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BRIDGING THE OTHER WORLD: PURE LAND BUDDHISM AND LITERATI CULTURE IN SONG DYNASTY CHINA (960–1276)

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Abstract

The Song Dynasty (960-1276) witnessed significant transitions in Pure Land Buddhism, with the rising literati class playing a crucial role in reshaping this religious tradition. This dissertation contextualizes these changes within the Buddhist resurgence following the Huichang Persecution (841-845) and the political turmoil of the tenth century. By examining the transformation of Pure Land belief and its interaction with literati culture from four perspectives—social organization, cultural paradigm, print technology, and anthologization practice—this project sheds light on the complex dynamics that shaped the development of Pure Land Buddhism during this period.

The dissertation investigates the popularization of Pure Land teachings through the lens of community organization, focusing on the West Lake Lotus Society established by the monk Shengchang in the late tenth century. It also explores how Song literati constructed and adapted the myth of Huiyuan and his "White Lotus Society" to make Pure Land teachings culturally appealing and socially acceptable among their social stratum. The study further analyzes the significant role of lay Buddhists, particularly Wang Gu and Wang Rixiu, in composing and circulating proselytizing texts that simplified and restructured Pure Land doctrines for a broader audience. Finally, it examines the first anthology of Pure Land texts, the *Lebang wenlei* (*Categories of Writings on the Blissful Land* 樂邦文類), compiled by the Tiantai monk Zongxiao 宗曉 (1151-1214) in 1199 CE, highlighting his pioneering efforts to establish Pure Land Buddhism as a distinct and legitimate tradition, with literary footprint deserving of a comprehensive anthology.

Employing a combination of social network analysis, textual analysis, and literary-historical analysis, this dissertation offers new insights into the popularization of Buddhism, religious shifts within the Tang-Song transition framework, and religious-literary writings of Song literati. By analyzing the reciprocal influence between literati culture and the Pure Land tradition, this dissertation seeks to complicate current academic narratives and offer a more complex and multifaceted understanding of the interaction between religion and literati culture.

Acknowledgments

At the onset of this dissertation project, the COVID-19 pandemic unexpectedly disrupted the world. Like countless others, I was not spared from its far-reaching impacts. Navigating the challenges of isolation, illness, and emotional turmoil, the completion of this work was an arduous journey. However, through perseverance and the support of many, I am delighted to have brought this project to fruition.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisors, Professor Anna Shields and Professor Buzzy Teizer. They are fantastic scholars who provided invaluable insights into my research and offered comprehensive guidance in all areas of academic training, including essay writing, conference presentations, and job material preparation. Most importantly, they offered unwavering support during times of hardship and provided constant encouragement at every stage of my doctoral study. I am truly fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with and learn from such outstanding mentors.

During my doctoral program, I had the chance to present my ongoing research at several academic conferences: the Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, March 14–17, 2024; the Third Middle Period China Humanities Conference (220–1600) at Yale University in New Haven, June 22–25, 2023; and the American Oriental Society: Western Branch at the University of Arizona in Tucson, November 3–5, 2022. On these occasions, I received valuable feedback from scholars from different institutions, such as Professor Charles Hartman, Professor Deng Xiaonan, Professor Martin Kern, Professor Jacqueline Stone, Professor Thomas Mazanec, Professor Albert Welter, and Professor Mark

Halperin. I also presented my work at the Glorisun International Buddhist Forum in the summer of 2023, where I received feedback from Professor Robert Sharf and Professor Barend Ter Haar.

During my field trip to Hangzhou, Ningbo, and Mount Tiantai in the summer of 2022, Professor Emeritus Huang Gongyuan welcomed me warmly and provided valuable information on Buddhist relics and locations from the Song period to the present day. I would like to extend my warmest thanks to him.

I also have the honor of being selected as a graduate fellow at the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies during 2022-2023, and as a research fellow at The Center for Culture, Society and Religion at Princeton University during 2023-2024. At their weekly meetings, I had the incredible opportunity to share my ongoing research with fellow doctoral students from different departments. The weekly workshop meetings provided a supportive environment to exchange ideas, receive constructive feedback from colleagues, and engage in inspiring discussions that broadened the scope of my research from various perspectives. With the support of these two funding sources, I made significant progress on my dissertation writing and completed all the chapters towards graduation. Here, I would like to thank the program directors, Dr. David Jarvis at PIIRS and Dr. Jenny Wiley Legath at CCSR, for their guidance in the weekly meetings.

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Introduction

> I have long wished to transcribe the piece "Eastern Sea God Ruo" by Liu Zihou and to engrave it and place it in the Hall of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life at the Jingzhu Monastery. On the ninth day of the second month in 1091, together with Cao Fu of Hailing, Liu Jisun of Kaifeng, and Hou Lin of Yongjia at the meeting hall, I finally wrote it down to leave it to the monk Congben to be engraved. Account by Su Shi of Meishan.[1]
>
> 軾久欲書柳子厚所作《東海若》一篇，刻之而置之淨住院無量壽佛堂中。元祐六年二月九日，與海陵曹輔、開封劉季孫、永嘉侯臨會堂下，遂書以遺僧從本使刻之。眉山蘇軾記。

The great literary giant of the Song Dynasty, Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), when he served as the Prefect of Hangzhou in 1091, completed the transcription of "Eastern Sea God Ruo" written by the Tang literati Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819). "Eastern Sea God Ruo" employs the parable of the Sea God and two gourds filled with dirt as an analogy for two types of practitioners. Both seek to return to their Buddha nature; however, their approaches differ. One practitioner claims to be the Buddha himself and views all practices as emptiness, while the other acknowledges his inability to be liberated from afflictions and thus seeks the Buddha's assistance. The first approach represents practitioners who depreciate Pure Land practices, while

[1] *Quan Song Wen* 全宋文, ed. Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊 and Liu Lin 劉琳 (hereafter *QSW*; Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2006), 89:1940.391. Also in *T.* no. 1969A, 47: 176c18-177a8.

the latter is an example of efficacious Pure Land practice, which allows the practitioner to attain ultimate enlightenment.[2]

Su Shi had his calligraphy engraved and placed in the Hall of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life at the Jingzhu Monastery. The Buddha of Immeasurable Life, also known as Amitābha Buddha, is the central Buddha of worship in the teachings of Pure Land Buddhism. Pure Land devotion occupies a significant place in the development of Chinese Buddhism, representing a vibrant Buddhist tradition that attracted a great number of followers. Although the simplicity of the doctrines and practices of Pure Land naturally appealed to laity with lower levels of literacy, educated people were also drawn to it. In this case, the erudite literati Su Shi resorted to the literary tradition as a means to engage with religious teaching. By engraving it in stone and placing it in the Hall of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life, he also signified his intention to perpetuate the text and reach a broader religious audience.

The location of the Jingzhu Monastery is also significant. It is situated in Hangzhou, which was the capital of the Wuyue region during the Five Dynasties period. In the eleventh century, Hangzhou was one of the most economically dominant cities, second only to the capital Kaifeng, for its rapid population growth, strategic location in the commercially thriving Lower Yangtze region, and high commercial tax revenues.[3] Since the tenth century, Hangzhou also became a center of Buddhism.[4] This also applies to the Pure Land teachings: the Jiangnan region

---

[2] For a detailed textual analysis of "Eastern Sea God Ruo", see Shixian 實賢 (1686-1734), *Donghairuo jie* 東海若解, *X*. no. 1178, 62.

[3] For the economic status of Hangzhou in the tenth century and the Song Dynasty, see William Guanglin Liu, "The Making of a Fiscal State in Song China, 960–1279," *The Economic History Review* 68, no. 1 (2015): 75–78.

[4] For Buddhism of Hangzhou, see Albert Welter, *A Tale of Two Stūpas: Diverging Paths in the Revival of Buddhism in Hangzhou China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022). The project "Revamping the BGIS Database and Website with a Focus on Hangzhou Buddhism" of the University of Arizona has rich information on the topic, refer to https://rrs.arizona.edu/.

became the central place for the dissemination of these teachings from the tenth century to the present.

The stele inscription by Su Shi left a legacy. It was later discovered by a Tiantai monk, Zongxiao 宗曉 (1151-1214), who included this text in his anthology of Pure Land texts, *Categories of Writings on the Blissful Land* (*Lebang wenlei* 樂邦文類), in 1199, more than a century after Su's inscription. In the note, he recounts how he came across this text.

> The piece "Eastern Sea God Ruo" on the right is truly the crown jewel in *Lebang wenlei*. In our dynasty, Lü Zuqian of Donglai also included it in his collection *Lize Wencui*. I humbly fear that Lü only admires the literature of the Western Pure Land, but may not necessarily follow the practices of Western Pure Land, and thus may not return to the Western Pure Land. Alas! In the past, people considered the Pure Land to be delusive and false, so Liu Zongyuan wrote this text to criticize their mistakes. How great! He is one who truly understands the Buddha's teachings. In recent times, there are still many who obstruct this path. How can they not be ashamed before Liu?
>
> I recently passed by the Zhe River and found the stele inscription and postscript by Su Dongpo at Li Ziji's house. I then realized that the eminent predecessors also appreciated this work. Now, I publish it together with the postscript by Juzhou, hoping to arouse deep faith in people.[5]
>
> 右東海若一篇，誠為樂邦文類之冠。本朝東萊呂祖謙集《麗澤文粹》，亦曾編入。竊恐呂公徒愛西方之文，未必履行西方之行，而作西方之

[5] *T.* no. 1969A, 47: 176c29-177a8.

歸也。嗚呼！昔人以淨土為誕妄，柳公故作斯文以譏其失。大哉！達佛旨者也。近世沮茲道者猶多，豈不愧於柳乎？

愚頃過霅上，於李子濟家，得東坡碑刻及跋文，乃知前輩高明亦有賞音者。今併橘洲之跋以刊之，庶發人之深信也。

From Zongxiao's note, we can infer that Su Shi's stele inscription circulated in the Jiangnan region during the twelfth century, likely due to Su Shi's rising reputation and circulation in the Southern Song. However, Zongxiao, as a monk who advocated Pure Land teachings, found Su Shi's transcription of Liu Zongyuan's text to be highly relevant in his collection of Pure Land texts. Liu's text is prominent enough to be included in the neo-Confucianist Lü Zuqian's collection of literary writings, but Zongxiao criticizes him for only admiring the literary merit of Liu's text without subscribing to the efficacy of the Pure Land practice, which is the main argument in Liu's text. Zongxiao views Liu's text from a functional perspective, arguing that it effectively counters those who criticize Pure Land teachings as delusive. He finally asserts that the function of Liu's text should be to "arouse deep faith in people".

From this case, we can observe the historical context of the Song Dynasty in which Pure Land teachings were disseminated. The involvement of literati during this period is particularly noteworthy. The tradition of literary writing also bears significant influence on the propagation of Pure Land teachings, which were mainly circulated in the Jiangnan region. Furthermore, there is evidence of dynamic interaction between monastics and lay Buddhists, suggesting the interconnectedness of religious and secular spheres in the development and spread of Pure Land teachings during the Song Dynasty.

What is the Pure Land Tradition?

The existence of Buddha's Pure Lands and the ultimate religious goal to seek rebirth in the Pure Land after one's demise has been an integral part of Mahāyāna Buddhism from its inception.[6] As a component of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Pure Land teachings were introduced to China in the first century. While early Indian Buddhists worshipped multiple Pure Lands, two major Pure Lands gained prominence after Buddhism traveled to China.[7] The earlier Pure Land devotees sought rebirth in Maitreya Bodhisattva's Pure Land on the Tuṣita Heaven, but by the Song Dynasty, the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss (Skt. *sukhāvatī*) presided by Amitābha Buddha became predominant in the Pure Land teachings in China. This dissertation will define Pure Land teachings as the Pure Land teachings of the Western Pure Land.

Whether the Pure Land constitutes a school or sect is under debate. Charles Jones proposes that Chinese Pure Land is best understood not as a school or institution, but as a distinct "tradition of practice" within Chinese Buddhism centered on this populist soteriology of rebirth in the Pure Land for all.[8] He has shown that Chinese Buddhists did identify something called the "Pure Land dharma-gate" (*jingtu famen* 淨土法門), referring to a tradition of practice.

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[6] See Gregory Schopen, "Sukhāvatī As A Generalized Religious Goal In Sanskrit Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 19, no. 3/4 (1977): 177–210.

[7] Yinshun traces the development of Pure Land ideas in early Indian Mahayana sources. He argues that Pure Land was the construction of ideal lands contrasted by the secular realm. These early imagined lands included Uttara-kuru, Akṣobhya-buddha's Eastern Pure Land Abhirati (The Joyous), and Maitreya Bodhisattva's Pure Land on the Tuṣita Heaven. However, the faith in Amitabha Buddha gained great popularity in subsequent eras. See Yinshun 印順, *Chuqi dacheng fojiao zhi qiyuan yu kaizhan* 初期大乘佛教之起源與開展 (Beiing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 123–27.

[8] Charles B. Jones, *Chinese Pure Land Buddhism: Understanding a Tradition of Practice* (Honolulu: University Of Hawaii Press, 2019), 3-4.

From a doctrinal perspective, Pure Land teachings are characterized by the pursuit of rebirth in the Western Pure Land through specific practices. These include the vocal recitation of Amitābha Buddha's name, deep contemplation of Amitābha Buddha and the Western Pure Land, or achieving *buddhânusmṛti-samādhi* (*nianfo sanmei* 念佛三昧), which means mindfulness of the Buddha.[9] The main distinction of Pure Land teachings from other Buddhist doctrines lies in their strong emphasis on faith and devotion, which leads to the ultimate goal of rebirth. Though various practice methods can lead to the final rebirth, vocal recitation of Amitābha Buddha's name is the most simple and accessible one. Given the simplicity of the practice method, a distinct feature of Pure Land teachings is universal salvation, as argued by Jones.[10] This idea, which was promoted by the Pure Land patriarch Shandao 善導 (613-681), holds that even ordinary, unenlightened beings can attain rebirth in the Pure Land through sincere devotion and practice, rather than relying solely on their own spiritual cultivation and merit.[11]

Current scholarship often defines the Pure Land teachings primarily through the lens of doctrine or practice. For example, Mochizuki defines Pure Land teachings as a major Buddhist sect that believes in the existence of various Buddhas and their Pure Lands. Followers of this sect seek to receive the protection and guidance of Buddhas in their current lives and aspire to be reborn in their Pure Lands after death.[12] Chen Yangjiong defines the Pure Land school as the Buddhist sect that promotes faith in Amitabha Buddha and the recitation of his name, with the

[9] Mochizuki Shinkō 望月信亨, *Chūgoku Jōdo kyōrishi* 中國浄土教理史 (Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 1964), 1-10, and Chen Yangjiong 陳扬炯, *Zhongguo Jingtuzong tongshi* 中國淨土宗通史 (Nanjing Shi: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2000), 67-72.
[10] Jones, *Chinese Pure Land Buddhism*, 29-32.
[11] See Julian F. Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvatī: Shan-Tao's Commentary on the Kuan Wu-Liang Shou-Fo Ching* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).
[12] Mochizuki, *Chūgoku Jōdo kyōrishi*, 1.

aim of being reborn in his Pure Land after death.[13] However, sources from the Song Dynasty suggest that the Pure Land tradition could be understood more broadly, encompassing various practices, agents, and expressions that extend beyond what is currently defined in scholarship. The most compelling case is the framing of Huiyuan and the White Lotus Society, which gained prominence in the literary writings and artworks of the Song Dynasty. The legends surrounding Huiyuan, his community known as the "Eighteen Worthies of Donglin," (東林十八高賢), and related figures such as Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365-427), Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385-433), and the Daoist Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406-477), originated in religious contexts but later became emblematic of reclusion and the idealized literati lifestyle. Interestingly, when Zongxiao compiled Pure Land texts in *Lebang wenlei*, he included all the literary works that eulogize Huiyuan and his community members, regardless of whether the content itself is related to "rebirth" or any specific religious practices. Therefore, all these literary works associated with Huiyuan and the White Lotus Society can be conceptualized as part of a broad "Pure Land tradition" that holds significance in the intersection of religious and literary spheres.

The Song Dynasty as a Transformative Period for the Pure Land Teachings

The term "Pure Land school" is often conveniently used to describe a tradition that appears unchanged and continuous from the fourth century to the present.[14] However, I observe that Pure Land teachings experienced a gap after the Huichang Persecution of Buddhism (841–

[13] See Chen, *Zhongguo Jingtuzong tongshi*, 1.
[14] This is a common conceptualization in writing the history of "Pure Land school", see Chen, *Zhongguo Jingtuzong tongshi*, 1.

845) and the political turmoil of the tenth century. Consequently, the tenth century and the Song Dynasty stand out as a transformative period for Pure Land teachings.

The first apparent shift in Pure Land doctrines during the Song Dynasty is their increasing diffusion with other Buddhist traditions, especially Tiantai teachings. Tiantai monks became the major advocates of Pure Land teachings, inevitably bringing their training and doctrinal inclinations into the interpretation of Pure Land doctrines, as in the examples of Zhili 知禮 (960-1028) and Zunshi 遵式 (964-1032).[15] This differentiates them from the teachings of Tang Pure Land advocates like Daochuo 道綽 (562-645), Shandao 善導 (613-681), and Shaokang 少康 (736-805). Moreover, monks from other lineages, such as Yuanzhao 元照 (1048-1106) from the Vinaya lineage and Zongze 宗賾 (fl. 11th c) from the Chan, also became important Pure Land advocates.[16]

The Song Dynasty was also a formative period for Pure Land teaching because it was during this time that the tradition experienced mass popularization. Numerous Pure Land communities emerged and flourished during the Song, serving as the major social form to engage Buddhist adherents of different identities and propagate Pure Land devotion to all levels of society. On one hand, there were more elite-oriented Pure Land communities; on the other, there

[15] For the Tiantai Pure Land, see Kōen Yamaguchi, Tendai Jōdokyō shi, 天台浄土教史. (Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 1967), Andō Toshio 安藤俊雄, Tendaigaku ronshū: shikan to jōdo, 天台学論集 : 止観と浄土 (Kyōto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1975), Fukushima Mitsuya 福島光哉, "Sōdai Tendai Jōdo Kyō no Kenkyū 宋代天台浄土教の研究" (PhD diss., Ōtani University, 1994), Daniel Getz, “T’ien-t’ai Pure Land Societies and the Creation of the Pure Land Patriarchate,” in *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 477–523, and Daniel Getz, “Siming Zhili and Tiantai Pure Land in the Song Dynasty” (New Haven, Yale University, 1994).

[16] For research on Yuanzhao’s Pure Land advocation, see Satō Seijun 佐藤成順, *Sōdai Bukkyō no kenkyū: Genshō no Jōdokyō* 宋代仏教の研究: 元照の浄土教 (Tōkyō: Sankibō Busshorin, 2001).For Zongze’ Pure Land devotion, see Feng Guodong 馮國棟, Li Hui 李輝, "Cijue Zongze Shengping zhushu kao," 慈覺宗賾生平著述考 *Zhonghua Foxue Yanjiu* 8 (2004): 235-248.

were communities inclined to engage the common masses.[17] We also witness less-known monks and local practitioners involved in the establishment of Pure Land communities.[18]

A significant trait of Song society is that the literati class rose to prominence, marking a significant shift from the hereditary aristocracy of earlier periods to a meritocratic system based on educational achievement and examination success.[19] Owing to the expanding scale of the civil examination since Emperor Taizong's reign (976-997), the number of *jinshi* candidates surged, which led to the formation of the social stratum of literati. This stratum was characterized by high education, erudition in Confucian classics, government service, and a shared culture that valued learning, literary pursuits, and engagement in painting and calligraphy, either as a painter or as a connoisseur and art collector.[20] The literati played a dominant role in shaping the political, social, and cultural life of the Song Dynasty.

The rising literati class actively engaged with religion, most prominently forming close interactions with Chan teachings.[21] The development of Chan teachings and the literati's interaction with them produced a vast corpus of literature that flourished during the Song Dynasty. This literature encompasses a wide range of genres, including sayings records (*yulu* 語

[17] This difference is demonstrated nicely in Daniel Getz, "T'ien-t'ai Pure Land Societies and the Creation of the Pure Land Patriarchate," in *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 477–523.
[18] We can see many examples from Zongxiao's *Lebang wenlei*.
[19] For an overview of the Song literati culture, see Robert Hymes, "Sung Society and Social Change", in *The Cambridge History of China*, *vol. 5, Part Two*, 621–60.
[20] See John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations*, Cambridge Studies in Chinese History, Literature and, Institutions (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China*, Harvard East Asian Monographs ; 271 (Cambridge, Mass: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2006), Cong Zhang, *Transformative Journeys: Travel and Culture in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 1-18.
[21] See Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 3-24. For a spatial analysis of Chan teachings, see Jason Protass, "Toward a Spatial History of Chan: Lineages, Networks, and the Lamp Records," *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* 3, no. 2 (November 3, 2016): 164–88.

錄), flame-of-the-lamp records (*denglu* 燈錄), poetry (both religious verse and classical *shi* poetry), "standards-with-comments" collections ("gong'an" 公案), compendia, letters, pretend dialogues, and glossaries.[22] Although the literati's interaction with Chan teachings was most prominent, Song literati also engaged with other Buddhist traditions, such as Tiantai and Pure Land, and composed writings on these as well. The literati class played an important role in the religious landscape of the Song Dynasty, not only through their engagement with various Buddhist traditions but also by shaping the literary production of the time.

Research Questions

This dissertation aims to contextualize the Pure Land teachings during the transitional period of the Song Dynasty and investigate the transformation of these teachings, especially focusing on the rising literati class's contributions to reshaping this religious tradition. The research will analyze participating agents, various propagation strategies, and the geographical spread of the Pure Land tradition. By examining the reciprocal influence between literati culture and the Pure Land tradition in the Song Dynasty, this study seeks to complicate current literary and religious scholarship and reveal the multi-faceted aspects of religious and literati life during this period. The dissertation will address the following research questions: How did the Pure Land teachings transform during the Song Dynasty, and what factors contributed to these changes? In what ways did the rising literati class contribute to the reshaping of the Pure Land

[22] Jeffrey L. Broughton, "Chan Literature," Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion, December 19, 2017, accessed May 11, 2024, https://oxfordre-com.ezproxy.princeton.edu/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-214. Robert Sharf, "How to Think with Chan Gong'an," in *Thinking with Cases: Specialist Knowledge in Chinese Cultural History*, edited by Charlotte Furth, Judith T. Zeitlin and Ping-chen Hsiung (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 205–43.

tradition? Who were the key participating agents in the transformation and propagation of the Pure Land teachings during this period? What strategies were employed to propagate the Pure Land teachings, and how did these strategies develop? How did the geographical spread of the Pure Land tradition occur, and what factors influenced this spread?

By addressing these questions, this dissertation aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the interplay between religion and literati culture in the Song Dynasty. It will shed light on the complex dynamics that influenced the development of the Pure Land tradition, which exhibited distinct variations from those of previous dynasties.

Literature Review and Significance of Study

This dissertation will situate itself in the discursive field of the relationship between religious and literary practices in medieval China but also speaks with Buddist studies of the Song Dynasty. Scholars have been working in this field from different angles.

In his book "Out of the Cloister: Literati Perspectives on Buddhism in Sung China, 96o-I279", Mark Halperin examines how educated Chinese elites (literati) wrote about and represented Buddhism, especially Buddhist temples, during the Song dynasty.[23] Through a close analysis of temple inscriptions written by literati, Halperin argues that literati attitudes toward Buddhism underwent a major shift from the preceding Tang dynasty. Whereas in the Tang, literati largely wrote about temples in devotional terms that privileged a Buddhist perspective, Song writers began in the 11th century to view temples through a wider variety of lenses: doctrinal, political, social, and personal. He attributes this diversification of literati views to

[23] Mark Halperin, *Out of the Cloister: Literati Perspectives on Buddhism in Sung China, 960-1279* (Cambridge, Mass: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2006).

changes in both Buddhism and literati culture, especially the rise of Chan, closer state control over monasteries, and the revitalization of Confucian learning. In all, Halperin illustrates the centrality of Buddhism in the framework of the Tang-Song transition. He argues this shift reflects not a decline in literati engagement with Buddhism but an even deeper integration of Buddhism into the literati culture and an assertion of scholar-officials interpretive authority over the religion.

Similarly, Zhang Peifeng also works on the subject of Song literati and Buddhism. In his book *Songdai shidaifu foxue yu wenxue* 宋代士大夫佛学与文学 ("Literati Buddhism and Literature in the Song Dynasty"), Zhang Peifeng introduces the concept of "literati Buddhism" in the Song Dynasty.[24] This concept is distinct from "Lay Buddhism" and focuses specifically on the dynamic relationship between Buddhism and the educated class.[25] Zhang conducts an extensive analysis of the political and social contexts of "literati Buddhism" during this period. Through his exploration of the perspectives of eminent scholar-officials such as Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086), Fu Bi 富弼 (1004-1083), and Wang Dan 王旦 (957-1017), Zhang reveals the complex and sometimes contradictory attitudes of scholar-officials, who are balancing between "opposing Buddhism" and "protecting the Dharma."

In recent years, several younger scholars have increasingly engaged with the intersection of religion and literature, reflecting a burgeoning interest in this interdisciplinary field. In *Poet-Monks: The Invention of Buddhist Poetry in Late Medieval China*, Thomas Mazanec traces how the category of "poet-monks" (*shiseng* 詩僧) emerged and evolved from the eighth-tenth

[24] Zhang Peifeng 张培锋, *Songdai shidafu foxue yu wenxue* 宋代士大夫佛学与文学 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2007).
[25] "Lay Buddhism" encompasses aspects of Buddhism beyond the monastics, see Pan Guiming 潘桂明, *Zhongguo jushi fojiao shi* 中国居士佛教史 (Beijing: Xinhua shudian, 2000).

centuries in China.[26] He argues that these poet-monks found ways to synthesize elite poetic practices with Buddhist meditative, incantatory, and philosophical practices to invent a new concept of "Buddhist poetry" in the late Tang dynasty. Mazanec identifies three key features that characterized the poet-monks' works: 1) repetition of characters related to Buddhist apophatic discourse, 2) attention to the spiritual power of sound and foreignness in incantation, and 3) assertion that poetry, like meditation, requires painstaking effort and absorption. However, this vision of Buddhist poetry was short-lived. Many Song dynasty Buddhists saw the poet-monks as too literary and not religiously orthodox, while literati increasingly dismissed them as minor poets from a decadent age. Overall, Mazanec uses the case of the poet-monks to argue scholars of religion and literature to move beyond inner beliefs and examine the intersection of embodied religious and literary practices.

Jason Protass's book *The Poetry Demon: Song-Dynasty Monks on Verse and the Way* examines the relationship between poetry and Buddhism in Song Dynasty China, providing a different perspective on the literary writings of monks in the late medieval period.[27] This book meticulously examines the attitudes of Buddhist monks towards poetry in the Song dynasty. It challenges the prevailing notion that there was a "literary Chan" (*wenzi chan* 文字禪) movement starting with the monk Huihong in the Song dynasty. Protass argues that in the Song poetry was generally seen by monks as separate from and subordinate to the Buddhist path. He also analyzes major genres of verse composed by Song Chan monks, including verses for rituals, popular songs, encomia on paintings, occasional and social exchanges, and explicit Buddhist teachings, shedding light on the diverse social, ritual, and religious functions of monks' verses. In

[26] Thomas J. Mazanec, *Poet-Monks: The Invention of Buddhist Poetry in Late Medieval China* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2024).
[27] Jason Protass, *The Poetry Demon: Song-Dynasty Monks on Verse and the Way* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2021).

summary, this book offers a model for rethinking the relationship between religious and literary studies more broadly.

While the majority of these scholarships focus on the relationship between Chan Buddhism and literary activities, there is also research on Pure Land Buddhism and literature. Wang Aijun's dissertation investigates the Pure Land literature of the Northern Song dynasty. Through careful close reading, he explores the main themes, content, and stylistic features of Pure Land literature composed by both literati and monastics.[28] Similarly, Ding Liangyan's MA thesis traces the literary representation of the Pure Land before the Song dynasty, offering an examination of the various rhetorical methods employed in literature about the Pure Land.[29] In contrast, Huang Wenhan's thesis examines the poetry on the "Lotus Society" in the early Northern Song, arguing that there was an increasing number of poems on the "Lotus Society" between 960 and 1022.[30] Huang attributes this phenomenon to the growing number of religious communities during that period.

From the political and social perspectives of Chan Buddhism, the book *Chūgoku Zenshūshi no kenkyū: Nanshūzen sōritsu igo no seiji shakaiteki kōsatsu* 中国禅宗史の研究：南宗禅成立以後の政治社会的考察 by Abe Chōichi 阿部肇一 and the monograph *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* by Albert Welter are seminal.[31] Abe Chōichi meticulously traces the development of various Chan lineages in

[28] Wang Aijun 王爱军, "Beisong jingtu wenxue yanjiu" 北宋净土文学研究 (PhD diss., Shaanxi Normal University, 2020).
[29] Ding Liangyan 丁良艳, "Song yiqian fojiao xifang jingtu sixiang yu wenxue" 宋以前佛教西方净土思想与文学 (MA thesis, Shaanxi Normal University, 2019).
[30] Huang Wenhan 黄文翰, "Songchu sanchao liansheshi yanjiu" 宋初三朝莲社诗研究 (MA thesis, Shandong Normal University, 2018).
[31] Abe Chōichi 阿部肇一, *Chūgoku Zenshūshi no kenkyū: Nanshūzen sōritsu igo no seiji shakaiteki kōsatsu*, 中国禅宗史の研究：南宗禅成立以後の政治社会的考察 (Tōkyō: Seishin Shobō, 1963), and

southern China to elaborate on how the patronage of local administration and communication with scholar-officials facilitated the growth of the Nanzong Chan (南宗禪). Welter's book examines the historical and geographical contexts surrounding the official acceptance and rise to prominence of Chan Buddhism in China from Tang to Song. Welter argues that the success of Chan Buddhism was closely tied to the support and recognition it received from political rulers, officials, and literati. He traces how different Chan factions and regional movements sought to establish their legitimacy and orthodoxy by appealing to and winning the favor of those in power. This process involved the compilation of various Chan historical records and transmission histories (*denglu*) which served to promote certain lineages and teachings while marginalizing others. These books reveal the sociopolitical dynamics behind the evolution of Chan Buddhism, showing how the expansion of Chan was shaped by the interests of powerful patrons over generations.

From the above survey of existing scholarship on Buddhism and literature, we can see that scholars have approached the subject from various angles. Some works explore the literati's complex perspectives on Buddhism, others focus on the literary production of monks, and yet others examine the political and social aspects of Chan Buddhism. The existing scholarship on the Pure Land tradition and literature primarily centers on the literary analysis of related texts. However, this dissertation aims to integrate social network analysis, textual analysis, and literary-historical analysis to explore the rich corpus of Pure Land texts and the flourishing Pure Land practices during the Song Dynasty.

Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

By investigating a widespread religious belief and its interaction with literati culture during the tenth to thirteenth centuries, this project will shed light on larger academic issues such as the popularization of Buddhism, religious shifts within the Tang-Song transition framework, and intercultural exchanges. First, it will complicate the narrative of the popularization of Pure Land teachings and reveal the distinct strategies used to engage adherents from different social classes. For the literati, monastic elites emphasize doctrines and introduce meditation practices, while for commoners, monks simplify the Pure Land practice, transforming doctrines into a belief in Amitābha and the Western Pure Land. Second, this research will contribute to rethinking the transition of Buddhism from the Tang to the Song dynasty within the long-durée framework of the Tang-Song transition, an area insufficiently explored in Chinese Buddhism studies. This dissertation will enrich the Tang-Song transition model by highlighting the diversity of religious ideas within intellectual and cultural fields, challenging the dominance of Neo-Confucianism. Lastly, this study will expand scholarship on the relationship between religion and literature, arguing that literati actively participated in the propagation and adaptation of Pure Land beliefs, most significantly in the symbolization of the "White Lotus Society."

Chapter Outlines

The project will approach the transformation of Pure Land belief and its interaction with literati culture from four perspectives: social organization, cultural paradigm, print technology, and anthologization practice.

Chapter One "The Dynamics of Pure Land Communities: Players, Strategies, and Influence" examines the popularization of Pure Land teachings in the Song Dynasty through the lens of Pure Land community organization. It introduces the different actors involved in

organizing Pure Land communities in the Song and discusses their strategies for propagating Pure Land teachings to various audiences. The chapter particularly focuses on the West Lake Lotus Society established by the monk Xingchang in the late tenth century, which attracted the participation of many high-ranking scholar-officials. Through a detailed social network analysis, it reveals how the emerging networks of scholar-officials formed through the civil service examination system and government academies facilitated the spread of Pure Land teachings among the elite class. The chapter also underscores the importance of tenth-century Buddhist culture in the Wuyue region in laying the foundation for the trajectory of Pure Land Buddhism in the Song Dynasty. Finally, it demonstrates how the model of large-scale, inclusive Pure Land communities enhanced the wide popularization of Pure Land teachings among different segments of Song society, setting the stage for the Pure Land tradition to become a mainstream form of Buddhism in late imperial China.

Chapter Two, "Cultural Paradigm: The Construction of the White Lotus Society and the Adaptation with Literati Culture," explores how the myth of Huiyuan and his "White Lotus Society" was constructed and adapted by Song literati to make Pure Land teachings culturally appealing and socially acceptable among the literati class. The chapter traces the evolution of the legend surrounding Huiyuan's religious community at Mount Lu, from its earliest historical records in the 6th century to its transformation into a cultural phenomenon during the Song Dynasty. It analyzes how the monk Xingchang strategically revived the paradigm of the White Lotus Society in establishing his own community, the West Lake Lotus Society, which attracted the participation of many high-ranking officials. The chapter then examines the ways in which these literati members creatively adapted the myth of the White Lotus Society in their writings to justify their involvement in Pure Land practice while fulfilling their official duties. It argues that

the White Lotus Society served as a flexible cultural symbol that allowed Song literati to navigate between their religious aspirations and their social responsibilities, thereby facilitating the integration of Pure Land teachings into the mainstream elite culture of the Song Dynasty.

Chapter Three "Books: The Print Technology and the Production of Pure Land Texts" will shift focus to the proliferation and circulation of Pure Land proselytizing books. This reveals another significant change from the Tang to the Song Buddhism, that is, the production of religious texts was no longer the privilege of monastic elites, and the abstruse Buddhist treatises of the Tang were supplemented by popular Buddhist proselytizing books, which were welcomed by the new emerging market. The rising social stratum of literati, many of its members were lay Buddhists, actively engaged in the composition and compilation of proselytizing texts and rebirth tales, which were then printed and circulated with the aid of print technology in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This chapter will examine the *Pure Land Text of Longshu* by Wang Rixiu, which was the first and most popular proselytizing text, and rebirth tales such as "Revised Edition of Rebirth Biographies to the Pure Land" by Wang Gu. Analysis of these collections' print history, prefaces, and postscripts will deepen scholars' understanding of the popularization and adaptation of Pure Land belief and the mediating function of Song literati.

Chapter Four "Anthologization of Pure Land Texts: Case Study of *Lebang wenlei* 樂邦文類" examines the first anthology of Pure Land texts in Chinese Buddhism, the *Lebang wenlei* (*Categories of Writings on the Blissful Land*) compiled by the Tiantai monk Zongxiao 宗曉 (1151-1214) in 1200 CE. By situating this anthology within the vibrant anthologization culture of the Song Dynasty, the chapter highlights Zongxiao's pioneering efforts to establish Pure Land teachings as a distinct and legitimate tradition. The chapter analyzes Zongxiao's multifaceted approach to defining and organizing Pure Land texts, which includes imposing a religious

hierarchy, expanding selection criteria, and incorporating the myth of Huiyuan's White Lotus Society. It also explores the diverse range of literary compositions featured in the anthology, which reflect the richness and complexity of Pure Land literature during the Song Dynasty, encompassing liturgical texts, meditation-oriented works, and persuasive writings aimed at a general audience. The chapter argues that through the compilation of *Lebang wenlei*, Zongxiao not only defines the boundaries of Pure Land literature but also strategically defends Pure Land teachings against criticisms from Chan practitioners and Confucianists, reflecting a vibrant intellectual landscape in which Pure Land teachings were challenged, debated, and discussed.

In summary, this dissertation aims to provide a examination of the transformation and popularization of Pure Land teachings during the Song Dynasty, with a particular focus on the contributions of the rising literati class. By employing a multidisciplinary approach that combines social network analysis, textual analysis, and literary-historical analysis, this study seeks to shed light on the complex interplay between religious and literati life during this pivotal period in Chinese history. Through an in-depth investigation of the social organization, cultural paradigm, print technology, and anthologization practices associated with the Pure Land tradition, this dissertation contributes to our understanding of the larger historical and cultural issues surrounding the popularization of Buddhism, religious shifts within the Tang-Song transition framework, and intercultural exchanges. Ultimately, this project aims to provide a nuanced and comprehensive perspective on the development of Pure Land Buddhism during the Song Dynasty, highlighting the significant role played by the literati class in shaping this important religious tradition.

Chapter One The Dynamics of Pure Land Communities: Players, Strategies, and Influence

One of the major features of the spread of Pure Land teachings in the Song dynasty was the emergence and flourishing of Pure Land communities as the primary social form that engaged Buddhist adherents of different identities and propagated Pure Land devotion to all levels of society. As the monk historian Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001) explicated, the merits of a religious community lie in that it can consolidate the collective efforts of individual members by establishing community regulations, which will advance the religious practices of Buddhist adherents:

> The organization of the community is to gather multiple lightness to achieve one weight. When it comes to the accomplishments of things, none could compare with the community. In today's organization of the community, people plant in the field of merits together. The regulations were lucid and strict more than public law. Members inspire each other to be diligent in practice. Therefore, the community has great contribution to the nourishing of Buddhahood. [32]
>
> 社之法，以眾輕成一重。濟事成功，莫近於社。今之供社，共作福田，修約嚴明，愈於公法。行人互相徹勵，勤於修行，則社有生養之功大矣。

This chapter examines the popularization of the Pure Land teachings in the Song dynasty through the lens of the organization of Pure Land communities. It will introduce different players in the organization of Pure Land communities in the Song dynasty and discuss strategies for

[32] Zanning 贊寧, "Jieshe faji wen" 結社法集文, in *Lebang wenlei* 樂邦文類, *T.* no. 1969A, 47*:*177b4-19.

propagating Pure Land teaching to different audiences. Finally, it will demonstrate how the model of the Pure Land community enhanced the wide popularization of the Pure Land devotion to different classes of society, which became the mainstream religious organization in the late imperial era. Specifically, it will underline the participation of scholar-officials, an emerging political and cultural class in the Song dynasty, in the Pure Land communities, countering the conventional narrative that the Pure Land devotion spread exclusively among the common folks. Additionally, it will foreground the tenth century as the transitional period for the Pure Land teachings to formalize and popularize in southern China, which laid the foundation for the dissemination of the Pure Land belief in the Song dynasty.

The Transition of the Pure Land Teachings in the Tenth Century

Though often conceptualized as an uninterrupted and continuing entity in the chronological treatment of the Pure Land teaching,[33] this research will present several observations that challenge the dominant narrative. It will foreground the tenth century as the transitional period in the development of Pure Land teachings and propose that a new form of Pure Land teaching emerged synchronically with the social, political, and cultural changes delineated in the Tang-Song transition framework proposed by Naitō Konan.[34] Some fundamental changes of the Pure Land teaching include the following: first, the center of the Pure Land teaching shifted from northern China to the south, especially in the Wuyue area,

[33] Studies on the diachronic history of the Pure Land teachings tend to conceptualize it as an uninterrupted and continuing entity, see Chen Yangjiong, *Zhongguo Jing tu zong tong shi*, 1, and Mochizuki, *Chūgoku Jōdo kyōrishi*, 1-10.

[34] For a detailed account of the Tang-Song transition paradigm, see Miyakawa, Hisayuki 宮川尚志. "An Outline of the Naitō Hypothesis and its Effects on Japanese Studies of China." *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 14. 4, Special Number on Chinese History and Society (1955): 533-552.

governed by the Qian clan in the tenth century, which covered the nowadays Zhejiang Province, the southeast of Jiangsu Province, and the northeast of Fujian Province. This shift was the consequence of the Huichang Persecution of Buddhism from 842 to 845 CE, during which time Buddhist temples were destroyed, monks secularized, and scriptures scattered and disappeared.[35] Since the two capitals of the Tang Dynasty——Chang'an and Luoyang——suffered most from the imperial edict of persecution, Buddhist monks migrated to southern China to seek protection and patronage in local governments. Additionally, Li Yinghui 李映辉 has calculated that while the total number of temples dropped by 50% from mid-Tang to late Tang, the number of temples in the southern cities increased by nearly 25%.[36] With the migration of monks and new construction of temples in the south, Buddhist centers shifted from the two capitals Chang'an and Luoyang to the south, especially in the Jiangnan area.[37]

This transformation was also evident in the Pure Land teaching. Pure Land masters in the Tang dynasty mainly preached in northern China, for instance, Daochuo 道綽 (562–645) preached in Shanxi Province, while Shandao 善導 (613–681) was recorded preaching in Chang'an, and Fazhao 法照 (747–821) expanded the Pure Land teaching to Mount Wutai[38]—— all of these locations were in the north. However, the Jiangnan region became the locus of the Pure Land teaching in the tenth century and continued to assume a central position in the later

[35] For more information on the Huichang Persecution, see Yu Gang 俞鋼, "Yuanren wenjian de huichang fanan" 圓仁聞見的會昌法難, Journal of Shanghai Normal Univeristy (Social Science Edition), no. 01 (1999): 89–94, and Huaiyu Chen, *The Revival of Buddhist Monasticism in Medieval China* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).
[36] Li Yinghui 李映辉, *Tangdai Fojiao dili yanjiu* 唐代佛教地理研究 (Changsha: Hunan da xue chu ban she, 2004), 95-97.
[37] Benjamin Brose, *Patrons and Patriarchs: Chan Monks and Regional Rulers during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 45-60.
[38] For research on Pure Land masters in the Tang Dynasty, see Tsukamoto Zenryū 塚本善隆, *Tō chūki no Jōdokyō* 唐中期の浄土教 (Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 1975); Shi xiuyou 釋修優 "Daochuo 'Anleji' nianfo famen de yanjiu" 道綽《安樂集》念佛法門的研究 (Diss. Zhonghua foxue yanjiusuo, 2003), 5.

imperial period, nurturing numerous Pure Land patriarchs such as Shengchang 省常 (959–1020), Zhuhong 袾宏 (1535–1615), and Zhixu 智旭 (1599–1655), who cultivated a massive body of Pure Land adherents among literati and common folks.

What happened simultaneously with the shift of Buddhist centers in the tenth century was the change in the patronage system of Buddhism. Nicolas Tackett's argument about the destruction of the aristocracy in the late Tang also had major implications on Buddhist sponsorship.[39] The Huang Chao rebellion in the late ninth century was the watershed: before it, Buddhist institutions were mainly sponsored by the imperial family and the elite family clans, but in the tenth century, Buddhist clerics found their patrons from regional rules, such as the Qian family in the Wuyue region, and the Wang family in the Min region, and the Li family in the Southern Tang.[40] The religious preferences of these regional rulers significantly shaped the trajectory of Buddhism in the Song dynasty.

Another major transition of the Pure Land teaching was its extensive diffusion with other Buddhist lineages, especially the Tiantai genealogy. This stands in sharp contrast with the Pure Land teaching in the Tang dynasty. For instance, Shandao advocated the exclusive practice of mindful invocation of Amitâbha Buddha and discouraged varied practices.[41] In his exegesis of *the Meditation Sutra*, Shandao places great emphasis on cultivating deep faith in Amitâbha Buddha and his Pure Land and distinguishes between the "right established action" and "supplementary practices". He considers the vocal invocation of Amitâbha Buddha as the "right

[39] For a detailed analysis of the destruction of aristocracy in the late Tang, see Nicolas Tackett, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014).
[40] Brose, *Patrons and Patriarchs*, 34.
[41] See Ingram Samuel Seah, "Shan-Tao, His Life and Teachings." (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1975), 296–8.

established action" to attain rebirth in Sukhāvatī, whereas other Buddhist practices as supplementary to the goal of rebirth.[42] The exclusive emphasis on Pure Land practices suggests that Shandao endeavored to establish the Pure Land belief and practice as independent and distinctive from other Buddhist schools, but the effort to seek distinction and boundary was replaced by the tendency of diffusion in the tenth century. For one thing, monks who promoted the Pure Land teaching became highly diversified: there were monks from the genealogy of Tiantai Buddhism who promoted Pure Land, and still other advocators received Chan teaching.[43] Shandao's idea of "exclusive practice" was left aside and mixed practices were promoted.

The above analysis presents three major transformations of the Pure Land Buddhism in the tenth century: 1) the shift of Buddhist locus to the Jiangnan region, especially Hangzhou and its surrounding areas; 2) the transformation of patrons from aristocratic families to regional rulers; 3) diffusion of Pure Land teaching with various Buddhist lineages. These significant changes prompt us to reconsider the tenth century in the Hangzhou area as a transformative stage of the Pure Land teachings, and specifically, I will argue that the Wuyue region in the tenth century laid the foundation for the trajectory of Pure Land Buddhism in the Song Dynasty, and that it took a significantly different path compared with the Tang dynasty.

The Wuyue region did not suffer from the political turbulence and economic recession of the Five Dynasties (907–960 CE.). Instead, it enjoyed peace and prosperity for nearly eighty years under the governance of the Qian clan, who employed the strategy of "serving the sovereign of the Central Plain" that distanced it from the wars and destruction in northern

[42] Ibid, 304–5.
[43] The diverse background of Pure Land promoters can be found in the Pure Land section in *Fozu tongji*. See *T.* no. 2035, 49: 260c18.

