A Primer in Chinese Buddhist Writings

Supplement: Epigraphy

Annotation

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Short Donative Inscriptions

1. The Zhái Mán Maitreya Stele

佛弟子瞿蠻為亡父母洛難弟造彌勒像一塚，願使亡者上生天上、託生西方。
侍佛佐右，供養三寶時。

[1] 上生天上，托生西方: Three questions can be raised regarding this passage: 1) Does 上生天上 mean “to be born above in a heaven,” or does it mean “to achieve a superior rebirth in heaven?” 2) Are 天上 and 西方 two different places? If so, what would this mean? 3) Why would one make an image of Maitreya and then use the merit for rebirth in Amitâbha’s paradise?

A search for 上生天 in the epigraphical database shows: 1) 上 probably just means “above” rather than a particular class of rebirth in heaven as is the case in Pure Land texts. In other cases in which the phrase appears, 上生 is juxtaposed with 下生, (i.e. in the human world), as in the vow: 願上生天上下生人中侯王居仕富貴家産 (May they be reborn above in the heaven, or be reborn below in the human world as aristocrats or high officials in wealthy and honorable households). 2) 上生 here probably refers to rebirth in heaven where Maitreya resides, as in the vow: 願亡父上生天上弥勒長唱 (May the deceased father be reborn above in the heaven where Maitreya always preaches), or in other vows that pray for 上生天宮下生人間 (be reborn in the Celestial Palace, and then be reborn below in the human world) in which the “Celestial Palace” is the palace in which Maitreya lives while waiting to be reborn on earth. This suggests a solution to the problem. Zhái Mán is asking that his deceased relatives either be reborn in Maitreya’s heaven or be reborn in Amitâbha’s paradise. This is, perhaps, a moment in Chinese Buddhist history when the two destinations were competing alternatives. This is
how Dorothy Wong takes it in her *Chinese Steles: Pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Use of a Symbolic Form* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2004), p. 98.

[2] 侍佛佐右，供養三寶時: This can be a description of the stele, that is, “Those attending the Buddha on the left and right are in the act of making offerings to the Three Jewels,” or this can refer to the deceased in paradise, attending there on a Buddha. Dorothy Wong (*Chinese Steles*, pp. 98-99) opts for the second interpretation, translating the passage: “May the deceased ascend to Heaven, may they be reborn in the Western Regions, where they attend to the Buddha and worship the Three Treasures.”

[3] 時: There are two possible interpretations of 時 in these inscriptions: First, it could be taken as a grammatical particle, marking a pause. According to the *Hànyǔ dà cídiǎn* 漢語大辭典, 時 is “a modal particle used at the end of sentences to indicate pause which is equivalent to 呵.” (語氣詞。表停頓，相當於『呵』。) Second, it could be taken to mean “in the act of,” in reference to donor figures depicted on the stele or image. Evidence for the second interpretation includes the rubbing of no. 3 “The Tang Xiaohu Maitreya Stele” below, in which each reference to 時 accompanies a donor in a pose of veneration.

2. The Chéng Duàn’ér Stone Stūpa

涼太緣二年歲在丙子六月中旬, 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。

[2] The term 末世 could be read in at least two ways: the age in which the Dharma is in decline, or, more generally, any age of chaos. Lǐ Yùqún 李裕群 in his exhaustive study of cave temples of the late Northern Dynasties (Běicháo wǎnqí shíkū sì yánjìù 北朝晚期石窟寺研究, Běijīng: Wénwù chūbānshè, 2002, pp. 240-41), cites this passage as an example of the prevalence of a belief in the decline of the Dharma (mòfǎ 末法) during the period. While not citing this inscription, the Hányǔ dà cídiǎn 漢語大辭典 glosses the term as meaning the period in which a dynasty is in decline (but does not list the Buddhist meaning of the term). Jan Nattier’s Once Upon a Future Time: Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1991, pp. 101-110) provides ample evidence that well before the fifth century, the term 末世 was used in Chinese Buddhist writings to indicate the final of three ages of the Dharma. Natier questions the Indian origins of this tri-partite scheme, but not their prevalence in China. In short, both interpretations are possible. But given the Buddhist context of the inscription, and a similar sentiment expressed in other Buddhist texts using the term 末法 (that is, lamenting being born in the final age [of the Dharma]), it is most likely that Lǐ Yùqún is right and that 末世 here refers to the final age of the Dharma.

[3] 命過: The deceased. (as opposed to “living” (xiàncún 現存/見存).)

[4] 秋官: The Ministry of Punishments, one of the six kinds of official position in the Zhou lǐ 周禮 (Rites of Zhou).

3. The Táng Xiǎohǔ Maitreya Stele

武定六年五月三日，廣武將軍奉車都尉清敞隊主唐小肅仰為皇帝大承相，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，見存徳福，生世值仏聞法，合生之類同登正覺。仏弟子唐小肅敬造。


[2] 右: There are at least two possible interpretations of yòu 右: The word can mean “proximately.” It may also be used here in place of the homophone 又. We see recurrent patterns such as “At the highest level..., as well as..., and...” (仰為/上為..., 又為/右為..., 普及/並及...) or “First, may..., also, may..., next, may...” (上願..., 又願..., 次願...) in donative inscriptions when the writer lists recipients of merit.

