A Primer in Chinese Buddhist Writings

Supplement: Epigraphy
Acknowledgements

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Preface

This supplement is intended primarily for advanced students interested in Chinese Buddhism. Before attempting this supplement, students should work through the main three volumes of the Primer and, ideally already have a good command of Classical Chinese. I do not gloss common terms here, focusing instead on introducing the main sources for Buddhist epigraphy in China, including extant pieces now housed in museums, rubbings of inscriptions, collections of transcriptions, archaeological publications, and local gazetteers.

Part 1 of this supplement provides a brief introduction to each piece and a bibliography of relevant sources. Part 2 includes annotation of difficult passages, and reflects class discussion over alternate readings for a given passage. Part 3 provides an English translation. After working through the material, with reference to Parts 2 and 3 as needed, the student should attempt to return to Part 1 and read the primary sources without recourse to Parts 2 or 3, or any other external material.

Eventually, I hope to expand this supplement with more selections from local gazetteers, an important source for Buddhist epigraphy in China.
Short Donative Inscriptions

1. The Zhái Mán Maitreya Stele

Background

Our first inscription is found above an image of Maitreya on a stele now preserved in the Kyoto National Museum, but presumed to have been made in Henan (see photo below). Below the image of Maitreya is a longer inscription (Wànshòu sì bei 萬壽寺碑記) that I do not include here. The longer inscription dates the image to 706. Below we will look at some instances in which the original stone is lost, the inscription surviving only in one or more rubbings (tàpiàn 拓片). The practice of making rubbings goes back to at least the fifth century, but most extant rubbings are from the late Qing and early part of the twentieth century. The rubbing (see image below) for our stele shows how—even in cases in which the original stele or image survives—old rubbings often preserve inscriptions that are no longer visible on the stone. I reproduce a rubbing from the Peking Library collection below.

In addition to making rubbings, literati and modern scholars have copied out inscriptions in epigraphical collections. Again, these can be helpful for interpreting characters no longer visible on the original stone or in later rubbings. And, again, at times inscriptions survive only in such collections. The great novelist and scholar Lù Xùn 魯迅 in the early decades of the twentieth century hand-copied a large number of rubbings, collected in his Lù Xùn jíjiào shìkē shǒugāo 魯迅輯校石刻

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1 For a survey of the history of Chinese rubbings, see Kenneth Starr, Black Tigers: A Grammar of Chinese Rubbings (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008). The collections of the Peking Library and the Fu Ssu-nien Library are particularly useful. Many of the rubbings of the Peking Library collection are available in a 100 volume set, Bēijīng tūshūguǎn cáng Zhōngguó lìdài shìkē tàběn huìbiān 北京圖書館藏中國歷代石刻拓本匯編 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou gujī chūbānshè, 1989-91). This collection is available in digital form at http://www.cadal.zju.edu.cn/. Stanford students have access to this database. The first time you use it, you need to register a username and password. For a catalog of the Fu Ssu-nien holdings of rubbings for the Northern Wei period, see Fǒjiào tàbián yǎndū xiǎo zǔ 佛教拓片研讀小組, Zhōngyāng yánjūyuán lǐshǐ yuēyán yánjūyuán suǒ cáng Běi Wèi jìnian fójiào shìkē tàběn mùlù 中央研究院歷史語言研究所藏北魏紀年佛教石刻拓本目錄 (Taipei: Zhōngyāng yánjūyuán shìyǔsuǒ, 2002).
手稿 (Shànghǎi: Shànghǎi shūhuà chūbānshè, 1987). I reproduce his transcription of this rubbing below.

My transcription below is based on yet another source, originally published in 1915, about the time that Lǔ Xùn began to record inscriptions in his book. This work is by the great scholar of Buddhist art Ōmura Seigai 大村西崖, entitled Shina bijutsushi: Chōso hen 支那美術史: 雕塑篇 (Tōkyō: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1972 [1915]), p. 235, which I have compared with the other sources mentioned above.

This inscription, along with the longer passage that follows, have been cited as evidence for conceptions of heaven and hell in China in the early sixth century.

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Rubbing in the collection of the Peking Library.

Běijīng túshūguǎn cáng Zhōngguó lìdài shíkē tàběn huìbiān 北京圖書館藏中國歷代石刻拓本匯編 (Zhèngzhōu: Zhōngzhōu gǔjí chūbānshè, 1989), vol. 4, p. 80.
魯迅輯校石刻手稿

Lu Xun jíjiào shíkē shǒugǎo

(Shànghǎi: Shànghǎi shūhuà chuānbānshè, 1987), case 2, volume 1, p. 103.
家众恶云消万善庆集名长寿齐如彭祖使学问者
聪明精爽士官属官者为致三司应世不绝伏顔虫
右造像记以寿考聪明宣达为善禄之文亦造像中
之别开生面者也。臣学藏石刻六

"Lǔ Xùn jíjiào shíkè shǒugǎo 鲁迅辑校石刻手稿" (Shànghǎi: Shànghǎi shūhuà chūbānshè, 1987),
case 2, volume 1, p. 104.
Inscription

佛弟子翟蠻為亡父母洛弟造彌勒像一塸，願使亡者上生天上、託生西方。

侍佛佐右，供養三寶時。

3 Notice that the non-standard 洛 is given for 落.
4 Again, note the form the character takes in the original by looking at Lǔ Xùn’s transcription.
5 Notice that Lǔ Xùn gives 待 which matches the rubbing. In inscriptions, the radical 亻 is often interchangeable with 彳 (e.g. 佛 is often written as 彿).
Bibliography


2. The Chéng Duàn’ér Stone Stūpa

Background

The following inscription comes from the base of a stone stupa discovered during construction in the city of Jiǔquán 酒泉, Gansu Province in 1969. 43 centimeters tall, and 12 centimeters in circumference, the stupa is now in the Gansu Provincial Museum. The stupa includes images of seven Buddhas and a cross-legged Maitreya. The inscription below is followed by a section from the Ekōttarāgama-sūtra 《增壹阿含經》卷 42〈46 結禁品〉 (CBETA, T2, no. 125, p. 776, a19-20) which we don’t include here.

This inscription is often cited as evidence for the prevalence during this period of belief in the latter days of the Dharma (mòfǎ xīnyǎng 末法信仰). The transcription of the inscription (on the base) given here is based on that given in Wáng Yì 王毅, Běi Liáng shítǎ 北涼石塔 (《文物資料叢刊》) (Bēijīng: Wénwù chūbǎnshè, 1977), pp. 96-97 in comparison with the rubbing below.

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6 Jīn Shēn 金申 gives 1960, but this seems to be a mistake.
Detail from Zhāng Bǎoxi, Běi Liángshítáiyìshù 北凉石塔藝術 (Shànghǎi: Shànghǎi císhū chūbānshè, 2006), pp. 96-97.
Inscription

涼太緣二年歲在丙子八月中旬，程段兒自惟薄福，生值末世，不觀佛典，自竭為父母、合家立此石塔形象，願以此福，成無上道，並及命過秋官女妻陵男亦同上願。

7 Jin Shēn 金申 (Zhōngguó lì dài fó xiàng tú diǎn 中国歷代紀年佛像圖典 [Beijing: Wenwu chūbānshè, 1994], p. 433) gives 惟 for 涼, but a blowup of a rubbing of the inscription suggests 涼 is right. A colophon to a fragment from Turfan ends with 「維太緣二年，歲在丙子四月中旬，令狐廉嗣於酒泉勸助優婆塞史良奴寫此經」. Our inscription is followed by a copy of a passage from a scripture itself followed by a colophon indicating that the same figure (書令狐廉嗣 Clerical Scribe Hú Liánsì) copied both pieces. See Zhāng, Běi Liáng shítà yǐshù, pp. 43-44.