China.[44] Further, the Qian family implemented a series of policies that boosted the economy, including developing agriculture, promoting international commerce, and revising fiscal policies, [45] all of which secured a peaceful and prosperous social environment in the Wuyue region.[46]

The thriving economy and government support led to the resurgence of Buddhism in the Wuyue area in the first half of the tenth century. Just like other regional rulers in southern China, the Qian family was a great benefactor of Buddhism, and every generation of rulers sponsored Buddhist activities.[47] As analyzed above, the religious preferences of the benefactor also influenced the development of Buddhism. The key features of Wuyue Buddhism were the revival of Buddhism and religious eclecticism. The southern states were among the first to recover the scattered Buddhist classics and the destroyed Buddhist temples after the Huichang Persecution and subsequent political turmoil. For example, the last ruler Qian Chu 錢俶 (929-988) sent envoys to Japan and Korea to retrieve Tiantai classics upon the advice of Tiantai Yiji 天台義寂 (919-987).[48] The Qian family also engaged in the construction and renovation of temples, for instance, the second ruler Qian Yuanguan 錢元瓘 (887-941) built Zhaoqing Temple, Jingkong

[44] Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 et al., eds., *Xin wudai shi* 新五代史 (Scripta Sinica Database electronic edition), 45.253. See more on the vassal relationship of the Wuyue region to central plain sovereignity, see He Yongqiang 何勇强, *Qianshi Wuyue guoshi lungao* 钱氏吴越国史论稿 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2002), 216–20.

[45] For the thriving economy of the Wuyue region during the tenth century, see Zheng Xuemeng 郑学檬, *Zhongguo gudai jingji zhongxin nanyi he Tang Song jiangnan jingji yanjiu* 中国古代经济重心南移和唐宋江南经济研究 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2003), 228–9, 316–7. Du Wenyu, *Wu Dai Shi Guo Jing Ji Shi* 五代十国经济史 (Beijing: Xue yuan chu ban she, 2011), 34-56.

[46] Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith, eds., *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 5, Part One: The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907-1279* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 345-350.

[47] A detailed analysis of the Qian family's patronage of Buddhism, see Brose, *Patrons and Patriarchs*, 89–113; Huang Yixun 黃繹勳, "Wuyue zhuwang yu fojiao" 吳越諸王（893–978）與佛教, *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* no. 17 (2004): 123–47; He, *Qianshi Wuyue guoshi lungao*, 382–428. Lai Jiancheng 賴建成, *Wuyue fojiao zhi fazhan* 吳越佛教之發展 (Taipei: Hua Mulan wenhua chubanshe, 2010), 19–36.

[48] Chikusa Masaaki 竺沙雅章, *Sō-Gen Bukkyō bunkashi kenkyū* 宋元仏教文化史研究 (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 2000).

Temple and Guanyin Monastery.[49] Qian Chu played a more important role in the restoration of Buddhism in that he declined the edict of Emperor Shizong of the Later Zhou to abandon temples without the imperial board in 955,[50] and he also established print shops to circulate Buddhist scriptures and treatises, and these printing houses were continued to put to use in the Song dynasty, making the Hangzhou area a center of private printing.[51] For example, Shengchang's *Lotus Society Anthology* was the product of Hangzhou's local print shops.[52]

The other feature of Wuyue Buddhism is religious eclecticism. The Qian family sponsored Buddhism for its utilitarian function, according to Huang Yixun 黃繹勳. Huang suggests that Qian Liu 錢鏐, the founder of the Wuyue sovereignty, employed Buddhist rituals to repent for his karma of killing on the battlefield.[53] Thus, the Qian family sponsored a range of religious activities such as asceticism, exegesis, Pure land devotion, thaumaturgy, and ancestral appeasement.[54] With respect to sponsoring Buddhist schools, the Qian family sponsored monks

[49] Zhuge Ji 諸葛計, *Wuyue shishi biannian* 吳越史事編年 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang gu ji chu ban she, 1989), 225-242, *Shiguo Chunqiu* 十國春秋, *Liangzhe jinshi zhi* 兩浙金石志 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang gu ji chu ban she, 2012), 10.

[50] See Wang Pu 王溥, *Wudai huiyao* 五代會要 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 12.150. For the persecution of Buddhism by Emperor Shizong of the Later Zhou, see Luo Shixian 羅時憲, "Tang wudai zhi fanan yu zhongguo" 唐五代之法難與中國, *Fo Guang Shan Foundation for Buddhist Culture & Education* n.50 (2009): 186–8.

[51] For a detailed account of the printing in the Wuyue region, see Zhang Xiumin 张秀民, *Zhongguo yinshua shi* 中国印刷史 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2006). For the use of printing in the promotion of Buddhism in the Wuyue region, see Lai, *Wuyue fojiao zhi fazhan*, 87–9. The most notable Buddhist prints sponsored by Qian Chu are the *Scripture of the Mudrās and Dhāraṇīs of the Precious Repository of the Secret Whole-body Śarīra of all the Tathāgata* 一切如來心祕密全身舍利寶篋印陀羅尼經 discovered in Leifeng pagoda.

[52] See Xin Deyong 辛德勇, "beisong keben qiantang xihu zhaoqingsi jie lianshe ji de faxian jiqi zai banbeshi yanjiu zhong de jiazhi" 北宋刻本《钱唐西湖昭庆寺结净社集》的发现及其在版刻史研究中的价值," *Zhongyuan wenhua yanjiu* 中原文化研究 4, no. 3 (2016): 31–44.

[53] Huang Yixun 黃繹勳, "Wuyue zhuwang (893-978) yu fojiao" 吳越諸王（893-978）與佛教, *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* No. 17 (2004): 123–47.

[54] Brose, *Patrons and Patriarchs*, 90.

from various lineages——Nanshan Vinaya, Hongzhou Chan, and Tiantai, etc.[55] Monks in the Wuyue region also mastered more than one Buddhist doctrine and were placed in multiple lineages. For example, the national teacher of the Wuyue region, Tiantai Deshao 天台德韶 (891–972), received training from the Chan patriarch Fayan Wenyi 法眼文益 (885–958) but was also active in retrieving Tiantai classics from overseas.[56] Buddhism in the Wuyue region suggests that boundaries between different doctrinal schools were getting blurred and monks were making efforts to integrate doctrines and practices. This became the historical context in which the Pure Land doctrine was interpreted in relation to Tiantai, Huayan, and Chan theories, and the new social form of the Pure Land community was established to engage in its practice.

Syncretism and eclecticism were the main features of the Buddhist culture in the Wuyue area in the tenth century. It was during this time that the Pure Land teaching was propagated by a group of Buddhist monks who were often affiliated with other schools, most notably Tiantai and Chan. For instance, Baoyun Yitong 寶雲義通 (927–988), the sixteenth patriarch of the Tiantai lineage, explicitly expressed his pursuit of the Pure Land:

[He] often called people fellow townsmen. When he was asked about the reason, he answered: "I consider the Pure Land as my hometown, and we will all attain rebirth there, so you are all my fellow townsmen."[57]

常呼人為鄉人。有問其故。曰："吾以淨土為故鄉，諸人皆當往生。皆吾鄉中之人也。"

[55] A detailed discussion of the types of monks supported by the Qian clan, see Brose, *Patrons and Patriarchs*, 91-105; Lai, *Wuyue fojiao zhi fazhan*, 47–69.
[56] *Fozu tongji, T.* no. 2035, 49*:*190c25-191a5.
[57] *Fozu tongji*, *T.* no. 2035, 49*:*191c4-6.

Yitong's Pure Land devotion was transmitted by his two eminent disciples, Zhili 知禮 (960–1028) and Zunshi 遵式 (964–1032), both of whom played a significant role in the propagation of the Pure Land teaching and in the organization of Pure Land communities in the first half of the eleventh century. Their religious activities in the Northern Song were the continuation and development of the idea of rebirth to the Pure Land which emerged in the tenth century and attracted the attention of monks of that era.

The eminent monk Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904–975) also embodied the eclecticism of Wuyue Buddhism. He is often identified as the third patriarch of the Fayan Chan (法眼禪) lineage, transmitting the teachings of Tiantai Deshao. His major contribution to the Chan school is that he drew on a wide range of doctrines and practices and attempted to integrate them into a single, comprehensive system, as argued by Albert Welter.[58] Despite being a patriarch in the Chan lineage, Yanshou also contributed to synthesizing the teachings of Chan and Pure Land, making him an important figure in the history of the Pure Land teaching. His most influential theory of integration of Chan and Pure Land was elaborated in his work *Collections of Returning All Merits* (*wanshan tonggui ji* 萬善同歸集). In this book, Yanshou attempted to resolve several contradictions between Chan and Pure Land doctrines and practices. First, Yanshou addressed the conflict between the Chan doctrine of "Mind-only" (*weixin* 唯心) and the existence of an external Buddha and Pure Land, that is, how could a Buddha or a Pure Land exist outside one's mind? Yanshou answers this question by negating the dichotomy between the mind and Pure Land. He argues that there is no distinction between the mind and

[58] Albert Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu: A Special Transmission within the Scriptures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 117–118, and Albert Welter, *The Meaning of Myriad Good Deeds: A Study of Yung-Ming Yen-Shou and the Wan-Shan t'ung-Kuei Chi* (New York: P. Lang, 1991).

others since the Buddha and the Pure Land are exactly the manifestations of the mind. Second, Yanshou incorporates the concept of "Mind-only Pure Land" (*weixin jingtu* 唯心淨土) into the theoretical framework of Pure Land, but Yanshou distinguishes two kinds of practitioners: one who has achieved the ground of joy[59] could rely on self-power to obtain rebirth in any Mind-only Pure Land, and the one who is less capable needs to rely on the power of Buddha and the superior condition of the Pure Land to achieve Buddhist enlightenment.[60] Yanshou thus negotiates the conflicts between the Chan and Pure Land practices and justifies the practice of *nianfo* as a complementary aspect of the ultimate enlightenment by foregrounding its benefits and convenience for less capable practitioners.[61]

In addition to the justification of the Pure Land practice from the doctrinal perspectives, Yanshou also engaged in the popularization of the Pure Land teaching to the mass audience in the Wuyue region. In Yanshou's biography, the editor Yuanzhao 元照 (1048–1116) recorded the incentives for Yanshou to propagate the Pure Land teaching and his proselytizing activities:

> Yanshou read in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra* that one old man in Buddha's time asked to become a monk, and Śāriputra did not accept him. The Buddha observed that this man was a woodcutter in ancient Kalpa[62] and that he went into the mountain and was approached by a tiger. He rushed to climb a tree and cried out involuntarily "Namaḥ Buddha"[63]. For this small merit, he should

[59] The ground of joy is the first ground of the ten bodhisattva grounds in the path to perfect enlightenment. See DDB: http://buddhism-dict.net.ezproxy.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%88%9D%E5%9C%B0.
[60] Yanshou, *Wanshan tonggui ji*, *T* 48, no. 2017, p. 966b28-c8.
[61] Albert Welter, *The Meaning of Myriad Good Deeds*, 149.
[62] Kalpa means an eon, the longest period of time in Indian cosmology. See DDB: http://buddhism-dict.net.ezproxy.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%8A%AB. Updated 2022/1/11.
[63] Namaḥ is an expression of submission to command, complete commitment, reverence, devotion, trust for salvation, etc. See DDB: http://buddhism-dict.net.ezproxy.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%8D%97%E7%84%A1. Updated 2010/4/1.

meet the Buddha and become a monk, and later attain enlightenment. Yanshou thus considered that the sentient beings who were bound up by their karma in this world were indulged in desirable conditions and their attachment was strong. Only the teaching of *nianfo*[64] could enlighten them. He thus assembled ten thousand people in an Amitâbha community. He also personally printed one hundred forty thousand copies of the Amitâbha pagoda and circulated them to the whole state. The practice of *nianfo* hence flourished in the Wuyue area since then.[65]

因見《智度論》說：佛世有一老人來求出家，舍利弗等不受。佛觀此人曩劫曾作樵人，入山為虎所逼，奔馳上樹，失聲一稱“南無佛”，以此微善，合遇佛出家，後得果證。因念世間業繫眾生，耽滯欲境，執著堅牢，唯念佛一門可能誘化，乃結一萬人彌陀社。曾親手印彌陀塔十四萬本，徧施寰海。吳越國中念佛之興，由此始矣。

Yanshou's incentive to promote the Pure Land teaching, as described in the above passage, conforms with the idea in the *Collections of Returning All Merits* that only the practice of *nianfo* could enlighten practitioners who were unable to unshackle their attachment to desire on their own. Therefore, Yanshou chose the Pure Land teaching to engage the grassroots and initiated several projects to propagate the Pure Land teaching: he organized a large-scale

[64] The practice of *Nianfo* 念佛 is an essential concept in the Pure Land teaching. In this context, it refers to the verbal chanting of the name of Amitâbha Buddha for the purpose of obtaining rebirth in the Pure Land.

[65] Ding Yuan 定源, "Guojia tushuguan cang 'yongming zhijue chanshi fangzhang shilu: yongming yanshou zhuanji xinziliao'" 國家圖書館藏《永明智覺禅師方丈實錄》——永明延壽傳記新資料, in *Wuyue fojiao* 吳越佛教, Vol 8 (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2013), 546-559.

Amitâbha community and printed massive copies of the Amitâbha pagoda for wide circulation. Yanshou's Pure Land community foreshadowed the prosperity of Pure Land societies in southeastern China during the Song dynasty in many ways. First was the scale of Yanshou's community which consisted of ten thousand members, indicating that it was a community intended for a mass audience. Second was the employment of printing, which was employed as an important device to propagate Buddhism to the common people since the tenth century.[66] These features of Yanshou's Pure Land community were continued and developed in the subsequent centuries in the Hangzhou area.

The above analysis revisits the tenth century as a transitional period of the Pure Land teaching. It suggests that the Pure Land teaching did not follow a linear trajectory from the Tang to the Song dynasty; rather, it displayed different features from the Pure Land teaching in the Tang dynasty.[67] It emerged in the cultural-religious environment of the Jiangnan region under the patronage of Wuyue rulers and became increasingly diffused with other Buddhist lineages. For one thing, the propagators of the Pure Land teaching were mainly monks from Tiantai and Chan lineages, notably Yiji and Yanshou. Consequently, the "special practice of *nianfo*" was replaced with a myriad of religious activities, compatible with practices like śamatha and vipaśyanā. The Pure Land belief should be considered less as an independent Buddhist school than as a set of Buddhist doctrines and practices shared by the monastic elites and common adherents. For another, Pure Land propagators purposefully popularized the *nianfo* practice to reach the

[66] The technique of printing was a significant device in the Buddhist revival in the Wuyue region during the tenth century, for instance, Qian Chu printed *Dhātu Kāraṇḍa Mudra Dhāraṇī Sūtra* and stored in the Leifeng pogada in Hanghou.See Huang Yixun, "Wuyue zhuwang yu fojiao", 123, and Albert Welter, *The Meaning of Myriad Good Deeds*, 29.

[67] For a general overview of the Buddhist communities in the Song, see Suzuki Chūsei 鈴木中正, "Sōdai Bukkyō Kessha No Kenkyū" 宋代仏教結社の研究, *Shigaku Zasshi* 52, no. 3 (1943): 65-98.

commoners, thus extending the influence of Buddhism to all levels of society. This laid the foundation for the development of Pure Land teaching in the Song dynasty, which could be considered as "New Pure Land Buddhism".

Pure Land Communities Before the Song Dynasty

The Pure Land community did not emerge as a significant social organization until the Northern Song dynasty, but it played an important role from the inception of the Pure Land teaching. The first Pure Land community was documented in Liu Yimin 劉遺民's (352–410) written vow in 402 CE., and he recorded that one hundred twenty-three Buddhists, led by the Buddhist master Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416), assembled in front of the statue of Amitâbha Buddha at Donglin Temple 東林寺 in Mount Lu and prayed to be reborn in the Western Pure Land.[68] Though the model of Huiyuan's Pure Land community was re-discovered and revived in the Song dynasty (which will be discussed in Chapter Two), the social form of the Pure Land community did not continue after the fifth century, which was due in part to the flourishment of doctrinal Buddhism in Southern China, which valued the scholarly research of Buddhist doctrines over practices. The Pure Land teaching assumed importance in the Tang dynasty, when the Pure Land patriarchs Shandao 善導 (613–681) and Shaokang 少康 (?–805) simplified the Pure Land practice and popularized the Pure Land belief among the common people.[69] Whereas Huiyuan's group inclined towards the meditation of Amitabha Buddha and aimed to achieve samādhi[70], Shandao and Shaokang turned to the practice of chanting the name of Amitabha

[68] *Chusanzang jiji* 出三藏記集, *T.* no. 2145, 55: 109c08-110a9.
[69] Mochizuki, *Chūgoku Jōdo kyōrishi*, 184-188.
[70] Ibid, 24-28. Samādhi refers to a state of deep concentration, meditation, and absorption.

Buddha to get rebirth in the Western Pure Land.[71] Though the Pure Land masters in the Tang dynasty intended to propagate the Pure Land teaching to the mass audience, records of Pure Land communities were scarce, and they mainly consisted of monks. For instance, the monk Zhiyan 智琰 assembled five hundred people to meditate on the Buddha every month,[72] and Shenhao 神皓 established a Western Society in the Jiangnan area.[73] Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) and the monk Ruman 如满 organized a small group at Mount Xiang, and they constructed a building and pond to engage in religious talk and compose poetry.[74] Though the Pure Land devotion became popular during the Tang dynasty, it would wait until the Song period for wider popularization.

As discussed above, the development of Wuyue Buddhism in the tenth century laid the foundation for the Pure Land teaching in the Song dynasty. The doctrine and practice of the Pure Land became important among monks of different genealogies, and they intentionally propagated this belief to scholar-officials and the common folks. The large-scale Pure Land community organized by the eminent monk Yanshou is a case in point.

In the Song dynasty, Pure Land communities flourished and became a common social form of Pure Land teaching, making the Pure Land teaching widely circulated among the literati and the commoners. The final unification of the Song empire in 979 put an end to the geographical division and political turbulence of the Five Dynasties,[75] and Buddhism enjoyed a favorable socio-political environment under the imperial support of Emperor Taizu and Taizong, the first two emperors of the Song Dynasty.[76] Additionally, a unified empire laid the social

[71] Ibid,
[72] *Fozu tongji*, *T.* no. 2035, 49: 274c24-275a1.
[73] *Song gaosengzhuan*, *T.* no. 2061, 50: 802c17-803a13.
[74] Xin Wenfang 辛文房, *Tang caizizhuan* 唐才子傳 (Beijjing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), 75.
[75] The Song court conquered the Northern Han in 979.
[76] For the imperial support of Buddhism, see Yan Mengxiang 閆孟祥, *Song dai fo jiao shi* 宋代佛教史 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2013), 27-35.

foundation for the free migration of talent. As we will see below, the spread of the Pure Land teaching to northern China was made possible by the relocation of scholar-officials, enhancing mutual communication between the intellectuals from the north and the south.

This chapter aims to underscore the significant role of the literati network in the dissemination and adaptation of Pure Land teachings. Specifically, the chapter studies the West Lake Lotus Society, organized by Shengchang 省常 (959–1020), to investigate the social dynamics within Pure Land communities during the Song Dynasty. I demonstrate that the emerging network between scholar-officials in the Northern Song Dynasty facilitated the spread of Pure Land teachings, specifically the networks formed through the civil service examination and in Academy Institutes (*guange* 館閣). It will also show how the elite monastic network became intertwined with the emerging literati network. Finally, I argue that poetry was a critical medium of communication between the monastic and literati networks.

Shengchang's West Lake Lotus Society: A Case Study

This chapter will study the West Lake Lotus Society organized by Shengchang 省常 (959–1020) to examine the dynamics of the Pure Land community in the Northern Song. Established between 990 and 1006 CE, the West Lake Lotus Society was the earliest significant Pure Land community during the Northern Song Dynasty. It was organized by the monk Shengchang at the Zhaoqing Temple 昭慶寺 in Hangzhou.[77] The most remarkable feature of this community was that it attracted ninety scholar-officials to join, many of whom were among the

[77] Daniel Getz, "Shengchang's Pure Conduct Society and the Chinese Pure Land Patriarchate," in *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha*, ed. by Richard Payne and Kenneth Tanaka (University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 52-76.

highest-ranking officials during the reigns of Northern Song Emperors Taizong 太宗 (r.976–997) and Zhenzong 真宗 (r.997–1022). These high-ranking officials and distinguished literati included Grand Councilor Xiang Minzhong 向敏中 (949–1020), Vice Minister Wang Dan 王旦 (957–1017), Ding Wei 丁謂 (966–1037), eminent literati Li Zhi 李至 (947–1001) and renowned poets Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020) and Li Zong'e 李宗諤 (965–1013).[78] Although Shengchang left behind no writings, he was still recognized as a patriarch in the Pure Land lineage in the Southern Song, mainly due to his efforts in organizing this significant Pure Land community.[79] Moreover, the Buddhist historiographical texts that acknowledged him as a Pure Land patriarch underscored the involvement of high-ranking officials in the West Lake Lotus Society, drawing parallels with Huiyuan's religious community, established at Mount Lu in 402 CE. Further, Zhiyuan 智圓 (976–1022) stated that the engagement of high-ranking officials was a feature superior to that of Huiyuan's community:

> Huiyuan emerged during the declining Jin Dynasty, while Master Shengchang was born in the enlightened era.[80] Those who were drawn to Huiyuan were virtuous recluses, while those who came here were all renowned and

[78] See Jin Chengyu 金程宇, *Xijian tangsong wenxian congkao* 稀见唐宋文献丛考 (hereafter *XJTSWXCK*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 137–53.

[79] In the Buddhist historiographical texts of the Southern Song, Shengchang was recognized as a patriarch in the Pure Land lineage. For example, in *Lebang wenlei* 樂邦文類 (hereafter *LBWL*), the compiler Zongxiao 宗曉 (1151–1214) recognized Shengchang as the fifth patriarch of the Pure Land lineage, see *T.* no. 1969A, 47:192c19-25. Later, Zhipan 志磐, the compiler of *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (hereafter *FZTJ*), recognized Shengchang as the seventh patriarch of the Pure Land lineage, see *FZTJ*, *T.* no. 2035, 49:265a8-21. Both Zongxiao and Zhipan emphasized the inclusion of high-ranking officials in Shengchang's West Lake Lotus Society and compared it with Huiyuan's religious community at Mount Lu.

[80] This refers to the current imperial dynasty.

influential officials. By complementing the deficiencies with surplus, the past and present stand in equilibrium. Can we not say that it is splendid and magnificent?[81]

然而遠出衰晉，公生聖朝。彼招者悉隱淪之賢，此來者皆顯達之士。絕長益短，古今相埒，不曰盛與美與？

The West Lake Lotus Society signifies the earliest substantial religious community that epitomized the spread of Pure Land teachings into the literati class through the newly-formed bureaucratic and literary networks. Notably, this community emerged merely a decade after the final unification of central China under the Song court in 979 CE.[82] In many aspects, the unification of the empire and subsequent political and cultural policies enabled the formation of this unique Pure Land community.

Previously, material attesting to the activities of the West Lake Lotus Society was scarce, and scholars were uncertain about how the relatively unknown monk Shengchang was able to invite high-ranking officials and engage with top-tier officials in the capital, Bianjing. However, recently discovered material has now made it possible to analyze the elite social network within the West Lake Lotus Society. The primary source, titled *Anthology on Organizing Lotus Society at Zhaoqing Temple at West Lake in Hangzhou* (*Hangzhou xihu zhaoqingsi jielianshe ji* 杭州西湖昭慶寺結蓮社集, hereafter *West Lake Lotus Anthology*),[83] was printed in the first half of the

[81] Zhiyuan 智圓, "Epitaph to the Master of the West Lake Community" 錢唐白蓮社主碑, in *LBWL*, *T.* no. 1969A, 47: 183c16-184b9.
[82] See Lau Nap–yin and Huang K'uan–chung, "Founding and Consolidation of the Sung Dynasty under T'ai-tsu (960–976), T'ai-tsung (976–997), and Chen–tsung (997–1022)," in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 5, Part One: The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907–1279*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 225.
[83] The *Anthology on Organizing Lotus Society at Zhaoqing Temple at West Lake in Hangzhou* was not extant in China, but this edition was discovered in Korea and then transmitted to China in 2015. It went into an auction in Beijing in 2015 and was purchased by a private collector. See *Bei Song keben xihu jie*

eleventh century.[84] This poetry anthology collected ninety-four poems written by ninety community members, all of whom were government officials. The anthology was carefully structured: it began with four prefaces, followed by the main poetry section of ninety-four poems, and concluded with a text on the backside of a stele that inscribed the names of all community members, as shown in the following chart. Unlike most poetry anthologies that are organized by author, chronology, theme, or form, the organizational structure of the poems in this anthology is that they are arranged hierarchically according to the members' political ranks. It opens with Grand Councilor Xiang Minzhong, followed by Vice Ministers Li Zhi, Wang Huaji 王化基 (944–1010), Wang Dan, and Su Yijian 蘇易簡 (958–997), and concludes with the District Defender of Longyou, Lü Shi'an 呂士安.[85] The hierarchical ranking of poems based on political ranks foregrounds the anthology's objective to prioritize political status over religious devotion or literary skill.

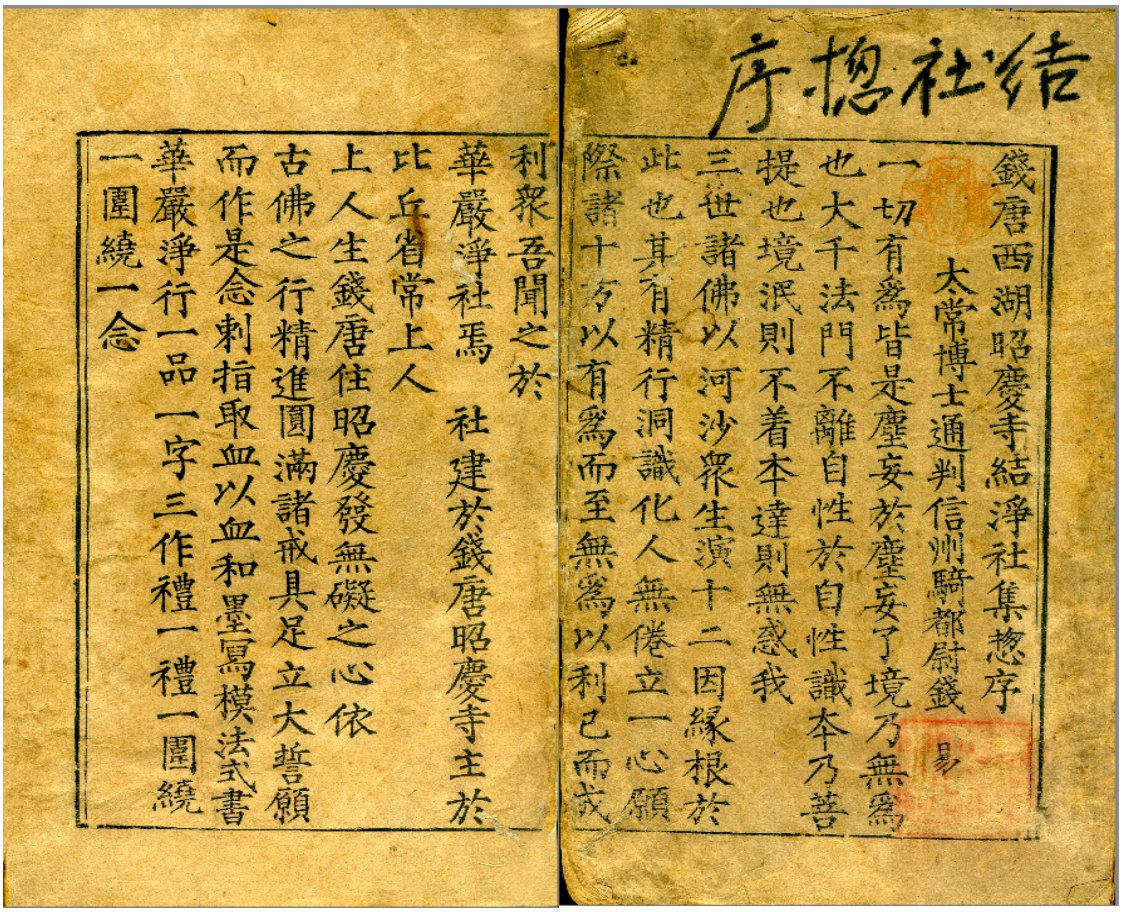
Texts from the *West Lake Lotus Society Anthology*		
Text	**Author**	**Date**

liansheji zhuanchang 北宋刻本西湖结莲社集专场, published by the auction house of Zhuode 卓德 in 2015. Now the transcription of the text can be found in Jin Chengyu, *XJTSWXCK*, 137–53.

[84] There are different opinions regarding the dating of the anthology. Fang Guangchang 方廣錩 believes that this anthology was first printed between 1008 and 1016, shortly after Qian Yi's general preface written in 1009, but the extant edition was a later reprint. This corresponds with the radiocarbon report of this anthology conducted by the University of Arizona which shows it was produced between 1024 and 1189. See Fang Guangchang, "Lüetan 'zhuodeben' *qiantang xihu zhaoqingsi jie jingsheji*——Gaoli Yitian yinshua xiequ ben?" 略談"卓德本"《錢塘西湖昭慶寺結淨社集》——高麗義天印刷攜去本？, *Banben muluxue yanjiu* 版本目錄學研究 2016: 371–88. Chen Fei 陈斐 argues that it was a print after Emperor Renzong's reign (r.1022–1063) because of the practice of avoiding his name. See Chen Fei, "Beisong xihu lianshe sheji bianzuankao" 北宋西湖莲社社集编纂考, *Wenxian* 文献 3, no. 2 (2021): 7–23.

[85] Jin Chengyu, *XJTSWXCK*, 137–53.

General Preface to the *West Lake Lotus Society Anthology* 錢塘西湖昭慶寺結淨社集總序	Qian Yi 錢易 (968–1026)	1009
Preface to the bestowal of "Chapter on Pure Conduct" in the *Flower Ornament Sutra* 施華嚴經淨行品序	Su Yijian 蘇易簡 (958–997)	991
Preface and Inscription to the Lotus Society at Zhaoqing Temple at West Lake in Hangzhou 大宋杭州西湖昭慶寺結社碑銘（並序）	Song Bai 宋白 (933–1009)	990
Preface to Lotus Society Poetry at West Lake 西湖結社詩序	Ding Wei 丁謂 (966–1037)	1006
Poems on Joining the Community 入社詩	Ninety members	990-1006
Text on the Reverse of the Organizing Community Stele (not extant) 結社碑陰	Sun He 孫何 (961–1004)	1002


結社念佛序

錢唐西湖昭慶寺結淨社集憩序

太常博士通判信州騎都尉錢易

一切有爲皆是塵妄於塵妄了境乃無爲也大千法門不離自性於自性識本乃菩提也境泯則不着本達則無惑我三世諸佛以河沙衆生演十二因緣根於此也其有精行洞識化人無倦立一心願際諸十方以有爲而至無爲以利已而戒利衆吾聞之於華嚴淨社焉　社建於錢唐昭慶寺主於比丘省常上人上人生錢唐住昭慶發無礙之心依古佛之行精進圓滿諸戒具足立大誓願而作是念刺指取血以血和墨寫模法式書華嚴淨行一品一字三作禮一禮一圍繞一圍繞一念

Image 1 General Preface to *the West Lake Lotus Society Anthology*

Why and how was this religious community initiated? Song Bai's preface to the *West Lake Lotus Society* sheds light on the society's aims and agenda:

> The monk from Zhaoqing Temple in Hangzhou, known as Shengchang, rejoiced in the prosperity of this era and made a profound vow within his heart. To extend the abundant blessings and reciprocate the four kinds of compassion,[86] he pricked his flesh to mingle blood with ink, inscribing the sacred scriptures.

[86] The four kinds of compassion are the compassion of parents, the compassion of sentient beings, the compassion of rulers, and the compassion of the Three Treasures. See Digital Dictionary of Buddhism (henceafter DDB): http://buddhism-dict.net.ezproxy.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%9B%9B%E6%81%A9. Updated 2013/2/5.

What was the text he transcribed? It was the "Pure Conduct Chapter" from the *Flower Ornament Sutra*. For each character he penned, he would bow three times, circle thrice, and chant the Buddha's name three times. Expert craftsmen then engraved his work and printed one thousand copies, which were distributed to a thousand monks and lay people. Shengchang, furthermore, crafted a sculpture of the Vairocana Buddha from sandalwood. He assembled a congregation of eighty monks to form a community. Once the scripture and the Buddha statue were completed, he knelt down, joined his palms, and recited the following words:

杭州昭慶寺僧曰省常，身樂明時，心發洪願。上延景祚，下報四恩。刺血和墨，書寫真經。書之者何？即大方廣佛華嚴經淨行一品也。每書一字，必三作禮，三圍繞，三稱佛名。良工雕之，印成千卷。若僧若俗，分施千人。又以栴檀香造毗盧像，結八十僧，同為一社。再時經像成，乃膝地合掌，作是言曰：

"I, along with eighty bhikṣus[87] and a thousand individuals, starting from this day forward, will awaken the mind of enlightenment, and vow to follow the bodhisattva path until the end of time. Upon the exhaustion of my karmic retribution, I wish to be reborn in the Pure Land of Sukhāvatī. I aspire to instantly enter the Dharma realm, fully realizing the non-arising nature of all phenomena. I will practice the ten pāramitā[88] and seek the guidance of countless reliable

[87] Bhikṣu refers to a fully ordained male monastic, also commonly known as a monk.
[88] The ten pāramitā is ten Mahāyāna practices which are enumerated based on the original six pāramitās 六波羅蜜, to which the four of skillful means 方便, vow 願, power 力, and wisdom 般若 are added. See DDB: http://buddhism-dict.net.ezproxy.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%8D%81%E6%B3%A2%E7%BE%85%E8%9C%9C. updated 2018/01/18.

teachers. Like Mahāsthāmaprāpta, my radiance will universally illuminate, leading all sentient beings to achieve the *nianfo* samādhi.[89] Like Avalokiteśvara, I will heed the cries and rescue people from suffering, and bestow upon all sentient beings the attainment of fourteen forms of fearlessness.[90] …… Upon becoming a Buddha, my form and land will resemble those of Amitābha……"[91]

"我與八十比丘、一千大眾，始從今日，發菩提心，窮未來際，行菩薩行。願盡此報已，生安養國。頓入法界，圓悟無生，修習十種波羅蜜多，親近無數真善知識。身光徧照，令諸有情得念佛三昧，如大勢至。聞聲救苦，令諸有情獲十四無畏，如觀世音……至成佛時，若身若土，如阿彌陀……"

The preface clearly indicates that the West Lake Lotus Society was originally established as a Pure Land community. In Shengchang's vow text that Song Bai quotes in the preface, he unequivocally expressed his and his community members' aspiration for rebirth in Western Pure Land. Moreover, Shengchang planned his enlightenment path to mirror that of Amitābha Buddha. He also made references to two primary bodhisattvas in the Western Pure Land—Mahāsthāmaprāpta and Avalokiteśvara—vowing to follow their practices of saving sentient beings. However, the West Lake Lotus Society exhibits eclectic characteristics. For instance,

[89] The *nianfo* samādhi (念佛三昧) is a meditative goal in Pure Land Buddhism. The term "nianfo" means "mindfulness of the Buddha", and "samādhi" refers to a state of deep concentration or meditative absorption. In this practice, devotees either recite the name of Amitābha Buddha or visualize the Western Pure Land to achieve a state of deep concentration. When the practitioner obtains the *nianfo* samādhi, he or she will be reborn in the Western Pure Land after their decease.

[90] Fourteen forms of fearlessness of Avalokitêśvara refer to the fearlessness that comes with understanding things in their true nature (Skt. *abhaya*, *vaiśāradya*), which comes from the *Śūraṃgama-sūtra*.

[91] This preface was preserved in *Yuanzong wenlei* 圓宗文類 (henceafter *YZWL*) compiled by Yitian 義天 (1055–1101), see Yitian, *YZWL*, *X.* no. 1015, 58: 563c5-19.

Shengchang chose to transcribe the "Pure Conduct Chapter" from the *Flower Ornament Sutra* rather than Pure Land scriptures such as the *Amitābha Sūtra*, and chose to carve a statue of Vairocana Buddha instead of Amitābha Buddha. Some scholars have thus argued that the West Lake Lotus Society represents the integration of Huayan and Pure Land schools.[92] Nevertheless, I suggest to understand the West Lake Lotus Society in the socio-historical context of the religious culure in the Wuyue region during the tenth century, featuring religious eclecticism.[93] The West Lake Lotus Society was a cultural product of Wuyue Buddhist culture and epitomizes a Pure Land community that embraced religious eclecticism. This implies an increasing diffusion of Pure Land teachings with other Buddhist doctrines towards the end of the tenth century.

The Literati Network in the West Lake Lotus Society

As noted, the ninety-four poems in the *West Lake Lotus Society Anthology* were organized hierarchically by members' political rank.[94] The following table illustrates the structure and format used for the first six members of the anthology.

Rank	**Political Title**	**Name**
1	Grand Master for Splendid Happiness, Working as Vice Director of Bureau of Military Appointments	Xiang Minzhong 向敏中

[92] Wei Daoru 魏道儒, "Zongjiao ronghe yu jiaohua gongneng——yi songdai liangzhong huayan jingtu weili" 宗教融合與教化功能 ——以宋代兩種華嚴淨土信仰為例, *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal,* no. 13, (2000), 299–305.
[93] This will be discussed in the last section of this paper.
[94] Chen Fei further argues that it was organized by member's highest political rank at the time when this anthology was finalized and printed, see Chen, "Beisong xihu lianshe sheji bianzuankao", 12–3.

	in the Secretariat, Manager of Affairs, Pillar of State 光祿大夫行尚書省兵部侍郎平章事上柱國	
2	Minister of the Ministry of Works, Participant in Determining Governmental Matters 工部尚書參知政事	Li Zhi 李至
3	Grand Master for Splendid Happiness, Working as Vice Director of Bureau of Military Appointments in the Secretariat, Participant in Determining Governmental Matters, Pillar of State 光祿大夫行尚書兵部侍郎參知政事上柱國	Wang Huaji 王化基
4	Vice Director of Bureau of Military Appointments, Participant in Determining Governmental Matters 兵部侍郎參知政事	Wang Dan 王旦
5	Disciple of Pure Conduct, Supervising Secretary, Participant in Determining Governmental Matters 淨行弟子給事中參知政事	Su Yijian 蘇易簡
6	Hanlin Academician Recipient of Edicts, Minister of Ministry of Rites, Drafter, Compiler of the Dynastic History 翰林學士承旨禮部尚書知制誥修國史	Song Bai 宋白

An analysis of these six figures immediately raises several questions. Regarding their places of origin, five of them were from the north, with the exception of Su Yijian who was from Sichuan. As for their political positions, Wang Huaji was the only one who worked in Hangzhou, while the other five exclusively worked in the north. If we analyze the geographical distribution of all ninety members of the community, we find that 40% of the elite members were located in the capital from 990 to 1006, while another 30% resided in Hangzhou and surrounding regions, as illustrated in the chart below.[95] This discovery raises some questions: How did Shengchang, a local monk from Hangzhou, establish connections with high-ranking officials in the capital? How were the scholar-officials interconnected? What made the Pure Land teachings so appealing that they managed to draw the attention of numerous distinguished literati?

	Number	**Percentage**
Capital Officials	36	40%
Hangzhou Officials	14	16%
Officials in Surrounding Areas	13	14%
Unidentified	27	30%
Sum	**90**	**100%**

Since this anthology was structured by the political rank of each individual, it is difficult to discern the central figures in this community and the interrelationship between members. It is also difficult to ascertain Shengchang's connections with individul literati. To address these

[95] The location of the last 30% of members could not be identified due to the lack of historical materials.

questions, I will deconstruct the anthology's original order and reconstruct the social network to elucidate community dynamics. This approach will illuminate how emerging political alliances facilitated the dissemination of Pure Land teachings among scholar-officials during the Song Dynasty. Furthermore, it will unveil the cultural medium that bridged the monastic elites and scholar-officials. It will also provide a perspective for examining the transition of Pure Land teachings during the tenth century.

The Network Formed in the Civil Service Examination

When I reviewed the political backgrounds of the West Lake Lotus Society members, I observed that many passed the civil service examination and held the *jinshi* degree. Additionally, many passed the exam in the same year. Considering existing scholarship on the expanding civil exam system and the significant political alliances formed therein,[96] I hypothesize that the networks established during the civil examination were a primary connection between officials in the West Lake Lotus Society.

To test my hypothesis, I rearranged the order of members in the anthology. I checked each member's *jinshi* status and categorized them based on the year they successfully passed the civil examination. I also listed the examiners who were also members of the West Lake Lotus Society, as depicted in the chart below.[97]

[96] For the expansion of the civil service examination system and structural reforms like qualifying exams and covered names in the Northern Song, see John Chaffee, "Sung Education: Schools, Academies, And Examinations", in *The Cambridge History of China*, *Vol. 5, Part Two*, 286–92; John Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 48–52. For the political cliques formed in civil exams, see Koon-wan Ho, "Politics and Factionalism: K'ou Chun (962–1023) and His 't'ung-Nien'" (Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 1990), 34–48.

[97] I consulted Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮, ed., *Song dengke jikao* 宋登科記考, compiled by Gong Yanming 龔延明 and Zu Hui 祖慧 (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009) and Zhuge Yibing 诸葛忆兵, *Songdai keju ziliao changbian* 宋代科举资料长编 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2017).

Year	Examiners	*Jinshi*	Number
961	Unknown	Song Bai 宋白 (no. 6[98]), Zhang Quhua 張去華 (no. 16)	2
969	Unknown	An Deyu 安德裕 (no. 33)	1
977	N.A.	Wang Huaji 王化基 (no.2), Li Zhi 李至 (no.3), Lü Youzhi 呂祐之 (no.17)	3
978	N.A.	Xue Ying 薛映 (no.18)[99], Tian Xi 田錫 (no.21), Niu Mian 牛冕 (no.22)	3
980	Song Bai[100] 宋白	Xiang Minzhong 向敏中 (no.1), Wang Dan 王旦 (no.4), Su Yijian 蘇易簡 (no.5), Song Shi 宋湜 (no.9), Kang Jian 康戩 (no.42), Xie Mi 謝泌 (no. 35)	6
983[101]	Song Bai	Liang Ding 梁鼎 (no.12), He Meng 和嶓 (no. 26), Yao Xuan 姚鉉 (no. 30), Wang Yucheng 王禹偁 (no.32), Zeng Zhiyao 曾致堯 (no. 45), Li Jianzhong 李建中 (no. 55), Li Xuji 李虛己 (no. 58)	7

[98] This number shows the individual's placement in the *West Lake Lotus Anthology*, which was organized by member's political rank.
[99] According to Zhuge Yibing, Xue Ying 薛映 passed the civil exam in 977, not 992 as recorded in *Song dengke jikao*. See Zhuge Yibing, *Songdai keju ziliao changbian*, 45–6.
[100] Song Bai served as the assistant examiner in 980. See Xu Song 徐松 et al., ed., *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿 (Scripta Sinica Database electronic edition, hereafter *SHY*), Xuanju 選舉 1.2.
[101] Civil exams were suspended in 981 and 982. See *SHY*, Xuanju 1.2.

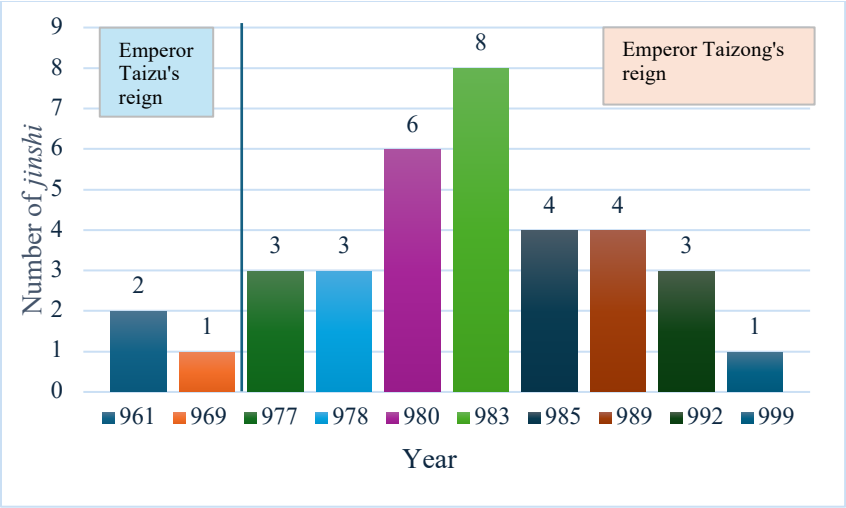
984	Zhang Quhua	Yang Yi 楊億[102] (no. 24)	1
985	Su Yijian 蘇易簡, Song Shi 宋湜	Qian Ruoshui 錢若水 (no.8), Liang Hao 梁灝 (no.10), Liu Shidao 劉師道 (no.15), Qian Xi 錢熙 (no.44)	4
989	Su Yijian	Chen Yaosou 陳堯叟 (no.7), Li Zong'e 李宗諤 (no.23), Mei Xun 梅詢 (no. 66), Cui Gong 崔拱 (no.78)	4
992	Su Yijian, Lü Youzhi, Qian Ruoshui, Wang Dan[103]	Ding Wei 丁謂 (no.25), Sun He 孫何 (no.31), Zhu Taifu 朱台符 (no.53)	3
999	N.A.	Li Kan 李堪 (no.87)	1
Unidentified	N.A.	Lü Wenzhong 吕文仲 (no.14), Zhao Kuang 趙況 (no. 57), Li Jiansu 李見素 (no. 80)	3
Sum			**38**

Upon re-categorizing members based on the year they passed the civil examination, several observations can be made from the chart. First, out of the ninety members in the West

[102] Yang Yi was admitted in the Youth civil examination (*tongzike* 童子科) in 983 CE at the age of eleven. He was tested by Zhang Quhua 張去華 who was the Fiscal Commissioner of Jiangnan in 984. See Tuo Tuo 脫脫 et al., eds., *Song shi* 宋史 (Scripta Sinica Database electronic edition, hereafter *SS*), 305.10079.

[103] In 992, Su Yijian served as the principal examiner, while Lü Youzhi, Qian Ruoshui, and Wang Dan served as assistant examiners, see *SHY*, Xuanju 1.3–4.

