun has begun its twilight glow,                 | 寒日夕始照 |
| 6 The squally river grows distant and gradually peaceful. | 風江遠漸平 |
| Quiet, none say a word,                                   | 默然都不語 |
| 8 I reckon they know the feelings of this moment.         | 應識此時情 |

Han Yu is surrounded by natural phenomena moving away from him in near silence. His poem concludes with the entire landscape overwhelmed by the anguish of separation, as Han projects his inner world of sadness upon the topography. Han Yu says simply ‘the feelings of this moment’ to refer to the form of despair that follows separation.

The *Shiren yuxie* also includes the following couplet by Chen Tao 陳陶 (9<sup>th</sup> c.), from a poem “Presented When Parting at Pencheng”:<sup>16</sup>

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| The spring waters are wide at Nine Rivers, | 九江春水闊 |
|--|-------|

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<sup>16</sup> For the full poem, see *Pencheng zengbie* 湓城贈別, in *Quan Tang shi* 745.8478. *Pencheng* 湓城 (“City on the Pen”) is one of the old names for the city of Jiujiang 九江, which is on the southern shores of the Yangzi River in Jiangxi Province where the mouth of the Pen river opens.

This parting poem emphasizes the insurmountable obstacles and distances that will soon separate the author from the recipient and prevent their reunion. It is common to see distance used as a symbol for the longing to be together.

The *Canglang shihua* 滄浪詩話 (Canglang's Remarks on Poetry) by Yan Yu 嚴羽 (1191-1241?) was especially well-received by later generations. Yan Yu regarded parting poems as provocative.

As for the best poems of the Tang, many are written when heading off to serve in border garrisons, being sent into exile, setting off on leisurely travel, or at another such moment of parting; time and again they can stir a man's feelings.

唐人好詩，多是征戍、遷謫、行旅、離別之作，往往能感動激發人意。<sup>17</sup>

According to Yan Yu, the best Tang poems of parting are those that deeply affect the reader.

There are many parting poems in the Tang and Song canon. For example, Song dynasty poet Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), wrote the following poem when taking leave of his beloved brother Su Zhe 蘇轍 (1039-1112). The second of two poems "On Taking Leave of Ziyou at Yingzhou" includes the line:<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Canglang shihua jiaoshi*, p. 198.

<sup>18</sup> *Yingzhou chu bie Ziyou ershou* 穎州初別子由二首, in *Su Shi shiji*, pp. 278-281. See also Yoshikawa Kōjirō, *Sōshi gaisetsu*, pp. 165-166. Adapted from Burton Watson's translation in Yoshikawa, *An Introduction to Sung Poetry*, p. 107.



- If in life there were no partings, 人生無離別  
 6 Who would know the gravity of love and kindness? 誰知恩愛重

Su Shi's poem to his brother gives full-throated voice to the tender sadness of leaving loved ones. Nostalgia, longing, and shades of sadness from anguish to despair are characteristic of parting poems found in Song dynasty *shihua*.

Finally, in an often anthologized poem, Tang dynasty poet Meng Haoran 孟浩然 (689-740) wrote a well-known poem to see off his friend Du Huang 杜暉, "Sending off Du Fourteen to Jiangnan."<sup>19</sup> Meng's poem vividly depicts the painful feelings of parting and anticipated separation.

- The lands of Jing and Wu link together where water serves as 荊吳相接水為鄉  
 home;<sup>20</sup>  
 2 Now you set out as the spring river boundlessly is flowing.<sup>21</sup> 君去春江正淼茫  
 Where will you moor this lonesome skiff tonight?<sup>22</sup> 日暮孤舟何處泊  
 4 Then even a glance at the horizon will break my heart. 天涯一望斷人腸

<sup>19</sup> *Song Du shisi zhi Jiangnan* 送杜十四之江南 in *Tang shi xuan* 7.17a. See also *Meng Haoran ji jiaozhu* pp. 301-302 and *Meng Haoran shiji jianzhu* pp. 266-267. Paul Kroll's *Meng Hao-jan*, pp. 72-77, discusses other poems written in the region of Lake Dongting.

<sup>20</sup> A well-known variant *shui lian xiang* 水連鄉 emphasizes the river as connecting Chu and Wu.

<sup>21</sup> Most earlier Chinese editions have *miaomang* 渺茫; both phrases read *ze ping* 仄平.

<sup>22</sup> Whereas *guzhou* 孤舟 appears in *Tang shi xuan*, older Chinese editions have *zhengfan* 征帆; all are even tones. Here, the final three words are inverted from the more common *po hechu* 泊何處; either sequence is regulated.

Meng Haoran imagines Du Huang as a traveler in the vast landscape. The traveler leaves in spring when snowmelt strengthens the big river. By sundown, Meng will wonder where his friend is. He believes that were he to look off in the direction where his friend Du Huang is traveling, he'd suffer wrenching pangs of separation.

### **Framing: Chan Poems**

Parting poems appear frequently in Buddhist writing. During the Song era, such poems were included in the *jisong* 偈頌 (Skt., *gāthā*) sections of Chan *yulu* 語錄 (“Recorded Sayings”) texts,<sup>23</sup> as well as in the *shiji* 詩集 (“collected poetry”) texts of poet-monks. I described this in more detail in this dissertation’s preface. As used here in the Song, *jisong* only loosely refers to Sanskrit *gāthā*. In other, older contexts, most notably that of sūtra literature, *jisong* is readily understood as a combination of *jita* 偈他 (a transliteration of *gāthā*) and *song* (a native Chinese word), and was how the Chinese referred to the *gāthā* found in Buddhist sūtras. However, beginning in the Tang, *jisong* was used creatively as a label for the Chinese poems (often *shi* carefully observing tonal

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<sup>23</sup> The *yulu* genre emerged in the early Northern Song and continued to develop well into the Ming and Qing periods. A *yulu* purported to record the sayings and activities of a master, and came to be a composite of the many distinct genres employed by an abbot in the course of carrying out their religious profession. For many *yulu*, the concluding fascicles functionally are a collection of poetry under the unassuming header *jisong*. For more on the history of *yulu*, a fine summary of Yanagida Seizan’s large Japanese-language tome is his essay, “The ‘Recorded Sayings’ Texts of Chinese Ch’an Buddhism,” trans. John R. McRae.

meter) written by well-regarded teachers.<sup>24</sup> This conferred on those poems the same religious reverence accorded Indic verse.

While parting poems are ubiquitous in monks' poetry, beginning in the Song these poems became integrated into the rituals of itinerant monasticism. The Northern Song dynasty gave rise to dramatic changes in Buddhist monasticism. The state sponsored newly constructed or renovated large temples, and literati bureaucrats were the arbiters of abbacy appointments.<sup>25</sup> These state-sponsored temples often had the finest teachers, the most resources, and as pathways to advancement in the monastic bureaucracy were the centers of Buddhist learning and activity.<sup>26</sup> Rituals for daily life in these large monasteries were encoded in *qinggui* 清規 (“rules of purity”), the first indigenous Chinese Buddhist monastic rules.<sup>27</sup> Within the monastic regulations that dictated most mundane interactions, the contents of a parting verse became an opportunity for individuation and variation.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The earliest unambiguous designation of *shi* poetry as *ji* that I am aware of is in the *Platform Sūtra*. Shenxiu's verse is a perfectly regulated *jueju*; the prosody of Huineng's response is in shambles. The preface by poet monk Qiji 齊己 (860-940) to the *jueju* by the Caodong teacher Longya Judun 龍牙居遁 (835-923) states that “although [Longya's works] are similar to *shi* poetry in form, their purport is not that of poetry” (*Chanmen zhu zushi jisong*, ZZ 116, p. 921, a13). For five-syllable lines with rhyme in early Chinese Buddhist texts, see Saito Takanobu's *Kango Butten ni okeru ge no kenkyu*. The use of *gāthā* (not *shi*) as an independent, creative genre of Chinese poetry begins at least in the Tang. Bai Juyi wrote a series of *ji* in four-syllable lines. On the other hand, the early poet monks' *shi* were not called *gāthā*.

<sup>25</sup> The most comprehensive review of the new system of large monasteries and abbotships is Morten Schlütter's *How Zen Became Zen*, pp. 31-77.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Gregory and Patricia Ebrey's “The Religious and Historical Landscape” sets the Tang-Song transition as a framework for making sense of both the changes and continuities in religious traditions across the Tang-Song transition.

<sup>27</sup> A critical review of the history and genre of *qinggui* texts in China is T. Griffith Foulk's “*Chanyuan qinggui*.”

<sup>28</sup> See Yifa, p. 176, for a translation of the ritual described in *Chanyuan qinggui* used to see off an honored guest or fundraiser. Note that the abbot is to recite a verse for the benefit of the departing

In the life of a monastery, there were many occasions when a parting poem might be written. Monks wrote poems to send off students, visitors, and friends, and composed farewell verses when taking leave of a saṃgha.<sup>29</sup> Sending-off (*songbie* 送別) and leave-taking (*libie* 離別) poems serve complementary functions, and their themes and emotional tones are similar.

The emotional timbre of the aforementioned *Yifanfeng* poem by Tiantai Weijun differs from the norms established by *shihua* above. Outside the *Yifanfeng*, there are other examples of parting poetry by monks written on a particular occasion in the life of a monastic. The following leave-taking poem also expresses sentiments that are the exact opposite of normative expectations. Huanglong Huinan 黃龍慧南 (1002-1069) wrote the poem “Retiring from the Cloister and Leaving Mt. Lu” 退院別廬山<sup>30</sup> to mark his departure from Mount Lu.<sup>31</sup>

After ten years a mountain monk of Lu,	十年廬嶽僧
<sup>2</sup> It takes just one day to emerge from the peaks.	一旦出巖層

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guest from the high seat in the Dharma hall. In Song dynasty *yulu* preserved in the Taishō and Zokuzōkyō canons, one can find myriad parting poems written for occasions that I suspect may have been like the social rituals described in *qinggui*. Not all extant parting poems, of course, were composed during or in advance of such formal events in the monastery, and many were “requested” 求. It is difficult to judge, but the core forty-three *Yifanfeng* poems seem to have been written in response to Nanpo’s request.

<sup>29</sup> This range of purposes is clear from perusing the titles of parting poems preserved in Song dynasty *yulu*.

<sup>30</sup> Huinan had been the abbot of Tong’an Chongsheng Chan Cloister 同安崇勝禪院 and then Guizong Temple 歸宗寺, both on Mt. Lu, before moving to the newly renamed Jicui 積翠 on Mt. Huangbo 黃檗山 (in Yifeng county 宜豐縣 near Nanchang 南昌).

<sup>31</sup> *Huanglong Huinan Chanshi yulu*, T. 47, no. 1993, p. 635, c13-16. Cf. Charles Egan’s translation in Charles Egan, *Clouds Thick, Whereabouts Unknown*, p. 114.

My old friends come to the river to bid farewell,	舊友臨江別
<sup>4</sup> My lonely skiff marked with a crane sets out. <sup>32</sup>	孤舟帶鶴登
Water does flow, following the twisting banks,	水流隨岸曲
<sup>6</sup> And my sail fills when the wind soars.	帆勢任風騰
Going or staying, fundamentally I am attached to neither,	去住本無著
<sup>8</sup> A master of Chan severs all love and hate.	禪家絕愛憎

There is an apparent conflict between Buddhist ideals of non-attachment and the normative emotional response to parting. The final couplet of Huinan's poem fulfills the generic expectations of a parting poem by addressing emotions while simultaneously challenging normative expressions of sentiment. The poem contrasts with the aforementioned examples by Su Shi and Han Yu. Huinan states that neither coming nor going is fundamentally nostalgic. Nostalgia is not located in the act of parting itself. The minds of those who face separation create the sentiment accompanying leave-taking.

Huinan's poem may be examined in terms of its literary themes and its performative functions, which interact to form a poetics of circumstance.<sup>33</sup> Huinan takes the riverside leave-taking scene as an allegory for an ideal Buddhist response to separation. The journey down the river becomes a metaphor for unwavering serenity as

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<sup>32</sup> In the Chinese poetic imagination, cranes fly as solitary individuals and often are heading home. The crane is also a symbol of longevity and associated with transcendent hermits. I have found some suggestions that carved cranes adorned small crafts and hence a crane may be synecdoche for a skiff.

<sup>33</sup> My investigation of a poetics of circumstance, marked by intentional play between themes within the poem and the social and ritual functions of the poem as an object, was inspired in part by Marian Sugano's analysis of Stéphane Mallarmé's *vers de circonstance*, in *The Poetics of the Occasion: Mallarmé and the Poetry of Circumstance*.

Huinan leaves one saṃgha and journeys to a new abbotship. Huinan asserts a true master is untroubled by grasping or aversion. It seems Huinan understands himself as untroubled, having successfully severed love and hate.

This parting message is addressed to Huinan's old friends from his ten years as abbot on Mount Lu, and it functions as a Buddhist teaching. Huinan uses the occasion of farewell as an example of impermanence. This is a beautiful orchestration of themes and functions to express a Buddhist principle pertinent to the occasion. This is a different kind of farewell poem from the sentimental poems in previous examples.

Another figure in the orthodox Chan lineage, Xuedou Chongxian 雪竇重顯, similarly wrote a poem to mark his departure from the community at Lingyin temple in Hangzhou. After having spent three years as an officer in the Lingyin community, Xuedou was about to take up his first abbot's post at Cuifeng 翠峯 temple in Suzhou. Though possessing the banal title, "Taking leave of the Chan masters at Lingyin to comply with the invitation at Cuifeng" 赴翠峯請，別靈隱禪師, the topic of Xuedou's parting poem is an inquiry into the nature of monks' parting poetry.<sup>34</sup>

At times of parting, I don't bother to speak of feelings;

臨行情緒懶開言

<sup>2</sup> Propagating cardinal tenets is also of no use.

提唱宗乘亦是閑

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<sup>34</sup> From *Mingjue Chanshi yulu* 明覺禪師語錄, *juan* 6 (T. 47, no. 1996, p. 706, b18-20), n.b. the punctuation in the Taishō edition is misleading. The poem appears in *Chanzong nan du hai* 禪宗雜毒海 with the slightly altered title 赴請翠峯別靈隱禪師 (XZJ 114, p. 159, b14). For a review of this event in Xuedou's career, see Huang Yi-hsun, "Xuedou Chongxian chanshi shengping yu Xuedou qi ji zhi kaobian," p. 90 and Huang, *Song dai Chan zong cishu Zuting shiyuan zhi yanjiu*, pp. 85-86.

A sea of worthy monks and venerable guiding teachers;      珍重導師并海眾  
 4 I cannot master my thoughts that linger and bend toward this      不勝依戀向靈山  
 temple.

Xuedou marked his leaving with a wonderful poem. The first premise is that most parting poems merely mouth platitudes and idle sentimentality. In the second line, however, Xuedou extends his critique to the kind of parting poetry that must have been in vogue among monks. We infer that chic monks' poems replaced sentimental truisms with Buddhist dogma. Such sentiment is also in vain, according to Xuedou. The second couplet turns from abstractions to the present moment. Xuedou lauds the monks at Lingyin temple and confesses his sentimental attachment to this community.

The monastic anxiety over emotions discussed in Chapters One and Two provides us the background to understand Xuedou's poem. Xuedou ultimately inscribes his sentiments, but situates them behind the phrase *busheng* 不勝 ("I cannot master"). This concluding line comes after his opening statement that he does not . Nonetheless, a public renunciation such as this entails the naming of feelings. Xuedou's sideward reference to sentiments thus allows him to utter and then undo the uttering of feelings that are appropriate for leaving but inappropriate for a monk. We may imagine how this technique of "unsaying" contrasts with parting poems that assert dogma, which Xuedou stated are "of no use" in Line Two.<sup>35</sup> Xuedou thus uses a literary technique to creatively

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<sup>35</sup> In Chapter Five I return to poems by Xuedou in which he deploys a similar technique of "unsaying" to express grief when mourning. I tentatively propose, as more consideration is needed, that Xuedou's poem be read as a statement that to acknowledge one's feelings and repent is a superior practice than the insincere repetition of dogma and monastic rules. I am not aware of this theme appearing in another monk's writing.

respond to the situation at hand. His orchestration of themes, techniques, and the function of the poem to mark his departure, is particularly skillful. Xuedou is able to successfully participate in the mode (or genre) of parting poetry and still maintain his ascetic deportment. The monks' poems below, written by a single community to bid farewell to a Japanese pilgrim, similarly use sets of themes and literary techniques to respond to the problem of emotions in parting poetry.

### **Texts: The *Yifanfeng* and its texts, paratexts, and contexts**

The *Yifanfeng* 一帆風 is a compilation of forty-four poems (or sixty-nine poems in one expanded edition) attributed to forty-four (or sixty-nine) Chinese monks. Colophons attest that these poems were presented to Japanese Zen pilgrim Nanpo Jōmin 南浦紹明 (1235-1309) at the end of his sojourn in China.<sup>36</sup> Nanpo was later known as the founder of the *Ō-Tō-Kan* Rinzai Zen lineage.<sup>37</sup> As a collection of poetry, *Yifanfeng* is unusual for being the work of many authors addressed to a single recipient. On this basis, we may interpret the *Yifanfeng* parting poems as a single corpus, the work of a single authorial community, written on the single occasion of Nanpo's departure from China. As such, it is imperative to determine to what extent we can know whether the text is the work of a community.

The complete text of *Yifanfeng* survives in two Edo period (1603-1868) woodblock editions. A fragment of *Yifanfeng* from an early 14<sup>th</sup> century autographed

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<sup>36</sup> Nanpo is often referred to as National Instructor Daiō 大應国師. For basic background on Nanpo, see Araki Kengo 荒木見悟's *Daiō*.

<sup>37</sup> More information can be found in Kenneth Kraft's *Eloquent Zen*.



manuscript was recently found set within an 18<sup>th</sup> century handscroll. There, it appears together with previously unpublished colophons by scholars including Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657-1725). The colophons note the loss of the original Chinese manuscripts in a fire at Kenchō-ji temple of Kamakura.<sup>38</sup> The fragment is in the hand of Nanpo's disciple Shūhō Myōchō 宗峰妙超 (1282-1337; also known as National Instructor Daitō 大燈国師, and hereafter simply "Daitō"). Photo-reproductions of two additional fragments from this same manuscript were found in Taishō era catalogues. These three fragments together account for about three-fourths of the original handscroll.

Each poem of *Yifanfeng* is attributed to one of Nanpo's dharma brothers under their teacher Xutang, a fairly prominent community of late Song dynasty Buddhist monks in the Jiangnan area. External evidence (discussed below) suggests that during fall 1267 and spring 1268 the parting poems were presented to Nanpo, at the end of his nine years of study in China. Nanpo then transported the poetry to Japan. Remarkably, the poems of the *Yifanfeng* were soon forgotten in China, even though they had been written by

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<sup>38</sup> A colophon by Daishin Gitō 大心義統 (1657-1730), abbot of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, reports that the original *Yifanfeng* manuscripts carried by Nanpo from China were destroyed in a fire at Tengen-in 天源院 in Kamakura. Tengen-in is part of Kenchō-ji 建長寺, and was built as a memorial for Nanpo. Several fires plagued Kenchō-ji before the Edo; a fire in 1414 destroyed the entire temple complex. Tengen-in was one of the memorial stupas in recognition of Nanpo. After Nanpo returned from China, he became abbot of Sōfuku-ji 崇福寺 in Hakata in 1272. In 1304 Nanpo was called to Kyoto, and then in 1307 was called by Hōjō Sadatoki 北条貞時 to Kamakura where he assumed the abbotship of Kenchō-ji. Following Nanpo's death in the twelfth month of Enkyō 1 延慶元 (1308), memorial stupas were erected at Tengen-in in Kenchō-ji, at Zuiun-in 瑞雲院 in Sōfuku-ji in Hakata (a large fire in 1586 destroyed the entire temple there, and the hall was rebuilt in 1612), and in Kyoto at Ryōshō-ji 龍翔寺 (now within Daitoku-ji temple grounds, Ryōshō-ji first burned down in 1378). See Nanpo's pagoda inscription *Entsū Daiō Kokushi tōmei* 圓通大應國師塔銘, written by one Yanjun 延俊 (d.u.) abbot of Hangzhou's Zhong Tianzhu 中天竺, found in his *goroku* at T. 80, no. 2548, p. 127, c4. See also the "Record of Tengen-an" 天源菴記 in *Chikusen Oshō Goroku* starting at T. 80, no. 2554, p. 445, b14.

Chinese monks. This is an excellent case for reflecting on the materiality of poetry.

Though these poems likely had been spoken aloud in China (voice too has its own kind of fleeting materiality), and for a period of time could be recalled from memory by their Chinese authors, and thus could have been re-materialized in/on a durable material, this does not seem to have been the case. Eventually the poems slipped from memory, and the only traces of their existence remained in Japan.

Today, though the original material Nanpo brought from China was destroyed by fire, there are three distinct editions of *Yifanfeng*.<sup>39</sup> First, the earliest witness is Daitō's hand-copied manuscript (hereafter *shojikubon* 書軸本), bearing his signature and seal. Daitō most likely copied directly from the original materials held by his master. Daitō's handscroll is extant in three fragments that account for just over 70% of a forty-four poem text, including middle and final portions of the text with his autograph.<sup>40</sup> Second, the earliest complete edition is a 1664 Edo woodblock print by one Rinbō Dōhaku 輪峰道白 (d.u.)<sup>41</sup> containing forty-four poems, all heptasyllabic. The poems are arranged by

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<sup>39</sup> The following essay is based on the work and conclusions of a seminar held at Hanzono University led by Prof. Kinugawa Kenji 衣川賢次 from 2011 through 2015. I was a principal member of that group, and I am grateful for the opportunity to acknowledge my debt to the group's efforts. Our group examined the core set of forty-four poems found in all manuscripts as well as the set of twenty-five supplemental poems found only in an Edo woodblock edition. A publication of the complete annotated translation into modern Japanese is forthcoming from the Zen Bunka Kenkyūjo.

<sup>40</sup> The final section is unambiguously the text's conclusion. The other two fragments do not clearly mark the beginning of the text, and I presume are from its middle portions. The missing section presumably is the beginning of Daitō's text, and any additional paratext is missing with it. A more detailed description of the manuscript and its significance may be found in the main text further below.

<sup>41</sup> It seems unlikely that this Dōhaku is the same person as Manzan Dōhaku 円山道白 (1636-1715), who hailed from near Hiroshima. The only *rinbō* 輪峰 I am aware of is located in northern Hyōgo prefecture, and that may be where our Dōhaku was from.

length, with forty-one *jueju* 絕句 (four-line poems) followed by three longer *guti* 古體 poems of varying lengths. I refer to this “Dōhaku’s first edition” (or, *shokokubon* 初刻本). Third, another run of *Yifanfeng* was printed from the same woodblocks but with some changes. An additional twenty-five poems, heptasyllabic *jueju*, were appended (after the original *guti* poems). The compiler’s colophon was also altered to reflect the new total number of poems. Though it is not clear who altered the woodblocks and expanded the text, I refer to this as “Dōhaku’s expanded edition” (or, *zōhobon* 增補本). During the Edo Period, Dōhaku’s editions played an important role in reintroducing the text, and all modern editions have relied on one or the other of his texts.<sup>42</sup>

The re-discovery in Japan of long-lost Chinese poems has drawn international attention in East Asia. There has been considerable debate about the provenance of the additional twenty-five poems. The *Yifanfeng* collection of poems has recently received scholarly attention in both China<sup>43</sup> and Japan.<sup>44</sup> As described in detail below, I consider

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<sup>42</sup> More recently, the *shokokubon* edition was reprinted by Sōfuku-ji 崇福寺 of Hakata in Taishō 11 (1922). The *Yifanfeng* was transcribed and published as part of the *Shijiku shūsei* 誌軸集成 section of *Gozan bungaku shinshū*, vol. *bekkan ichi*, pp. 925-930. When first reprinted in China, the *Yifanfeng* was presented as a supplement to *Quan Song shi* by Chen Jie (2007). Chen republished the poems together with more results in 2010, an article expanded and published in Japanese in 2012. *Yifanfeng* was *not* included in the 2012 compilation *Songdai Chanseng shi jikao*.

<sup>43</sup> In China, scholarship on *Yifanfeng* began when the text was reprinted with an initial analysis by Chen Jie 陳捷 (2007). This article elicited a response from Hou Tijian 侯體健 (2009), who held that the 25 supplemental poems should not be included in a supplement to the *Quan Song shi*. He supposed these poems may well have been composed in medieval Japan and mistaken by later Japanese readers for Chinese poems. Chen Xiaofa 陳小法 and Jiang Jing 江靜 in their book *Jingshan wenhua yu Zhongri jiaoliu*, pp. 111-113, expressed similar sentiments doubting that the poems were written by Xutang’s community. In response, Xu Hongxia 許紅霞 (2010) demonstrated that three of the authors of the supplemental 25 poems were known associates of Xutang’s community. This first half of Xu’s argument is correct, but Xu did not correctly explain how the supplemental poems came to be printed with the *Yifanfeng*.

the poems in the *zōhobon* to have been parting poems given directly to Nanpo by members of a loose confederacy of monks that had trained under Xutang. If this conclusion is correct, then it supports the insight that the poems were written by a community of authors and may be interpreted as a coherent corpus.

The title *Yifanfeng* itself offers some clues.<sup>45</sup> Both of Dōhaku's editions open with a short piece of prose by one Shaoxi Huiming 苕溪慧明 (d.u.) dated winter of the third year of Xianchun 咸淳 (late 1267 to early 1268). Nanpo had taken leave of master Xutang at Jingshan in the autumn earlier that year, 1267, and so this text by Huiming was written after the autumn poems found in *Yifanfeng*. Judging from the content of Huiming's address, it seems to have been intended as a prefatory inscription for the collection of poems. The piece's title *Yifanfeng xu* ("Preface to *Yifanfeng*") may have been Huiming's own, but it is difficult to say. *Yifanfeng* being the title of the corpus of poetry is attested by Zen monk Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純 (1394-1481), who read the collection, perhaps while abbot of Daitoku-ji, and wrote a seven-character quatrain inscription with the header "Dai Ippanfū go" 題一帆風後. One of his disciples also saw the *Yifanfeng*, which he described as a scroll (*jiku* 軸).<sup>46</sup> The title *Yifanfeng* is mentioned

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<sup>44</sup> In Japan, materials relating to Nanpo have been studied by Nishio Kenryū 西尾賢隆 and Satō Shūkō 佐籐秀孝. Among their many essays, most helpful have been Satō Shūkō "Kidō Chigu to Nanpo Jōmyō" and Nishio Kenryū "Nichū kōryū ni okeru Daiō no tōmei."

<sup>45</sup> The words *yifanfeng* themselves mean something like "a sail full of wind" and are a valediction for safe passage, a wish for smooth or plain sailing. The phrase may be familiar to some readers today from the platitude *yi fan feng shun* 一帆風順, or *yi fan shun feng* 一帆順風, frequently seen on the walls of Chinese restaurants.

<sup>46</sup> In his poem, Ikkyū attests that the *Yifanfeng* poems praise Nanpo's accomplishment, but do so in a strange, perhaps even inelegant, way that he associates with *zenwa* 禪話. This poem is found in the critical revised text of *Kyōun shū* by Itō Toshiko: p. 41, no. 645. An annotated Japanese translation is in Yanagida, p. 217. Ikkyū's disciple Nankō Sōgen 南江宗沅 (1387-1463) also

again by the Obaku émigré monk Jifei Ruyi 即非如一 (1616-1671; Jap. Sokuhi Nyoitsu) in an autographed colophon to Dōhaku's edition dated 1664. Jifei, a noted poet and calligrapher himself, praised the *Yifanfeng* poems by comparing them to “powerful waves that continue to travel through history” long after Nanpo's encounter with the great worthies of Song China.

Dōhaku's first edition (hereafter *shokokubon* 初刻本), printed shortly after 1664, contained forty-four poems: forty-one *jueju* followed by three *guti*, all in seven-character meter. Dōhaku wrote a colophon wherein he detailed how in 1664 he found in “an ancient temple of the capital” “a complete scroll” of *Yifanfeng* containing forty-three poems plus the verse given to Nanpo by Xutang, which he moved to the front of the collection.<sup>47</sup> Presumably, Dōhaku found this manuscript at Daitoku-ji.

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composed a seven-character quatrain on the occasion of examining a hand-copy of *Yifanfeng* (titled “On viewing a scroll of *Yifanfeng*, by Southern Song elders to send off Nanpo” 觀南宋諸老送南浦一帆風軸), in *Gozan bungaku shinshū* 6.254, no. 189. The ‘scroll’ in question probably is not the Chinese objects brought by Nanpo, but rather is Daitō's hand-copy, which was subsequently re-discovered at Daitoku-ji in the Edo (as per its colophons).

<sup>47</sup> Xutang's verse has been important for the Daitoku-ji tradition as proof of Xutang's recognition of Nanpo's awakening and for its prediction that “heirs will flourish in the east.” In Daitō's manuscript there are several curious signs that this verse was not necessarily part of *Yifanfeng*, but was appended by Daitō. Xutang's verse is at the end of the 43 parting poems, not at the beginning as in other editions, yet it is before his signature and seal. On the manuscript itself, the verse is placed with empty white space at the top of each line. This may have been an act of reverence by Daitō. All the other poems occupy the full height of the paper. The organizing principle of the other 43 poems – the 41 *jueju* are followed by three long *gutu* – suggests that this seven-character *jueju* poem should have been organized together with the other seven-character *jueju*, not at the very end after the longer *guti* poems. Whereas the other *Yifanfeng* poems record only the author, Xutang's verse includes a colophon after the poem. The colophon was later printed in the woodblock *Yifanfeng* as a prefatory note to the poem. All of this suggests that perhaps Xutang's verse was presented separately from the *Yifanfeng* poems. Iriya Yoshitaka (1985) pointed out the unexpected consequences of closely attending to the grammar of the poem, including the conclusion that the poem is written in Nanpo's own voice. A follow-up response and more, including an overview of earlier scholarship, is found in Nakase Yūtarō and Kinugawa Kenji, “Gidō sōbetsu ge to sono shūhen.”

A second expanded edition that reused Dōhaku's woodblocks (hereafter *zōhobon* 增補本) was printed at an unknown later date. Dōhaku's colophon was emended. In this second edition, the colophons appear exactly the same except for a single alteration by Dōhaku to reflect the number of poems that now appeared in the *Yifanfeng*. This edition contains the same forty-four poems plus an additional twenty-five poems. Dōhaku's colophon was changed so the number of poems found in a temple went from 43 to 67 (though in fact he now had 68 poems not including Xutang's verse). Though this could suggest he found the additional poems in the same temple and so added them, unfortunately Dōhaku or the new compiler did not document these changes.