[3] 七世亡父母: At least two interpretations are possible for 七世父母: as parents going back seven generations (e.g. parents, grandparents, great grandparents, great-great grandparents, etc.), or as parents of the past seven lives. We will return to this question below when we read the “Votive Inscriptions on the Southern Dynasties Stone Buddhist Images Discovered on Xi’an Road in Chengdu.”
肱妻侯侍佛。

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，動作糊州刺史侍佛。

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。

景明三年十一月十一日，弟子劉未、劉堆、劉寄、劉黑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。
5. Stele in the Nelson-Atkins Museum

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，常与三寶共會。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。

[1] 清信士: This refers to a yōupōsāi (優婆塞, Skt. upāsaka), lay male devotee.


[4] 大代太和十八年歲次甲戌四月乙巳朔八日任子: Shuò 朔 indicates the first day of the lunar month. This is a way of identifying the month, by noting the gānzhī 干支 of the first day of the month. In the date given above, two ways of calculating year, month and day are given as follows: 大代太和十八年歲次甲戌 (year), 四月乙巳朔 (month), and 八日任子 (day). The whole can be translated, “on the eighth day, rènzǐ, in the fourth month the first day of which was yǐsì, in the eighteenth year of Tàihé era (494) of this great dynasty, the year of jiǎxū.” See Wilkinson, Chinese History: A New Manual, pp. 175-182.

6. The Hán Xiǎohuá Image from Qingzhōu

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、遲奴等，後己身並息阿虎，願使過度惡世後，生了尊貴，世了侍佛。
7. The Yuánzhào, Yuánguāng Maitreya Image

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、圓光姉妹二人為亡妣、亡兄朱同，敬造雙彌勒玉石象一軀。上為皇帝陛下、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。


8. An Inscription from Fángshān

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，幽州范陽縣庞德相兄弟等，為亡考及見存母，敬造此經合家供養。
9. An Inscription from Lóngmén

顯慶五年正月廿三日，弟子王仁基敬造像一◇，上資□□□皇帝，下及含識，末為亡□女眷属己身等，因茲□功德，俱登正覺。

[1] ◇: ％, I think it is kān 堪, usually written kān 龃. Kān 龃 can mean “a stūpa,” or “a stūpa-shaped coffin,” or “a stūpa-shaped niche or alcove.” See Digital Dictionary of Buddhism. Here it is probably used in the more generic sense of niche.

10. Zhái Fèngdá Inscription from Dünsthuáng

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□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，長遇善回。兼為見在老母合家子孫，無諸災障報。願平安，福同萌芽，罪弃涓流。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。

[1] 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: The first missing character in the inscription (□) should be cān 慘. Official titles bestowed upon Zhái Fèngdá are divided
as follows: Acting Chancellor of the National University (Jíǎnjiào Guózǐ Jǐjǐǔ 檢校國子祭酒) concurrently serving as Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief (Yǔshǐzhōngchéng 御史中承) and Supreme Pillar of State (Shàngzhùguó 上柱國), Senior Official of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon (Yínqīng Guānglù Dàfū 銀青光祿大夫), Staff Officer of Defending Army (Shǒusuíjūn 守隨軍)，and Commanding Officer (Jiédù Yānwèi 節度押衛).

[2] 注意: Notice that hàn 揖 is given for jiǎn 减. Chǒujiǎn 抽減 means “to expend or remove part of the whole.”

[3] 擄: It has the same meaning with piāo 剽, which means “to take or use.”


11. (Bonus Track) Lotus Sūtra Colophon

垂拱四年十二月，清信佛子王琳妻斊氏，奉為亡女，敬寫法華一部。願亡者及遍法界眾生，共成佛道。

Longer Inscriptions

1. Stele in the Hénán Museum

《道俗九十人造像記》

夫妙色湛然，假朱紫以顯其真。法性無為，託形言而標至德。自非洞解虛宗，焉能悟斯玄猷者哉。有清信士合道俗九十人等，發心超猛，志樂菩提，造石像一區，舉高七尺。咸竭瓊珵，鎸餝周訖。綺麗金顏，暉暎楞伽。兾藉此微因，廣被群品。願慧海漣漪，四流息浪。鐵圍無垢，娑婆玉淨。帝道熙明，普光訓世。存亡眷屬，并及塵沙，龍華初唱，俱昇正覺。


[2] 鎊餝: Juān 鍬 is a variant of juān 鍬, which means “to carve or engrave.” Shì 镥 is a variant of shì 飾, which means “to adorn.”

[3] 棱伽: Léngqié, an abbreviation for Shìjiāpí léngqié móni bǎo 釋迦毗楞伽摩尼寶 which is the transliteration of the Skt. śakrābhilagna-manī-ratna, literally “the jewel owned by Śakra Devānāṃ-Indra,” a magical gem that grants wishes. See the Digital Dictionary of Buddhism.


[5] 四流: Also written sì bào liú 四暴流 (four raging currents), which are the raging currents of desire (yù bào liú 欲暴流), existence (yǒu bào liú 有暴流), false views (jiàn bào liú 見暴流), and ignorance (wú míng bào liú 無名暴流).
[6] 鐵圍: The iron mountain range that encircles our world, a geographic feature of the cosmos familiar to readers of Volume 2 of this Primer.