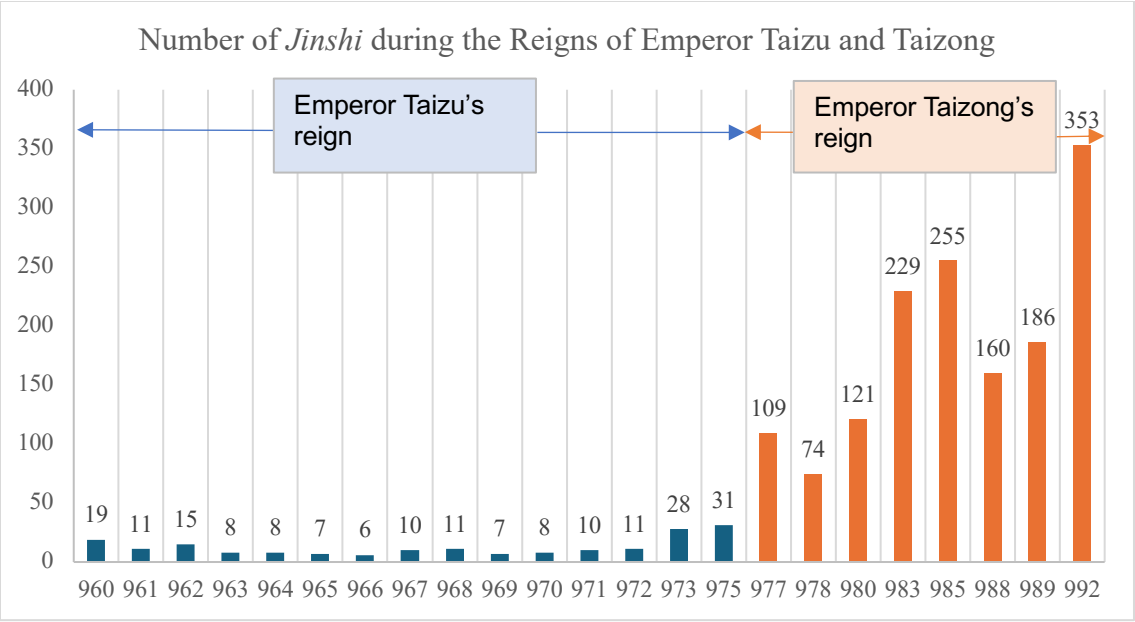
Lake Lotus Society, thirty-eight (42%) held a *jinshi* degree. This suggests that the civil examination served as a significant platform for establishing connections among them. More specifically, thirty-one members passed the civil examination during the reign of Emperor Taizong (976–997 CE), as illustrated in the graph below.



This distribution coresponds to the exponential growth of the civil examination system during Emperor Taizong's reign from 976 to 997 CE: while the average number of successful candidates (known as *jinshi*) was twelve per year during Emperor Taizu's reign, it dramatically increased to an average of one hundred and eighty-five *jinshi* per year, as illustrated in the chart below.[104] It was during this era that the first generation of officials in the Song Dynasty were recruited. These successful examinees supplanted the aristocratic families and emerged as the primary political and cultural leaders in the Song Dynasty. Given their humble backgrounds,

[104] For example, in 977, Emperor Taizong first opened up the civil exam and recruited one hundred and nine *jinshi*, outnumbering the total number of *jinshi* during Emperor Taizu's reign. A detailed account can be found in Gong Yanming 龚延明 and Zu Hui 祖慧, *Songdai dengke zonglu* 宋代登科总录 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2014), 33–154. A discussion of this can be found in Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China*, 48–50.

they did not have established familial alliances; instead, they forged social and political networks through civil examinations and their respective workplaces. These *jinshi* candidates constituted the scholar-official class, which substantially influenced the trajectory of literature, philosophy, and art during the Song Dynasty.[105]



This period of the early Northern Song also marked a significant transition in the Buddhist laity. As evidenced in the *West Lake Lotus Anthology*, those who attained the *jinshi* degree during Emperor Taizong's reign made up the majority of society members. The emerging social class of scholar-officials came into power due to the disintegration of aristocratic families during the late Tang and Five Dynasties periods and the expansion of the civil examination system during the Song Dynasty.[106] The political monopoly previously held by dominant

[105] For an overview of the Song literati culture, see Hymes, "Sung Society and Social Change", 621–60.
[106] For the destruction of Tang aristocracy, see Nicolas Tackett, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014), 187–234. For the expansion of the civil service examination system and structural reforms like qualifying exams and covered names in

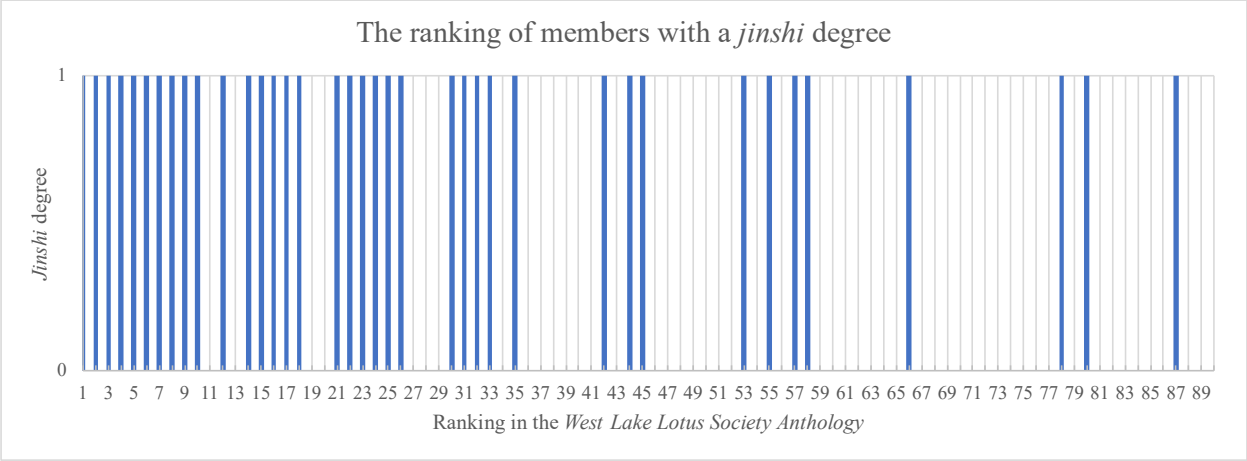
aristocratic clans was dissolved during the Huangchao Rebellion and the ensuing upheaval throughout the tenth century, reshaping Buddhist patronage and engagement.[107] Beginning with the Song Dynasty, scholar-officials entering government by the civil service examination emerged as the principal laity of Buddhism, as exemplified by the West Lake Lotus Society. This shift would subsequently bring about changes in the adaptation and reception of Pure Land teachings.

Further analysis of the distribution of *jinshi* degree holders in the *West Lake Lotus Society Anthology* reveals provocative insights. As the anthology organized each member in the hierarchical order of their political ranks, the frequency and placement of members with a *jinshi* degree within the anthology can be seen from the graph below. The graph illustrates that those with a *jinshi* degree are predominantly found in the first half of the anthology. Specifically, the initial ten members, comprising grand chancellors and vice ministers, all held *jinshi* degrees. Among the top thirty members, an overwhelming 77% possessed a *jinshi* degree. This distribution underscores that the high-ranking officials in this society were interconnected via the civil examination network.

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the Northern Song, see John Chaffee, "Sung Education: Schools, Academies, And Examinations", in *The Cambridge History of China*, *Vol. 5, Part Two*, 286–92.

[107] Brose, *Patrons and Patriarchs*, 18–29.



Furthermore, we can delineate the identities of community members within the civil service examination system. Two kinds of relationships were cultivated during the civil examination. The first was the mentor-disciple connection: the successful *jinshi* candidate would automatically become the disciple (*mensheng* 門生) of the examiner, who in turn was referred to as the "presiding teacher" (*zuozhu* 座主) of the *jinshi*. The second was the "same year" (*tongnian* 同年) association, referring to the cohort that passed the civil examination in the same year. Such political alliances were present and important to elite identity in the Tang Dynasty,[108] and they became a even more notable form of political affiliation in the Song Dynasty for two primary reasons: first, *jinshi* originating from humble backgrounds lacked familial support networks;[109]

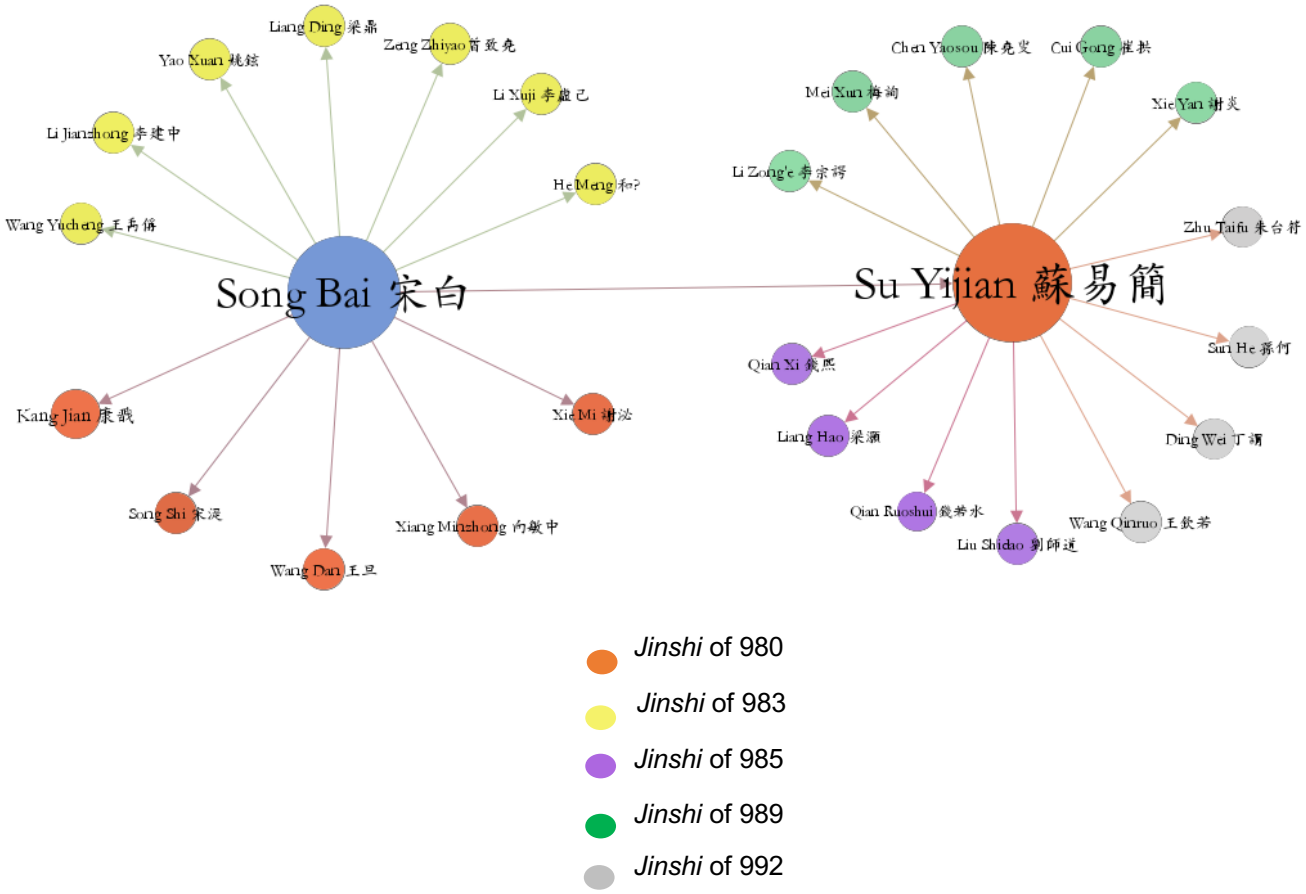
[108] The rituals fostering of the "mentor-disciple" network and the "same year" network was described in detail in *Tang zhiyan* 唐摭言. See Oliver Moore, *Rituals of Recruitment in Tang China: Reading an Annual Programme in the Collected Statements by Wang Dingbao (870-940)* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 181–280. The importance of the "same year" relationship between literati in the mid-Tang is also discussed in Anna Shields, *One Who Knows Me: Friendship and Literary Culture in Mid-Tang China* (Cambridge, Mass.: distributed by Harvard University Press, 2015), 65–81.

[109] For the differences between the aristocratic elite of the Tang and the new scholar-official elite in the Song, see Tackett, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy*, 235–42.

and second, the annual number of *jinshi* had increased to over three hundred each year, thereby facilitating the formation of political cliques.[110]

In the West Lake Lotus Society, the mentor-disciple connection stood out as a significant relationship. From the above chart, two names appeared frequently as the examiner: Song Bai 宋白 (936–1012) and Su Yijian 蘇易簡 (958–997). Song Bai was a *jinshi* in 961 CE and served as the main examiner in 980 and 983 CE. Su Yijian was Song Bai's disciple. He passed the civil exam in 980 and served as the examiner in 985, 989, and 992 CE. They represent two generations of scholar-officials who were selected from the civil exam and became influential academy officials in the late tenth century and early eleventh century, succeeding officials who had served earlier regional rulers.[111]

[110] The number of *jinshi* was more than ten times than the Tang dynasty, rising up to three hundred candidates each year. See statistics in Gong, *et al.*, *Songdai dengke zonglu*, 7615. For the network of "same year" in facilitating the formation of political cliques, see Ho, "Politics and Factionalism," 42–8.
[111] Ho, "Politics and Factionalism," 43–7.



From the above analysis, we can see that Song Bai and Su Yijian were the central figures connecting high-ranking officials in the West Lake Lotus Society, surpassing historical understanding that this community was led by Wang Dan.[112] Neither Song Bai nor Su Yijian held powerful political positions or participated in administrative affairs; rather, they were literary officials at court as the head of Hanlin Academicians. Song Bai received his *jinshi* degree in 961 and was part of the initial group of literati chosen by Emperor Taizu.[113] He became an

[112] For instance, Zhipan recognizes Wang Dan as the head of the West Lake Lotus Society, see *FZTJ*, *T. no. 2035, 49:*400c19-23.
[113] Gong, *et al.*, *Songdai dengke zonglu*, 4–6.

influential figure in the literary sphere during Emperor Taizong's reign, serving three times as the examiner of the civil examination in the years 980, 983, and 989 respectively, and he gained a reputation for selecting competent officials for the central government.[114] As the *Long Record* documents, "Song Bai presided as the examiner of the civil exam three times, and his selections included eminent officials such as Su Yijian and Wang Yucheng."[115] The most significant selection was the *jinshi* candidates in 980, out of which four ascended to Grand Councilors, one to Vice Grand Councilor, and two to Assistant Commissioners of Military Affairs, as Koon-wan Ho calculated.[116] It was therefore honorably named the "List of Dragons and Tigers" (*longhu bang* 龍虎榜). [117] As evident in the above graph, the *jinshi* of 980, along with Song Bai himself, secured the first, fourth, fifth, sixth, and ninth places in the anthology. This indicates that the *jinshi* candidates of 980 were among the most distinguished officials in the West Lake Lotus Society.

Song Bai was also renowned for his promotion of literary talents. The *Song History* records: "As for people of the younger generation who possessed literary talent, Song Bai would always praise them highly. Many prominent contemporaries followed him, for instance, Hu Dan and Tian Xi were both his disciples."[118] 後進之有文藝者，必極意稱奬，時彥多宗之。如胡旦、田錫皆出其門下. As the examiner of the civil examination, Song Bai had the capacity to select many young men of literary merit. For instance, Wang Yucheng 王禹偁 submitted his

[114] *SS*, 439.12998–9.
[115] *XCB*, 29.654.
[116] Ho, "Politics and Factionalism," 40.
[117] Gong Dingchen 龔鼎臣, *Dongyuanlu* 東原錄, *Quan Song biji* 全宋筆記 ed. (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2012), 8.9:1.187. For more analysis of the "List of Dragons and Tigers", see Ho, "Politics and Factionalism," 34–41.
[118] *SS*, 439.13000.

literary works to Song Bai in 979, seeking his recommendation for the civil examination.[119] Wang Yucheng was admitted in 983, as was Yao Xuan 姚鉉, another eminent literary man and compiler of the *Wencui* 文粹.[120] Additionally, Song Bai was also a poet who followed the style of Bai Juyi and had a close relationship with other literary men like Li Zhi and Li Zong'e.[121]

Su Yijian, on the other hand, represented the next generation of scholar-officials who held substantial influence within the central government's cultural sphere. He passed the civil examination as the top *jinshi* in 980, and won the favor of the examiner Song Bai and Emperor Taizong for his literary proficiency. In the subsequent years, he served as the principal examiner of the civil exams: he began as an assistant examiner in 985 and later assumed the role of chief examiner in 989 and 992.[122] Like Song Bai, Su also demonstrated good judgment in recognizing talent, selecting capable officials like Chen Yaosou 陳堯叟, the top examination graduate of 989, who later rose to the position of Grand Councilor in 1012. Similarly, Ding Wei 丁謂 (966-1037), another *jinshi* in 992, ascended to the Grand Councilor in 1020. Beyond political talents, Su also

[119] Wang Yucheng, "Tou shusongshi shu" 投宋拾遺書, in *QSW*, 7:151.414. This is the tradtion of "xingjuan" 行卷, which means presenting one's writings to the examiners before the exam. See Cheng Qianfan 程千帆, *Tangdai jinshi xingjuan yu wenxue* 唐代进士行卷与文学, in *Cheng Qianfan quanji* 程千帆全集, *Vol. 8* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000), 5–30. In the early Northern Song, the tradition of "xingjuan" persisted until the reign of Emperor Zhenzong, when the civil service exam became anonymous. See Ai Bingmei 艾冰梅 and Qian Jianzhuang 钱建状, "Jinshi xingjuan yu songchu guwen de fuxing——yi songbai wei kaocha zhongxin," 进士行卷与宋初古文的复兴——以宋白为考察中心 *Jiaoyu yu kaoshi* 教育与考试 no. 2 (2017): 45–50.

[120] Yao Xuan was the compiler of *Wencui*. For details of *Wencui*, see Anna M. Shields, "Defining the 'Finest': A Northern Song View of Tang Dynasty Literary Culture in the Wen Cui," *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 4, no. 2 (2017): 306–35.

[121] Wang Guolin 汪国林, "Shilun beisong zhenzong chao hanlin xueshi baiti shigechuangzuo," 试论北宋真宗朝翰林学士白体诗歌创作 *Yunnan nongye daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 云南农业大学学报(社会科学版) 8, no. 3 (2014): 116–22.

[122] Zhuge, *Songdai keju ziliao changbian*, 65, 80, 90.

selected literary talents: poets who were later classified as Xikun 西昆 poets[123]——Li Zong'e 李宗諤——achieved *jinshi* status under Su Yijian in 989.

Further, I would like to argue that the civil examination of 992 was especially important in forming the West Lake Lotus Society. Su Yijian wrote the preface for the *West Lake Lotus Anthology* in the autumn of 991 (see the chart on p. ?). His preface shows his admiration for Shengchang and the identification as a "Pure Conduct Disciple" in the anthology further implies his dedication to the community. In the first month of 992, Su served as the principal examiner of the civil examination, along with four assistant examiners. It was in this year that Su Yijian proposed that all the examiners should stay at the Secretariat without returning home from the day they received the appointment.[124] It was perhaps during this residency that Su Yijian introduced the West Lake Lotus Society to his colleagues. As a result, three of the four assistant examiners agreed to join the community: Lü Youzhi 呂祐之, Wang Dan 王旦, and Qian Ruoshui 錢若水. Additionally, three *jinshi* from the 992 examinations joined the community: the top *jinshi* Sun He 孫何, the second *jinshi* Zhu Taifu 朱台符, and the fourth *jinshi* Ding Wei. Sun He and Ding Wei were good friends, both extolled by Wang Yucheng for their prose writing.[125] They later composed inscription texts and prefaces for the West Lake Lotus Society in 1002 and 1006, respectively.

[123] The Xikun 西昆 poets refer to a group of poets in the early Northern Song who imitated the poetic style of Li Shangyin 李商隱. They acquired the name of Xikun due to a poetry anthology titled *Xikun chouchang ji* 西崑酬唱集 compiled by Yang Yi 楊億 and other academy officials when they were working on the compilation project of *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜. For more information, see Wang Zhongluo 王仲荦, *Xikun Chouchang ji zhu* 西昆酬唱集注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 1–7.
[124] *SHY*, Xuanju 19.2.
[125] Sima Guang 司馬光, *Sushui jiwen* 涑水記聞, *Quan Song biji,* 1.7:2.31.

In summary, the network analysis of the *West Lake Lotus Anthology* provides novel insights into the organization of the West Lake Lotus Society. It reveals that 42% of the members were linked through the civil examination, which expanded significantly in scope and influence during the final two decades of the tenth century under Emperor Taizong's reign. Specifically, the community's highest-ranking scholar-officials were principally associated with Song Bai and Su Yijian in the "mentor-disciple" and "same year" networks formed in the civil examination. Hence, it becomes evident that the West Lake Lotus Society encompassed two generations of literati during the early Northern Song period: Song Bai and Su Yijian epitomized two successive generations of literati who fostered connections among other members within the network established through the civil examination.

Network in Academies and Institutes: Compilation Projects and Literary Activities

While there were over one hundred scholar-officials who earned the *jinshi* degree in each examination, one might wonder why only a fraction of these *jinshi* decided to join the West Lake Lotus Society. Reviewing the political titles of the community members reveals that thirty-eight members (42%) held positions in the Three Institutes and Imperial Archives (*sanguan bige* 三館秘閣). This raises the question: could their service in the academies and institutes have facilitated the formation of the West Lake Lotus Society network?

The Three Institutes and the Imperial Archives comprised the Historiography Institute (*Shiguan* 史館), the Institute for the Glorification of Literature (*Zhaowen guan* 昭文館), the Academy of Scholarly Worthies (*Jixian yuan* 集賢院), and the Imperial Archives (*Bige* 秘閣). These four institutions were collectively organized under the Academy for the Veneration of Literature (Chongwen yuan 崇文院). The academies and institutes (*guan'ge* 館閣) were a

political and cultural legacy from the Tang Dynasty, which assumed an increasingly prominent role in the Song Dynasty. The academy institutes fulfilled two core functions: the first was that they served as national library and scholarly agency that facilitated the compilation of enclyclopedia and official histories; second, their goal was to "garnering talents", nurturing officials who were capable in political writing and government administration.[126] They also provided a rapid path for political promotion.[127] Statistically, during the Northern Song period, over half of all Grand Councilors had previously served in academic and institutional posts (*guanzhi* 館職).[128]

The organizational structure of academic and institutional posts was complex in the early Northern Song period, combining "assignments" (*zhi* 職) and "commissions" (*chaiqian* 差遣) across various posts.[129] For this article, I will concentrate solely on those who were physically present and directly involved in the operations of the Academy for the Veneration of Literature. I observed that many members of the West Lake Lotus Society participated in compilation

[126] For the core function of academy institutes, see Gong Yanming 龚延明, "Songdai Chongwenyuan shuangzhong zhineng tanxi—yi sanguan bige guan shizhi, tiezhi wei zhongxin" 宋代崇文院双重职能探析—以三馆秘阁官实职、贴职为中心, *Beijing daxue xuebao (Zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 北京大学学报(哲学社会科学版) 53.4 (2016): 136–41; Cheng Mingming 成明明, "Bei Song guange yu wenxue yanjiu," 北宋馆阁与文学研究 (Ph.D. diss., Sichuan University, 2006), 84–126. For a detailed analysis of the function of "nurturing talents" in the academies and institutes, see Xiong Huei-Lan, "A Reservoir of Talent: An Analysis of the Career Advancement of Imperial Library Officials during the Southern Song," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 48, no. 1 (2019): 11–13.

[127] Gong, "Songdai chongwenyuan shuangchong zhineng tanxi", 133–134.

[128] In the Northern Song, statistics show that many eminent Grand Councilors had served as the academicians in the Three Institutes and the Imperial Archives. The percentage is that 50% during Emperor Taizong's reign, 48% during Emperor Taizong's reign, 70% during Emperor Renzong's reign, 67% during Emperor Yingzong's reign, and 85% during Emperor Shenzong's reign. See Li Changxian 李昌宪, "Songdai wenguan tiezhi zhidu," 宋代文官贴职制度 *Wenshi* 文史 30 (1988): 109–35.

[129] For a discussion of the academic and institutional posts as "assignments" (*zhi* 職) or "commissions" (*chaiqian* 差遣), see Xiong, "A Reservoir of Talent," 13–18.

projects for encyclopedias and official histories. Therefore, I will examine whether collaboration on these scholarly endeavors established an additional connection among the members.

During Emperor Taizong's reign, the most important cultural projects were the compilation of three grand encyclopedias in the late tenth century undertaken by the academy officials: the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (*Imperial Encyclopedia of the Taiping xingguo era*), compiled between 977 and 983, the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (*Extensive Records of the Taiping xingguo era*), compiled between 977 and 978, and the *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 (*Finest Blossoms from the Garden of Elegant Writing*), compiled between 982 and 987.[130] Among the fourteen compilers of the *Taiping yulan* and *Taiping guangji*, four compilers joined the West Lake Lotus Society: Song Bai, Lü Wenzhong 吕文仲, Wu Shu 吳淑, Ruan Sidao 阮思道. Guo Bogong further suggested that only four compilers worked full-time on the project: Wu Shu, Lü Wenzhong, Tang Yue 湯悅, and Wang Kezhen 王克貞, all of them from the Southern Tang.[131] Thus, we can observe that Wu Shu and Lü Wenzhong, two southern officials, were connected to other members of the West Lake Lotus Society through their collaboration on the encyclopedia compilation projects.

The compilation of *Wenyuan Yinghua* had a closer bearing on the West Lake Lotus Society since its date was closer to the initiation of the West Lake Lotus Society: seven out of the fourteen compilers were members of the Lotus Society, including Li Zhi 李至, Wang Dan, Su Yijian, Song Bai, Song Shi 宋湜, Lü Wenzhong, and Wu Shu. Compilers of *Wenyuan Yinghua*

[130] A detailed account of the compilation projects, see Johannes Kurz, "The Politics of Collecting Knowledge: Song Taizong's Compilations Project," *T'oung Pao* 87, no. 4/5 (2001): 289–316; John Haeger, "The Significance of Confusion: The Origins of *The T'ai-p'ing Yü-Lan*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88, no. 3 (1968): 401–10; Russell Kirkland, "A World in Balance: Holistic Synthesis in the 'T'ai-p'ing Kuang-Chi,'" *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies*, no. 23 (1993): 43–70.
[131] Guo Bogong 郭伯恭, *Song sidashu kao* 宋四大書考 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1967), 16–7, 53–4.

involved more eminent northern officials like Li Zhi and Wang Dan, but the two southern officials, Lü Wenzhong and Wu Shu, also contributed to the compilation of *Wenyuan Yinghua*.

Johannes Kurz has calculated the geographical distribution of the encyclopedia compilers, differentiating between northern and southern officials. He also suggested that this action facilitated the cultural communication between southern and northern literati.[132] If the civil examination network connected officials from the north, the network of academy officials included literati from the south, for instance, the principal compilers of *Taiping Yulan* and *Taiping Guangji* —— Wu Shu, Lü Wenzhong and Ruan Sidao were literati from the Southern Tang. They were connected with other members of the West Lake Lotus Society through the network of academy officials, making it a geographically diversified religious community by involving officials from the newly-incorporated southern regions. Moreover, Song Bai was involved in the compilation of *Taiping Yulan*, *Taiping Guangji*, and *Wenyuan Yinghua*, making him the core figure that connected the network of civil exams and the academy officials.

Members in the West Lake Lotus Society	
Compilers of *Taiping Yulan* and *Taiping Guangji*	**Compilers of *Wenyuan Yinghua***
Song Bai 宋白	**Song Bai 宋白**
Wu Shu 吳淑	**Wu Shu 吳淑**
Lü Wenzhong 呂文仲	**Lü Wenzhong 呂文仲**
Ruan Sidao 阮思道	Li Zhi 李至

[132] Kurz, "The Politics of Collecting Knowledge," 310–316.

	Su Yijian 蘇易簡
	Song Shi 宋湜
	Wang Dan 王旦

Beyond the grand encyclopedia projects, academy officials were also responsible for composing the veritable records of emperors. For instance, among the community members of the Lotus Society, Qian Ruoshui, Liang Hao 梁顥, Li Zong'e, and Wang Yucheng were engaged in the revision of the *Veritable Records of Taizu* (*Taizu shilu* 太祖實錄), while Qian Ruoshui and Yang Yi were engaged in the composition of the *Veritable Record of Taizong* (*Taizong shilu* 太宗實錄).[133] In short, the cultural and historical projects conducted in the academy institutes brought together some of the most influential cultural and historical arbiters of the early Northern Song. Their support for the West Lake Lotus Society was a highly visible and surely influential endorsement of the society's religious and cultural activities.

In addition to their editorial and historiographical achievements, academy officials were also "literary attendants" of the emperor. Since Emperor Taizong appreciated cultural activities and often organized cultural events, academy officials also engaged in vigorous literary activities at the court. Su Yijian recounted that Emperor Taizong would invite academy officials to court banquets to view flowers and boating in the imperial garden, and on those occasions, academy officials would compose poetry and Emperor Taizong would compose matching poems.[134]

[133] Chen Yuanfeng 陈元锋, *Bei Song guange hanyuan yu shitan yanjiu* 北宋馆阁翰苑与诗坛研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), 177–87.
[134] *XCB*, 32.727.

These literary activities are evident in a poetry anthology titled the *Anthology of Banqueting at Academies* (*Jinlin yanhuiji* 禁林燕會集). The occasion for its production was that the Hanlin academician Su Yijian presented to the throne *Continued Records of the Hanlin Academy* (*Xu hanlin zhi* 續翰林志) and Emperor Taizong replied with a poetic line "You reside in a refined place" 卿居清華之地, and he also bestowed a horizontal board "The Office of the Jade Hall" 玉堂之署 in his calligraphy to Su. Su Yijian then organized an event, inviting other Hanlin academicians and academy officials to observe the calligraphy of the emperor. On this occasion, seventeen officials attended and composed poetry, including the Grand Councilors Li Fang 李昉 (925-996) and Zhang Qixian 張齊賢 (943-1014). Emperor Taizong also composed two poems for this event and praised the vigorous literary environment of academy officials. These poems were collected in the *Anthology of Banqueting at Academies*. This is the first large-scale poetry gathering in the academies during the Northern Song Dynasty,[135] exemplifying the medieval court culture and continuing the court literary traditions in the Tang Dynasty.[136] Among the seventeen officials in the *Anthology of Banqueting at Academies*, six joined the Lotus Society: Su Yijian, Lü Youzhi 呂祐之, Qian Ruoshui, Wang Dan, Pan Shenxiu 潘慎修, and Lü Wenzhong. This anthology demonstrates that academy officials engaged in a series of cultural and literary activities that fostered closer ties among them, in addition to their participation in the compilation projects.

In fact, many members of the West Lake Lotus Society possessed extraordinary literary talents and were renowned poets in the early Northern Song period. For example, Li Fang and Li

[135] See Chen, *Bei Song guange hanyuan yu shitan yanjiu*, 206–10; Cheng, "Bei Song guange yu wenxue yanjiu," 223–6.
[136] For the court poetry in the Tang Dynasty, see Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of the Early T'ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 3–13.

Zhi were both followers of Bai Juyi, and they exchanged poems between 988 and 991 that were preserved in an anthology titled the *Matching Poems of the Two Li (Erli changhe ji* 二李唱和集).[137] As mentioned previously, Wang Yucheng and Song Bai were also well-known for their poems that emulated the literary style of Bai Juyi. Yang Yi and Liu Shidao, on the other hand, represented the next generation of poets who transitioned to the literary style of Li Shangyin and compiled the anthology "Matching Poems of Xikun" (*Xikun chouchang ji* 西昆酬唱集) during 1005 and 1013.[138] Additionally, Tian Xi and Yao Xuan also gained prominence for their literary achievements and received commendation from Song Bai. It can be inferred that these literary connections played a significant role in forging connections among members of the West Lake Lotus Society.

Therefore, it was natural that poetry was the cultural medium Shengchang used to invite these scholar-officials to participate in the West Lake Lotus Society. Shengchang himself was celebrated for his poetic accomplishments: Song Bai extolled that "in addition to his Buddhist learning, Shengchang was very skilled at writing poetry, which could be compared with eminent poet-monks like Huixiu 惠休 and Jiaoran 皎然".[139] Thus, when he sent his poems to leading scholar-officials at court, they were enthusiastically received and appealed to many literary men, as documented in Ding Wei's preface to the anthology:

> So, Shengchang sent poems to the capital to summon ministers and senior officials. Since then, upon learning about Shengchang's invitation, nine out of ten officials with high rank were willing to join his community. Therefore, the three

[137] For a discussion of the literary style of the *Erli changhe ji*, see Qin Zhen 秦蓁, Li Bining 李碧凝, and Xiao Tiantian 肖田田, *Wang Yucheng "baiti shi" yanjiu* 王禹偁「白体诗」研究 (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 2018), 8–11.
[138] Wang, *Xikun chouchangji zhu*, 1–7.
[139] *YZWL*, *X.* no. 1015, 58: 564a17-18.

ducal ministers, the four advisors,[140] officials from the Bureau of Military Affairs and the Imperial Academy, literary talents from the Central Secretariat, imperial historiographer, and renowned literati from the Three Ministries[141], all sent poems as a pledge to join the community. [142]

繇是貽詩京師，以招卿大夫。自是，貴有位者，聞師之請，願入者十八九。故三公四輔，宥密禁林，西垣之辭人，東觀之史官，洎臺省素有稱望之士，咸寄詩以為結社之盟文。

It was through the medium of poetry that the Pure Land ideas and cultural activities was transmitted within the network of scholar-officials who recognized the value of poetry and would accept the invitation of a monk who displayed literary abilities as educated elites. The recognition of literature may have overridden officials' intellectual inclinations, even for some community members like Yao Xuan and Wang Yucheng who were also known for promoting Confucianist ethics.[143] These officials were connected to this Buddhist community not through endorsement of religious ideas, but through their recognition of poetry's power and the communal influence of the court scholar-official network. Here we can observe the influence of literature on the transmission of Pure Land teachings to Northern Song scholar-officials.

In this section, I investigated another type of connection between members in the West Lake Lotus Society: the network formed between academy officials. The academies and

[140] The three ducal ministers, the four advisors mean high-rank officials.
[141] Three Ministries are the Central Secretariat, the Grand Preceptor, and the Great General.
[142] *YZWL*, *X.* no. 1015, 58: 563b5-8.
[143] For Yao Xuan's promotion of Confucius and the classics as the foundation of Chinese culture and models for literary composition in *Wen cui*, see Shields, "Defining the 'Finest'," 312–4. For the Confucian inclination of Wang Yucheng, see Huang Qifang 黃啓方, *Wang Yucheng yanjiu* 王禹偁研究 (Taipei: Xuehai chubanshe, 1979), 27–9.

institutes were important institutions in the Song Dynasty since it was the manifestation of the Song state policy which held culture (*wen* 文) in higher esteem than military prowess. The academies and institutes gathered the most talented literary men from the civil service examination and surrendered southern regions. They were subsequently engaged in cultural projects and literary activities which enhanced their mutual bond. Literature, and especially poetry and poetic exchanges became an important device that connected the southern monk Shengchang to capital officials.

Furthermore, the above analysis demonstrates that the primary networks in the West Lake Lotus Society were those formed through the civil examination and among academy officials. These two networks were interrelated, as academy officials often served as examiners for the civil examinations. For instance, Song Bai, Su Yijian and Song Shi were academy officials who acted as *jinshi* examiners. Together, they can be considered networks of scholar-officials who gained increasing political and cultural influence in the early Northern Song period. These literary talents entered government service by passing the civil exams, then later connected as academy officials working on compilation projects, historical writings, and regular literary activities in the academy institutes.

Social Networks between the Monastery and Bureaucracy

Thus far, we have explored the networks between capital scholar-officials through the civil examination and academy institutes. But the question still remains: what was the connection between the southern monk Shengchang and top-tier officials in the capital, and more broadly, the networks between the monastery and bureaucracy? To answer this question, it is necessary to reexamine the importance of Buddhist culture in the Wuyue region during the tenth century. This

provides a lens through which to examine the transition of Pure Land teachings during this period.

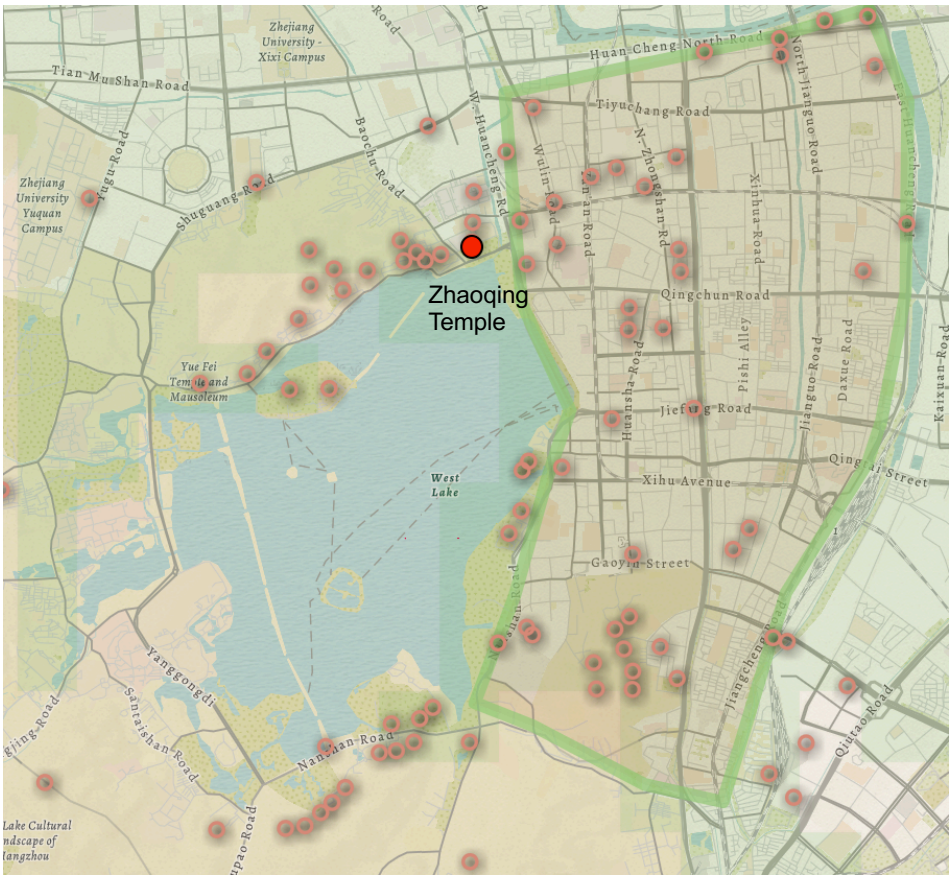


Image 2 Location of the Zhaoqing Temple in Hangzhou, RRS map[144]

The Zhaoqing Temple, the gathering place for the West Lake Lotus Society, was located in the northeastern corner of West Lake in Hangzhou, the capital of the Wuyue region in the tenth century, amidst a vibrant cluster of religious temples, as illustrated in the map above. We have discussed the significance of the Wuyue Buddhist culture in the tenth century, and we can

[144] This map was downloaded from the Regional Religious System (RRS) in Hangzhou China developed by the University of Arizona, which illustrates the confluence of Buddhist geography and culture in Hangzhou China from 618 to 2022. The link to the website is https://rrs.arizona.edu/digital-atlas-draft/.

now turn to Shengchang's position within it. Shengchang's biography reveals that he was an integral part of the network connecting monastic elites and regional rulers in tenth-century Wuyue. In his preface to the anthology, Song Bai documented that Shengchang was ordained at fifteen under Yuanming Zhixing 圓明志興, the deputy monk superintendent of Wuyue at the time. Shengchang later received Chan teachings from Wuyun Zhifeng 五雲志逢 (909–985), a notable disciple of the national preceptor Tiantai Deshao. As Brose points out, Tiantai Deshao was the most influential monk in the Wuyue region, and his disciples "received the vast majority of royal patronage and temple appointments."[145]

As a member of this prestigious Buddhist lineage, Shengchang became an abbot at Zhaoqing Temple at quite a young age, and he also established solid ties with the ruling Qian family. It was the Qian family members who recommended Shengchang to court. Qian Yan 錢儼 (937–1003), the younger brother of Qian Chu, submitted a memorial to the Song court in 984 CE, advocating for a purple robe for Shengchang when the monk was only twenty-five. Additionally, Qian Yi 錢易 (968–1026), the nephew of Qian Chu, wrote the general preface to the *West Lake Lotus Society Anthology* in 1009.[146] Thus, though Shengchang was based in Hangzhou, his religious accomplishments were relayed to the court by the Qian family. They likely also propagated his reputation among their colleagues and the literary circle.

After the Qian family surrendered to the Song court and was relocated north, Shengchang quickly began cultivating close relationships with Song officials in Hangzhou. As the capital of the Liangzhe Circuit, Hangzhou was an important economic hub in the Jiangnan region, whose

[145] Brose, *Patrons and Patriarchs*, 111.
[146] *YZWL*, *X.* no. 1015, 58: 564a9-14. For a detailed account of the lineage of the Qian clan, see Hu Yaofei 胡耀飞, *Wuyue guo yu Wuyue Qian shi yan jiu* 吴越國与吴越錢氏研究 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2020), 157–206.

economy thrived in the Song Dynasty and assumed important status in international trade. Located at the start of the Grand Canal, Hangzhou was strategically important for transporting rice, silk and commercial products from the south to the north, as well as transporting provincial taxes.[147] Thus, the Fiscal Commissioner (*zhuanyunshi* 轉運使) of Hangzhou, responsible for tax assessments and collection of the Jiangnan region, was an important position typically assigned to high-ranking court officials. In fact, numerous members of the West Lake Lotus Society, such as Zhang Quhua 張去華, Sun He 孫何, Yao Xuan 姚鉉, Zeng Zhiyao 曾致尧, and Chen Jing 陳靖, served as Fiscal Commissioners of Jiangnan.

Analyzing the poems in the *West Lake Lotus Anthology*, I found officials working in Hangzhou approached their topics differently from capital officials. They gave personal accounts of connections with Shengchang and detailed descriptions of Zhaoqing Temple and West Lake, whereas capital officials wrote more imaginatively, suggesting that they had never been to the south and met Shengchang in person. Among the Hangzhou officials, Zhang Quhua (938–1006) held a central position linking Shengchang with eminent capital officials. He worked twice in Hangzhou: he firstly assumed the role of Fiscal Commissioner of Jiangnan in 982 and later took charge in Hangzhou in 997.[148] Importantly, he identified himself as a "Pure Conduct Disciple" in the anthology, exhibiting deep Buddhist commitment. Compared to other quatrains in the anthology, he uniquely composed an extensive poem praising Shengchang's virtues and the scenic beauty of Zhaoqing Temple.[149] His poem displayed mastery of Buddhist terminology and

[147] For the significance of Hangzhou in the commercial transportation system during the tenth century, see Zheng, *Zhongguo gudai jingji zhongxin nanyi he Tang Song jiangnan jingji yanjiu*, 316; Qi Xia 漆侠, *Songdai jingji shi* 宋代经济史 (Shanghai: Xinhua shudian, 1987), 940–3, 952–6; Liu, "The Making of a Fiscal State in Song China, 960–1279."
[148] *SS*, 360.10109–10.
[149] Jin, *XJTSWXCK*, 140–141.

strong will for Buddhist practice. Zhang Quhua was renowned for literary talent and received praise from Li Fang.[150] Passing the civil examination the same year as Song Bai, he became a close friend of Song.[151] His son-in-law was Xiang Minzhong, ranked first in the anthology, indicating Zhang Quhua's extensive connections. Given this evidence, Zhang Quhua was likely the central figure linking Shengchang with eminent capital officials, especially Xiang Minzhong and Song Bai, who occupied central positions in literati networks in the capital.

Wang Huaji 王化基, ranked third in the anthology, was another high-ranking official who served in Hangzhou in the late tenth century.[152] In his poem's preface in the *West Lake Lotus Anthology*, Wang delineated Shengchang's intention to emulate Huiyuan's religious community at Mount Lu:

> Master Shengchang, a man of pure conduct, often admired the practitioners at Mount Lu who established the Lotus Society as a retreat from the dust of the worldly life. Besides Huiyuan, Huiyong, Liu Yimin, and Lei Cizong, there were in total eighteen members. Those who did not participate in this assembly did so because Xie Lingyun was emotionally disturbed, and Tao Yuanming was obsessed with wine. I consider myself fortunate, for my mind is free from worry, and I am not led astray by wine. Even more fortunate, the leader of the Hanlin Academy was the first [in the anthology], and the scholar of the Literature Institute came after,[153] extending to all our Buddhist fellows, entering

[150] *SS*, 360.10108.
[151] *SS*, 439.12999.
[152] Wang Huaji served as Manager of Affairs in Hangzhou (in effect Vice Grand Councilor) in the late tenth century, see Qian Yueyou 潛說友, *Xianchun Lin'an zhi* 咸淳臨安志 (China Comprehensive Gazetteers Database electronic edition), 46.2.
[153] This refers to the sequence of prefaces of the anthology. According to Chen Fei's analysis, the master of Hanlin denotes Su Yijian, whose title was Hanlin academician and the scholar of the Literature Institute denotes Song Bai, who held post in the Institute for the Glorification of Literature (*zhaowen*

together into the realm of enlightenment. Despite distinctions of name between the secular and monastic, the deeds of serving the emperor or serving the Buddha were equally virtuous. I bring forth the treasure of tranquility and purity, in harmony with a prosperous and peaceful era. Therefore, I composed this long gāthā[154], to record the good cause [of the Lotus Society].[155]

淨行師常公，多慕廬山道友，結蓮社為出塵之會。自遠永劉雷之下，凡十八人。其不得預斯會者，以謝靈運心亂、陶淵明嗜酒故也。予所幸者，心無慮焉，酒無惑焉。而又幸者，翰林主人首於前，文館學士繼於後，洎諸釋友，同入道場。雖在俗在僧，立名乃異；而事君事佛，為善則同。載延清靜之寶，式契隆平之運。輒書長偈，用志勝因。

Wang Huaji clearly understood Shengchang's intention to emulate Huiyuan's community and supported it, seeing himself as better than the eighteen worthies in Huiyuan's cohort. He also emphasized Song Bai, "leader of the Hanlin Academy," and Su Yijian, "scholar of the Literature Institute," highlighting the literary aspect of this community. This implies Wang had close ties with Shengchang. Another official, Xue Ying 薛映 (951-1024), who served as Manager of Military Affairs in Hangzhou, was recommended by Wang.[156] In a poem, Xue Ying noted

guan 昭文館). Wang Huaji must have seen an early copy of the *West Lake Lotus Society Anthology* to know the sequence of the prefaces of Su Yijian and Song Bai, since Song Bai's preface predated Su Yijian's. See Chen Fei, "Beisong xihulianshe sheji bianzuan kao", 23.