The supplemental poems show formal differences that suggest they are not from the same source as the original *shokokubon* forty-four. For example, the author names found in the *shokokubon* all contain four glyphs, whereas those in the supplemental poems contain only two glyphs. This has raised the suspicion of some modern scholars. Hou Tijian 侯體健 (2009), for example, noted that the twenty-five poems all include references to spring and seaside phenomena, whereas the forty-four poems of the *shokokubon* depict autumn and mountain scenes. He then made the interesting suggestion the twenty-five poems were a set of parting poems written by Japanese monks and mistakenly included in the *zōhobon*. Xu Hongxia 許紅霞 (2010), however, positively identified some authors listed in the *zōhobon* as Song dynasty monks and thus settled the question of nationality.<sup>48</sup> She found historical materials relating to seventeen of the

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<sup>48</sup> Hou Tijian (2009) pointed out that the 25 supplemental poems all depict a springtime seaside scene. On the basis of these seasonal references, he argued they were a set of parting poems without any connection to the *Yifanfeng*, which had been written in autumn. Then, Xu Hongxia (2012) corroborated the identity of seventeen of the authors named in the two *Yifanfeng* texts, including three monks who wrote poems now in the supplemental section. All seventeen were

authors named in the two *Yifanfeng* texts, including three monks from the supplemental section, and found that all seventeen monks were associated with Xutang's community. However, the possibility remained that the supplemental 25 poems had been written in Jiangnan one spring for some other Japanese monk, and were then brought to Japan and preserved separately until erroneously appended to the *Yifanfeng* several hundred years later. Previous research was unable to conclude whether the recipient of the supplemental poems was Nanpo or some other Japanese monk.

The twenty-five supplemental poems clearly were not part of an *Yifanfeng* urtext given to Nanpo when he left Jingshan in autumn of 1267. The spring seaside imagery makes that clear. Nanpo's collection of forty-four poems was the object of appreciation of Shaoxi Huiming (as discussed above), dated to winter of 1267, and was the source for Daitō's handscroll. Strictly speaking, then, the title *Yifanfeng* seems to belong to the forty-four poems. However, closely reading the supplemental poems demonstrates that the twenty-five poems were also written for Nanpo before he departed, perhaps in spring of 1268.

Particular poetic themes are used consistently across the two sets of *Yifanfeng* poems. These include general themes like images of the ocean and vessels,<sup>49</sup> as well as ironic references to journeying. While the presence of these more general, universal themes alone would not be sufficient evidence to support a new hypothesis concerning

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associated with Xutang. Xu was unable to prove whether or not the supplemental poems were addressed to Nanpo. Nonetheless, this established the authorship of the supplemental poems as Song Chinese monks and so settled the debate among Chinese scholars concerning verification of supplements to *Quan Song shi*.

<sup>49</sup> Extensive references to the ocean are also found in Tang era poems written in honor of people bound for Japan by sea, many of whom were monks. Buddhist monks only incidentally made up most of Edward Schafer's examples in "Fusang and beyond: the haunted seas to Japan." Schafer's analysis emphasized the strange, especially sea monsters, and primal fear of the sea.

the recipient, it is remarkable that these themes appear in great numbers throughout both sets of poetry. The repetition of images, metaphors, and rhetorical strategies all together suggest that this community of monks made recourse to a shared fund of knowledge.

Fortunately, there is one specific image that appears frequently in *Yifanfeng* that does not often appear in other parting poems of the period.<sup>50</sup> A particular image of Sudhana (*Shancai* 善財, often referred to as *Shancai tongzi* 善財童子), the boy-pilgrim protagonist of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* included as part of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* (explained in detail below), appears in many of the supplemental poems as well as the original forty-four. Furthermore, this same image is found in a poem by Xutang, titled “Sudhana.”<sup>51</sup>

A tour of the southern lands ends in a moment; 歷盡南方只片時

2 After the winds of karma blew fog through one hundred cities.<sup>52</sup> 百城烟水業風吹

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<sup>50</sup> This analysis recapitulates the findings published in Kinugawa Kenji, “Sōbetsu shishū *Yippanfū* no seiritu katei.” One can find examples from the period in which this same image is used in parting poetry, such as in *Beijian Jujian Chanshi yulu* 北澗居簡禪師語錄 (XZJ 121, p. 158, b12-14) and in *Yanxi Guangwen chanshi yulu* 偃溪廣聞禪師語錄 (XZJ 121, p. 298, b17-p. 299, a1). Nonetheless, the frequency with which this image appears in the *Yifanfeng* is exceptional.

<sup>51</sup> *Shancai* 善財, preserved in Gidō Shūshin’s (1325-1388) *Jōwa ruiju sōon renpōshū*, but was not included by the Chinese compilers in *Xutang heshang yulu* 虛堂和尚語錄 (The Recorded sayings of the venerable Xutang). Gidō’s colophon dated 1388 explains his lifelong endeavor to collect and organize Song and Yuan poems begun when he was a student during the *Jōwa* period. Future research may find in the *Jōwa ruiju sōon renpōshū* many more poems not preserved elsewhere.

<sup>52</sup> “Winds of karma” *yefeng* 業風 appears as “leafy wind” *yefeng* 葉風 in *Jōwa ruiju sōon renpōshū*, in the type-set edition of *Jōwa shū* in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho*, v. 143, p. 31, and was corrected based on the *Tentetsu shū* 點鐵集 (“Flecks of Iron Collection”), 2.87a, republished in *Zengaku tenseki sōkan*, v. 10, *jōken*, p. 142. *Tentetsu shu*, by the Sōtō Zen monk Gekiō Sōjun 逆翁宗順 (1433- 1488), is a 15<sup>th</sup> century compilation of couplets organized by rhyme word. The *Tentetsu shū* cites an earlier *Jōwa shū* as its source. Several Edo manuscripts of *Jōwa ruiju sōon renpōshū* survive, including two at National Diet Library. The poem is on p. 2.3a in the 1632 edition, which has an ambiguously printed character that looks like *ye* 葉 (“leaf”), which must be the source of the error in the *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho* edition. A later Edo edition clearly prints the correct character *ye* 業.



Even here at the end there is no good friend;<sup>53</sup>

如今到處無知識

4 Who do you need to see when you let go your grip of the  
precipice edge?

撒手懸崖要見誰

The phrase “hundred cities” is explained in *Zuting shiyuan* 祖庭事苑, a Northern Song dictionary of Chan terms, as an abbreviation of Sudhana’s “travels to one-hundred-ten cities and visits to fifty-two teachers.”<sup>54</sup> It was metonymy for Sudhana’s entire pilgrimage. The image of fog, however, does not appear in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. In Tang poetry *yanshui* depicts landscapes and can evoke a seemingly impassible wall or distance. In Song era Buddhist writing, including other poems about Sudhana, fog becomes a metaphor for the bumbling world not-yet-awakened. Sometimes written out as *yanshui mangmang* 烟水茫茫, it leaves the impression that ignorance is both thick and vast. The connection between one hundred cities and fog was not based on a scriptural passage, but was a creative expression used in the Song dynasty to refer to a particular interpretation of Sudhana’s pilgrimage.

The second couplet’s iconoclasm transforms this poem from mere praise of Sudhana’s achievement to an inquiry into the meaning of a journey. Remarkably similar ironic images of Sudhana’s journey recur throughout *Yifanfeng*, discussed at length further below. The repetition of particular images and rhetorical strategies connects these poems to a community of authors based around Xutang. However, as the two sets of

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<sup>53</sup> “Good friends” *zhishi* 知識, short for *shanzhishi* 善知識, are spiritual teachers.

<sup>54</sup> XZJ 113, p. 73, a13-17. The number of teachers is either given as fifty-two or fifty-three, depending on whether one includes Samantabhadra after the second visit to Mañjuśrī. A comprehensive study of the text, its history, and significance is Huang Yi-hsun, *Song dai Chan zong cishu Zuting shiyuan zhi yanjiu*. See pp. 135-136 and 253 for interesting comments pertinent to interpretation of Sudhana’s pilgrimage.

poems depicted distinct seasonal scenes, it is still likely that the poems were written at different times, and quite possibly for different Japanese pilgrims.

On the basis of extraordinary textual similarities shared by a poem from the *zōhobon* and a poem later written by Nanpo, Kinugawa has shown that the Japanese pilgrim was none other than Nanpo.<sup>55</sup> The eighth supplemental poem by a monk Dewei 德惟 (d.u.) has particular significance.

Casting off, the ship's bow spins north,	撥轉船頭向北看
2 Boundless high tide dashes against the coast.	全潮拍岸正漫漫
The pilgrim Sudhana did not know he had it,	咨詢童子不知有
4 And walked in vain to a hundred cities through fog and cold.	空走百城烟水寒

The author of this poem, the monk Dewei, is well-attested as a close disciple of Xutang. Dewei was the editor of the third fascicle of *Xutang heshang yulu* 虛堂和尚語錄 (The Recorded sayings of the venerable Xutang). Dewei was also honored by name in a poem that survives in Xutang's own hand, now in the Tokugawa Art Museum of Nagoya.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> This is a continuation of the argument published by Kinugawa Kenji, “Sōbetsu shishū *Yippanfū* no seiritsu katei.”

<sup>56</sup> Dewei is addressed as “Dewei chanzhe” 德惟禪者 in the manuscript. This poem is also found in the *Xutang heshang yulu*, when Dewei is called “Dewei shizhe” 德惟侍者. Xutang states that the verse was given as Dewei set out for itinerant practice.

Though Dewei's above parting poem is found in the supplemental poems, an uncanny borrowing occurs in a later poem, "Kannon san" 觀音贊 ("In Praise of Kannon"), written by Nanpo sometime after returning to Japan.<sup>57</sup>

Clouds gentle, water boundless;	雲淡淡，水漫漫
2 The universal gate appears, do not slight it.	普門現，不相謾
The pilgrim Sudhana did not yet know he had it,	咨詢童子未知有
4 Walked in vain to a hundred cities through fog and cold.	空走百城烟浪寒

3/ The Taishō canon reads *chuiyun* 吹詢.

Nanpo's final couplet is borrowed directly from the parting poem by Dewei. Nanpo also repeats the "water boundless" (*manman* 漫漫) found in Dewei's poem. The most likely explanation for this exceptional similarity is that Nanpo personally knew Dewei's poem.

We have seen above how the supplemental poems share images and themes, most notably an antinomian reference to Sudhana, that tie them to one another and to Xutang. Many more examples of this type of sharing are given below. I will now take as read that the poems constitute a single corpus and instead focus on interpretation. We have also seen an extraordinary similarity between a supplementary poem and a poem by Nanpo, which ties the supplemental set to Nanpo.

If the supplemental poems were written for Nanpo, than it is likely that they were written after Nanpo had taken leave of the community at Jingshan and was on his way home, perhaps in Ningbo 寧波. The supplemental poems express spring and seaside

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<sup>57</sup> This poem is found in the Recorded Sayings of Nanpo, *Entsū Daiō Kokushi Goroku*, T. 80, no. 2548, p. 123, c18-19.

themes whereas the first forty-four possess autumn mountain images. There is external evidence to support the thesis that Nanpo did not set sail for Japan until late spring or early summer of 1268. The calligraphy manuscript signed by Chinese monk Wushi Kexuan 無示可宣, a registered *jūyō bunkazai* 重要文化財 (Important Cultural Property), is a parting poem addressed to Nanpo.<sup>58</sup>

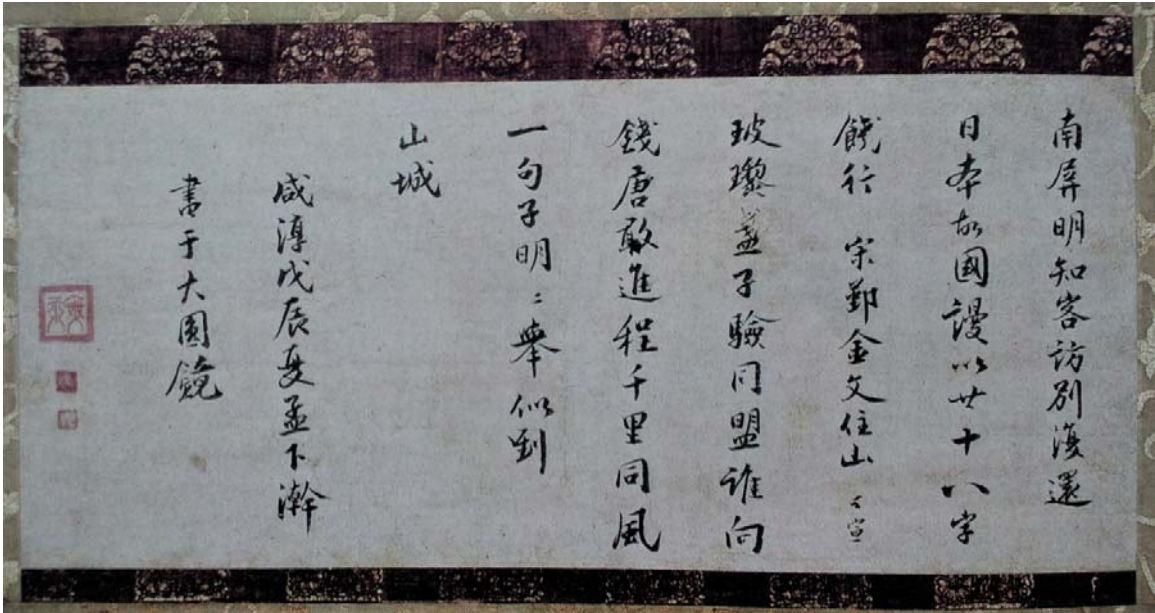


Fig. 1 Parting poem by Wushi Kexuan 無示可宣, abbot of Huizhao Temple in Ningbo, addressed to Nanpo in early summer 1268. Collection of Urasenke.<sup>59</sup>

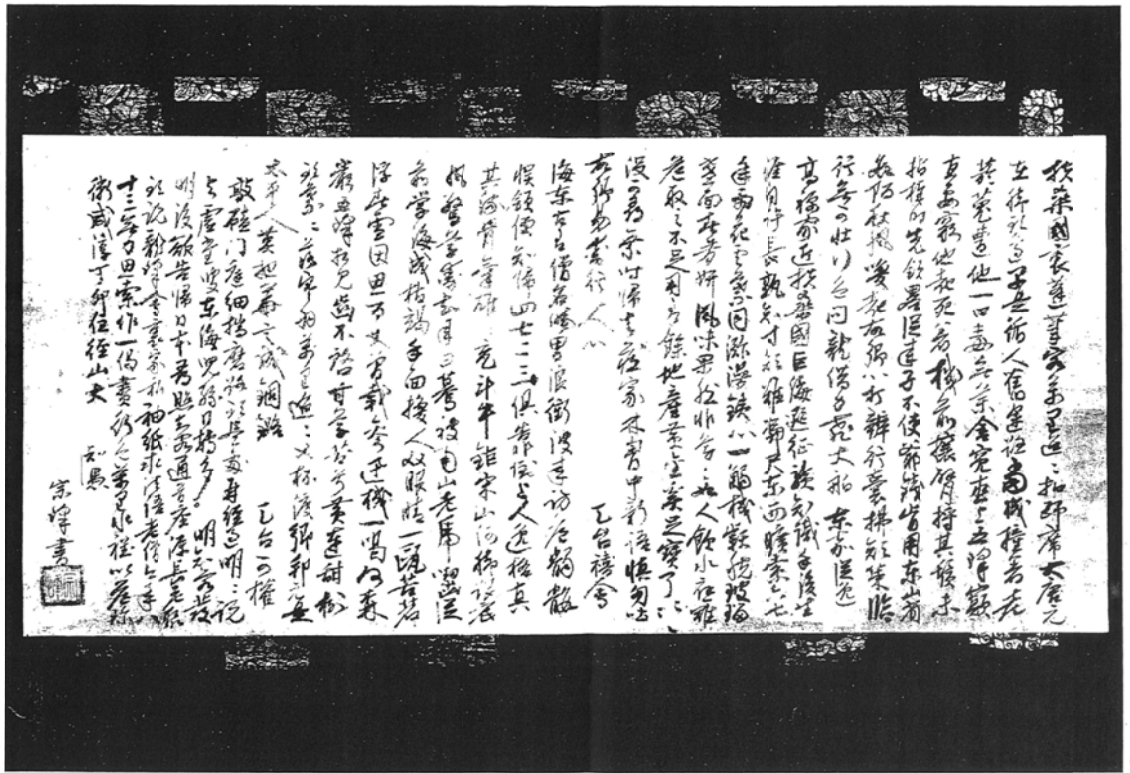
In this piece, Kexuan presents himself as “abbot [of Huizhao temple] on Jinwen mountain in Yin county [Ningbo] of the Song” (*Song Yin Jingwen zhushan Kexuan* 宋鄞金文住山可宣). Kexuan signed the poem from *Da yuan jing* 大圓鏡, the name of the abbot’s quarters at Huizhao Temple 惠照寺, during “the last week of the fourth month” of 1268

<sup>58</sup> This specimen has been printed several times, first in *Zenrin bokuseki*, 1.44. In the mid-century *jūyō bunkazai* 重要文化財 (Important Cultural Property) documentation, the monk’s name was erroneously thought to be Wuer Kexuan 無爾可宣. In all likelihood, the *shi* 示 was misread as a simplified *er* 尔. For more, see Nishio Kenryū, *Chūsei no Nitchū kōryū to Zenshū*, 28-33.

<sup>59</sup> Photo courtesy of Komiyama Akihiro and Kinugawa Kenji.

(*Xianchun wu chen xiameng xiahuan* 咸淳戊辰夏孟下澣). This places Nanpo in Ningbo during early summer of 1268.

The most plausible conclusion is that the supplemental poems were a set of poems written by monks in the Ningbo region where Nanpo waited for a springtime vessel to Japan.<sup>60</sup> The authors of these poems seem to have been members of a loosely confederated community of monks who had trained under Xutang. We may now consider all sixty-eight poems in the *zōhobon* to have been parting poems given to Nanpo.



Fragment of *Yippanfū* (Yifanfeng), signed by Daitō. Private Collection, Kyoto.

In addition to the two editions of Dōhaku’s woodblock, Daitō’s hand-copied manuscript (or, *shojikubon*) can tell us more about the *Yifanfeng* as well as about the life of the manuscript. Daitō’s *shojikubon* was most likely made directly from Nanpo’s

<sup>60</sup> See Kinugawa Kenji, “Sōbetsu shishū *Yippanfū* no seiritsu katei.”

original documents. This *shojikubon* may have been made during the Ungo-an period of Daitō's life, when it is thought that Daitō made copies of many books from Nanpo's library, however little is certain about this period in Daitō's career.<sup>61</sup> The early history of the manuscript remains obscure. However, it is clear that the *shojikubon* had been cut into several fragments before the Edo merchant Tani Yasutaka 谷安殷 (1669-1721) came into possession of a fragment of Daitō's *Yifanfeng*, which is now held in a private collection entrusted to Kitamura Bijutsukan 北村美術館 of Kyoto. In all likelihood, the original *shojikubon* scroll was held by a temple in need of funds. The long scroll was carefully severed into three or four sections that could be mounted easily on hanging scrolls, and which when sold separately would fetch more revenue for the temple. Tani's fragment has thirty lines of text constituting four poems, and is mounted on a scroll with a series of colophons all dating the 1720s. This is the fragment which recently resurfaced in Kyoto and was brought to a group at Hanazono University.

In addition to Tani's fragment, two matching pieces of Daitō's *shojikubon Yifanfeng* are also known, thanks to Miyatake Yoshiyuki 宮武慶之. Independently of the Hanazono group, Miyatake discovered Meiji and Taisho period photographs of two more fragments, one from the collection of Ikeda Seisuke 池田清助 (18 lines constituting 9 poems) and one from the collection of Masuda Nobuyo 益田信世 (30 lines constituting 15 poems). The manuscripts themselves have not been located and may have been lost in the war. Fortunately, the brushwork in these photographs is quite legible and the text readily readable.

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<sup>61</sup> See Kraft, *Eloquent Zen*.

The three fragments of Daitō's handscroll are in the same hand, are the same height, and fit neatly back together. All together twenty-eight of forty-four poems are represented: twenty-four of the forty *jueju* poems, all three of the longer *guti* poems, and Xutang's one verse. The three fragments account for 78 lines of a presumed 110 (just over 70%). Sixteen *jueju* (presumably 32 lines long) remain unaccounted for and may be presumed missing.

Tani's fragment was from the final extremity and contains the last three poems of *Yifanfeng*, then Xutang's verse (found at the head of all later editions), and finally Daitō's autograph and seal. We learn from the Edo period colophons that Tani traveled between Edo and Kyoto, showing the specimen to members of the learned world, including Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657-1725), who composed an erudite colophon praising Daitō's brushwork.<sup>62</sup> Today, we find Arai's colophon appended to a large hand scroll with Tani's specimen, along with four other colophons composed between 1720 and 1721 by Zen monastic officers. The colophons make clear that the publication of Dōhaku's woodblock editions in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century had reignited interest in the *Yifanfeng* still felt some decades later. Tani's efforts as a collector were critical to the survival of the manuscript until today.

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<sup>62</sup> In the colophon, dated the eleventh month of the fifth year of the Kyōhō 享保 reign (1720), Arai contrasted these three poems in *guti* style with the first forty poems of the *Yifanfeng* which are seven-character *jueju*. Arai concluded that the three *guti* poems were not originally from the *Yifanfeng* and had been added erroneously in the Edo woodblock. It seems clear Arai was unaware of the rest of the *shojikubon* manuscript in which the three poems are part of the *Yifanfeng*, and thought he was looking at an unrelated manuscript – not a fragment from a larger work. Nonetheless, Arai's comments reveal that he was familiar with the Edo *shokokubon* edition. Also of note, Arai disparages the *shokokubon* editor for moving to the front of the woodblock edition the verse by Xutang which appears at the end of *shojikubon*. This anticipates by several hundred years a similar criticism found in Kinugawa, “Gidō sōbetsu ge to sono shūhen.”

It seems clear that two distinct textual lineages survive. One lineage is Daitō's *shojikubon*, which has no other known stemma. For the other line, Dōhaku's *shokokubon* edition from the Edo period is the earliest witness. The latter descends from the scroll found by Dōhaku; the whereabouts of the scroll are unknown. The texts suggest that the two lineages descend from an original set of texts brought from China by Nanpo (which was destroyed in a fire at Kenchō-ji).

The most striking difference between the lineages is the order in which the poems appear. Though the differences are mostly random, there are two common points. Both sets of texts begin with the *jueju* and group the *guti* poems afterward; and both sets of texts repeat poems in pairs. For example, the Masuda fragment contains the poems numbered: 12, 13, 8, 9, 30, 31.<sup>63</sup> Somehow the same poems are paired in both textual lineages, but the pairs themselves appear in seemingly random order. In all likelihood, there were two poems to each piece of paper of the *Yifanfeng* urtext, but the sequence of those sheets was not fixed. Kinugawa has speculated that Nanpo had gone around Jingshan temple requesting the parting poems one by one, somehow using each sheet of paper twice.<sup>64</sup> It also seems possible there was a single event at which a number of pieces of paper circulated. Either way, the *Yifanfeng* text was distinct from other farewell texts, such as Wushi Kexuan's poem, which appear singly. In conclusion, the set of forty-four poems were most likely written for a single event: Nanpo's departure from Jingshan.

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<sup>63</sup> I use the sequence of the Dōhaku woodblock to number the poems. The Ikeda fragment includes poems: 15, 24, 25, 16, 17, 4, 5, 26 and 27. The Masuda fragment includes poems: 12, 13, 8, 9, 30, 31, 32, 33, 28, 29, 22, 23, 38, 39, 40. The Tani fragment includes poems: 42, 43, 44, and 1.

<sup>64</sup> Kinugawa, "Gidō sōbetsu ge to sono shūhen."



The internal coherence of the twenty-five supplementary poems suggests a somewhat similar situation transpired in Ningbo. At first, the set of Ningbo poems must have been kept separately from *Yifanfeng* proper. Only later, were the twenty five supplemental poems taken to belong within *Yifanfeng*. However, the authenticity of the supplemental twenty-five poems has been confirmed. On the basis of shared imagery and rhetorical strategies, to be explored below, we may consider the supplemental poems together with the first forty-four as a single corpus of poems given to Nanpo by his Chinese hosts, the Xutang community.

In the essay below, all textual variants between the *shojikubon* and *shokokubon* have been noted. Poems from *Yifanfeng* are cited using the name of the author and the number from the order in which it appears in Dōhaku's *shokokubon* edition (not the Daitō *shojikubon* manuscript), the most commonly available edition (e.g., “Chicheng Xinghong 赤城行弘 / poem #5”). Xutang's verse is “poem #1”. The supplemental poems found in Dōhaku's second edition similarly include the name of the author, but are enumerated separately as “suppl. #X”.

### **Poetics: *Xingjiao* and the *Gaṇḍavyūha***

The *Yifanfeng* texts are also social documents that reflect the immediate contexts that created the *Yifanfeng* corpus. To read the *Yifanfeng* poems as literary documents requires understanding the social logic that informs the text. To that end, it may prove profitable to consider the widespread practice of occasional poetry. Occasional poems, common throughout the Chinese canon, use literary forms to enact social customs

(welcoming a guest, seeing off a friend) or to mark everyday occasions (the giving of a small gift, a birthday, a moment of nostalgia). These poems serve as witnesses to the circumstances in which they were composed. Occasional poems are worthy of study for the scholar of religion as a means of understanding the social interactions of religious professionals and their expression of religious principles in the context of everyday occasions.

At least two elements of a parting poem may be in some relationship to one another: the world of the text – its symbols, metaphors, and narrative arc – and the world behind the text, or a poem's function on the occasion of parting. To approach both of these two elements, an occasional poem should be (1) closely read as a text (2) in the context in which it served as a token of a particular occasion.

The *Yifanfeng* collection of parting poems is a valuable manuscript in that it represents a community of authors writing on a single occasion. It collects the farewell poems addressed to a single recipient written by many different authors.<sup>65</sup> Most parting poems are found in *yulu*, which are the works of a single author addressed to many recipients. The *Yifanfeng* suggests that parting poetry was not limited only to the abbot of a temple, but that the many monastic officers also participated in writing farewell poetry to a departing monk.

The *Yifanfeng* poems, written on the occasion of the departure of the visiting monk Nanpo, respond to the end of a stage of itinerant practice, or *xingjiao* 行腳.

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<sup>65</sup> Similar to the *Yifanfeng*, 'farewell scrolls of poetry' seem to have been fairly common in Southern Song and Yuan Chan monastic communities, judging from extant colophons. Though few scrolls survive, there are numerous colophons like *Ba Xian shangren songxing shizhou* 跋賢上人送行詩軸 by Tianru Weize 天如惟則 (d. 1354), which goes into detail about the thirty-five monks who authored poems (XZJ 122, p. 922, b11).

*Xingjiao* is a prominent part of the development of a Chan monk, also referred to as *youfang* 游方 / 遊方 (“wandering the realm”).<sup>66</sup> During this period of itinerancy, monks travel long distances to study with great teachers.<sup>67</sup> *Xingjiao* was an arduous physical practice that could double as an allegory for the spiritual journey a student underwent before awakening.

Many poems in *yulu* were presented to students on the occasion of leaving from a period of *xingjiao* practice. The poems often addressed the simple facts of the student leaving, mentioning how long the student stayed to study, where they might go next, or a few words about their spiritual insights (or lack thereof). Like other parting poems, Buddhist occasional verses invoked the context in which they were written.

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<sup>66</sup> There has not been, to my knowledge, a sustained inquiry into monks’ itinerant practices. Though itinerancy is a well-known phenomenon, and the image of the wondering monk is ubiquitous in literature and art, a description of historical practices is difficult to find. Prescriptive texts are fairly abundant, such as portions of *qinggui* (which I refer to again below). There are also myriad data. A brief essay by Jiang Yibin, “Zhongguo senglü youfang chuantong de jianli jiqi gaibian,” tries to cover the history of wandering from India to Ming China. Translations of writing by Zhongfeng Mingben about *xingjiao* can be found in Heller, *Illusory Abiding*, 154-158.

<sup>67</sup> The Song dynasty Chan dictionary *Zuting shiyuan* 祖庭事苑 says the following about *xingjiao*:  
*Xingjiao* is to go a great distance from one’s home, to walk through the world, to slough off sentiments and burdens, to seek a masterful benefactor, and to seek the dharma and confirm one’s awakening. This is why studying with many teachers and wandering in all corners is best, just like Sudhana’s southern pilgrimage and Sadāprarudita’s eastward pilgrimage,<sup>67</sup> the previous sages who went in search of the dharma. What Yongjia described [in *Zhengdao ge*] as “wandering among rivers and oceans, wading through mountain rivers, / seeking teachers to inquire of the way is the practice Chan,” how could it not be so?  
行脚者。謂遠離鄉曲。脚行天下。脫情捐累。尋訪師友。求法證悟也。所以學無常師。徧歷為尚。善財南求。常啼東請。蓋先聖之求法也。永嘉所謂游江海。涉山川。尋師訪道為參禪。豈不然邪。 *Zuting shiyuan*, XZJ 113, p. 240, a1-4.

For Sadāprarudita’s eastward pilgrimage, see Edward Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines & Its Verse Summary*, 277-290.

The symbolism of *xingjiao* practice resonated with the imagery of the *Ru fajie pin* 入法界品 (Skt. *Gaṇḍavyūha*).<sup>68</sup> Found in the *Huayan jing* 華嚴經 (*Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*) the *Gaṇḍavyūha* concerns the story of a merchant-banker’s son named Sudhana (*Shancai tongzi* 善財童子), who listening to a sermon by Mañjuśrī (*Wenshu* 文殊) aroused the aspiration to awakening (*puti xin* 發菩提心; Skt. *bodhicitta*). On the advice of Mañjuśrī, he sets out to the south to visit spiritual friends (*shanzhishi* 善知識; Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*). Sudhana endures an epic journey, travels to one-hundred and ten cities and encounters fifty-three spiritual friends – images repeated in *Yifanfeng* poems. Sudhana’s journey culminates when he meets bodhisattva Maitreya (*Mile* 彌勒), who shows Sudhana the pure dharma realm (*fajie* 法界; the namesake of the *Ru fajie pin*), and reveals that his entire journey has been supported by the power of Mañjuśrī.<sup>69</sup>

In general, Sudhana’s pilgrimage has been understood as an allegory of progress along the bodhisattva path. Awakening is extremely difficult and uncommon, though entirely possible, given enough lifetimes of focused training and dedication. Sudhana is the model practitioner. As the *Gaṇḍavyūha* ends, Sudhana has a visionary experience of Samantabhadra (*Puxian* 普賢) awakening sentient beings. Sudhana will now live in the world embodying this wisdom. His identification with Samantabhadra at the very conclusion of the text reaffirms his role as the model practitioner and Samantabhadra as

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<sup>68</sup> For art historical evidence to corroborate the popularity of Sudhana’s pilgrimage during the Song Dynasty, see: Dorothy Wong, “The Huayan/Kegon/Hwaōm Paintings in East Asia”; and Jan Fontein, *The pilgrimage of Sudhana*.