8 Most scholars take this to be 436. Jin argues that it should instead be 337. Wèi Jìn nánbēi cháo diàosù also gives 337 (p. 12).
Bibliography


3. The Táng Xiǎohǔ Maitreya Stele

Background

As far as I know, the original stele for the following inscription does not survive; we have only rubbings and transcriptions. One early transcription, reproduced below, comes from the Táozhāi cáng shí jì 陶齋藏石記 by Duān Fāng 端方 (1861-1911). Duān was a Qing official who, among other prominent posts and assignments, was sent by the emperor on a fact-finding mission to the West (including a visit to Washington D.C.) to report on models of constitutional government. Duān was an avid collector of antiques, many of his pieces eventually finding their way into Western museums (most notably, his collection of bronzes was sold, after his death, to the Metropolitan Museum in New York). He also had a large collection of rubbings, many of which were eventually incorporated into the Peking Library collection.9 This collection, along with many similar collections is available in a useful database (Zhōngguó lìdài shíkē shǐliào huìbiān 中國歷代石刻史料匯編 available to Stanford students) at:

http://guji.unihan.com.cn

Unfortunately, judging by this example, the database contains mistakes (see comparison below).

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宋舍舍宅造寺记

石高九寸二分，宽一尺二寸，长分十三行字，径六寸

大魏武定五年，次下那七年丙申，朔九月甲辰，成信土佛弟

子宋舍今为正父母，舍宅一，造寺并经，洪福先馈，嘉为臣

祖母许造塔，浮斋一，枢，以缘，舍未，君僧立今始，得

入，先已，醇，见在家，眷，比，病，长，寿，恒，僧，佛，闻，法，遇，善，知，识

切有形之数，同此。唐，俱时，普，正，觉，大，道

唐小虎造象记，残石

上佛时，缺佛时，以上第二佛，雕佛时，上佛，以上第二，

佛时，上佛时，以上第二，佛，雕佛时，上佛，以上第二，
Duān Fāng端方, Táozhāi cáng shí jì陶齋藏石記, juàn 9, pp. 15b-16a (Taipei: Yìwén yīnsǔn, 1966).
Zhōngguó lìdài shíkē shìliào huìbiān 中國歷代石刻史料匯編 http://guji.unihan.com.cn/
Mistakes and omissions are marked with a red dot to the right. You can check these in the database itself by clicking on the 圖像頁 icon in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.
北京圖書館藏中國歷代石刻拓本匯編，vol. 6, p. 148.
武定六年五月三日，廣武將軍奉車都尉清敞隊主唐小侖為皇帝大承相，右為七世亡父母、見存眷屬造弥勒像一區。願國祚永隆万代。有願先亡生天，離苦受樂，見存德福，生孓世孓值仏聞法，含生之類同登正覺。仏弟子唐小侖敬造。

Bibliography


Duann Fang 端方, Taozhai can shi ji 陶齋藏石記, juan 9, pp. 15b-16a (Taipei: Yiwên yinhshuguân, 1966).


4. The Liú Wèi Maitreya Stele

Background

The following inscription comes from the lower portion of the back side of the stele discovered at Shífó 石佛 temple in Fángshān 房山 County, Héběi Province. This inscription dates the image to 502 (in the third year of Jingming 景明 era of Northern Wei). 70 centimeters tall, and 65 centimeters in circumference, the original stone was allegedly stored in Paris⁷⁰, which is now in the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (Östasiatiska museet), Stockholm, Sweden.¹¹

The stele depicts an image of Maitreya Buddha in the center in high relief, flanked by two smaller bodhisattvas. The back side of the stele is decorated with images of Śākyamuni Buddha and Prabhūtaratna Buddha (Duòbáoláí 多寶如來) sitting in a pavilion surrounded by donors or believers. This is a depiction of a scene from the eleventh chapter of the Lotus Sūtra, “The Emergence of the Treasure Stupa” chapter (“Jiàn bǎotā pǐn” 見寶塔品), where Prabhūtaratna Buddha leaves the state of nirvāṇa and comes to the world in order to listen to Śākyamuni preach the Lotus Sūtra. Prabhūtaratna Buddha offers half of his seat in the treasure stūpa to Śākyamuni Buddha, and Śākyamuni enters the stūpa and takes the half of the lion’s seat. The transcendental power of the two Buddhas in the stūpa enables the stūpa and their entourage to float in mid-air.¹²

* Sinae Kim prepared this piece for the class, including the translation.


¹¹ For the photos of both sides of the stele and the detailed description, visit the website of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities. I include the photos on page 27.

¹² CBETA, T 9, no. 262, pp. 32b16-34b22. As Wang mentions in his book, the scene where twin Buddhas—Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna—seated side by side inside the Many Treasures Stūpa was one of the most popular motifs in medieval Chinese Buddhist art. “Its staple form is almost ubiquitous, appearing on cave-shrine walls and votive stelae across China.” He also raises questions as to why this scene was so popular in medieval China but absent in India and Central Asia, and why it became so firmly fixed in the medieval Chinese imagination. Eugene Y. Wang, Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), p. 5.
Not only does this inscription express hope for the rebirth of the deceased in a heaven (shàngshēng tiānshàng 上生天上), it also seems to express the hope that the deceased would subsequently be reborn in the human realm (xiàshēng rénzhōng 下生人中) when their lives in the heaven are exhausted.

The transcription of the inscription given here (on page 10) follows the Lǔ Xùn jíjiào shìkē shǒugǎo 鲁迅辑校石刻手稿 (Shànghǎi: Shànghǎi Shūhuà chūbān, 1987), case 2, volume 1, pp. 37-39. In the footnotes, I compare Lǔ Xùn’s transcription with those from Yán Juānyǐng 颜娟英 et al., Bǐcháo fòjiào shìkē tàpiàn bǎipín 北朝佛教石刻拓片百品 (Taipei: Zhōngyāng yánjūyuàn lìshù yuán yánjūsuǒ, 2006), No. 5, pp. 10-11 (CBETA, I 1, no. 5, p. 11, a0-b12), the Táozhāi cáng shí jì 陶齋藏石記 by Duān Fāng 端方, juàn 6, pp. 6b-8a, and the Wǔ, liù shíjì běiāng mínzhòng fòjiào xìnyǎng 五、六世紀北方民眾佛教信仰 (Běijīng: Zhōngguó shēhui kēxué chǔbānshè, 1998) by Hóu Xùdōng 侯旭東, p. 177, and also with the rubbing itself.

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13 The expression “to be born above in a heaven” (shàngshēng tiānshàng 上生天上) is also found in the short donative inscriptions of our class material, e.g. “The Zhái Mán Maitreya Stele” (No. 1) and “The Táng Xáohú Maitreya Stele” (No. 3).