[7] 龍華: According to the Fóshuō Mílè xiàshēng chéngfó jīng 佛說彌勒下生成佛經 (CBETA, T14, no. 455) and the Fóshuō Mílè dà chéngfó jīng 佛說彌勒大成佛經 (CBETA, T14, no. 456), Maitreya will be reborn in this world after the death of Śākyamuni, and will attain Buddhahood and preach three sermons to sentient beings under the Dragon-Flower Tree (Skt. Nāgapuṣpa). This trope is common in Buddhist epigraphy.

[8] 摹: A variant of mó 輦, “to imitate” or “to depict.”

[9] 煋聲: Interchangeable with xiū 休, xiū 休 means “fortunate,” “felicitous,” or “blessing.” Hence, the compound 煋聲 should mean “blessed message.”
太子得道，諸天送刀与太子剔。定光佛入國菩薩時。如童菩薩賚銀錢与王女買花。摩耶夫人生太子，九龍吐水洗。想師瞻□太子得想時。黃羊生黃羔。白马生白駒。此婆羅門婦即生恨心，要婆羅門乞好奴婢逑去時。三年少嘆婆羅門婦時。五百夫人皆送太子向檀毒山辞去時。隨太子乞馬時。婆羅門乞得馬時。太子值大水得度時。
past foretells that the child will become a buddha [i.e., Śākyamuni]. Note that Lù Zēngxiáng confidently asserts that the writer of the stele got it all wrong since there should be only two nagas. Lu was evidently unaware of the source.

[12] 黃羊生黃羔。白馬生白駒: According to the Pùyào jìng 普曜經 (CBETA, T03, no. 186), at the time of the Buddha's birth, white horses gave birth to white foals; and brown sheep gave birth to brown lambs. (The Pùyào jìng 普曜經, juàn 卷 2, “Yùshēng shí sānshíèr ruìpìn” 欲生時三十二瑞品 5. CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 494, b7-10)

[13] 此婆羅門婦即生恨心。要婆羅門乞好奴婢逑去時: This refers to the famous story of Sudāna (Pali: Vessantara), paragon of generosity and renunciation. According to the Tàizǐ Xūdàná jìng 太子須大拏經 (CBETA, T03, no. 171), the Crown Prince Sudāna 須大拏, a previous incarnation of the Buddha, is so generous that when a brahman asks him for his children as slaves, Sudāna gives the brahman his daughter and son. When the brahman brings the children to his home, his wife scolds him for bringing home children of the royal family. Regarding Prince Sudāna's offering of the children, see Hubert Durt, “The Offering of the Children of Prince Viśvantara/Sudāna in the Chinese Tradition,” Journal of the International College for Advanced Buddhist Studies (Kokusai bukkyōgaku daigakuin daigaku kenkyū kiyō) 2 (1999), pp. 147-82.

[14] 檀毒山: Mount Daṇḍaka 檀特山, where Sudāna 須大拏 went into retreat after his father expelled him from the kingdom for giving away to the enemy a powerful elephant.
開光明主: Guāngmíng zhǔ 光明主 or Kāi Guāngmíng zhǔ 開光明主 is the monk or donor in charge of the ceremony of “opening the eyes” (i.e. consecrating) the images on a stūpa or stele. See Liú Shúfēn 劉淑芬, “Wǔ zhì liù shíjī Huábēi xiāngcūn de fǒjiào xìnyǎng” 五至六世紀華北鄉村的佛教信仰, Zhōngyāng yánjìuyuàn lǐshì yǔyán yánjìu suǒ jīkān 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊, 63.3 (1993), pp. 527-29.

邑母, 邑子, 邑師, 邑主: According to donative inscriptions on stūpas in medieval China, local devotees organized Buddhist societies that took on a wider religious as well as social functions. This kind of devotional society is called yìyì 邑義 or fǎyì 法義. Members of the laity of the devotional society are called yìzǐ 邑子, yìyì 邑義, or fǎyì 法義. Members of the clergy are called yíshī 邑師. Members of the laity leader are called yìzhǔ 邑主, dà yìzhǔ 大邑主, dū yìzhǔ 都邑主, or dàdū yìzhǔ 大都邑主. Yìmǔ 邑母 is the abbreviation for yìyì mǔn 邑義母人, which means the mother of members of the laity. See Liú Shúfēn 劉淑芬, “Wǔ zhì liù shíjī Huábēi xiāngcūn de fǒjiào xìnyǎng,” p. 248.

都督長史: Chief Clerk to the Commander-in-chief.

定光佛主: Dìngguāng fó zhǔ 定光佛主 is the donor who commissioned the construction of the image of Dīpāṃkara Buddha.

前部郡從事: The former Assistant Officer (Cóngshì 從事) of Commandery Governor (Bùjùn 部郡).

都維那: Wéinà 維那 and Dūwéinà 都維那 are titles for the administrator or the rector of a monastery. The director of affairs in a monastery is also called Yuèzhōng 悅衆 or Zhīshì 知事 (Skt. karmadāna). See Liú Shúfēn, “Wǔ zhì liù shíjī Huábēi xiāngcūn de fǒjiào xìnyǎng,” p. 524.