<sup>69</sup> For example, see this passage in the sixty-fascicle *Huayan jing* (T. 9, no. 278, p. 783, b23-25):

[Maitreya says,] “All the spiritual benefactors you have seen, all the ways of practice you have heard, all the modes of liberation you have entered, all the vows you have plunged into, are all the result of the magnificent numinous powers of Mañjuśrī.”

「汝先所見諸善知識，修菩薩行，滿足大願，得諸法門，皆由文殊師利威神力故。」

the bodhisattva of the path of practice. In some classic Chan texts, including the *Linji lu* 臨濟錄 (“Record of Linji”), references to Sudhana’s pilgrimage were employed to urge students to seek truth with sincerity and effort. Sudhana was a model of great practice.

A radical new interpretation of this narrative appeared in Chan texts beginning in the early Song dynasty.<sup>70</sup> These new ways of seeing Sudhana’s pilgrimage emerge from the development of Chan subitism.<sup>71</sup> This new reading placed emphasis on the

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<sup>70</sup> For example, the 10th century polymath Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904-976) in his widely circulated *Zhu Xinfu* 註心賦 (also given as *Xinfu zhu* 心賦注) wrote:

The boy Sudhana journeyed south, throughout the dharma realm to visit fifty three spiritual friends and obtain the *famen* from one hundred ten cities. He began with a visit to his very first teacher, Mañjuśrī. At that time he was already awakened to his own mind. Afterward, he step by step visited many different spiritual friends. He said to each of them, “I have already given rise to the mind of awakening, but I am searching for the bodhisattva’s graduated path of wisdom that leads to Maitreya and the attainment of Buddhahood in my next lifetime.” Later, Maitreya instead instructs him to go back and revisit his initial teacher, Mañjuśrī. This signifies that the prior mind and latter mind are the same, without any difference whatsoever. From beginning to end, he never parted from the one mind. This is most extraordinary.

「善財童子南行。遍法界參五十三員善知識。得一百十城法門。為求菩薩之道。最先參見文殊初友。已悟自心。後漸至諸善知識。皆云我已先發菩提心。但求菩薩差別智道。及至彌勒。證一生成佛之果。後彌勒却指歸再見初友文殊。以表前心後心一等。更無差別。始終不出一心。離此別無奇特矣。」(XZJ 111, p. 141, a11-16)

Note that the *Zhu Xinfu* survives only in a relatively late edition and the identification of Yanshou as the author was, until recently, regarded with suspicion. Yanagi Mikiyasu’s 2015 monograph uses a recently recovered Northern Song biography of Yanshou to determine that Yanshou composed the *Xinfu* as well as the auto-commentary. Yanagi, *Eimei Enju*, 46-47, note 17. Across several chapters, Yanagi carefully details the manner in which Yanshou was received during the Song and each successive dynasty.

<sup>71</sup> Subitism, a reference to sudden awakening, was a term popularized by Paul Demiéville in his essay “The Mirror of the Mind.” The sudden-gradual polarity had precedent elsewhere, but assumed its greatest significance within China. The terms sudden *dun* 頓 and gradual *jian* 漸 were used throughout Chinese Buddhism not only to describe to the nature of awakening but also to rank the different teachings of the Buddha that arrived hodgepodge in the vast corpus of translated Buddhist texts. Within this latter context sudden and gradual resolved a hermeneutical problem, but the fluidity of the terms led to further developments of Buddhism within China that emphasized sudden awakening, or sudden practice. Chan Buddhism in particular is associated with the development of subitism.

significance of Sudhana's return to Mañjuśrī after visiting Maitreya – a scene newly depicted in paintings of the period (see image below).<sup>72</sup> In this interpretations, Sudhana was never apart from the wisdom of Mañjuśrī, or “separate from the one mind.”<sup>73</sup> Sudhana cycles back to the beginning of his journey, encountering Mañjuśrī once more. The result is the same as the cause. This interpretation rebukes Sudhana's gradual progression along the path.

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<sup>72</sup> See Itakura Masaaki on the painting with an inscription by Beijian Jujian 北澗居簡 (1164-1246), which incorporates earlier research on the relationship between a Tōdai-ji image and a now-lost Song original. In English, building on the work of Itakura and others, Yukio Lippit, “Apparition Painting” (pp. 66 no. 17, 74, 76-78, *en passim*) has written about Beijian's inscription on the Sudhana painting. Lippit provides a detailed review of earlier scholarship on Beijian and his cultural influence. More recently, Huang Qijiang has written extensively on Beijian (and other Southern Song monks), for the first time making extensive use of works preserved in Japanese *Gozan* editions. See his *Yiwei Chan yu jianghu shi*, Chapter Three, and *Nan Song liu wenxue seng jinianlu*.

<sup>73</sup> *Zhu Xinfu*, XZJ 111, p. 141, a11-16, translated in full in a footnote immediately above.



Sudhana reencountering Mañjuśrī, detail from *The Pilgrim Boy Sudhana*, in the style of Li Gonglin with inscription by Beijian Jujian 北澗居簡 (1164-1246)<sup>74</sup>

There is a structural parallel between this way of seeing Sudhana's pilgrimage and certain Chan models of awakening. Sudhana began his journey to the south with Mañjuśrī and in the end returned to Mañjuśrī. Now back where he began, Sudhana envisions

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<sup>74</sup> Image reproduced from *Kokka* no. 1181, p. 11; also found in Lippit, p. 77. The image depicts the moment after Sudhana's encounter with Maitreya, in which he prays to see Mañjuśrī again. Mañjuśrī responds by extending his hand one-hundred ten *yojanas* to touch the boy's head. There had previously been some doubt about the provenance of the object; see the accompanying article by Itakura, "Hokkan Kokan san Zenzai dōjizu." Building on Itakura's article, Yukio Lippit placed Beijian's inscription on this painting within the context his other comments about Li Gonglin as well as his broader participation in discourses about painting; see Lippit, "Apparition Painting."

fulfilling the vows of Samantabhadra. The importance of this ultimate return to the source may be understood in light of the oft-quoted saying by Qingyuan Weixin.

*The Record of the Spread of the Flame, of the Jiatai era, juan 6*, the record of Qingyuan Weixin, says:

The Master ascended the hall, and said: “Thirty years ago, before this old monk had studied Chan, I saw that mountains are mountains, and I saw that water is water. Then, sometime later with my own eyes I saw a *spiritual friend*, and there was some progress through the gate: I saw that mountains are not mountains, and I saw that water is not water. And now, I have come to a place to rest, and, like before, I see that mountains are just mountains, and I see that water is just water. Great assembly! These three ways of seeing things, are they the same? Are they different? If there is a monk or lay person who can get this, then you could say you had seen this old monk with your own eyes.”

『嘉泰普燈錄』卷6吉州青原惟信禪師章：「上堂曰：“老僧三十年前，未參禪時，見山是山，見水是水。及至後來親見知識，有箇入處，見山不是山，見水不是水。而今得箇休歇處，依前見山只是山，見水只是水。大眾，這三般見解，是同是別？有人緇素得出，許汝親見老僧。」

Qingyuan Weixin’s sermon describes the spiritual path in three phases. First, there is the ordinary way of seeing things. Things appear to be what the seer is conditioned to see. In terms of Sudhana’s pilgrimage, this first stage may refer to Sudhana before encountering Mañjuśrī. Second, there is an encounter with a spiritual friend and seeing the nature of



emptiness. Things are not what they appeared to be. For Sudhana, this represents almost the entirety of his epic pilgrimage after encountering Mañjuśrī and giving rise to bodhicitta. In other Chan materials, this often appears as a restless spiritual urgency that drives itinerant practice. Lastly, there is a return to the mundane world with the wisdom to understand the mechanisms of karma and liberation. Sudhana's pilgrimage concludes with his return to Mañjuśrī and visionary enactment of Samantabhadra awakening beings. Qingyuan Weixin's sermon provides a model for understanding how Sudhana's pilgrimage may be used as an allegory of Chan *xingjiao*.

Allusions to Sudhana's pilgrimage are found in the *Yifanfeng* parting poems. Nanpo was returning to Japan after his study in China. This is analogous to the climax of Sudhana's pilgrimage. In terms of Qingyuan Weixin's sermon, Nanpo surpassed seeing mountains are not mountains.

Chicheng Xinghong 赤城行弘 / from poem #5

On a southerly voyage to seek the ultimate truth,  
you knew when to stop;

南詢端的便知休

To return to the poem by monk Dewei, we see it paints the scene in Ningbo where Nanpo's boat will set sail, and uses the imagery of Sudhana's arduous pilgrimage to describe Nanpo's period of study. "Casting off, the ship's bow spins north, / Boundless high tide dashes against the coast. / The pilgrim Sudhana did not know he had it, / And walked in vain to a hundred cities through fog and cold." This poem is an example that explicitly links Sudhana's pilgrimage to the image of Nanpo's ocean-bound vessel

heading back north to Japan.<sup>75</sup> The narrative of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* serves as an allegory for Nanpo's journey through China.

The first two lines adhere to normative expectations of a parting poem. These lines describe the local scene of the port where Nanpo will depart, and the enormous landscape into which he will disappear. The couplet is at once general and specific. The images of ocean, coast, and boats are not exclusive to Buddhism, but some readers could interpret these lines as expressing a subtle Buddhist truth. The second half of the poem shifts, however, and seizes this moment of farewell to describe Nanpo's departure in explicit terms of Buddhist principles.

The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to exploring the implications of two elements found in the final couplet of Dewei's poem above. I will first examine how Buddhist principles are at play in the *Yifanfeng* poems, and then explore the subversive nature of Chan humor in these parting poems.

### **Doctrines: Buddha-nature and Emptiness in Parting Poems**

In the last section I wrote about the appropriation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as a theme in *Yifanfeng* parting poems. In this section I will examine the Buddhist principles of Buddha-nature and emptiness.

Monk Dewei's curious remark, "The pilgrim Sudhana did not know he had it," seems to refer to Buddha-nature 佛性. The doctrine of Buddha-nature holds that all

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<sup>75</sup> The harbor of Ningbo 寧波 opens to the north. From the vantage of the harbor, a traveler from Japan would travel south to alight at Ningbo and would set off north when returning home. Many parting poems to Japanese monks make a double entendre reference to this fact and its significance as an imitation of Sudhana's southern pilgrimage.

beings are imbued with the same Buddha mind. In Chan practice, when one knows for oneself the immediacy of Buddha-nature, this marks a dramatic turning point in one's spiritual journey.

As Buddha-nature is universal, it follows that all beings in Japan also must be imbued with Buddha-nature. By this reasoning, if one seeks to find Buddha-nature, there is no reason to leave Japan to go to China. Nanpo traveled to China to discover that he had possessed Buddha-nature all along. Recalling Sudhana's pilgrimage, what Sudhana was looking for did not exist only in the south. Both Sudhana and Nanpo traveled great distances to discover that what they sought did not require them to go anywhere at all.

The following couplets and lines found in poems in *Yifanfeng* use the occasion of Nanpo's departure to invoke the universality of Buddha-nature.

Xiangshan Keguan 象山可觀 / poem #29

As for Buddha dharma, we know for certain there is neither      佛法固知無彼此  
there nor here;

4 Everywhere under heaven the wind and snow feel cold.      普天風雪一般寒

Another couplet invokes Sudhana's pilgrimage to the south to convey that Nanpo stopped seeking truth outside himself.

Chicheng Xinghong 赤城行弘 / poem #5

Seeking the ultimate truth in the south, you knew when to stop;      南詢端的便知休

2 In the sky above there have never been two suns.

天上原無兩日頭

This single sun that shines everywhere is a metaphor for Buddha-nature.

A couplet from another poem also emphasizes the sameness of Buddhist truth in all places. This couplet twists the normative standards of a parting poem. Normative parting poems emphasize the great distance between friends as a reason for sorrow. This poem instead concludes:

Jiangnan Cirong 江南慈容 / poem #12

Light in the daytime, dark at night – in this one walled city of a universe, 晝明夜暗一寰宇

4 Who says our ancestral homes are separated by ocean cliffs?

誰道家山隔海涯

The initial image “light in the daytime, dark at night” invokes the third stage of Qingyuan Weixin’s sermon, “mountains are just mountains.” Things are what they are. This is followed in the second line by a disruption of the expected expression of nostalgia associated with distance. For one who has perceived Buddha-nature and seen the dependent co-arising of phenomena, sentiments associated with distance do not necessarily have much emotional purchase.

The same poetic logic explored above in terms of Buddha-nature also applies to the principle of emptiness. All phenomena are empty of self-existence 自性 and arise in dependence upon each other. This is a basic teaching of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*,

which includes Sudhana's pilgrimage story. At a fundamental level there is no difference between emptiness in Japan and emptiness in China.

Several *Yifanfeng* parting poems respond to Nanpo's *xingjiao* with expressions of emptiness. For example, this next line focuses on the emptiness of coming and going.

Jiangxi Daodong 江西道東 / poem #3

2 Coming, no traces; going, the same;

來無蹤跡去還同

The theme of this passage is emptiness of mover and movement, like Nagarjuna's verses on *Gatāgataparīkṣā* in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Such ideas were more likely to be known to Song dynasty authors from the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* 維摩詰經 or *Śūraṅgama sūtra* 大佛頂首楞嚴經.<sup>76</sup> The significance of this passage is derived primarily from the context of composition. The composition of this expression of emptiness and the presentation of the poem are actions in response to the circumstances of Nanpo's leaving.

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<sup>76</sup> For example, the final section of the *Śūraṅgama sūtra* (*Da Foding Shoulengyan Jing* 大佛頂首楞嚴經) details an extended discussion of demons and deluded mental states associated with the five skandhas (beginning mid-way through the ninth fascicle, T. 19, no. 945, p. 147, b4, and running through the tenth fascicle). The Buddha teaches Ānanda the dissolution of the five *skandha* through profound *samādhi* that reveal ever more subtle strata of awareness. The relevant phrase here, which comes at the beginning of the section on the fourth skandha, describes the mind perceiving the world "coming without attachments and passing without any trace" (來無所粘過無蹤跡; T. 19, no. 945, p. 151, b29-c4.). Though this moment is mid-way through the progression, it is the opening passage of the tenth and final fascicle in all recensions of the *Śūraṅgama sūtra*. This is no coincidence, as this is a pivotal stage in the text's conception of awakening. What comes before is taming the mind and guarding against demonic influences; what comes after are the contemplation of profundities and reintegration. It might be worth considering in another forum how this is analogous to the second of three stages in Qingyuan Weixin's sermon quoted above in this chapter.

Another example well-known during the Song is from the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (*Weimojie jing* 維摩詰經, T. 14, no. 475, p. 544, b16-17), explored in more detail in the following chapter.

The following line suggests that Nanpo practiced *xingjiao* with an understanding of emptiness.

Siming Zhiping 四明志平 / poem #39

You wandered throughout mountains and rivers with vision      江山歷盡眼頭空  
empty;<sup>77</sup>

These poems use the ordinary social custom of presenting a poem to see off a guest, but instead of expressing nostalgia or longing, the writers convey Buddhist ideals. Though the form appears similar to normative parting poems, the function of the *Yifanfeng* poems must be understood within the context of Chan *xingjiao*. Without their circumstances these poems could be read simply as statements of Buddhist principles.

### **Chan Humor: “All that way for nothing”**

Chan is notorious for its humor.<sup>78</sup> Many stories about Chan masters involve incongruities: iconoclastic behavior, seemingly contradictory statements, and even flat-

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<sup>77</sup> *Yantou* 眼頭 is more literally ‘eyeballs.’ The phrase appears often in Chan texts and sometimes refers to the sense organ rather than perception or the act of seeing.

<sup>78</sup> A juxtaposition of three representative studies of Chan humor will underscore the diversity of interpretations. A historical and cultural criticism that reveals the serious nature of humor in Chan can be found in Bernard Faure’s discussion of the Chan master as a trickster figure, in Chapter Six of *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*. Dale Wright has his fingers on the pulse of Buddhist ethics in *The Six Perfections* as he considers Buddhist wisdom and laughter (what he calls “comic wisdom”), especially pp. 258-262. A broadly theological survey of Chan humor by Conrad Hyers, “Humor in Zen: Comic Midwifery,” reflects a more popular and modern notion of Zen, and is a distillation of Hyers’ oft-cited book (*Zen and the Comic Spirit*). Though in many ways this essay is retrograde to the state of the field of Chan Studies, Hyers is an insightful thinker.

out heresies. A good Chan master also may have a sharp wit, but his witty repartees are not just for amusement.<sup>79</sup> The subversion of expected norms points to a Buddhist principle, an aspect of Chan practice. Chan humor may or may not be liberative per se, yet at the least it illuminates how Song dynasty monks continued to engage seriously with classical Buddhist ideas of salvation.

In the *Yifanfeng* parting poems, several humorous tropes are repeated frequently. In the aforementioned passage, “Sudhana did not know he had it,” the writer alludes to the principles of Buddha-nature and emptiness and the imagery of Sudhana’s pilgrimage. He immediately disrupts any sense of reverence with his next words, “And walked in vain to a hundred cities.” This iconoclastic allusion to Sudhana’s pilgrimage is a joke being made on Nanpo.

Tongue-in-cheek, many of the *Yifanfeng* parting poems joke that Nanpo was determined to make the dangerous voyage across the seas to discover that he already possessed Buddha-nature. The monks suggest he came all that way for nothing, that his trip was in vain. If he had understood this principle before he had set out, Nanpo could have saved himself the voyage. Several of the *Yifanfeng* poems tease Nanpo that his coming to China was based on his mistaken understanding.

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<sup>79</sup> Chan humor is not the only wit in Chinese history that serves a second layer of purpose. See David Knechtges’ early, skillful application of the Freudian distinction between wit and humor in “Wit, Humor, and Satire.” An updated introduction to humor and wit of Chinese culture (that excludes Buddhist aspects) is Karin Myrhe’s essay “Wit and Humor” in Mair’s *Columbia History of Chinese Literature*. More recently, Jessica Chey’s introductory essay to *Humour in Chinese Life and Letters* examines the modern Chinese term *youmo* 幽默 and the many classical terms it has displaced. The strength of Chey’s essay (its coverage from traditional Chinese theories of the body to modern theater and native literary criticism, and suggestion of “humor with Chinese characteristics”) may in part stem from the need to make sense of the widely ranging essays in the volume.

Xishu Zhengyin 西蜀正因 / poem #21

2 You mistakenly came to China to suffer seeking an answer. 錯向中華苦訪尋

Chicheng Yiwei 赤城義爲 / poem #30

2 Mistakenly coming to China, mistakenly visiting people; 錯入唐朝錯見人

Nankang Yongxiu 南康永秀 / poem #35

Confused before ever lifting a foot over the side of the boat – 腳頭未跨船舷錯

4 Who could have been told the breadth of the sea or the vastness of the mountains? 海濶山遙舉似誰

Read literally, these verses claim Nanpo made his trip in error and should not have come. However, it is nearly impossible to imagine such sentiments would be addressed earnestly to a distinguished departing monk. Nanpo lived in Xutang's community for ten years, served as a monastic officer, was in daily proximity to these monks, and the poems' directness of expression signals this intimacy.<sup>80</sup> This directness can be read as a form of affectionate play. It is possible to read these passages as a mark of respect for their recipient, or even confirmation of Nanpo's spiritual attainment. Only one possessing certain understanding of Buddhist principles would get such a rough joke.

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<sup>80</sup> These poems are especially funny in light of Nanpo's position as a respected member of Xutang's community. He had served as the *zhike* 知客 (Guest Hall officer). In Huiming's preface found in the woodblock edition, Nanpo is described as "tending guests" 典賓, and in the preface to the verse attributed to Xutang, Nanpo is called by his name *Ming zhike* 明知客 (Guest Hall officer Ming). When Xutang died a few years later, a messenger was sent to Kyoto to inform Nanpo, which is another sign of his stature in the community.



Passages from many other *Yifanfeng* parting poems crack the same joke :

Lize Qingda 笠澤清達 / poem #16

Your home is in Japan – what was there to search for? 家在扶桑何所求

Jinhua Zhiduan 金華智端 / poem #18

Did you know your home was in Japan? 誰知家住在扶桑

2 You traveled great distance, ten thousand li, to come to China. 萬里迢迢入大唐

Lu'nan Deyuan 瀘南德源 / poem #19

For several years you've lived in this southern kingdom, 幾年經歷在南朝

2 How could it be necessary to suffer to seek the great way  
outside oneself? 大道何須苦外求

Guhong Jingxi 古洪淨喜 / poem #22

2 Why would such knowledge be in China?<sup>81</sup> 知識何曾在大唐

Siming Zuying 四明祖英 / poem #34

The southern country never had Buddha dharma; 南國自來無佛法

4 Don't bother to say you spent the summer in residence on 莫言今夏在凌霄

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<sup>81</sup> The phrase *zhishi* (“knowledge”) could also be an abbreviation for *shanzhishi*, the ‘good friends’ or teachers one would visit during a pilgrimage in imitation of Sudhana.

Mount Jing.

Dongjia Congyi 東嘉從逸 / poem #42

The Great Tang was always right next to your feet.

大唐元在脚頭邊

Qingzhang Benyin 清漳本因 / poem #11

In the Great Kingdom of the Tang, originally there was no Zen;

大唐國裡本無禪

2 Nonetheless, you came southward, resolutely, to seek it.

剛要南來探一回

Again the *Yifanfeng* poems convey that Nanpo's leaving Japan to seek the dharma in China resulted from mistaken understanding. The ultimate principle Nanpo sought also existed in Japan. These jokes on the conventions of the *songbie* tradition allowed the author and recipient to enact the Chan monk's conquest of emotions.

On the surface these verses appear to be overly direct, and in some cases outright rude and mocking. And the verses are right: if Nanpo had understood dharma before he left, he would have had no need to journey to China. The poems can be read in several different ways. They might be teachings for Nanpo, pointing to the principles of Buddha-nature and emptiness. Or they might be in-jokes with Nanpo that affirm Nanpo's success in gaining insight after coming to China.<sup>82</sup> The presentation of these humorous passages by Nanpo's Chinese dharma brothers, that extra-textual action itself, might suggest that they believed he had reached the end of his *xingjiao* with enough attainment to grasp the meaning of the poems. If so, then the parting verses suggest that Nanpo, like Sudhana

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<sup>82</sup> The preface by Huiming also suggests this is how they are to be read.

reaching the end of his pilgrimage, on the eve of his return to his origins could see the erroneous understanding that had brought him to China in the first place. These jokes on the conventions of the *songbie* tradition allowed the author and recipient to enact the Chan monk's conquest of emotions, and make sense of how a single collection of parting poems would appear to contain poems both valedictory and tongue-in-cheek.

The Chan humor found in the *Yifanfeng* parting poems is not simply funny. Chan humor expresses the iconoclastic implications of emptiness and the apparent contradictions of deluded beings possessing Buddha mind. Chan uses words in doubled meanings to convey concepts that are unfamiliar, and often impenetrable by conventional thinking. The *Yifanfeng* poems repeatedly use the words “empty-handed” 空手 and “nothing” 空 to simultaneously invoke their conventional meanings of lack, and their more profound implications of Buddhist emptiness.<sup>83</sup> This dual usage allows the authors to subvert the conventional norms of a parting poem, and reappropriate its social function in a Buddhist monastic setting. Thus, the poems can be read as insults, teachings, or in-jokes between awakened monks.

## Conclusion

Is Buddhist poetry possible? The works in the *Yifanfeng* use the same literary forms as conventional parting poetry but are distinctly Buddhist in terms of themes and functions. One of the salient themes of the *Yifanfeng* parting poems is their invocation of

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<sup>83</sup> For a similar usage of the term by Dōgen, “I came home empty-handed,” see Takashi James Kodera, *Dogen's Formative Years in China*, pp. 77-78, and Steven Heine, “Empty-handed, but not Empty-headed.”

Buddhist principles, especially emptiness and Buddha-nature, to acknowledge the departure of a monk. Symbols of *xingjiao* are used as metonymy and allusions to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* are deployed throughout the parting poems of *Yifanfeng*. Further, the *Yifanfeng* poems do not convey longing or nostalgia and thus deviate from norms seen in anthologies and Song Dynasty *shihua*. This cool equanimity appears not to be limited to the *Yifanfeng* and to be characteristic of parting poetry in other Chan monastic communities.

As the *Yifanfeng* poems are a type of occasional poetry, the circumstances of composition are essential to understanding the corpus. The *Yifanfeng* poems respond to the circumstances of *xingjiao* itinerant study, a practice woven into the fabric of the Song dynasty monasticism and which generated many occasions of arrival and leave-taking. The poems were written by monks to see off another monk who had lived, worked, and studied in their monastic community for almost a decade. These monks' parting poems are situated within the double occasion of a ritual departure at the end of a long pilgrimage and a personal farewell to a familiar colleague.

In the *Yifanfeng* poems, Buddhist monks used the standard forms of parting poetry but adapted genre conventions to meet specific Buddhist monastic ideals. Nonetheless, this doesn't require the definition of a new genre of "Buddhist parting poetry." I suggest we are more interested in pigeons than in pigeonholes,<sup>84</sup> and our goal is to make sense of the monks' poetry before us instead of focusing on taxonomies of

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<sup>84</sup> Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, p. 37.

limited use.<sup>85</sup> In this way we may study the *Yifanfeng* poems, and see how Buddhist monks used poetry to engage the circumstances of their lives.

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<sup>85</sup> Rather than imagining the *Yifanfeng* poems as belonging to one genre, or hybrid sub-genre, these parting poems are in a dialogue with genre conventions. This resonates with Carol Newsom's efforts to make sense of Elihu's speech in Job as an appeal to a genre: "As a way of framing a situation, a genre has a rhetorical and even an ideological force. One must not forget, however, that there are no such things as pure types. Texts invoke or participate in genres, often several at once; they do not belong to them. And with every instantiation of a genre, the performance adds to and thus modifies the generic repertoire, changing the contours of what passes for that genre." See Newsom, *The Book of Job*, p. 221.

## Chapter Five – Mourning

### Introduction

Is Buddhist poetry possible? In the previous chapter we saw how monks' parting poetry was quintessentially "Buddhist poetry" – it was written by monks, to monks, on the occasion of an event in monastic life. The *Yifanfeng* poems use explicit Buddhist diction in iconoclastic ways to engage creatively with the conventions of parting poetry. I referred to this orchestration of themes and functions as Buddhist poetics.

In this chapter I argue that Buddhist poetry was not possible. Or, rather, I aim to show the limitations of the idea of "Buddhist poetry" by focusing on the monks' poems that exist at or across the margins of this category. It will be clear that not all monks' poems are necessarily Buddhist; that Buddhist diction does not necessarily mark a Buddhist poem; that poems in monasteries are not necessarily Buddhist poetry.

To move beyond "Buddhist poetry," I suggest we focus on the vital poetic cultures that thrived in monasteries. In this chapter, my main concern is Song dynasty literary and visual representations of grief as a Buddhist problem of emotions. Monks' poetry of anguish is part of a broader monastic culture of emotions, and art historical evidence complements what can be seen from text alone. In the previous chapters I have shown that there was a pervasive anxiety about monastic poetry throughout literate society of middle period China. The root of this anxiety was a conflict between monastic aspirations to equipoise and literary conventions of expressing emotion.

The poems in this chapter are written about grief. When faced with the anguish of grief, it seems that some monks turned to poetry. They may have written in search of respite from the problem of emotions, perhaps in search of an answer, or perhaps because they didn't know what else to do. A reader with sustained attention on monks' lamentations will see an aspect of the religious culture of Song China.

If the question "Is Buddhist poetry possible?" is to be answered by what we know of middle period writers, then these poetic lamentations are not the "monks' poetry" (*sengshi*) described in *shihua*. On the surface, many poems in this chapter are not necessarily Buddhist at all. In some cases, we might jump to concur with Stephen Owen's conclusion (when writing about Jiaoran) that "exactly the same poem might have been written by a secular poet."<sup>1</sup> But I have found these poems, in which monks struggle with grief, to be spaces for religious innovation. Beyond the question of "Buddhist poetry," the poetic culture of monks shows us that we've been asking the wrong question.

### **"Lodging Grief" – Qisong's impropriety**

There is a kind of poetry written to grieve the passing of a friend. The death of a friend is unlike any other loss, and inscriptions for parents and teachers, or memorials for servants of the state, are not suitable models to express the gravity of a friend's passing away.<sup>2</sup> This intimate grief may take the literary form of a lamentation, elegy, or dirge.

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<sup>1</sup> This argument presented by Stephen Owen in *The Great Age*, p. 283, continues to be a point of debate. I review several scholars' positions on the matter in the concluding chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Another process of early elegaic writing developed as a formal genre for official functions. This can be seen reflected in the nine of thirty-seven genres included in *Wenxuan* that are funerary. Both prose such as *jiwen* 祭文 ("sacrificial texts" written to accompany a sacrifice to the spirit of

Elegies in verse were written under many different generic names, such as *lei* 誄 – a public form conventionally reserved for an official function – as well as poems marked with titles including the words *dao* 悼, *ai* 哀, *ku* 哭, or *wan* 挽 (also written *wan* 輓) – which all generally belong to a more personal lamentation.<sup>3</sup> Song Dynasty compilers and writers were keen historians of the tradition of mourning songs.<sup>4</sup> Serious-minded Buddhist monks engaged with various aspects of the Chinese elegy tradition throughout the Middle Period.<sup>5</sup> When we look at how monks wrote personal lamentations, inscribed within these poems is that sense of the conflict between profound feelings and religious commitments. The tension between religious serenity and human emotion is again an essential context for understanding how these poems engage broader themes in the Buddhist religious tradition.

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an acquaintance who has recently died) and verse were used by government officials to express official mourning. Uses of *jiwen* transformed during the Tang to broader emotional range, and such texts were still in use during the Northern Song. James Hightower, “The *Wen Hsüan* and Genre Theory.” Hightower translates *ji* with “requiem” on pp. 526-527; Anna Shields, “Words for the Dead and the Living: Innovations in the Mid-Tang Prayer Text (*jiwen* 祭文).”

<sup>3</sup> Prose and verse genres in the *Wenxuan* include *lei* 誄 dirge; *diao* 弔 (also written 吊) condolence; *ji* 祭 requiem; *bei* 悲 threnody; *ai* 哀 lament; *bei* 碑 epitaph; *jie* 碣 columnar inscription; *zhi* 誌 necrology; *zhuang* 狀 obituary. See Hightower, pp. 522-528. In practice, many of the traits associated with the disparate subgenres in such lists were blended and transformed. As such, the distinction between more formal and more personal expressions remains a useful heuristic.