[154] The Sanskrit gāthā means the poetic verses of the scriptures, as opposed to the prose. See DDB: http://buddhism-dict.net.ezproxy.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%81%88. Updated 2021-11-01.

[155] Jin, *XJTSWXCK*, 137–8.

[156] *SS*, 350.10089–90.

Shengchang had visited him to present a copy of the "Pure Conduct Chapter," further evidencing Shengchang's connections with senior officials of Hangzhou:

導師訪我苦留連，	The teacher visited me and energetically lingered on,
密授華嚴淨行篇.	secretly he gave me the "Pure Conduct chapter" of the *Flower Ornament*.
久葺禪庵似廬岳，	He had long been renovating the monastery to be like that of Mount Lu,[157]
更招社客擬香蓮.[158]	and further summoned community members to imitate the [society of] fragrant lotus.[159]

Besides senior officials, Shengchang also extended his visits to lower-ranking officials in Hangzhou. Zhang Su 張肅, who appears as the fiftieth poet in the anthology, served as a sixth-rank official in Hangzhou. He portrayed his interaction with Shengchang in his poem, stating, "A distinguished monk visited the dusty official;/ he formed a community as members of the Lotus Society" 高僧來訪塵埃吏，結作蓮華社里人.[160] Lu Kuang 陸曠, placed number eighty-five in the anthology, held the position of Prefectural Judge of Hangzhou. His poem reads: "Pine tree withering, cloud heavy, they conceal the gate of Chan;/ when (the master) received humble officials, he also broke into smiles" 松枯雲老掩禪關，每接卑官亦破顏.[161] Both Zhang Su and

[157] This refers to the Donglin temple.
[158] Jin, *XJTSWXCK*, 141.
[159] The fragrant lotus refers to the religious society of Huiyuan.
[160] Jin, *XJTSWXCK*, 147.
[161] Jin, *XJTSWXCK*, 152.

Lu Kuang underscored that, despite their lower official ranking, Shengchang nonetheless respected them and received them with warmth and hospitality.

Shengchang also visited officials outside Hangzhou. When Sun He 孫何 served as the Fiscal Commissioner of Liangzhe,[162] Shengchang traveled to Suzhou and asked him to compose the backside of the stele inscription for the West Lake Lotus society, as Sun He stated in his text:

> In the fourth year of Xianping (1001), Master Chang traveled afar from Zhe River[163] to Suzhou, where he lived for half a year, and he asked me for the stele inscription. [164]
>
> 咸平四年，常公遠自淛水來乎姑蘇，旅寓半年，以碑陰爲請。

[162] *SS*, 360.10100.
[163] 淛水 is the alternative writing for 浙水. Here it refers to Hangzhou.
[164] Qian, *Xianchun Lin'an zhi*, 79.9, also in *QSW*, 186.209.

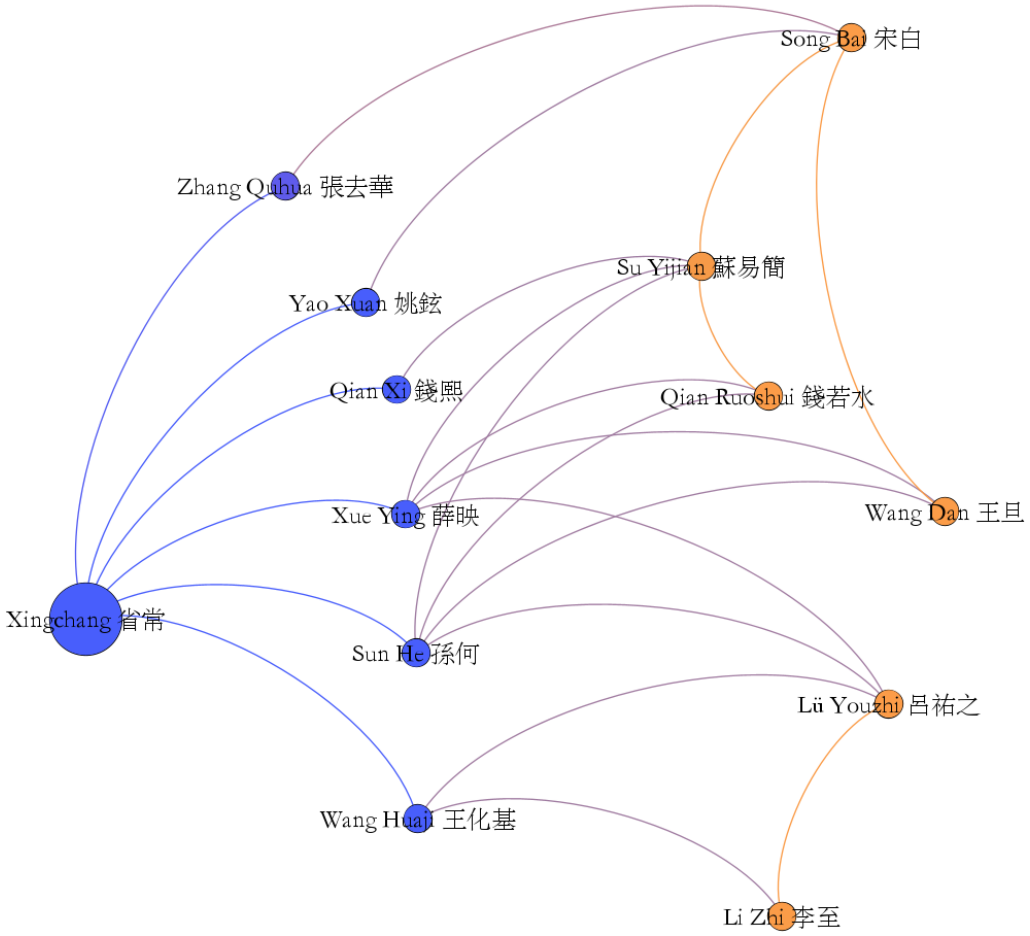


Figure 1 Shengchang's Connection with Hangzhou Officials and their ties to Capital Officials

In summary, Shengchang's West Lake Lotus Society was founded upon the thriving Buddhist culture of tenth-century Wuyue. Specifically, he inherited connections between monastic elites and Wuyue's ruling Qian family, who then recommended him to the Song court upon their relocation to the north. After their move, Shengchang cultivated close ties with senior Hangzhou officials, often dispatched from the capital. These officials were linked to capital literati through civil service exams or personal affiliations. A close reading of the *West Lake*

Lotus Anthology reveals Zhang Quhua as the central figure connecting Shengchang with eminent capital officials like Song Bai and Xiang Minzhong. Overall, this section illuminates the substantial influence of Wuyue's Buddhist culture in the tenth century on the subsequent development of Pure Land teachings in the Northern Song.

Different Models of Pure Land Communities in the Song Dynasty

The West Lake Lotus Society marks the starting point for the prosperity of Pure Land communities in the Song Dynasty, but it also appears to stand out among Pure Land communities in the Song Dynasty due to its effort to include high-ranking officials and expand the reach of Pure Land communities into the capital. In this section, I will endeavor to outline some prominent characteristics of Pure Land communities during the Song Dynasty.

Firstly, there is a notable proliferation of Pure Land communities during this period. According to historical sources, I have identified twenty-one Pure Land communities in the Northern Song and twelve in the Southern Song (For a comprehensive list of these communities, please refer to Appendix 1). This surge in numbers, when compared to the Tang Dynasty, underscores the expanded reach and influence of Pure Land teachings, not only within monastic circles but also among the lay populace.

Daniel Getz has made a compelling case regarding Pure Land communities in the Song era, arguing that they were primarily organized by Tiantai monks.[165] He made detailed analysis of three prominent Pure Land communities and proposed two distinct models of Pure Land communities during this period. The first model, a small-scale elitist one, is exemplified by Zunshi's community in 996 CE. This model included residents of Mingzhou and possibly

[165] Getz, "T'ien-t'ai Pure Land Societies and the Creation of the Pure Land Patriarchate," 477–523.

patrons of Baoyun Monastery. It relied on the method of meditative recollection of the Buddha. In contrast, the second model, represented by Zhili starting from 1013 CE, is seen by Getz as a departure from the earlier, relatively small and elite gatherings led by figures like Huiyuan and Zunshi.

Zhili's model, according to Getz, featured a much larger community with around 10,000 members, encompassing individuals from all socio-economic backgrounds. In this community, the primary practice was the invocation of Amitabha Buddha's name. Getz argues that Zhili not only made membership in his society more accessible to a wider audience but also simplified the path to rebirth in the Pure Land through an easier practice.

Building on Getz's findings, it is worthwhile to extend the argument beyond sectarian boundaries and consider the geographical concentration of Pure Land communities, as depicted in the map below.[166] It shows that Pure Land communities were concentrated in the Liangzhe Circuit. The geographical distribution of this region overlapped with the Wuyue territory during the tenth century, so it becomes pertinent to explore the relationship between Pure Land communities and the broader Wuyue Buddhist culture.

[166] Most Pure Land communities were concentrated in the Jiangnan region. I have only two cases where they were located in the capital.



As previously discussed, Pure Land teachings gained significant prominence in the Wuyue region during the tenth century. Yanshou established a substantial Amitābha community of 10,000 members and produced numerous copies of the Amitābha pagoda for widespread distribution (see pages 11–12). Baoyun Yitong 寶雲義通 (927–988), a Tiantai patriarch and mentor to Zhili and Zunshi, notably referred to people as "fellow villagers" (*xiangren* 鄉人) and articulated, "I consider the Pure Land as my hometown, and you should all be reborn there, which makes you my fellow villagers" (吾以淨土為故鄉, 諸人皆當往生, 皆吾鄉中之人也).[167] Both Yanshou and Yitong made deliberate efforts to popularize Pure Land teachings among a

[167] *FZTJ, T.* no. 2035, 49: 191c4-6.

broader and more diverse audience within the Wuyue region. This suggests that Pure Land communities played a crucial role in the dissemination of Buddhist teachings beyond sectarian boundaries and contributed to the broader Buddhist culture of the Wuyue region.

Transitioning to the Song Dynasty, following the legacy of Yanshou and Yitong, monks in the Jiangnan region began to experiment with various strategies to disseminate Pure Land teachings. Shengchang was the first one to utilize his network with the Qian family and local Hangzhou officials to extend the influence of the Pure Land community to the capital. He was also notable for being the first to explicitly claim to be carrying on the traditions of Huiyuan's community.

On the other hand, Yitong's eminent disciples began to play a significant role in the organization of Pure Land communities. In the Baoyun temple where Yitong was abbot, his disciple Zunshi established a community of over 100 members in 996 CE, dedicated to meditation on the image of Amitābha Buddha. Getz defined Zunshi's community as "elitist", as its practice was meditation on the image of Amitābha Buddha. It represented an attempt to fully imitate Huiyuan's community, as Zunshi later composed "*Nianfo* samadhi poems" to emulate Huiyuan's poetic works. However, it is noteworthy that Zunshi's community was regional in scope, compared to the geographical expansion achieved by Shengchang's community. When Zunshi moved to Mount Dongye in Tiantai region, he started a new Pure Land community focused on the practice of *nianfo* samadhi.

Following Zunshi's endeavor in organizing the Pure Land community, Zhili also established a Pure Land community, sized up to 10,000 participants at the Yanqing Temple 延慶寺 in Mingzhou (nowadays Ningbo in the Zhejiang Province). Getz has translated the "Announcement of the Gathering of the Nianfo Assembly: The Nianfo Pure Society of the

Yanqing yuan in Mingzhou" in his article,[168] and I will quote a section of it to explain the structure of this Pure Land community:

> This society broadly gathers together monks and lay persons, men and women, ten thousand people [in all, so that they may] through their whole lives invoke the Buddha Amitabha, give rise to the aspiration for enlightenment, and seek birth in the Pure Land. Every year on the fifteenth day of the second month [the society] will set up the place of practice in the monastery, make offerings to the Three Jewels, and hold a vegetarian feast for the monks. The merit [from this convocation] will extend the emperor's longevity and contribute to the prosperity of the people.
>
> 當社普結僧俗男女一萬人，畢世稱念阿彌陀佛，發菩提心，求生淨土。每年二月十五日，於院啟建道場，供養三寶、設僧田功德，祝延帝壽，福利軍民。
>
> With regard to the manner in which the assembly is formed, there will be 210 assembly heads, who act as proselytizers[169]. Each one will enroll forty-eight people, with each person [receiving] a copy of the Calendar Exhorting [the practice of] Buddha-Recitation, Repentance, and Vow. Every day, in order to save all beings through the attainment of the Pure Land, they should invoke the Buddha's name for one thousand utterances, repent serious transgressions that obstruct the Way, and make the vow to enlightenment. They are requested to mark the number of recitations on the calendar. On the day of the [annual]

[168] Getz, "T'ien-t'ai Pure Land Societies and the Creation of the Pure Land Patriarchate", 494–496.
[169] Proselytizer (*huishou* 會首), literally means "assembly heads who entreat and invite".

assembly, they will bring their calendars and a pure donation of forty-eight coins ahead of time to the monastery [where] these things will be gathered and recorded in a register. On that day, [that which was recorded on their calendars] will be announced.

其建會之法，勸請會首二百一十人，各募四十八人，逐人請念佛懺願曆子一道。每日稱念佛名一千聲，懺障道重罪，發菩提願，為度眾生，取於淨土。請畫佛數於曆子上。至建會日，預齎曆子，并備淨財四十八文，到院攢錄上疏，至日表宣。

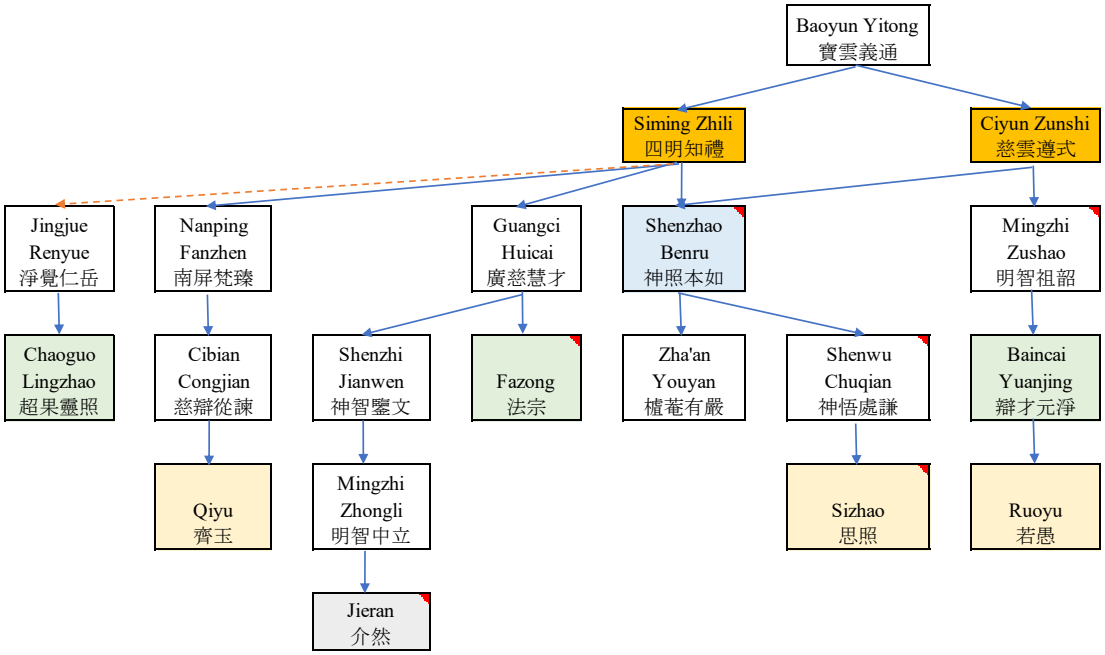
Zhili's Pure Land community, on the other hand, set the norm for Pure Land communities in the Song era in terms of scale and religious practice. Zhili carefully designed the organizing structure, the assembly rituals, and the daily practice of the Pure Land community. It was in a vertical structure, in which he oversaw two hundred and ten group leaders, who were responsible for forty-eight members. It was locally based, related by kinship or personal acquaintance, and possibly included women. The practice method was clear, simple, and feasible: one thousand times reciting Buddha's name and making a record in a notebook each day. Once a year the 10,000 participants would gather to perform a ritual to return their merits to the emperor and the populace. Zhili also clarified the procedure if one member died: other 9,999 members should recite one thousand times of Buddha's name to transcend the deceased to the Pure Land, and they should immediately find another member to fill in the position. Zhili wished that there would always be 10,000 members to practice the Pure Land tradition. Due to the simplicity of his rules, Zhili's Pure Land community was continued for 190 years and had attracted innumerable people.

Though Shengchang, Zunshi, and Zhili organized their Pure Land communities differently, one shared feature may be their relationship with eminent scholar-officials. For instance, during his stay in Hangzhou, Zunshi communicated with scholar-officials to promote the Pure Land belief to the literati class. In 1011, when Zhang Dexiang 章得象 (978–1048) held office in Hangzhou, he invited Zunshi to lecture the Tiantai doctrines of śamatha-vipaśyanā in his abode. He also preached to the Hangzhou magistrate Ma Liang 馬亮 (978–1044) during his term of office from 1016 to 1026, and composed "Practice and Vow of the Pure Land Teaching and Rebirth Biographies" 淨土行願法門往生略傳 for him, which was printed by Ma Liang for circulation.[170] When the grand chancellor Wang Qinruo 王欽若 (962–1025) was relegated to Hangzhou in 1019, he visited Zunshi and was impressed by his erudition in Tiantai philosophy. When Wang Qinruo returned to office in the capital, he sent a memorial to the emperor to beneath the title "Mercy Cloud" (*Ciyun* 慈雲) to Zunshi and requested to include Zunshi's works to the Buddhist canon. Buddhist historiographers remarked that Zunshi and Wang Qinruo made a great contribution to the spread of Tiantai Buddhism to the north.[171]

The significance of Zunshi and Zhili's Pure Land communities lies in the fact that it established a tradition where their disciples carried on the practice of Pure Land communities. These communities were established either at the temples where Zunshi and Zhili resided or at new temples founded by their disciples. To illustrate this lineage within the Tiantai monks, a colored cell in the below table represents an individual who organized a Pure Land community. For instance, Benru 本如 (981–1050) inherited the lineage of Zunshi, and he continued the Pure Land community in Mount Dongye, and his community included Zhang Dexiang after Zhang

[170] Qisong, *Xinjin wenji* 鐔津文集, *T*. no. 2035, 49: 277a23-29.
[171] *T*. no. 2035, 49: 714c18-715a14.

was promoted to the grand chancellor in 1042. Over the course of seven years, Benru's Pure Land community grew into a large-scale monastery, gaining significant influence. Emperor Renzong even inscribed a board reading "White Lotus" to be displayed at Benru's temple in recognition of its prominence.[172] The White Lotus Temple was subsequently passed on to Benru's disciple, Chuqian 處謙, and Chuqian's own disciple, Sizhao 思照, carried forward the Pure Land community. It comprised one thousand members and persisted for a span of 30 years until Sizhao's passing.[173]



However, despite Tiantai monks continuing the tradition of organizing Pure Land communities, they seemed to have lost their connection with prominent scholar-officials, as we

[172] *FZTJ*, *T*. no. 2035, 49: 214b8-11.
[173] *FZTJ*, *T*. no. 2035, 49: 278a9-17.

have witnessed in the cases of Shengchang, Zunshi, Zhili, and Benru. Consequently, while the scale of these Pure Land communities continued to grow, ranging from hundreds to even ten thousand members, they failed to attract the involvement of top-level literati. Instead, these communities gradually evolved into a local tradition, thriving in various cities within the Jiangnan region and primarily composed of local gentry. The ambitious vision initially set forth by figures like Shengchang and Zunshi was not sustained. Nonetheless, the efforts of early Song monks established the standard for Pure Land communities. Notably, they successfully revived the tradition of Huiyuan's community. Even though their successors did not maintain connections with elite literati, they nevertheless carried the tradition forward within their local areas, engaging native lay practitioners.

In conclusion, the examination of Pure Land communities highlights the Song Dynasty as a transitional period in the development of Pure Land teachings. While Pure Land communities were scarce before the tenth century, they emerged as a prominent religious phenomenon during the Song Dynasty. This chapter places significant emphasis on the Buddhist culture of the Wuyue region in the tenth century, arguing that it laid the foundation for the trajectory of Pure Land teachings during the Song Dynasty.

Furthermore, this chapter provides a detailed analysis of the first Pure Land community in the Northern Song period: the West Lake Lotus Society organized by Shengchang. The results of the network analysis demonstrate that Shengchang made pioneering efforts to establish connections with high-ranking scholar-officials in order to expand the influence of his Pure Land community, particularly in the capital. He effectively utilized his network with the ruling Qian clan and local Hangzhou officials to achieve this goal. As a result, Pure Land communities

proliferated during the Song Dynasty and became a significant religious phenomenon. A closer examination reveals that they were predominantly concentrated in the Jiangnan region, indicating that they benefited from the foundation of Buddhist culture established in the Wuyue region during the tenth century.

Tiantai monks, in particular, employed various strategies to organize Pure Land communities. Zunshi adopted a more elitist model that involved meditative practices, while Zhili implemented a simpler practice, namely the invocation of Buddha's name, to attract a larger number of lay practitioners. Zhili's model eventually became the standard in subsequent eras. However, as their successors continued to organize Pure Land communities, they gradually lost national influence as they failed to establish connections with eminent literati in the capital and became more localized traditions. Nonetheless, these Pure Land communities in the Song Dynasty explicitly claimed to be the continuation of Huiyuan's religious community at Mount Lu and sought to emulate his legacy. This connection underscores the enduring influence of Huiyuan’s teachings on the development of Pure Land Buddhism during this period.

Chapter Two The Construction of the White Lotus Society and the Adaptation with Literati Culture

In the previous chapter, the examination of the West Lake Lotus Society reveals Shengchang's deliberate efforts to resurrect the tradition of Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416) and his religious community at Mount Lu. The Pure Land tradition in the Song Dynasty provides an interesting case in which Huiyuan and the group then known as the "Lotus Society" (*lianshe* 蓮社) became prominent, particularly in the context of establishing new Pure Land communities. In the Southern Song Pure Land anthology *Lebang wenlei* (*Categories of Writings on the Blissful Land* 樂邦文類), we can find numerous examples in which the founders of Pure Land communities claim to be the successors of Huiyuan's "Lotus Society". In this way, Huiyuan's status rose to prominence during the Song, overshadowing Pure Land advocators of the Tang, like Shandao and Daochuo, and led to his recognition as the first patriarch of the Pure Land tradition.[174] This raises questions about the Southern Song construction of the story of Huiyuan and the White Lotus Society. Additionally, the myth surrounding Huiyuan and the "Lotus Society" extended beyond religious spheres and became a significant cultural phenomenon among the literati in the Song Dynasty's literary and artistic traditions.[175] Although some

[174] For the change of Huiyuan's image, see Getz, "T'ien-t'ai Pure Land Societies and the Creation of the Pure Land Patriarchate", 502-9, and Li Qinhe 李勤合, "Weisheme shi Huiyuan: Huiyuan lianshe chuzu xingxiang de queli yu chuanbo" 为什么是慧远：慧远莲社初祖形象的确立与传播, *Baoji Wenli Xueyuan Xuebao* 40, no. 06 (2020): 33-44.

[175] For the "Lotus Society" in art history, see An-yi Pan, *Painting Faith: Li Gonglin and Northern Song Buddhist Culture* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2007), 173-282. For literary writings on the Lotus Society, see Huang Wenhan 黄文翰, "Songchu sanchao liansheshi yanjiu" 宋初三朝莲社诗研究 (MA thesis, Shandong Normal University, 2018).

Buddhist scholars may dismiss the historical truthfulness of Huiyuan's "Lotus Society,"[176] this chapter will take a different perspective. It aims to trace the origins of Huiyuan's "Lotus Society" and explore how Song scholar-officials adapted it to the literati culture.

Huiyuan and the "Lotus Society"

Huiyuan's "Lotus Society" invites numerous doubts from Buddhist scholars, who argue that it is a fabricated history.[177] However, when we examine the Pure Land practices in the Song Dynasty, we observe that Huiyuan's "Lotus Society" became a paradigm for common Pure Land practitioners. Zhongli Song 鍾離松 (1101-?), a *jinshi* of 1148, came from a family devoted to Buddhism. When he served in Suzhou in 1170, he met with a monk named Shi and other Pure Land practitioners from the local region. Inspired by the Lotus Society and the Donglin community, they formed a society and chanted the Buddha's name.

> In the summer of 1170, I was granted the favor to serve in the Sacrificial Office. While residing in Suzhou, I chanced upon the preacher Shi of Baoji Temple. We longed for the pure traditions of the Lotus Society and aspired to follow in the lofty footsteps of the Donglin community. As it happened, Mr. Li of Dongping and various other virtuous individuals were all diligently engaged in Pure Land cultivation for many years. We immediately felt a deep affinity with one another. Together, we formed a society to chant the Buddha's name in unison.[178]

[176] For instance, Tang Yongtong questions the existence of the "Lotus Society", the "Eighteen Worthies of Donglin" and the involvement of Tao Yuanming and Lu Xiujing. See Tang Yongtong 汤用彤, *Hanwei liangjin nanbei chao fojiao shi* 汉魏兩晋南北朝佛教史 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2011), 202-6.
[177] Tang, *Hanwei liangjin nanbei chao fojiao shi*, 202-6.
[178] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 189b7-12.

乾道庚寅夏，予蒙恩奉祠。僑寓蘇臺，邂逅寶積實講師，遐想蓮社清風，擬追東林高躅。會東平李侯洎諸名德，俱刻意熏修，多歷年所，遂莫逆於心，相與為社，同聲稱佛。

Zhongli Song drew inspiration from Huiyuan's "Lotus Society" to establish his own community with local monks and other Pure Land adherents who were dedicated to chanting the Buddha's name. His case was not unique; in fact, Huiyuan's "Lotus Society" became an esteemed model for Song Pure Land practitioners. While the narrative surrounding Huiyuan and the "Lotus Society" was largely constructed retrospectively, it became an integral and crucial component of the Pure Land tradition after the tenth century. Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine the development of this myth from the fifth to the thirteenth century to investigate what layers of elements were added to the original story and what socio-historical contexts facilitated those changes. Instead of dismissing it as false, this investigation will help us understand the transitions of the Pure Land tradition during the Song Dynasty.

The earliest documentation of Huiyuan's establishment of a Pure Land community can be found in the Buddhist bibliographic text *Collection of Records Concerning the Translation of the Tripiṭaka* (*Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集) by Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518) in the 510s. In Huiyuan's biography in this book, it is recorded that Huiyuan was a disciple of the eminent monk Dao'an 道安 (312/314–385) and later became the abbot of the Donglin Temple (*Donglin si* 東林寺) at the foot of Mount Lu (*Lushan* 廬山).[179] The account of how he established the Pure Land community is as follows:

[179] *T*. no. 2145, 55: 109b11-c7.

He led the assembly in the practice of the Buddhist way, ceaselessly from dawn to dusk. The legacy of Shakyamuni Buddha was thus revitalized here. Gradually, those who upheld the precepts and calmed their minds, those who renounced worldly dust and embraced pure faith, without any prior arrangement, came from far and wide. Liu Yimin from Pengcheng, Zhou Xuzhi from Yanmen, Bi Yingzhi from Xinchai, and Zong Bing from Nanyang, all of them renounced worldly life and abandoned fame, seeking company and retreat under Huiyuan's guidance. Thus, at the [Donglin] monastery, before the statue of Amitābha Buddha, Huiyuan organized a feast and made vows, with the collective aspiration for rebirth in the Western Pure Land.[180]

於是率眾行道，昏曉不絕。釋迦餘化，於斯復興。既而謹律息心之士，絕塵清信之賓，並不期而至，望風遙集。彭城劉遺民、鴈門周續之、新蔡畢穎之、南陽宗炳，並棄世遺榮，依遠遊止。遠乃於精舍無量壽像前，建齋立誓，共期西方。

The vow text composed by Liu Yimin was also recorded in this book. The opening lines of the vow state:

On the 28th day of the seventh month in 402 CE[181], Master Huiyuan, perceiving the profound and mysterious, felt his long-held aspirations awakened profoundly. He then extended an invitation to fellow practitioners, those with tranquilized minds and pure and unwavering faith, numbering one hundred and

[180] *T*. no. 2145, 55: 109c7-12.
[181] 惟歲在攝提秋，七月戊辰朔，二十八日乙未: This is an ancient method of recording time in astronomy, indicating July 28th, 402 C.E. in the lunar calendar. See *Biographies of Eminent Monks*.

twenty-three. They gathered before the statue of Amitābha Buddha at the Prajñā Terrace on the north slope of Mount Lu, and offered incense and flowers with reverence and made solemn vows.[182]

惟歲在攝提秋，七月戊辰朔，二十八日乙未。法師釋慧遠，貞感幽冥，宿懷特發。乃延命同志，息心清信之士，百有二十三人。集於廬山之陰般若臺精舍阿彌陀像前，率以香華敬鬳而誓焉。

From the account in the *Records of the Transmission of the Tripiṭaka*, we can gather fundamental details about Huiyuan's community. It was established by Huiyuan in the autumn of 402 CE at Donglin Temple, comprising a total of one hundred and twenty-three members.[183] Prominent figures in this community included Liu Yimin 劉遺民, Zhou Xuzhi 周續之, Bi Yingzhi 畢穎之, and Zong Bing 宗炳, all of whom were esteemed recluses of their time. Zhou Xuzhi was known for his Confucianist knowledge, while Zong Bing enjoyed recognition as a landscape painter and theorist.[184] This is unequivocally a Pure Land community. It is clearly stated that its primary aim was to achieve rebirth in the Western Pure Land, as demonstrated by their vows made before the statue of Amitābha Buddha. This constitutes the first layer of the myth surrounding Huiyuan and his community, which underwent variations in subsequent times. It's worth noting that in the 510s, the community had no official name, and only four members

[182] *T*. no. 2145, 55: 10912-13.
[183] For Huiyuan and his community members' Pure Land practices, see See Fang Litian 方立天, *Huiyuan jiqi foxue* 慧遠及其佛學 (Beijing: Xinhua shudian, 1984), 108-121.
[184] For Zong Bing's biography, see Sun Yaoqing 孙耀庆, "Jinsong zongbing jushi lve kao" 晋宋宗炳居士略考. *Hunan gong cheng xue yuan xue bao (She hui ke xue ban)* 28.1 (2018): 64–67.

were recorded by name: Liu Yimin, Zhou Xuzhi, Bi Yingzhi, and Zong Bing. None of these individuals were particularly well-known in literary history.

Another contemporary source, *Biographies of Eminent Monks* 高僧傳 by Huijiao 慧皎 (497-554), composed in the first half of the sixth century, contains similar accounts but includes three additional members in the community: Lei Cizong 雷次宗 (386-448), Zhang Caimin 張菜民, and Zhang Jishuo 張季碩.[185] Lei was a recluse at Mount Lu who specialized in Confucianist rituals and was later summoned by the emperor to the capital to teach.[186] In summary, according to sixth-century Buddhist sources, Huiyuan founded a religious community consisting of one hundred twenty-three individuals with the goal of seeking rebirth in the Western Pure Land. The leading figures in this community were eminent recluses from the early fifth century.

A prominent feature of this community was its literary production.[187] From existing sources, it appears that Huiyuan and his followers composed poems focused on the theme of "*nianfo* samādhi" 念佛三昧. "Nianfo" is a central practice in Pure Land teachings, signifying the "recollection, invocation, or chanting of [the name of] the Buddha."[188] *Samādhi* in Sanskrit means "concentration", and is related to the ability to establish and maintain one-focus of mind on a specific object of concentration.[189]

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[185] *Gaosengzhuan*, *T*. no. 2059, 50: 358c14-22. See Li Qinhe, "Weishenme shi huiyuan", 33-44.
[186] Shen Yue 沈約 et al., ed., *Songshu* 宋書 (Scripta Sinica Database electronic edition), 93.2292-4.
[187] For a detailed account of Huiyuan's literary composition and achievements, see Liu Yunhao 刘运好, "Lushan huiyuan wenxue chuangzuo kaolun,"庐山慧远文学创作考论, *Wenxue yichan* no.5 (2023): 34–47.
[188] The Chinese term *nianfo* is a translation of the Sanskrit term *buddhānusmṛti* (recollection of [the qualities of] the Buddha), one of the common practices designed to help develop meditative absorption (*dhyāna*) in the mainstream traditions. See Buswell, Robert E., Jr., and Donald S. Lopez, Jr. "Nianfo." In *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 580.
[189] "Samādhi." In *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 743.

Huiyuan himself wrote a preface to the "Anthology of *nianfo* samādhi" (念佛三昧詩集序), in which he explained the superiority of "*nianfo* samādhi" for Buddhist practitioners in achieving concentration compared to other Buddhist practices.[190] This suggests that there was a literary event involving the composition of poems on the Pure Land practice of "*nianfo* samādhi", and these poems were later collected in an anthology. Unfortunately, the anthology no longer exists, and only four poems by Wang Qiaozhi 王喬之 have survived.[191] Little is known about Wang Qiaozhi, but based on his name and place of origin, it appears that he belonged to one of the most prominent aristocratic clans of the fourth and fifth centuries: the Wang clan of Langye. This suggests that Huiyuan was not only associated with recluses but also had interactions with elite aristocratic families.

In addition to the "Anthology of *nianfo* samādhi", Huiyuan was a prominent figure in literary history and his community members actively engaged with literary compositions at Mount Lu.[192] His literary contributions encompassed both Buddhist and non-Buddhist writings. On the one hand, he authored numerous Buddhist inscriptions, eulogies, and *gāthā* (meaning "song" or "verse"). On the other hand, he gained recognition for his poems and prose depicting the scenery of Mount Lu, placing him on the trajectory of literary development from mystical poetry to landscape poetry in the fourth century.[193] The community that gathered around him also produced

[190] *Guang Hongming ji* 廣弘明集, *T*. no. 2103, 52: 351b10-c7. For an analysis of Huiyuan's *nianfo* samādhi practice, see Fang, *Huiyuan jiqi foxue*, 122-143.
[191] These poems survived in *Guang hongmingji*, *T*. no. 2103, 52: 351c8-17.
[192] For a detailed account of Huiyuan's literary composition and achievements, see Liu Yunhao 刘运好, "Lushan huiyuan wenxue chuangzuo kaolun,"庐山慧远文学创作考论, *Wenxue yichan* no.5 (2023): 34–47.
[193] See Hu Yaqi 胡亚琦, "Dongjin shiseng jiaowang yu shanshuishi de shengcheng" 东晋士僧交往与山水诗的生成, *Jiujiang xueyuan xuebao* 199 no.4 (2020): 50-55.

literary works. During one excursion to the Stone Gate of Mount Lu, they collectively composed "Poems on Visits to the Stone Gate by Monks at Mount Lu" (廬山諸道人遊石門詩).[194]

In summary, drawing from sixth-century Buddhist and historiographic sources, Huiyuan enjoyed a significant reputation as a major Buddhist leader in southern China. He was well-known for his profound knowledge of Buddhist doctrines and "mysterious learning."[195] His erudition attracted a group of educated recluses, leading to the formation of a religious and literary community around him. It was documented that he established a Pure Land community in 402 CE, which consisted of one hundred twenty-three members who upheld a collective aspiration to attain rebirth in the Western Pure Land. The community members also engaged in the composition of poetry related to the Pure Land practice of "*nianfo* samādhi". During this period, Huiyuan was not exclusively depicted as a Pure Land patriarch.[196] However, the characteristics of his Pure Land community held the potential for later adoption by monks and literati and marked an early stage in the development of a community bridging eminent monks and educated lay Buddhists.[197]

The Construction of the White Lotus Society in the mid-Tang and Song Dynasty

We have hitherto examined the early records of Huiyuan and his Pure Land community in Buddhist sources. However, it was not until the literary creation of the White Lotus Society during the mid-Tang Dynasty, around the mid-ninth century, and its continued influence through

[194] *Lushanzhi* 廬山志, *juan* 10.
[195] "Mysterious learning" 玄學 refers to a philosophical trend during the Wei and Jin periods primarily centered around the thoughts of Laozi and Zhuangzi. See Tang Yongtong, *Weijin xuanxue lungao* 魏晋玄学论稿 (Beijing: sanlian shudian, 2009), 1-15.
[196] See Li Qinhe, "Weishenme shi huiyuan", 33-44.
[197] For the literary activities of monks and educated elites, see Yang Jiaoxiao 杨剑霄, "Dongjin nanbeichao hanchuan fojiao sengzhong wenxue huodong yanjiu," 东晋南北朝汉传佛教僧众文学活动研究 *Wenxue yichan* no.5 (2023): 48-60.

the Northern Song Dynasty (tenth and eleventh centuries), that the image of Huiyuan as a Pure Land master and the myth of the White Lotus Society became established. It then exerted significant influence on the development of Pure Land teachings both within and outside monasteries in the Song Dynasty and beyond, to the point where these teachings became referred to as the "Lotus School."[198] In this section, we will explore the evolution of the paradigm of the White Lotus Society through literary and Buddhist texts and delve into how it emerged as a collective cultural symbol among literary figures.

As the Buddhist scholar Tang Yongtong pointed out, "The legends surrounding Huiyuan's White Lotus Society vary in different sources, and it is not clear when they originally began. However, there appears to be no mention of them prior to the mid-Tang Dynasty."[199] Indeed, the popular elements in the myth of the White Lotus Society seem to have first emerged during the ninth and tenth centuries. Several significant transformations occurred during this period. First, Huiyuan's community adopted the name the "White Lotus Society". Additionally, two literary giants, the renowned landscape poets Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433) and Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365–427), were incorporated into the myth. Lastly, the tale of the eighteen worthies of Donglin (東林十八高賢) gained popularity at Mount Lu and found its way into literary compositions and eventually into Buddhist historiography in the twelfth century.[200]

Xie Lingyun was a renowned landscape poet from a high aristocracy and a prominent lay Buddhist. In literary historiography, Xie was highly regarded as the figure who introduced

[198] At least in the twelfth century, we can find references to "Lotus School" in *Lebang wenlei* and *Fozu tongji*. See also B. J. ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (New York: Brill, 1992),1-29.
[199] Tang, *Hanwei liangjin nanbeichao fojiao shi*, 258–9.
[200] For instance, in *Fozu tongji*, a special section was given to "Biographies of the Eighteen Worthies of Donglin". *T*. no. 2035, 49: 265b17.

landscape as a poetic subject and profoundly transformed poetic style in the fifth century.[201] During the Tang Dynasty, Xie's literary talents continued to be greatly admired, and he was considered a representative literary figure of the Southern Dynasties.[202] In addition to his literary fame, he was also a well-known lay Buddhist who produced works on Buddhism, such as "Inscription of Buddha's Shadow" 佛影銘, "Hymn of Immeasurable Life"[203] 無量壽頌, and "Eulogy for Master Huiyuan of Mount Lu" 廬山慧遠法師誄.[204]

Xie had connections with Huiyuan, as implicated in his works. In Huiyuan's biography, he is portrayed as a distinguished elite who was deeply influenced by Huiyuan's erudition.

> Xie Lingyun, the Prefect of Linchuan, was talented and arrogant, rarely showing respect to others. However, when he met with Huiyuan, he was profoundly impressed and held great respect for him.[205]
>
> 臨川太守謝靈運，負才傲俗，少所推崇。及一相見，肅然心服。

However, whether Xie attended the Pure Land community was not fully substantiated in pre-Tang sources.[206] In the early biography of Huiyuan, Xie Lingyun was not affiliated with the religious community established in 402. His connection with Huiyuan was not mentioned in his

[201] Discussion of the transformation of poetic style in the fifth century and Xie's literary accomplishments can be found in contemporary literary critics *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 and *Shipin* 詩品.
[202] For Xie's literary status in the Tang and Song, see Li Hongxia 李红霞, "Cong Tao Xie bing cheng de li shi shan bian kan qi wen xue di wei de xiao chang, yi Dong Jin zhi Nan Song wei li," 从陶谢并称的历史嬗变看其文学地位的消长———以东晋至南宋为例, *Qilu xuekan* no. 3 (2005): 82–85.
[203] Another name of Amitābha Buddha.
[204] These pieces can be found in *Guang hongmingji*, *T*. no. 2103, 52: 200a24-27.
[205] *T.* no. 2145, 55: 110b29-c1.
[206] For a discussion on whether Xie joined Huiyuan's Pure Land community, see Liu Hong 刘蕻, "Xie Lingyun ru lianshe bian," 谢灵运入莲社辨, *Jiujiang xueyuan xuebao* no. 1 (2014): 16–20.

biography in *Songshu*. There is also no recorded evidence of him traveling from his hometown in Kuaiji to Mount Lu during that time.

Interestingly, Xie's inclusion as a member of Huiyuan's community began to appear in mid-Tang sources. Starting in the ninth century, Buddhist monks began producing a distinct sub-genre of hagiography known as Pure Land rebirth biographies (*jingtu wangshengzhuan* 淨土往生傳). They selected prominent Buddhist figures from traditional hagiographical texts who were practitioners of Pure Land teachings and compiled them into a separate collection.[207] The Pure Land rebirth biographies emphasized the Pure Land devotion of renowned monks and introduced miraculous phenomena associated with their rebirth, in alignment with the descriptions found in Pure Land sutras. The earliest surviving Pure Land rebirth biography from the ninth century, titled the *Auspicious Biographies of Rebirth to the Western Pure Land* (*Wangsheng jingtu zhuanying zhuan* 往生西方淨土瑞應傳) compiled by Wenshen 文諗 and Shaokang 少康, introduced variations to the account of Huiyuan's religious community. It is documented:

> Although well-versed in various classics, Huiyuan was particularly devoted to the teachings of the Western Pure Land. Below the cliffs, he established the Pure Land Hall and conducted morning and evening rituals and repentance practices. Officials like Xie Lingyun and recluses like Liu Yimin all renounced worldly fame to collectively engage in Pure Land practices. The practitioners numbered one hundred and twenty-three. Before the statue of Amitābha Buddha, they organized a feast and made vows. Liu Yimin composed prose to eulogize this event, and in response, a celestial being on a cloud listened

[207] For an analysis of the Pure Land rebirth biographies, see Huang Qijiang 黃啟江, "Mituo jingtu de zhuixun: beisong 'wangsheng jingtu' zhuzuo de taolun" 彌陀淨土的追尋－北宋「往生西方」著作的探討, *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 no. 16 (1998): 59-86.

to their words, sometimes performing a pure melody, with voices carried on the wind for miles.[208]

雖博群典，偏弘西方。岳下建淨土堂，晨夕禮懺。有朝士謝靈運、高人劉遺民等，並棄世榮，同修淨土。信士都有一百二十三人。於無量壽像前，建齋立誓。遺民著文讚頌，感一仙人乘雲聽說，或奏清唄，聲御長風。

Compared to the biographies from the sixth century, this version featured some remarkable changes. Firstly, it included Xie Lingyun as a member of the community and paralleled him with Liu Yimin. While Xie represented a member who was a government official and aristocrat, Liu represented recluses who abstained from worldly life. Secondly, it introduced miraculous phenomena, stating that celestial beings were drawn to the assembly and performed celestial music, which is unique to the Pure Land tradition. Since then, Xie Lingyun has become a recognized member of Huiyuan's religious community. His presence was documented in the treatises on the Pure Land by Feixi 飛錫 and Fazhao 法照 in the Tang Dynasty.[209]

It was also during the Tang Dynasty that the religious community of Huiyuan began to be referred to as the "White Lotus Society" or simply "Lotus Society" in poetry, suggesting its growing popularity in literature. By the beginning of the tenth century, this designation gradually became more established. One of the earliest textual references to the "White Lotus Society" can be found in Tang poetry. For instance, Wen Tingyun's 溫庭筠 (801?–866) poem addressed to a monk at Qingyuan Temple includes the final couplet: "If asked by those in the White Lotus

[208] *T*. no. 2070, 51: 104a12-21.
[209] See Feixi 飛錫, "nianfo sanmei baowang lun"念佛三昧寶王論, *T*. no. 1967, 47: 140b1-22; Fazhao 法照, "Jingtu wuhui ninafo songjing guanxingyi" 淨土五會念佛誦經觀行儀, *T*. no. 2827, 85: 1255b11-13.

Society, / You may tell them that the traveler's surname is Lei." 白蓮社裏如相問，爲說遊人是姓雷.[210] Here Wen Tingyun is comparing himself to a Huiyuan community member, Lei Cizong. Further, an anonymous poem addressed to the poet-monk Guan Xiu 貫休 (832–912) reads "In another year, the White Lotus Society / perhaps we will meet each other again."[211] 他年白蓮社，猶許重相期. This is the final couplet of the poem dedicated to Guanxiu, suggesting that the image of the White Lotus Society serves as a literary allusion to the union between monks and literati. The most notable example is the poet-monk Qiji's 齊己 (863–937) poetry collection which is titled the "White Lotus Anthology." The preface to the anthology mentions that "[It is] titled the 'White Lotus Anthology', since [Qiji] resided long at Donglin Temple, and he never forgot the remarkable experiences."[212] 題曰白蓮集。蓋以久棲東林，不忘勝事. From these examples from Tang poetry, we can see that the imagery of the white lotus became closely linked with Donglin Temple and Huiyuan's religious community.[213] It began to be employed in scenarios of poet-monk poetry exchanges, symbolizing the friendship between monks and poets.