邑子前大郡主簿路惠顯侍佛。邑子路涅侍佛時。邑子李廣侍佛。邑子釗壽侍佛時。邑子衛清侍佛時。邑子程桃種侍佛。邑子張薩和侍佛時。邑子張達侍佛。
佛時。邑子雷賀德侍佛時。邑母太室充侍佛時。邑母史男容侍佛時。邑母潘
英仁侍佛時。邑母張好侍佛時。邑母王阿駒侍佛時。邑母苟妙姜侍佛時。邑
母王女貴侍佛時。邑母路堂姬侍佛時。邑母張要姿侍佛時。

邑子符求興侍佛時。邑子王承伯侍佛時。邑子路儀和侍佛時。邑子路慶洛侍
佛時。邑子路儀遵侍佛時。邑子路清頭侍佛時。邑子路道意侍佛時。邑子路阿松侍佛。

邑子路孟禮侍佛時。邑子閭□□侍□□。邑子閭□□侍□□。邑子閭□□侍□□。

[21] 前大郡主簿: The former Official Registrar (Zhùbù 主簿) of Great Governor (Dàjùn 大郡).
2. A Stūpa for a Parrot

《西川鸚鵡舍利塔記》

元精以五氣授萬類，雖鱗介羽毛，必有感清英純粹者矣。或炳耀離火，或稟奇蒼精，皆應乎人文以奉若時政。則有革彼禽類，習乎能言，了空相於不念，留真骨於已斃。殆非元聖示現，感於人心。同夫異緣，用一真化。[1]

前歲有獻鸚鵡者，曰此鳥聲容可觀，音中華夏。有河東裴氏者，誌樂金仙之道，聞西方有珍禽，群嬉和鳴，演暢法音，以此鳥名載梵經，智殊常類，意佛身所化，常狎而敬之。[2]


[2] 蒼精: The quintessence of the azure, apparently a reference to the azure dragon (cānglóng 蒼龍), like the phoenix, an auspicious animal.

[3] 殆非: Dàifēi literally means “it must not be the case that...” It might here be meant to be taken as a rhetorical question: “Is it not the case that...?” though this usage of 殆非 is not common. Some later authors seem to have taken this as a scribal error, giving give either 其 or 由 for 非. See 《釋氏通鑑》卷 10：「殆其元聖示現感於人心。」 (CBETA, X 76, no. 1516, p. 107, a20), and 《居士傳》卷 16：「殆由元聖示現。感於人心。」 (CBETA, X 88, no. 1646, p. 214, a20-21).
[4] 金仙: Konākamuni or Kanakamuni is the second of the five buddhas in the present bhadrakalpa, and the fifth of the seven past buddhas. It literally means “golden ṛṣi” and is transliterated as 迦那伽牟尼 and 迦諾迦牟尼. See Digital Dictionary of Buddhism.

始告以六齋之禁，比及辰後非時之食，終夕不視，固可以矯激流俗，端嚴梵倫。或教以持佛名號，曰當由有念，以至無念，則仰首奮翼，若承若聽。其後或俾之念佛，則默然而不答，或謂之不念，即唱言阿彌陀佛，曆試如一，曾無爽異。


餘謂其以有念為緣生，以無念為真際。緣生不答，為緣起也；真際雖言，為本空也。每虛室戒曙，發和雅音，穆如笙竽，靜鼓天風，下上其音，念念相續，聞之者莫不洗然而嘉善矣。於戲！生有辰乎，緣有盡乎？


以今年七月，猝爾不懌，七日而甚。馴養者知其將盡，乃鳴磬告曰：「將西歸乎？為爾擊磬，爾其存念，每一擊磬，一稱彌陀佛。」洎十擊磬，而十念
成，斂羽委足，不震不仆，奄然而絕。

按釋典，十念成，往生西方。又云：「得慧者，殞有舍利。」知其說者，固不隔於殊類哉？遂命火以闍維之法焚之，餘燼之末，果有舍利十餘粒，炯爾燿目，瑩然在掌。識者驚視，聞者駭聽。咸曰：「苟可以誘迷利世，安往而非菩薩之化歟？」

[7] 按釋典，十念成，往生西方: According to the Fó shuō wúliàngshòu jīng 佛說無量壽經 (Skt. Sukhāvatiyāhaḥ sūtra) (juan 卷 2), among the three classes of aspirants to be reborn in Amitābha Buddha’s Western Pure Land, the lower level of aspirants 下輩 are those who single-mindedly concentrate on Amitābha up to ten times, and vow to be reborn in his Pure Land. (CBETA, T12, no. 360, p. 272, c4-10).

[8] 閍維: Shéwéi is a transliteration of the Sanskrit jhāpita, “cremation.”

時有高僧慧觀，常詣三學山巡禮聖跡，聞說此鳥，涕淚悲泣，請以舍利於靈山用陶甓建塔，旌其異也。余謂此禽，存而由道，沒有明徵。古之所以通聖賢階至化者，女媧蛇軀以嗣帝，中衍鳥身而建侯。紀乎策書，其誰曰語怪？而況此鳥有宏於道流，聖證昭昭，胡可沒巳。是用不愧，直書於辭。貞元十九年八月十四日記。
[9] 女媧蛇躯以嗣帝：Nǚwā 女媧 is a female deity credited with creating mankind and one of the Three Sovereigns 三黃 of ancient Chinese mythology, often depicted with human head and torso, but with a serpentine tail.