<sup>4</sup> For example, some norms are laid out in a section for elegies, *shangdao men* 傷悼門, found in *juan* 43 and *houji* 後集 *juan* 34-35 of the encyclopedic *Shihua zonggui* 詩話總龜 by Ruan Yue 阮閱. A ten fascicle version of *Shihua zonggui* (then called simply *Shizong* 詩總) was first completed in 1123, and continued to expand over four decades up to the completion of the *houji* (preface dated 1161). On this and the significance of *Shihua zonggui* in the Southern Song, see Zhang Gaoping, *Tiaoxi yuyin conghua*, 185-192.

<sup>5</sup> Many of these genres were used to commemorate the passing of Chan teachers. The formal *jiwen* 祭文 can be found appended to *yulu* and in the *wenji* collected prose of literati; *taming* 塔銘 displace *zhi* 誌 for funerary inscriptions; similar *zhuang* 狀 obituaries can be found appended to the received edition of many *yulu* as well as throughout *wenji* collected prose of literati.



Several lamentations are found in the collected works of monk Qisong 契嵩 (1007-1072).<sup>6</sup> These poems are said to be in the mode of *aici* 哀辭 (“lamentations” or “verses of grief”). Qisong’s *aici* participate in the subgenre of *daowang* 悼亡 poems, and evoke the cultural imagination of *wange* 挽歌, or “burial songs” (also translated as “pallbearers’ songs”).<sup>7</sup>

The verses by Qisong themselves are mostly conventional and largely unremarkable, with the exception of the prefatory remarks Qisong appended to each of his *aici*.<sup>8</sup> These prose comments are longer than the poetic lamentations and explain the contexts and circumstances of Qisong’s relationship to the individual. The paratextual space of a prose preface offered Qisong a chance to reflect on the very act of writing funerary verses. In his prefatory remarks to “Lament for Zhou Shuzhi” (*Zhou Shuzhi aici* 周叔智哀辭), for example, Qisong detailed the long friendship he shared with the late Zhou.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> There are three lamentations with prefaces in *Tanjin wenji* 潭津文集, *juan* 13.

<sup>7</sup> For a traditional rehearsal of the history of *daowang* poetry from the *Shijing*, the *fu* by Emperor Han Wudi 漢武帝 (r. 141-87 BCE) for his wife *Li furen fu* 李夫人賦, and the *daowang* 悼亡 by Pan Yue 潘岳 (247-300) for his wife, dynasty by dynasty all the way up to the late Qing, see Hu Xu, *Daowang shi shi*. Grace Fong does an especially skillful reading of women’s *daowang* poems in the late imperial period in “Private Emotion, Public Commemoration.” See also Lai, “The Art of Lamentation in the Works of Pan Yue.” As for *wange*, the term itself has also been translated as “Coffin-Pullers’ Songs” and “Hearse-pullers’ Songs” based on the early Chinese understanding that these songs were sung by hearse-pullers as they worked. See Anne Birrell, “Burial songs 喪歌,” pp. 94-99; see also Chan, *Considering the End*, p. 106, n 31.

<sup>8</sup> The contents of Qisong’s funerary poems are entirely about the deceased. He uses the prefaces to inscribe his autobiography, a process described by Grace Fong, “Private Emotion, Public Commemoration.” Formally, one poem is *guti shi*, the others use rhyming couplets mostly four-characters in length and with the archaic *xi* 兮.

<sup>9</sup> In *Tanjin wenji*, T. 52, no. 2115, p. 718, b6-c3.

I last received a letter with news from Shuzhi's son Mingfu in summer of last year, and I only now learned that shortly thereafter, in the height of autumn on the *guiwei* day, Shuzhi died. Oh, alas! Shuzhi and I had always been friends. [...] Oh! Our path of friendship has come to an end. I lament that I will not see the man again. I wrote this verse to extol his virtues.

去年孟夏得叔智之子明服書。且聞叔智以癸未孟秋死矣。嗚呼吾嘗與叔智友。  
[...] 嗚呼交道之已矣乎。哀其人不復見矣。故辭之以揚其德也。

Qisong is stirred by the finality of death, by the comprehensive end of this friendship. He mentioned that he felt caught off-guard by the sudden yet belated news of a death that transpired many months earlier. It is as though he thought the friendship was still alive all these months, when in fact, his friend had not been alive since autumn the previous year. Overall, the program of the lamentation is to praise the goodness, or virtues, of the departed, and this is typical of elegies. There is nothing surprising in this use of an elegy to praise the dead, except that such plain sentiments were recorded by the hands of a Buddhist monk.

Slightly different sentiments are found in another preface to a lamentation by Qisong. In the paratext for “Lament for Judge Li Huishu” (*Li Huishu tuiguan aici* 李晦叔推官哀辭), Qisong finds himself shocked that a young man who had seemed so alive could suddenly be utterly gone.<sup>10</sup>

Last year, in the second month of spring, [Li] was about to pardon a criminal. He came to my office to discuss the matter and for an entire day was unable to leave.  
[...] He had just turned thirty when we parted one year ago. How am I to make

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<sup>10</sup> T. 52, no. 2115, p. 718, a14-15, a20-22.

sense of his unexpected death? The ancients would compare the lives of men to the fleet soaring clouds, which cannot be kept forever.

去年仲春將施生。來吾室與吾語。終日不能去。[...]別去一年志方壯。豈悟其忽然而已亡邪。古人以人生比之浮雲奄忽不可常保。

Qisong's lamentations for Zhou Shuzhi and Li Huishu are, in many ways, conventional and typical of the genre. Qisong's inclusion of paratext offers us additional insights into the situations in which this monk felt moved to write elegiac poetry.

It may seem entirely natural for anyone, monks as well, to grieve the death of a friend. Nonetheless Qisong himself was aware of the commitments to his religious profession and expressed anxiety over the appropriateness of his writing elegiac poetry. Once again, Qisong extols the virtues of the departed in "Lament for the retired Vice Minister Zhongshan" (*Zhi zheng shi lang Zhongshan gong aici* 致政侍郎中山公哀辭). In the paratext, however, he ponders how this outpouring of grief reflects on his identity as a Buddhist monk.<sup>11</sup>

On the day of the interment of the late Vice Minister Zhongshan, I felt aware of his usual goodness and wrote this verse of grief to convey my thoughts.<sup>12</sup> Of

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<sup>11</sup> From Qisong's *Tanjin wenji* 譚津文集, *juan* 13

<sup>12</sup> This was not the only time Qisong would write an elegiac poem on account of "having feelings" (*yogan* 有感). Qisong opens the aforementioned prefatory remarks to "Lament for Judge Li Huishu":

Huishu of the Li clan from Longxi [in Gansu] died. Word spread, and after I learned of the matter I grieved him and had such feelings.

隴西李晦叔死。有以相報者，予聞，悼之且有所感也。

Here, as before, Qisong prefaces his funerary verse for a lay-person with a confession of his grievous sentiments.

course, I myself am a Buddhist.<sup>13</sup> Outwardly, I forsake the body, while inwardly I distance myself from the falsehoods of emotions. I ought not have such feelings and then lament them. But, I could not bear to contemplate the death of such a worthy person and the further impoverishment of the way of gentlemen. I sighed grievously without end, and in the end I wrote a verse to lodge my grief.

故侍郎中山公。其喪下葬日。客有感其舊德而為哀辭。以見意也。然客本佛氏者。外遺形質內融情僞。不宜有所感而哀之也。蓋不忍視其賢人歿而君子之道益寡。嗟嘆之不已。姑託哀而辭之。

Qisong says “I ought not.” The phrase *buyi* 不宜 might also be rendered “it is inappropriate.” And yet, Qisong could not help himself, he says. He writes that he “could not bear it” *buren* 不忍. Even though *ren* is a verb here, and was probably only intended in its most literal sense, there is some irony that *ren*, in addition to its ordinary meanings, also denotes one of the well-known Buddhist virtues: the perfection of forbearance. This perfection of forbearance is attributed to advanced bodhisattvas, who must endure the emptiness of all phenomena (*wusheng fa ren* 無生法忍). For Qisong, it is the impermanence of something precious that he is unable to bear.

The final words in this passage are *tuo ai er ci zhi* 託哀而辭之, “I write a verse to lodge my grief.” These words are a variation on another phrase, *wei ge yi ji ai* 為歌以寄

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<sup>13</sup> The word “a buddhist” *foshi* 佛氏 employs the metaphor of family. When monks in China took tonsure, it should be remembered, they adopted as their surname the name *Shi* 釋, from the name of Sakyamuni (*Shijiamouni* 釋迦牟尼). Monks not only left their families when they “left home” *chujia* 出家, they also joined the family of the Buddhist sangha. See John Kieschnick, “Buddhist Monasticism,” 557-558.

哀 “sang songs to give vent to their grief.”<sup>14</sup> This phrase derives from the *locus classicus* for the *wange* 挽歌 funeral song. Buddhist encyclopedias indicate that monks were expected to be aware of the *wange* literary tradition.<sup>15</sup> These verses developed as a literary form supposedly inspired by humble, anonymous origins.<sup>16</sup> For scholars and monks working in the Song Dynasty, the origins of dirges were traced through the following somewhat enigmatic passage and its canonical commentaries contained in the 5<sup>th</sup> century compilation *Shishuo Xinyu* 世說新語.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Qisong’s verb *tuo* 託 (“to lodge,” “to entrust”) is nearly synonymous with the verb *ji* 寄, and one can find variations on this passage using either verb.

<sup>15</sup> Ming era monk Yongjue Yuanxian 永覺元賢 (1578-1657) compiled a compendium for the various kinds of prose and poems monks were expected to master, *Chanlin shuyu kaozheng* 禪林疏語考證. The text includes an entry under the header *luxi* 露晞, on the topic of *wange* (XZJ 112, p. 849, a4-b8). A colophon to that text offered an insightful comment:

The presence of official language [*shuyu*] in Chan monasteries was not commanded by Buddha, nor was it commanded by the [Indian Chan] ancestors. However, as long as there have been monks in this land [China], for the sake of attracting sentient beings to turn towards the sea of Buddhism there have been expressions of feelings and other matters, which necessitated writing in petitions [*shu*]. This is why there is already a long history of using petitions [*shu*]. In monasteries of the Tang and Song periods especially this custom [*zhi*] was emphasized.

禪林之有疏語，非佛制也，亦非祖制也，但此土有僧以來，引群生以歸佛海，其間表事陳情則必有藉于疏，故疏之為用其來已久，在唐宋時叢林中特重是職。(XZJ 112, p. 791, a1-14)

This fascicle also documents the recommended practices for a monk to mourn his birth parents.

<sup>16</sup> On the origin story, see Anne Birrell, “Burial songs 喪歌,” pp. 94-99; especially 96.

<sup>17</sup> Prior to the Huang Bosi 黃伯思 edition completed around 1109 (earliest extant in 1210 printing), and before the widely circulated Southern Song 1138 woodblock edition (extant in Japan), at least 23 different manuscript editions are known to have been in private collections. Among those manuscripts, a well-read copy is known to have been in the possession of Huang Tingjian. For these and other details see Pan Jianguo, “*Shishuo xinyu zai Song dai*,” p. 168, 172, *et passim*.

Zhang Zhan after a few drinks used to sing pallbearers' songs with great pathos and poignancy. Huan Chong said to him, "You're not one of Tian Heng's retainers; how have you suddenly reached such perfection?"<sup>18</sup>

張麟酒後挽歌甚悽苦，桓車騎曰：「卿非田橫門人，何乃頓爾至致？」

Readers in the Song Dynasty were expected to understand why Huan Chong 桓沖 (328-384) thought that skillfulness in singing dirges reached its pinnacle with the retainers of Tian Heng.<sup>19</sup> Some five hundred years earlier yet, Tian Heng 田橫 (d. 202 BCE) had ascended to the throne of the kingdom of Qi 齊. Liu Bang 劉邦, the first emperor of the Han, known as Gaozu 高祖, conquered the territory of Qi and drove out Tian Heng. As the *Shishuo xinyu* would have it, Tian Heng later rendered his own fate en route to a summons at the Han capital. The *Shishuo Xinyu* text includes a commentary by Liu Jun 劉峻 (462-521). This section of Liu's commentary is the source for Qisong's allusion:

Tian Heng was summoned by Han Emperor Gao, but as he arrived at Shixiang Pavilion (near Luoyang) he slit his own throat, offering his own head, which his retainers bore (*wan*) to the palace. They dared not weep, yet could not contain their grief, so they sang songs, to give vent to the sounds of their grief.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Translation follows Mather, p. 418.

<sup>19</sup> For examples of Song Dynasty scholarship on dirges, see the entry labeled *wange* 挽歌 in Gao Cheng's 高承 (c. 1078-1085) *Shiwu jiyuan* 事物紀原, *juan* 9 (Zhonghua shuju, 1989, p. 481), as well as the entry for *wange* 挽歌 in Zeng Zao's 曾慥 *Leishuo* 類說, *juan* 43. Also, the explanation for the titles *Xielu* 薤露 and *Haoli* 蒿里, the latter of which directly precedes the selection of poems titled *Wange* 挽歌, in the Song Dynasty collection *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集, *juan* 27, SBCK ed. This is passage number forty-five in *Rendan* 任誕, *Shishuo xinyu jiao jian*, 2.407.

<sup>20</sup> Here I deviate from Mather, p. 418. *Shishuo xinyu jiao jian*, 2.407, Liu Jun attributed this passage to *Qiaozi fa xun* 譙子法訓 by Qiao Zhou 譙周. Liu's own additional commentary ponders why *Qiaozi fa xun* didn't refer to *Zhuangzi* or *Zuo Zhuan*. There are several extant

蓋高帝召齊田橫，至于尸鄉亭自刎奉首，從者挽至於宮，不敢哭而不勝哀，  
故爲歌以寄哀音。

By the Tang Dynasty, the entire narrative had been condensed to four characters, *ge yi ji ai* 歌以寄哀 “They sang songs to give vent to their grief.”<sup>21</sup> For writers of the Song Dynasty, too, pallbearers’ songs were frequently traced back to Liu Jun’s commentary.<sup>22</sup>

Turning to look closely at the words in “they sang songs to give vent to their grief” *ge yi ji ai* 歌以寄哀, we might note that Mather, in his translation of *Shishuo xinyu*, rendered *ji* as “to vent,” which conveys the sense quite well. A more literal rendition of *ji* 寄, however, might be “to lodge” or “to entrust,” which are closer again to *tuo* 託 (as found in Qisong’s *tuo ai er ci zhi* 託哀而辭之). “Lodging,” a phrase common by the Six

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versions of *Xielu* 薤露 and *Haoli* 蒿里, two of the *yuefu* attributed Tian Heng’s followers.

Yoshikawa Kojiro devotes the entirety of the *banka* 挽歌 section in *Ningen Shiwa* 人間詩話 to these two verses; *Yoshikawa Kōjirō zenshū*, 1.360-362.

<sup>21</sup> The whole narrative appears in *Wenxuan* in the category of *wange*. This phrase appears in the *wange* section of several Tang Dynasty compilations, including Xu Jian’s 徐堅 (659-729) *Chuxueji* 初學記, (*Li* 10) and Yu Shinan’s 虞世南 *Beitang shu chao* 北堂書鈔, (*Liyi* 33).

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, *Shiwu jiyuan* 事物紀原 *juan* 9, *Leishuo* 類說 *juan* 43, and *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 *juan* 27; *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽, *juan* 552, *liyi bu* 31, also had a significant section on the history of *wange*; Late Song compiler Zhu Mu 祝穆 (13<sup>th</sup> C) *Gujin shi wen leiju* 古今事文類聚, *qianji* 前集, *juan* 59 (*Sangshi*), as well as prominent late Song scholar Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-1296) in *Kunxue jiwen* 困學紀聞 *juan* 80, also picked up on the criticism originally by Liu Jun that there are earlier, overlooked precedents for *wange* before the Tian Heng incident. Wang Yinglin states the matter concisely:

《左傳》有《虞殯》，《莊子》有《紼謳》，挽歌非始於田橫之客。

The *Zuo Zhuan* has the *Yubin*, and *Zhuangzi* has *Fu’ou*. Dirges did not start with the retainers of Tian Heng.

Nonetheless, for these earlier examples we have only titles; the two songs *Xielu* 薤露 and *Haoli* 蒿里 of Tian Heng’s retainers seem to be the earliest extant *wange*. Of course, poems from the later *wange* genre do not resemble these two songs in the slightest. The purpose of our restating such genealogies here is to understand how these genres existed in the cultural imagination of Song era authors.

Dynasties, was given a new meaning by Qisong's near contemporary Su Shi. Su contrasted *yuyi* 寓意 "to lodge the mind [temporarily]" with *liuyi* 留意 "to fix thoughts upon something." Besides *yi*, one might also lodge emotions (*qing* 情) or a mood (*xing* 興). Qisong was active in the decades just before Su Shi began developing his ideas.<sup>23</sup> Qisong's diction cleaves to that older sense of a cathartic release articulated in *Shishuo xinyu*, which Su Shi also attributed to Han Yu.<sup>24</sup> Also like the didactic writings of Han Yu, Qisong's preface subscribes to a particular, orthodox interpretation of Buddhism. Qisong's preface states that as a Buddhist monk, he "outwardly forsakes the body while inwardly distancing himself from the falsehoods of emotion." In other words, outward and inward asceticism are the ideals for a Buddhist monk. This view approximates the assumptions underlying Han Yu's criticism of monk Gaoxian's calligraphy. There is a conflict between Buddhism and art if one believes, like Han Yu, that great art emerges from emotional disquiet that is lodged in art.<sup>25</sup>

Beyond allusions to anonymous Han dynasty songs, perhaps more substantial contributions to the development of the genre were the authored poems, such as the infamous *Ni wange ci* 擬挽歌辭 funeral song Tao Qian 陶潛 (365?-427), also known as

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<sup>23</sup> Su Shi articulated these distinctions in his *Baohui tang ji* 寶繪堂記, written in 1077, and his poem to Daoqian *Song Canliao shi* 送參寥詩 in 1078. Qisong died in 1072. Su once when a young man met the venerable Qisong. Su described him as one of the five great monks of Hangzhou, incredibly stern, and never smiling.

<sup>24</sup> Qisong was well aware of the classical tradition behind the elegy he was writing. For example he compared the early passing of a friend to Lu Ji's 陸機 (261-303) elegies (*wange*) for his young brothers (T. 52, no. 2115, p. 718, a27). See Egan, "Ou-yang Hsiu and Su Shih on Calligraphy," pp. 403-409, for a discussion of the differences between Su and Han Yu. Su's poem to Daoqian *Song Canliao shi* 送參寥詩 comprehensively rebukes the message of Han Yu's *Song Gaoxian shangren xu* 送高閑上人序.

<sup>25</sup> This notion was elsewhere expressed by Han Yu as *buping ze ming* 不平則鳴. See, Egan, "Ou-yang Hsiu and Su Shih on Calligraphy," p. 407.



Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, wrote for himself.<sup>26</sup> Later *wange* came to more closely resemble other *daowang* 悼亡 poetry. As is well-known, Pan Yue 潘岳 (247-300) was regarded as the fount for the *daowang* tradition.<sup>27</sup> He wrote *daowang* to mourn his late wife.<sup>28</sup>

Though it may seem normal to modern readers, even natural, for a writer to write about the passing of his wife, one should note that “the mourning of one’s wife, unlike that of one’s parents, was not regarded as a virtuous duty. Therefore it is exceptional that the

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<sup>26</sup> There are also well-known *wange* by Cao Zhi 曹植 (192-232) and Lu Ji 陸機 (261-303). There is some debate as to whether Tao Yuanming was writing in imitation of any already existent poem, or *ni* was being used in a broader sense, as well as what the original title may have been. See Chan, *Considering the End*, p. 103, n 19. Regardless, for writers in the Song Dynasty, the tradition of writing in imitation of these songs was traced back to Tao Yuanming’s self-dedicated dirge *Ni Wange ci* 擬挽歌辭 (“A poem in imitation of dirges”). Qin Guan, for example, wrote a poem titled *zizuo wan ci* 自作挽詞, which was considered an inferior imitation of Tao’s by Qin’s near contemporaries. See the Song Dynasty *Tiaoxi yuyin conghua* 苕溪漁隱叢話, *houji* 後集 *juan* 3. The author places in the mouth of Su Shi the following criticism of this poem by Qin Guan:

Su Dongpo said of Qin Guan: His sentiments gather with the flavor of the world, his will attaches to principles of life, but as soon as he was sent into exile, he could not explain it to himself, and so with anger clutched under one arm he wrote this poem. What sincerity is achieved like this?

東坡謂太虛：情鍾世味，意戀生理，一經遷謫，不能自釋，遂挾忿而作此辭。豈真若是乎？

For a new, compelling reading of Tao Yuanming’s poems on death, see Chan, *Considering the End*, pp. 100-106. See also, A. R. Davis, *T’ao Yuan-ming, His Works and Their Meaning*, 1.165-173.

<sup>27</sup> In addition to the above-mentioned essays on *daowang* by Lai and Fong, as well as the survey by Hu Xu, for more on the importance of *daowang* for women writers, one may also see Wilt Idema, “The Biographical and the Autobiographical in Bo Shaojun’s *One Hundred Poems Lamenting My Husband*.”

<sup>28</sup> Poets of the Northern Song made contributions to the *daowang* tradition. Mei Yaochen 梅堯臣 wrote a remarkable number and variety of poems exploring his sorrow after his wife’s passing. One set of three poems was particularly influential. Mei’s three poems in *Daowang san shou* 悼亡三首 are well known and have been translated into English. Among Mei’s other works mourning his wife there are several about dreams. For a list of all twenty-one poems, see Hu Xu, *Daowang shi shi*, 111-112.

majority of Pan's works on mourning concern his wife."<sup>29</sup> Pan has been canonized as the first poet to inscribe personal feelings when mourning in an eloquent manner. Pan's *daowang* also opened the door for writing sentimentally about one's dear friends. Personal lamentation of a beloved friend would differ from a formulaic official elegy.

For an orthodox Buddhist like Qisong, there was a conflict between his identity as a monk and his behavior as a friend. When his friends died, he felt unbearable grief. He believed that in light of the Buddhist teachings, he ought to know better than to allow such emotions to get the better of him. For someone who lives a life committed to Buddhist principles, it seemed inappropriate to Qisong to put into song the emotions that do arise.

### **“Feelings Coalesce” – Monk Daoqian, Poet Su Shi**

A set of texts composed by Daoqian 道潛 (1043-after 1111) demonstrate a different framework for engaging with the problem of the emotions.<sup>30</sup> Daoqian and the polymath Su Shi, from their acquaintance in the 1070s until Su's death in 1101, remained

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<sup>29</sup> Lai, “The Art of Lamentation,” p. 410.

<sup>30</sup> For an overview of Daoqian's life, see Kong Fanli, “Song shiseng Daoqian shengping kaolüe.” Some further details concerning a possibly earlier first meeting between Su and Daoqian at Xipu temple 西菩 near Yuqian 於潛 in 1074 are discussed in Shi Shuting, 154-155, 195, and 218-224; a theory first proposed by Su Shufen, “Su Shi yu Canliaozi jiaoyou kao.” Poems with *wanci* 挽辭 in the title appear in Juan 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12. The fifteen poems written for Su Shi, *Dongpo Xiansheng wanci* 東坡先生挽詞, may be broken into three cycles: the first set of four is voiced as though from grave-side; the second set of four engage in timeless praise; the last set of seven, written in *jueju* form, are roughly chronological vignettes from Su's life. Daoqian's ninety-four lines of lamentation for Qin Guan, titled *Ku Shaoyou xueshi* 哭少游學士, break down into three sections; each uses a different rhyme. The first set seems to speak of Qin in the third person; the second in the second person; and the third in the plural singular.

intimate correspondents.<sup>31</sup> Though Su befriended many people, there were few men with whom he exchanged more poetry than Daoqian.<sup>32</sup> Not surprisingly, these two men held parallel views on many topics. With much similarity between them, small differences found in letters and poems to one another are all the more significant.

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<sup>31</sup> In 1101, Su wrote to Daoqian from the road during his return from exile in Hainan, the miasmatic island. He sent several poems upon reaching Dayu Ridge *dayu ling* 大庾嶺, a place of significance in the geographic imagination – it sits along the continental divide separating the Yangzi 長江 water basin from that of the Pearl River 珠江. Once back “inside” the pass, Su had returned to proper Chinese civilization. He sent his poems to family and friends. Many wrote back. Daoqian sent poems and a letter. The poems repurposed Su’s original rhyme-words, such as *Ciyun Dongpo jushi guo ling* 次韻東坡居士過嶺 (CLZSJ 10) which matches Su’s “Crossing the Ridge” *Guo Ling* 過嶺, and the poems speak with unbridled enthusiasm for Su’s triumphant return from a long exile. None of Daoqian’s prose letters survive, unfortunately. However, we can speculate from Su’s letters in response. Some months later, Su sent another letter, number twenty-one under *Yu Canliaozi* 與參寥子 (*Su Shi wenji*, p. 1868). The last letter from Su to Daoqian references a letter from Daoqian – possibly the one sent with the matched rhyme poems mentioned above. Su begins abruptly.

My illness is grave. I think we will not see each other. These last two days I’ve not had much life in me. The things you expressed in your letter, I have gotten them all. But I am not able to write much in reply. I was visiting a good friend, and fell very ill, and now death drapes upon me. I requested leave of office so that I might recuperate; I could not avoid such base sentiments. Perhaps there will be a [medical] response, and if otherwise, do not pity me. I beg you a thousand, myriad times: do not inscribe my deathbed petition. It will help no one, and only do harm.

某病甚，幾不相見，兩日乃微有生意。書中旨意一一領，但不能多書歷答也。見知識中病甚垂死因致仕而得活者，俗情不免效之，果若有應，其他不恤也。遺表千萬勿刻，無補有害也。

Su in this letter references his retirement on account of old age. Sometime in 1101.6, because of his advanced age and grave illness, Su petitioned the throne to request an honorable retirement (see *Su Shi wenji*, pp. 2430-2431). The letter to Daoqian must be from that or the next month. Su died at the end of the seventh month. Su’s deathbed petition *yibiao* 遺表 is not extant.

<sup>32</sup> Su’s most frequent correspondent was his brother Su Zhe. Of all the monks Su corresponded with, he wrote more prose letters and poems addressed to Daoqian than any other. Of course, quantity is not the same as quality. I hope the quotations I provide in this section demonstrate the high level of discourse sustained by these friends over many years.



Daoqian's sobriquet *Canliao*, calligraphy by Su Shi.<sup>33</sup>

Daoqian's disciple Faying (d.u.) was the compiler of Daoqian's collected poems, and preserved the title *wanci* 挽詞 for most of Daoqian's funeral verses.<sup>34</sup> As Faying was

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<sup>33</sup> Image reproduced from *Song Su Wenzhong ji Canliao shijuan zhenji*. The complete title and body of the poem may be found in *Su Shi shiji* 39.2102, but only the original calligraphy is signed and dated second month of 1101 (*Jingzhong jingguo yuannian er yue* 建中靖国元年二月).

<sup>34</sup> The earliest extant editions of *Canliaozi shiji* (CLZSJ) are clearly from the Song, and presumed to be the late Northern Song first edition sponsored by Faying. Several witnesses seem to be extant, and are the basis for the *Sibu congkan* (SBCK) edition. A high-quality full-color reproduction of the witness held at National Library of China in Beijing was printed by Beijing tushuguan chubanshe in 2003. I have worked closely with this 2003 edition throughout, and found no variants from the SBCK edition. All citations will be to the SBCK edition. The SBCK

learned enough for Chen Shidao to once refer to him as “a monk of the Su Dongpo school,” Faying likely was aware that the name *wanci* implied these poems were joining in the tradition of *wange*.<sup>35</sup> The contents of these poems make clear that their author was participating in the lamentation tradition.

Daoqian uses a striking phrase in several lamentations: “the feelings coalesce” *qingzhong* 情鍾. This poem, “Lamentation for the Attendant Yu Gongda” (*Yu Gongda daizhi wanci* 俞公達待制挽辭), is the second of two written after Yu Chong 俞充 died in 1081.<sup>36</sup> All records indicate that Yu was a congenial official. He also was known to have studied Buddhist principles.<sup>37</sup> After many lines praising Yu’s virtues, Daoqian concluded the poem with one couplet about bereavement.<sup>38</sup>

From time immemorial there have been the cemetery hills;  
Though feelings coalesce in people like us, do not suffer grief.<sup>39</sup>  
零落山丘今古事，情鍾我輩謾傷神。

This couplet introduces two themes. First, Daoqian establishes his knowledge that death has always been with us. Not just this cemetery, but the cemetery as a fact, as synecdoche

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includes an appendix showing variants found in later editions. As I was completing this work, I received a copy of Gao’s annotated edition. I have not had the opportunity to consult it.

<sup>35</sup> Chen Shidao calls Faying *Dongpo zhi men seng* 東坡之門僧 in “*Ying shi zi xu*” 穎師字序 in *Houshan ji*, *juan* 16. See also *Su Shi wen ji*, 2302, where Su describes Faying as heir to Canliao.

<sup>36</sup> Hucker states that in the Song, a *daizhi* or *daizhiguan* or “edict attendant” was a member of the Hanli academy who attended imperial meetings with officials and took notes on pronouncements. Hucker, 475.6129.

<sup>37</sup> For more on Yu Chong, see the notes to Qin Guan’s two *Yu Gongda daizhi wanci* 俞公達待製挽詞, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, 40.1289.

<sup>38</sup> CLZSJ 3.7b. This couplet comes at the end of a second regulated *shi*. Both poems are fairly conventional in praising.

<sup>39</sup> “Suffer grief”: *shang shen* 傷神 (lit. “harm the spirit”), is similar to *shang xin* 傷心 and a profound sense of feeling heart-broken, but may also connote a waste of energy.

for death, has been a part of life since ancient times (*jingu shi* 今古事). With this knowledge, it should not come as a surprise when people we know die. And yet, in the second half of this couplet, Daoqian states that “feelings coalesce in people like us” (*qing zhong wobei* 情鍾我輩). Though this is an allusion that will require some elucidation, and the addendum “do not be grieved” (*man shang shen*) likewise requires explanation, at this stage it should at least be clear that Daoqian used the couplet form to inscribe two ideas together – familiarity with the presence of death, and the distress of mourning.

A similar couplet is found in one of the several *wanci* Daoqian wrote to lament the death of the monk Liaoxing Haishi 了性海石.<sup>40</sup> Compared with the above, Daoqian employs a more explicitly Buddhist allusion in the first line of this couplet, from the second of three poems “Lamenting Great Master Cihua, metropolitan bishop” (*Du seng zheng Cihua Dashi* 都僧正慈化大師挽詞).<sup>41</sup> Just as above, the couplet is from the end of the poem, after praising the deceased, and offers some personal reflection on life and death.