The second major figure associated with Huiyuan's community is the renowned poet Tao Yuanming. Tao Yuanming came from a fallen elite family and held only humble positions such as county magistrate. He is most renowned for his renunciation of his political post, choosing to return to his hometown in Pengzui and live as a farmer and recluse at the foot of Mount Lu. He composed poems, prose, and rhapsodies depicting the serene countryside, and portraying a

[210] *Wen Tingyunji* 溫庭筠集, *juan* 4, p.2.
[211] *Quan wudai shi* 全五代詩, 64.6.
[212] Qiji, *Bailianji* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983), 327–8. See also Mazanec, *Poet-Monks: The Invention of Buddhist Poetry in Late Medieval China*, 23-24.
[213] The reasons why Huiyuan's community acquired the name "white lotus" are manyfold. It obviously reflects the Pure Land doctrine which states that sentient beings are reborn into a lotus flower after they perish.

retired and leisurely life in the village, as well as his farming experiences in the fields. Tao Yuanming's poetic style sharply contrasts with that of Xie Lingyun, as their respective literary reputation from the fifth to the ninth centuries. While Xie's polished language and mastery of poetic parallelism were widely admired by his contemporaries and enjoyed equal fame during the Tang Dynasty, Tao Yuanming's bland and unadorned style did not receive as much appreciation during that time.[214]

However, the situation changed during the Northern Song when Tao Yuanming started to receive greater recognition from literary figures, while Xie Lingyun fell out of favor. The elevation of Tao Yuanming began in the late ninth andtenth century and reached its peak in the eleventh century. As the literary scholar Qian Zhongshu 錢鐘書 points out, "Tao Yuanming's literary reputation reached its height during the Song Dynasty. Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 highly praised 'Rhapsody of Returning Home' by Tao Yuanming, considering it a unique masterpiece among the literary works of the Jin Dynasty. Su Shi 蘇軾 composed hundreds of matching poems to Tao Yuanming, regarding him as superior to many other eminent literary figures like Cao Zhi 曹植, Liu Zhen 劉禎, Bao Zhao 鮑照, Xie Lingyun, Li Bai 李白, and Du Fu 杜甫.

Since then, poetry critics have consistently echoed these opinions, and there is unanimous agreement regarding Tao's achievements."[215] Xie Lingyun, on the other hand, was regarded by Song poetry critics as inferior to Tao Yuanming. For instance, Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 believed that Xie could not be compared with Tao because Xie dedicated every effort to refining his

[214] For an account of the literary reception of Tao Yuanming from the Six Dynasties to Song, see Wendy Swartz, *Reading Tao Yuanming: Shifting Paradigms of Historical Reception (427-1900)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 145–211.
[215] Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書, *Tan yilu* 談藝錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 88.

language. This was due to his concern for the praise or criticism of ordinary people regarding the skillfulness and awkwardness of his works.[216]

In this context, Tao Yuanming began associated with the myth of the White Lotus Society in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. At the same time, Xie Lingyun's image also changed from someone who attended the White Lotus Society to someone who got rejected by Huiyuan because his mind is discomposed. An example is Qiji's regulated verse "Writing on the Hall of the Eighteen Worthies of Donglin" 題東林十八賢真堂:[217]

白藕花前舊影堂，	In front of the white lotus flowers, the old hall of the sacred stands,
劉雷風骨畫龍章。	The spirit of Liu and Lei[218], paints the dragon's pattern[219].
共輕天子諸侯貴，	Together, [they] depreciate the Son of Heaven and the noble lords,
同愛吾師一法長。	Collectively, [they] cherish the *dharma*[220] of our master[221].
陶令醉多招不得，	Magistrate Tao[222] often gets drunk——he could not be invited,

[216] *Huang Tingjian quanji* 黃庭堅全集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2021), 1301.
[217] *Quan Tang Shi* 全唐詩, ed. Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1960, henceforth *QTS*), 844.17991.
[218] Refering to Liu Yimin and Lei Cizong.
[219] "Dragon's pattern" has dual meanings. Firstly, it alludes to the dragon design decorating the hall's architecture. Secondly, it is a metaphor for the exceptional literary talents of Liu Yimin and Lei Cizong.
[220] *Dharma* means teachings of Buddha.
[221] Refering to Huiyuan.
[222] Refering to Tao Yuanming. Tao served as a county magistrate of Chaisang.

謝公心亂入無方。	Duke Xie's[223] mind is in turmoil——there is no way to enter [the community].
何人到此思高躅，	Who comes here and thinks of the lofty recluses?
嵐點苔痕滿粉牆。	Mist gives rise to patches of moss, spreading across the white wall.

As mentioned earlier, Qiji resided in Donglin Temple for a long time during the late ninth and early tenth centuries. This poem provides insights into the evolution of the legend of Huiyuan's community at Donglin Temple. The term of the "Eighteen Worthies of Donglin" emerged. We now have information about the "Eighteen Worthies of Donglin" from eleventh-century sources, a mountain annual titled the *Records of Mount Lu* 廬山記 by the scholar-official Chen Shunyu 陳舜俞 (1026–1076). "Eighteen Worthies of Donglin" consists of representative figures selected from Huiyuan's community, including both laypeople and monks. Below is a chart listing the "Eighteen Worthies of Donglin" in their original order in the *Records of Mount Lu*.[224]

1	慧遠	Huiyuan	Founder
2	彭城劉遺民	Liu Yimin	Lay Buddhists, same in the *Biographies in the Eminent Monks*
3	豫章雷次宗	Lei Cizong	
4	雁門周續之	Zhou Xuzhi	

[223] Refering to Xie Lingyun. Xie inherited the noble title "Duke Kangle" from his grandfather Xie Xuan.
[224] *T*. no. 2095, 51: 1039a2-8.

5	南陽宗炳	Zong Bing	
6	張野	Zhang Ye	
7	張詮	Zhang Quan	
8	慧永	Huiyong	Abbot of Xilin Temple
9	道生	Daosheng	
10	慧持	Huichi	Huiyuan's brother
11	佛馱耶舍	Buddhayaśas	Foreign monks
12	佛馱跋陀羅	Buddhabhadra	
13	慧睿	Huirui	
14	曇順	Tanshun	
15	曇恆	Tanheng	
16	道昺	Daobing	Huiyuan's disciples
17	道敬	Daojing	
18	曇詵	Tanshen	

The "Eighteen Worthies of Donglin" is evidently an extension of the records in the *Biographies of the Eminent Monks.* This is because Huiyuan and six lay Buddhists in the list follow the sequence, deviating from the conventional Buddhist practice where monks are typically listed before laypeople. The additional eleven monks on the list come from diverse backgrounds, including the Abbot of the neighboring Xilin Temple, Huiyuan's brother, foreign monks, and Huiyuan's own disciples. It appears that the inclusion of the eleven monks may be a

local tradition, as none of them seem to have achieved widespread recognition in a broader religious context (except for the two foreign monks who were translators), and their presence in literary creations is insignificant. As we can see in Qiji's poem, he selects Liu Yimin and Lei Cizong as representative figures of the Lotus Society instead of monks.

Another noteworthy thing in Qiji's poem is the parallelism between Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun. In the context of the Lotus Society, Tao Yuanming is portrayed as a recluse who was invited by Huiyuan to join the community but did not make it due to his addiction to wine. A detailed account of this can be found in the twelfth-century Buddhist chronicle, *Comprehensive Record of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs* (*Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀):

> At that time, Master Huiyuan and other worthies organized a Lotus Society, and Huiyuan sent a letter to invite Tao Yuanming. Yuanming replied, "If you permit me to drink wine, I will come." Huiyuan agreed, so Tao went there. Suddenly, Tao frowned and left.[225]
>
> 時遠法師與諸賢結蓮社，以書招淵明。淵明曰："若許飲則往"。許之，遂造焉，忽攢眉而去。

Several factors contributed to the creation of this tale. Firstly, Tao Yuanming himself was a renowned recluse at Mount Lu and lived near Donglin Temple. His elevation in literary history in the late ninth and tenth centuries also appealed to literary men,[226] leading them to establish a connection between him and Huiyuan.[227] What's interesting is that Tao Yuanming was depicted

[225] *FZTJ*, *T*. no. 2035, 49: 269c28-270a1.
[226] For the changing reputation of Tao Yuanming, see Swartz, *Reading Tao Yuanming*.
[227] Whether Tao joined Huiyuan's community is under debate by scholars. See Guo Peng 郭鹏, "Guanyu "Bailianshe" benshi ji Tao Yuanming nianpu zhong xiangguan wenti de kaoshu" 关于"白莲社"本事及陶渊明年谱中相关问题的考述, *Wenxue pinglun congkan* 14, no. 1 (2012): 105-110, and

as an outsider to the Lotus Society. This is because Tao Yuanming had a fervent love for alcohol, which often inspired him to write good poetry after drinking. Some of his best works include "Poems on Drinking Wine," which goes against Buddhist precepts that forbid the consumption of alcohol. His works also did not seem to exhibit a strong commitment to Buddhism. Therefore, in the story, he came but immediately left.

The image of Xie Lingyun also changed during this time. Although he was associated with the Lotus Society during the Tang Dynasty, he was eventually excluded from the group.

> Xie Lingyun, who was from Chen County, was talented and arrogant, rarely showing respect to others. When he met with Huiyuan, he was profoundly impressed and held great respect for him. He dug two ponds in the east and west to plant white lotus flowers for Huiyuan. He sought to enter the Pure Land community, but the master stopped him due to his turbulent mind.[228]
>
> 陳郡謝靈運負才傲物，少所推重。一見肅然心服。為鑿東西二池種白蓮。求入淨社，師以心雜止之。

This account is also an expansion of the *Biographies in the Eminent Monks*. The first two lines remain the same while incorporating two additional details. However, in this narrative, Xie's reputation took a negative turn. His arrogance, coupled with a possible attachment to worldly affairs, made him disqualified as a member of the Pure Land community. This aligns

Bao He 鲍赫, "Huiyuan zhao Tao Qian ru 'Lian she' shi luekao" 慧远招陶潜入"莲社"事略考, *Guji zhengli yanjiu xuekan*, no. 3 (2017): 99-102.

[228] *T*. no. 2095, 51: 1039b11-13.

with the fact that his literary reputation decreased, and critics of his personality increased during that time.[229]

Based on the above analysis, it becomes clear that the legend of Huiyuan's Pure Land community underwent significant variations from the late ninth century to the eleventh century. The table below illustrates the textual layers of the White Lotus Society.

[229] Li Hongxia, "Cong Tao Xie bing cheng de li shi shan bian kan qi wen xue di wei de xiao chang, yi Dong Jin zhi Nan Song wei li," 82–85.

Table 1 Textual Layers of the White Lotus Society

People	Texts	Dates
Huiyuan + Recluses: 7	Buddhist biographies	Sixth century
+ Xie Lingyun	Pure Land rebirth biographies	Eighth century
+ Monks: 11 ↓ "Eighteen Worthies of Donglin"	Poetry	Late ninth to tenth centuries
+ "White Lotus Society"	Mountain annals Buddhist chronicles	Eleventh century Twelfth century
- Xie Lingyun		
- Tao Yuanming		

Collective Performance in Shengchang's West Lake Lotus Society

In this section, we will explore the collective performance of the Huiyuan's society by monks and literati during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. We will analyze how their

efforts contributed to the consolidation and popularity of the White Lotus Society paradigm during the Song Dynasty.

Shengchang's West Lake Lotus Society was the first major Pure Land community in the Song Dynasty. Established in 990, it attracted over 1,000 devotees, including 90 high-ranking officials, epitomizing the influence of the Pure Land community on the literati class through bureaucratic and literary networks. In the previous chapter, we analyzed the social network in Shengchang's West Lake Lotus Society. I make use of an eleventh-century print—the *Poetry Anthology of Organizing Lotus Society of the West Lake at Hangzhou* 杭州西湖昭慶寺結蓮社集—to analyze the social networks in Shengchang's West Lake Lotus Society. It identifies two types of bureaucratic networks among the literati members of the West Lake Lotus Society: the network formed in the civil service examination (*keju* 科舉), and the network of academy officials forged in the Three Institutes and the Imperial Archives (*sange bige* 三館秘閣). Further, it unveils the connection between the southern elite monastic tradition and northern scholar-officials.

In the previous chapter, I argued that Shengchang's West Lake Lotus Society is the cultural product of the integration of the elite Buddhist tradition in the south with the first generation of Song literati in the capital after the unification of the empire in 979. Social network analysis reveals Shengchang's connections to the central political apparatus through relationships with Wuyue's ruling family and local Hangzhou officials with court ties, indicating Pure Land teachings' integration with literati culture. Further, the expansion of the civil examination and grand cultural projects facilitated the transmission of Pure Land teachings among capital officials and literary men.

In this section, I will focus on how Shengchang chose to emulate and revive Huiyuan's Lotus Society as a model, and also how the literati of the Song Dynasty performed in the framework of the White Lotus Society paradigm.

We will begin by exploring an account by a monk to see how the monastic elites perceive the organization of the West Lake Lotus Society. In the epitaph to Shengchang, the Tiantai master Zhiyuan 智圓 (978-1022) provides a comprehensive insight into Shengchang's emulation of Huiyuan and its significance.

> The teachings of the Western Sage[230] are characterized by purity and tranquility, by non-action, and compassion with no killing. He presented his thoughts with profound language and eloquent words. The magnificent meaning and transcendental aim [conveyed in words of Buddha] have been complete in China. Those who followed his teachings, whether they received a small portion or a greater one, were inclined towards goodness and distance from evil. Those who embraced the profound teachings return to their origin and achieve the *dharma* nature.
>
> Alas! Didn't Mater Huiyuan of Mount Lu attain the profound and distant teachings? He remained reclusive and followed the right path, and he composed writings to establish sincerity. His knowledge was sufficient to express the subtle, and his practices were sufficient to establish the [right] path. Therefore, the worthy people of his time admired his profound wisdom, and there was the event of religious assembly. People have been eulogizing it to this day, yet none can truly succeed him.

[230] This refers to the Sakyamuni Buddha.

粵西聖之為教也，清靜而無為，仁慈而不殺。抗辭幽說，閎意眇指，大備諸夏。稟化之徒，得其小者近者，則遷善而遠惡；得其大者遠者，則歸元而復性。

噫！廬山遠公，其得乎大者遠者與？考槃居貞，修辭立誠。識足以表微，行足以作程。是故時賢仰其高企其明，自是有結社之事焉。人到于今稱之，而莫能嗣之。

Only Master [Shengchang] was rigorous and strict in doctrines and precepts, and maintained a pure and steadfast mind. Hearing the traditions of Mount Lu, he was delighted and said, “The horse which admires a thoroughbred horse could also rise to become one. Though I am nothing like Master Huiyuan, how dare I forget the admonition to aspire for excellence?” He thus decorated his body, purified his mind, and resolved to establish a society… [He considered] the Buddha of Immeasurable Life was what sentient beings rely on, so he carved in sandalwood and gave it form. The “Pure Conduct chapter” of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* was the essence of enlightenment, and he engraved in his own blood and wrote its verses…

惟公理行謹嚴，修心貞素。聞廬山之風而悅之，且曰：“睎驥之馬，亦驥之乘。吾雖無似，敢忘思齊之誡耶？”於是乎乃飾其躬，乃刳其心，乃矢結社之謀云：……無量壽佛者，群生之仰止，乃刻栴檀而為之形容焉。華嚴淨行品者，成聖之機要，乃刺身血而書其章句焉……

Henceforth, grand ministers, prominent scholars, and provincial municiples heard about Shengchang’s reputation and were pleased by it. Some visited the

West Lake to inquire about the Way, some observed the statue and realized the truth, and some studied scriptures to find its meaning. For thirty years, they maintained close friendship. There were one hundred and twenty-three people participating the White Lotus Society. Shengchang's cultivation was like such. The West Lake community was a true successor to that of Mount Lu.

繇是宰衡名卿邦伯牧長，又聞公之風而悅之。或尋幽而問道，或覩相而知真，或考經而得意。三十餘年，為莫逆之交。預白蓮之侶者，凡一百二十三人。其化成也如是。有以見西湖之社嗣於廬山者，無慚德矣。

I will try to discuss this matter. Master Huiyuan was a sage at higher level of practice, while Shengchang was a virtuous person in the beginner's rank. Their practice levels differed, and their fame was not the same. However, Huiyuan emerged during the declining Jin period, while Shengchang was born in the glorious dynasty. Those whom Huiyuan attracted were all reclusive talents, while those who came to Shengchang were renowned and accomplished literati. Discontinue the merits but enhance the demerits: the past and the present became equals. Isn't it magnificent and admirable? [231]

嘗試論之，遠也上地之聖也，公也初心之賢也。實階位不同，名聲異號。然而遠出衰晉，公生聖朝。彼招者悉隱淪之賢，此來者皆顯達之士。絕長益短，古今相埒，不曰盛與美與？

[231] *LBWL*, *T.* no. 1969A, 47: 183c16-184b9.

Zhiyuan's text creates a lineage from Sakyamuni Buddha to Huiyuan and then to Shengchang. Writing from a monastic perspective, Zhiyuan begins by highly praising the teachings of the Buddha and distinguishes between two types of practitioners: those who acquire a basic understanding of Buddha's teachings can become good people, while those who attain a deep and profound understanding can return to their true *dharma* nature. He acknowledges that Huiyuan was one who achieved this profound understanding. His practices were greatly admired and attracted followers, leading to the establishment of a religious community. However, this community was discontinued for nearly six hundred years.

As Shengchang aspired to revive Huiyuan's Pure Land society, Zhiyuan believed that Shengchang was a true successor to Huiyuan in this effort. In the end, he argues for a major difference between Huiyuan's and Shengchang's societies. While Huiyuan's members were recluses, Shengchang's members were distinguished and accomplished scholar-officials. Zhiyuan states that the inclusion of high-level officials was a major improvement to Huiyuan's community, making Shengchang's West Lake community comparable to Huiyuan's White Lotus Society.

Since Shengchang was celebrated for his poetic accomplishments[232], he sent his poems to leading scholar-officials at court. They were enthusiastically received and appealed to many literary men, as documented in Ding Wei's preface to the *Poetry Anthology of Organizing Lotus Society of the West Lake at Hangzhou*.

> So, Shengchang sent poems to the capital to summon ministers and senior officials. Since then, upon knowing about Shengchang's invitation, nine out of ten officials with high rank were willing to join his community. Therefore, the three

[232] *X.* no. 1015, 58: 564a17-18.

ducal ministers, the four advisors,[233] officials from the Bureau of Military Affairs and the Imperial Academy, literary talents from the Central Secretariat, imperial historiographer, and renowned literati from the Three Ministries[234], all sent poems as a pledge to join the community. [235]

繇是貽詩京師，以招卿大夫。自是，貴有位者，聞師之請，願入者十八九。故三公四輔，宥密禁林，西垣之辭人，東觀之史官，洎臺省素有稱望之士，咸寄詩以為結社之盟文。

However, upon reading the poems in the *West Lake Lotus Society Anthology*, a discrepancy emerges between the content of the poems and Shengchang's original motivation for founding the Lotus Society. In Shengchang's vow text for the establishment of the West Lake Lotus Society, he unequivocally states:

"I, along with eighty bhikṣus[236] and a thousand individuals, starting from this day forward, will awaken the mind of enlightenment, and vow to follow the bodhisattva path until the end of time. Upon the exhaustion of my karmic retribution, I wish to be reborn in the Pure Land of *Sukhāvatī*. I aspire to instantly enter the *Dharma* realm, fully realizing the non-arising nature of all phenomena. I will practice the ten *pāramitā*[237] and seek the guidance of countless reliable

[233] The three ducal ministers, the four advisors mean high-rank officials.
[234] Three Ministries are the Central Secretariat, the Grand Preceptor, and the Great General.
[235] *YZWL*, *X.* no. 1015, 58:563b5-8.
[236] Bhikṣu refers to a fully ordained male monastic, also commonly known as a monk.
[237] The ten pāramitā is ten Mahāyāna practices which are enumerated based on the original six pāramitās 六波羅蜜, to which the four of skillful means 方便, vow 願, power 力, and wisdom 般若 are added. See DDB: http://buddhism-dict.net.ezproxy.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%8D%81%E6%B3%A2%E7%BE%85%E8%9C%9C. updated 2018/01/18.

teachers. Like Mahāsthāmaprāpta, my radiance will universally illuminate, leading all sentient beings to achieve the *nianfo* samādhi.[238] Like Avalokiteśvara, I will heed the cries and rescue people from suffering, and bestow upon all sentient beings the attainment of fourteen forms of fearlessness.[239] …… Upon becoming a Buddha, my form and land will resemble those of Amitābha……"[240]

"我與八十比丘、一千大眾，始從今日，發菩提心，窮未來際，行菩薩行。願盡此報已，生安養國。頓入法界，圓悟無生，修習十種波羅蜜多，親近無數真善知識。身光徧照，令諸有情得念佛三昧，如大勢至。聞聲救苦，令諸有情獲十四無畏，如觀世音……至成佛時，若身若土，如阿彌陀……"

In Shengchang's vow text, the central focus is the aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land and the bodhisattva practices after attaining rebirth. However, scholar-officials included in the *Anthology of West Lake Lotus Society* exhibit a spectrum of religious devotion, varying from those well-versed in Buddhist doctrine to those who merely offer polite replies as a social etiquette. In this anthology, 11 out of 90 members refer to themselves as "disciples". For instance, Su Yijian and Zhang Quhua designated themselves as "Pure Conduct disciple" (*jingxing dizi* 淨行弟子), while members like Zhao Gan and Du Weiyi identified themselves as

[238] The *nianfo* samādhi (念佛三昧) is a meditative goal in Pure Land Buddhism. The term "nianfo" means "mindfulness of the Buddha", and "samādhi" refers to a state of deep concentration or meditative absorption. In this practice, devotees either recite the name of Amitābha Buddha or visualize the Western Pure Land to achieve a state of deep concentration. When the practitioner obtains the *nianfo* samādhi, he or she will be reborn in the Western Pure Land after their decease.

[239] Fourteen forms of fearlessness of Avalokitêśvara refer to the fearlessness that comes with understanding things in their true nature (Skt. *abhaya*, *vaiśāradya*), which comes from the *Śūraṃgama-sūtra*.

[240] This preface was preserved in *Yuanzong wenlei* 圓宗文類, *X.* no. 1015, 58*:* 563c5-19.

"Disciples who came to the door" (*men dizi* 門弟子), meaning that they went to Shengchang's residence to receive his teachings. Their poems display a strong commitment to Buddhist faith and knowledge of basic Buddhist doctrines. For example, in Zhao Gan's poem, it reads:

勞生名宦蓋纏深，　Laboring in fame and officialdom, the hindrances and tethers run deep;

幾嘆蹉跎雪鬢侵。　How often I lament the wasted time, as snowy hair encroaches.

久奉十齋希淨行，　Long have I observed the Ten Fasting Days, aspiring for pure conduct;

新求一偈願清心。　Now I seek a gāthā, hoping to cleanse my mind.

導師已悟華嚴旨，　The mentor has already realized the gist of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*;

弟子宜將貝葉尋。　The disciple should accordingly seek the palm-leaf scriptures.

況值相君同入社，　Further, at the time when the grand chancellors joined the community;

芳蹤寧肯讓東林。　Why would this assembly yield to that of Donglin?

Zhao Gan incorporates his Buddhist knowledge and religious devotion into this poem. In the first line, he employs the term "hindrances and tethers" (蓋纏), a Buddhist concept, which specifically alludes to the five hindrances and ten tethers that hinder one's progress towards *dhyāna* (meditative absorption). Essentially, the line conveys that the demands of worldly fame

and official duties act as impediments, preventing the poet from fully embracing the Buddhist path. In line 3, Zhao Gan mentions his longstanding observance of the "Ten Days of Fasting," a common practice among lay Buddhists. On the 1st, 8th, 14th, 1fifth, 18th, 23rd, 24th, 28th, 2ninth, and 30th days of each month, lay Buddhist practitioners observe the eight pure precepts (八齋戒).[241] It can be inferred that Zhao Gan is a devout lay Buddhist who has followed the precepts for a long time. In the third couplet, he not only demonstrates his familiarity with the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* but also expresses his dedication to becoming well-versed in this sūtra. Overall, as one of the "disciples who came to the door" of Shengchang, Zhao Gan shows his Buddhist knowledge and religious devotion. It is highly likely that he joined the Lotus Society driven by his religious faith. Other self-proclaimed "disciples", such as Zhang Quhua and Du Weiyi 杜惟一, similarly exhibit Buddhist erudition and devotion. It's worth noting that even these "disciples" do not echo Shengchang's wish for rebirth in the Pure Land. Instead, their expressions of devotion tend to focus on general Buddhist doctrine, such as "seeking enlightenment," as in Du's poem.

On the opposite end of the spectrum of religious devotion, there are members who abstain from openly declaring their religious affiliation, and Sun He serves as a notable example. Disciple of Wang Yucheng, Sun vehemently opposes Buddhism and has composed essays to criticize and denounce the religion which caused the dissatisfaction of elite monks in the capital.[242] Sun is also known as a proponent of "ancient-style prose" and advocates for the superiority of Confucianism in literary works, as demonstrated in his essays "Respecting

[241] The full list of eight pure precepts includes prohibitions against (1) killing, (2) stealing, (3) engaging in sexual misconduct, (4) lying, and (5) consuming intoxicants; these are supplemented by these three extra precepts prohibiting (6) resting on a high or luxurious bed, (7) using makeup and perfumes and enjoying music and dance, and (8) eating at improper times (viz., after midday). See *PDB*, 73.
[242] *QSW*, 7:150.393.

Confucianism" 尊儒 and "Discussion of Tang Dynasty Worthies" 評唐賢論議.[243] Given his intellectual and literary inclinations, he did not use Buddhist terminology in his writing. Instead, he wrote a poem suitable for the social occasion, without compromising his Confucianist stance.

On a single boat, I returned to court, regretting our parting;	单舸归朝恨解携，
On an autumn evening, the fragrant grass is even more desolate.	杜衡秋晚更萋萋。
The master need not bother with the golden staff,	高僧不必劳金锡，
He has already seen Tao Qian off beyond the Tiger Creek.	已送陶潜过虎溪。

Sun He managed to write the poem without invoking any religious affiliation. In the first couplet, he depicts a common departure scene but emphasizes that he is returning to the court. In the second couplet, he employs the allusion of "Huiyuan sending off Tao Yuanming beyond the Tiger Creek," comparing himself to Tao Yuanming and Shengchang to Huiyuan. According to Sun's "Account on the White Lotus Society," we learn that Shengchang visited him in Suzhou in 1002 CE and asked him to compose the stele inscription for the West Lake Lotus Society. It can be inferred that this poem was written on that occasion. Sun's poem sharply contrasts with Zhao Gan's poem. While Zhao demonstrates religious devotion, Sun deliberately distances himself

[243] See Ou Changrong 歐朝榮, *Songchu zhiyuan yu qisong dui ruxue de huiying* 宋初智圓與契嵩對儒學的回應 (Taipei: Huamulan wenhua chubanshe, 2009), 42-44.

from any religious terms and ideas. The myth of "Huiyuan sending off Tao Yuanming" is used by Sun as a cultural symbol devoid of any religious elements.

In the *Anthology of West Lake Lotus Society*, the legend of Huiyuan and the White Lotus Society are used to respond to Shengchang's invitation to join the Lotus Society. The collective consensus in the society is that Shengchang is reviving the tradition of Huiyuan's community that was lost for 600 years. For instance, Wang Huaji 王化基, another high-ranking official who served in Hangzhou in the late tenth century,[244] delineated Shengchang's intention to emulate Huiyuan's religious community at Mount Lu in his poem's preface in the *West Lake Lotus Anthology*:

> Master Shengchang, a man of pure conduct, often admired the practitioners at Mount Lu who established the Lotus Society as a retreat from the dust of the worldly life. Besides Huiyuan, Huiyong, Liu Yimin, and Lei Cizong, there were in total eighteen members. Those who did not participate in this assembly did so because Xie Lingyun was emotionally disturbed, and Tao Yuanming was obsessed with wine. I consider myself fortunate, for my mind is free from worry, and I am not led astray by wine. Even more fortunate, the leader of the Hanlin Academy was the first [in the anthology], and the scholar of the Literature Institute came after,[245] extending to all our Buddhist fellows, entering

[244] Wang Huaji served as Manager of Affairs in Hangzhou (in effect Vice Grand Councilor) in the late tenth century, see Qian Yueyou 潛說友, *Xianchun Lin'an zhi* 咸淳臨安志 (China Comprehensive Gazetteers Database electronic edition), 46.2.

[245] This refers to the sequence of prefaces of the anthology. According to Chen Fei's analysis, the master of Hanlin denotes Su Yijian, whose title was Hanlin academician and the scholar of the Literature Institute denotes Song Bai, who held post in the Institute for the Glorification of Literature (*zhaowen guan* 昭文館). Wang Huaji must have seen an early copy of the *West Lake Lotus Society Anthology* to know the sequence of the prefaces of Su Yijian and Song Bai, since Song Bai's preface predated Su Yijian's. See Chen Fei, "Beisong xihulianshe sheji bianzuan kao", 23.

together into the realm of enlightenment. Despite distinctions of name between the secular and monastic, the deeds of serving the emperor or serving the Buddha were equally virtuous. I bring forth the treasure of tranquility and purity, in harmony with a prosperous and peaceful era. Therefore, I composed this long *gāthā*[246], to record the good cause [of the Lotus Society].[247]

淨行師常公，多慕廬山道友，結蓮社為出塵之會。自遠永劉雷之下，凡十八人。其不得預斯會者，以謝靈運心亂、陶淵明嗜酒故也。予所幸者，心無慮焉，酒無惑焉。而又幸者，翰林主人首於前，文館學士繼於後，洎諸釋友，同入道場。雖在俗在僧，立名乃異；而事君事佛，為善則同。載延清靜之寶，式契隆平之運。輒書長偈，用志勝因。

Compared to Zhiyuan's account of the West Lake Lotus Society, Wang Huaji's preface left out several religious elements. In the beginning, there is no reference to the Buddha's teachings or Huiyuan's religious achievements. Instead, Wang Huaji portrays Huiyuan's community as a retreat from the tumultuous affairs of worldly life. Furthermore, he incorporates elements from the popular narrative of the White Lotus Society, including the eighteen worthies, and the exclusion of Xie and Tao. While Zhiyuan's account of Huiyuan's community emphasizes the monastic perspective, highlighting Huiyuan's eventual Buddhist accomplishments, Wang's narrative presents a more popular version of Huiyuan's community. Wang gives greater attention to the laypeople associated with the community, particularly figures like Xie Lingyun and Tao

[246] The Sanskrit gāthā means the poetic verses of the scriptures, as opposed to the prose. See DDB: http://buddhism-dict.net.ezproxy.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%81%88. Updated 2021-11-01.
[247] Jin, *XJTSWXCK*, 137–8.

Yuanming, who were more familiar to educated literary men. Wang goes even further to assert his superiority over Xie and Tao, claiming that “his mind is free from worry, and he is not led astray by wine.” This is the typical approach taken by members of the West Lake Lotus Society when they write about Huiyuan's White Lotus Society.

Additionally, Wang Huaji draws a parallel between the noble endeavors of serving the emperor and serving the Buddha, asserting that these services were both doing good. This parallel allows him to justify his involvement in the Lotus Society despite holding an official position in Hangzhou. In this way, Wang Huaji’s preface de-emphasizes the religious elements in Zhiyuan’s account, focusing instead on the comparison between serving the Buddha and serving the emperor.

珍重當年結社人，	I cherish those who founded the society in that year,
白蓮高會喜重聞。	The lofty White Lotus Assembly——rejoiced to hear it again.
去為淨行心依佛，	When I come there, I purify my conducts, and follow the Buddha’s path,
回作忠規力報君。	When I return, with loyal dedication, serving the emperor’s cause.
塵里虛名師似夢，	The empty fame in the dust——the master seems like a dream,
世間浮事我如雲。	The floating affairs in the world——I am like clouds.
若教疇得生平志，	If I could realize aspirations of my life,

來此同訓鳥雀群。 I will come here, together we will train the flock of birds and sparrows.

Wang Huaji's poem has similar features. The first couplet introduces the topic – the revival of the White Lotus Society. In the second couplet, he draws a parallel between his religious practices and his loyal service to the emperor. Moving to the third couplet, Wang Huaji employs the doctrine of emptiness, comparing the master to a dream and the poet to ephemeral clouds, thereby underscoring the transient and illusory nature of worldly fame and affairs. The last couplet expresses a future aspiration, where the poet envisions retiring once he has achieved his political ambitions, and leading a reclusive life, training a flock of birds and sparrows with Shengchang.

Wang Huaji, similar to Zhao Gan, does not echo with Shengchang's transcendental vow. Instead, he made a commitment that he would realize reclusion after his retirement. For the time being, he was committed to his duty as an official. It's noteworthy that members of Huiyuan's society held no official positions and were wholly dedicated to religious practices. In contrast, members of the West Lake community all occupied official positions, which made them unable to fully engage in religious pursuits. Thus, the White Lotus Society, as depicted by Wang Huaji, took on the character of an idealized reclusive life, one filled with leisure and the pleasures of Buddhism.

Common Approaches to Write about the White Lotus Society in the Song Dynasty

The legend of the White Lotus Society first appeared in literary writings during the late ninth and early tenth centuries. However, it gained prominence as a recurring literary theme in

the late tenth century and continued to grow in popularity during the Northern Song dynasty. During this period, an increasing number of literary works began to incorporate the myth of Huiyuan and the White Lotus Society. Literary men developed several common approaches for depicting the White Lotus Society, which solidified its status as a cultural phenomenon during Song Dynasty. This phenomenon was further illustrated through a series of paintings depicting the White Lotus Society and the literature associated with these artworks.

As we discussed earlier, the concept of the "eighteen worthies" likely emerged in the ninth century and eventually became recognized as representative members of Huiyuan's community. Literary men, on the other hand, took a more selective approach. Among the 12 monastic members, only Huiyuan himself was prominently featured, while the other 11 monks received no attention. Among the six lay Buddhists, Liu Yimin, Zong Bing, and Lei Cizong were frequently mentioned, while the other three (Zhou Xuzhi, Zhang Ye and Zhang Quan) remained relatively obscure. Liu Yimin, Zong Bing, and Lei Cizong were often collectively referred to as "Liu-Lei" and "Zong-Lei" for the sake of poetic parallelism. These three figures had more significance over the other three likely because they were educated individuals who embodied the qualities of scholar-officials.

By the early tenth century, the White Lotus Society had evolved into a model that included "insiders" and "outsiders". While the "insiders" refer to the "eighteen worthies", the "outsiders" include later additions like Xie Lingyun and Tao Yuanming. The "outsiders" received more consistent mention in literary works, likely because they were prominent literary figures and more familiar to writers. Despite their literary fame, both Xie and Tao received disparaging depictions in the legend. Xie was portrayed as having a turbulent mind, while Tao

was distanced from the community due to his obsession with intoxicants. This implies that Xie and Tao's literary accomplishments did not translate into religious success.

One significant transformation in the legend of the White Lotus Society is the reduction of its religious elements, while other features of the society have been emphasized. For one thing, the society's reclusive nature was foregrounded. While Song literati often occupied political positions (unlike those in Huiyuan's community), the legend of the White Lotus Society offers room for imagination of reclusiveness and withdrawal from societal affairs. We could see in the *West Lake Lotus Society Anthology* a common expression of their intention to join Shengchang's company after their retirement. For instance, Qian Ruoshui's preface and poem reads:

> Venerable Shengchang established the Lotus Society by the West Lake, so I sent a poem as a promise to join the society in the future.
>
> 常公上人，結香社於西湖。因寄拙詩一章，為他年入社之約。
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | 侍從冕旒雖有幸， | Though honored to attend the emperor's crown with tassels; |
> | 訏謀帷幄愧無能。 | I am ashamed of my inability in political counsel within the court's curtains. |
> | 會辭北闕垂衣主， | I will bid farewell to the emperor at court; |
> | 去伴西湖結社僧。 | And will join the monk who established the community by West Lake. |

已學莊周齊一馬，	I have learned from Zhuang Zhou the principle of "undifferentiating a horse"[248];
終陪宗炳論三乘。	And will eventually accompany Zong Bing to discuss the Three Vehicles[249].
憑師預掃林間路，	I would kindly request the master to sweep the path in the forest;
他日相容仗瘦藤。	In another day, you will tolerate [my company] with our thin canes in hand.

Qian Ruoshui's poem is typical of the *West Lake Lotus Society Anthology*. It is balanced between social duty in the current time and affiliation to Lotus Society in the future. Qian describes his political duties in the opening line and states his wish to join the community of Shengchang after his retirement. In this poem, no specific religious terms or devotion are mentioned. The image of Huiyuan's Lotus Society is here transformed into a cultural symbol that signifies reclusion (exemplified in the path in the forest and thin canes) and an intellectual engagement in Buddhist discussion (the third couplet indicates that he is willing to engage in scholarly discussion of Buddhism). Huiyuan's White Lotus Society offers a middle ground for

[248] The term "齊一馬" comes from "The Chapter on Adjustment of Controversies" 齊物論 in *Zhuangzi*, where Zhuangzi states that "By means of a finger (of my own) to illustrate that the finger (of another) is not a finger is not so good a plan as to illustrate that it is not so by means of what is (acknowledged to be) not a finger; and by means of (what I call) a horse to illustrate that (what another calls) a horse is not so, is not so good a plan as to illustrate that it is not a horse, by means of what is (acknowledged to be) not a horse. (All things in) heaven and earth may be (dealt with as) a finger; (each of) their myriads may be (dealt with as) a horse." 以指喻指之非指，不若以非指喻指之非指也；以馬喻馬之非馬，不若以非馬喻馬之非馬也。天地，一指也；萬物，一馬也。

[249] The Three Vehicles refer to three different means taught in Buddhist soteriological literature of conveying sentient beings to liberation. There are two common lists of the three: (1) the vehicles of the *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha* (both of which lead to the state of an *arhat*), and *bodhisattva* (which leads to buddhahood); (2) the *hīnayāna*, *mahāyāna*, and *vajrayāna*. See *PDB*, 926.

Song literati. It is not uncommon for members of the West Lake Lotus Society to express their intention to join Shengchang's company after their retirement. While they cannot completely forsake their careers, they maintain the belief that they will pursue a more religious life once they have fulfilled their public and familial duties. This model is flexible enough to accommodate both devout Buddhists and those with less intense religious devotion, as exemplified in the poems of Zhao Gan and Sun He.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the myth surrounding Huiyuan and the White Lotus Society underwent significant transformations from the sixth century to the Song Dynasty. What began as a small elite Pure Land community founded by Huiyuan at Mount Lu was gradually re-created over the centuries. By the mid-Tang period, the community became known as the "White Lotus Society," and the legend of the "Eighteen Worthies of Donglin" emerged. Further variations included the incorporation of renowned poets like Xie Lingyun and Tao Yuanming as outsiders to the community, thereby elevating the literary prestige of the White Lotus Society.

During the late ninth and early tenth centuries, the monk Shengchang revived the White Lotus Society paradigm to establish his West Lake Lotus Society, attracting over a thousand devotees, specifically, ninety members with high political ranks. These literati members creatively adapted the myth to justify their involvement in the community despite holding official posts. In their writings, the White Lotus Society was framed as an idealized retreat complementary to their political career.

In the early Northern Song, Shengchang made an effort to make Pure Land teachings appealing to the literati of his time, and he saw the White Lotus Society as the means to achieve

this goal. The unique features of the White Lotus Society, including the presence of erudite monks, the exchange of literary works between monks and literati, and its role as a retreat from worldly affairs, made it a flexible and attractive symbol for Song literati. The constructed image of the White Lotus Society played an important role in bridging Pure Land teachings with the social values and cultural pursuits of scholar-officials in the Song.

Chapter Three Production of Pure Land Texts and Print Technology

The Song Dynasty marked a significant period in the production and circulation of Pure Land texts. Previously, Pure Land texts consisted mainly of exegesis composed by scholarly monks. For instance, the Pure Land patriarch Tanluan 曇鸞 (c. 476–542) composed a commentary on Vasubandhu's *Sukhāvatīvyūhôpadeśa* (the Treatise on the Pure Land)[250], and the monk Jingying Huiyuan 淨影慧遠 (523–592) wrote expositions on *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and *Sutra of the Meditation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*.[251] This tradition of scholarly hermeneutics continued into the Tang Dynasty: Shandao produced a significant exegesis on the *Meditation Sutra*,[252] and Jiacai composed "Treatises on the Pure Land". This exegesis laid the theoretical foundation for the development of the Pure Land doctrine. However, the hermeneutical tradition and scholarly nature limited their audience to those with a solid background in Buddhist doctrines, typically the highly educated monks and scholar-officials.

In contrast, during the Song Dynasty, there was an expansion in both the authors and the audience of Pure Land texts. Lay Buddhists, both literati and commoners, began actively participating in the composition and circulation of Pure Land writings. They produced popular Pure Land proselytizing texts that simplified the doctrines and translated sutras into more accessible language. Additionally, they attempted to bridge the gap between different intellectual ideas, such as Confucianist ethics and Chan practices to argue for the legitimacy of Pure Land

[250] Mochizuki, *Chūgoku Jōdo kyōrishi*, 70-74.
[251] Ibid, 89-98.
[252] For more details, see Ingram Samuel Seah, "Shan-Tao, His Life and Teachings." (Ph.D., United States -- New Jersey, Princeton Theological Seminary), accessed December 21, 2022, and Julian F. Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvatī : Shan-Tao's Commentary on the Kuan Wu-Liang Shou-Fo Ching*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

teaching in religious thoughts. This approach made the Pure Land teachings accessible to a broader audience, extending its influence beyond the highly educated elite.

Moreover, lay Buddhists in the Song Dynasty took advantage of printing technology, which became increasingly prevalent during the Southern Song, to disseminate Pure Land texts.[253] In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Pure Land texts were frequently printed and reprinted, expanding the reach and impact of Pure Land teachings during this era.

Pure Land Rebirth Biographies

Pure Land rebirth biographies evolved from Buddhist hagiographies and represent a distinctive sub-genre within Pure Land literature.[254] Unlike traditional hagiographies, these biographies focus on miraculous events and experiences associated with the practices of Pure Land teachings, particularly those leading to rebirth in the Western Pure Land.[255] This genre emerged during the mid-Tang Dynasty. One example is the *Treatise on the Pure Land* (*Jingtu lun* 淨土論) by the monk Jiacai 迦才, written between 648 and 681 CE.[256] Jiacai argues that mere references to sutras and treatises are not sufficient for sentient beings with limited wisdom. He suggests real-life examples of individuals who have achieved rebirth serve as a more persuasive

[253] For the scholarship on print technology in imperial China, see Lucille Chia and Hilde De Weerdt, eds., *Knowledge and Text Production in an Age of Print: China, 900-1400* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). Lucille Chia, "Print Culture and the Circulation of Knowledge in Imperial China, 8th–17th Centuries," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, 2020.
[254] For the evolvement of Buddhist hagiographies, see John Kieschnick, *Buddhist Historiography in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022).
[255] For a discussion of the development of Pure Land rebirth biographies, see Huang Qijiang 黃啟江, "Mituo jingtu de zhuixun: beisong 'wangsheng xifang' zhuzuo de tantao" 彌陀淨土的追尋－北宋「往生西方」著作的探討, *Gugong xueshu jikan* 16, no.1 (1998): 64–5.
[256] See Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo,1994), 102–6, and Julian F. Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvatī: Shan-Tao's Commentary on the Kuan Wu-Liang Shou-Fo Ching* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 300–2.

method for cultivating faith in the Pure Land.[257] To this end, he cites the stories of twenty individuals, including six monks, four nuns, five male lay Buddhists, and five female lay Buddhists, who exhibited extraordinary signs, such as a light terrace, at the time of rebirth. Slightly after Jiacai's era, Wenshen 文諗 and Shaokang 少康 (?–805) compiled the earliest Pure Land rebirth biographies, titled *Biographies of Auspicious Responses for Rebirth in the Western Pure Land* 往生西方淨土瑞應傳. This collection was built upon the work of Jiacai and historical biographies of eminent monks and influenced the development and proliferation of such narratives in Pure Land literature from the tenth century onwards.[258]

Pure Land texts were first printed in the Wuyue region in the tenth century. Zhang Xiumin noted the prosperity of religious printing in the Wuyue region during this period, which closely aligned with the revival of Buddhism and the widespread employment of printing technology to propagate Buddhist teachings.[259] The most eminent monk of this time, Yanshou, exemplifies the prosperity of religious printing. He emphasized the propagation of Buddhism through written texts and visual images and engaged in the extensive printing and distribution of sutras, mantras, and Buddha images. For instance, he printed major Buddhist sutras such as the *Amitabha Sutra*, *Shurangama Sutra*, *Lotus Sutra*, and *Avalokitesvara Sutra*, as well as mantras like "Buddha Crown Mantra," and "Great Compassion Mantra," around the year 939. Further, the *Amitabha Sutra* was reprinted and disseminated in 972.[260]

The Pure Land rebirth biography, titled *Abridged Biographies of Auspicious Responses for Rebirth in the Western Pure Land* 往生西方淨土瑞應刪傳 was first printed during this

[257] *T*. no. 1963, 47: 97a19-26. See Mochizuki, *Chūgoku Jōdo kyōrishi*, 164-179.
[258] See Huang Qijiang, "Mituo jingtu de zhuixun: beisong 'wangsheng xifang' zhuzuo de tantao," 64–5.
[259] Zhang, *Zhongguo yinshua shi*, 39-40.
[260] Ibid, 48–51.

period by Daoshen 道詵, the abbot of Shuixin Chan Monastery.[261] Based on its title, scholars infer that this printed edition was an abridged version of the original by Wenshen and Shaokang.[262] It encompassed 48 rebirth tales, including narratives of 21 monks, 5 nuns, 2 śrāmaṇera (novice monks), 12 male lay Buddhists, and 7 female lay Buddhists. It also shows a nice balance of lay Buddhists from different social classes, including the king of Udyāna, the queen of the Sui Dynasty, government officials, and common people. What's interesting is that although the compiler Shaokang and the editor/printer Daoshen were from the Jiangnan region, the rebirth biography features figures from both the north and south of China. Specifically, there is a noticeable number of people from Bingzhou in modern Shanxi province, suggesting the influence of Daochuo's Pure Land teachings in that area. In summary, this tenth-century printed rebirth biography reflects the legacy of Pure Land teachings from the Tang Dynasty.