[10] 中衍鳥身而建侯：This story appears in the “Qin Annals” 秦本紀 chapter in the Shǐjì 史記 (12, p. 171): “Zhongyan had the body of a bird yet spoke like a human being. Emperor Taiwu heard of him, and divined to see if he could employ him as his charioteer. The response was auspicious so he employed him and gave him a wife. (中衍，鳥身人言。帝太戊聞而卜之使御，吉，遂致使御而妻之。)”

3. Chicken Tomb Inscription

禅雞塚碑

五因山人林如原記

豐山峭雄為泉北鎮。客有攜白雞來謁夢者，禪師宗鑒戒律精嚴，苦祈放生，客因施於巗師。受以三皈。後每聞諷經聲，即對佛伏聽。諷畢，乃出遊。客或投遺腥，輒棄去，如是者數年。崇禎庚午中秋，端伏佛前不動，就視則坐化矣。


昔遠公有聽經鵝，永寧院有坐化鵲。東林寺登於碑碣，陳後山著之《談叢》。謂其有佛性也，乃今以觀佛性更備。既瘗巗左。余表曰「禪雞塚」。嘗閲韋忠武《鸚鵡舍利塔記》，於今甚有合也，故仍勒其事於石。師嘗畜牝、牡二犬，亦不茹血葷，十年無風合孽育，並一時異事云。

庚午臘月白毫庵居士張瑞圖書。

徑即鳴叫騰躍入遠房內。爾後依前馴聽。但聞法集鍾聲不問旦夕。覆講論義皆入堂伏聽。
僧徒梵散出戶翔鳴。若值白黑布薩。雖聞鍾召終不入聽。時共異之。若遠途講解。依法
潛聽。中聞汎及餘語。便鳴翔而出。如斯又經六載。樂聽一時不虧。後忽哀叫庭院不肯入
堂。自爾二旬。遠便棄世。即。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2060, p. 491, b16-26).

(Taibei: Guǎngwén shūjú, 1969), p. 14a: “There was the magpie of Yōngníng Cloister that perched on the
pine tree at the front yard and did not leave for days. Upon inspection, it was seen to have died while in a
standing posture. The midsummer was extremely hot. More than a month passed, and still the body
had not decomposed. Raising its beak and flapping its wings, the bird looked as if it was soaring. (永寧
院有雀，棲於庭松，累日不去。取視之已立化矣。盛夏極暑，經涉月餘，形質不壞。軒啄
鼓翼，有騰翥之狀。)”

[4] 陳後山著之《談叢》: See Chén Shīdào’s 陳師道 (1053-1101) Hòushān cóngtán 後山叢談, juàn 卷 4
(Taibei: Guǎngwén shūjú, 1969), p. 1b: “There was the cat of Lu Prefecture that died while in a seated
posture; there was the ape of the gorge that died while in a seated posture; there was a snake of the
house of Lǐ Gōngzé that died while in a seated posture; there were parrot’s šarīra in the Tang dynasty.
(盧州有坐化貓，峽中有坐化胡孫，李公擇家有坐化蛇，唐有鸚鵡舍利。)”
4. Epitaph for a Tang Monk

大唐淨域寺故大德法藏禪師塔銘並序

京兆府前鄉貢進士田休光撰文

世之業生滅若輪環者，則雖塵沙作數，草木為籌，了無遺纖哉。籲！不可知者，其惟流浪乎。夫木性生火，水中有月。以凡筌聖，從道場而至道場；通因及果，非前際而於後際。行之於彼，得之於此。

禪師諱法藏，緣氏諸葛，蘇州吳縣人。昔群雄角力，三方鼎峙，蜀光有龍，吳恃其虎。瑾之後裕，蟬聯姑蘇。

[1] 蜀光有龍，吳恃其虎：The “Dragon of Shu” refers to Zhūgè Liáng 諸葛亮 (181-234), ruler of the state of Shu-Han during the Three Kingdoms period; the “Tiger of Wu” refers to his older brother Zhūgè Jǐn 諸葛瑾 (174-241), high official in the state of the Eastern Wu during the Three Kingdoms period. See the Shìshuō xīnyǔ 世說新語, 9.4: “Zhūgè Jǐn, his younger brother, [Zhuge] Liáng 諸葛亮, and his younger cousin, [Zhuge] Dan 諸葛誕 (d. 258), were all famous, with each serving a different kingdom. People then used to say, “Shu got the dragon, Wu got the tiger, and Wei got the dog.” (諸葛瑾弟亮及從弟誕，並有盛名，各在一國。於時以為「蜀得其龍，吳得其虎，魏得其狗」。)”

曾祖辯，吳郡太守蘇州刺史秘書監銀青光祿大夫上柱國開國男；大父穎，隨
閬州刺史銀青光祿大夫；父禮，皇唐少府監丞。吳會旗裳，東南旖旎，洗墨
而清夷落，衣錦而燭江鄉。山海禁錢，蓬萊秘府，屢遊清貫，曆拜寵章。


[10] 吳會旗裳，東南旖旎: This passage depicts the scene that the pennants of Wūhuì region (the
region of Wu state, i.e. Suzhou) flew in the southeastern barbarian lands.

[11] 旗裳: Both are pennants or banners. 裳 is interchangeable with cháng 常.