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<sup>40</sup> Liaoxing Haishi was a disciple of Baoyue 寶月, and affiliated with the Guanghua cloister 廣化院, especially the *Chuici tang* 垂慈堂. See *Xianchun Lin'an zhi*, 76.4. Daoqian later wrote another poem about a flowering tree grown from a sapling planted at *Chuici tang* by Liaoxing, titled *Chuici tang mu qi hua* 垂慈堂木栖花 (CLZSJ, *juan* 9). There is little information about Liaoxing; see Qisong’s inscription for Liaoxing’s hermitage, T. 52, no. 2115, p. 705, c9-20. Liaoxing was also known to Su Shi, who called him *Liuguan tang laoren* 六觀堂老人; see Shi Shuting, p. 243. Note that Xu Hongxia, *Zhen ben Song ji wu zhong*, 1.313, mistakes Daoqian’s poems to be for Huailian, clearly misunderstanding the original author’s note to the first of the three poems.

<sup>41</sup> CLZSJ, 7.2b-3a. Metropolitan bishop translates *du seng zheng*. In the subsequent poem in CLZSJ, Daoqian turns down the very job vacated by Cihua’s passing; see “The position of the metropolitan bishop has been vacant, and Attendant [Lin] Zizhong hoped I would fill it, but I thank him and decline with this small poem, and thereupon succeeded in avoiding trouble” *Du sengzheng ji que Zizhong daizhi yu yu bu qi wei zhe ci yi xiao shi sui huo mian* 都僧正既闕子中待制欲余補其位輒辭以小詩遂獲免, CLZSJ 7.3b.

Coming and going are fundamentally without traces,  
Though feelings gather, do not be overcome with grief.<sup>42</sup>

來往元無迹，情鍾謾鬱陶。

This poem repeats the same juxtaposition in a couplet. The first line plays with the image found in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (*Weimojie jing* 維摩詰經).<sup>43</sup> In the second line, “feelings gather,” and yet do not cause harm. Again, there is a contrast between a kind of religious knowledge about the impermanence of things and the personally embodied affects of distress. Daoqian’s conclusion here is very similar: it is likely that thoughts and feelings of grief will arise, but one should not dwell in them or allow them to become entertainment. Such feelings are like weather, or clouds, that will arrive and go again without traces.

The phrase “feelings gather in people like us” alludes to a well-known story from the *Shishuo xinyu*. This is the same passage from “The Chapter on Grieving for the Departed” seen in a previous chapter when discussing Huihong and *wenzi chan*.

When Wang Rong lost his son (Wang Sui, d. ca. 275), Shan Jian went to visit him. Wang’s grief was such that he could not control himself. Jian said, “For a mere babe in arms, why go to such lengths?”

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<sup>42</sup> The phrase *yuyao* 鬱陶 is found in several pre-Han texts to describe a welling of grief. The reading of 陶 as *yao* and citations to *locus classicus* can be found in *Hanyu da cidian*, 3.1141.

<sup>43</sup> The encounter between Mañjuśrī and Vimalakīrti heats up when the layman declares that Mañjuśrī has come without coming, and Mañjuśrī assents with statements about the emptiness of movement (T. 14, no. 475, p. 544, b16-17). A similar phrase is also found in the *Śūraṅgama* (*Da Foding Shoulengyan Jing* 大佛頂首楞嚴經): “coming without attachments and passing without any trace” (來無所粘過無蹤跡; T. 19, no. 945, p. 151, b29-c4.). More details can be found in an earlier chapter, a footnote to *Yifanfeng* poem by Jiangxi Daodong 江西道東.

Wang said, “A sage forgets his feelings; the lowest beings aren’t even capable of having feelings. But the place where feelings are more concentrated is precisely among people like ourselves.”

Moved by his words, Jian grieved for him more than ever.<sup>44</sup>

This story revolves around the strict emotional stoicism one might expect of a cultivated gentleman. Young children may die (and certainly many more newborns died then than now). Such deaths are even expectable, and certainly are not grounds for being unable to control oneself (*bu zisheng* 不自勝). The social norm expressed by Shan Jian is a lofty ideal. This sets up Wang’s timeless response. Wang replies that such ideals of “forgetting one’s feelings” may be well and good for sages or saints (*shengren* 聖人), sentiments still concentrate, gather, or coalesce (*zhong* 鍾) in “people like us.”<sup>45</sup> Though below sages, “people like ourselves” is in the middle, above those lowly types who do not rise up to feelings. As for the latter, they are not a lower social class per se. These lowest types are people whose responses to situations are either hackneyed or insensitive, and as such do not measure up to the nuanced feelings of Wang’s anguish. Rich feelings exist in the middle – neither among the sages, nor among coarse people. When Shan Jian heard this explanation, he was more deeply moved than before. That Shan Jian was moved is because he too belongs to this “people like us,” and is someone who is refined enough to notice and articulate feelings and also not a sage who has forgotten them. Though during the time of the *Shishuo xinyu* such people mostly belonged to the aristocracy, at the time

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<sup>44</sup> Translation from Mather, p. 347. *Shishuo xinyu jiao jian*, p. 349; *Shangshi* 傷逝, number 17.

<sup>45</sup> The spiritual ideal of “forgetting” *wang* can be traced back to the Zhuangzi. On the verb *zhong* in classical texts, consider *huangzhong* 黃鍾 in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, section 3.16 天文訓. This is largely about explaining the cosmogony; *zhong* is the manner in which *qi* coalesces.



when Daoqian and other Song dynasty writers referred to this passage, the “people like ourselves” were then members of the literati.

Su Shi, too, used this phrase in exchanges with his literary monk friends. One such occasion was in a letter sent to Daoqian. This letter was written in response to news from Daoqian about the recent passing of the beloved Tiantai monk Longjing Biancai 龍井辯才 (1011-1091).<sup>46</sup>

Your letter arrived and is in my hands, so I know that you are well. Biancai has followed the transformation of things and departed. Though coming and going are fundamentally non-existent, feelings will coalesce in people like us, and we cannot escape sorrow. I am sending a *dianwen* [eulogy]<sup>47</sup> and two taels of silver to procure tea and fruit for funeral offerings.

兩得手書，具審法體佳勝。辯才遂化去，雖來去本無，而情鍾我輩，不免悽愴也。今有奠文一首，并銀二兩，託為致茶果一奠之。<sup>48</sup>

In this letter, Su used almost the same phrases as the above poem by Daoqian. Su contrasts the emptiness of coming and going with the unavoidable reality that “feelings coalesce in people like us.” Su laments that such feelings are inescapable. This

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<sup>46</sup> Among the sources for Biancai’s life, the *Fozu tongji* gives a fairly standard account, at T. 49, no. 2035, p. 211, a23-c25. Though incomplete, I have found Hu Xiaoming’s *nianpu* article of use. Daoqian and Biancai had an unusually close relationship. In all likelihood it stems from their both being from the small town of Yuqian 於潛, located in a valley to the west of Hangzhou. Daoqian frequently went to visit Biancai in his dotage. In the end, Biancai called Daoqian to his side, and announced he would die in seven days.

<sup>47</sup> This is probably the text *Ji Longjing Biancai wen* 祭龍井辯才文, found in *Su Shi wenji*, 63.1961.

<sup>48</sup> This is letter number six in *Su Shi wenji*, p. 1861; the letter is also reproduced elsewhere as *Da Canliao* 答參寥. In the second half of the letter, Su discusses the disciple Faying’s progress with calligraphy.

resignation, however, differs from Daoqian’s suggestion that such feelings may pass without anguish.

Su Shi not only wrote in this way to Daoqian. He also inscribed a related sentiment in a set of three lamentations for Haiyue Huibian 海月慧辯 (d. 1073).<sup>49</sup> The second of three was later anthologized, and includes this couplet.<sup>50</sup>

Life and death bend as quickly as an elbow,

Yet feelings coalesce in people like us – how entirely sour and painful.<sup>51</sup>

生死猶如臂屈伸，情鍾我輩一酸辛。

The contrast here with Daoqian’s poem could not be more stark. Just like Daoqian’s poem “Lamenting Great Master Cihua,” the first line alludes to Buddhist texts and the second line the *Shishuo xinyu*. The first line here refers to an old Indian metaphor known in countless Chinese translations of sūtra. It is more commonly seen as “the time it takes to bend an elbow” (*qu shen bi qing* 屈伸臂頃) as well as the older and complete phrase “as fast as it takes a strong man to bend his elbow” (*you ru li shi qu shen bi qing* 猶如力

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<sup>49</sup> Haiyue was a Tiantai monk, a student of Zushao 祖韶 who was a disciple of the famous Zunshi 遵式. See *Shi shi ji gu lüe* at T. 49, no. 2037, p. 864, c19-25, and on his death see p. 873, a6-12. According to another text, Haiyue’s final words were instructions to wait until after Su Shi arrived to perform the funeral. Su arrived after four days, and found Haiyue’s body still sitting in full-lotus as though he were alive; whereupon Su wrote these three lamentations. See, T. 49, no. 2035, p. 415, a6-9. A lengthy biography for Haiyue Huibian is found in *Fou tongji*, beginning at T. 49, no. 2035, p. 210, b28. Su Shi’s brother Su Zhe wrote the pagoda inscription for Haiyue, *Tianzhu Haiyue fashi ta bei* 天竺海月法師塔碑, in *Luancheng ji*, *Luancheng houji* 24.1445.

<sup>50</sup> *Diao Tianzhu Haiyue Bian Shi* 弔天竺海月辯師, *Su Shi shiji*, 479-480. The third poem cleverly quotes from the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*.

<sup>51</sup> For “sour and painful,” Su’s use of flavors *suan xin* 酸辛, literally sour and spicy, has some resonance with his theory of Buddhist poetry explored in the introductory chapter and in the chapter on *shihua*. In that poem addressed to Daoqian, Su says that there is a subtle and ultimate flavor beneath the bitter and sweet. Bitter and sweet conveys the full range of human emotional. Here, sour and spicy denotes only the unpleasant.

士屈伸臂頃). This indicates that something happened with great speed and unhindered. In classical Buddhist texts, the metaphor is applied to action that follows thought swiftly, to superpowers used to travel great distances, and to the cycles of birth and death. It is the latter connotation that Su seems to be drawing upon. Despite knowing that life and death are such, Su finds that he has not yet “forgotten feelings.” Su again concludes this line with resignation. The difference between Su and Daoqian on this point is subtle, and we may be tempted to attribute it to the commitments that distinguish a layman with family and a monk. Regardless, in these examples the similarities between them are greater than the differences. Both men engaged the gap between abstract Buddhist knowledge and embodied affect.

One more poem by Daoqian, written for a monk that died young, can show how the same principles playing out across a single couplet can also take shape across halves of a poem. About the monk who is the subject of the poem “Mourning Venerable Xiu” (*Ku Xiu shangren* 哭休上人), nothing more is known. The final couplet indicates that he died out of turn, young enough to be survived by his mother. The first half is about religious truth and finding comfort there. The second half, then, turns to the relative wherein we do mourn the individual loss.<sup>52</sup>

I have long had doubts about the Creator,<sup>53</sup>

從來疑造物

<sup>2</sup> There is no place one can verify he is real.

無處識其真

<sup>52</sup> SBCK reproduces a carver’s error whereby the two words 室白 were forced onto a single space at half size. *Canliao shi chao* 18a-b reprints this poem with proper alignment.

<sup>53</sup> Ideas about “the Creator” can be found in *Zhuangzi*, such as the chapter *Dazongshi*, and refers to the creative force that gave shape to the myriad objects and things in the world. The poem is referring to a Chinese idea, not an Indian Buddhist one.

A comely moon does not last the whole night through,	好月難終夕
<sup>4</sup> Just as famous blossoms do not endure the entire spring.	名花不盡春
A bronze lamp may illumine a room in vain,	青燈空照室
<sup>6</sup> As even whitest wool eventually becomes scraps. <sup>54</sup>	白氈謾遺巾
Your poor mother weeps tears of blood,	泣血怜慈母
<sup>8</sup> Her bitter grief affects all around her.	悲酸動四鄰

In this poem, Daoqian seems to be addressing those who survived and are distressed. We might surmise that these lines are for the benefit of the grieving mother, but may well be written for anyone moved by the pitiful sight. Lines 3 and 4 discuss the virtues of the deceased. However, these lines might also be discussing the creator and cosmos. When we focus on only the moon of night and flowers of spring, we fail to see the horrors of dark, and the spring wind that slaughters butterflies. In Line 5 we enter a small space. Even in a small room, we may only shed light on one portion at a time. How much more true this seems for the death of a young man. At the finality of death, no matter how pure this monk, (white as wool,) it does not seem to matter. This poem doesn't turn the corner and begin to romanticize death. It just stays with mourning. For he is dead. The poem ends with the unconsolable mother's grief. Contrast this with Daoqian's "Lamentation for

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<sup>54</sup> "White wool" *baidie*, also written 白氈, appears in many Buddhist texts. Here it refers to the virtuous character of the late Venerable Xiu. White wool is a rare and treasured fabric, and so it is a metaphor for persons whose character is woven of the finest virtue. There are many older texts, such as "the metaphor of the merchant's dead camel" 估客駝死喻 in *Baiyu jing* 百喻經 (T. 04, no. 209, p. 549, c5-17), but an example more likely to be familiar in the Song dynasty might be something like this passage from the *Zong jing lu*:

The mind of *bodhi* is like a piece of white wool, because down to its roots its nature is clear and pure.

菩提心者。如白氈線。從本已來性清淨故。

T. 48, no. 2016, p. 465, b10-11

the Lady of Su Shimei.” That verse is addressed to the widower Su Shimei, and offers him the comfort of knowing his wife had lived out her good years.<sup>55</sup> She had a full life, and her death was an appropriate death. A mother, on the other hand, can never stop grieving for a son; “For nothing now can ever come to any good.”<sup>56</sup> The narrator in Daoqian’s poem “Mourning Venerable Xiu” asserts religious truths and then shifts register to acknowledge the details of the situation at hand and the anguish felt in the face of this death. Daoqian’s poem allows these different registers of truth to sit side-by-side. These poems by Daoqian represent one strategy for negotiating religious commitments with anguish at the finality of death.<sup>57</sup>

### Lamentations by Xuedou

Qisong and Daoqian were not alone among the sangha in composing lamentations.

Monks from Chan and Tiantai traditions alike, throughout the Northern Song and

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<sup>55</sup> After addressing the timeliness of Lady Su’s virtues, and before exalting the virtue of having songs, Daoqian’s “Lamentation for the Lady Su Shimei” *Su shimei furen wanci* 蘇世美夫人挽辭 (CLZSJ 8) includes the lines:

For no reason we are startled by funeral songs; has man not long felt such sorrow?  
We ought know by now that the creator also sees death through.  
空驚薤露昔人悲，故知造物酬陰施。

“Funeral songs” refers to *wange*. The phrase here *xielu* 薤露 (lit. “onion dew”) is the name of one of the songs sung by Tian Heng’s retainers; and by extension denotes the *wange* subgenre. As Daoqian is clearly addressing the widower Su Shimei, Daoqian may have had in mind the *daowang* subgenre as written for wives, from Pan Yue to Mei Yaochen. As for the identity of Su Shimei, when the widower later died, Su Shi wrote an elegy for him, titled *Su Shimei aici* 蘇世美哀詞, found in *Su Shi wenji* 1964-65. Apparently there was no relation.

<sup>56</sup> This line epitomizes the pessimistic melancholy in W. H. Auden’s “Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone.”

<sup>57</sup> One might compare these poems with Daoqian’s lamentations for Qin Guan, which record florid anguish. After nearly one hundred lines of grief, he concludes: “In the snap of a finger, we are parted forever” 彈指當永訣.

Southern Song, often found themselves confronting grief. These monks' elegies may be regarded as a corpus. Once again, the problem of the emotions, a conflict between grief and religious ideals, animates these poems.

There are funerary poems by monks from the orthodox Chan lineages.<sup>58</sup> For example, there are four funerary verses (marked by *dao* 悼 in the title) by Xuedou Chongxian 雪竇重顯 (980-1052), best-known as the author of the commentarial verses at the core of the *Biyuanlu* 碧巖錄 (*Blue Cliff Record*).<sup>59</sup> Just as in Qisong's elegiac verse, Xuedou's poems are for lay persons. Unlike Qisong, Xuedou inscribes his personal sentiments within the poems. For example, in "Mourning the functionary of Wuwei" (*Dao Wuwei pingshi* 悼武威評事),<sup>60</sup> the final couplet reflects a conflict within the author, who wonders about the propriety of a devout monk singing songs about his sorrow.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Such poems are found in individual *yulu*, such as *Fayan chanshi yulu*, T. 47, no. 1995, p. 666, c22-p. 667, a11; as well as in anthologies like *Chan zong za du hai*, *juan* 3, XZJ 114, p. 141, a18-p. 143, a3. There are also poems in individual's collections, like *Dao Xing shangren* 悼性上人 by Huihong in *Shimen wenzi chan* 石門文字禪, *juan* 10.

<sup>59</sup> The *Zuting shiyuan*, *juan* 4, includes these four poems in a section called *Xuedou shiyi* 雪竇拾遺, under the sub-section *diaodao* 弔悼 ("mourning"). The *Xuedou shiyi* includes a brief explanation by the compiler at XZJ 113, p. 123, a4-5, which says the contents were gathered from hand-written manuscripts at Siming, from various stone inscriptions, and from personal collections of calligraphy. The *Zuting shiyuan* itself is a well-attested Northern Song text, and these fragments of Xuedou are believed to be authentic; see, Huang Yi-hsun, 2007, pp. 109-111.

<sup>60</sup> Though this person remains obscure, we can know the approximate location of Wuwei 武威. Ouyang Xiu, in *Xin Wudai shi* 新五代史, *juan* 16, states that Wuwei was an alternate name for part of Min 閩. Lines 5 and 6 mention the *Yin shui* 鄞水 "the waters of Yin" and *Yue shan* 越山 "the mountains of Yue;" Yin and Yue may sometimes refer to the Ningbo and Shaoxing areas, but are also metonyms for the ancient kingdom of Yue; after the fall of the kingdom of Yue, the ruling family moved south to Fujian and set up *Minyue* 閩越.

<sup>61</sup> XZJ 113, p. 125, b1-4.

I am ashamed that old and ill beneath these pine cliffs      我慚老病松巖下

<sup>8</sup> I turn in vain to the groaning wind to sing of your virtuous      空對悲風詠德門  
house.

Xuedou's shame (*can* 慚) at his sentimentality comes in spite of his own aging and illness (*lao bing* 老病). This is a clever allusion to basic Buddhist teachings. Old age and illness are two parts of the three marks, *lao bing si* 老病死 – the third is death. In other words, Xuedou's comment is that in spite of his own embodiment of two of the three marks, he somehow is surprised or caught off guard by the third. He suggests that he should know better by now. Nonetheless, he turns into “a wind of sorrow” (*beifeng* 悲風) to sing this song, even though he knows that it is in vain (*kong* 空). This is the cause for his shame.<sup>62</sup>

Xuedou further explored the tensions of Buddhist and poetic ideals in the first of three poems “Mourning the functionary of Hejian” (*Dao Hejian pingshi* 悼河間評事).<sup>63</sup>

At your funeral were hundreds or thousands of people;      隨喪人物百千重

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<sup>62</sup> I have experimented with reading *can* here as a technical Buddhist term. In technical literature *can* and *kui* are used to translate *hrī* and *apatrāpya*, respectively, both wholesome qualities. From what I gather, *can*, as a translation of *hrī*, is an inner moral restraint (not self-loathing or guilt-tripping); *kui*, as a translation of *apatrāpya*, is a concern for bringing harm to oneself or others (not fear of social embarrassment or censure). Following this train of thought, many Mahāyāna texts insist that bodhisattvas engage in this-worldly behavior but do not accrue karma because they abide in *can* and *kui*. If we interpret the poem in light of these ideas, Xuedou would seem to be stating that he is “ashamed,” or *can* (inner moral restraint), as he performs the action of writing this elegy, exactly because this is how an awakened bodhisattva would feel and behave. In other words, feeling *can* (inner moral restraint) as one writes an elegy presents “a Buddhist solution” to the problem of the emotions. This reading is speculative, however, and I am not sure what more evidence one can find in Xuedou's other writings.

<sup>63</sup> XZJ 113, p. 125, b4-5.

2 But with a snap of the fingers here, the whole affair is already empty. 彈指郊原事已空

All that's left are the freshly sown pines and cypress 唯有新栽小松栢

4 That will bend in the grieving wind ever for you. 為君遐古動悲風

Xuedou's entire poem moves across a landscape that mirrors his interiority.<sup>64</sup> The first line refers to the funeral procession out to the burial site, which is impressively large when it happens but soon disperses to become but a vacant memory. When he imagines looking at the funeral proceedings in the countryside outside of town, Xuedou sees two things. First, Xuedou sees the emptiness of all things – this is a Buddhist ideal. As the poet observes the myriad details of funerary etiquette, he knows that it is ultimately empty (*kong* 空).<sup>65</sup> This reality can be seen “with a snap of the fingers.” This sense of time as timeless presence is at odds with the impermanence that hangs on a funeral. In Xuedou's second vision, he sees pine and cypress saplings, and he finds them grieving. Again “a wind of sorrow” (*beifeng* 悲風) blows across the funereal landscape. Such visions of nature itself grieving are possible in this poetic landscape because the poet Xuedou is full of grief. Taken all together, the poem presents the vision of a monk who sees through the affairs of grieving as empty, and yet still is grieved.

The above verses by Qisong, Daoqian, and Xuedou are fairly representative of monks' lamentations. Not without significant differences between them, each author wrote about the problem of the emotions for men committed to monastic paths. These

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<sup>64</sup> The relationship between interiority and landscape are explored in Kao, “Chinese Lyric Aesthetics,” 83-84, *et passim*.

<sup>65</sup> One wonders if he is playing with the layers of *kong* to also indicate that such behavior is in vain.



poems express personal sentiments, but within the context of the author's commitments to a fairly strict interpretation of the ideal of equanimity. There is another kind of funeral verse that was written by Song dynasty monks. It is clear that verses were also written for and used at the funerals of Buddhist monks. Buddhist ritual funeral verses markedly differ from poems of the *wange* tradition.

### **Ritual Poems in Monastic Funerals**

One new literary form pervasive in Chan monastic literature is the funerary poem offered by an abbot to a deceased monk. Many of these poems were collected and included in *yulu*. Most commonly, these verses were included towards the end of a *yulu*. Many different types of verses were gathered there. These funerary verses were sometimes grouped under a special name. They most frequently are referred to as *Foshi* 佛事 “matters of Buddhas.”<sup>66</sup> This was a euphemism for matters relating to caring for the bodies of the dead.

Verses of *foshi* can be in Chan *yulu* (“recorded sayings”). *Yulu* are published texts that purport to record the sermons, teaching dialogues, prose instructions, and religious verses from the career of an individual Chan master. In some *yulu*, a reader may find *foshi* verses relating to a *kan* 龕. The purpose of these *kan* verses becomes clear when we turn to read *qinggui* 清規 (“rules of purity”). The *qinggui* are Chan monastic codes, legislating everyday life for those who live in the monastery, as well as ritual manuals

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<sup>66</sup> See Holmes Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, 1900-1950*, p. 189, on the use of this name for funerary and memorial activities among monks during the early Republican Period. *Ibid.*, pp. 340-345, discusses further details about monastic funerals.

with great detail concerning annual memorials, funerals, and other ritual events. From the *qinggui* we may learn that *kan* referred to the wooden structure used to hold a corpse through cremation rites.<sup>67</sup> In *yulu* there are also *foshi* verses written to accompany the rites for *ruta* 入塔 “inserting into a pagoda,” or interment. All of these verses correspond to instructions found in *qinggui*.

There are many different sequences recorded for the different communities that produced the extant *qinggui*, and there is much variation in the details.<sup>68</sup> We cannot reconstruct the exact ritual specifics for any given funeral from these texts. The text of funerary *foshi* verse, on the other hand, is a witness to a one-time liturgy performed for an individual’s funeral. As found in *yuku*, these *foshi* verses are stripped from the living, ritual contexts in which they derive most of their meaning. The *foshi* verses were not texts to be read from a book. They were an essential part of a funeral. A reader of specific *foshi* verses benefits immeasurably from understanding the likely contours of the ritual in which those verses participated.

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<sup>67</sup> In practice a *kan* was largely synonymous with a *guan* 棺 (“coffin”). See for example XZJ 112, p. 40, b17-18 and the gloss for *kanzi* 龕子 in *Shi shi yaolan* T. 54, no. 2127, p. 307, c2-7, and the Qing era note trying to create a distinction, at XZJ 111, p. 702, b4)

<sup>68</sup> See for example the list of seventeen rituals in Yuan era text *Chi xiu Baizhang qinggui* 敕修百丈清規, T. 48, no. 2025, p. 1128, a22-26, and the subsequent instructions for each ritual event. There is a sixteen step funeral process in the late Southern Song *Conglin jiaoding qinggui zongyao* 叢林校定清規總要, XZJ 112, p. 40, a16-b3, likewise with detailed instructions for events, including liturgical texts for recitation and model petitions. The text includes an original preface dated 1274 (咸淳十年), while colophons of the reproduction are dated 1284 (至元甲申) and 1293 (至元癸巳). The *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規 (preface 1103) includes similar instructions; see under *wangseng* 亡僧 (XZJ 111, p. 912, b3-p. 914, a9); Kagamishima 237-248; Yifa, 206-211.

The most numerous *foshi* verses in Song Dynasty *yulu* are those that accompany the cremation rites.<sup>69</sup> These are generally referred to by the descriptive euphemisms *xiahuo* 下火 “lowering the flames” or *bingju* 秉炬 “bringing the torch.” Cremation rites are also known as *tupi* 茶毗 (also written *tupi* 茶毘), a transliteration that corresponds with Sanskrit *dhyāpeti* (Pāli: *jhāpeti*). These verses were not restrained to one branch of the Chan family tree, or to one time and place. For example, numerous verses found in *yulu* of Yuanwu Keqin,<sup>70</sup> Hongzhi Zhengjue,<sup>71</sup> and Xutang Zhiyu<sup>72</sup> all correspond to funerary ritual events outlined in *qinggui*.

Many of the *qinggui* indicate exactly when in a funeral procession some verses are to be spoken. For example, the *Chanyuan qinggui*, the earliest extant full code, makes clear that “some dharma words” (*fayu* 法語) should be recited once the cremation fire is exhausted.<sup>73</sup> Extant examples from *yulu* from the Song onwards show that often these “dharma words” took the form of a verse.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> My understanding is based in part on the erudite commentary by monk Yirun 儀潤 (19<sup>th</sup> c.) in *Baizhang qinggui zhengyi ji* 百丈清規證義記, under *chapi* 茶毗, XZJ 111, p. 704, b15-p. 705, b10.

<sup>70</sup> *Rukan* 入龕, *juai* 舉哀, and *xiahuo* 下火 verses at T. 47, no. 1997, p. 810, a27-c28.

<sup>71</sup> Approximately thirty *xiahuo* 下火 verses from T. 48, no. 2001, p. 82, b10-p. 83, c5, followed by several *ruta* 入塔.

<sup>72</sup> Sixteen *bingju* 秉炬 verses each with the name of a monastic officer can be found from T. 47, no. 2000, p. 1060, a18; and another dozen *foshi* poems on p. 1033, c7-p. 1034, a25.

<sup>73</sup> XZJ 111, p. 913, a2-3; Kagamishima, 239-240; Yifa 207.

<sup>74</sup> These practices continued throughout late imperial China. The late Southern Song and early Yuan monk Deyin 德因 (b. 1236, see autobiography at XZJ 114, p. 104, a11) compiled (prefaced is dated 1287). Fascicles 12 and 13 are liturgies to be used for any conceivable funeral situation. Fascicle 12 are most familial relations; perhaps Deyin had a thriving funeral business. The verses in *juan* 13, on the other hand, are to be used in the monastery, and the chapter is titled *Niepan fayu men* 涅槃法語門. The liturgies are a mix of prose and verse, though some rites, especially the cremation rites, are almost entirely verse. Among other curiosities, Deyin had a different standard verse for cremation rites held in each of the four seasons of the year; unique verses for

The rhetoric and themes of *foshi* verses generally follow a similar pattern.

Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤, teacher of Dahui and author of *Biyuanlu* (Blue Cliff Record), wrote two *foshi* verses during the observation of the death of his dharma brother Foyan Qingyuan 佛眼清遠 (1067-1120),<sup>75</sup> one *ju'ai* 舉哀 and one *xiahuo* 下火. According to *qinggui*, the *ju'ai* was a formal expression of grief performed after encoffinment and before cremation (*xiahuo*), usually immediately after erecting the portrait of the deceased and before tea offering.<sup>76</sup> This public lamentation, titled “Offering Lamentations for the monk Foyan” (*Wei Foyan heshang ju'ai* 為佛眼和尚舉哀) is distinct from the personal *wange* we saw above. It includes lines such as:<sup>77</sup>

“On a great gust of wind he leaves, / I only see how this is not sour or painful.”

Though it is so, you must know that Foyan was never born, and never dies. He never left, and he never came.

颯然恁麼去。唯見不酸辛。雖然如是。須知佛眼未曾生未曾死。未曾去未曾來。

In one of Su Shi's poems above, he remarks that the loss of an individual is “entirely sour and painful.” Yuanwu Keqin first offers a verse in which he negates the sentiments of lamentation. This is a small intrusion of the lamentation poetic tradition. Yuanwu quickly negates even such poetic unsaying in the prose that follows. He declares that Foyan has

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monks, Daoist, and scholars; old and young; merchant or farmer; and for those who drunkenly fell off a bridge and drowned.

<sup>75</sup> Foyan Qingyuan 佛眼清遠 was a disciple of Wuzu Fayan 五祖法演.

<sup>76</sup> See, for example, XZJ 112, p. 40, a16-b3.

<sup>77</sup> T. 47, no. 1997, p. 810, b8-25. This and other verses by Yuanwu were later anthologized, such as in the Kangxi era *Liezu tiwang lu* 列祖提綱錄 created as a supplement to *qinggui*.

not died, and not left. Yuanwu declares the religious truth of nonduality. This kind of non-dual doctrinal statement is typical of the *foshi* verses.<sup>78</sup>

There are many plausible reasons why verses expressing doctrinal truths would be recited at monastic funerals. These publically recited verses were recited at monks' funerals by the abbot, who was regarded as a living Buddha and whose words were to accord with the speech of a Buddha. Not only was the abbot to be regarded as a buddha, but the monks who died were ritually transformed into buddhas themselves.<sup>79</sup> Monastic funerals (especially for elite monks) ritually enact the nirvāṇa of the Buddha Śākyamuni.<sup>80</sup>

Verses at monastic funerals are also distinct because they are part of the rites for communal mourning. These *foshi* verses address the living, as much as the deceased, and are not meant as an expression of personal grief. This context enables a reader of *foshi* funeral verses to understand why they so little resemble *daowang* lamentations. This is the context in which we should understand the lamentations by monks. By contrasting

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<sup>78</sup> See, for example, a verse by Hongzhi for two anonymous monks, one among many that plays with “coming and going”; T. 48, no. 2001, p. 82, c8-11; and another among many that play with “life and death”; T. 48, no. 2001, p. 82, b28-c2.