During the Song Dynasty, the tradition of compiling rebirth biographies continued. A major work from this period was the *Pure Land Rebirth Biography* 淨土往生傳, compiled by the monk Jiezhu 戒珠 (985–1077) in the first half of the eleventh century. Compared with the approaches used in rebirth biographies of the Tang Dynasty, Jiezhu's methodology is more rigorous and exhaustive. In the preface, Jiezhu states his approach: he thoroughly reviewed the biographies written by masters such as Huijiao and Daoxuan from the Liang and Sui dynasties, totaling twelve works, and also referred to the newly-composed biography by Tonghui of the Song Dynasty. From these, he selected seventy-five individuals and revised their stories for more clarity. Jiezhu adopted a stringent criterion for inclusion, omitting sixty-two figures like Hongye and Huiming, whom he considered as lacking sufficiently miraculous events at their death to

[261] Zhang, *Zhongguo yinshua shi*, 47.
[262] See Huang, "Mituo jingtu de zhuixun", 64–5.

inspire faith.[263] Only 56 biographies survived in extant sources, comprising 53 monks, 2 nuns, and just one lay Buddhist Liu Yimin. Liu's inclusion was primarily due to his close association with Huiyuan's Lotus Society. This approach significantly reduced the representation of lay Buddhists in the rebirth biography, suggesting that this collection was primarily targeted at a monastic audience.

Jiezhu's preface to the *Pure Land Rebirth Biography* also offers a historiography of Pure Land teachings in China. He highlights the foundational role of Huiyuan, believing that Huiyuan was the initiator of Pure Land practices in China.[264] This perspective is evident in Jiezhu's selection of monks for the biography, which aligns with what later became known as the "Eighteen Worthies of Donglin." For instance, while the Tang Dynasty rebirth biography included only Huiyuan and Liu Yimin from the Lotus Society, Jiezhu expanded this representation by including other Lotus Society members such as Huiyong, Huichi, Tanshun, and Buddhayaśas. This broader inclusion indicates the growing influence of Huiyuan's Lotus Society during the Northern Song.

The *Pure Land Rebirth Biography* was later edited and expanded by a lay Buddhist Wang Gu 王古 (1038?–1122?) in 1084. Wang Gu was the great-grandson of the former Vice Minister Wang Dan, who was a participant in Xingchang's West Lake Lotus Society in the early eleventh century. He held positions like Vice Director of the Bureau of Military Appointments and Director of the Ministry of Revenue in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.[265] He also maintained a close friendship with Su Shi during Su's exile in Huizhou in the late eleventh century, while Wang himself served as the Prefect of Guangzhou. Their friendship was shown

[263] *T*. no. 2071, 51: 108c28-109a7.
[264] *T*. no. 2071, 51: 108c15-25.
[265] *SHY*, 禮 Li 3.24, and *SHY*, Zhiguan 職官 67.36. Also in *SS*, 346.10986.

through their correspondences, which ranged from requests for financial assistance and updates on court news to routine daily exchanges.[266] Wang was also engaged in poetic exchanges with members of Su Shi's literary circle, including Qin Guan and Zhang Lei.[267] Though Wang Gu did not achieve significant political prominence in the clique conflicts of the late Northern Song. However, he gained a reputation for his contributions to Pure Land teachings, a reputation that compared with that of another eminent lay Buddhist, Yang Jie 楊傑 (1023-1092).

Wang Gu made an expansion to Jiezhu's rebirth biography and titled this new edition *Collection of Precious Pearls* 寶珠集. Although this edition is no longer extant, another version titled *Newly Revised Pure Land Rebirth Biography* 新修淨土往生傳 by Wang has survived. It is believed to be a revised version of the *Collection of Precious Pearls*[268]. In this work, Wang Gu states his editorial approach as follows:

> Jiezhu of Futang[269] reviewed twelve biographical works and selected seventy-five figures. [I sought to] supplement the missing and correct the omissions, and to trim down the excessive and lengthy texts. I included separate accounts and expanded on recent events. In total, [I compiled biographies of] one hundred and nine figures. Both eminent and obscure individuals are selected. Monks and laypeople are listed side by side.[270]

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[266] For the correspondances between Su Shi and Wang Gu, see Chen Yao 陈瑶, "Su Shi danzhou shiqi jiaoyou wenxue yanjiu" 苏轼儋州时期交游、文学研究 (MA thesis, Chongqing University, 2020), 16–7.
[267] For more details of Wang Gu's biography and his network with Su Shi, see Li Guilu 李贵录, "Wang Gu shengping jiqi jiaoyou" 王古生平及其交游, *Shaoguan xueyuan xuebao* 24 (no.1): 79–86.
[268] See Mara Seigai, "Preface to the Newly Compiled Collection of Pure Land Rebirth Biographies from Past to Present," 新編古今往生淨土寶珠集 in *Continuation of the Complete Works of the Pure Land* 淨土宗全書續, vol. 16 (Tokyo: Yamakibo Butsu Forest, 1974), 64-67.
[269] Futang is an old name of Fuzhou.
[270] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 173a23-28.

福唐釋戒珠，採十二家傳記，得七十五人。蒐補闕遺，芟夷繁長。該羅別錄，增廣新聞。共得一百九人。隱顯畢收，緇素並列。

The extant version preserves only 57 figures. However, a comparison between Wang's edition and Jiezhu's reveals significant differences. While Jiezhu omits lay Buddhists, Wang included them in the new edition. Of the 57 figures, 11 were lay Buddhists, including two females. This inclusion suggests that Wang Gu might have referred to the earlier *Abridged Biographies of Auspicious Responses for Rebirth in the Western Pure Land*, as the newly added lay Buddhists overlap with those in that rebirth biography. Wang also incorporated contemporary figures such as Wang Zhonghui 王仲回, a friend of Yang Jie. Overall, Wang Gu was the first lay Buddhist to intervene in the tradition of compiling rebirth biographies and to make new contributions: first, he included lay Buddhists, both male and female; and second, he added recent figures, thus extending the genre to encompass not only historical figures but also ongoing accounts of contemporary events and people.

Wang Gu's *Newly Revised Pure Land Rebirth Biography* is extant in a Japanese manuscript, transcribed between 1126 and 1130, and was originally preserved at Kōzan-ji 高山寺.[271] This manuscript not only indicates the influence of Wang Gu's work but also illustrates the religious exchange between China and Japan in the twelfth century. At the end of this manuscript, there is information about its printing history. It reads:

[271] For more information about this manuscript, see "Jūyō bunkazai shitei shiryou shōkai 'shinshū jōdo ōjōden'" 重要文化財指定資料紹介『新修浄土往生傳』, *National Diet Library monthly bulletin*, no. 630 (September 2013): 12–13. For online information, visit https://kunishitei.bunka.go.jp/heritage/detail/201/00011581.

In Hangzhou's Renhe County, outside the Houchao Gate, the disciple who is Assistant Teacher of Yuezhou, Ling Dazhong, with his brothers Dazheng, Dashun, with their families, and those who had intention, [write]: My late father, for the matter of a special event,[272] devoted to and recited the name of Amitabha Buddha of the West. At the critical moment,[273] as he had hoped for, [we] witnessed light, as fine as a hair, for seven days. With a smile, in correct mindfulness, he passed away. [This was] witnessed and testified by the monk Huazang Yigong. At this time, [the project of] the printing woodblock of Pure Land rebirth biography was initiated, and I respectfully donated pure wealth to support this event. I extended my wish that those who see, hear, read, and recite this, as well as all sentient beings, may return to the land of ultimate bliss and swiftly realize enlightenment.

Respectfully inscribed on the fifteenth day of the sixth month in 1102.

The abbot of Miaohui Monastery by the West Lake in Qiantang, Dharma Transmission, Granting Purple, the monk Wenyi, encouraged this event.[274]

杭州の仁和縣の候潮門外の界に三賓を奉るに、弟子守越州の助教凌大中、弟大正、大順、家眷等意なる者、先考九許事の為に西方の阿彌陀佛に歸依繫念す。屬纊の際、期する所の如し。七日に毫光を親で微笑正念して逝たり。華蔵の義公和尚目撃證明す。又當に浄土傳の板を開きて、謹て

[272] The original "九許事" (Kujoji) in Japanese could refer to a place name, a specific location, or it might denote a particular event or subject matter.
[273] The critical moment refers to the time of death.
[274] See Keigo Utsunomiya 宇都宮啓吾, "Tōdai-ji toshokan zō 'shinshū jōdo ōjōden' eiin narabini kun'yomi bun" 東大寺図書館蔵『新修淨土往生傳』影印並びに訓読文, *Kamakura Jidai Go Kenkyū* 鎌倉時代語研究 14 (October 31, 1991): 345–346.

浄財を捨て、此の縁を成して用て伸ふ。追て荘厳を薦く。仍て願はくは見聞讀誦の者、及一切衆生、咸極楽の邦に歸して速に菩提の道を證せん。

時に崇寧元年六月の望日、謹題す。

銭塘西湖の妙慧院の住持傳法賜紫釋文義勸緣。

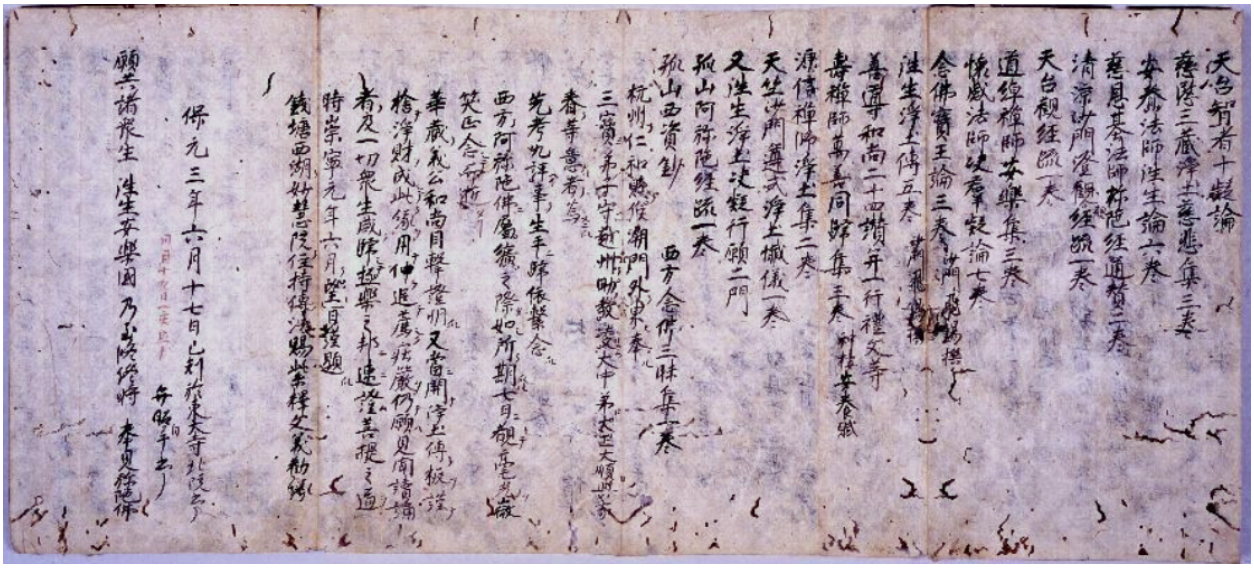


Figure 2 "Newly Revised Pure Land Rebirth Biography", End of Volume

According to this text, the *Newly Revised Pure Land Rebirth Biography* by Wang Gu was printed in Hangzhou in 1102, fifteen years after the text's completion. We don't know how the text was transmitted to Hangzhou, since Wang Gu did not serve in the Jiangnan region before. However, in 1102, Wang Gu was relegated to Taizhou, which was near Hangzhou. According this text, this printing was influenced by a miraculous event involving Ling Dazhong, a junior official in Yuezhou, and his father, a devout Pure Land practitioner. At the time of Ling's father's death, his family witnessed a radiant light that lasted for seven days. Ling's father passed away

with a serene smile, maintaining his mindfulness of Amitabha Buddha. Ling Dazhong was inspired by this miraculous event, so when he learned that Wang Gu's Pure Land rebirth biography was going to be woodblock printed, he generously funded its publication. It is possible that he learned about this event from the monk Wenyi, the abbot of Miaohui Monastery by the West Lake.

This case demonstrates the growing popularity of Pure Land teachings in the Jiangnan region during the Southern Song period. First, the fact that a junior official like Ling Dazhong was inspired by his father's miraculous death and chose to fund the printing of a Pure Land text indicates that Pure Land practices had gained a strong following among the residents of the Jiangnan region. Second, the involvement of the monk Wenyi, the abbot of Miaohui Monastery, suggests that the monastic community in Hangzhou actively promoted the dissemination of Pure Land teachings through printing. This collaboration between lay Buddhists and monastics in the printing of religious texts reflects the close ties between these two groups in the Jiangnan region during this period. It also suggests that Hangzhou continued to be an important hub for religious printing in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Although Wang Gu had no prior connections to Hangzhou, his work was circulated and printed here. Finally, the Japanese manuscript of Wang Gu's work, transcribed just a few decades after its printing in Hangzhou, attests to the rapid transmission of Buddhist texts from China to Japan during this period.

The *Pure Land Text of Longshu*: A Printing History

The *Pure Land Text of Longshu* 龍舒淨土文 is the most prominent Pure Land proselytizing text of the Song Dynasty. Composed in 1160, it experienced multiple printings and reprints throughout the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, influencing the spread of Pure Land

teachings in southern China. The author of this text was Wang Rixiu 王日休 (?–1173), a lay Buddhist who had earned a *jinshi* degree but chose not to take any political positions. In the beginning, Wang learned Confucian classics and wrote commentaries on them. However, one day, he suddenly renounced his Confucian studies and converted to Buddhism, declaring that his previous devotion to Confucianist learnings was a manifestation of his past karma and habituated tendencies, not the ultimate dharma. Instead, he aimed to achieve rebirth in the Western Pure Land.[275] After that time, Wang Rixiu devoted himself to Pure Land practices and led an ascetic lay Buddhist life. At the time of his death, miraculous phenomena were reported by his countrymen. It is accounted that one night, he loudly invoked the Buddha's name and passed away while standing.[276]

In examining Wang's biography, it's evident that he was not among the top-tier literati of the twelfth century, primarily because he never held a political position. Wang remained a local figure throughout his life, dedicating himself to educating people in Luling, now known as Fuzhou in Jiangxi Province. At around 60 years old, he composed the *Pure Land Text of Longshu* and actively sought support from other Buddhists for its publication. This text captured the interest of a group of literati, who held higher social status, and they played a significant role in assisting its publication.

The *Pure Land Text of Longshu* preserves a rich collection of prefaces and postscripts, written by high-level officials and eminent monks, as well as officials of lower ranks, signifying its popularity and influence during that era. Below is a list of its prefaces and postscripts.

[275] *T.* no. 1970, 47: 251c5-15.
[276] Ibid.

Title	Date	Author	Author's Identity
Preface I	1161	Zhang Xiaoxiang 張孝祥 (1132–1170)	Optimus *jinshi* (狀元)
Preface II	1316	Lü Shishuo 呂師說 (fl. 14th c.)	Deputy Supreme Supervisorate-in-chief for Revenues[277]
Preface III	1316	Lü Yuanyi 呂元益 (fl. 14th c.)	No political position, nephew to Lü Shishuo
Eulogy I	(n.d)	Zhou Bida 周必大 (1126–1204)	Grand Councilor
Eulogy II	(n.d)	Lay Buddhist Li	Unknown
Postscript I	1162	Zhou Kui 周葵 (1098–1174)	Vice Minisiter
Postscript II	1162	Liu Zhang 劉章 (1097–1171)	Optimus *jinshi*
Postscript III	1160	Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1107–1163)	Chan master of the Linji lineage
Account I	1173	Li Yanbi 李彥弼 (fl. 12th c.)	Unknown, held minor positions
Postscript IV	1203	Nie Yundi 聂允迪 (fl. 12th c.)	In charge of army revenue of Xiangyang

[277] His title is 財賦都總管府, translated to Supreme Supervisorate-in-chief for Revenues, established in the Jianghuai region, apparently to arrange for the collection and transport of tax income allo- cated to the Empress. See Hucker, 515.

The authors of these prefaces and postscripts include a range of figures, from high-ranking officials like Zhou Bida, a Grand Councilor, and Zhou Kui, a Vice Minister, to lower-level officials such as Li Yanbi and Nie Yundi, who held minor positions in southern China. It also involved individuals who had earned the esteemed title of "Optimus *jinshi*" 狀元, such as Zhang Xiaoxiang and Liu Zhang. Additionally, there were individuals without any political positions, such as Lü Yuanyi and a lay Buddhist with the surname Li. Furthermore, Dahui Zonggao, a Chan master from the Linji lineage, is also included, offering an alternative perspective from the Chan genealogy. These texts provide the printing sources that allow us to tentatively reconstruct its history.

The earliest text delineating the biography of Wang Rixiu and his initial efforts in printing is Zhang Xiaoxiang's preface. He gave a brief biography of Wang Rixiu and accounted how he came to know about this text.

> My friend Wang Xuzhong[278] from Longshu[279], was elegant and calm, simple and impeccable, and extensively versed in various books. He commented on the Six Classics[280] and the various masters[281], amounting to tens of thousands of words. One day, he gave it all up, saying: "These are all manifestations of my past karma and habituated tendencies, not the ultimate *dharma*. I shall return to the Western Pure Land." Since then, he practiced diligently, mindful only of the Buddha. At nearly sixty, he wore plain clothes and ate simple vegetarian food. He

[278] Xuzhong is Wang Rixiu's literary name.
[279] Longshu 龍舒 is in nowadays Shucheng 舒城 in Anhui Province.
[280] The six classics are the *Book of Poetry*, the *Book of Documents*, the *Book of Rites*, the *Book of Changes*, the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and the *Book of Music*.
[281] The masters refer to the writings of various pre-Qin philosophers.

traveled thousands of miles in hardship to instruct others about the Pure Land, undeterred by wind, rain, cold, or heat. In his spare time, he would perform one thousand kowtows daily, and only sleep after midnight. His face was radiant and those who saw him believed him to be a man of virtue.

In the autumn of 1161, he visited my father in Xuancheng. He stayed for two months, during which I first saw his Pure Land text. Altogher, the *dharma* practices, and correspondances with Buddha, were fully detailed. He intends to find those with faith to engrave the book for circulation and has asked me to write a preface for his book. Therefore, I wrote this preface. Xuzhong's personal name is Rixiu.[282]

友人龍舒王虛中，端靜簡潔，博通群書。訓傳六經諸子，數十萬言。一旦捐之，曰："是皆業習，非究竟法。吾其西方之歸。"自是精進，惟佛惟念。年且六十，布衣蔬茹。重趼千里，以是教人，風雨寒暑弗皇恤。閒居日課千拜，夜分乃寢。面目奕奕有光，望之者信其為有道之士也。

紹興辛巳秋，過家君於宣城。留兩月，始見其淨土文。凡修習法門與感驗章著，具有顛末。將求信道鋟木傳焉，諉余序其書。故為之題其端云。虛中名日休。

The preface was written by Zhang Xiaoxiang 張孝祥 (1132–1170), a renowned poet from the Southern Song Dynasty, who obtained the optimus *jinshi* title at the age of 23. Between 1154 and 1159, Zhang experienced rapid promotions in the capital Lin'an (Hangzhou). However, his

[282] *T.* no. 1970, 47: 251c5-15.

rapid rise attracted envy and slander, which caused his dismissal from office in 1159.[283] By 1161, Zhang had returned to his hometown in Xuancheng, where he met Wang Rixiu who visited his father. Given Zhang Xiaoxiang's literary reputation and political standing, Wang requested a preface from Zhang. Zhang's preface begins with a concise overview of the Pure Land teachings, followed by a brief summary of Wang's self-cultivation and altruistic endeavors. Finally, Zhang outlines the content of Wang's Pure Land text.

According to the postscript by Dahui Zonggao, Wang's Pure Land text was completed before the eighth month of 1160. This is evidenced when Zonggao read the text in Hangzhou and wrote a postscript eulogizing Wang's beneficial behaviors. From Zhang's preface, we understand that Wang traveled to Xuancheng to seek support for printing and distributing his book. This suggests that Wang was actively engaged in efforts to publicize and circulate his work, aiming to reach a broad audience.

Wang's effort to promote the printing of his work was also highlighted in the postscripts of Zhou Kui 周葵 (1098–1174) and Liu Zhang 劉章 (1097–1177). Zhou's postscript notes:

> Wang composed a Pure Land text, which is meticulous and thorough, simple and profound, and well-organized. Therefore, he printed and distributed it to those with a connection to the Buddha, rushing about in the various counties of Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Furthermore, he planned to personally go to Jian'an[284] to carve the woodblock in bookstores, eagerly as if it could not be delayed even for a single day.

[283] *SS*, 389.11942–4.
[284] Jian'an is in nowadays Jian'ou 建甌 in Fujian Province.

On intercalary April 7th of 1162, written by "Mind-Only" lay Buddhist, Zhou Kui of Jingxi[285].[286]

作淨土文，精粗淺深，且有條理。以是印施有緣，奔走於江浙諸郡。又將親往建安，刊版於鬻書肆中，汲汲然若不可一日緩者。

紹興壬午閏四月七日，唯心居士荊溪周葵跋。

In 1162, Zhou Kui likely served as a Prefect in the Jiangnan region.[287] It can thus be inferred that between the autumn of 1161 and the spring of 1162, Wang Rixiu traveled from Xuancheng to the Jiangnan region. Zhou Kui observed that Wang actively visited various counties in the Jiangnan region to seek support to print his Pure Land texts. Zhou also noted Wang's plans to travel to Jian'an, a major printing hub renowned for its numerous bookstores.[288] These bookstores in Jian'an were known for their lower printing costs, likely because they used locally produced bamboo paper. Books printed in Jian'an had wide diversity, ranging from Confucian classics to scholarly commentaries, and they were widely circulated.[289] Zhou's writings provide insights into Wang Rixiu's endeavor to seek support for printing the Pure Land text, and Wang's journey could be traced from Anhui, through the Jiangnan region, and finally to Fujian.

Liu Zhang's postscript, written in the summer of 1162, also noted Wang's efforts in printing the Pure Land text: "Xuzhong, intending to enlighten those of lesser capacity, broadly discusses the Pure Land, focusing solely on returning to the Western Pure Land. Hence, he was

[285] Jingxi is Zhou Kui's hometown, in nowadays Changzhou in Jiangsu Province.
[286] *T*. no. 1970, 47: 283a15-26.
[287] *SS*, 385.11834–5.
[288] See Zhang, *Zhongguo yinshua shi*, 88–93.
[289] Zhang Xiumin, *Zhongguo yinshu shi*, 95-158. See also Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Hui'an ji* 晦庵集, vol. 123.

eager to print and distribute his works, fearing they won't reach far enough."[290] Liu's writing suggests that he is familiar with Chan teachings, as he contrasts them with Pure Land teachings, arguing that Chan is suited for those with higher wisdom, while Pure Land is more accessible to ordinary people. Additionally, Zhou Kui's self-identification as a "Mind-Only" lay Buddhist implies his possible affiliation with Chan teachings. Based on these texts, it can be inferred that Wang Rixiu traveled extensively in the Jiangnan region, reaching out to other lay Buddhists. He likely asked individuals who held political positions to compose postscripts for his Pure Land texts, which could enhance the reputation and influence of his work, reflecting the impact of political capital on the distribution of religious teachings.

As the paratextual material depicts it, the printing history of the *Pure Land Text of Longshu* was distinguished by numerous miraculous phenomena, which differentiated it from the printing of secular books. As we will see, these phenomena played a significant role in its enduring popularity and continuous reprinting from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. The earliest record of these miraculous phenomena was documented by Li Yanbi 李彥弼, a former *jinshi* candidate who retired to his hometown of Luling 廬陵. He described a remarkable encounter with Wang Rixiu in a dream and also included an account of Wang's miraculous death.

> In 1173, my family was infected with an epidemic disease. On April 5th, I also fell ill, unable to consume food or medicine. In the morning of the 19th, I dreamt of a man in brown clothes, thin in appearance. He stroked my limbs and urged me to get up quickly. Startled, I asked, "Who are you, sir?" The man replied, "I am Longshu." I told him about my illness, explained that I was unable to get up, and asked how might the sickness be cured. He said, "Do you remember

[290] *T*. no. 1970, 47: 283a27-b8.

the teachings of the shortcut?" I replied, "Yes, I recite Amitabha Buddha every day without stopping." He said, "Just get up and eat white porridge." After I woke up, I ate white porridge, and my illness was indeed healed. Later, I saw a painting of [Wang] Longshu, and it looked exactly like the man in my dream.

I have always heard that Wang was well versed in the Six Arts[291], particularly the *Book of Change*. He tirelessly taught others, attracting many learners wherever he went……On the 11th day of the first month, I sent my offspring to receive his teachings. They soon returned and reported Wang had lectured as usual the previous night. After reciting and worshiping Buddha until midnight, he suddenly loudly chanted Amitabha Buddha several times, saying, "The Buddha comes to fetch me." And with that, he died standing. That night, some countrymen dreamt of two men in blue leading Wang westward. His passing was considered extraordinary, and those who know him and those who do not, all came to pay their respects……

I, with great sincerity, engraved Wang's portrait, along with his miraculous deeds, to spread his story. I dare not embellish words to deceive the eyes and ears, but have faithfully recounted and documented the true story……

Recorded by Yanbi of Luling on the fifteenth day of the tenth month, 1173.[292]

[291] The Six Arts in ancient China are a set of essential skills comprising rites, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy, and mathematics, which are considered essential for a gentleman.
[292] *T*. no. 1970, 47: 285b13-c14.

彥弼乾道癸巳，家染疫疾。四月五日，彥弼亦病，粥藥不進。至十九日早，夢一人褐衣，神貌清癯。以手撫摩彥弼肢體，而呼彥弼令速起。彥弼惕然問曰：公何人耶？答曰：予即龍舒也。彥弼因告以疾病，雖欲支持莫能，將何以愈其疾乎？公曰：記省闕中雅教汝捷徑否？彥弼曰：然，每日持誦阿彌陀佛不輟。公曰：汝起食白粥，即可既悟。索粥食之，病果隨愈。後見龍舒畫像，儼然如夢見者。

彥弼稔聞，居士潛通六藝，尤精於易。誨人不倦，所至學者輻湊……正月十一日，令子姪往承其教。不久回云，居士夜來講書，罷如常。持誦禮佛至三鼓，忽厲聲念阿彌陀佛數聲，云：佛來接我。言訖立化。是夕邦人有夢，二青衣引公向西而行，傳為勝異。識與不識，咸來瞻敬……

謹刻公像，并著感應事跡，用廣其傳。非敢飾辭，以惑耳目。故此直述而具載之……

是歲下元廬陵李彥弼謹記。

Little is known about the figure Li Yanbi, except that he achieved *jinshi* status in the 1090s and was an original of Luling in Jiangxi Province.[293] In 1173, he retired to his hometown and had a remarkable dream encounter with Wang Rixiu, who provided guidance to cure Li's deadly epidemic disease. Li then sent his descendants to visit Wang, but they discovered Wang had already passed away. But the extraordinary thing was that Wang Rixiu died standing, and others dreamt that he was led to the West. His miraculous death deeply impressed the local

[293] *SHY*, 68.2.

community and showed the effectiveness of Pure Land practices. To show his gratitude, Li Yanbi made a reprint of Wang's Pure Land text, adding Wang's portrait and his own story. This edition became the transmitted version, further enhancing the influence of Pure Land teachings in the local area of Luling.

The subsequent postscript, written by Nie Yundi 聂允迪 in 1203 (which is 30 years after Li's account), provides insights into the later printing history of the *Pure Land Text of Longshu*. It states:

> In the past, Wang Rixiu preached the teachings of the Pure Land to people with great earnestness. He once lingered in my hometown. At that time, I was just over twenty years old and was about to make a journey to the east. I did not know about the Buddha's teachings, so I did not have the opportunity to meet Wang in person. When I turned thirty, I found myself constantly amidst calamities. This led me to deeply feel that human life was like sinking into a vast sea of suffering and vexations, endless with no shore in sight. I thus determined to follow Wang's Pure Land teachings as a means of liberation. Just three years later, Wang passed away in Luling County. The people of the county all made paintings to venerate him. This happened in the first month of 1173.
>
> Five years later, in 1177, my elder brother, a prefectural military official, received a decree to inspect Luling. During this time, he obtained a printed copy of Wang's Pure Land Text and brought it back. I was concerned that this extraordinary work might be forgotten over time and fail to spread widely, and so I had it carved into stone and placed in the Amitabha Hall of the Bao'en Temple, located in the north of the city.

Today, I want to distribute ten thousand copies of Wang's writings on the Pure Land. Additionally, I have included Wang's portrait and eulogies written by Grand Councilor Zhou Bida and others at the beginning of the book, following the structure of the printed edition of Luling. I hope that those who see or hear of Wang's teachings will strengthen their faith and practice diligently, then the Western Pure Land is indeed not difficult to reach.

In 1203, Nie Yundi from Xujiang, a military warehouse official in Xiangyang under the jurisdiction of the newly appointed general inspector of Huguang, joining palms together, bows in obeisance and respectfully writes this postscript.[294]

居士平昔以淨土之說，懇切勸人。嘗盤桓于鄉里。允迪于是時，年方二十餘，適預偕東上，且未知有佛法，弗獲識公面。迨犬馬之齒至三十，連嬰災患。殊覺人生沉淪於煩惱大苦海中，渺無邊岸。遂一意祖襲居士之說，為超脫計。如是者才三數年，居士遂立化于廬陵郡。郡之人皆繪像以事之。蓋乾道癸巳之正月也。

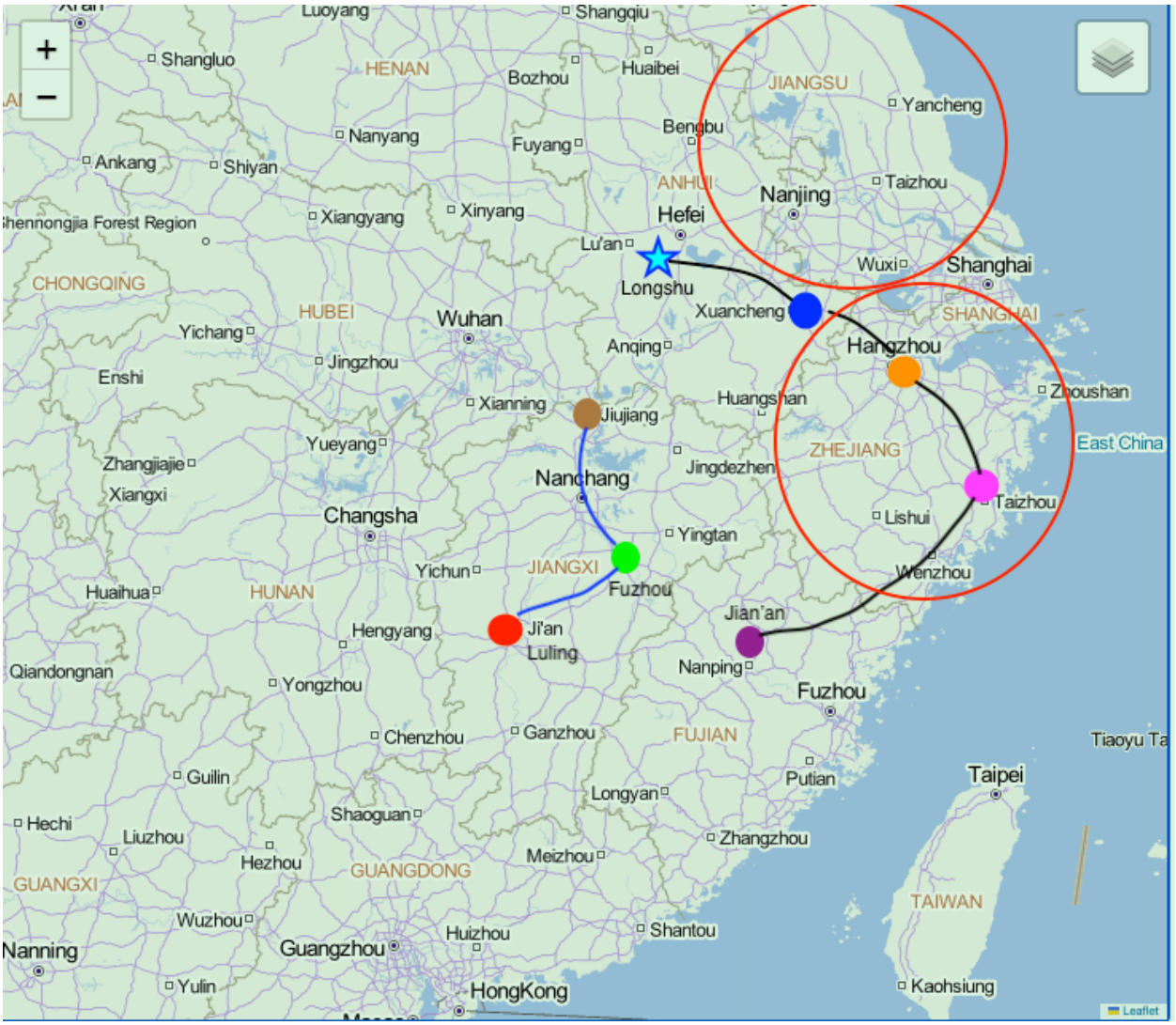
後五年丁酉歲，先兄知府兵部被檄，較試廬陵，得所刻本以歸。允迪恐此一段奇事，久之湮沒，無以傳遠，遂刻諸石，置城北報恩寺之阿彌殿。

今此，願施居士所著淨土文一萬帙，輒復以居士慈相及丞相周益公而下讚述附於卷首，皆襲廬陵刻本也。庶幾見者聞者，增益信心，勉疆精進，則西方淨土誠不難到。

[294] *T*. no. 1970, 47: 285c15-286a15.

嘉泰癸亥，文林郎新监湖广总领所襄阳府戶部大軍倉旰江聂允迪合十指爪稽首谨跋。

Nie Yundi’s postscript narrates Wang Rixiu’s preaching activities and the history of the printing of his Pure Land text. Nie, a native of Xujiang, which is today’s Fuzhou in Jiangxi Province, mentioned that Wang Rixiu visited his hometown to preach the Pure Land teachings during the 1160s. The map below shows Wang’s hometown, his locations in the 1160s, and the spread of his Pure Land text.



Wang's journey began from his hometown Longshu (now Shucheng County, marked with a star) and made a stop to visit Zhang Xiaoxiang's father in Xuancheng (marked with a blue dot) in the autumn of 1161. He then traveled through the Jiangsu and Zhejiang regions (indicated by large red circles). His encounters likely included meetings with Zhou Kui in Hangzhou (marked with an orange dot) and Liu Zhang in Taizhou (marked with a pink dot) in the first half of 1162, with plans to visit Jian'an in the south (marked with a purple dot).

By 1173, over a decade after the Pure Land text's completion and its possible initial printing, his Pure Land text had reached Luling (marked with a red dot) where it was reprinted by Li Yanbi. Li Yanbi's decision to reprint the text was influenced by a miraculous dream in which he encountered Wang, as well as by learning of Wang's extraordinary death. Motivated by these events, Li included Wang's portrait and his story in the book.

Nie Yundi's engagement with Wang's Pure Land text closely followed that of Li Yanbi. In 1177, four years after Li's reprint, Nie's elder brother acquired a copy of Wang's text in Luling and brought it back to Fuzhou (marked with a green dot). Nie converted to Buddhism in his thirties after experiencing numerous misfortunes, so he was motivated to preserve and spread Wang's teachings. Nearly thirty years later, in 1203, he reprinted ten thousand copies of the text and distributed them freely. Nie followed the structure used in the Luling print, which included Wang's portrait and eulogies at the beginning of the book. Notably, he included the eulogy written by Grand Councilor Zhou Bida 周必大 (1126-1204).[295] Zhou Bida was a prominent politician and literary figure in the Southern Song Dynasty, and also an important figure in printing history. He spent four years editing and publishing *Wenyuan yinghua* in 1204, one of the four great Song Dynasty encyclopedias, which consisted of a thousand *juan*.[296] Additionally, he edited and published the complete collection of Ouyang Xiu, and established a definitive version of Ouyang Xiu's work that has been preserved to this day.[297] His eulogy represents a significant endorsement of Wang's teachings at the highest political level. Zhou's eulogy is as follows:

皇皇然而無求，　　Sublime and yet without desire,

[295] *SS*, 391.11965-72.
[296] Wang Yongbo 王永波, "Nansong Zhou Bida keshu huodong kaoshu" 南宋周必大刻书活动考述, *Guizhou wenshi congkan* 贵州文史丛刊, no. 4 (2022): 1-12.
[297] Dong Censhi 董岑仕, "Zhou Bida bian 'Ouyang Wenzhong gongji' Song ke san ban kao 周必大编《欧阳文忠公集》宋刻三版考," *Wenxian* 文献, no. 6 (2022): 54-84.

惕惕然而無憂。　　vigilant and yet without worry.

閔頹風之將墜，　　[He] pities the degenerate practices about to fall,

攬眾善以同流。　　and embraces all good to merge them together.

導之以仁義之原，　　[He] guides people with the principles of benevolence and righteousness,

诱之以寂滅之樂。　　and appeals to them with the joy of calm extinction[298].

人見其有作，　　People see his actions,

而莫識其無為。　　yet none recognize his non-action.

故中道奄然，　　Thus, the middle way appears,

而示人以真覺。　　showing people the true awakening.[299]

Zhou Bida starts by praising Wang's noble moral character: the phrases "sublime and yet without desire, vigilant and yet without worry" depict a literati who is indifferent to fame and fortune and has a mind free from entanglements. Zhou continues to justify Wang's composition of a Pure Land text from a Confucian perspective, emphasizing that Wang endeavors to advocate benevolence and righteousness to guide people in an age of degeneration. What is particularly interesting is that Zhou does not specifically focus on Pure Land teachings. Instead, he portrays Wang as a Buddhist in general terms, praising his accomplishments in maintaining the state of "non-action" and showing people "the joy of calm extinction." This broader depiction may suggest how prominent literati received Wang's Pure Land text at that time.

[298] Calm extinction 寂滅 is synonym of *nirvāṇa*, which means Buddhahood, enlightenment, realization of the truth.
[299] *T*. no. 1970, 47: 252a22-b3.

The last piece of information about the printing history of Wang's Pure Land text was written in 1316 when the text was again reprinted in Jiujiang (marked with a brown dot) by the lay Buddhist Lü Yuanyi 呂元益 (fl. 14th century). This reprinting was also associated with miraculous phenomena, as recorded in the preface written by Lü Shishuo 呂師說, uncle of Lü Yuanyi.

> [Wang Rixiu] also wrote thirteen volumes of the Pure Land texts, citing scriptures from the three teachings[300] as support. [The text] conveniently benefits people and provides guidance for later generations, this can be called "a thought lasting ten thousand years." Over time, the woodblocks have become obscured, making the print difficult to read. My nephew Yuanyi, who calls himself "Guest of Kanglu", is the son of my elder brother Daoshan[301], the former Vice Minister. He has long planted virtuous roots[302] and was born into our family. In his conduct and establishments, he is always on the right path. He always cares for those who are hungry, cold, ill, and suffering. He expounds the Daoist and Buddhist scriptures, printing and circulating them to benefit others. He practices the Pure Land deeds, known only to himself……
>
> He resolved to reprint Wang's book to preserve its transmission and wishes all sentient beings to return to the Pure Land. While carving volumes IV to IX, workers felt obstacles with the iron pen on the ten woodblocks. Three

[300] The three teachings refer to Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism.
[301] This is Lü Shikui 呂師夔 (1230–1301), with Daoshan as his literary name. He is the son of Lü Wende 呂文德 (?–1269), a famous general during the late Southern Song Dynasty and formed a powerful military clan. Lü Shikui succeeded his father's career but later surrendered to the Mongal Yuan army and served as Vice Minister for the Mongols. See *Yuanshi*, .
[302] "Virtuous roots" 善本 is a Buddhist term which means morally positive habits that bring good retribution.

śarīra[303] emerged, embedded deep and hidden in the cracks, their radiance bright and dazzling, astonishing all who saw them. These are all results of the manifestation of Amitabha Buddha's compassion and wisdom, the unwavering will of the lay Buddhist Longshu, and my nephew's firm faith. How can it be said that the Buddha's teachings are without miracles, or that there is no Pure Land in the West? So the old woodblocks were recarved, and good destinies were fulfilled……

In 1316, on the Mid-Autumn Festival, a Pure Land practitioner, Grand Master for Admonishment[304], former Deputy General Manager of the General Office in Jianghuai, in charge of Finance and Tax, Lü Shishuo, seventy years old, wrote this in the Buddhist hall at his residence in Xunyang.

又作淨土文十三卷，引三教經書為證。方便利益，開導後人。可謂一念萬年。歲久板翳，不任披閱。吾姪元益遜齋，自號康廬客，乃先兄道山左丞之子。夙植善本，來生我家。行已立身，靡不在道。飢寒病苦，周恤有恒。道釋諸經，印施饒益。修行淨業，惟己自知……

發心重為刊梓，欲壽其傳。願一切眾生悉歸淨土。刊至第四卷第九、卷十板，鐵筆有礙。出舍利三顆，嵌罅深隱，光彩燦燦，眾驚異焉。此皆阿彌陀佛悲智示現，龍舒居士願力不泯，吾姪信心堅固所致。謂佛法無靈驗、西方無淨土可乎？舊板重刊，善緣圓滿……

[303] *Śarīra* 舍利 means the relics of the Buddha or a revered monk.
[304] Grand Master for Admonishment is a prestige title for civil officials of rank 6b2 in Qin, 5b thereafter. See Hucker, 213.

延祐三年, 歲次丙辰中秋日, 同修淨土信士奉訓大夫前江淮守處財賦都總府副總官古壽呂師說，書于潯陽寓舍之信堂。

Lü Shishuo and Lü Yuanyi were members of the Lü family, a powerful military clan during the late Southern Song Dynasty.[305] This family maintained their power even after surrendering to the Yuan court, with many members serving in the Yuan administration. The Lü family originated from Jiangxi and was a significant political force in the region. Lü Shishuo represented the second generation of the family, while Lü Yuanyi was part of the third generation, but he did not hold political positions.[306] This preface indicates that both were devout practitioners of Pure Land. Specifically, Lü Yuanyi was committed to benevolent practices, particularly in reprinting and disseminating Wang's Pure Land text. What was remarkable was that during the carving of the new woodblock for this text, three *śarīra* (sacred relics) appeared, an event considered by Lü as a powerful testament to the efficacy of Pure Land teachings, and that would likely enhance the faith of future Pure Land practitioners.

In summary, the rich collection of prefaces and postscripts of the *Pure Land Text of Longshu* enables us to examine its geographical spread. This text reached the capital, Hangzhou, in 1160, where the eminent Chan monk Zonggao had the opportunity to read it. The author, Wang Rixiu, actively promoted his new book in the Jiangsu and Zhejiang regions and made plans to travel to Jian'an to create a woodblock for printing. By 1170, the text had been disseminated to Luling, where it was reprinted. The Luling printed edition became the

[305] For more details about the Lü family, see Qiao Dongshan 乔东山, "Lüshi an ze zhaoshi wei—— Lüshi jiazu yu nansong miewang" "吕氏安则赵氏危"——吕氏家族与南宋灭亡, *Songshi yanjiu congkan* no. 01 (2022): 71-82.
[306] Ibid.

transmitted version of this text and was subsequently reprinted in the nearby counties of Fuzhou in 1203 and Jiujiang in 1316. A key driver for its continuous reprinting was the religious faith and miraculous events associated with it, which represented a unique feature in the printing history of Pure Land books.

The Role of Lay Buddhists

The *Pure Land Text of Longshu* marks a significant milestone in the development of Pure Land teachings during the Song Dynasty. This text is distinguished by its substantial involvement of lay Buddhists, which contrasted with the norm that Pure Land teachings were predominantly interpreted and disseminated by monastic personnel. This text was initiated and supported by lay Buddhists, who made an effort to spread Pure Land teachings beyond monastic circles. Specifically, it involved lay Buddhists from various social strata. We see high-ranking officials like Grand Councilor Zhou Bida, middle-level officials such as Zhou Kui and Liu Zhang, peripheral figures in a powerful political family like Lü Yuanyi, and low-level officials like Li Yanbi and Nie Yundi. It also included eminent literary figures like Zhang Xiaoxiang. Most importantly, the author Wang Rixiu was a commoner with no political position, but he rose to a position of considerable respect and influence, and his legacy continued until the twentieth century.[307]

As for its genre, this text is a proselytizing work, which sets it apart from conventional Pure Land exegesis produced by eminent monks. Its widespread popularity could be attributed to

[307] For example, Master Yinguang highly praises Wang's book, describing it as the foremost resource for beginners. See Yinguang, "Chongke 'longshu jingtu wen' tici bingxu," 重刻《龙舒净土文》题词并序 in *Zengguang Yinguang fashi wenchao* 增广印光法师文钞, ed. Zhang Jinggang 张景岗 (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2012), 310–2.

its straightforward and easily understandable nature, which represents a significant effort in popularizing the teachings. Lay Buddhists, in particular, have certain advantages in producing proselytizing Pure Land texts. Their proximity to the common people enables them to have a deeper understanding of their demands and needs. For instance, Wang Rixiu traveled extensively in southern China and communicated with various people, and that prepared him to simplify Pure Land doctrines to be more comprehensible to a broader audience.

As for his approach, Wang Rixiu restructured the core doctrines of the Pure Land teachings to be more accessible to ordinary people. The Pure Land scriptures were translated several centuries earlier and their language was difficult for contemporary readers to understand. Further, their exegesis was even more elusive, making the texts intimidating for common Buddhist adherents. Wang's work fills the gap and served as a kind of "Pure Land Teachings 101" aimed at those with minimal religious knowledge. The below table shows the chapters of his book, which manifests his approach to popularizing Pure Land teachings.