[12] 洗墨而清夷落: Non-Han peoples located mostly in the regions south of the Yangzi river were
known among the Han for their tattooed bodies. See, Carrie E. Reed, “Tattoo in Early China,” Journal of

[13] 山海: The profits derived from the mountains and seas (i.e. metals and salt). See the Yántiě lùn 鹽
鐵論, “Fùgǔ” 復古: “The profits of the mountains and the seas and the produce of the broad swamps
are the stored-up wealth of the world and ought to belong to the Aide in the Directorate. (山海之利，
廣澤之畜，天地之藏也，皆宜屬少府。)”
[14] 禁錢: The money provided to the emperor by the Aide in the Directorate (Shàofǔ 少府).

[15] 蓬萊: The imperial archive or library for the precious books, migé 秘閣 (literally secret pavilion).


[21] 伏膺: Fú 伏 is interchangeable with fú 服, meaning “to study with a master.”
至永徽中，頗以妙年經業優長，奉敕為濮王度，所謂天孫利益，禪門得人。禪師自少出家，即與眾生作大善知識。道行第一，入天殊勝，開普門之幽鑰，酌慈源之蜜波。由恐日月居諸，天地消息，每對天龍八部，晝夜六時，如救頭然，曾未蹔舍。

[22] 妙年: A tender age.

[23] 濮王: “Prince of Pú,” one of the titles of Lǐ Tái 李泰 (620-652), fourth son of Emperor Tàizōng 太宗 of the Tang dynasty. Lǐ Tái died in the third year of the Yonghui era (652), during the reign of his brother, Emperor Gàozōng 高宗. Jiù Táng shū 舊唐書 76 (Běijīng: Zhònghuá shūjù, 1975), p. 2656. The passage seems to imply that Fāzàng was ordained on the occasion of the death of the prince, perhaps in order to make merit on his behalf. I have found no other source for this interpretation of the passage.

[24] 天孫: The grandson of Heaven. The emperor is the son of Heaven 天子. Lǐ Tái was Emperor Tàizōng’s son.


[27] 如救頭然: “Rán 然” is interchangeable with “rán 燃.” [To act with the urgency of] one whose head is on fire” is a not uncommon phrase in Buddhist scriptures.

非乞之食不以食，以至於頭陀；非掃之衣不以衣，得之於蘭若。禪師自少於老，駝騾象馬，莫之聞乘也。以為銅金為象，非本也；裂素抄經，是末也。欲使賤末貴本，背偽歸真，求諸如來，取諸佛性。三十二相，八十種好，眾生對面而不識，奈何修假以望真？

[29] 頭陀: Transliteration of the Sanskrit dhūta, ascetic practice. Note that in the note above [28] begging is also singled out as a practice common among Sānjiè followers.


且夫萬行之宗，眾相之本，生善之地，修善之境，禪師了了見之矣。夫鍾鼓在庭，聲出於外。如意元年，大聖天后聞禪師戒行精最，奉制請於東都大福先寺檢校無盡藏。長安年，又奉制請為薦福寺大德。長安年，又奉制請為薦福寺大德。

[32] 東都大福先寺: This monastery was founded in Luoyang in 675 by Empress Wu (624-705). Reconstruction of the monastery into a great dynastic monastery began in 693 and was completed in 705. See Antonino Forte, “On the Origins of the Great Fuxian Monastery 大福先寺 in Luoyang,” Studies


[34] 谷王: The King of the Valleys. See the Dàodéjīng 道德经 66: “The reason why the River and the Sea are able to be king of the hundred valleys is that they excel in taking the lower position. (江海所以能為百谷王者，以其善下之。)” Tao Te Ching, trans. by D.C. Lau (London: Penguin, 1963), p. 73.

[35] 若周公之吐哺，天下歸心: This refers to a poem by Cáo Cāo 曹操 (155-220), “Duàngē xíng 短歌行”: “The Duke of Zhou spit out his food, and the whole world turned to him. (周公吐哺，天下歸心。)” The Duke of Zhou was so dedicated to the people that, when someone came to him while he was eating, he would spit out his food and rush to meet them instead of finishing his meal.
火宅. “The burning house.” From the “Chapter of Parables” (譬喩品) of the Lotus Scripture.

繩床: A corded chair.

粵以開元二年十二月十九日，捨生於寺，報齡七十有八。門人若喪考妣，乃相謂曰：「和上云亡，吾徒安放？」乃抆血相視，仰天椎心。即以其年十二月（闕一字）日，施身於終南山楩梓谷屍陁林。由是積以香薪，然諸花氎。收其舍利，建窣睹波於禪師塔右。

抆血: To wipe tears of blood. It expresses extreme grief.

屍陁林: Shītuólín is a transliteration of the Sanskrit sītavana, meaning burial ground.

花氎: This seems to be a reference to cotton cloth. Cotton, imported from India, only became common in China from the Tang era. See Morohashi Tetsuji chief ed., Dai Kan-Wa Jiten 大漢和辭典 (Tōkyō: Taishūkan Shoten, 1984-1989), vol. 6, p. 835.

窣睹波: A transliteration of the Sanskrit stūpa.