<sup>79</sup> See Demiéville, “Langue et littérature chinoises: Tch’an et poésie,” p. 280; “Stances de la fin.” Robert Sharf discusses a typical Chan funeral of the Song dynasty in “Idolization of Enlightenment,” 16-22. See also Foulk and Sharf, “On the Ritual Use of Ch’an Portraiture.”

<sup>80</sup> This is fairly explicit in Weimian’s *Conglin jiaoding qinggui zongyao*, in the section “On the nirvāṇa of the current abbot” 當代住持涅槃; XZJ 112, p. 38, b4-14; and under the same header in *Chanlin beiyong qinggui* 禪林備用清規, XZJ 112, p. 121, b3-14. Many *qinggui* make explicit use in funeral ceremonies of the *wuchang ji* 無常偈 attributed to Buddha throughout the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* complex, including *Daban niepan jing* 大般涅槃經 T. 12, no. 374, p. 450, a16-p. 451, a1. Per the *Chanlin beiyong qinggui* 禪林備用清規 (author’s preface dated 1311), the entire assembly recites the gatha of impermanence three times; XZJ 112, p. 122, a1-2. Zhongfeng Mingben in *Xuanzhu an qinggui* 幻住庵清規 proposed writing each of the four lines on a separate large sheet of paper which is placed around the coffin; XZJ 111, p. 1001, a12-14. A diagram of how this is practiced in Rinzai Zen can be found in the Hanazono University Zen bunka kenkyūjo, *Shinshū Zenke shokan*, p. 261.

personal lamentations with communal elegies, we may better understand, for example, Qisong's sentiment in "Lament for the retired Vice Minister Zhongshan," in which he declared "he should not." After the funeral for his friend, despite participating in mourning rites, Qisong still felt an urge to lodge his anguish in song.

The prescriptive Buddhist sources from the Song dynasty directly address this issue of the emotions after a funeral. The *Shi shi yaolan*, for example, in the section on "seeing off the departed" (*songzhong* 送終) has an entry on "crying" (*ku* 哭).<sup>81</sup> The compiler cites three canonical sources that offer authoritative restrictions on crying, including the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* and the *Sifen lü* vinaya.<sup>82</sup> This pithy command conveys the gist of the prescriptions: "Do not raise one's voice wailing; one should shed only a few tears" (*bu de ju sheng da ku ying xiao xiao qi lei* 不得舉聲大哭應小小泣淚).<sup>83</sup> These kinds of commands also appear in *qinggui* rules, such as the command that after one's master has died "one must not lose control crying and tear one's robes" (*bu de pi ma tong ku* 不得披麻慟哭).<sup>84</sup>

The existence of so many monks' *daowang* lamentations, by prominent orthodox figures no less, makes clear that commands to control one's feelings were ideals. These ideals were powerful, nonetheless, and were perpetuated with every monastic funeral. As a result of the repeated performance of the conflict between these ideals and lived

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<sup>81</sup> T. 54, no. 2127, p. 308, b7-14.

<sup>82</sup> *Shi shi yaolan*, T. 54, no. 2127, p. 308, b7-14. The text attributed to the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* is not a direct quote. It comes close to the recounting in the *Sifen lü* vinaya at T. 22, no. 1428, p. 966, b3-24. The *Sifen lü* vinaya passage concerning nuns who cry while quarreling comes from T. 22, no. 1428, p. 744, a17-20.

<sup>83</sup> From a text *Wubai wen* 五百問, also known as *Wubai wen shi* 五百問事, cited in the Tang and no longer extant.

<sup>84</sup> *Chi xiu baizhang qinggui* 敕修百丈清規, T. 48, no. 2025, p. 1127, b5.

religion, the problem of the emotions was not one that would go away so simply. Song dynasty compilers and writers used these same canonical references to the Buddha's disciples after his *nirvāṇa* to address and attempt to negotiate the problem of the emotions.

### **Emotions in Scripture: The *Nirvāṇa sūtra* complex**

The emotional timbre of the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* (NS) narrative is driven by the grief expressed for a superlative teacher. However, the displays of grief by the Buddha's leading disciples also raises an interesting question. If the arhats extinguished the passions and awakened to the truth of the Buddha's teaching, then how is it, or why is it, that they are so moved to tears, outpourings of grief, and loss of self-control? This apparent contradiction became a locus for later Buddhist exegetes to consider how a good Buddhist, who grasps the import of impermanence and no-self, or of emptiness, should mourn and grieve.

The disparate texts that form the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* narrative complex address this question with several possible answers. Each *Nirvāṇa sūtra* purports to contain the Buddha's final message. Most broadly speaking, these *sūtra* may be divided into two narrative complexes: (1) the Nikāya/Āgama texts, sometimes referred to as the "mainstream" *Nirvāṇa sūtra* (hereafter "mainstream NS"), and (2) the Mahāyāna texts.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> There are several translations of the ANS in Chinese; see Sonya Lee p. 89, Table 1, for a comprehensive list, based in part on Waldschmidt, *Die Überlieferung vom Lebensende des Buddha*. The MNS was first translated by Buddhahadra 佛陀跋陀羅 and Faxian 法顯 (T. no. 376), which was soon supplanted by a longer work by Dharmakṣema 曇無讖 (T. no. 374); Dharmakṣema's translation was then reworked by Huiyan 慧嚴, Huiguan 慧觀, Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 et al. (T. no. 375). Historically, the most widely read and commented upon versions of the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* in China is T. no. 374 and T. no. 375.

As is well known, the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* (MNS) had much greater impacts in China and East Asian Buddhism than did the Āgama *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* (ANS).<sup>86</sup> However, the body of the MNS is dedicated almost entirely to explicating important Mahāyāna doctrines, not to narrative per se. What's more, the MNS text ends abruptly before the Buddha has attained to parinirvāṇa.<sup>87</sup> This presents a challenge for attending to the Mahāyāna telling of the Buddha's final moments, and will require some explanation for understanding how the NS was understood by some in China's Song dynasty.

There are two sections of the NS narrative when the Buddha's disciples clearly express emotional responses to the death of the Buddha. The first comes after the Buddha's announcement that he will enter nirvāṇa and is in anticipation of his imminent passing. The second follows the Buddha's parinirvāṇa, in the moments after the Buddha has died.<sup>88</sup> Below, I attend to each of these moments in turn.

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<sup>86</sup> On the importance of the MNS in China, see volume two of Fuse Kōgaku, *Nehanshū no kenkyū*. In English, see Mark Blum's introduction to *The Nirvāṇa sūtra*, beginning on p. xiii. There are, of course, notable and interesting exceptions in which the ANS was read in China. For example, it is reported Su Shi copied the *Zhong ahan jing* in 1090 to mourn his mother. There are also Āgama manuscripts from Dunhuang.

<sup>87</sup> The doctrines presented in the MNS differ substantially from those in the ANS. The MNS is one of the most important sources for the doctrines of Buddha-nature and Tathāgatagarbha; the inversion of principles like no-self; and the pronouncement of the eternal Buddha. In the MNS, the real body of the Buddha, his dharma body, is revealed to be eternal and never dying. In addition to the MNS' doctrinal differences from the ANS, there are also significant differences in the narrative. The disciples and arhats are not the main interlocutors with the Buddha, and are not the immediate audience for the teachings of the MNS. The MNS, despite being 40 fascicles long, seems to convey less narrative. Most interestingly, the MNS translated by Dharmakṣema ends abruptly just as the arhats are gathering before the Buddha's parinirvāṇa. In other words, the surviving MNS texts end before the Buddha's nirvāṇa. I will return to this point below.

<sup>88</sup> Important scholarship analyzing these scenes from the Buddha's life includes: Przyluski, pp. 5-46; Waldenschmidt, vol. 2, pp. 196-200, 254-262; Foucher, pp. 308-323; Bareau, vol. 2, pp. 161-171, 171-174; and Strong, pp. 110-114.



The ANS has been extensively analyzed and well translated elsewhere.<sup>89</sup> One can consult Bareau (1971) for analysis and Waldschmidt (1944-1948) for direct comparisons of the Chinese texts with extant Sanskrit and Pali. There is considerable variation across the ANS texts, and I will discuss this variation where necessary. In general, however, the plot devices function in a structurally similar manner, and the particular changes across texts are insignificant for my purposes here. So it will suffice here to point to those sections that provide illustrative comparisons with MNS texts in particular.

In ANS texts, after the Buddha announces his parinirvāṇa, there are several telling moments in which sentient beings react to this news.<sup>90</sup> For example, the Buddha chastises his attendant Upamāna (P. Upavāṇa, Ch. *youbomona* 優波摩那 and other transliterations) for blocking the view of the Buddha's body for countless devas who surround the twin sala trees.<sup>91</sup> Among those devas, there are two kinds: those that thrash around, weeping, pulling at their hair; and those that are free from craving who patiently endure this and repeating the words of the Buddha grasp the profound truth that all is impermanent.<sup>92</sup> The qualitatively different reactions of these groups are pegged to their fundamentally understanding, or not, the Buddha's teaching. This is one of many places we are told, here by none other than the Buddha himself, that those who understand his teachings should grieve like *this* (with calm dignity), and not like *that* (a loss of self-control).

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<sup>89</sup> John Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, organizes Chapter Four by following the narrative of events from the Buddha's instructions, to his death and production of relics, and ultimately to the division of relics by the eight kings. I followed Strong's notes to locate early scholarship.

<sup>90</sup> Sections 3.36-38 and 3.51, in Walshe pp. 250-251, 253.

<sup>91</sup> See Bareau, vol. 2, p. 21.

<sup>92</sup> Bareau, vol. 2, pp. 21-29; Waldschmidt, p. 206. Known in several Chinese examples, including *Daban niepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (T. 01, no. 7, p. 199, b14-21). For the Pali *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* 5.6, see Walshe, p. 263.

This same division between beings who are awakened and those who are not yet is seen in the opening of the MNS, and is again revealed by the qualities of their expressions of grief. The MNS begins immediately with the announcement by the Buddha of his parinirvāṇa.<sup>93</sup> This is followed by descriptions of each of the classes of beings who will attend the parinirvāṇa, and in turn their responses to this news. The first class is types of sentient beings (*zhu zhongsheng* 諸眾生), which in this case probably refers to those in the six kinds of birth but who are not yet awakened.<sup>94</sup> We understand they are not awakened because of their expression of grief. They first weep uncontrollably and beat their chests, but then suddenly suppress and stifle their feelings (*caiyi* 裁抑).<sup>95</sup> In that moment, driven by grief, they conspire to go and ask the Buddha to stay in the world and to not pass into nirvāṇa. They are able to suppress their grief only because they believe they can go beg the Buddha to remain in the world.<sup>96</sup> It is no surprise that this wrong-headed suppression does not work for long. These sentient beings have not uprooted the fundamental causes of suffering from grief.

This unending grief of the not-yet-awakened is embodied by the layman par excellence in this narrative, Chunda (Ch. *Chuntuo* 純陀), the same layman who fed the Buddha his last, fateful meal. In the MNS, the well-meaning Chunda weeps openly

<sup>93</sup> The first sentences of the sūtra, beginning T. 12, no. 374, p. 365, c6, describes his laying beneath the twin sala trees on the fifteen day of the second month, on the verge of parinirvāṇa, at which time he loudly pronounces his final invitation to settle any remaining doubts and then sends forth enormous magical lights in all directions to all sentient beings.

<sup>94</sup> The Faxian translation here has “sentient beings of the six destinies” *liuqu zhongsheng* 六趣眾生, see *Foshuo da ban nihuan jing* 佛說大般泥洹經 (T. 12, no. 376, p. 853, a17).

<sup>95</sup> T. 12, no. 374, p. 365, c18-22.

<sup>96</sup> In Jingying Huiyuan’s 淨影慧遠 (523-592) commentary to the *Nirvāṇa sūtra*, he discusses this passage in similar terms; *Daban niepan jing yi ji* 大般涅槃經義記, from T. 37, no. 1764, p. 619, c19. For passing references to Huiyuan’s commentary on the *Nirvāṇa sūtra*, see Ken Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine*.

before the Buddha. Even while the Buddha directly instructs him, Chunda is unable to stop weeping. He composes himself just enough to make a final heart-felt offering for the benefit of all sentient beings, before he is led off by Mañjuśrī.<sup>97</sup> These open displays of grief clearly are ridiculed and belittled in the MNS. Such judgment is put in the mouth of the Buddha himself, when he explicitly instructs his disciples not to mourn like these beings.<sup>98</sup>

Nonetheless, despite these personal instructions from the Buddha, even the great disciples are at first disturbed by the announcement of the parinirvāṇa.

At that time, innumerable great disciples, the worthy Mahākātyāyana, \*Bākula, Upananda, and various great bhikṣus like these, upon encountering the Buddha's light, trembled with fear until they began shaking uncontrollably. Their hearts clouded over lost in a stupor, they raised their voices in louds shouts, and otherwise gave rise to all sorts of vexations like this.

時有無量諸大弟子，尊者摩訶迦旃延、尊者薄俱羅、尊者優波難陀，如是等諸大比丘，遇佛光者，其身戰掉，乃至大動不能自持，心濁迷悶，發聲大喚，生如是等種種苦惱。<sup>99</sup>

The great bhikṣus, the most famous and accomplished disciples of the Buddha, are said to lose self-control (*bu neng zichi* 不能自持). This is a surprise. It certainly

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<sup>97</sup> For Chunda's tearful final offering together with his family, which ends with Mañjuśrī assisting Chunda off-stage, see T. 12, no. 374, p. 375, b14-20. Through the entire episode, which is conveniently marked off as a separate chapter in T. no. 375, Chunda does not stop weeping.

<sup>98</sup> T. 12, no. 374, p. 376, a29-b3.

<sup>99</sup> T. 12, no. 374, p. 366, a1-4

contradicts strict orthodox interpretations of the attainments of an arhat.<sup>100</sup> The MNS also deviates quite wide of the mark set by ANS texts. It may well be that this denigration of the arhats is another Mahāyāna jab at Hinayana saints. The point goes without further remark in the text here.

Directly following the great disciples are myriad bhikṣus and bhikṣunis. Somewhat unexpectedly, these minor figures react with greater equanimity than the great disciples.<sup>101</sup> After the bhikṣus, some bhikṣunis are revealed to be great bodhisattvas “who constantly cultivate and gather the four immeasurable states of mind” (*chang xiu ji si wu liang xin* 常修集四無量心) that have taken female bodies to help sentient beings.<sup>102</sup> This introduces the bodhisattvas, the most superlative beings in attendance at the parinirvāṇa.<sup>103</sup> All of these awakened beings are described in terms of their self-control. They are self-possessed throughout this ordeal. Though these enlightened beings have

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<sup>100</sup> Przyluski, p. 41, pointed out a century ago that a strict orthodox interpretation would have the arhat as a perfected being. In this text, however, some of those called arhats are called by such a name simply out of respect for the fact they would later become arhats. More recently, Engelmajer, “Perfect or Perfecting?” offered evidence supporting a thesis that arhats were perfecting, not necessarily perfected. This lends support to arguments that these categories and theologies were in flux and contested, and though most intriguing and with great implication for modern Buddhists, nonetheless historical orthodoxies concluded otherwise.

<sup>101</sup> T. 12, no. 374, p. 366, a4-16. In Faxian’s six fascicle MNS, the great disciples of the Buddha are not distinguished from the bhikṣus, and are not portrayed as grossly grieving.

<sup>102</sup> The two passages are: T. 12, no. 374, p. 366, a26-29; T. 12, no. 376, p. 853, b16-18.

<sup>103</sup> If one were inclined to analyze the progressive introduction of ever more accomplished beings, then there are two potential ways to interpret why the bhikṣunis follow after the bhikṣus. One can take the entire passage T. 12, no. 374, p. 366, a4-29 as a single class of beings, bhikṣus and bhikṣunis, and within that class the women follow the men. By taking the bhikṣus and bhikṣunis together in this way that the succession of beings continues in order. The other way is to emphasize a wonderful passage in both Faxian’s and Dharmakṣema’s MNS. In this passage, it is revealed that some of the bhikṣunis are in fact great bodhisattvas who have taken a female form only for the benefit of others (and thus not the result of karmic retribution). In this way, it may be that the bhikṣunis are introduced after the bhikṣus because they are the manifestations of great bodhisattvas. The text does not say that all bhikṣunis are bodhisattvas.

bodily reactions to the news of the Buddha's imminent nirvāṇa – hairs stand on end, the skin flushes, weeping from great pain – they do not lose self-control.<sup>104</sup> They never wail and sob, and do not need to suppress feelings in order to regain composure. They have not lost composure to begin with.<sup>105</sup>

The great arhats who have lost self-control (*bu neng zichi* 不能自持) are more like the classes of ordinary beings. From lay people, to heavenly maidens and other devas, and to birds, cows and many other animals, all come to pay homage and make offerings. In a dramatic conclusion to the chapter, sentient beings of the three higher realms of rebirth but who have not yet awakened, respond to the conclusion of the miraculous sign produced by the Buddha.

“... Oh no! It hurts! This is the greatest suffering of the world!” They threw their hands and beat their chests, wailed and sobbed, shaking all limbs violently, unable to control themselves. From every pore on their bodies flowed blood which splattered on the ground.

「...嗚呼痛哉，世間大苦。」舉手搥胸，悲號啼哭，支節戰動，不能自持，身諸毛孔流血灑地。<sup>106</sup>

The grossest performance of emotional distress is the flow of blood from the body. This follows from a dramatic loss of self-control (*bu neng zi chi* 不能自持). In sum, the MNS uses vivid and descriptive language to exaggerate the physical symptoms of grief in the

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<sup>104</sup> This pain, moreover, is the pain of knowing that not-yet-awakened beings have lost the most perfect teacher.

<sup>105</sup> T. 12, no. 374, p. 366, b1-15.

<sup>106</sup> T. 12, no. 374, p. 371, b28-c7. I believe the subject of this passage refers to all the various classes described after the bodhisattvas, as well as to that very initial description of sentient beings (*zhongsheng*) who suppressed their feelings in order to beg the Buddha to remain in the world.

not-yet-awakened beings, and subtle descriptions for the momentary discomfort of awakened beings. This is similar to the ANS, in which devas who understand the Buddha's teaching are calm while other devas are in despair. These are signals meant to alert the reader to the religious status of each class of beings. The same structural contrast drives the narrative. Built into the structure of the nirvāṇa story, there is a distinction between beings of greater and lesser attainment.<sup>107</sup>

### **Ānanda Collapses in Anguish**

The Chan master Xueyan Zuqin 雪巖祖欽 (d. 1287) was an abbot of the late Southern Song and very early Yuan. Today, Zuqin is remembered as one of the more outspokenly sectarian disciples of Wuzhun Shifan 無準師範 (1178-1249) – who himself is best known for his Japanese disciples such as Enni Ben'en 圓爾辯圓 (1202–1280) – and as an ancestor in the lineage of Zhongfeng Mingben.<sup>108</sup> Among the sayings attributed to Zuqin, the following sermon at an annual memorial rite for the Buddha's Nirvāṇa included a short piece of rhyming parallel prose followed by an admonition.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Przymuski, p. 42, *en passim*. Przymuski explores the idea that differences between ANS texts reflect division among early Buddhist communities regarding the nature of nirvāṇa and of an arhat. See also, Foucher, p. 314, for a statement that reflects the ubiquity of this structure in nirvāṇa narratives.

<sup>108</sup> Zuqin appeared in Wu's study of biography in China, *The Confucian's Progress*, as one of the earliest autobiographical writings, a view that was repudiated by Miriam Levering in "Was there religious autobiography in China before the Thirteenth Century?" See Broughton, *The Chan Whip Anthology*, 16-20 for a translation of the passage in question. Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 182 discusses the place of Zuqin's sectarian comments in the broader intellectual history of Song era Chan.

<sup>109</sup> The Buddha's nirvāṇa day was part of the annual calendar in Chan monasteries. Part of the ceremony was a *shangtang* sermon, in Zuqin's text marked *Fo niepan shangtang* 佛涅槃上堂.

“The willow on that shore drops gold,<sup>110</sup>

the peach tree by the brook spits out jade.<sup>111</sup>

Māra beginningless-ly rises to dance,<sup>112</sup>

Ānanda lays on the ground sobbing.”

Because it is just like this, see for yourself the face of the Tathāgata!

岸柳搖金。溪桃吐玉。波旬無端起舞。阿難平地悲哭。

因甚如此。親見如來面目。<sup>113</sup>

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As one might expect, these sermons often reflected on the significance and imagery of parinirvāṇa. This is parallel prose and not a regulated *shi* poem. The two couplets are linked by end-rhyme, *yu* and *ku*. The first couplet uses four-character lines reminiscent of scripture; and the second couplet is in lines of six characters. The ornate language of parallel prose was used with great frequency in Song era monasteries; a collection of Song dynasty exemplars may be found in *Zengi gemon* 禪儀外文 by Kokan Shiren 虎關師鍊 (1278–1347). Gozan editions, such as the witness held in Tanimura Bunko at Kyoto University (now available online), use significant amounts of white space to make visible the parallel couplets. Kokan’s preface to *Zengi gemon* offers an erudite account of the use of these petitions in Song era monasteries.

<sup>110</sup> A description of awakening, popular in Song dynasty Chan texts. The locus classicus seems to be *Fayan chanshi yulu* 法演禪師語錄 (T. 47, no. 1995, p. 650, b8-9). According to that text, Fayan (d. 1104) was describing awakened reality and perfected action when he said, “A thousand peaks arrayed like emeralds; a willow on that shore drops gold; the woodcutter sings his song; the fisherman drums his oar.” (千峯列翠, 岸柳垂金, 樵父謳歌, 漁人鼓棹.) The earliest use of “willow on that shore” seems to be the first poem by Fadeng 法燈 (d. 974) in a series “imitating Hanshan,” *Fadeng chanshi ni Hanshan* 法燈禪師擬寒山 (XZJ 116, p. 926, a13-15).

<sup>111</sup> Though the image seems This line seems to have been Zuqin’s invention, to match the saying by Fayan.

<sup>112</sup> This line means that delusion and suffering are without beginning, and therefore always present to those who are not awakened. “Māra” translates *boxun* 波旬, itself a transliteration from Skt. *pāpīyas*, meaning demon, and which is used through the MPS as an epithet for Māra the demon king. I am not aware of a scriptural reference in which Māra “gets up and dances” (起舞). Dancing is sometimes caused by Māra as a temptation. A similar set of images to those here was also used by Yuan era monk Yuejiang Zhengyin 月江正印 in a nirvāṇa memorial sermon, XZJ 123, p. 230, b13-p. 231, a2.

<sup>113</sup> *Xueyan Zuqin chanshi yulu*, XZJ 122, p. 498, a18-b1.

This sermon ends with an admonition to wake up from delusion. The parallel prose was an original composition by Zuqin, and combines classical texts with creative parallels. The parallel prose form is an elevated language that conveyed authority. The first two lines describe the awakened reality taught by the Buddha. The second two lines describe the ongoing struggle of sentient beings to realize that reality. The final line envisages Ānanda (Ch. *Anan* 阿難) on the ground sobbing.

The image of Ānanda rolling with anguish is both very specific, and rather uncommon. “Ānanda falling to the ground in anguish” is an unmistakable reference to a somewhat obscure text in the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* complex. This text survives only in Chinese, and retells the final moments of the Buddha’s life and up to the division of his relics. In the moments after the Buddha has gone, Ānanda finds himself unable to tell what is happening.<sup>114</sup>

At that time, Ānanda’s mind was distraught and in a stupor, unaware of anything that was happening. He did not know if the Tathāgata had entered nirvāṇa or not. He could see the reality of impermanence. He asked Aniruddha again, “Is the Buddha in nirvāṇa now?” Aniruddha said, “The awakened world-honored one has entered nirvāṇa.” Then, when Ānanda heard this, he became absolutely anguished and fell to the ground as though he were dead, silent and unbreathing, unconscious and unresponsive. Then, Aniruddha took some cool water and splashed it on Ānanda’s face, then helped him stand up, and comforted Ānanda by telling him a metaphor, an expedient device ... After that, Ānanda began to

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<sup>114</sup> This is from a text known as the *Houfen*, discussed below; T. 12, no. 377, p. 905, b10-24



recover, and slowly regained consciousness, sobbing and crying, sorrowed and unable to control himself.

爾時，阿難心慌迷悶，都不覺知，不識如來已入涅槃、未入涅槃？唯見非恆境界，復問樓逗：「佛涅槃耶？」樓逗答言：「大覺世尊已入涅槃。」爾時阿難聞是語已，悶絕躄地，猶如死人，寂無氣息，冥冥不曉。爾時，樓逗以清冷水灑阿難面，扶之令起，以善方便而慰喻之，語阿難言 ... 爾時阿難聞慰喻已，漸得醒悟，哽咽流淚，悲不自勝。

Poor Ānanda. He was the Buddha's youngest disciple, and by some accounts his most favored. Ānanda was also a cousin of the Buddha, and felt especially affectionate towards his teacher. In this telling, he has completely lost self-control (*bu zi sheng* 不自勝) at the finality of the Buddha's departure. The setting for this pitiful story is the moment after the Buddha's parinirvāṇa. Ānanda, who is not yet awakened, cannot embody the teachings of the Buddha, and is so anguished that he passes out. The moment after the Buddha's nirvāṇa is a quintessential moment in which emotions are revealed in the *Nirvāṇa sūtra*.

The many versions of the mainstream NS have been well analyzed by Przuluski and Bateau.<sup>115</sup> Przuluski, for example, focuses on a series of verses offered immediately after the parinirvāṇa by the gods Brahma and Śakra (i.e. Indra), and then by the two monks, one from the senior Aniruddha and the other alternately Ānanda or an anonymous junior monk.<sup>116</sup> Foucher sums this up: "Brahma, Shakra, Aniruddha, and Ānanda, each

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<sup>115</sup> Bateau 2.157-174.

<sup>116</sup> The various sequences of these "stances de lamentation" were ascribed such significance in Przuluski, pp. 5-46.

reveals their sentiments in an attitude appropriate to their character.”<sup>117</sup> The sequence of poems may be read as a reflection of the spiritual attainments of the four speakers.

In the ANS Ānanda plays a major role as one of the primary interlocutors with the dying Buddha. He is especially important in the dialogues that reveal the Buddha’s final teachings, his *yijiao* 遺教. On the topic of Ānanda, we might recall the announcement of the impending parinirvāṇa, the first of the two narrative sections in which emotions are visible. Several Chinese versions of this scene are extant.<sup>118</sup> Ānanda’s loss of self-control and despair appears across most ANS texts.<sup>119</sup> Some details differ across ANS texts, especially in the reported speech of Ānanda.<sup>120</sup> Regardless of the specifics, Ānanda is depicted lamenting the Buddha’s impending death. When Ānanda finally arrives at the Buddha’s side, the Buddha upbraids him for his emotional outburst. “Enough, Ānanda, do not weep and wail! Have I not already told you that all things ... are changeable, subject to separation and becoming other?”<sup>121</sup> From the Buddha’s mouth we learn that if

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<sup>117</sup> Foucher, 313-314.

<sup>118</sup> For example, T. 01, no. 1, p. 25, b26-c1; and T. 01, no. 5, p. 169, b10-12.

<sup>119</sup> See Bareau 2.54-65; Waldschmidt 196-200. Earlier, Przymuski discussed at length that the portrayal of Ānanda differs across NS texts. In some texts he appears weak, almost feminine, and bubbles around. In other texts Ānanda remains calm, and is charged by Aniruddha with the task of informing the citizens of Kuśinagara. Przymuski believes the authorial communities behind each of these texts held different religious attitudes toward the arhat. Though such attribution of attitudes to particular communities with specific doxographic identities is passé, Przymuski’s nuanced readings remain germane. Bareau (2.65 and *en passim*) sees the episode as epitomizing Ānanda’s humility and paying tribute to the dedication with which Ānanda served the Buddha over several decades. The disquiet of Ānanda re-emerges during the first council at Rājagṛha in the mouth of Mahākāśyapa, according to some accounts. On the rivalry between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda, see Strong 112-114.

<sup>120</sup> Bareau v 2, p. 54-57, divides the speech of Ānanda into two types. This follows Przymuski, 40-46.

<sup>121</sup> Walshe, p. 265.

one understood his teaching of impermanence, then one should not weep and wail for death.

In the mainstream NS, after the Buddha's nirvāṇa, following the series of verses, suddenly the arhats in attendance appear to lose the narrative. Many monks become despondent. Aniruddha reprimands those monks who engage in a display of grief deemed completely inappropriate. This is a most peculiar moment. The disciples of the Buddha, the greatest teacher, have lost their way. This may also be one of the most widely known parts of the nirvāṇa narrative. It is a frequent subject in the art historical record. For example, a schist carving at the Metropolitan Museum of shows monks and lay people alike in states of grief.



“The Death of the Buddha,” Gandhāra, NY Met (L.1993.69.4)

The Buddha lies upon the bier as the people around grieve wantonly. Amid the commotion, two figures are remarkably serene. Standing at the far left is a monk, tentatively identified as Subhadra, who grasps the reason that there is no reason for sorrow as the Buddha has reached nirvāṇa. There is a more mysterious figure at top center, peeking out from a half-opened (lotus?) flower.

The figure at bottom, beneath the bier, is a monk who has fallen to the ground. He appears to be reaching up to something beyond the edge of the object. Another Gandaran specimen once held at the Lahore Museum, and reproduced by Foucher in his 1905 tome, shows another monk bending at the knees and extending his muscled arm to assist the fallen monk.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> This same motif appears again at 1.575, fig. 284. The image is of an object then held in a private collection.



“The parinirvāṇa of the Buddha,” Foucher, *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra*, 1.565, fig 281

Foucher hypothesizes that these monks might be Ānanda and Aniruddha. However, he bases his supposition on Franz Anton Schiefner’s translation of the 1734 Tibetan account which in turn was a translation from the Chinese.<sup>123</sup> Moreover, in the intervening century since Foucher penned his tome, art historians have raised serious doubts over whether

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<sup>123</sup> Matsuda Kazunobu, p. 10, identifies D. 120 and Peking 787 as a translation from the Chinese texts of the Northern Edition of the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* (T. no. 374) together with the Houfen. That is the Houfen was taken as the concluding chapters of Dharmakṣema’s translation. See also Anton Schiefner “Eine Tibetische Lebensbeschreibung Çakjamuni’s, des Begründers des Buddhathums,” p. 231, for background on the text, while Foucher’s reference to Ānanda is on pp. 291-293.

one can identify any figure as Ānanda with certainty in sculpture from Gandhāra.<sup>124</sup>

Regardless of the exact identity of the two monks, there is enough legible detail to discern that one is composed and able to assist the other who has fallen to the ground in despair. This pictorial motif found in sculpture of Gandhāra seems to predate our earliest extant textual reference to a monk fallen to the ground in anguish.