	Chapter		
1	Arousing Faith in Pure Land	淨土起信	9 excerpts
2	Essentials of Pure Land Sutras	淨土總要	7 excerpts
3	Universal Recommdations of Practice	普勸修持	9 excerpts
4	Teachings of Practice Methods	修持法門	15 excerpts
5	Miraculous Responsive Events	感應事跡	30 excerpts
6	Specific Advice	特為勸喻	37 excerpts
7	Essentials of Guiding the Lost	指迷歸要	7 excerpts

8	Miraculous Responses in this Life	現世感應	18 excerpts
9	Achieving Higher Level of Practice	助修上品	16 excerpts
10	Purity and Impurity as One	淨濁如一	10 excerpts

The extant edition of the *Pure Land of Longshu* has ten chapters, excluding the appendix added by Nie Yundi. Unlike the exegesis written by scholarly monks, this text offers an accessible and structured introduction to the Pure Land teachings for newcomers, particularly those familiar with Chan. It addresses fundamental questions of "why," "what," and "how" in practicing the Pure Land. Wang Rixiu aims to engage a broad audience, particularly those with limited education, so he employs short excerpts instead of lengthy expositions to present Pure Land doctrines. Additionally, the work integrates tales set in familiar secular contexts, which could appeal to lay Buddhists in various professions, including officials, farmers, butchers, and women. Moreover, Wang Rixiu skillfully negotiates between Confucianist morality, Chan doctrines, and Daoist practices, positioning the Pure Land teachings in a manner that demonstrates their compatibility with other traditions while also emphasizing their unique and incomparable benefits.

The first chapter, "Arousing Faith in Pure Land," addresses the fundamental "why" of the practice and introduces the most crucial topic of Pure Land teaching: faith. In the beginning, Wang states that the benefits of the Pure Land teachings not only apply to the afterlife but also have significant advantages in this life, encouraging people to start practicing now. Then he emphasizes that the Pure Land practice is very simple and accessible: reciting the Buddha's name ten times only requires as little time as drinking a cup of tea in the morning. Hence, he advocates that this practice is suitable for people of all professions, stating:

> Since [the Pure Land] is not difficult when practiced, it also does not hinder any worldly affairs. Thus, among officials, it does not hinder their official duties. Among scholars, it does not hinder their studies. Among merchants, it does not hinder their trading. Among farmers, it does not hinder their farming. Among those in government offices, it does not hinder their responsibilities. Among monks, it does not hinder their Chan meditation. For all activities, there is no hindrance. Therefore, it is said that the practice can be taken in the time it takes to drink a cup of tea in the morning. This then becomes the indestructible resource for countless eons. Why then do people not practice it?[308]
>
> 所以修者不難，亦不妨一切俗事。故在官不妨職業，在士不妨修讀，在商賈不妨販賣，在農人不妨耕種，在公門不妨事上，在僧徒不妨參禪。凡一切所為皆不相妨。故曰：其修持工夫，見於早晨一茶之頃耳，遂可以為萬萬劫不壞之資。人何為而不修乎？

Wang continues to inspire people to arouse faith in the Pure Land teachings. He said that it is not surprising that people often do not believe in the existence of Pure Land, since people often base their beliefs on their immediate and direct life experiences. However, Wang asserts that the Buddha has no motive to deceive people, so his words must be true. Moreover, Wang believes that the tales of miraculous correspondences of past Pure Land practitioners should encourage and strengthen faith in others.

Wang also draws comparisons between Pure Land teachings, Chan teachings, and Daoist practices, advocating for their compatibility while also arguing the superiority of Pure Land

[308] *T*. no. 1970, 47: 254c17-22.

teachings. He believes that while Chan advocates the concepts of "self-nature as Amitabha Buddha" and "mind-only Pure Land," these ideas are difficult for most people to attain. Both Chan and Pure Land practitioners aim to achieve buddha-nature, but attaining buddha-nature through Pure Land practice is significantly easier compared to Chan. For the average person, the concepts of "self-nature as Amitabha Buddha" and "mind-only Pure Land" are impractical and can be misleading. In contrast, Pure Land practice is down to earth and serves as a reliable path for liberation from the reincarnation cycle. In the end, Wang emphasizes that Chan and Pure Land practices are not mutually exclusive but are compatible. While Pure Land practitioners have no obstacles in practicing Chan, he questions why those who practice Chan meditation disparage the Pure Land and choose not to practice it.[309]

Wang also compares the Pure Land with Daoist practices. He points out that the goal for Daoist practitioners is to attain immortality, but their immortality has an end. While Daoist immortals may live for thousands of millions of years, they eventually re-enter the reincarnation cycle. This is because of their failure to fully comprehend their true nature. Daoist practitioners are often attached to physical and spiritual forms, which prevents them from realizing the ultimate reality. Moreover, the Daoist pursuit of immortality is exceedingly difficult: only one in ten thousand succeeds. In recent times, only Zhongli Quan 鐘離權 and Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 have become immortals. Wang personally knows many of their followers, but they all eventually died and their lifelong efforts were futile and brought no benefit. Instead, Wang advocates for the Pure Land practice for those seeking eternal life. He states that people born in the Pure Land will have

[309] *T*. no. 1970, 47: 255c07-256a14.

immeasurable life and this makes the Pure Land practice a more reliable and fruitful path for those seeking eternality.[310]

The next chapter "Essentials of Pure Land Scriptures" provides a succinct summary of Pure Land doctrines scattered in various *sutras*. Wang states his approach in the preface to this chapter:

> Within the Great Canon, there are "*Wuliang qingjing pingdeng jue jing*"[311], "*Amituo Guodu rendao jing*", "*Wuliangshou jing*", and "*Wuliangshou zhuangyan jing*"[312]. These four texts are originally one *sutra*, but due to different translators, they have four titles. There are many errors in them, and I have long since corrected them and also published it in printed edition. Based on these *sutras* and other commentaries, I compose "Essentials of Pure Land Scriptures".[313]
>
> 大藏之中有《無量清淨平等覺經》、《阿彌陀過度人道經》、《無量壽經》、《無量壽莊嚴經》。四者本為一經，譯者不同，故有四名。其舛訛甚多，予久已校正，亦刊板以行。今按此經及餘經傳，為淨土總要。

Wang Rixiu identifies four translations of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* 無量壽經, a major Pure Land text, and he made the first attempt in the history of Pure Land teachings to

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[310] *T*. no. 1970, 47: 256a16-b9.
[311] The *Wuliang qingjing pingdengjue jing* (*T*. 361, *K*. 24) in four fascicles; one of the five extant translations of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*, the most common reference being the 無量壽經 (*T.* 360). There are various versions regarding who translated this text, varying between Baiyan 帛延 (ca. 258) of the Wei dynasty or Lokakṣema 支讖 (between 147 and 186).
[312] The "*Wuliangshou zhuangyan jing*", *T*. 363; *K*. 1199 (3 fascicles); an alternative translation of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* 無量壽經.
[313] *T*. no. 1970, 47: 257b5-10.

synthesize the four translations in a single text, which he also printed for wider circulation. Since the language of Pure Land *sutras* is elusive to ordinary people, Wang extracted the core teachings of Pure Land doctrine into six short excerpts. These excerpts include a description of the Western Pure Land, the great power and vows of Amitabha Buddha, a historical account of the Western Pure Land's origin, and the benefits of being reborn in the Pure Land. One of the key benefits is achieving "patient acceptance based on the awareness of the non-arising of phenomena."[314]

In Chapter Four "Teachings of Practice Methods", Wang presents a comprehensive list of fourteen practice methods of the Pure Land. These methods are organized from the simplest to the most challenging. The most accessible practice he introduces is the daily recitation of Amitabha Buddha's name ten times. Wang then progresses to more advanced practices, including the recitation of Pure Land *dhāraṇī*[315], observance of precepts, chanting of Mahayana sutras, and meditation focused on Amitabha Buddha and the two great bodhisattvas of the Pure Land. He explains these practice methods in a straightforward way in order to engage practitioners of all levels.

Chapters Five and Eight are dedicated to "miraculous correspondences," a major genre in Pure Land literature. Chapter Five compiles "miraculous correspondences" of historical figures, while Chapter Eight documents extraordinary tales relayed to Wang. Chapter Five aligns with the tradition of Pure Land rebirth tales and features eminent monks such as Huiyuan, Tanluan, and Shandao, together with ordinary individuals like a blacksmith and a butcher. It also includes five women among its thirty tales, ranging from aristocratic ladies to a common old woman. Chapter

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[314] "Patient acceptance based on awareness of the nonarising of phenomena" 無生法忍 (Skt. *Anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti*) is a distinctive level of enlightenment. In the Mahāyāna, a bodhisattva is said to have attained the stage of "nonretrogression" (*avaivartika*) when he develops an unswerving conviction that all *dharmas* are "unproduced" (*anutpāda*) and "empty" (*śūnyatā*) in the sense that they lack any intrinsic nature (*niḥsvabhāva*). See *PDB*, 55.

[315] *Dhāraṇī* is a mystical utterance that contains the power to bring about spiritual or temporal results.

Eight focuses on Wang's fellow villagers, encompassing diverse characters like farmers, a would-be murderer, elderly men and women, and a blind girl. The inclusion of women and common villagers makes the text more relatable and accessible, especially to an audience that Wang presumes to have limited education.[316]

Chapter seven "Essentials of Guiding the Lost" is specifically aimed at Chan practitioners. In this chapter, Wang continues the arguments he presented in Chapter One, and further elaborates on the pitfalls of practicing Chan, and supports his arguments with historical examples as evidence. The following is his approach.

> Many who practice Chan do not believe in the Pure Land, considering it to be attached to phenomenal appearances. They aim to point directly at the minds of men [so that they might] see the nature and achieve Buddhahood. This teaching is very good but extremely difficult to achieve, and many have fallen into pitfalls. Therefore, I will elaborate on the pitfalls of practicing Chan and cite historical examples as evidence. I will also address those who practice but do not understand the essentials, and discuss these matters together. Hence, the title of this chapter is "Essentials of Guiding the Lost to Return".[317]
>
> 參禪者多不信淨土，以謂著相。欲直指人心、見性成佛。此說甚善。極不易到，反成弊者多矣。今故詳言參禪之弊，且引事跡為證，與諸修行不知其要者，併舉而言。故此卷名指迷歸要。

[316] Wang said in the preface to Chapter Six "Special Advice" that "if one cannot read, it entirely depends on the kindness of gentlemen with the mind of a Bodhisattva to explain it to them." See *T*. no. 1970, 47: 269c24-26.
[317] *T*. no. 1970, 47: 275a14-18.

Chan teachings enjoyed wide popularity during the Song Dynasty, so Chan naturally became a central subject in Wang's discourse on Pure Land. Wang observes that the doctrines of Chan and Pure Land are seemingly contradictory: the Chan teachings, especially the Chan schools popular in the Song, emphasize a direct approach to enlightenment, aiming to "point directly at the minds of men [so that they might] see the nature and achieve Buddhahood," whereas the Pure Land teachings stress the faith in the existence of the Pure Land and the profound vow of Amitabha Buddha. Consequently, Chan followers often dismiss the Pure Land as "attaching to phenomenal appearances," which contradicts the core doctrines in Chan that renunciate the reality of all phenomena. Wang admits that the Chan doctrine is great, but achieving Buddhahood through it is very hard. In this chapter, he refers to the life stories of four Chan masters to demonstrate the difficulty in escaping the reincarnation cycle. For instance, he uses the case of the eminent poet Su Dongpo to support his point.

> "Su Dongpo was Master Jie's future incarnation."
>
> The Chan master Wuzu Jie was believed to be a past life of Su Dongpo, as evidenced in many instances. Due to his Buddhist cultivation in previous lives, Su Dongpo was exceptionally intelligient in this life. However, since he had not yet eradicated the five poisons[318], he was deeply involved in poetry and, unexpectedly, suffered exile. This is a significant mistake. If he had practiced both Chan and Pure Land teachings as a monk in the past life, he would definitely be

[318] Poison is a Buddhist term referring to an obstruction and hindrance. It is often used as "three poisons", which means the three basic afflictions from which all other afflictions are derived: (1) desire, craving (貪欲 *rāga*); (2) anger, aversion (瞋恚 *dveṣa*); and (3) nescience, folly (愚癡 *moha*). See DDB: http://buddhism-dict.net.ezproxy.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?4e.xml+id(%27b4e09-6bd2%27. Here it may be a misspelling.

reborn directly in the Pure Land, attaining great fortune and wisdom. Why, then, did he endure so much suffering in this world?

It is said that when Su Dongpo traveled south, he carried only a scroll of Amitabha Buddha. When asked, he replied, "This scroll is my claim to rebirth in the Western Pure Land." If this account holds true, it suggests that Su Dongpo finally succeeded in his practice. It is because he had planted good roots in a previous life and was enlightened beyond ordinary people that he was able to realize this principle.[319]

"戒禪師後身東坡"

五祖禪師乃東坡前身，應驗不一。以前世修行故，今生聰明過人。以五毒氣習未除故，今生多緣詩語，意外受竄謫。此亦大誤也。若前世為僧，參禪兼修西方，則必徑生淨土，成就大福大慧，何至此世界多受苦惱哉？

聞東坡南行，唯帶阿彌陀佛一軸。人問其故，答云：此軾生西方公據也。若果如是，則東坡至此方為得計。亦以宿植善根，明達過人，方悟此故也。

Su Dongpo, also known as Su Shi (1037–1101), a renowned poet of the Song Dynasty, was often associated with the Chan tradition. He had close connections with Chan masters like Changzong 常總 (1025–1091) and also has a significant presence in Chan literature such as various lamp records.[320] His association with the Pure Land tradition, on the other hand, emerged

[319] *T*. no. 1970, 47: 275b4-15.
[320] For Su Dongpo's connection with Chan masters, see Zhu Gang, *Su Shi shijiang* 苏轼十讲 (Shanghai: sanlian shudian), 159–199.

much later in the twelfth century. Buddhist historiographies like *Fozu tongji* records a popular narrative that he was the future incarnation of the Chan master Wuzu Jie, as evidenced in the dreams of his brother and his own accounts.[321] Wang Rixiu makes a point about this story, positing that Su Dongpo's remarkable talents resulted from his Buddhist practices in his past life. However, Wang argues that Su had not fully eradicated his afflictions in his past life, and that led to his future incarnation as Su Dongpo. Though Su had extraordinary talents in literature, he also suffered from multiple exiles to the southernmost regions of China. Wang presumes that if Su Dongpo had integrated Pure Land practices with his Chan practices, he must have achieved rebirth in the Pure Land, so he does not have to endure suffering. Nevertheless, it is said that Su Dongpo carried only a scroll of Amitabha Buddha during his exile, indicating his determination to be reborn in the Pure Land. This, according to Wang Rixiu, marks Su's final success in Buddhist practice.

The negotiation with Chan's doctrines and practices was a significant topic in the twelfth century. Not only did Wang dedicate to arguing for the compatibility of Chan and Pure Land, but monks and lay Buddhists who wrote prefaces also emphasized this issue. Chan master Zonggao wrote the earliest postscript on this subject in 1160 in Hangzhou.

> Wang Rixiu from Longshu, with the literary name Xuzhong, pays attention to Buddhism beyond reading thoroughly. He takes it as his duty to benefit others, like a lotus growing in fire. The Buddha said, "Those who seek to enlighten others before achieving their own enlightenment are Bodhisattvas with great aspiration. Those who have achieved self-enlightenment and can enlighten others are like the *Tathagata* who appears in the world."[322] I admire his aspiration

[321] An account of this story could be seen in *FZTJ*, *T*. no. 2035, 49: 417c28-418a5.
[322] This quote comes from the *Shurangama Sutra*, *T*. no. 945, 19: 131c4-5.

and thus write this postscript. If one realizes that one's own nature is like Amitabha Buddha, one would understand the Mind-only Pure Land. If not yet capable of this, then this text serves its purpose, and Xuzhong's effort is not in vain.[323]

龍舒王虛中日休，博覽群書之餘，留心佛乘。以利人為己任，真火中蓮也。佛言："自未得度，先度人者，菩薩發心。自覺已圓，能覺他者，如來應世。"予嘉其志，為題其後。若見自性之阿彌，即了唯心之淨土。未能如是，則虛中為此文，功不唐捐矣。

Zonggao's postscript is written from the perspective of the Chan tradition. Unlike Wang Rixiu, he does not elevate the Pure Land teachings above Chan teachings. Rather, he argues that if one can realize the nature of sentient beings is the same as that of Amitabha Buddha and understand that the Pure Land is generated from one's own mind, then the goal of the Pure Land teachings is already fulfilled. However, he also recognizes that Wang's effort to promote Pure Land teachings was highly commendable and acknowledges the value of Wang's Pure Land text for those who cannot grasp the Chan understanding.

Lay Buddhists also make similar arguments. For example, Nie Yundi observes that Chan practitioners frequently disparage Pure Land teachings. For that reason, when he reprinted Wang's Pure Land text, he included writings from various Chan masters who explicitly advocate Pure Land teachings. He makes this point by stating:

In the past, I often observed that beginners in Chan practice revered only Chan teachings. When it came to the Western Pure Land, they regarded it as mere

[323] *T*. no. 1970, 47: 283b9-18.

attachment to phenomena and vehemently rejected it. They did not realize that Shakyamuni Buddha appeared in this world for a great cause: to enlighten sentient beings about birth and death, and to liberate them from the cycle of reincarnation. The *dharma* of Chan is indeed established for apprehending birth and death, and so is the *dharma* of the Pure Land. If one gets enlightened through the Chan teachings, one can apprehend birth and death in this life. If one is born in the Pure Land, one will meet Amitabha Buddha and then apprehend birth and death. Moreover, one directly realizes the patient acceptance of the non-arising of phenomena and dwells in the ground of non-retrogression[324] until one finally becomes a Buddha. Why should beginners in Chan practice stubbornly adhere only to Chan and vehemently reject the Pure Land teachings? Great masters often encourage the practice of Pure Land. I have selected two or three excerpts, which I am attaching to the end of the *Longshu Pure Land text*, to clarify this matter.[325]

允迪舊常見初機參禪人，但知歸敬禪宗，至言西方淨土，則指為著相，力肆排斥。殊不知釋迦如來為一大事因緣出現於世，是欲令眾生了悟生死，脫離輪迴苦趣耳。參禪一法，固為了悟生死而設，修淨土一法，亦是令眾生了悟生死也。參禪有省，則現世了悟生死。得生淨土，則見阿彌陀佛，而後了悟生死。況便證無生忍，居不退轉地，直至成佛而後已。初機參學人，何苦獨取禪宗一法，而力排淨土之說耶？大善知識，未嘗不以此勸人。今略採二三說，附於龍舒淨土文之末，以辨明之。

[324] "Nonretrogression" (Skt. *avaivartika*) is a term used to describe a stage on the bodhisattva path at which further progress is assured, with no further possibility of retrogressing to a previous stage. See *PDB*, 82.
[325] *T*. no. 1970, 47: 286a4-15.

Nie made an argument similar to Wang's, critiquing those beginners in Chan practice who vehemently reject the Pure Land teachings. This suggests that there was conflicts between Chan and Pure Land teachings in the late twelfth century, which necessitated Pure Land adherents to defend their stance against the strong opposition from Chan practitioners. Nie's strategy was to refer to excerpts from renowned Buddhist masters who also advocated for Pure Land teachings, including the Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi 智顗, Chan master Zongze 宗賾 and Yanshou 延壽, and attached them to Wang's Pure Land text to further persuade Chan practitioners.

Based on the above analysis, we can conclude that the *Pure Land Text of Longshu* represents a significant stage in the development of Pure Land teachings in the Song Dynasty. This text stands as the first major religious proselytizing work of its kind in the Pure Land tradition, written by lay Buddhists. It also marks a shift, as we recognize the increasingly influential role lay Buddhists played in popularizing Pure Land teachings, especially during a period when there was an absence of monks dedicated solely to Pure Land teachings. In the Song Dynasty, it was monks specializing in Tiantai, Chan, or Vinaya who incorporated Pure Land teachings into their broader doctrinal teachings. In contrast, lay Buddhists like Wang Rixiu took on a distinct role by focusing exclusively on advocating for the Pure Land. Consequently, he could propose that Pure Land teachings are superior to other Buddhist doctrines, whereas monks from other lineages did not have the liberty to make such a claim.

As we have observed, Wang's text targets a broad and diverse audience, addressing Confucianists, Daoists, Chan practitioners, and laypeople from various vocations, including merchants, farmers, and women. This broad targeting distinguishes his work from other Pure Land literature written by monastics. Wang's approach involved restructuring Pure Land

doctrines to make them more accessible to the general populace and intentionally avoiding complex doctrinal debates. He emphasizes aspects like the grandeur of the Pure Land, the great vows and powers of Amitabha Buddha, and the practical benefits of Pure Land practice in both this life and the afterlife. Meanwhile, he left aside scholarly discussions prevalent in monastic writings, such as the differences among the four kinds of Pure Land or the nature of meditative practices.[326]

Furthermore, Wang's use of miraculous tales and stories about common people effectively enhance the appeal of his book. Additionally, he emphasizes the compatibility of Pure Land practice with worldly responsibilities, reassuring followers that they can fulfill their daily duties while still engaging in Pure Land practices and attaining their benefits.

In summary, lay Buddhists like Wang played a crucial role in the dissemination and popularization of Pure Land teachings. They took the advantage of their identity as lay followers in several ways. Firstly, they adopted a unique and systematic approach to introducing Pure Land teachings to other laypeople. This method was adjusted to be more pertinent and accessible compared to traditional monastic teachings. Secondly, they established connections with laypeople of higher social status and wealth, seeking endorsement and potential financial support. Furthermore, lay Buddhists significantly made use of print technology to enhance the wider circulation of religious texts. The printing of such proselytizing books was unique in several aspects. On one hand, the printing process was described as having miraculous events, which were seen as a testament to the efficacy of Pure Land teachings. On the other hand, the act of printing religious texts was viewed as an accumulation of merits. This belief encouraged

[326] For instance, Tiantai monks often debates on these issues, as in the works of Zhili and Zunshi. See Andō Toshio 安藤俊雄, *Tendaigaku ronshū: shikan to jōdo* 天台学論集 : 止観と浄土 (Kyōto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1975).

laypeople to donate generously towards the printing process, further enhancing the spread and influence of Pure Land teachings. Compared to the Tang Dynasty and earlier periods, the promotion of Pure Land teachings during the Song Dynasty displayed distinctive features, emphasizing the innovative and active involvement of lay Buddhists.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the Pure Land texts and their printing history reveals the major presence of lay Buddhists in the development of Pure Land teachings during the Song Dynasty. This contrasts with previous eras when monastic elites dominated the interpretation and spread of Pure Land teachings. In the Song, laypeople such as Wang Rixiu and Wang Gu stood out as dynamic agents, rather than merely passive recipients, in the popularization of Pure Land teachings. The Song Dynasty was unique in that it lacked monks who solely advocated for Pure Land teachings, and this allowed lay Buddhists to take distinctive stances and take initiative in propagating Pure Land teachings. In particular, Wang Rixiu did pioneering works by writing the first proselytizing book solely on the Pure Land. His work was characterized by simplifying and restructuring Pure Land doctrines and including miraculous tales that are more pertinent to practitioners with lesser education. In this way, he made Pure Land teachings more accessible ato a wider audience. He also intervened in the conflict between Chan and Pure Land teachings, advocating for the superiority of Pure Land teachings, a stance rarely seen in monastic discourse.

Moreover, the use of print technology by lay Buddhists like Wang was revolutionary in disseminating Pure Land texts. This demonstrated the growing influence and autonomy of lay practitioners in religious endeavors. The printing of Pure Land texts involved lay Buddhists from all social strata, including high-level government officials, junior officials in regional areas, and

common folks. Particularly in the Southern Song, lay Buddhists of humble social backgrounds took an active role in propagating Pure Land teachings, as we have observed in the printing of Wang Rixiu and Wang Gu's books. Another unique feature in religious printing during this period was that it was often accompanied and inspired by miraculous events. These phenomena enhanced the faith of ordinary believers and prompted the continuing reprinting of Pure Land texts in the Song Dynasty and beyond.

Chapter Four Anthologization of Pure Land Texts: Case Study of *Lebang wenlei* 樂邦文類

Anthologization has been an important literary practice since as early as the Zhou Dynasty. The oldest surviving literary anthology, *Wen Xuan* (*Literary Selections* 文選), compiled by Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-531) in the sixth century, represents the culmination of the early development of the anthology genre from the third to the sixth centuries AD.[327] Literary anthologization was then used to establish the category of "wen" 文: through the practice of selection, anthologies define the distinctive features of "wen", which differentiates them from historical and philosophical writings.[328] *Wen xuan* adopts the "categorization by genre and theme" method, which means classifying works by subject matter within each literary genre.[329] However, this organizational approach did not become mainstream in the compilation of literary collections until after the Tang Dynasty.[330] During the Song Dynasty, this method of anthologization became prevalent and was first applied to the re-compilation of Tang poetry collections, such as the re-organization of Du Fu's anthology.[331] The method was later

[327] For a discussion of early Chinese genre theory and the beginnings of the genre anthology, see David R. Knechtges, "Introduction" in *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature, Volume I* (Princeton University Press, 2014), 1-4.
[328] For the literary anthologization practices, see Anna M. Shields, "Gathering the 'Flowers' of Poetry and Song: Anthologies in Tang and Shu," in *Crafting a Collection: The Cultural Contexts and Poetic Practice of the Huajian Ji (Collection from among the Flowers)* (Cambridge: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2006), 119-158, and Anna M. Shields, "Defining the 'Finest': A Northern Song View of Tang Dynasty Literary Culture in the Wen cui," *JCLC* 4 (2017): 306-335, and Lu Yanxin 卢燕新, *Tangren bianxuan shiwen zongji yanjiu* 唐人编选诗文总集研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2014), 1-20.
[329] *Wenxuan* was the oldest surviving Chinese anthology arranged by genre and it contains 761 pieces across 37 genres. See Knechtges, *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature, Volume I*, 1-4.
[330] See Wan Man 万曼, *Tangji Xulu* 唐集叙录 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 28.
[331] For instance, in the Song Dynasty, two collections of categorized compilation appeared for the poems of Li Bai and Du Fu. One is *Fenlei buzhu Li Taibai shi* 分类补注李太白诗 compiled by Yang Qixian 杨齐贤 and Xiao Shiyun 萧士赟, and the other is *Fenlei jizhu Du Gongbu shi* 分门集注杜工部诗 compiled

extensively applied to the organization of anthologies by Song authors. For instance, Su Shi's anthology was divided into as many as 78 categories, signifying the growing nuances of literary categorization during the Song Dynasty.[332]

During the Song, anthologies also played a crucial role in the formation and spread of the "Ancient Prose" (*guwen* 古文) canon used in examination preparation in the twelfth century.[333] For instance, "Yongjia" (永嘉) teachers and those associated with them, like Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137-1181) in nearby Wuzhou, compiled anthologies that helped establish a core canon of Tang and Song "guwen" writers, including Han Yu, Liu Zongyuan, Ouyang Xiu, and Su Shi.[334] Moreover, in the early thirteenth century, as the Learning of the Way (*daoxue* 道學) gained prominence, its advocates compiled anthologies canonizing the writings of Learning of the Way masters like Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤, Zhang Zai 張載, the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi 朱熹.[335] Hilde De Weerdt argues that anthologies are key mediating texts in the intellectual transformation of Learning of the Way and ultimately reshaped existing examination culture in the Southern Song dynasty.[336]

Literary anthologization and encyclopedias also exerted influence on the categorization of Buddhist knowledge.[337] In literary anthologies, texts that touched on the subject of Buddhism

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by Wang Zhu 王洙. For more details, see Pan Mingfu 潘明福, "Beisong shiqi de wenji bianzuan yu chuanbo yanjiu" 北宋时期的文集编纂与传播研究 (PhD diss., Wuhan University, 2015), 107-118.

[332] For example, in *Jizhu fenlei dongpo xiansheng shi* 集注分类东坡先生诗 by Wang Shipeng 王十朋 (1112-1171), Su Shi's work is categorized into 78 types.

[333] Hilde De Weerdt, *Competition over Content: Negotiating Standards for the Civil Service Examinations in Imperial China (1127-1279)* (Cambridge, Mass: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2007), 12.

[334] Ibid, 129-169.

[335] Ibid, 109-129.

[336] Ibid, 322-365.

[337] For an analysis of the relation between the categorization of Buddhist knowledge and the compilation of anthologies in the Song Dynasty, see Zuo Fusheng 左福生, "Fojiao zhishi leihua yu Songdai shiwen ji

began to be categorized according to genres. For instance, in *Wenyuan Yinghua* 文苑英華 Buddhist texts are classified into eight genres: poetry, discourse, eulogy, inscription, account, memorial, stele inscription, and rhapsody. In *Wencui* 文萃, the subject of Buddhism is sub-categorized under the genre category. This suggests an effort to classify Buddhist literature in the framework of literary anthologization during the vigorous anthologization practices of the Song Dynasty.

This practice also influences the compilation of Pure Land texts. It was during the Southern Song that the first anthology of Pure Land texts was compiled, which is titled *Categories of Writings on the Blissful Land* (*Lebang wenlei* 樂邦文類) compiled by a Tiantai monk Zongxiao 宗曉 (1151–1214) in 1199 CE. This collection preserves 247 pieces of text, and the majority of the texts were written by authors in the Song dynasty.[338] So it has been used as a major source to study the development of Pure Land teachings in the Song.[339] Scholars have studied Zongxiao's biography, religious accomplishments, and his connections with the literati in the Jiangnan region. Additionally, the literary works in *Lebang wenlei* have been analyzed for their content and rhetoric. For this chapter, I will study *Lebang wenlei* as an anthology and examine its agenda, organizational structure, hierarchy of categories, and selection criteria for

leizuan" 佛教知识类化与宋代诗文集类纂, *Chongqing shifan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 重庆师范大学学报 (社会科学版) 44, no. 1 (2024): 104-114.

[338] For an overview of Zongxiao's *Lebang wenlei*, see Fukushima Kōya 福島光哉, *"Rakuhō monrui" no kenkyū: Sōdai jōdokyō no tokusei to "Kyōgyōshinshō"* 『楽邦文類』の研究: 宋代浄土教の特性と『教行信証』 (Kyoto: Higashi Honganji Shuppanbu, 1999).

[339] Since *Lebang wenlei* contains valuable textual sources on the Pure Land, scholars have been relying on it to investigate the development of Pure Land teachings in the Song. See Chen, *Zhongguo jingtuzong tongshi*, 416-420. There is also research on the literary compositions in *Lebang wenlei*, see Chen Yuhao 陈昱昊, "*Lebang wenlei* yanjiu" 《乐邦文类》研究 (PhD diss., Wuhan University, 2019).

Pure Land texts. Through this, I aim to uncover the historical context and development of Pure Land teachings during the Southern Song.

Zongxiao and the Compilation of *Lebang wenlei*

Zongxiao (1151–1214) was a significant monk in the Tiantai lineage during the Southern Song dynasty. He was part of the Shanjia lineage within Tiantai and was the fourth-generation disciple of Zhili 知禮.[340] Zongxiao was particularly active in the Jiangnan region, where he dedicated himself to the propagation of Buddhism and established connections with high-ranking officials, including Lou Yue 樓鑰 (1137–1213) and Wang Dayou 汪大猷 (1120–1200).[341] In addition to his interactions with important literati, Zongxiao was renowned for his extensive writings of Buddhist texts. Six of his works are extant today and they span a variety of topics including traditional sutra commentary, accounts of miraculous events associated with the *Lotus Sutra*, compilations on Pure Land teachings, efforts to delineate Tiantai lineages, and writings on Buddhist rituals.

Table 2 Zongxiao's Works

Title	**Date**	**Contents**
Commentary on the Sutra of Golden Light 金光明經照解	1190	A new commentary on *the Sutra of Golden Light*, a Mahayana Buddhist

[340] For the Shanjia/Shanwai debates of Tiantai Buddhism, see Andō Toshio 安藤俊雄, *Tendai shisōshi* 天台思想史 (Tōkyō: Hōzōkan, 1959).
[341] For Zongxiao's experiences, see Chen, "*Lebang wenlei* yanjiu", 16-22.

		text that promotes national protection and societal peace.
Miraculous Events of the Lotus Sutra 法華經顯應錄	1198	Collected miraculous events of the *Lotus Sutra*.
Lebang Wenlei 樂邦文類	1200	Collected writings on the Pure Land teachings.
Record of the Teachings and Practices of the Venerable Siming 四明尊者教行錄	1202	Collected writings of the Tiantai patriarch Siming Zhili.
Collection of Baoyun's Teachings 寶雲振祖集	1203	Collected writings of Zhili's teacher Yitong.
Lebang Yigao 樂邦遺稿	1204	Additional writings on the Pure Land teachings.

Chronologically, Zongxiao's works include a commentary on the *Sutra of Golden Light* 金光明經照解 in 1190 and a compilation titled *Miraculous Events of the Lotus Sutra* 法華經顯應錄 in 1198. In 1200, he assembled the *Lebang Wenlei* 樂邦文類, an important anthology that gathered writings on Pure Land Buddhism up to the Song Dynasty period. Following this, he dedicated himself to recording the teachings of the Tiantai patriarchs through two books: the *Record of the Teachings and Practices of the Venerable Siming* 四明尊者教行錄 in 1202 and the *Collection of Baoyun's Teachings* 寶雲振祖集 in 1203.[342] These works not only preserve the

[342] Chen, "*Lebang wenlei* yanjiu", 16-22.

teachings of Tiantai patriarchs Siming Zhili 四明知禮 and Baoyun Yitong 寶雲義通 but also include stupa inscriptions, stele biographies, and eulogies related to Zhili and Yitong, thereby tracing the development of Tiantai doctrines and solidifying the lineage of the tradition.[343] In 1204, Zongxiao compiled an additional work focused on Pure Land teachings, titled *Lebang Yigao* 樂邦遺稿.

From the list of Zongxiao's major works, we can tell that Zongxiao played a crucial role in documenting the development of Tiantai teachings and establishing its doctrinal lineage. He dedicated similar efforts to the construction of Pure Land teachings in his compilation of *Lebang Wenlei*, as I explore below. This happened in a critical historical era: John Kieschnick has identified the 300 years after 1000 as the formative period for the new genre "genealogical Historiography," which is exemplified in Zhipan's 志磐 (ca. 1220-1275) major work *Comprehensive Record of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs* (*Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀). Kieschnick argues that genealogical history functioned as a tool for both legitimization and historiographical organization, providing a structured narrative that linked individual biographies within a logical and satisfying order.[344] In *Lebang Wenlei*, Zongxiaomade the first attempt to construct the genealogy of Pure Land patriarchs, and this effort was continued in Zhipan's *Comprehensive Record of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs*.[345] It was through their efforts that Pure Land teachings began to assume a semi-independent position within Buddhist teachings.

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[343] Scholars have been paying attention to the literary materials contained in these compilations. See Bian Dongbo 卞东波, "Focang zhong de Songdai wenxue shiliao—yi Nansong Zongxiao suobian 'Siming Zunzhe Jiaoxing Lu' wei li" 佛藏中的宋代文学史料——以南宋宗晓所编《四明尊者教行录》为例, Gudian wenxian yanjiu 00 (2008): 196-222, and Zhang Gen 张艮, "'Siming Zunzhe Jiaoxing Lu' zhong Songdai wenxue shiliao buyi," 《四明尊者教行录》中宋代文学史料补遗 *Gannan Shifan Daxue xuebao* 43, no. 1 (2022): 89-95.

[344] Kieschnick, *Buddhist Historiography in China*, 133-159.

[345] Daniel Getz documents the construction of Pure Land patriarchs in his essay, see Getz, "T'ien-t'ai Pure Land Societies and the Creation of the Pure Land Patriarchate", 502-9.

Zongxiao's preface to *Lebang Wenlei* offers us insights into his motivation and agenda for compiling this anthology, as is common in major and innovatice anthology prefaces. I will analyze this preface first to better understand the context and objectives behind this work.

> In the middle of the Qiandao reign (1165-1173), [Emperor Gaozong][346] wrote in his imperial brush "Lotus Society" and bestowed it upon Zhang Lun, the Defense Commander and General Manager of the Zhejiang West Route. [The calligraphy] is like dragons and phoenixes leaping up, and it embodies the eight methods[347] completely. It truly is a rare auspice of the Yellow River and Luo River civilization. I humbly think that Emperor Gaozong, with a transformation akin to those of Tang and Yu[348], has cultivated and nurtured the world. He achieved greatness yet did not dwell upon it, and he is not attached to emperorship. In times of withdrawal, he indulges his mind in the inner classics[349]. Moreover, he wished to revive the *nianfo* traditions of Mount Lu, hence he bestowed his calligraphy of "Lotus Society" to Zhang Lun.
>
> Upon examining how emperors have promoted the growth of Buddhism since ancient times, I find that some emperors focused on constructing pagodas and temples, others sponsored the translation of sutras and treatises, and still others supported the ordination of monks and nuns. However, I have not heard of any emperor who wielded the brush and elaborated on the Pure Land teachings,

[346] This phrase uses metonymy, where Zongxiao employs Deshou Palace as a metonym for Emperor Gaozong.
[347] The eight methods are often used to refer to calligraphy, since the strokes of Chinese characters include the dot, horizontal, vertical, hook, upward diagonal, downward left stroke, short rightward stroke, and the downward right stroke.
[348] These refer to the ancient sage kings Yao and Shun.
[349] The inner classics refer to Buddhist scriptures.

making an effort to help people ascend from the five defilements[350], as our sagely emperor has done. To this day, across the seas and within our borders, people have honored this tradition and established temples, and the sounds of chanting Buddha's name fill the ears, echoing grandly.[351]

乾道中，德壽宮親灑宸毫，大書蓮社二字，賜防禦使浙西路總管張掄。龍驤鳳翥，八法俱全，真希世河洛之瑞也。竊惟高宗皇帝，以唐虞之化，甄陶天下。功成不居，脫屣萬乘。退藏之暇，游心內典。且欲追還廬阜念佛之風，故有斯舉焉。

歷考自古帝王興隆釋教，或建立塔廟者有之，或翻譯經論者有之，或廣度僧尼者有之，而未嘗聞操觚染翰、發揮淨邦、俾一切人升出五濁，如吾聖君者。至今薄海內外，宗古立社，念佛之聲洋洋乎盈耳。

Zongxiao opens the preface by recounting an honorific event in which Emperor Gaozong bestowed his imperial calligraphy "Lotus Society" to Zhang Lun 張掄 (fl. 12th c) during the Qiandao reign (1165-1173). This endorsement of Pure Land teachings at the highest level of the imperial court happened twice in Song history. The first event occurred when Emperor Renzong bestowed the "White Lotus Temple" to Shenzhao benru 神照本如 (981-1050) when he formed a

[350] The five defilements include 劫濁 the kalpa in decay (*kalpa-kaṣāya*), when it suffers deterioration and gives rise to the ensuing form; the defilement of mistaken views 見濁 (*dṛṣṭi-kaṣāya*); the defilement of afflictions 煩惱濁 (*kleśa-kaṣāya*); the defilement of being a sentient being 衆生濁 (*sattva-kaṣāya*) in consequence human miseries increase and happiness decreases; and the defilement of having a lifetime 命濁 (*āyus-kaṣāya*) human life time gradually diminishes to ten years. See DDB: http://buddhism-dict.net.ezproxy.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%BA%94%E6%BF%81.

[351] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 149a21-c4.

religious community with Grand Councilor Zhang Dexiang 章得象 (978-1048).[352] This Southern Song event, however, differed from the previous one. Zhang Lun was part of the imperial family and was the son-in-law of Prince Qiong Zhao Zhonglei 趙仲儡 (?-1139), who was Emperor Shenzong's cousin and hence the great-uncle of Emperor Gaozong.[353] Zhang Lun was granted a political position as an imperial relative and later served in the function of Memorial Reception Staff 閤門. [354] The Memorial Reception was an inner court institution that served directly under the emperor and was in charge of ceremonial receptions and facilitated the exchange of information between the emperor and officials. Officials of the Memorial Reception were often selected from imperial families or relatives. Zhang Lun began functioning in the role of Memorial Reception Staff since 1160.[355]

During the Qiandao reign, Emperor Gaozong abdicated the throne to Emperor Xiaozong and retired to Deshou Palace. Zhang Lun accompanied him to serve in the Deshou palace. Zhang Lun was also a skilled lyricist and served much like a court literary figure. [356] He presented lyrics on occasions of imperial visits. Besides his political service, he was also a pious Pure Land practitioner. In his own account, Zhang stated that he followed the model of Huiyuan's community: he dug a pond to plant lotuses and led his family in chanting the Buddha's name ten thousand times per day.[357] Moreover, he established a Pure Land community at the Pujing

[352] In *Fozu tongji*, it is recorded that Benru admired the community of Mount Lu and formed the White Lotus Society with Grand Councilor Zhang Dexiang 章得象 (978-1048) and other individuals. Over the course of six or seven years, it developed into a large monastery. Emperor Renzong respected his virtue and bestowed the name "White Lotus" upon it. See *T*. no. 2035, 49: 214b8-11.
[353] Li Xinchuan 李心傳, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要錄, vol. 154.
[354] Zhong Zhenzhen 钟振振, "*Quan Song ci* Zhang Lun xiaozhuang jibu," 《全宋词》张抡小传辑补 *Hanyu yan wenxue yanjiu* 1, no. 1 (2010): 20-26.
[355] Ibid, 20-26.
[356] Ibid, 24.
[357] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 149a21-c4.

Temple in Wuzhen and assembled local Pure Land practitioners to chant Buddha's name collectively.[358]

Due to his religious practice, organization of the Pure Land community, and most importantly, his position in the inner court and his service to the Emperor, the retired emperor bestowed his imperial calligraphy "Lotus Society" as a reward to Zhang Lun in 1166.[359] Zhang Lun was extremely honored by this bestowal, and he wrote an account to record this event. He then inscribed the event on stone and disseminated it among the monastic community. It is likely through these efforts that Zongxiao became aware of the event and then used it both as an endorsement and a means of bestowing honor upon the compilation of *Lebang Wenlei*.

Zongxiao highlights the distinct approach of Emperor Gaozong in promoting Buddhism through the calligraphy of "Lotus Society." He argues that this method was unprecedented among emperors in historical times. It serves as a testament to the fact that Huiyuan's community not only became the standard for Pure Land communities during the Song dynasty but also marked the widespread establishment of Pure Land communities by the twelfth century. As Zongxiao puts it, "To this day, across the seas and within our borders, people have honored this tradition and established temples, and the sounds of chanting Buddha's name fill the ears, echoing grandly." The endorsement of the Pure Land community from the emperor and the expansive reach of Pure Land practices within society provided the historical context for Zongxiao's initiative to compile the first Pure Land anthology.

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[358] Ibid.

[359] This event best exemplifies the model of Song governance proposed by Charles Hartman. Zhang Lun belongs to the inner court, and the Pure Land belief reached the emperor through his connection in the court. See Charles Hartman, *Structures of Governance in Song Dynasty China, 960-1279 CE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 55-79.

In the middle section of the preface, Zongxiao attempts to construct a historical lineage of Pure Land teachings, tracing them from Sakyamuni Buddha to Huiyuan, and then extending them to today's practitioners. This effort to establish lineage aligns with similar initiatives in the Chan and Tiantai traditions.[360] Zongxiao also employs this methodology in the main body of the anthology.[361]

In the last part of the preface, Zongxiao delineates both why and how he compiled this anthology.

> Therefore, those who endeavor to learn must find a teacher, and those who wish to advance their practice must rely on the Dharma. Hence, the establishment of this society adopts the *Amitabha Sutra* as its principal doctrine, with other sutras serving as guides. Since the Jin and Tang dynasties, eminent monks and profound Confucian scholars have all composed writings to eulogize it. Although there are differences in the degree of interpretation and the artfulness of composition, it is like the myriad streams flowing eastward, all converging into the vast sea, allowing all who drink from it to taste the same flavor.
>
> I have approached my old age, and realized that the world is not permanent. I humbly think that Emperor Gaozong, whose morality encompasses heaven and earth, and whose virtue surpasses that of the legendary rulers, still propagates the supreme teaching and enlightens the unlearned. How then can I, as a monk, dare to neglect the path of learning and contemplation? Thus, I have gathered all the scriptures and collected various works. Then I read them closely

[360] Kieschnick, *Buddhist Historiography in China*, 133-159.
[361] In the category of biographies, Zongxiao constructs the five patriarchs of Pure Land, see Getz, "T'ien-t'ai Pure Land Societies and the Creation of the Pure Land Patriarchate", 502-9.

and intend to find good guidance. Although the profound meanings of these subtle words are not easily investigated, after years of study, I have roughly grasped their main idea. I also think that the pearl of Marquis Sui and the jade of Bi are the world's greatest treasures, but if they were hidden in boxes, who then could appreciate their value? Therefore, in my free time, I organized and compiled what I had collected, starting from the sutras and dharani, and ending with poetry and lyrics. In total, there are fourteen categories, comprising more than two hundred and twenty pieces. I divided them into five *juan*, and titled it *The Categories of wen on the Blissful Land*. This work is modeled after *The Categories of wen in the Western Han* by the Confucian scholar Liu Zongzhi. If my collection is incomplete, I will continue it with my colleagues someday in the future.[362]

然則務學必求師，進業必託法。故茲社之興，專以彌陀為宗主，諸經為司南。自晉唐以來，高僧巨儒，咸有著述，讚美斯事。雖其間說義有淺深，屬辭有工拙，譬如萬派東流，同歸滄海，使夫飲用者，咸沾一味焉。

（宗曉）侵尋晚景，悟世非堅深。仰高宗皇帝，道參天地，德邁羲軒，猶乃宣揚至教，啟迪群蒙。況愚忝筮僧倫，敢怠思修之路乎？由是囊括諸經，網羅眾製。伏而讀之，意圖良導。雖微辭奧旨，未易窺測，然研味有年，粗亦識其梗概。重念隋珠和璧，為天下之至寶。苟韞匱而藏諸，則人孰得而共之？遂於假日，即其所得次而編之。始於經呪，終乎詩詞。凡十有四門，總二百二十餘首。析為五卷，目曰樂邦文類。蓋倣儒家柳宗直《西漢文類》之作也。其有集之不盡，當有與吾同志者續焉時。

[362] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 149b17-c4.

In the final section of the preface to *Lebang wenlei*, Zongxiao explains that his motivation for compiling this anthology is rooted in his belief that practitioners like Zhang Lun need to find the right teacher and appropriate Dharma to advance their Pure Land practice. At the time, Pure Land communities flourished and members in those communities primarily used the *Amitabha Sutra* as its foundational text. However, there was also a rich body of writings on the Pure Land from eminent monks and renowned Confucian scholars, scattered across various sources. Over the years, Zongxiao dedicated himself to gathering all existing writings on the Pure Land, including sutras, commentaries, and other literary genres. Although his initial intent was personal learning and practice, he decided to publicize these writings to benefit others. In his later age, he organized these materials into a structured sequence, starting with the sutras and dharani and ending with poetry and lyrics, comprising 14 categories in total.