自佛般入涅槃，於今千五百年矣。聖人不見，正法陵夷。即有善華月法師、樂見離車菩薩，潛茲絕紐，並演三階，其教未行，鹹遭弒戮。有隨信行禪師與在世造舟為梁，大開普敬認惡之宗，將藥破病之說，撰成數十餘卷，名曰《三階集錄》。禪師靡不探賾索隱，鉤深致遠，守而勿失，作禮奉行。是故弟子將恐頹其風聲，乃掇諸景行，記之於石。
善華月法師: The story of the Dharma Master Good Flower Moon 善華月法師 appears in the *Yuèdēng sānmèi jìng* 月燈三昧經 (Skt. *Samādhīrāja sūtra*), (CBETA, T 15, no. 639), one of a group of texts explaining the Decline of the Dharma, a concept of central importance to the Three Stage Teachings (See Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion*, p. 62). According to this text, in the distant past, in a time of the decline of the Dharma, an evil ruler, out of jealousy for the virtuous monk Good Flower Moon, has him assassinated.

樂見離車菩薩: Licchavi, also called Sarvasattva-priyadarśana 一切世間樂見離車童子 (Youth Who Takes Delight in All the Views of the World) appears in the *Dà fāgǔ jìng* 大法鼓經 (Skt. *Mahābherihāraka-parivarta sūtra*) (CBETA, T 9, no. 270). In this scripture, long ago a buddha prophesied that a boy will one day become a monk, live one hundred years and be reborn in a paradise, all after the nirvana of Śākyamuni, but eighty years before the end of the period of the true Dharma (CBETA, T 9, no. 270, p. 294b-c.) I remain puzzled by this reference since, unlike Good Flower Moon, Licchavi is not murdered.

探賾索隱，鉤深致遠: This passage appears in the *Yìjīng* 易經, “Xìcí A” 繫辭上: “Of things that delve into mysteries and search out what is hidden, that hook things up from the depths and extend a reach to the distances in order to determine the good fortune and bad in the world and to bring about the untiring efforts of all those in the world, none are greater than yarrow stalks and tortoise shells. (探蹟索隱，鉤深致遠，以定天下之吉凶，成天下之亹亹者，莫大乎蓍龜。)” (Lynn, *I Ching*, p. 66).

銘曰：
有若禪人凝棱，心不易兮。

身世澒洞，探討真蹟兮。
寂行冲融，渙其冰釋兮。

軒裳蟬聯，清暉相射兮。

奕裔不染，乾乾衣錫兮。

[45] 渲其冰釋: To melt away [misgivings, delusions, and difference of opinions etc.]. See the Dàodéjīng 道德經 15: “Of old he who was well versed in the way/ Was minutely subtle, mysteriously comprehending,/ And too profound to be known./ It is because he could not be known/ That he can only be given a makeshift description:/ Tentative, as if fording a river in winter,/ Hesitant, as if in fear of his neighbors;/ Formal like a guest; Falling apart like thawing ice. (古之善為士者，微妙玄通，深不可識。夫唯不可識，故強為之容，與兮若冬涉川，猶兮若畏四鄰，儼兮其若客，渙兮若冰之將釋。)” (Lau, Tao te ching, p. 19).

蕭灑喧嘩，地自虛僻兮。

元關洞開，亡珠可索兮。

吾將斯人，免夫過剿兮。

魂兮何之？聲流道格。

若使天地長久而可知，即相與撿實刊之於石兮。

[46] 元關洞開: A similar passage appears in the Suíshū 隋書, juàn 卷 14, "Yīnyuè zhì" 音樂志 (Treatise on Music): “The nine gates burst open and the hundred spirits gather around in rows. (九關洞開，百靈環列。)”
This is probably an allusion to the eighth chapter of the *Lotus Scripture* in which a rich man secretly sews a jewel into a friend’s garment. The friend falls on hard times and one day meets his rich acquaintance who tells him that he had a precious gem with him all along. The jewel is a metaphor for the Buddha-nature.
5. The Dampa Stele

膽巴碑

大元敕賜龍興寺大覺普慈廣照無上帝師碑

大元勑賜龍興寺大覺普慈廣照無上帝師之碑

集賢學士資德大夫臣趙孟頫奉勑撰並書篆

[1] 帝師: Imperial Preceptor (literally, “teacher to the emperor”). This is an official monastic title under the Yuan for (Tibetan) monks who served as Buddhist chaplains at court.

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。』勑臣孟頫為文並書，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。」復勑臣孟頫為文並書。臣孟頫預議：『賜謚「大覺」，以言乎師之體；「普慈」，以言乎師之用；「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，事聖師綽理哲哇為弟子，受名膽巴。梵言膽巴，華言微妙。先受秘密戒法，繼遊西天竺國，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。


[4] 空實: Emptiness (Skt. śūnyatā) and thusness (Skt. tathatā).

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。

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。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，下至諸王將相貴人，委重寶為施，身執弟子禮，不可勝紀。

龍興寺建於隋世，寺有金鋼大悲菩薩像。五代時契丹入鎮州，縱火焚寺，像毀於火，周人取其銅以鑄錢。宋太祖伐河東，像已毀，為之嘆息。僧可傳言，寺有復興之讖。於是為降詔復造，其像高七十三尺，建大閣三重以覆之，旁翼之以兩樓。壯麗奇偉，世未有也。繇是，龍興遂為河朔名寺。方營閣，有
美木自五臺山頰龍河流出，計其長短、小大、多寡之數，與閣材盡合，詔取以賜。僧惠演為之記。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。


[6] 終是: For this reason; therefore.