14 Regarding the wish for the consecutive rebirths of the deceased in the heavens and then in the human world, see Hóu Xùdōng 侯旭東, Wǔ, liù shíjì běiāng mínzhòng fòjiào xìnyǎng 五、六世紀北方民眾佛教信仰 (Běijīng: Zhōngguó shēhui kēxué chǔbānshè, 1998), pp. 173-79, and Friederike Assandri and Wang Ping, “Multiple Souls and Destinations: Early Medieval After-Life Conceptions in the Mirror of Six Dynasties Stone Inscriptions,” *Journal of Chinese Characters* 韓國漢字研究 3 (2010), pp. 125-26. Friederike Assandri and Wang Ping’s paper quotes the Fóshuō zuò fóxíngxiàng jīng 佛說作佛形像經 (T no. 692, vol. 16), which says that one of the merits of creating Buddhist images is that, “… After they die they will be reborn in the heaven. When the long life in the heavens is finished, then they will come back to be born in the world and will be sons of rich families, with uncountable money and treasures, and after they may obtain Buddha’s nirvāṇa. (死即生天上。天上壽盡，復來下生世間，為富家作子，珍寶奇物不可勝數，然後會當得佛泥洹道)" (Translation from Assandri and Wang).
Liú Wèi Maitreya Stele. H. 70 cm, W. 65 cm.
Photo from Yán Juānyīng 颜娟英 et al., Běicháo fójiào shíkè tàpiàn bǎipín 北朝佛教石刻拓片百品 (Taipei: Zhōngyāng yánjiūyuàn lǐshǐ yǔyán yánjiūsuǒ, 2006), no. 5, p. 10.
Liú Wèi Maitreya Stele.

http://collections.smvk.se/carlotta-om/web/object/101127
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stele_with_Maitreya_1,_front,_China,_Northern_Wei_dynasty,_dated_502_AD,_limestone,_traces_of_pigments_-_Östasiatiska_museet,_Stockholm_-_DSC09371.JPG
Rubbing from Yán Juānyīng 颜娟英 et al., Běicháo fójiào shíkè tàpiàn bǎipín 北朝佛教石刻拓片百品 (Taipei: Zhōngyāng yánjiùyuàn lìshǐ yǔyán yánjiūsuǒ, 2006), no. 5, p. 10.
劉未等造象記

佛像首高五尺二寸下滿二尺五寸字數十行題名及題名右

比丘惠簡
比丘惠問
比丘道安
比丘道實
比丘僧伽

右上層
右中層
右層
右道右

北魏 景明三年十一月十一日
劉未等造象記一
有景皇帝昭皇帝皆在魏未建号之先此记昭作照
刻时偶误黄之兄弟所授之官郭今魏书官氏志有
异黄作丁零护军按官氏志天兴四年七月令诸
军皆属大将军府是魏先有诸部护军而志未载
冀州见于地形志夏州之畜疑在相字之谬地形志
司州下云太祖天兴四年置相州徐与修同魏县属
渤海郡音条不言立郡甄音通县名属范阳郡此乃
魏书官氏志所谓小县子者三郎为荀士称官氏
志幢将六人主三郎荀士是也杜氏通典言魏初有
殿中尚书掌殿内兵马仓储其最奇侍郎扬威将军
官氏志略著此称若建依将军世宁太守官号及地
Duán Fāng端方, Táozhāi cáng shí jì 陶齋藏石記. juàn 6, pp. 6b-8a
Inscription

肱之妻侯侍佛。

弟子劉莫肱侍佛。

弟子劉芒侍佛。

武跡景照皇帝時，家祖劉黃兄弟九人，四人臺士，黃蒙國寵受作丁零護軍三州賢作，冀州刺史侍佛時。

劉清作條郡太守，動作諸州刺史侍佛。

劉愛國恩俱作護軍封建依將軍直縣子，

劉羌作三郎董作殿中尚書征東將軍直縣子侍佛時。

劉還香夫妻侍佛。

劉采妻趙侍佛時。

\[\text{Notice that Lu Xun and Duân Fâng give a variant of肱, while Yán Juânyìng gives胳.}\]

\[\text{Notice that Lu Xun and Duân Fâng give作, while Yán Juânyìng gives佐.}\]
景明三年十一月十一日，弟子劉未、劉堆、劉寄、劉黌等四人造彌勒像一軀，
上為國家皇帝，併及七世父母、眷屬、村舍、大小常与佛。願上生天上，
下生人中，侯王居仕，富貴家產。
願〃從心，所求如意，天下太平，五穀豐登，人民安樂，永離諸苦。劉倉成
夫妻侍佛。弟子劉市德侍佛。妻孫侍佛時。息阿祖、零和、阿慶、道興兄弟
四人侍佛時。

Notice that Lǔ Xùn gives 併 apparently a variant of 併, Hóu Xùdōng gives 並, Duǎn Fāng gives 隊, and Yán Juānyīng gives 仰.
Bibliography


Duān Fāng 端方, Tāozhāi cáng shíjí 陶齋藏石記, juàn 6, pp. 6b-8a.


5. Stele in the Nelson-Atkins Museum

Background

This inscription appears on the back of an image in the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City. The opening lines, in abstract terms, provide justification for making Buddhist images at all. This is standard in longer stele inscriptions. There are apparently no records of this inscription in the epigraphical collections. Nor are there rubbings in the major collections.
Photo from Jin Shēn, Zhōngguó lidài jìnián jìxiàng tūdiǎn, p. 88.
夫至道虛寂，理不自興。然眾像不建，則真容无以明；郡言不敘，則宗極无以朗。由是釋迦能人，見生王宮，應權方便，廣設津渡。

清信士尹受國，為亡考造釋迦文石像一區，作功以就，僅發微願：上願七世父母，未來見世，常與三寶共會。又願亡考，生生之處，遇佛聞法，自識宿命，永不退轉。次願一切途有生之類，離諸有結，地獄眾苦，咸皆休息。緣少微福，普同斯願。維大代太和十八年歲次甲戌四月乙巳朔八日任子敬造訖。

Bibliography


Note where the character 苦 is on the image. Apparently, the craftsman did not leave enough space for it.
6. The Hán Xiăohuá Image from Qīngzhōu

Background

In 1996, while excavating the remains of the Lóngxīng Monastery 龍興寺 in Qīngzhōu 青州, Shāndōng, archaeologists discovered a large cache of Buddhist images, ranging in date from the Northern Wei all the way to the Northern Song. The inscription below identifies one of these images as among the earliest of the finds. In addition to its value for dating the finds, the inscription illustrates the beliefs and values of an elite lay woman of the sixth century.