Turning towards Song dynasty examples of nirvāṇa art, there is one most peculiar problem when studying the parinirvāṇa and its representations in East Asia. The MNS texts (neither T 374, its derivative 375, nor T 376) include the scene of the parinirvāṇa. These texts, the most important NS texts in East Asia, stop before the parinirvāṇa. Even in Dharmakṣema's own time it was understood that the longest translation of the text was incomplete.<sup>125</sup> The urgent need to possess the conclusion the MNS drove many pilgrims to meaningless ends.

Several hundred years later, in the early Tang, a translation attributed to \*Jñānabhadra and Huining 會寧 appeared, was quickly adopted, and became known as the *Dabanniepan jing houfen* 大般涅槃經後分 (“The Latter Portion of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*”; hereafter, “*Houfen*”). The *Houfen* opens with an addendum to

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<sup>124</sup> Recently, interesting doubts concerning the identification of Ānanda among any Gandhāra sculptures were published by Filigenzi, “Ānanda and Vajrapāṇi.” She discusses Foucher’s assertions on p. 282, n 1, though not this particular episode.

<sup>125</sup> According to the earliest monastic biography of Dharmakṣema, his life ended when on the road searching for the missing final chapters. From *Chu sanzang jiji*, compared with the slanderous *Weishu* biography. For this and other details concerning dates and translation, see Chen Jinhua, “The Indian Buddhist Missionary Dharmakṣema (385-433).”

the final chapter of the MNS, and then adds four more chapters.<sup>126</sup> The text purports to begin right where the MNS left off, but there are some worrying inconsistencies.

The narrative structure of the four and a half chapters of the *Houfen* unmistakably parallel the narrative of the ANS – not a Mahāyāna NS. This uncanny resemblance was soon noticed, and it led Yijing 義淨 to suspect the text of being “a Hīnayāna text.”<sup>127</sup>

Despite whatever suspicions are raised by this uncanny structural borrowing, the doctrinal message throughout the *Houfen* is decidedly that of the Mahāyāna. The text was admitted to the Tang canon, and has been included as canonical scripture ever after.<sup>128</sup>

Not long after its appearance in Chang’an, the *Houfen* began to receive commentarial attention. Zhanran was the first significant figure to engage with the text.<sup>129</sup> Another text, the *Niepan jing shu siji* 涅槃經疏私記 (X661) by Tang era Tiantai exegete and thaumaturge Daoxian 道暹 (fl. 8<sup>th</sup> c) also included the *Houfen*. Daoxian’s commentary was closely read by the influential Song era monk Gushan Zhiyuan 孤山智圓 (976-1022),

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<sup>126</sup> The chapter titles are also found in the Fangshan stone-inscribed canon. There, the first section is referred to as “Kaunḍinya” *Jiaochenru pin zhi mo* 儵陳如品之末. See Fuse’s analysis of the particular terminology of a ‘latter section of a chapter’ as either *pinyu* 品餘 or *pinzhimo* 品之末.

<sup>127</sup> See Yijing’s *Datang Xiyu qiu fa gaoseng zhuan* T. 51, no. 2066, p. 4, a02-21.

<sup>128</sup> Scholarly opinion has changed little since Fuse first addressed these matters (pp 139-155). Mochizuki (4.3359b-3360b) provides a summary of the plot and then rehearses an abbreviation of the argument found in Fuse. Mochizuki also reviews some important NS commentaries that debate whether or not the translated *Houfen* was the same as the three chapters of a ‘latter section’ (also written *houfen* 後分) referred to in Dharmakṣema’s biography, and finds all arguments inconclusive. Mochizuki concludes that we are unable to determine whether the *Houfen* is apocryphal or not. This set of arguments, and Mochizuki, make the assumption that there was a single, original Mahāyāna NS. The *Houfen* may be an “authentic” Mahāyāna sūtra regardless of whether it is the conclusion to the particular MNS translated centuries earlier.

<sup>129</sup> See Sasaki Shokaku, “Tendei ni okeru *daihatsu nehan-gyō gobun* no chūshaku ni tuite”. The text is quoted in *Lidai Fabaoji*, without an explicit attribution; see also Wendi Adamek, p. 377 and p. 498 n 562.

who included the *Houfen* in his *Niepan jing shu sande zhigui* 涅槃經疏三德指歸 (hereafter *Sande zhigui*).<sup>130</sup>

It is fairly well-established that the *Houfen* is one of the texts responsible for introducing certain elements to the Chinese repertoire.<sup>131</sup> In some paintings of the Nirvāṇa scene from the Song dynasty there are details which cannot be found in any *Nirvāṇa sūtra* except the *Houfen* or related texts. More recently, Japanese art historian Ide Seinosuke 井手誠之輔 pointed out that ten of thirteen motifs in the Nirvāṇa painting owned by Eifuku-ji closely follow the *Houfen*, but with several important exceptions.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Gushan Zhiyuan devotes most of the final fascicle to explicating obscure terms from the *Houfen*. Though he notes the tenuous position of the text as the only version to include certain details, Zhiyuan seems to accept all of the *Houfen* with one exception. The final section of the *Houfen* inexplicably offers a unique account of the division of the Buddha's relics, which introduces characters like a spell-master (*zhoushi* 呪師). For possible meanings of *zhoushi*, see Mochizuki, v 9, p. 389. Zhiyuan's notes on his textual criticism can be found at (XZJ 58, p. 357, b13), and throughout *juan* 20 where the *Houfen* is referred to as 'the fifth version used' *diwu yongzhang* 第五用章. Zhiyuan's abbreviated account of the division of the relics is at XZJ 58, p. 985, a14-b17. Zhiyuan's account follows that of Daoxian's commentary almost word for word, *Niepan jing shu siji* (XZJ 58, p. 348, a9-b12), but does not repeat Daoxian's assertion that this is an abridgement of the ANS found in the *Chang Ahan jing*.

<sup>131</sup> In English, for example, see Sonya Lee, *Surviving Nirvāṇa : Death of the Buddha in Chinese Visual Culture*, pp. 88-94.

<sup>132</sup> Ide, "Eifukuji zō Nehan hensō zu," p. 42, says that the final two elements, the division of relics by the eight kings, are different from the rather unique account given in the *Houfen* (911.a-c). Though Ide suggests that the two elements of the eight kings do not follow the *Houfen* text found in the Taisho, these two elements could be drawing upon the *Houfen* found in the *Qisha* and later canons. I believe this would strengthen Ide's argument. Two colophons at the end of the Taisho edition of the *Mohe moye jing* 摩訶摩耶經 (T. 12, no. 383, p. 1015, a9-16) include the name of one Zhutang 竹堂 (fl. 1283) of Xiazhu temple in Hangzhou. Zhutang states that a section from the *Houfen* concerning the division of the relics by the eight kings had been inappropriately appended to his copy of the *Mohe moye jing* and for this reason he excised it. In other words, the edition of the *Houfen* that Zhutang had at hand around the end of the Song included the division of relics by the eight kings. Next, the *Houfen* found in the *Zhonghua Dazangjing* included an extended variant found in the *Qisha*, *Puning*, *Jiaying* and *Qianlong* canons, which may draw from earlier canons like the *Chongning*. The variant is not found in the Korean edition (which is the base text for both the Taisho and Zhonghua editions) and is not included by the Taisho



The three departures from the *Houfen* text follow the *Sande zhigui* commentary of Gushan Zhiyuan.<sup>133</sup> Ide argues that Zhiyuan's *Sande zhigui* had been absorbed into the world of Ningbo religious art, which was permeated with Tiantai elements.<sup>134</sup> Based on the unusual correlations with Zhiyuan's commentary, connoisseurs now accept that the Japanese held painting of the nirvāṇa was created in China.<sup>135</sup> Ide has written about another famous example of Ānanda weeping in another nirvāṇa program.<sup>136</sup>

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compilers. This long variant is none other than the narrative of the eight kings dividing the relics. This would seem to match the text mentioned by Zhutang in Hangzhou at the end of the Song. There are some significant problems with this hypothesis, and it is significant that the *Houfen* in the Fangshan canon (2.459-471) carved during the Tang – which is the earliest textual witness – does not include the long variant. My point here of course is limited to the paintings in question and arguments concerning the text during the Song, and it is clear that a variant circulated during the Song period. Zhiyuan's commentary includes these variants, and he may have some responsibility for perpetuating this text in the Song.

<sup>133</sup> Ide overlooked Daoxian's commentary, which was included in no less than three Tendai catalogues: T. 55, no. 2159, p. 1056, b18; T. 55, no. 2183, p. 1153, c26; T. 55, no. 2178, p. 1136, b10.

<sup>134</sup> See Ide, "Nihon no Sō-Gen butsuga," pp. 36-42.

<sup>135</sup> A table of Ide's proposals is found in "Nihon no Sō-Gen butsuga," pp. 86-87.

<sup>136</sup> Ide, "Riku Shintyū kō ... (jō)," p. 81.



*Parinirvāṇa*, Anonymous S. Song, Collection of Chōfuku-ji<sup>137</sup>

The program and style of anonymous painting from the Southern Song belong to the same family as that most enormous nirvāṇa painting at Tōfukuji, completed in 1408 by Minchō (1342-1431), which is suspended in the *Butsuden* 仏殿 for three days every year

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<sup>137</sup> Reproduced from *Bijutsu Kenkyū* 354 (1992), pl. 5

for the annual memorial of the Buddha's nirvāṇa.<sup>138</sup> Just to the left and below the funeral bier is a monk collapsed on the ground. Found in this and other Song era paintings, this depiction of Ānanda is part of the Song dynasty nirvāṇa visual culture.

In addition to these paintings on silk preserved in Japan, there is a second medium on which nirvāṇa images survive from the Song Dynasty: frescoes within crypts. There is ongoing debate in art historical scholarship regarding the purpose and significance of each of these media.<sup>139</sup> Here, we need only concern ourselves with the visual lexicon shared across a wide range of objects that demonstrates their participation in a common visual culture.

In early 2009, a Song dynasty tomb was rediscovered in the city of Hancheng 韓城, Shaanxi Province 陝西省. Known as M218, the tomb belonged to a local physician and his wife. A coin minted during the Shenzong emperor's Xining 熙寧 reign (1068-1077) was discovered, suggesting the tomb dates to sometime during the latter half of the Northern Song. Working with provincial officials, local scholars Kang Baocheng 康保成

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<sup>138</sup> On Minchō, his painting (8.7 m x 5.3 m), and its influence, see Wheelwright, "Late Medieval Japanese Nirvāṇa Painting."

<sup>139</sup> Some art historians have proposed that relic crypts are similar to underground tombs. In this reading, one may apply the well-developed analytic methods of reading a tomb to the pictorial program of a relic crypt. On the other hand, Sonya Lee recently proposed that a relic crypt possesses a distinct logic that is different from that of a tomb. As for paintings on silk from the Song and Yuan, most specimens are preserved in Japan. It is unclear to what extent these objects were produced in China for export to Japanese audiences; or, whether they were used in Chinese temple rituals on the Buddha's Nirvāṇa Day marked in Chan *qinggui* 清規 and for which *shangtang* 上堂 lectures are recorded in *yulu* 語錄. The use of images in Japanese *Nehan-e* 涅槃會 is well-known. Ide has argued that pictorial representations of the Buddha's nirvāṇa do not demonstrate individual style and tend to adhere to standard programs. I have not located evidence to prove the ritual use of nirvāṇa paintings in Song or Yuan China. I am optimistic on the subject, however, because literati records of viewing paintings while visiting temples do not discuss viewing nirvāṇa paintings. In other words, the nirvāṇa paintings which are extant were not regarded as art objects, and may have been created for ritual purposes.

and Sun Bingjun 孫秉君 quickly penned an article and published a series of photos displaying the superior preservation of the frescoes.<sup>140</sup>



*Parinirvāṇa* fresco at “Physician’s Tomb” M218, Hancheng, Shaanxi Province<sup>141</sup>

There are several elements in this nirvāṇa scene. In the center Sakyamuni lays on his right side atop a funeral bier, arm tucked beneath his head. His eyes are closed and his face is still. Five monks stand around the bier. The three monks facing the viewer are visibly distraught. Their mouths are open as they wail, the corners of their lips turned down. The monk on the right raises his fists in the air, while the monk on the left wipes his tears into a white cloth (possibly his under-robe, but probably a handkerchief). These monks appear to have lost self-control, as they grieve in a wild manner. This may depict

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<sup>140</sup> There are two other wall paintings in cave M218. The central fresco portrays a bustling dispensary with the physician seated at center. There are two *shi* poems painted on the screen standing behind the physician – one of which is known from *Quan Tang Shi*. On the third wall is an entertainment troupe with musicians and performers. Other objects in the tomb suggest that the physician and his wife did not follow prevailing Han customs and might have been a northern people. See Kang Baocheng and Sun Bingjun, “Shaanxi Hancheng Song mu bihua kaoshi.”

<sup>141</sup> Published by Kang Baocheng and Sun Bingjun.

the moments following the Buddha's nirvāṇa, a narrative element also textualized in the *Houfen* and the āgama texts.

Other elements include the appearance of someone touching the Buddha's feet.<sup>142</sup> That it is a woman may or may not indicate that this is Māyā, the Buddha's mother, an attribution made more clearly in other similar images. Another lay person appears on the near right, carrying what appears to be an offering of incense. The interpretation that the man is the Buddha's father is obviously problematic, but not uncommon. Perhaps they are meant to represent the patrons, the deceased – a man portrayed in the tomb's central image with a similarly round face and moustache – and his wife. The people on the far right are either *waidao* who will be converted, or they are the 'infidels' who rejoiced at the Buddha's death thinking they were now free to behave as they pleased. I prefer the latter interpretation. Two lions, princes among animals, mourn conspicuously in front. All of these incidents have some textual counterpart.<sup>143</sup>

There are two elements in the image, however, that are not to be found in either the ANS or the MNS. First, in the upper left quadrant a monk flies off, leaving a trail of clouds behind.<sup>144</sup> Second, in the lower left another scene plays out. Here a monk has fainted. He can be seen on the ground with his feet out from under him. He is supported

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<sup>142</sup> This person sometimes is a monk, often identified as Kāśyapa. In this case it is a lay person, which is common to many surviving Song era images of the nirvāṇa. See Kang and Sun, p. 83.

<sup>143</sup> Kang and Sun, pp. 82-84, one by one identify a *locus classicus* for each element. However, it is unlikely that the artisans were working directly from a text, and Sonya Lee's emphasis on the polysemous nature of images offers one way of thinking about the image-text relationship.

<sup>144</sup> This correlates with Aniruddha's supernormal flight ascending to Trāyastriṃśa Heaven (here *Daoli tian* 忉利天) to recite a gatha for Queen Maya is found at T. 12, no. 383, p. 1012, b7-15 in the *Mohe Moye jing* 摩訶摩耶經 (T. no. 383, \**Mahāmāyā-sūtra*). For a rather comprehensive review of scholarship on the *Mahāmāyā sūtra* and a summary of the section of text in question, see the second installment of Hubert Durt's two-part article, "The Post-Nirvāṇa Meeting of the Buddha with Māyā in the Trāyastriṃśa Heaven." The significance of this episode with Queen Maya is also the subject of an extended treatment by Sonya Lee, *Surviving Nirvāṇa*, pp. 94-118.

by a second monk. A third rushes over with hands outstretched, a distraught look hanging on his face. In the foreground, a fourth monk is hunched over carrying a water bowl. This monk's face is serene, his mouth closed and lips even.

This is a depiction of Aniruddha carrying water to sprinkle on the face of Ānanda. Aniruddha thus appears twice, which may indicate the temporal dissociation in the narrative. This unmistakable motif is found across East Asia in many pictorial representations of the nirvāṇa.<sup>145</sup> The *Houfen* is the only text to describe Ānanda's falling unconscious.<sup>146</sup> This interaction between Ānanda and Aniruddha was fairly common during the Northern Song.

Another Song dynasty wall painting was discovered in the relic crypt at Jingzhong cloister 淨眾院 in Dingzhou 定州, Hebei Province 河北省. In the fresco's lower register, left-hand side, one finds Ānanda and Aniruddha.<sup>147</sup> The pained expression on mourners' faces is one of the themes appearing in both the Hancheng tomb and the Jingzhong yuan.

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<sup>145</sup> Wide-ranging evidence is marshaled in Akazawa, *Nehanzu no zuzōgaku*, pp. 69-71. Akazawa also noted that the motif does not appear in Heian paintings, and came to Japan only in the Kamakura period. This corroborates Ide's suggestion that the motif was part of Ningbo visual culture. See Ide Seinosuke. "Riku Shintyū kō ... (ge)."

<sup>146</sup> Note that a similar description of Queen Māyā occurs in *Mohe Moye jing* at T. 12, no. 383, p. 1012, b15-18.

<sup>147</sup> Lee analyzes the Jingzhong Cloister murals in *Surviving Nirvāṇa*, pp. 238-245. She reproduces a high quality photo of a dancing infidel (p 241, fig. 4.26) which includes a partial image of Ānanda and Aniruddha. A grayscale photograph of the complete nirvāṇa scene is on p. 49 of Dingxian bowuguan, "Hebei Dingxian faxian liangzuo Song dai taji." A recent article in an obscure Hebei province journal published new full-color photographs that include close ups of a mourner's face: Hao Jianwen "Dingzhou Songdai jingzhong yuan ta ji bihua." This article is available on the cnki website. I have not had access to the 1997 catalogue *Chika kyūden no ihō*.



*Parinirvāṇa* fresco, monk's relic crypt, Jingzhong Cloister<sup>148</sup>

The details of this fresco in the relic crypt at Jingzhong Cloister, though not as well-preserved as the tomb in Hancheng, are still legible. Most of the visual elements are roughly similar. The Buddha is more than twice as large as the other beings. The mourners appear in different places – some at the feet, some below the bier, one at the head. One dancing ‘infidel’ stands off on each side. A regal and beautifully adorned woman, possibly Queen Māyā, stands serenely behind the Buddha, her face along the central axis of the image. The figure in the lower right with his back to the viewer speeds off towards the Buddha, his robes wave with his speed. This may be Aniruddha (or Upāli) setting for heaven as seen in Hancheng, or it may be Kāśyapa rushing to Kuśinagara on

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<sup>148</sup> Published by Hao Jianwen.

foot, a well-defined motif in some Dunhuang frescoes.<sup>149</sup> In the lower left corner, again we see Ānanda and Aniruddha. The expressions worn on their faces are clear in the lower right of this photograph.



Detail from *Parinirvāṇa* fresco, monk's relic crypt, Jingzhong Cloister<sup>150</sup>

Ānanda has fainted, his eyes closed. There is a sweet smile on Aniruddha's face. The Jingzhong Cloister and Hancheng frescoes are not faithful copies made from a single masterpiece. The inclusion of similar elements and the overall program suggest that each artisan, though working about one hundred years apart, drew upon common and apparently well-known elements. Though Ānanda's grieving is not part of the proper MNS, and only the *Houfen* narrates his falling to the ground, nonetheless this narrative element found its way into the Chinese middle period visual culture of the *Nirvāṇa*. The problem of the emotions seen in text was a participant in the broader culture of grief during the Song dynasty.

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<sup>149</sup> Sometimes referred to as *Jiashe ben sang* 迦葉奔喪 and seen in Dunhuang cave 148; see *pangti* 35 on p. 19 of He Shizhe. This corresponds to a section in the *Houfen* text, T. 12, no. 377, p. 908, b11-20.

<sup>150</sup> Reproduced from Sonya Lee, *Surviving Nirvāṇa*, p. 241, fig. 4.26.



## Zhiyuan's Nirvāṇa Commentary

Historical exegetes have been drawn to another of the aforementioned passages from the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*, in which the great disciples of the Buddha lose self-control at the announcement of the coming parinirvāṇa. These personal disciples of the Buddha extinguished the passions and awakened to the truth of the Buddha's teaching. Yet they are anguished and lose self-control – the *sine qua non* of saintliness.

A significant engagement with this passage was by the Sui dynasty monk Guanding 灌頂 (561–632), in the *Daban niepan jing shu* 大般涅槃經疏. Guanding posed the question to himself, and then responded with three technical explanations for how it might be that the Buddha's disciples, perfect awakened beings, could appear to suffer from grief and anguish – followed by an insightful reflection.<sup>151</sup>

Question: How is it that the arhats, who have completely annihilated all sorrow and anguish, are suddenly brought to this? Answer: it was remnant karmic impressions, and not current afflictions;<sup>152</sup> Or, they were acting in order to cause others to grieve in a manner suitable for a king;<sup>153</sup> Or, they had not yet eliminated situational mental disturbances, but these were not universal disturbances.<sup>154</sup> As for sorrow and anguish – this reality of the buddhadharma encompasses each and

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<sup>151</sup> The text attributed to Guanding, compiled by Zhanran, T. 38, no. 1767, p. 46, c8-12

<sup>152</sup> This marks the distinction between present, active afflictions (*zhengshi* 正使) and those that are the fruit of previous afflictions and which remain after the affliction proper (*canxi* 殘習).

<sup>153</sup> Reading *panmu* 攀慕 in the sense of *panran* 攀髯.

<sup>154</sup> All awakened beings eliminate universal disturbances 通惑, but elimination of the situationally specific disturbances 別惑 is an accomplishment of the bodhisattva and not an arhat. This would explain why the disciples appear to have suffered a temporary situational delusion, but it is not a more general conceptual or perceptive delusion. According to the Tiantai doctrine of *sanhuo* 三惑, the arhats do not suffer false views or temptations.

every dharma, so whether “being sorrowful” or “no sorrow,” all are part of the reality of the Tathāgata.<sup>155</sup>

問羅漢憂悲都盡何頓至此。答此是殘習非正使也。又示楷模令物攀慕。

又別惑未除非通惑也。憂悲者。是佛法界攝一切法。下文有憂、無憂悉是如來境界。

The erudite Guanding suggested three technical doctrines which might explain why the arhats appear to have suffered anguish at the death of the Buddha. The second explanation is similar to the concept of expedient means (*fangbian*). This is similar to what the MNS suggests to be the reason for the awakened bodhisattvas – but was not mentioned for the arhats. Whether or not these three responses are satisfactory, Guanding added a note concerning the emotions. If all things are contained within the universal, non-dual Buddha, then why would emotions be outside of that? From a non-dual perspective, how can one prefer either the presence or absence of emotions? All that it is, just as it is, must be part of how things are.

The early Song Tiantai monk Gushan Zhiyuan further elaborated on this last point. As introduced above, Zhiyuan’s *Niepan jing shu sande zhigui* commentary seems to have had some impacts on the Ningbo Buddhist visual culture. Elsewhere in this commentary, Zhiyuan remarked on Guanding’s text.<sup>156</sup>

As for [when Guanding said] “this reality of the buddhadharma,” sorrow and anguish come from the fluctuations of the mind, and as the mind is identical with the three truths, then [these fluctuations of] sorrow and anguish must also be so.

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<sup>155</sup> Taking *jie* 界 and *jingjie* 境界 as ‘reality;’

<sup>156</sup> XZJ 58, p. 388, b9-11.

Because the three truths are universally inclusive they are called “reality of the buddhadharma.” The sorrow and suffering of the arhats is not excluded from the reality of dharmas. How marvelous is this? This is a perfect instruction.

是佛法界者，憂悲由心所變，心即三諦，憂悲亦然，三諦徧收名佛法界，故羅漢憂苦無非法界。何所怪哉！此圓義也。

Zhiyuan marvels at Guanding’s insight. He repeats the idea that one should not prefer being sorrow-less to sorrowful. Zhiyuan was no stranger to the controversies about Buddhism and the arts.<sup>157</sup> This may be why he was impressed by Guanding’s Buddhist justifications that seem to cut the Gordian Knot of the problem of the emotions. A similar attitude towards the emotions seems to inform Zhiyuan’s lamentations. Below, I read Zhiyuan’s lamentations to understand how emotions appear in this aspect of his poetic practice.

### **Zhiyuan’s Lamentations**

The monk Zhiyuan wrote several *daowang* lamentations.<sup>158</sup> Though he was aware of the poetry demon and *waixue*, and the conventions of Chinese poetic tradition, he did

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<sup>157</sup> Recall that Zhiyuan provided some of the evidence in the chapter on monastic anxiety. His commentary on the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* contained extensive quotations from a range of vinaya texts.

<sup>158</sup> His lamentations are marked with the words *ku* 哭 or *dao* 悼 in the title, in *Xian ju bian* 閑居編.

not necessarily see a conflict between Buddhism and poetry.<sup>159</sup> Rather, he seems to have had high standards for either activity, and did not tolerate mediocrity.<sup>160</sup>

Compared with the other monks' lamentations seen above, Zhiyuan held a fairly ecumenical stance. This lamentation is for Guangjun Baolong 廣鈞保隆 (d.u.), who was also a Tiantai monk connected to Zhiyuan's family tree.<sup>161</sup>

This monk from the north has taught us about extinction;	北僧傳示滅
<sup>2</sup> Such eminent men are ever hard to find again.	高跡更難尋
Back home, his room can only wait,	故國房空在
<sup>4</sup> Already on fresh tomb the grass mats thick.	新墳草已深
It's as though a mountain spring broke an old promise to the clouds,	雲泉違舊約

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<sup>159</sup> Zhiyuan is something of a chameleon. In one poem addressed to one of the Nine Monks, *Zeng shiseng Baoxian shi* 贈詩僧保暹師 (XZJ 101, p. 180, b8-11), he appreciates the monk's subtle poetics and declares it non-Confucian. Elsewhere, he declared the division between Chinese classics of poetry and Buddhism a false dualism; the poem's title *Yanzhi* 言志 (XZJ 101, p. 200, a17-b13) itself is an allusion to the Mao preface to the book of odes, in which poetry is said to "express what is intently on the mind" – a phrase Qisong thought at the heart of the conundrum. His poem *shimo* (XZJ 101, p. 189, a2-4) plays with the image of a poetry demon; see translation in previous chapter on monastic anxiety.

<sup>160</sup> Zhiyuan once sent a poetic epistle to a compatriot complaining, "How many times have I sighed at those old fashioned funerals, / I cannot stand people with such vulgar dispositions. / I have been waiting for a visit from you, / so we can sit face-to-face talking about this culture of ours" (幾歎淳風喪, 寧容俗態羣, 終期一相訪, 對坐議新文); XZJ 101, p. 169, b12-15.

<sup>161</sup> This poem found at XZJ 101, p. 181, b4-7. Guangjun is mentioned by Zhiyuan in a memorial for Ciguang Zhiyin 慈光志因 (d. 986), a "great-grandfather" through whom Zhiyuan traced his own lineage, titled *Ji zushi wen* 祭祖師文, see XZJ 101, p. 103, b10. There, Zhiyuan recorded that the remains (靈骨) of Ciguang had been placed in a *minshe* 民舍 for some twenty odd years, until Guangjun went and claimed them, and placed them in Jingzhu Cloister 淨住院 of Qiantang 錢唐, where they remained for another 10 years. The memorial was written 32 years after Ciguang's death, when Zhiyuan finally made a proper memorial, a *fenta* 墳塔 bearing inscriptions.

- 6 As though the wind and moon cease heartfelt conversations. 風月罷論心  
 I sit silently looking at your death poem, 默坐看遺偈
- 8 Out my western window the moon sinks again. 西牕月又沈

This poem is unreservedly emotional. There is a Buddhist euphemism for the death of a monk Line 1. The phrase *shi mie* 示滅, synonymous with *shi ji* 示寂, described the Buddha's apparent death (which was revealed in the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* to have been a teaching). By the Song, *shi mie* and *shi ji* were used to describe the passing of an eminent monk who was said to have died like the Buddha. Zhiyuan uses this phrase, however, without lingering on Guangjun's accomplishments or virtues. In Lines 3 and 4 he contrasts Guangjun's "old home" that is empty with the "new crypt" beneath the grass.

By the end of the poem, Zhiyuan is reflecting on his own situation as the survivor. He sits alone with the last words written out by his friends. I have interpreted Lines 5 and 6 as a metaphor for the relationship between Zhiyuan and Guangjun. Their friendship has been as natural as a cloud appearing in a mountain spring; their conversation as intimate as that between wind and moon.<sup>162</sup> The final line registers Zhiyuan's solitude. The moon does not stop sinking, even though Guangjun is gone and they cannot together watch it slowly edge out of sight.

Zhiyuan inscribed sorrowful sentiments in another lamentation titled "Mourning the ācārya of Fantian temple, matching Venerable Cong" (*He Cong shangren dao*

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<sup>162</sup> Another plausible way to read this couplet focuses on Guangjun's relationship with the world. "The mountain spring will think you broke your old promise, / The wind and moon will think you abandoned your conversations."

*Fantian sheli* 和聰上人悼梵天闍梨).<sup>163</sup> More than ten years older than Zhiyuan (b. 976), the monk Fantian Qingzhao 梵天慶昭 (963-1017) was the senior disciple of Zhiyuan's teacher Fengxian Yuanqing 奉先源清 (d. 1000). Qingzhao died in his fifties known by the title *sheli* 闍梨, or ācārya. The cloister mentioned in the first line is Fantian temple, the site of Qingzhao's funeral.<sup>164</sup>

Grief blows through the Teachings Cloister and stirs the white funeral shroud;	講院悲風動素帷
<sup>2</sup> The swaying pines strain for one more look at our teacher.	搖松難更見吾師
Dust is gathering on his well-worn mat, he will unroll no more;	塵生舊榻休開卷
<sup>4</sup> A moonrise in this autumn veranda, but I quit making poems.	月上秋軒罷賦詩
The true dharma transmits itself to future students,	真法自將傳後學
<sup>6</sup> But for such a fine man, who will compose a sufficiently generous eulogy?	清名誰為勒豐碑
His disciples will recall his noble manner,	橫經弟子懷高跡

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<sup>163</sup> Qingzhao 慶昭 had the sobriquet Ziwen 子文. See, also by Zhiyuan, a biography *Gu Fantian si Zhao sheli xingye ji* 故梵天寺昭闍梨行業記 in XZJ 101, p. 97, a14-p. 98, a11. Details of Zhaoqing's life are scattered through *Xian ju bian*.

<sup>164</sup> This poem can be found XZJ 101, p. 169, b16-p. 170, a2. The 'matched' rhyme may well be set to a poem by the same Qiantang Wencong 錢唐聞聰 for whom Zhiyuan wrote a preface *Qiantang Wencong shi shiji xu* 錢唐聞聰師詩集序 XZJ 101, p. 139, a6-p. 140, a2.