[7] 河朔: The Héshuò region, i.e. the North China Plain or the Yellow River Plain.

[8] 計其長短、小大、多寡之數，與閣材盡合: This story about the famous Great Compassion Pavillion (dàbēigé 大悲閣) seems to draw from a Song inscription titled “Zhēndìng fǔ Lóngxīng sì chóngxiū Dàbēigé jì” 真定府龍興寺重修大悲閣記 written by Gé Fán 葛蘩, see Changzhou zhēnshí zhì 常州貞石志, vol. 12.

[9] 僧惠演為之記: Here the text refers to Huìyǎn’s “Zhēndìng fǔ Lóngxīng sì zhù jǐntōngxiàng púsà bīng gài dàbēigé xù” 真定府龍興寺鑄金銅像菩薩並蓋大悲寳閣序, see Gé Fán 葛蘩, Chángzhōu zhēnshí zhì 常州貞石志, vol. 12. Huìyǎn’s text is also mentioned by Gé Fán’s text.

元貞元年正月，師忽謂眾僧曰：『將有聖人興起山門。』即為梵書奏徴仁裕聖皇太后，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。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：

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，破滅無踪跡。
法力所護持，國土保安静。
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。
6. Votive Inscriptions on the Southern Dynasties Stone Buddhist Images Discovered on Xiān Road in Chéngdū

H1:1

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弥勒成佛石像一軀。願現在眷屬，七世父母，龍華三會，希登初首。一切眾生，普同斯願。

[1] 龍華三會: Three assemblies at the dragon-flower tree. According to the Fóshuò Mílè xiàshēng chéngfó jīng 佛說彌勒下生成佛經 (CBETA, T 14, no. 455) and the Fóshuò Mílè dà chéngfó jīng 佛說彌勒大成佛經 (CBETA, T 14, no. 456), Maitreya will accomplish Buddhahood beneath a dragon-flower tree, after which he will hold three assemblies.

H1:3

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，願七祖先靈一切眷屬，皆得離苦，現在安隱。三界六道，普同斯誓。

H1:4

太清五年九月廿日，佛弟子柱僧逸，為亡児李佛施，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 因緣及六道含令，普同斯誓。
谨...

[1] 佛弟子柱僧逸，為亡兒李佛施: I tentatively identify that Zhù Sēngyí's gender is female based on the fact that the person's son, Li Fóshì, does not have the same family name.

H1:5

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。併藉兹功德，願過去者早登瑤土，奉睹諸佛。現在夫妻男女一切眷属，無諸鄣㝵，願三寶應諸夫自身...

H1:7

天監三年甲申三月三日，比丘釋法海，奉為亡母亡姊，造無量壽石像。願亡者乘此福，去離危苦，上昇天堂，與諸賢聖。而為眷属，廣及一切眾生，等成無上正覺。

[1] 比丘釋法海: Could this be the same person mentioned in H1:1? At the time when the earlier Shi Fāhāi made the image (the year 490), his mother was still alive (比丘釋法海与母). Could it be that the same Fāhāi made another image when his mother died in 504?
7. Inscription for the Reconstruction of the Guǎngfú Chán Monastery of the Wise

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。

[1] 智者。 "The Worthy." In Tiántái texts, this refers to Zhiyì 智顗 (538-597), but here it refers to a less famous monk, Huìyuē 慧約 (sometimes given as Lóuyē 樓約 or 廬約) who is said to have been granted the name 智者 posthumously by Emperor Wu of the Liang. See Shìmén zhèngtǒng 釋門正統 4 (CBETA, X 75, no. 1513, p. 310a6).


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，故寖壞至於此。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，擯相襜翼；將吏武士，執捫孰何。然後為稱。


[6] 賓客進趨，擯相襜翼: “Qū” 趨進 and “chānyì” 襜翼 are allusions for the proper way to greet a guest from *Lúnyǔ* 論語. The passage appears in the *Analects* 10.3: “When he was summoned by his lord to act as usher... his robes followed his movements without being disarranged. He went forward with quickened steps, as though he was gliding on wings... (君召使捫... 衣前後，襜如也。趨進，翼如也...)” (Lau, *The Analects*, p. 101).

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。梁其上達于大路，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。而木所從來久，以是未決。

[8] 責 *zī*: To slander; to detest; to criticise.
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。繚為垣墻，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。

[9]庖湢帑庾之所: páo (kitchens), bì (bathrooms), tâng (treasuries), and yǔ (granaries).


[11] 耄 mào: Of advanced age, between the ages of seventy and ninety. Lù Yóu was seventy-nine years old at the time.
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。

[12] 食邑: The Song appanage/land grants (shíyì 食邑) system has fourteen levels in total and is measured by number of households (hù 戶), ranging from 200 to 10,000 households. By the Song times, the appanage rank was a nominal nobility title. See Gong Yànmíng, Sòngdài guǎnzhì cídiǎn 宋代官制辭典 (Bēijīng: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1997), pp. 604-5.

[13] 實食封: This refers to an additional stipend paid to officials with an appanage. It is also measured by number of households. See Gong, Sòngdài guǎnzhì cídiǎn, p. 605.