Front of Hán Xiăohuá image. Qīngzhōu shì bówùguăn 青州市博物館, Qīngzhōu Lóngxīng sì fūjiào zàoxiàng yìshù 青州龍興寺佛教造像藝術 (Jīnăn: Shāndōng móishù chūbānshè, 1999), pl. 1.
青州市博物馆，青州龍興寺佛教造像藝術（濟南：山東美術出版社，1999）pl. 2.
Inscription

永安二年二月四日，清信女韓小華敬造彌勒像一軀，為亡夫樂醜兒與亡息祐興、迥奴等，後己身並息阿虎，願使過度惡世後，生尊貴，世侍佛。

Bibliography


Qīngzhōu shì bówùguǎn 青州市博物館, Qīngzhōu Lóngxīng sì fójiào zàoxiàng yìshù 青州龍興寺佛教造像藝術 (Jìnán: Shāndōng měishù chūbānshè, 1999), pp. 1-2, pl. 1-6.
7. The Yuánzhào, Yuánguāng Maitreya Image

Background

The following inscription follows a typical pattern of somewhat longer dedicatory inscriptions, beginning with the date, the names of the donors and the recipient of the merit, and followed with a “paeon” (sòng 頌).

The inscription is interesting in part because the two donors are both nuns and sisters (i.e. of the same parents). We have at least two separate rubbings and transcriptions in at least two separate sources. Here I include only the rubbings in one collection, but provide references in the bibliography in case you want to compare them with other sources.

Yán Juānyìng 颜娟英 et al., Běicháo fójiao tàpiàn bǎipǐn 北朝佛教石刻拓片百品 (Taipei: Zōngyáng yánjiúyuàn lishi yǔyán yánjiùsuǒ, 2006), no. 100, p. 264.
Yán, Běicháo fújiào shíkē tǎpiàn bāipìn, p. 264, detail (first half of inscription).
Yán, Běicháo fójiaoshí tāpiān bāipín, p. 264, detail (second half of inscription).
Inscription

大齊武平六年歲次己未五月甲寅朔廿六日己卯，佛弟子比丘尼圓照、圓光姊妹二人為亡妣、亡兄朱同，敬造雙彌勒玉石象一軀。上為皇帝陛、群僚百官、州郡令長。又為七世先亡、現存眷屬、一切含生有形之類。普沾斯福。

乃為頌曰：

峨㇏玉象，妙飾幻玄。光同五色，淨境交連。真如法眼，永願昌延。上為亡妣，捨家財珍，敬造聖容。留音万年。比丘尼圓德。比丘尼仲菀。
Bibliography


Lǔ Xùn jījiào shíkē shǒu gǎo 魯迅輯校石刻手稿 (Shànghǎi: Shànghǎi shūhuà chūbānshè, 1987), case 2, vol. 4, pp. 875-76.


8. An Inscription from Fángshān

Background

What follows is an example of a colophon to an inscribed sūtra. This inscription, following an engraved version of the *Diamond Sūtra*, is from the Fángshān 房山 site, outside of Běijīng. Begun in the early seventh-century, Fángshān is the largest collection of “stone scriptures” in China.²⁰ Lothar Ledderose is involved in a large project to collect and study stone inscriptions from other parts of China as well. Volumes 1 through 3 of this project have been published.

I include rubbings below, but the dedication of merit is hard to make out so I rely mostly on the handy catalog of colophons: Běijīng tǔshūguǎn jīnshí zǔ 北京圖書館金石組 ed., *Fángshān shíjīng tíjì huìbiān 房山石經題記彙編* (Běijīng: Shumu wenxian chūbānshè, 1987), p. 203.

A related inscription (now otherwise lost?) is recorded by Lù Zēngxiáng 陸增祥 in his *Bāqióngshì jīnshī būzhèng 八瓊室金石補正*, juàn 39, p. 20b-23a.

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Rubbing of the front of the stele (our inscription is on the side, bottom left—see next page for detail).
You can just about make out the inscription on the last line on the left.
Inscription

金剛般若波羅蜜經

垂拱元年歲次乙酉四月丙子朔八日癸未幽州范陽縣龐德相兄弟等為亡考及見存母敬造此經合家供養

Bibliography


Lù Zèngxiáng 陸增祥, Bāqióngshì jīnshí bǔzhèng 八瓊室金石補正, juàn 39, p. 20b-23a.

9. An Inscription from Lóngmén

Background

This is one of many inscriptions from Lóngmén. This one is from the Lǎolóng Cave 老龍洞 (Cave no. 660). In addition to the extant rubbing, Lù Zēngxiáng 陸增祥 records the inscription in his Bāqióngshì jīnshí bǔzhèng 八瓊室金石補正. I include copies of both below. I haven’t been able to locate a picture of the inscription in situ. Bonus points if anyone can find one.

For an animation piece inspired by “Tomb Raider” that illustrates the history of an earlier inscription from Lóngmén (yes, you read that right) see 元詳造彌勒像記 on Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax2RVPST9s

See Amy McNair, Donors of Longmen: Faith, Politics, and Patronage in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Sculpture (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007).
Wú Yuánzhēn 吳元真 et al ed.,
Běijīng tǔshūguǎn cáng Lóngmén shíku zàoxiàng tǐji taben quán bian
北京圖書館藏龍門石窟造像題記拓本全編 (Guìlín: Guǎngxī shìfàn dáxué chūbǎnshè, 2000),
vol. 5, p. 832.
陆增祥，《八瓊室金石補正》，卷31，p. 7a.
Inscription

顯慶五年正月廿三日弟子王仁基敬造像一◇**上資□□□皇帝下及合識末為亡□

女眷属己身等因茲□功德俱登正覺

Bibliography

Lù Zēngxiáng 陸增祥, Bāqióngshì jīnshí bǔzhèng 八瓊室金石補正, juàn 31, p. 7a.


** I can't type the character. I think it is 堪, usually written 竹.
10. Zhái Fèngdá Inscription from Dünhuáng

Background

What follows is an early Tang colophon from Cave 220. This is not technically “epigraphy” since it is not inscribed into durable material; it is instead painted on plaster. For this reason, it is not included in collections of jīnshí wén 金石文 and, of course, no rubbings can be made of it. It is instead classified as a tǐjì 题記, or “cartouche.” Nonetheless, in style and content it is indistinguishable from the epigraphy we have seen so far.

Zhái Fèngdá 翟奉達 (883-961?), was a member of one of the most prominent families at Dünhuáng. The cave in which this inscription is found (Cave 220) is a family cave, made in memory of members of the Zhái family (not unlike the Stanford Memorial Church, filled with inscriptions to various members of the Stanford family, not to mention an inscription naming the donors who funded its refurbishment after the 1989 earthquake—but I digress). A number of manuscripts by or otherwise related to Zhái Fèngdá survived in Cave 17.23

925 C.E., Dunhuang, north wall of the passageway of Cave 220.
(The inscription is in the middle.)
Inscription

清士弟子節度押衛守隨軍□謀銀青光祿大夫檢校國子祭酒兼御史中承上柱國
潯陽翟奉達抽㨔□貧之財敬畫新檨大聖文殊師利菩薩一軀並侍從兼供養菩薩
一軀即□觀世音菩薩一軀摽斯福者先奉 為造窟亡靈神生淨土不墜三塗之災
次□(為)我過往慈父長兄勿溺幽間苦難長遇善田兼為見在老母合家子孫無諸災
障報願平安福同萌芽罪弁涓流絕筆之間聊為頌曰大聖文殊瑞相嵬㇌光照世界
感現千威于時大唐同光三年歲次乙酉三月丁巳朔廿五日辛巳提記之耳

Bibliography


Qiang, Ning. Art, Religion & Politics in Medieval China: The Dūnhuáng Cave of the Zhai Family (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004). This whole book is about Cave 220. Qiang does not translate our inscription, but does provide extensive information on the inscription’s author, Zhái Fèngdá. For a picture of the inscription (still too small to see clearly), see pl. 12.
11. (Bonus track) Lotus Sūtra Colophon

Background

The last “short inscription,” is, again, not technically epigraphy. It is a “colophon” (tíji 题記) from a Dünhuáng manuscript. As such there are of course no rubbings of the text, nor is it referred to in epigraphical collections. I place it here to illustrate the overlap in style and content with the dedicatory inscriptions we have seen on stone and metal above.