This lamentation is somewhat conventional. Zhiyuan was writing about his elder dharma-brother on behalf of the students left behind, and may have felt a need to be restrained. Even in such a conservative poem as this, Zhiyuan avoids some of the clichés in lamentations. In the first line, nature itself is mourning the loss of Qingzhao. Zhiyuan uses hyperbole to laud the deceased, as he seems to be at a loss for words. Even at a loss for words, and too troubled to focus on writing poetry for the time being, he still composes this lamentation. The second half of the poem clearly turns to address Qingzhao's students, Zhiyuan's own dharma-nephews. The poem ends with a religious trope – perhaps in earnest – but nowhere in this lament does Zhiyuan flinch about the propriety of a lamentation.

Another unflinching poem is “Crying for Ye Shou” (*Ku Ye Shou* 哭葉授).<sup>166</sup> Ye Shou 葉授 (d.u.) was a promising young man who died young. Ye had stayed at Zhiyuan's temple not long ago, while traveling from his home in the south to the northern capital in order to take the imperial civil service examination.<sup>167</sup>

I heard you failed the exam only this past spring,

今春聞落第

<sup>165</sup> A dragon flower tree will be the site of the awakening of the next Buddha Maitreya. It is a common refrain in monks' lamentations to yearn for meeting again in a future rebirth in either the Western Pure Land, or by Maitreya's Dragon-Flower convocation *longhua hui* 龍華會.

<sup>166</sup> The following poem is at XZJ 101, p. 201, b14-p. 202, a2.

<sup>167</sup> See Zhiyuan's earlier poem to send off the young man, titled *Zeng jinshi Ye Shou* 贈進士葉授 (XZJ 101, p. 170, a13-17). Ye is a family name most common among southern people. Among sources from the middle period, members of the Ye family often have single character personal names.

2	Now my heart pains for you.	為君心悽然
	Your books alone return south; <sup>168</sup>	東書獨南還
4	What a dreadful sensation that fills my chest.	憤氣胸間闌
	Though you lodged temporarily here beside the Zhe river, <sup>169</sup>	跡寄浙河旁
6	Your home was on the shores of the southern sea.	家延南海邊
	Once you fell ill, it was not long before the end,	遭疾既彌留
8	And your existence was discarded.	一命成棄捐
	In your sack was nary a penny,	囊中無餘金
10	Only ashen essays not meant for this world.	零落空文編
	Tortoises and cranes are fragile types	龜鶴本微類
12	but enjoy long lives over a thousand years;	享壽皆千年
	How come you, sir, an ideal Confucian,	如何君子儒
14	returned to the Deep Springs after only thirty? <sup>170</sup>	三十歸重泉
	Heaven on high cannot be questioned;	天高不可問
16	but for you I am forced to beseech the heavens.	為君強問天

Zhiyuan is full of anguish at the untimely death of a young man. It did not matter that Zhiyuan did not know the young man before his brief sojourn on his way to the capital. For no reason that we may know, Zhiyuan felt especially invested in this rising career.

<sup>168</sup> That is, the young scholar's books are wrapped and return south without him.

<sup>169</sup> The phrase *jiji* 跡寄 may be read as *jiji* 寄跡 "a temporary dwelling." Similarly, *jiayan* 家延 in the next line may be read as *yanjia* 延家 "distant home."

<sup>170</sup> *Chongquan* 重泉 is a name the underworld.



The poem's finale is a statement that the narrator's anguish is such that he is about to lose self-control. Though this poem is not written with explicit Buddhist language, the discourse from the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* seems relevant here. The awakened beings know that life is impermanent and do not doubt the fact; only those not yet liberated lose self-control. This poem also has echoes of Daoqian's "Mourning venerable Xiu," in which the late Xiu's mother is left in terrible anguish.

Zhiyuan writes in metaphor for a poet monk in one more lamentation, "Tears for Bianduan Shangren" (*Ku bianduan shangren* 哭辯端上人).<sup>171</sup>

A lifetime suffering poetry,	平昔於詩苦
<sup>2</sup> Keenly searching, thoughts never at rest.	精搜省未閑
From ramshackle room beyond birds and sky	壞房空鳥外
<sup>4</sup> Came pure phrases to fill the world of men.	清句滿人間
[In life,] a thin shadow falling on walls;	瘦影懸鄰壁
<sup>6</sup> An unswept tomb will sink into the aged hill.	孤墳接舊山
In a funeral procession beneath tall trees,	弔迴高樹下
<sup>8</sup> Cold river flows on by itself.	寒水自潺潺

In this poem are some of the patterns Zhiyuan liked to use in his lamentations. Nature mourns the departed, in Lines 7 and 8, as the flowing river is imagined to be a funeral procession. The poem begins, however, by alluding to the *kuyin* tradition of "painstaking composition" associated with Jia Dao, and introduced in a previous chapter. The *kuyin*

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<sup>171</sup> XZJ 101, p. 213, a5-8.

poet is always revisiting and tinkering with his poetic lines, and the life of this poet monk was one of constant struggle with language. Zhiyuan lauded the deceased poet monk for successfully writing poetic lines that circulated in the world of men (*man renjian* 滿人間). A careful reader notices that this praise is limited to the realm of men, and not a larger religious cosmology. But Zhiyuan is not done here. He admired Bianduan's thorough avoidance of fame. He was like a shadow in life, and in death he disappeared. (We know nothing about venerable Bianduan beyond Zhiyuan's lament.) Zhiyuan discerns that Bianduan's life was spent at odds with the normative Buddhist monastic path, but Zhiyuan is agnostic on whether that is a good thing or a bad thing. It is sorrowful, though, as the cold river flows on.

## **Conclusion**

Monks of the Song dynasty actively participated in the *daowang* lamentation subgenre of poetry. The conventional norms of this genre were directly at odds with the monastic ideals perpetuated by many mainstream and orthodox monks. When monks engaged in lamentations, they often chose to write about the problem of the emotions. Qisong, for example, went so far as to say that "he should not" be writing such poems. Though the monastic normative texts are fairly uniform in their prohibition, monks who wrote *daowang* poems adopted a variety of strategies. Some monks, including Daoqian and Xuedou, used literary techniques to explore the tensions between religious ideals and their own lives.

The tradition of lamentations is distinct from the ritual monastic funerals that also include elegiac verse. The contrast between the *foshi* verses and *daowang* lamentations provided a chance to generalize about *foshi* as doctrinal poems for communal mourning and *daowang* as expressions of personal grief.

The poems of Gushan Zhiyuan, on the other hand, serve as a foil. The lamentations by Zhiyuan above do not all observe the monastic norms concerning emotions. I have suggested that this is related to Zhiyuan's ideas about emotions for awakened beings expressed in his *Nirvāṇa sūtra* commentary. Even if that were so, a reader on first approaching his poems is unlikely to come to the conclusion that they are Buddhist poetry. Only a reader who knows the author's identity as a monk – and further background knowledge of an obscure scriptural commentary – can begin to develop a Buddhist poetics in Zhiyuan's poems. This demonstrates that not all poems written by monks are necessarily “Buddhist poetry.” If a modern reader were to find his poems more personally significant by imagining them as “Buddhist,” then that is a legitimate reader response. Similarly, a historian would profit from approaching Zhiyuan's poems as social documents of early Song era Tiantai literary works. A reader could perform any number of readings of monks' poems. By focusing on monastic poetic culture, rather than on “Buddhist poetry,” I hope I have shown how monks used poetic spaces to create meaningful responses to the gaps between the norms expressed in prescriptive texts and lived religion.

## Chapter Six – Conclusion

Is Buddhist poetry possible? This question itself encapsulates the attitudes expressed both in prescriptive Buddhist texts, and in non-Buddhist literary criticism. The phrase “Buddhist poetry” is not entirely anachronistic – Song era critics thought in terms of “monastic poetry” – nonetheless, the category renders a reader ill-equipped to interpret the poetry written by Buddhist monks. Monks’ poems participate simultaneously in many contexts, and are not only religious, only Buddhist, or only literary. It is an error to take the prescriptions by critics and in legal codes of what Buddhist poetry *should be* and mistake them for descriptions of what Buddhist poetry *was*. There is a complex relationship between the “apparatus” of prescriptive norms and the specific, historical practices of poetry.<sup>1</sup> Monks continued to write poems in spite of – sometimes directly into – the anxiety produced from the conflict between the aspirations of monasticism and the conventions of poetry. In conclusion, a reader benefits from thinking about these poems as part of a poetic culture among Buddhist monks, and not Buddhist poetry *per se*.<sup>2</sup>

Today, the phrase “Buddhist poetry” conjures up a variety of images. Stephen Owen remarked on the poems of Wang Wei, that “the poetic tradition and the concept of

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<sup>1</sup> I have suggested that Agamben’s idea of monastic life as “an apparatus,” may help explain how monks’ individual practices (including literary practices) may embody, perpetuate, and or challenge the heterogeneous set of discourses, everyday biopolitics, architecture, and ritual that structure monastic life. Agamben introduces this idea in *The Highest Poverty: Monastic Rules and Form-of-life*, building upon his earlier essay “What is an Apparatus?”

<sup>2</sup> One could expand this to “poetic culture in Buddhist monasteries,” which would include the myriad poems lay-poets exchanged with monks, or composed during visits to temples.

poetry it presumed excluded the possibility of a truly religious or devotional poetry.”<sup>3</sup>

Though the poet Wang Wei may have been a devout Buddhist and **traces** of Buddhism may appear in his poetry, there is not that “**tension** of it” that Felstiner spoke of animating Celan’s poetry.<sup>4</sup>

Owen arrived at a similar conclusion regarding monk Jiaoran 皎然 (720-circa 795) and his poet-monk contemporaries: “they were in no sense religious poets.”<sup>5</sup> Owen says of monk Lingyi’s poem “A new spring at Yifeng [Temple]” that “exactly the same poem might have been written by a secular poet.”<sup>6</sup> He argues that only our foreknowledge of the author’s identity as a monk provides the “situational frame of reference” that allows us to read the presumed religious concerns of the author into the natural imagery of the poem.<sup>7</sup> This contradicts the presumption underlying a collection of monks poems, such as Charles Egan’s *Clouds Thick, Whereabouts Unknown*.

Charles Egan’s anthology reflects an assumption that poems written by Buddhist monks are, or at least ought to be, a distinctly Buddhist poetry. This would seem to be the basis for many modern anthologies.<sup>8</sup> Introducing his selection of poetry by monks from

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<sup>3</sup> Owen, *The Great Age*, p. 44. Owen also maintained somewhat similar distinctions between religion, Daoism, and poetry when discussed Li Shangyin in *The Late Tang*, p. 381 and *en passim*. See also pp. 84-86 for an example of a poem that Owen thinks “seems more truly religious.”

<sup>4</sup> Felstiner, *Paul Celan*, pp. xvi-xviii.

<sup>5</sup> Owen, *The Great Age*, p. 282.

<sup>6</sup> Owen, *The Great Age*, p. 283.

<sup>7</sup> Owen does permit as ideal religious poetry the bodies of poetry attributed to Hanshan and Wang Fanzhi, which include discursive and meditative treatments of religious values. His comments suggest that religious poetry ought to grapple with questions of faith, put to song “the cry of an unconvinced soul.” (*The Great Age*, p. 287) Ronald Egan, writing about Su Shi, avoids the term “Buddhist poetry” altogether and proposes to examine “the richness of Buddhism’s influence” (*Word, Image, and Deed*, p. 134). Egan cautions against the anachronism of applying modern notions of religion in our search for religious poetry.

<sup>8</sup> See a list in “Poetry” by Byrne and Protass.

the 8<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Charles Egan wrote “poetry from the monasteries comprises a distinct tradition of rich imagery and profound reflection, spiced liberally with wit and humor.”<sup>9</sup> We have seen that such a conclusion is not necessarily true. Some literary critics of the Song dynasty, for example, praised poetry by monks that did not obviously “stink of Zen.” There is no shortage of examples of conventional poems by monks.

Owen introduces another line of reasoning when describing another poem by Lingyi, written when about to leave this same Yifeng Temple. The poem is short and humorous. Owen dismisses any religious implications as “less important,” as merely epigrammatic, and believes that with Lingyi’s poetry “the philosophical problem is subordinate to the motives of occasional poetry.”<sup>10</sup> For Owen, the creativity of the poet-monks, even when introducing religious themes or images, is subsumed within the powerful forms of the Chinese poetic tradition.

Clearly, Owen has in mind a particular definition of “religious poet,” one divorced from authorial identity and biography, and more than just the use of religious diction and settings. He says of Wang Wei, that “religion played a significant role in [his] poetry, but ... not until the early ninth century did the scope of poetry broaden enough to admit a discursive and meditative treatment of religious values.”<sup>11</sup> When it comes to what constitutes “religious poetry,” Owen seems to have more affinities with a critic like Harold Bloom than a historian of literature or religions.

Nonetheless, Owen’s contentions about the poetry of Buddhist monks have been influential. John Kieschnick writing in *The Eminent Monk* stated that for scholar monks,

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<sup>9</sup> Charles Egan, *Clouds Thick*, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Owen, *The Great Age*, p. 284.

<sup>11</sup> Owen, *The Great Age*, p. 44.

the arts like poetry, calligraphy and painting were somehow “less *Buddhist*” than technical dogmas, and goes on to say that for the Tang poet-monks’ “poetry is for the most part secular.”<sup>12</sup> Such views of the Tang poet-monks are predicated on a sense that their poetry ought to be religious in a way recognizable to us in distinction with so-called secular poetry. The term secular here presumably refers to the “non-religious” canon of literature sanctioned by literati and the imperial court. The difficulty with which we apply these terms to the Song dynasty, however, is a sign that they present us the wrong question.

Responding to some of Owen’s comments, Paul Kroll elucidated how several Li Bo poems are intelligible only when we understand their “precise Daoist diction and imagery.”<sup>13</sup> Kroll demonstrated Li Bo’s masterful comprehension of the Shangqing and Lingbao Daoism that was current in the Tang, whereas Owen observes “Li Po was even less a religious poet than Wang Wei.”<sup>14</sup> Owen’s ideas about religious poetry are revealed in his praise of the monk Qingjiang; “it is his self-doubt about his own religious conviction that makes him perhaps the most religiously serious of the southeastern poet-monks.”<sup>15</sup> This resonates with a view once espoused by Anthony Yu, that “China has no poet with an explicit religious commitment and concern comparable to the stature of a Dante, Milton, Donne, or T.S. Eliot.”<sup>16</sup> It becomes clear that the *kind* of religious poetry these scholars have in mind is one defined by the western canon. For Kroll, religious

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<sup>12</sup> Emphases are in the original. Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, pp. 116, 117-118.

<sup>13</sup> See Paul Kroll, “Li Po’s Transcendent Diction,” p. 99, n. 1. Kroll reviews Li Bo scholarship that emphasizes Zhuangzi and Laozi to the exclusion of Daoist practices, literatures, and cultures of the Lingbao and Shangqing revelations. See also Kroll, “Verse from on high: the ascent of T’ai-shan,” p. 232, n. 39.

<sup>14</sup> Owen, *The Great Age*, p. 140.

<sup>15</sup> Owen, *The Great Age*, p. 287.

<sup>16</sup> Yu, *Comparative Journeys*, p. 104.

poetry consists of whatever poems were written with clearly identifiable Buddhist references. Kroll further allows that some other poems without explicit markers still have “undeniable Buddhist flavor.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, Kroll takes as “religious” whatever traces of Buddhism from the early medieval period can be found in poems.<sup>18</sup> The two men make erudite points but have in mind different senses of “religion” and “religious poetry.”<sup>19</sup>

François Martin made an attempt to describe the contours of these two kinds of Buddhist poetry. He distinguished between Buddhist poetry *stricto sensu* and *lato sensu*; this also correlates with his distinction between *jisong* as a religious genre – derived from the translation of *gāthā* from the Indian sūtras – and a Chinese secular tradition of *shi*.<sup>20</sup> The result, however, is “the somewhat disappointing immaturity shown by Buddhist poems *stricto sensu*.”<sup>21</sup> (950-951) In other words, doctrinal verses and devotional poetry tend to have little literary merit. This view was earlier voiced by Burton Watson (citing Arthur Waley), when he stated that verses like the famous *Xin xin ming* are “versified statements of doctrine, rather than actual poems.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, Buddhist poetry *stricto sensu* appears to have no literary merit. If we follow Martin’s working categories,

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<sup>17</sup> Kroll, *Meng Hao-jan*, p. 111. This is a similar premise to that of Schafer, *Mirages on the Sea of Time*.

<sup>18</sup> More recent comments that reflect Kroll’s thinking on the matter of “religious poetry” may be found in “Daoist Verse and the Quest of the Divine,” under ‘Remarks for further inquiry,’ pp. 983-985. It seems fair to say that he is interested in what Eliot and Bloom have to tell us about our present and future, and not what we might have them say about pre-modern Chinese culture.

<sup>19</sup> In the terms of Smith’s “Religion, Religions, Religious,” Owen is speaking of religion, and Kroll religions.

<sup>20</sup> Martin, “Buddhism and Literature,” pp. 930-931.

<sup>21</sup> Martin is also dismissive of Buddhist poetry *stricto sensu* as “they oscillate between direct imitation of the *jisong* and unconditional submission to the requisites of fashion.” (“Buddhism and literature,” page 945) His celebration of poems in that vaguely defined Buddhist poetry *lato sensu* is beyond reproach, and at the same time one cannot help but wish he could be generous to that other, stricter Buddhist poetry.

<sup>22</sup> Watson, “Zen Poetry,” pp. 117-118.



we face the problem of whether or not Buddhist poetry can be good Buddhism and good poetry simultaneously.<sup>23</sup>

There are several fallacies at work in most definitions of Buddhist poetry. One surprising fallacy is that poems written by Buddhist monks necessarily are, or at least ought to be, Buddhist poetry. This would seem to be the basis for many modern anthologies. An argument by identity begins with the presumption that poetry by monks naturally is Buddhist poetry.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, Buddhist-themed poetry by persons who are not monks, like Su Shi, is taken as evidence that he was “a Buddhist.”<sup>25</sup> Such logic is circular, and tells us little about what made Buddhist poetry work.

Participation in and engagement with religious traditions in China, even today, did not require exclusivity. By this same measure, Su was also a Daoist, a Confucian, a father, a brother, and a political exile. To escape the limits of working with identity, some have tacked toward foreground genres and modes of poetry. For example, Ronald Egan has written eloquently about the hymns and encomia (*song* 頌 and *zan* 贊) to Guanyin

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<sup>23</sup> Elsewhere, Martin himself focuses on what he calls the “integration of Indian ideas and Chinese form” in “Les ‘Quatre portes de la ville’.”

<sup>24</sup> Martin, “Buddhism and Literature,” for example, tries to avoid this by giving the final word on what is “Buddhist poetry” to the ancient Chinese themselves. Martin does so in an attempt to define Buddhist poetry strictly, and as a result focuses on two collections of poetry from the early medieval period. The criteria for inclusion in these collections, it would seem, was one’s identity as a monk. Though this is not a great surprise, what it tells us is that the *idea* of Buddhist poetry in medieval China – for a few anthologists, at any rate – was not much more nuanced than our own.

<sup>25</sup> This is especially true for Su Shi, who adopted the name *Dongpo jushi* 東坡居士 (The Layman of East Slope). The latter phrase (*jushi*) is derived from the translation for “a lay Buddhist” (Sanskrit *upāsaka*). It would be a mistake to say that this was “his Buddhist name.” By the Song dynasty, the appellation *jushi* was widely used by poets. It did not denote the completion of a ritual, such as taking precepts, or any other technical sense by which someone might be said to “be a Buddhist.” A good example of careful use of the adjective Buddhist is found in Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited*, in which she is careful to refer to Buddhist ideas, texts, and institutions, but not to a person as “a Buddhist” (unless the person is “a Buddhist monk”).

composed by Su Shi.<sup>26</sup> Though Su Shi is not a Buddhist monk (or necessarily “a Buddhist”), he is able to write verse in what is a recognizably Buddhist genre, or mode. By focusing on form and poetics, rather than identity, Egan deftly skirts the fallacy of monolithic identity.

Those seeking such rapprochement on the topic of “Chinese Buddhist poetry” can take cues from the debates surrounding “Zen Art,” another ambiguous and contested category. “Zen Art” may denote ink wash paintings by Zen monks, such as the beloved *Six Persimmons* by monk Muqi Fachang 牧溪法常 (13<sup>th</sup> c), or a painting of bamboo.<sup>27</sup> These are cases in which the painter’s identity as a monk determines the frame by which the painting is seen as being Zen Art. “Zen Art” may also refer to paintings of icons, like the patriarch Bodhidharma, or topoi associated with Zen, like the parable of the ox-herding boy, regardless of the painter’s identity.<sup>28</sup> “Zen Art” also refers to art, regardless of creator, that reflects an awakened understanding of Zen, which is only visible to those who have a firm grasp on Zen.<sup>29</sup> As exhibitions of “Zen Art” have grown in popularity in Japan and elsewhere, curators have begun to focus on monastic visual culture and to push against the general image of Zen culture as one of “elegant simplicity.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed*, p. 148. It is pertinent to this discussion of prejudices about Buddhist poetry that Su’s *song* and *zan* – even those written in *qiyan* meter and humorous like “A Verse about [Li Gonglin’s?] Painting of a Drunken Monk” (*Zui seng tu song* 醉僧圖頌, in *Su Shi wenji* p. 584) – were published together with the prose in *Su Shi wenji* and not with the poetry in *Su Shi shiji*. This *song* is not the infamous colophon attributed to Su Shi on the object at the Freer Sackler, but may have been written on another object by Li Gonglin. See <https://www.asia.si.edu/SongYuan/F1968.18/F1968-18.Documentation.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Persimmons may be found in Awakawa, *Zen Painting*, p. 57; bamboo by Qingzhuo Zhengcheng, in Fontein, *Zen Painting & Calligraphy*, p. 67.

<sup>28</sup> See Brinker, *Zen*, beginning on page 131.

<sup>29</sup> This is the main thrust of Shin’ichi Hisamatsu, “On Zen Art.”

<sup>30</sup> Asami, “Kamakura – The Art of Zen Buddhism,” p. xii.

The limitations of thinking with the category “Zen Art” are well known.<sup>31</sup> The story of the modern construction of “Zen Art” in modern Japan and the west is now the study of the modern reception of East Asian visual culture.<sup>32</sup> It is worth noting, as Lachman pointed out, that “the term Chan painting does not occur anywhere in Tang or Song dynasty texts, and does not appear to have been recognized as a category of painting by traditional Chinese writers.”<sup>33</sup> Zen Art (as distinct from the Edo period term *zenga*, or “Zen painting,”) has existed as a heuristic term in modern conception of East Asian art.<sup>34</sup> “Zen Art” emerged from modern Japanese discourse on transcendental Zen.<sup>35</sup> In response to this crisis of deconstruction, Gregory Levine has suggested that “rather than producing cultural anxiety, the loss of an idealized, simplified *Zen Art* is our gain. For one thing, we are likely to ask more and new questions about still more intriguing works of art, expanding our gaze beyond the canon and its ‘usual suspects.’”<sup>36</sup> This seems to represent the majoritarian view, as scholars have begun to study the uses of art objects in Buddhist rituals, or themes and topoi within specific contexts, abandoning the term “Zen Art” and looking towards the visual culture that flourished in monasteries.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> There is a concise and incisive summary by Asami, “Kamakura – The Art of Zen Buddhism,” also published in Japanese in the front of that same exhibition catalogue, focused on the limitations of Hisamatsu’s approach. Separately, a now classic rehearsal of the problems is found at the beginning of Shimizu, “Zen Art?”

<sup>32</sup> Gregory Levine, “Zen art before nothingness,” surveys the modern origins of “Zen Art” from first contacts to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>33</sup> Lachman, “Art,” p. 41.

<sup>34</sup> Gregory Levine, “Two (or More) Truths,” surveys the creative aspects of the reception of “Zen Art.”

<sup>35</sup> Hisamatsu, “On Zen Art,” is a singular representation of mid-century Kyoto School views on art; translated from *Tōyōteki Mu* (“Oriental Nothingness”), published in 1939. On Hisamatsu and D.T. Suzuki in particular, see Robert Sharf, “The Zen of Japanese Nationalism,” esp. pp. 29-34.

<sup>36</sup> Levine, “Two (or More) Truths,” p. 59.

<sup>37</sup> This view seems to be reflected in exhibitions in Japan, especially those involved the curator Asami Ryūsuke 浅見龍介. See Asami, “Kamakura – The Art of Zen Buddhism,” pp. vii-viii. A

Much like Zen Art, the appeal of Buddhist poetry was reinforced by a series of decontextualizations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>38</sup> It may be helpful to look beyond the term Buddhist poetry, to see what kinds of poems historical Chinese Buddhist monks were interested in writing. Instead of looking for “Buddhist poetry,” we might turn our gaze towards the vital poetic cultures that thrived in monasteries. If we do so, we are likely to ask more and new questions about still more intriguing poetry.

When we look past the canon of Buddhist poetry, we are apt to see the abundance of occasional poetry. Occasional poems use literary forms to enact social customs (welcoming a guest, seeing off a friend) or to mark everyday occasions (the giving of a small gift, a birthday, a moment of nostalgia). These poems serve as witnesses to the circumstances in which they were composed, and are useful as social documents. These works are also literary, using literary techniques to sculpt language and present imagistic ideas. Monks’ poems coordinate participation in genre conventions with Buddhist principles. The transgressions against convention are how the norms become visible.<sup>39</sup> The determinative forms of poetry were manipulated and subverted by Buddhist monks in ritualized farewells, as seen in the poems of *Yifanfeng*. These manipulations made possible expressions of Buddhism as a living religion, in which abstract principles are measured against the embodied realities of monasticism.

My goal has not been to define Buddhist poetry, but to present some ways of reading in which monks’ poems are simultaneously literary and religious. I have found it

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comprehensive introduction to the study of ritual uses of visual culture using Song era materials, and its limitations, may be found in Foulk, “Religious Functions of Buddhist Art in China.” Helmut Brinker et al. adopted a two-fold approach divided between functions and themes to structure the volume *Zen*.

<sup>38</sup> See Chapter Five of McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*.

<sup>39</sup> Todorov, “The Origin of Genres,” p. 160.

helpful to repurpose the tripartite analysis in Patrick Diehl's *The Medieval European Religious Lyric*, which focused on function; genre or form; and rhetoric.<sup>40</sup> More recently, Daniel O'Sullivan returned to the topic of Mary in the troubadour tradition. He used genre analysis to consider Marian devotion "against the landscape" of genre.<sup>41</sup> Troubadour songs in which the Virgin Mary appears had undergone a flattening out by critics present and long past. O'Sullivan shows that these poems did not just substitute the Virgin Mary for the Lady of secular song, but "a fusion of Marian and secular poetics."<sup>42</sup> I hope I have shown what kinds of knowledge are necessary for understanding the fusion of Buddhist and secular poetics. This is similar to, but more historically grounded than, doing "Buddhist readings" of the same poems.<sup>43</sup>

In conclusion, I would like to briefly return to some of the factors that shaped the environment in which monks wrote poetry: criticism of their poetry as stinking of vegetables, insistence by monastic leaders that poetry should only consume a small portion of a monk's day, the dangers of the poetry demon, disparagement of the written word by Chan leaders, and, most of all, an expectation that monks express emotions differently from others. To some extent we see all of this in the poetry itself, and when we don't, these expectations nonetheless contribute to our appreciation of the poetry.

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<sup>40</sup> I became aware of the usefulness of this book from Paul Kroll, "Daoist Verse and the Quest of the Divine," page 983, no. 65.

<sup>41</sup> See O'Sullivan "Na Maria," p. 185.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Rouzer has recently published what he refers to as "Buddhist readings" of Hanshan poems. These readings are compelling, perhaps not least of all because of Rouzer's use of the Hakuin commentary together with the scriptural texts that belong to what we might call "a Hakuin canon." He does not present this work as a reception history (Hakuin on Hanshan), and instead offers his method as literary theory. This becomes clearer in the final more experimental section, which I found quite interesting. It seems fair to say he has created a coherent "Hakuin reading" of poetry, which clearly is some species of "Buddhist reading." Even if the heuristic of "Buddhist readings" is too simple and ultimately not satisfying, a door has been opened for more possibilities.

I have not come near to exhausting the genres that constitute monks' poetry, and perhaps future researchers will reconsider further genres, modes, and subgenres, or the function and rhetoric of monks' poetry. Some yet unexplored areas of study include monks' *huaigu* 懷古 ("cherishing the past"), *jiju* 集句 ("poems of collected lines"),<sup>44</sup> and *ciyun* 次韻 ("matching rhyme poetry").<sup>45</sup> Stephen Miller reflected on the long process of learning to read Buddhist poetics. "After reading a few of these poems [of Buddhist *waka*], I thought I shared some scholars' judgment that they were didactic in tone, thin in substance, and ambiguous in purpose. As is the case with reading any poetry or appreciating any art, there is a skill involved, a vocabulary and a context to learn, which at first I did not have."<sup>46</sup> I hope the reader has gained some skill, vocabulary, and contexts in which to read Chinese Buddhist poetry.

— *fin* —

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<sup>44</sup> For a short paper focused on *jiju* poetry, see Li Hongliang 李洪亮 and Zhang Minghua 张明华, "Wang Anshi zhi jiju shi." Southern Song monk Shaoqi 紹嵩 composed hundreds of *jiju* poems to mark his travel. See *Yayu jiang zhe ji xing jiju shi* 亞愚江浙紀行集句詩.

<sup>45</sup> See Chen Zhongxiu, *Tang dai he shi yan jiu*, pp. 129-153 for an overview of the three types of *heyun* 和韻 poetry, including *ciyun*. A notable example of Buddhist *ciyun* center on the ten ox-herding pictures, including the text known as *Puming Chanshi mu niu tu song fu zhu da chanshi he song* 普明禪師牧牛圖頌附諸大禪師和頌 (XZJ 113, no. 1271). Another example are the travel poems written by Qisong together with Yang Pan 楊蟠 (1017-1106) and monk Weiwu 惟晤 (T. 52, no. 2115, p. 742, a18 - p. 746, a22), for which Qisong also wrote colophons (T. 52, no. 2115, p. 705, c21-p. 706, b19).

<sup>46</sup> Stephen Miller, 'Afterword,' in *Wind from Vulture Peak*, p. 440.

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### Abbreviations

**SBCK** *Si bu cong kan*

**SQKS** *Si ku quan shu*; see *Ying yin Wen yuan ge Si ku quan shu*

**T** *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*

**XZJ** *Xu zang jing*; see *Dai Nihon zokuzōkyō*

*Dai Nihon zokuzōkyō* 大日本續藏經. 750 vols. Kyoto: Zōkyō Shoin, 1905–1912. Maeda

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