As I noted above, the Chéng Duàn’ér stūpa contains an inscription that was copied by a figure who also copied a text discovered at Turfan. We saw above that Zhái Fèngdá appears both on the walls of Dünhuáng and in the manuscripts. In other words, not only is the overlap between epigraphy and manuscript colophons; at times the same people made both.

For the colophon below, skip the end of the Lotus Sūtra and concentrate on the colophon. I don’t transcribe this colophon. You are on your own. Stein 791 is another copy of the Lotus Sūtra copied for the same woman in the same month.
Longer Inscriptions

1. Stele in the Hénán Museum

Background

For the next piece, we turn from short dedicatory inscriptions commissioned by an individual or by a few members of a family to an example of longer inscriptions commissioned by groups of people. The first is an example of an inscription on a stele (zàoxiàng bēi 造像碑) commissioned by a devotional society (called yìyì 邑義 or yìyì 義邑 or yìshè 邑社). The principle of these inscriptions is the same as for the short inscriptions we have already seen: to create merit for the donors by making an image. Inscriptions by devotional societies often provide clues as to the organization of the society, including the titles of the various officers—monastic and lay—in the organization, and their activities. As in the case of short, dedicatory inscriptions, for the Tang we have examples of texts on paper from Dùnhuáng composed by and for devotional societies.

This following stele is interesting both for the titles of members of the devotional society, and for what both the art and the inscriptions reveal about the understanding of the life of the Buddha in this sixth-century community. The abstract, florid opening to the inscription is typical of such steles.

For this piece I give all of the material I have been able to find, but don't provide a transcription. The stele is stored in the Hénán Xīnxiāng Museum (河南新鄉市博物館), and the photographs of the stele are in Yán Juānīng's 颜娟英 Běicháo fójìào shíkè tàpiàn bàipín 北朝佛教石刻拓片百品 (Taipei: Zhōngyōng yánjiùyuàn lishí yǔyán yánjiùsuǒ, 2006), no. 45, p. 114.

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魯迅輯校石刻手稿 (Shànghǎi: Shànghǎi Shūhuà chūbàn, 1987),
case 2, volume 2, p. 337.
鲁迅辑校石刻手稿

Lu Xun Jiju Shuo Shangdiao (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua chuabian, 1987).

La Xun Jiju Shuo Shangdiao 鲁迅辑校石刻手稿 (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua chuabian, 1987).

case 2, volume 2, p. 338.
Bibliography


Lü Zengxiang 陸增祥, Baoqiongshi jinshi buzheng 八瓊室金石補正, juan 卷 19, p. 19.


Background

Composed in 803 by the Tang literatus Wéi Gāo 韋皋, the following inscription was written for a stūpa said to contain the remains of a parrot that recited the name of Amitābha. This story is cited a number of times in Song-era Buddhist histories. As far as I know, the stele is no longer extant, but the content of the inscription is preserved in a number of sources, including local gazetteers (more on those below) and literary collections, most prominently the Complete Works of the Tang (Quán Táng wén 全唐文), compiled on imperial command in the early nineteenth century.

Many such works can be found in the literary collections (wénjí 文集) of prominent writers, even when the original steles do not survive. Such pieces can be mined for information about monasteries and monks, but are also valuable for understanding literati attitudes towards Buddhism. This is how works like these (though later than this example) are used in Mark Halperin's Out of the Cloister: Literati Perspectives on Buddhism in Sung China, 960-1279 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2006) and Timothy Brook's Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University and Harvard-Yenching Institute: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1993).

For this work, find and prepare the text of the “Xīchuān yīngwǔ shèlì tǎjì” 西川鸚鵡舍利塔記 from the version in the Quán Táng wén, fascicle 453 and/or a version in one of the Sichuan gazetteers, such as the sixteenth-century Sichuān zōngzhì 四川總志 or the eighteenth-century Sichuān tōngzhì 四川通志. These last two can be found in the database Zhōngguó fāng zhì kuì 中國方志庫 available through the East Asian Library at:


These record that the stupa was located in what is today Sānxué Monastery 三學寺 in Jīntáng County 金堂縣 just outside of Chengdu. The stupa itself is no longer extant. A search in CBETA for the opening characters of the inscription (元精以五氣) uncovers another half dozen transcriptions of this piece in Buddhist collections.
Bibliography

3. Rooster Tomb Inscription

Background

I can’t resist including one more piece in this admittedly marginal sub-genre of epigraphy related to birds: a Ming-dynasty era inscription for a “Chan chicken” (what exactly that means isn’t yet clear to me), composed by Lín Rúyuán 林如源 and copied by the prominent Ming calligrapher Zhāng Ruìtú 張瑞圖. The stele is still extant. I include below the best quality reproduction I could find of a rubbing from it.

4. Epitaph for a Tang Monk

Background

Epitaph tablets (mùzhìmíng 墓誌銘) refers to a square limestone slab placed inside a tomb; the word “tablet” distinguishes them from steles which were erected above ground. The inscriptions on the epitaphs usually detail the life story of the deceased, with an emphasis on his or her accomplishments. Because they were buried, epitaph stones are often well-preserved. In addition to making their way into collections of rubbings, thousands of epitaphs have been excavated since the beginning of the twentieth century. The most prominent collections of epitaph tablets are from the Tang dynasty for which we have approximately 7,000 examples either in the form of the original stone or in rubbings, about a third of which are for women. Together with later periods, we have approximately 40,000 examples.26 The vast majority of surviving epitaph tablets from the Tang are for high status figures from around the two Tang capitals of Luòyáng and Cháng’ān. Relative to epitaphs for officials, epitaphs for monastics are relatively rare, and are almost always for monks or nuns born to prominent families.

Below I provide the text of an epitaph for a monk called Fǎzàng 法藏. This is not the famous Fǎzàng, known for his exegesis of the Flower Adornment Scripture, born five years later. This Fǎzàng has attracted attention because of his connections to the Sānjiējiào 三階教 movement.27

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This rubbing (64*77 cm) is held by Táiwān guójiā túshūguǎn 台灣國家圖書館 (National Central Library).
Bibliography

5. The Dampa Stele

Background

Dampa (Ch. Dānbā 膽巴) (1230-1303) was one of the most influential Tibetan lamas at the Yuan court, but the following piece is more famous in the Chinese tradition for its calligrapher than for the subject of the text itself. The “Dampa Stele” (Dānbā bēi 膽巴碑), written by the Yuan literatus Zhào Mèngfǔ 趙孟頫 (1254-1322) in 1316, has long been held up by connoisseurs as an exemplary piece of elegant Regular script, one of the finest works left by one of China’s greatest calligraphers. A draft for the inscription in the form of a scroll is now possessed by the Palace Museum in Beijing. Because of its popularity among modern calligraphy enthusiasts, this paper draft has been repeatedly reprinted in recent decades.28

The Fózǔ tōngjì 佛祖統紀 records that in 1308, the crown prince Āyur-parvata, who later became Emperor Rénzhōng 仁宗, promulgated an edict ordering the composition of Dampa’s biography (xíngyè 行業).29 This biography was included in the Fózǔ lìdài tōngzāi 佛祖歷代通載.30 Compared to this long biography, the Dānbā bēi seems structurally disconnected, largely made of a short biography, an origin myth of Lóngxīng Monastery 龍興寺, and Dampa’s prophecy. The prophecy cannot be found in any other sources, though the biographical entries in the Fózǔ lìdài tōngzāi and the Yuán shì 元史 include other miracles brought about by Dampa that the Dānbā bēi does not mention.

Interestingly, this composition was not included in Zhào Mèngfǔ’s literary collection Xuěsōng zhāijí 雪松齋集. Though the site of Lóngxīng Monastery was subject to both tomb raiding and archeological excavation, the original stele has never turned up and no authentic rubbing is known to exist. According to the Fózǔ lìdài tōngzāi, Dampa’s relics were kept in the Rénwáng Monastery 仁王寺, rather than the Lóngxīng Monastery. The Yuán shì does not put Dampa into the list of Imperial Preceptors, indicating that the title is posthumous and Dampa never officially assumed the office of Imperial Preceptor.31 This scroll was first catalogued by the Qīnghé shūhuà fāng 清河書畫舫 published in 1616, some three hundred years after its supposed composition.

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* Allan Ding prepared this piece for the class, including the translation.
29 CBETA, T 49, no. 2335, pp.43526-b27 (繼奉青宮令旨撰膽巴金剛上師行業).
30 CBETA, T 49, no. 2336, pp.725c14-727a6.
Judging from the content, the text is largely based on Dampa’s official biography in the *Fózǔ lìdài tōngzǔ* 佛祖歷代通載 (TZ) and the “Zhèngdìng fǔ Lóngxīng sì zhù tóngxiàng jì” 正定府龍興寺鑄銅像記 (S) written in 1097 by Gé Fán 葛蘩.

皇帝即位之元年有詔：『金剛上師膽巴，賜謚大覺普慈廣照無上帝師。』勅臣孟頫為文並書，刻石大都寺。五年，真定路龍興寺僧迭瓦八奏：「師本住其寺，乞刻石寺中。」復勅臣孟頫為文並書。臣孟頫預議：『賜謚「大覺」，以言師之體；「普慈」，以言師之用；「廣照」，以言慧光之所照臨；「無上」，以言為帝者師。』既奏，有旨：『於義甚當。』

謹按：『師所生之地，曰「突甘斯旦麻」，童子出家，事聖師繹理哲哇為弟子，受名膽巴。』

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31 Zhao left the empty space for two characters, probably because at the time the decision had not yet been made about which monastery was to house the stele.

32 This line is in Seal Script; the rest of the text is written in Regular Script. In square brackets are line numbers of the text on the scroll.

33 The character looks like a 凡 with an extra horizontal stroke inside.
梵言膽巴，華言微妙。先受秘密戒法，繼遊
西竺國，遍參高僧，受經律論。繇是深入法
海，博採道要，顯密兩融，空實兼照，獨立三
界，示眾標的。至元七年，與帝師巴思八
俱至中國。

斯旦麻人。幼孤依季父。聞經止啼。
知其非凡。遣侍法王上師。……年十
二訓以前名。自是經科哭式壇法明
方，靡不洞貫。年二十四講演大喜樂
本續等文，四衆悦服。上師令巴至西
天竺國參禮古達麻室利(Gautama-
Śrī?)習梵典，盡得其傳。初世祖居潛
邸，聞西國有綽理哲瓦道德，願見
之。

帝師者，乃聖師之昆弟子也。帝師告歸西蕃，
以教門之事屬之於師。

帝師者……遂往西涼遣使請於廓丹大
王。王謂使者曰：師已入滅，有姪思巴，
此云聖壽，年方十六，深通佛
法，請以應命。

始於五臺山建立道場，行秘密咒法，作諸佛
事，祠祭摩訶伽剌。持戒甚嚴，晝夜不懈，屢
彰神異，赫然流聞。

天兵南下。襄城居民禱眞武。降筆
云。有大黒神。領兵西北方來。吾亦
當避。於是列城望風欵附。兵不血
刃。至於破常州。多見黒神出入其
家。民罔知故。實乃摩訶葛剌神也。
此云大黒。蓋師祖父七世事神甚謹。

TZ: 世祖……遂往西涼遣使請於廓丹大
王。王謂使者曰：師已入滅，有姪思巴，
此云聖壽，年方十六，深通佛
法，請以應命。

TZ: 巴入中國。詔居五臺壽寧。……初

TZ: 巴入中國。詔居五臺壽寧。……初
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>隨禱而應。此助國之驗也。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>自是德業隆盛，人天歸敬。武宗皇帝、皇伯晉王及今皇帝、皇太后皆從受戒法，下[45]至諸王將相貴人，委重寶為施，身執弟子禮，不可勝紀。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TZ: 王申留京師王公威稟妙戒。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S: 距真定府城之西三四里，有大悲寺，唐自覺禪師所造，金銅大悲菩薩像在焉，因以名寺。五代之亂，契丹犯境，燒寺韃滅其半。□□以香完之。周顯德中，國用空虛，掌計者無遠圖，搜羅天下銅佛，鑄錢以資調度。於是，菩薩之像，又以泥易其半。宋興，太祖皇帝開寳二年討晉不庭，駐蹕真定，召羣僧而問焉，得像之興□□本末。欲徙置城中，不可。且言像壞之時，有文在其中曰：“遇顯卽毀，遇宋即興。”於是詔遣中使相地於龍興寺佛殿之北，將復建閣，鑄銅像以慰鎮人之意。□駕還京師，未幾寺之菜園有祥光出其上，凡三年不</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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滅。望氣者占之得古銅物不可勝數。時暴雨大作，浮棟梁材千万，計自五臺山而下至頑龍河止。州以事上聞，詔以銅鑄像以木建閣……景祐中，寺僧惠演録其興建之迹甚詳，言不雅馴。

TZ contains a parallel story: 師謂門人曰：“潮乃大顛韓子論道之處，宜建剎利生。”因得城南淨樂寺故基，將求材，未知其計。寺先有河斷流既久，庚寅五月，大雨傾注，河流暴溢。適有良材泛集充斥，見者驚詫，咸謂鬼輸神運焉。

師始來東土，寺講主僧宣微大師普整、雄辯大師永安等，即禮請師為首住持。

元貞元年正月，師忽謂眾僧曰：『將有聖人興起山門。』即為梵書奏[70]徽仁裕聖皇太后，奉今皇帝為大功德主，主其寺。復謂眾僧曰：『汝等繼今，可日講《妙法蓮華經》，孰復相
代，無有已時。用召集神靈，擁護聖躬，受無量福。香華果餌之費，皆度我私財。』

且預言聖德有受命之符。至大元年，東宮既建，以舊邸田五十頃賜寺為常住業。師之所言，至此皆驗。

大德七年，師在上都彌陀院入般涅槃，現五色寶光，獲舍利無數。

TZ: 五月十八日，師問左右：“今正何時？”對曰：“日當午矣。”師即斂容端坐，面西而逝。上聞悲悼不勝，賜沈檀眾香，就上都慶安寺結塔焚之，王及四衆，莫不哀惻。是月二十九日，勅丞相答失蠻，開視焚塔。見師頂骨不壞，舍利不計其數，輪殊坐氈如故。

皇元一統天下，西蕃上師至中國不絕，操行謹嚴，具智慧神通，無如師者。臣孟頫為之頌曰：

[90]師從無始劫，學道不退轉，十方諸如來，一一所受記。來世必成佛，住娑婆世界。演說無量義，身為帝王師。度脫一切眾，黃金
為宮殿。七寶妙莊嚴，種種諸珍異。供養無不備，建立大道場。邪魔及外道，破滅無跡。

法力[100]所護持，國土保安靜。皇帝皇太后，
壽命等天地。王宮諸眷屬，下至於含生。歸依法力故，皆證佛菩提。成就眾善果，獲無量福德。臣作如是言，傳布於十方。下及未來世，讚歎不可盡。

延祐三年 月立石。

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6. Votive Inscriptions on the Southern Dynasties Stone Buddhist Images Discovered on Xi’an Road in Chéngdū

Background

The following is an example of the wealth of Buddhist epigraphical material that modern archaeology in China continues to discover. For keeping up with recent discoveries, the two most prestigious journals are Kǎogǔ 考古 and Wénwù 文物, but there are many other important archaeological journals that also contain recent discoveries of Buddhist epigraphy, art and architecture.

The following are the rubbings and transcriptions of the votive inscriptions carved on stone statues that were discovered on Xi’an Road 西安路 in Chéngdū in May 1995. The excavation unearthed nine stone images, of which eight were Buddhist images and one was Daoist. Five had votive inscriptions carved on the backside. The dates in these votive inscriptions range from 490 to 551. An archeological and art historical report of these statues, as well as rubbings of their inscriptions, can be found in “Chéngdū shì Xi’an lù Náncháo shíkē zàoxiàng qǐnglǐ jiànbào” 成都市西安路南朝石刻造像清理簡報, Wénwù 文物 1998, no.11, pp. 4-19 (the eleventh installment of the year 1998 issue; henceforth the “Archeological report”), written by the Archeological Team of Chengdu Municipality and the Institute of Archaeology of Chengdu. I introduce some emendations to the Archeological report’s transcription of the inscriptions.

Two things are immediately notable about these inscriptions:

First, their stylistic affinity to the contemporary Northern Dynasties votive inscriptions should be pointed out. Although the authors of these inscriptions express their political identification to the Southern Dynasties by using Southern Dynasties era names, the artistic details of the statues and the literary style of the inscriptions follow the Northern examples strikingly closely. Coupled with the fact that material evidence of this particular type of devotional expression in the South at this time is next to absent, this might be an indication that the provenance of the inspiration for the Sichuanese practice of creating stone votive image stelae was mainly Northern China. 35

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* Sangyop Lee prepared this piece for the class, including the translation.
Second, there are some minor details that shed additional light on the early medieval Chinese Buddhists' understanding of the concept of “the parents of the previous seven generations/rebirths” (qíshì fùmǔ 七世父母). In H1:3 we see the expression “qī zǔ xiǎnlíng 七祖先靈” (the deceased souls of the previous seven generations of ancestors). The word “ancestors/grandfathers/patriarchs,” i.e., zǔ, suggests that the expressed recipients of the merit were the commissioner’s previous seven paternal ancestors (which need not exclude the female members of the paternal lineage, i.e. paternal grandmothers, zǔmǔ, and so on). In contrast to this, in H1:4, likely written by a female, we see the expression, “qī [one character illegible because of damage] yīnyuán 七因緣.” This wording suggests that the commissioner is making a wish for the people with whom she had either familial or social ties (yīnyuán) in her previous seven rebirths. That these two disparate understandings are attested in the same locale and from roughly contemporaneous eras could be taken as another indication of the ambivalence of the concept of “qíshì fùmǔ” in medieval China. Also, it may be noted that the role the gender difference played in these two kinds of understanding of the concept might be significant, since a female could not have been as devoted as a male with regard to worshiping and caring for the individual's own paternal ancestors given her equally-expected filial loyalty towards her male spouse’s paternal ancestors.

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* This tentative identification of the donor’s gender as female is based on the possibility that the donor's son should have had a different family name from the donor. See transcriptions and translations.
Inscriptions

H1:1 (transcription in p. 6 in the archeological report; rubbing in p. 8 of the archeological report)

齊永明八年庚午歲十二月十九日，比丘釋法海與母為亡父造彌勒成佛石像一軀。願現在眷属，七世父母，龍華三會，希登初首。一切眾生，普同斯願。

37 Reading 軀 according to the archeological report, but this is not very clear from the rubbing.
38 The archeological report gives a square symbol (meaning illegible) but I tentatively read it as 希.
中大通二年七月八日，比丘晃藏奉為亡父母，敬造釋迦石像一軀。依此善因，願七祖先靈一切眷属，皆得離苦，現在安隱。三界六道，普同斯誓。
太清五年九月廿日，佛弟子柱僧逸，為亡兒李佛施，敬造育王像供养。願存亡眷属，在所生處，值佛聞法，早悟无生。七因縁及六道令，普同斯誓。谨...。
大同十一年十月八日，佛弟子張元，為亡父母敬造釋迦多寶石像。併藉茲功德，願過去者早登瑤土，奉睹諸佛。現在夫妻男女一切眷属，無諸業障，願三寶應諸夫自身...
天監三年甲申三月三日，比丘釋法海，奉為亡母亡姊，造无量寿^{47}石像。願
亡者乘^{48}此福，去離危苦，上昇天堂，与諸賢聖。而為眷属，廣及一切眾生，
等成无上正覺。
Bibliography

7. Inscription for the Reconstruction of the Guǎngfú Chán Monastery of the Wise

Background

Composed in 1203 by the literatus Lù Yóu 陆游 (1125-1210), the following inscription (Chóngxiū zhīzhě Guǎngfú shàn/chán sì ji 重修智者廣福禪寺記) was written for the reconstruction of a monastery in Wūzhōu 婺州 (present-day Jinhua, Zhèjiāng) at the request of Zhòngqǐ 仲圮, the abbot of the monastery. The inscription was both composed and handwritten by Lù Yóu, himself a renowned writer and calligrapher. The reconstruction was proposed because the monastery, named Guǎngfú (literally: Extensive Blessings), had been largely abandoned by the time Master Zhòngqǐ, an old friend of Lù Yóu, arrived to take up the post. The stele inscription is not only valuable for the study of Lu's calligraphy style, but also for what the inscription suggests about the understanding of geomantic principles in the design and construction of a Buddhist monastery in the Song times as well as of the relationship between literati and Buddhism.

Significantly, eight letters Lù Yóu exchanged with Zhòngqǐ (in Lù's running script style) concerning the request to compose the inscription and do the calligraphy were carved on the back of the stele. In these letters, Lù emphasized a few things: 1) he enjoined Zhòngqǐ to inform him of the name and post(s) held by the person who was going to do the calligraphy on the plaque (tí é rén 題額 人) for he wanted to ensure that everything carved on the tablet was handwritten by himself, including the "head" of the stele (bēi é 碑額); 2) he enjoined Zhòngqǐ to make sure that no extra characters would be mistakenly carved on the stele; 3) he suggested following the Stele of the Chénkuí

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* Kedao Tong prepared this piece for the class, including the translation.

49 This is the title given on the tablet. 標 (shàn) is a variation of 禪 (chán).

50 The inscription itself does not mention the position Zhòngqǐ held. But in a letter Lù Yóu wrote to Zhòngqǐ, Lù referred to Zhòngqǐ as the "head of halls" (tángtóu 堂頭), or "chief monk," that is, abbot. See Wáng Zhòngyáo 王仲堯, Nán Sòng fójiào zhìdù wénhuà yánjiù 南宋佛教制度研究 (Béijīng: Shāngwǔ yīnshūguǎn, 2012), vol. 1, pp. 196-98. For details about the letter(s), see the discussion below and footnote 51.

Pavilion 寶奎閣碑 in Míngzhōu 明州 with regard to “stele style and layout” (bēi yàng 碑樣). The present translation, however, focus only on the inscription.

The original stele is still extant. The transcription below is primarily based on that contained in the Jinshī xùbiàn 金石續編 by the Qing scholar Lù Yàoyù 陸耀遹 (1771-1836). In addition, I consulted a rubbing of the stele now in the collection of National Library of China. The stele is recorded in the Qing (Kangxi era) Jīnhuá yìzhì 金華邑志, although the inscription was not provided in it. The inscription is also found in Lù Yóu’s literary collection (Wèinán wénjí 渭南文集) under a different title. The Jinshī xubian and the Wèinán wénjí editions suggest a number of discrepancies with the rubbing. When such discrepancies occur, I follow the word choice in the rubbing. With regard to punctuation, I consulted two modern editions of the Wèinán wénjí.

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52 The stele inscription was composed and handwritten by Sū Shì 蘇軾 (1037-1101) in 1070 for the famous Āyuwáng (Guǎnglì) Monastery 阿育王廣利寺 in Mingzhōu (modern Níngbō, Zhèjiāng). For the inscription, see: Sū Shì, Sū Shì wénjí 蘇軾文集, ed. Kǒng Fánlǐ 孔凡禮 (Běijīng: Zhōnghuá shùjú, 1986), vol. 17, pp. 501-2.


54 The original stele is now in the collection of Jīnhuá Museum, Zhèjiāng.


57 Zhào Tàishēn 趙泰甡, ed., Jīnhuá yìzhì 金華邑志, vol. 7 (Bēijīng: Guójū tǔshū guān chūbānshè, 2011). The relevant pages are missing in the modern reprint edition of the contemporaneous Jīnhuá xiānzhì 金華縣志. But the content of the two gazetteers appears to be largely the same, with the extant reprint edition of the Jīnhuá yìzhì having two more volumes preserved. Nonetheless, the exact relationship between the two seemingly identical gazetteers remains unclear to me. See Zhào Tàishēng, ed., Jīnhuá xiānzhì, vol. 7 (Táiběi: Chéngwén chūbānshè, 1983).

58 The last part of the inscription is not found in the Wèinán wénjí edition. See footnote 63 below.
婺州金華山智者廣福禪寺，浮屠氏所謂梁樓約法師道場。國朝開寶九年，始為禪寺。自淨悟禪師全肯傳三十七代，二百餘年。至慶元之五年，而仲玘實來。方是時，事廢不舉，地茀不糞；棟橈柱腐，垣斷甃缺，若不可復為者。玘植杖四顧曰：智者之為寺，天造地設者至矣。而人事者不能充焉，故浸壞至於此。天其使我興此地歟？乃諏諸為地理學者。則其言與玘略合。蓋寺在金華山之麓，峰嶂屹立，林岫間出，日月映蔽，風雲吞吐，而前之形勢無以留之。如王公大人南嚮坐帷幄中，宜其前有列鼎大牲之養，盛禮備樂之奉。賓客進趨，搢相襜翼；將吏武士，執撻孰何。然後為稱。今乃巍然獨坐，而侍衛者皆奔趨而去，則其威重，無乃稍損乎？於是始議鑿大池潴水於門。粱其上通大路，而增門之址，高於舊三之二。異時所謂奔趨而去者，皆肅然就列，恪然就事。則王公大人之尊，於是始全。則其施置建立、號令賞罰，亦何可少訾耶？方議之初，或謂門有大木數十，必盡去乃可興池役。而

59 Lù Yàoyù gives 骨 for 肯.
60 A variant of 勝.
61 The transcription of the line provided here is based on the rubbing, which is also what the Lù Yàoyù edition suggests. The Wèinán wénjí edition gives 通 for 達; also, the 于 after 達 here is missing there. Although the characters in the two modern Wèinán wénjí editions I consulted are the same, their punctuation is different. One editor suggests 潮水於門梁，其上通大路，而增門之址. See Lù Yóu 陸游, Lù Fàngwēng quánjí 陸放翁全集, ed. Yáng Jiāluò 楊家駱 (Taipei: shìjiè shùjū, 1990), vol. 1, pp. 118-19. The other editor suggests 潮水於門，梁其上通大路，而增門之址. See Lù Yóu quán jí jiùo zhù, vol. 9, p. 495. Here I am tentatively following the latter reading, and treat 梁 as a verb (i.e. to build a bridge).
木所從來久，以是未決。忽有一夕大風，木盡拔。若有鬼神相其役者，其亦異矣。玘之來，百役皆作，脩廊傑閣、虛堂廣殿；至於棲眾養老之室、庖湢帑庾之所。繚為垣墉，引為道路，莫不美於觀而便於事。後雖有能者，無以加焉。玘有道行，為其徒所宗，而才智器局又卓然不凡。如此，故薦紳多喜道之。予又與有夙昔，且嘗記其嚴州南山興造之盛。故玘今又從予求智者興造記，而予友人寧遠軍節度使提舉佑神觀姜公邦傑，復以手書助之。請未及屬藁，而邦傑歿。予尤感焉。雖耄，不敢辭也。今茲之役，池為大，故書之特詳。嘉泰三年十月甲子，太中大夫，寶謨閣待制，提舉江州太平興國宮，山陰縣開國子，食邑五百戶，賜紫金魚袋陸遊篆并書。保靜軍節度使，知婺州軍州，兼管內勸農使，齊安郡開國候，食邑一千一百戶，食實封二百戶吳璹題額。

64 For this inscription titled 嚴州重修南山報恩光孝寺記, see Lù Yóu quánjí jiàozhù, vol. 9, pp. 476-78.
65 From this line onward, the rest of the inscription is not included in the Wèinán wénjì edition.
64 Lù Yàoyù gives 觀 for 勸, which is obviously incorrect.
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