Zongxiao makes a significant claim that the compilation of *Lebang wenlei* is modeled after *the Categories of wen in the Western Han* (*Xihan wenlei* 西漢文類) compiled by the Confucian scholar Liu Zongzhi 柳宗直 (782-806)[363]. The similarity between their titles suggests this resemblance. *Xihan wenlei* is an anthology of wen compiled by Liu Zongzhi in the late eighth and early ninth centuries.[364] Although this collection was lost during the Song Dynasty, it was recovered in the eleventh century by a scholar named Tao Shuxian 陶叔獻 and subsequently printed and circulated in the twelfth century. This was probably facilitated by the enthusiasm for

[363] Lu Yanxin 卢燕新 did a research on the date of Liu Zongzhi, here I use his findings. See Lu Yanxin, "Liu Zongzhi *Xihan wenlei* kaolun," 柳宗直《西汉文类》考论 *Qinghua daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 26, no. 1 (2011): 120-126+160.
[364] For the investigation of *Xihan wenlei*, see Lu Yanxin, "Liu Zongzhi *Xihan wenlei* kaolun," 120-126+160.

anthology compilation to promote the Learning of the Way,[365] and Tao's edition likely provided Zongxiao with access to the work.

Although the compiler Liu Zongzhi is relatively unknown and passed away at the young age of 36, he is the brother of the renowned literary figure Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819). Liu Zongyuan composed a preface to *Xihan wenlei*, which became a key text for understanding its purpose, principles of compilation, and organization. According to Liu Zongyuan's preface, the purpose of compiling *Xihan wenlei* was to construct a historiography of the "wen" category from antiquity to the mid-Tang period and to instruct those who wanted to learn "guwen" (ancient prose) on the right paradigm. His argument is as follows:

> Before the Yin and Zhou dynasties, *wen* was simple and rustic. From the Wei and Jin dynasties onward, it became extravagant and decadent. It was during the Han dynasty that a balance was achieved. After the Han court moved eastward,[366] *wen* had already declined. During the reign of Emperor Wen [of the Han Dynasty], Jia Yi expounded Confucian learning, which Emperor Wu particularly favored. Then figures like Gongsun Hong, Dong Zhongshu, Sima Qian, and Sima Xiangru flourished, and the elegance [of *wen*] was enhanced and spread across all under heaven. From the emperor down to the ministers, scholars, and common people, everyone was well-versed. Thus, it influenced imperial edicts, reached into memorials to the throne, was chanted in verses and rhapsodies, and was transmitted through songs and ballads. From Emperor Gao to the times of Emperors Ai and Ping and the execution of Wang Mang, the literary

[365] See De Weerdt, *Competition over Content*, 109-129.
[366] This means that the Eastern Han when the capital moved to Luoyang.

works from all regions were outstanding. The historian Ban Gu edited these works and selected the best for inclusion in the historiography, then over the span of 230 years, the generally accepted standards of rulers, the exemplary principles of renowned officials, the committed endeavors of the virtuous and capable, and the customs of the common folks were all listed. If one were to consolidate their essence, dissect their variations, and discuss their arrangements, it must await those who study antiquity to carry it out. During the Tang dynasty, unity and coherence in *wen* were highly regarded, especially during the Zhenyuan era, when literary works are flourishing exceptionally. These works are rooted in the Three Dynasties and continued the [legacy] of the Han Dynasty, aligning with them. Therefore the capable person took the bibliography of Ban Gu, classified the writings, arranged them in order, and compiled them into forty *juan*.[367]

殷周之前，其文簡而野，魏晉已降，則蕩而靡，得其中者漢氏。漢氏之東，則既衰矣。當文帝時，始得賈生明儒術，武帝尤好焉。而公孫宏、董仲舒、司馬遷、相如之徒作，風雅益盛，敷施天下，自天子至公卿大夫士庶人咸通焉。於是宣於詔策，達於奏議，諷於辭賦，傳於歌謠。由高帝迄於哀、平，王莽之誅，四方之文章，蓋爛然矣。史臣班孟堅修其書，拔其尤者充於簡冊，則二百三十年間，列辟之達道，名臣之大範，賢能之誌業，黔黎之風習列焉。若乃合其英精，離其變通，論次其敘位，必俟學古者興行之。唐興，用文理，貞元間，文章特盛。本之三代，接於漢氏，與之相準。於是有能者，取孟堅書，類其文，次其先後，為四十卷。

[367] *Liu Zongyuan ji* 柳宗元集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 575.

In his preface, Liu Zongyuan constructs a historiography of *wen* and evaluates the relative value of *wen* in different historical periods. In his construction, the Western Han period stands out for striking a balance between the austerity of ancient times and the extravagance after the Wei and Jin dynasties. Liu Zongyuan perceived the category of *wen* very broadly in this preface. He claims that during this time, the influence of *wen* spread across all genres and reached all levels of society. He also implicitly imposes a hierarchy on genres: "It influenced imperial edicts, reached into memorials to the throne, was chanted in verses and rhapsodies, and was transmitted through songs and ballads." The hierarchy of genres is based on the subject who created or used *wen*: emperors issued edicts, officials wrote memorials, poets composed verses and rhapsodies, while the general populace created songs and ballads. In line with this expansive view, Liu Zongyuan emphasized the irreplaceable value of *wen* in recording history, sustaining morality, and documenting folk customs.

The writings of the Western Han are preserved in the bibliographical section of Ban Gu's *Han History*. Liu Zongyuan emphasizes the importance of analyzing this extensive body of texts to discern evolutionary trends of *wen* and establish rankings within these texts. He contextualizes the compilation of *Xihan wenlei* within the advocation of "Guwen" during the mid-Tang and points out that this was a prime time for the flourishing of *wen*. The goal of the literary men in the mid-Tang was to "continue the legacy of the Western Han and become comparable to it". As Peter Bol has noted, the decades after the An Lushan Rebellion was a period of cultural change towards the concept of *wen*. Scholars began to argue for the transformative power of *wen* and its role in shaping morality and re-establishing civil order after the rebellion.[368]

[368] Peter Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 108-147.

Therefore, the compilation of *Xihan Wenlei* was rooted in the transitional period of the mid-Tang, and it aims to reevaluate and restore the literary and ethical values of *wen*. This effort involved selecting texts and assessing their relative importance, which then makes necessary the creation of categories and hierarchies among them to establish benchmarks. Liu Zongzhi's approach to compiling *Xihan wenlei* showcases the significance of methodical categorization and evaluation in the trend of the advocation of "Guwen".

> Fortunately, my younger brother Zongzhi delights in ancient books and is willing to accomplish the task. He searched, dissected, sorted, and integrated texts. He also separated different texts and combined similar ones, classifying them with each category. Without changing over months and years, he succeeded in giving texts order and sequence. [This collection is] dense and luminous, as if opening a treasury of various jade. Directing and linking texts in sequence, like different kinds of gems, texts got their places in order, not deviating from their sequence. It is fine to arrange them by their value. From the perspective of *wen*, this collection fully encompasses genres such as rhapsodies, hymns, poetry, songs, letters, memorials to the throne, edicts, commands, debates, and treatises. From the perspective of language, it thoroughly covers the speech of History of the Right, and insights into successes, failures, rises, and falls which were encompassed in the *Book of Documents*, *Discourses of the States*, and *Strategies of the Warring States* were comprehensively covered. Oh! Can this be considered the beginning of a scholar?[369]

[369] *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 575.

幸吾弟宗直愛古書，樂而成之。搜討磔裂，捃摭融結，離而同之，與類推移。不易時月，而鹹得從其條貫。森然炳然，若開群玉之府。指揮聯累，圭璋琮璜之狀，各有列位，不失其序，雖第其價可也。以文觀之，則賦、頌、詩、歌、書、奏、詔、策、辨、論之辭畢具。以語觀之，則右史紀言，《尚書》《國語》《戰國策》成敗興壞之說大備，無不苞也。噫！是可以為學者之端耶？

Liu Zongyuan provides a detailed account of Liu Zongzhi's methodology in compiling the *Xihan wenlei*. He identifies ten genres in this anthology: rhapsodies, hymns, poetry, songs, letters, memorials to the throne, edicts, commands, debates, and treatises. Liu Zongzhi adopts broad selection criteria, drawing on the literary categories and hierarchical structures established in *Zhaoming Wenxuan*, which greatly impacted the anthologization of the Tang.[370] This includes both literary forms such as rhapsodies and poetry and political prose like memorials, edicts, and commands. However, this hierarchy contrasts with the approach described in Liu Zongyuan's preface, which adopts a top-down perspective, organizing genres according to the social status of the individuals using *wen*. In the anthology, the influence of *Wenxuan* profoundly impacts the ranking of genres, suggesting a more significant cultural legacy.

What is unique in Liu Zongyuan's preface is the emphasis on the historical significance of *wen*. Liu Zongyuan argues that the *wen* from the Western Han dynasty continued the tradition of the "History of the Right," which records "speech" (*yan* 言), as opposed to the "History of the

[370] Lu Yanxin 卢燕新, *Tangren bianxuan shiwen zongji yanjiu* 唐人编选诗文总集研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2014), 39-42.

Left," which documents "events" (*shi* 事).[371] Liu Zongyuan believes the value of compiling the *Xihan wenlei* lies in its comprehensive documentation of insights into the rise and fall of dynasties as recorded in works such as the "Book of Documents," "Discourses of the States," and "Strategies of the Warring States." He posits that learning *wen* in this way provides an excellent starting point for scholars.

From the above preface, we learn that Liu Zongzhi's *Xihan wenlei*, emerging during the advocation of "Guwen" during the ninth century, aimed to establish an orthodox standard for *wen*, imposing hierarchies and ascribing intrinsic values to each text, and emphasizing the construction of lineages and tracing of evolution. Similarly, Zongxiao's *Lebang wenlei*, which claims to model itself after *Xihan wenlei*, also pursues similar agendas. Zongxiao drew inspiration from the anthologization practices of the Tang and Northern Song dynasties, but at the same time applied a religious hierarchy to texts. His anthologization of Pure Land texts simultaneously reinforces and challenges established hierarchies of *wen*. Moreover, he uses anthologization to construct and argue for a semi-independent status of Pure Land teachings within the Buddhist context of the Song dynasty.

[371] In the Bibliographic Treatise section of *Han History*, Ban Gu states: "The Left Historian records words, the Right Historian records events. The events form the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and the words form the *Book of Documents*." Here, Liu Zongyuan follows Ban Gu's classification of Right and Left History. Modern scholars contend that the Left Historian and Right Historian were actual official positions in the pre-Qin period, but they were not completely separated. Instead, there is an interchangeability between them. See Cao Jingsi 曹静偲, "Zuo shi, you shi kao bian 左史、右史考辨," *Xin jishi* 新纪实, no. 29 (2021): 87-89.

What Makes a Pure Land Text? Selection Criteria and Structural Organization in *Lebang wenlei*

Zongxiao's primary challenge in compiling *Lebang wenlei* lies in establishing the selection criteria to determine what constitutes a Pure Land text. As far as we know, no one before him had made such an extensive effort to compile Pure Land texts, which encompassed a diverse body of works, including canonical Buddhist scriptures, exegetical texts, hagiographies, rebirth tales, various prefaces and postscripts to major Pure Land treatises, and a series of literary compositions such as poetry and lyrics on the Pure Land. How does Zongxiao determine which texts qualify as "Pure Land texts"? Additionally, how should he organize this diverse collection of texts? What organizing principle does he follow to arrange these works? Additionally, what features do they have to display to count as *wen*?

Although Zongxiao claims to have "gathered all the scriptures and collected various works" and read them closely,[372] *Lebang wenlei* is not a comprehensive survey of Pure Land texts across all times. Instead, it displays highly selective features. First, the majority of texts in this anthology are from the Song dynasty, with only a few from earlier periods. To one's surprise, works by prominent Tang Pure Land advocates were minimally included: works of Shandao and Daochuo are not as well-represented as Song monks. This may be due to the fact that Zongxiao s in the Tiantai lineage. This leads to the second feature of this anthology. Texts written by Tiantai masters occupy a significant portion of the anthology. Zongxiao includes numerous Pure Land texts by Tiantai masters such as Zhili, Zunshi, Zhiyuan 智圓, and Renyue 仁岳. In addition, he

[372] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 149b24-25

also involves masters from other lineages: Zongze 宗賾 and Huihong 惠洪 are recognized as Chan masters, while Yuanzhao 元照 is noted as a Vinaya master.

This anthology is also highly regional. Zongxiao was active in the Jiangnan region and served as the abbot of Yanqing Temple in Siming (present-day Ningbo), which was Zhili's temple and a major site for the Tiantai lineage. His primary sources of information were from Siming and surrounding areas like Hangzhou. Consequently, he includes works written by lesser-known lay Buddhists from this region, such as Li Ji from Hangzhou and Zhu Ruyi from Mingzhou,[373] giving us a glimpse into the Pure Land practices of local lay Buddhists.

Despite its local characteristics, *Lebang wenlei* also features a diverse group of authors, including both monastics and laypeople. Among the non-monastic authors, Zongxiao seems to have aimed at incorporating representative figures. He included well-known lay Buddhists from the Song dynasty who actively propagated Pure Land teachings, such as Wang Rixiu, Yang Jie, and Wang Gu, who wrote extensively on the Pure Land. On the other hand, Zongxiao also consciously included figures who held differing intellectual perspectives. For instance, the anthology features Han Yu, likely included to offer a critical viewpoint held by certain literati towards Buddhism, while Chao Yuezhi 晁說之 (1059-1129) represents the neo-Confucian perspective on Buddhism. Moreover, Zongxiao consciously includes some of the most eminent literary figures like Li Bai 李白 (701-762), Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770), Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846), and Su Shi. The relevance of their works to the Pure Land awaits further investigation, but their presence unquestionably adds literary prestige to the anthology.

Given the diverse range of texts and authors, the structure of *Lebang wenlei* reveals the organizational principles and implicit values attributed to Pure Land texts. The structure of

[373] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 175a13-16.

Lebang wenlei is influenced by literary anthologization but bears religious assumptions about the hierarchy of texts. This anthology has five *juan* and fourteen categories of texts, as shown in the chart below.

	Category	Quantity
***Juan* 1**	1. Sutra 經	46
	2. Dharani 咒	10
	3. Treatise 論	6
***Juan* 2**	4. Preface and Postscript 序跋	32
	5. Prose 文	13
	6. Eulogy 讚	17
***Juan* 3**	7. Account and Stele 記碑	19
	8. Biography 傳	14
***Juan* 4**	9. Miscellaneous Writings 雜文	33
***Juan* 5**	10. Rhapsody and Inscription 賦銘	2
	11. Gatha 偈	6
	12. Hymns 頌	20
	13. Poetry 詩	22

	14. Lyrics 詞	7

Religious Hierarchy of Texts

As a religious anthology, *Lebang wenlei* assigns the highest value to canonical texts. sutra 經, dharani 咒, and treatise 論 make up the first *juan*. Zongxiao states at the end of *juan* one: "The reason why I place the sutras and treatises at the beginning when compiling these texts is that I want those practicing the Pure Land to concentrate on the fundamentals. All other sutras and treatises are scattered throughout the Great Canon. Now, I list the sutra titles and case numbers to facilitate easier review and reference."[374] 余編類斯文，所以先示經論者，欲修淨業人務本故也。其諸經論皆散在大藏，今載經題函號，以助撿閱之易耳. These canonical texts in *juan* one represent Zongxiao's methodological approach, which was to read through the entire Buddhist canon and select texts that discuss the Pure Land. These include sutras solely dedicated to the Pure Land, such as *The Amitābha Sūtra*, *The Sūtra on the Buddha of Infinite Life*, and *The Amitāyus Meditation Sūtra*. Additionally, he includes excerpts from other sutras that talk about the Pure Land, like *The Lotus Sutra*, *The Sutra of Compassionate Flower*, and *The Flower Garland Sutra*. The selection criteria for "what makes a Pure Land text" are straightforward in *juan* one, and the hierarchy of texts follows established precedents: sutras are placed before dharanis, and dharanis before treatises. This arrangement reflects the traditional hierarchy in Buddhist textual traditions, where sutras hold the highest authority.

The category of prefaces and postscripts is placed at the beginning of *juan* two, an exceptional ranking in the typical genre hierarchy. However, this sequence reflects the Buddhist

[374] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 150b14-17.

assumptions about the intrinsic value of texts, which are evaluated by their close association with canonical texts. In this category, the prefaces and postscripts are written by eminent monks and are intended for sutras, treatises, and Pure Land rebirth biographies. The prestige of the authors and the close association with canonical texts justify their placement in the anthology. Among the 32 texts in this section, Huiyuan's "Preface to *Nianfo* Samādhi Poetry" is the first, followed by prefaces to Pure Land sutras written by renowned monks such as Zhiyi 智顗, Kuiji 窺基, Zunshi 遵式, and Zongze 宗賾. This arrangement suggests that Zongxiao valued these works as interpretive and exegetical commentaries in addition to canonical texts, representing the commentarial tradition by eminent monks in medieval China. This is the reason why they assume privileged status in the hierarchical structure of the anthology.

In addition to these texts related to canonical works written by eminent monks, Zongxiao also includes Pure Land proselytizing texts composed by lay Buddhists during the Song dynasty. One such example is the "Preface to the Direct Pointing to the Pure Land: A Collection for Resolving Doubts" 直指淨土決疑集序[375]. This preface was written by Yang Jie 楊傑 (1023-1092) for a Pure Land text titled "Direct Pointing to the Pure Land: A Collection for Resolving Doubts," written by Wang Gu. Yang Jie and Wang Gu were among the most prominent Pure Land literati practitioners in the Northern Song period.[376] The text "Resolving Doubts" represents a typical genre of Pure Land literature, as there was a textual tradition of addressing doubts and concerns related to Pure Land teachings. For instance, Zunshi composed an essay titled "Two Aspects of the Resolution of Doubts and Vows for Rebirth" 往生決疑行願二門,

[375] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 171c07-172b25.
[376] For the prominent lay practitioners of Pure Land, that is to say, those who held certain political positions, see Mochizuki, *Chūgoku Jōdo kyōrishi*, 400-406.

addressed to Ma Liang 馬亮 (959–1031) when he served in Hangzhou.[377] The issue of resolving doubts occupied a central position in propagating Pure Land teachings to adherents since cultivating faith was a core doctrine in Pure Land teachings. From *Lebang wenlei*, we can observe that lay Buddhists in the Song dynasty continued this textual tradition of addressing doubts and uncertainties related to Pure Land practices.

Expansion of Selection Criteria

If the categories of sutras, dhāraṇīs, treatises, prefaces and postscripts have clear boundaries, and their value is evaluated by their doctrinal and exegetical functions, other categories in *juan* two begin to have expanding standards. We can consider why certain texts are classified as "Pure Land" literature. In the genres "prose" (文) and "eulogy" (讚), Zongxiao adopts a broader selection criterion for what constitutes a Pure Land text. Whereas in the aforementioned categories, a Pure Land text is a text that discusses the nature of the Pure Land, different kinds of Pure Lands, the criteria for rebirth, the benefits of rebirth, and the resolving of doubts about the Pure Land. In these two categories, Zongxiao broadens his lens to incorporate tangentially relevant works, while the text of *juan* 1 are doctrinal and exegetical in nature, representing "Pure Land text" in its strictest sense.

In the genres "prose", "eulogy" and "account and stele inscription", Zongxiao extends the selection criteria to include texts that touch upon the subject of Pure Land belief, specifically, focusing on various practices related to the Pure Land and Amitābha belief. Some texts in these categories represent the more practical aspect of Pure Land belief, and we can glimpse into how

[377] *T*. no. 1968, 47.

lay Buddhists in the Song practice the Pure Land teachings. These include painting of Amitābha Buddha, or, for a female, embroidering the image of Amitābha Buddha and the Pure Land. The eulogy written by Su Shi for his deceased second wife is a good example.

Eulogy for Painting the Portrait of Amitabha Buddha 畫阿彌陀像讚

The wife of Su Shi, Madam Wang, her name is Runzhi, and her style name is Jizhang. At the age of forty-six, on the first day of the eighth month in 1093, she passed away in the capital. On the evening of her demise, she bequeathed her belongings and instructed her sons Mai, Dai, and Guo to commission a painting of Amitabha Buddha. On the ninth day of the sixth month in 1094, the portrait was completed and respectfully enshrined in the Qingliang Temple in Jinling. The eulogy states:

When the Buddha's child[378] was alive, a hundred worries entwined; at departure, what final thought is completed? [She] vocally recites "Namo Amitabha", like the sun rising over the land and lightening every state. Even more so, she renounced worldly possessions, to paint the perfect embodiment of the sun. Those who see, hear, and rejoice will all attain Buddhahood. Not discriminating between humans, *devas*, insects, or birds. One should always maintain the view of equality; essentially there are neither sorrows nor joys, nor longevity nor premature death. The full sixteen-feet body[379] is not too large; Within the small square inch, a thousand Buddhas—how could that be small?

[378] The Buddha's child refers to a Buddhist adherent, here it refers to Wang Runzhi.
[379] Sixteen-feet body is a measurement used for Buddhist statues. For statues in a standing position, 丈六 indicates the height of the statue measured to the hairline and is an abbreviation of 一丈六尺 (approximately 4.85 meters). See DDB: http://buddhism-dict.net.ezproxy.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%B8%88%E5%85%AD.

Fair-mindedness is the Western Pure Land; With Close eyes, one will arrive there, free from *Māra*'s[380] distractions.[381]

蘇軾之妻王氏，名潤之，字季章。年四十六，元祐八年八月一日，卒于京師。臨終之夕，遺言捨所受用，使其子邁、迨、過為畫阿彌陀像。紹聖元年六月九日像成，奉安于金陵清涼寺。讚曰：

佛子在時百憂繞，臨行一念何由了？口誦南無阿彌陀，如日出地萬國曉。何況自捨所受用，畫此圓滿天日表。見聞隨喜悉成佛，不擇人天與蟲鳥。但當常作平等觀，本無憂樂與壽夭。丈六全身不為大，方寸千佛夫豈小？此心平處是西方，閉眼便到無魔嬈。

Su Shi's eulogy offers insight into the Pure Land practices of women during the Song dynasty.[382] His second wife, Wang Runzhi, actively engaged in these practices. On her deathbed, she vocally chanted the name of Amitabha Buddha, and her last words instructed her three sons to commission a portrait of Amitabha using her possessions, as a way to accumulate merit posthumously. Su Shi, on the other hand, presented a contrasting viewpoint heavily indebted to his reception of Chan teachings and his interactions with Chan masters. He argues that if one could hold the view of equality, then, in essence, there are neither sorrows nor joys. This view stands in contrast to the Pure Land doctrine that differentiates between the joyous Pure Land and the suffering of the *saha* world. In the end, he makes a strong claim that "When this mind is in a

[380] Māra (मार) is a term that refers to a demon or demonic being who opposes the Buddha and tries to prevent beings from attaining enlightenment.
[381] *QSW*, 91:1988.349. Also in *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 180b20-c3.
[382] Su Shi's mother and first wife were also Pure Land adherents, see Beata Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited: Buddhism in the Life and Writings of Su Shih* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 9-10, 31-33.

state of equality, it resides in the Western Pure Land," suggesting that one could reach the Pure Land simply by closing one's eyes. In doing so, Su Shi was not merely offering an alternative viewpoint but was directly challenging Pure Land tenets with the teachings of Chan.[383]

It is curious, then, why Zongxiao included a text that raises opposition to Pure Land teachings. One possible reason might be that he intended to include the most eminent literary figures to add prestige to his anthology. We can see that he included works by Han Yu, Du Fu, and Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045-1105), although the relevance of their works to the Pure Land remains relatively distant. Another reason might be that this text is intended to manifest the Pure Land practices of women in the Song dynasty, and the emphasis on devotion overshadows the opposition from the Chan perspective. The last reason might be that Zongxiao welcomed divergent and contrasting ideas, allowing this anthology to be an arena for various ideas to contest and communicate.

This point is made more explicit in Zongxiao's inclusion of Han Yu's prose text entitled "An Elegy for the Imperial Bodyguard Wu [who] Painted the Buddha" 弔武侍御畫佛文.[384] The elegy narrates the story of an Imperial Bodyguard surnamed Wu whose wife passed away and he was left deeply sorrowful. A Buddhist monk came to him and told him about the Western Pure Land, encouraging him to paint the portrait of Amitābha Buddha in the hope that his deceased wife could be reborn in the Pure Land. Initially, Wu refused, stating that he was a Confucian, which forbade him from following Buddhist traditions. After some time, he became regretful and said, "What good does my obstinacy do? I do not understand the Buddhist faith, yet how could I know it is not true?" Finally, he approached the monk and asked him to paint the portrait of

[383] For Su Shi's complicated views on the Pure Land, see Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited*, 79-82.
[384] *Quan Tang Wen* 全唐文, ed. Dong Gao 董誥 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 557.5641-2. Also in *T.* no. 1969A, 47: 177a9-b4.

Amitābha Buddha. On this event, Han Yu wrote an elegy criticizing Wu's compromise, claiming that Wu had been "using the unreal to stop up his grief" 以妄塞悲. If Su Shi raised opposition from the perspective of Chan, Han Yu is representative of a group of Confucians who completely opposed Buddhist teachings as a whole.

Zongxiao, however, gives a note in the text to justify his inclusion of Han Yu's prose.

> Master Han [Yu], with his usual protest of Buddhism, composed this essay containing the phrase "using the unreal to handle his grief," which is appropriate [to his stance]. However, while he only knows to denounce the unreal as false, aiming to repudiate Buddhism, he is unaware that even the unreal can be in accordance with the Buddhist teachings. If we consider the ultimate truth[385] that no single *dharma* can be obtained, then the Buddha and sentient beings as forms, the teachings expressed in words, and even the Pure Land as [dharma] gate, are all essentially unreal. But if they could benefit the way [to enlightenment], who can say they are not true? Thus, Master Han's critique might be explicitly disparaging but could also be implicitly supportive of [Buddhist teachings]. Then its inclusion in this category is also appropriate.[386]
>
> 韓文公以平時排佛之心而作此文，有所謂"以妄塞悲"之語，宜也。雖然，彼徒知妄之為非，意以斥佛，殊不知妄亦有合於教意。且夫第一義諦，一法不可得，則凡佛之所以為像，教之所以為言，與夫今淨土之所以為

[385] Ultimate truth 真諦 is one of the two aspects of truth, the other being the secular truth or relative, worldly truth 俗諦. This paramount truth is a synonym for *nirvana* 涅槃, *tathatā* 眞如, the middle path 中道, *dharmadhātu* 法界, and *śūnyatā* 空.
[386] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 177a25-b4.

門，莫非妄也。苟濟於道，孰曰非乎？然則文公之說，未必非陽抑而陰助之耳。則今類見於此，亦宜也。

In the paratext, Zongxiao offers a reinterpretation of Han Yu's critique of Buddhism. He argues that although Han Yu denounces Buddhism as unreal, it actually aligns with the Buddhist doctrine of ultimate truth. According to the teaching of ultimate truth, phenomena lack inherent existence. Therefore, the perceived distinction between Buddha and sentient beings is unreal, the Buddha's words are unreal, and even the teachings of Pure Land are also considered unreal. However, given their unreal nature, if they serve as expedient means, or *upaya*, to facilitate one's enlightenment, then they cannot be dismissed as false. Zongxiao proposes that Han Yu is actually supportive of Buddhist teachings, even though he appears to be oppositional. Therefore, it is appropriate and strategic to include his work in the category of prose.

In this case, the selection criteria expand beyond the original scope. Han Yu's original text is actually a criticism of Wu's compromise to Pure Land devotion, but Zongxiao responds to Han Yu's criticism with the argument presented above. In this sense, *Lebang wenlei* can be viewed as an anthology of diverse opinions on the subject of Pure Land, and the compiler, Zongxiao, is strategically defending Pure Land teachings against criticism from Chan practitioners and Confucianists. The inclusion of diverse perspectives in *Lebang wenlei* implies a vibrant intellectual landscape in which Pure Land teachings are challenged, debated, and discussed.

Texts on the White Lotus Society

Another provocative aspect of *Lebang Wenlei* is that the textual record surrounding Huiyuan's White Lotus Society is considered Pure Land literature. According to Zongxiao's criteria, it seems that any text related to the myth of the White Lotus Society is considered a Pure Land text, regardless of whether it discusses Pure Land doctrine or practice. For example, in the eulogy category, there is a piece by Huang Tingjian titled "Imitating Chanyue to Compose an Ode to Master Yuan" 倣禪月作遠公詠. The entire text reads: "Inviting Tao Yuanming to share a cup of wine; Bidding farewell to Lu Xiujing as he crosses Tiger Creek. His mind amongst the nine rivers is as clear as a mirror; While the affairs of the world leave one drunken as if in mud."[387] 邀陶淵明把酒椀，送陸修靜過虎溪。胸次九流清似鏡，人間萬事醉如泥. In this poem, Huang uses an allusion to Huiyuan's myth involving Tao Yuanming and the Daoist Lu Xiujing. Huang is not referring to Huiyuan's Pure Land practices or his establishment of the Pure Land community; he is simply alluding to the collectively perceived friendship between Huiyuan, Tao Yuanming, and Lu Xiujing, and how Huiyuan is willing to break his precepts to maintain these bonds.

This phenomenon is also evident in other pieces in the eulogy section, which includes five eulogies: one for Master Huiyuan, one for Liu Yimin, one for Tao Yuanming, one for Xie Lingyun, and one for Lu Xiujing. While the eulogies to Huiyuan and Liu Yimin could be related to the Pure Land community, the other three eulogies are not directly related to Pure Land teachings. However, they appear to be included because the figures mentioned are associated with the myth of Huiyuan and the White Lotus Society. These examples indicate that by the

[387] *Huang Tingjian shi jizhu* 黃庭堅詩集注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 603, also in *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 181c12-21.

twelfth century, various elements and narratives related to the White Lotus Society were being integrated into the broader conception of Pure Land teachings, transcending the boundary of doctrinal content.

Literary Compositions of the Pure Land

Juan five of *Lebang Wenlei* is perhaps the first collected work of literary compositions on the Pure Land, written by both monastics and laypeople. Here, Zongxiao gathers rhymed verses and ranks them in the order of rhapsody, inscription, *gāthā*, hymns, poetry, and song lyrics. These works are produced mainly by Song authors, with some works written by authors of previous times: Xie Lingyun and Shandao, for instance. Thomas Mazanec argues that gāthā was considered inferior to *shi* poetry, and late Tang poet-monks like Guanxiu and Qiji tried to distance themselves from gāthās to distinguish their work as real poetry.[388] However, in *Lebang Wenlei*, this genre hierarchy is inverted. Though Zongxiao still places rhapsody at the beginning of this section, following the anthologization practice of *Wen xuan* and other medieval anthologies, he nonetheless places gāthā and hymns before poetry and song lyrics, suggesting a different prioritization of Buddhist genres over traditional Chinese poetic forms.

Like the previous category of prose, this section of rhymed verses is also miscellaneous in nature. It encompasses different kinds of texts: some are persuasive texts (*quanxiu* 勸修), some are poetry on meditation, and others are liturgical texts. Firstly, there is the *gāthā* genre which functions like an independent liturgical text. for instance, “Gāthā of Correct Faith in

[388] Thomas J. Mazanec, “The Medieval Chinese Gāthā and Its Relationship to Poetry,” *T’oung Pao* 103, no. 1–3 (August 28, 2017): 94–154.

Rebirth, According to the Sutras" 依修多羅立往生正信偈 composed by Zunshi is perhaps intended for regular Pure Land practices. It includes an instruction at the beginning:

> If a person can recite and retain these verses, they will have several benefits. They will consistently retain the titles of the Mahayana sutras, increase their faith in the Pure Land, and deepen the faith of Pure Land for those who hear it. When encountering someone at the time of death, [one should] recite this gāthā aloud once or twice, and then encourage the dying person to chant the name of Amitābha Buddha.[389]
>
> 若人能誦持此偈，得三種利益。一得常持諸大乘經首題名字，二得增長淨土信心，三令聞者深信淨土。若遇臨終者，高聲誦一返二返，然後勸令念佛。

In the category of hymns, there are three sets of hymns focusing on the sixteen kinds of visualizations described in the *Meditation Sutra*. These hymns were composed by three renowned monks: Zunshi, Youyan 有嚴 (1021-1101), and Yuanzhao 元照 (1048-1106). The inclusion of these works suggests that in monastic communities, Pure Land practice also included visualization and meditation techniques as instructed in the *Meditation Sutra*. This approach stands in contrast to the Pure Land practice commonly propagated for lay followers, which primarily involves chanting the Buddha's name. An example of this practice can be seen in Su Shi's eulogy where he describes his late wife's devotion to chanting the Buddha's name on her deathbed. The set of hymns by these monks indicates an alternative approach to Pure Land

[389] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 215c21-22.

practices, one that emphasizes visualization and meditation rather than the recitation of the Buddha's name. Here we can observe the diversity of Pure Land practices in the monastics and among the laity.

The sixteen types of visualizations are a sequence of meditation methods, ranging from usual objects to surreal objects, to guide practitioners to attain *samādhi* to finally attain rebirth in the Pure Land. In the hymns on the sixteen types of visualizations, the authors not only give a succinct summary of the content of each visualization but also provide a doctrinal interpretation of each meditation.

VI General Meditation 第六總觀

樓中天樂，	Music from the heavens within the tower,
讚佛法僧。	Praising the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,
寶樹地池，	Jeweled trees, land, and ponds,
一念圓成。	In a single thought, all is perfectly completed.[390]

VIII Meditation on the Image 第八像觀

托像凝真，	Rely on the image to concentrate on the real;
見真忘像。	Once perceiving the real, one forgets the image.
三聖炳然，	The three sages[391] are vividly clear;
尚名麁想。	Yet this is still called a rough perception.

[390] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 219a1-2.
[391] The three sages refer to Amitâbha Buddha, with Avalokitêśvara 觀音 on his left and Mahāsthāmaprāpta 勢至 on his right.

IX Meditation on the Buddha 第九佛觀

觀佛相好，	Contemplating the Buddha's excellent characteristics;
一經宗要。	It is the doctrinal essential of this sutra[392].
三昧現前，	The *samadhi* emerges in front of you;
始知深妙。	Only then does one begin to understand the profound.

These three hymns are selected from the hymn set composed by Yuanzhao. After the first five meditations on the setting sun, the waters, the land, the jeweled trees, and the jeweled pond, the sixth meditation is the holistic visualization of the Western Pure Land, integrating all the images from the previous five meditations.[393] Instead of listing all the magnificent scenery of the Pure Land, Yuanzhao suggests that the visions of jeweled trees, land, and ponds should all manifest simultaneously in a single moment of thought. This aligns with the Tiantai formulation of "a chiliocosm in a single thought," which refers to the idea that the entire universe can be contained within a single moment of thought.[394] Here, we can see another type of Pure Land literature that is heavily embedded with Tiantai doctrines and written in a highly literary form of Chinese.

[392] This sutra refers to the Meditation Sutra.
[393] Julian Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvatī: Shan-Tao's Commentary on the Kuan Wu-Liang-Shou-Fo Ching* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).
[394] A chiliocosm in a single thought refers to one thought surveying or embracing the 3,000 worlds. See Brook Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as The Good: Omnicentrism, Intersubjectivity, and Value Paradox in Tiantai Buddhist Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

The eighth hymn, "Meditation on the Image," expounds on the correct way to practice visualization. It states that practitioners should use conditional images as a means to reach the ultimate reality, and once this reality is realized, one should leave the images behind. In this way, images serve only as expedient means in the meditation practice. Even though one can vividly visualize the three sages, this is not considered the ultimate goal. The ninth hymn, "Meditation on the Buddha," is the advanced stage of the eighth meditation, where the practitioner forsakes the images and enters into the *samadhi* of meditating on the Buddha.

Yuanzhao's usage of four-syllable lines also implies a more dense and high-register literary style, which we have seen in the "Nianfo *samadhi*" poems by Wang Qiaozhi, who is from Huiyuan's community. Only four poems are extant from that period, and they are all written in four-syllable lines.

妙用在茲，	The marvelous function is here;
涉有覽無。	it touches on what exists to perceive what does not exist.
神由昧徹，	The spirit is penetrated by the dark;
識以照麁。	consciousness is coarse when illuminated.
積微自引，	Accumulate subtlety to guide oneself;
因功本虛。	rely on this effort take root in emptiness.
泯彼三觀，	Exhaust the three contemplations[395];
忘此豪餘。	and forget about the rich remnant.[396]

[395] In the Tiantai teachings, three contemplations elucidated by Zhiyi are the view of emptiness 空觀, which negates mistaken notions of common-sense reality; The view of dependent arising, which cancels extreme attachment to emptiness 假觀 (also see 從假入空), and the middle view 中觀, which utilizes either of the above but is not attached.
[396] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 221b8-10

This very dense poem is perhaps describing the religious experiences one undergoes when practicing the nianfo *samadhi*. It refers to nianfo *samadhi* as a marvelous function, which uses what exists to perceive what does not exist. This perspective corresponds with Yuanzhao's interpretation of the visualization practice, which also relies on external objects to realize the truth. Towards the end of the poem, it suggests that the three contemplations are to be exhausted, and the external phenomena, referred to as the "rich remnant," should be forgotten.

The tradition of Pure Land literature is also manifested in Zunshi's "Poems on nianfo *samadhi*," which he composed on the occasion of organizing a Pure Land community in Siming. Daniel Getz has argued that Zunshi's community was elite-oriented and that its Pure Land practice focused on meditation rather than vocal chanting. This assessment is correct, and Zunshi's composition of "Poems on nianfo *samadhi*" is also a clear imitation of the poems composed by Huiyuan and his community. In these poems, Zunshi presents another interpretation of the *Meditation Sutra*.

金肌昧真見，	Golden skin[397] conceals the view of reality;
八音愚正聞。	eight tones[398] deafen the correct hearing.
玄空了無託，	The profound void relies on nothing;
至涉寧有勛？	why does the great experience have merit?
森羅會都寂，	The assembly of myriad things is utterly extinguished;
長空銷積氛。	the vast sky dissolves lingering mists.
良哉此達觀，	How splendid is this penetrating observation;

[397] Golden skin is the metonymy of the Buddha.
[398] This refers to the eight attributes of the Buddha's voice.

局士安與云。　　how can this be spoken about to a confined person? [399]

The poem claims that the visualization of the Buddha impedes the view of reality, while the Buddha's words simply mislead one's understanding. It suggests that ultimate emptiness does not depend on any phenomenon and that the profound experience of *samadhi* does not come with merits. The myriad external objects become extinguished, just like mists dissolving in the vast sky. How, then, could this profound understanding be conveyed to someone with a narrow perspective?

When reading the verses of Wang Qiaozhi, Zunshi, and Yuanzhao together, it becomes apparent that a different literary tradition in Pure Land literature has been overshadowed by the more popular form of Pure Land texts. This type of Pure Land literature is based on the *Meditation Sutra* and Tiantai doctrines, reflecting the meditative Pure Land practice that perhaps existed among monastics and certain well-trained lay Buddhists.

A more prevalent type of text in *Lebang wenlei* is the persuasive text, which aims to inspire people to begin Pure Land practice now. They consist of nearly half in *juan* 5. A common rhetorical device used in these persuasive texts is the juxtaposition of the suffering experienced in the *Saha* world with the joy and bliss found in the Western Pure Land. This rhetorical approach has its roots in the Pure Land sutras, but it is presented in a more straightforward and accessible manner in literary compositions, making the teachings easier for laypeople to understand and follow.

[399] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 221c3-6. The preface to this set of poems is translated in Getz, "T'ien-t'ai Pure Land Societies and the Creation of the Pure Land Patriarchate," 489.

Two sets of song lyrics to the tune "Wang Jiangnan" exemplify this rhetorical technique of creating contrasts. One set is titled "The Suffering of the Saha World," while the other is titled "The Bliss of the Western Pure Land." Each set consists of six lyrics and they are composed by a monk named Baiyun Jingyuan 白雲淨圓.

娑婆苦，	The *Saha* world is suffering,
長劫受輪迴。	enduring the reincarnation cycle for eons.
不斷苦因離火宅，	If one does not cut off the causes of suffering,
	then one cannot escape the burning house[400];
秖隨業報入胞胎。	one can only follow karma and enter the womb.
辜負這靈臺。	It is unworthy of the spiritual terrace[401].
朝又暮，	Morning and evening pass,
寒暑急相催。	the urgency of cold and heat rushes us.
一箇幻身能幾日，	How many days can this illusory body last?
百端機巧衮塵埃。	All clever schemes are merely dust.
何得出頭來？	How can we ever be set free?[402]
西方好，	The Western Pure Land is wondrous,
瓊樹聳高空。	jade trees towering into the sky.

[400] The parable of the burning house is one of the seven parables in the *Lotus Sutra*'s Chapter of Parables 譬喻品. The burning house from which the owner tempts his heedless children by the device of the three kinds of carts—goat, deer, and bullock, especially a white-bullock cart.
[401] This refers to the mind.
[402] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 228a10-13.

彌覆七重珠寶網，	Covered with a seven-layered net of jewels,
莊嚴百億妙華宮。	beautifying billions of splendid jeweled palaces.
宮裏眾天童。	In the palaces, divine youths abound.
金地上，	On golden grounds,
欄楯繞重重。	railings spiral layer upon layer.
華雨飄颻香散漫，	Flowers rain gently, dispersing fragrance,
樂音寥亮鼓清風。	while music resonates, clear as the sound of the wind blowing.
聞者樂無窮。	Those who hear it find joy unending.[403]

The two sets of lyrics make the contrast between the suffering in the *Saha* world and the joy in the Western Pure Land explicit. In the first lyric, two major types of suffering are emphasized: the suffering of the endless cycle of reincarnation and the impermanence of human existence. By stressing the impurity and transience of the *Saha* world, this text urges readers to seek a path to liberation from cyclical reincarnation. This message leads to the second set of lyrics, which describes the splendid scenery of the Western Pure Land. The images in the second lyric are based on the accounts found in *The Sūtra on the Buddha of Infinite Life*, such as the trees made of the seven jewels, the seven layers of nets covering the trees, the palaces located on the trees, the *devas* residing in the palaces playing musical instruments, the golden ground, the

[403] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 228a10-13.

layers of railings, and the flowers raining from the sky.[404] This set of lyrics serves as a concise summary of the Pure Land as described in the Pure Land sutras, aiming to inspire and motivate readers to engage in Pure Land practices.

In comparison to the verses of Zunshi and Yuanzhao, these lyrics are more descriptive and grounded in everyday life experiences, without engaging in the complex doctrines of emptiness, ultimate truth, or other Tiantai teachings. Instead, they highlight more relatable life experiences, such as the transience of life and the deceit people encounter in daily encounters. Consequently, these lyrics are more accessible to a general audience who may not have extensive training in advanced Buddhist teachings. Moreover, the language used in these lyrics is more vernacular and plain, contrasting with the more literary and elevated language found in the works of Zunshi and Yuanzhao.

In addition to contrasting suffering and joy, the persuasive texts also provide instructions for Pure Land practice.

西方淨土頌	“Hymn to the Western Pure Land VIII”
宗賾	Zongze
信重終須往，	Those with deep faith will surely go [to the Pure Land];
疑多未可知。	Those with many doubts cannot yet know.
淨心憑一念，	The purification of the mind relies on one single thought;

[404] For details of the descriptions of the ornaments of the Pure Land, see Luis O. Gómez, *The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light : Sanskrit and Chinese Versions of the Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutras* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), 179-183.

功行越僧祇。	Meritorious deeds surpass the innumerable[405].
便列阿惟位，	One will be placed in the state of nonretrogression[406];
還將補處齊。	and also reach the place of an upcoming Buddha [407].
進修宜勇猛，	Energetically practicing should be vigorous;
不必待多時。	There is no need to wait for many ages.[408]

The Chan master Zongze was an active propagator of Pure Land teachings and composed many persuasive texts on the subject. The above verse is selected from his "Hymn to the Western Pure Land VIII," which consists of 13 pieces. Moving beyond the juxtaposition of suffering and joy, Zongze expounds on the core doctrine of Pure Land Buddhism: faith. The criterion for determining whether one attains rebirth in the Pure Land is based on one's faith. If one has genuine faith, then they will definitely be reborn in the Pure Land; however, if one harbors many doubts, huge uncertainties arise. This single thought of faith purifies one's mind, and the merit of this thought surpasses that accumulated over countless eons.

Zongze then elucidates the great benefits of being reborn in the Pure Land. Rather than emphasizing joy, Zongze focuses on the benefits of one's practice toward enlightenment. One who attains rebirth will enter a state of non-retrogression, meaning they will not regress to the level of sentient beings but will maintain their identity as a bodhisattva. They will also hold a

[405] The Chinese term 僧祇 is a transliteration of the Sanskrit term *asaṃkhyeya* (or *asaṃkhya*), which means uncountable.
[406] The Chinese term 阿惟越致 (Sanskrit. *avinivartanīya*) literally means "not liable to turn back." It refers to a particular type of bodhisattva whose future enlightenment is assured.
[407] The Chinese term 補處 refers to a bodhisattva destined to attain Buddhahood in his next life, for example, Maitreya bodhisattva.
[408] *T*. no. 1969A, 47: 219c20-23.

status similar to that of an upcoming Buddha, such as Maitreya bodhisattva, since the state of non-retrogression guarantees that the practitioner will attain Buddhahood. In conclusion, Zongze encourages people to practice diligently, stating that even a brief period of practice will yield great benefits.

In summary, *juan* five of *Lebang Wenlei* is dedicated to literary compositions on the Pure Land, consisting mainly of works from the Song Dynasty. It shows the richness and complexity of Pure Land literature during this period. It includes independent Pure Land liturgical texts for daily practice and deathbed services. It also involves two literary traditions, indicating two diversified Pure Land practices. One practice leans towards meditation, primarily practiced by monastics, while the other emphasizes vocal invocation, which is usually the common method propagated to lay Buddhist adherents. The former follows the literary tradition of Huiyuan's community, while the latter produced numerous persuasive texts.

These persuasive texts employ intimidating images of the *Saha* world and highlight the appeal of the Pure Land to inspire people to engage in Pure Land practices. They also serve as instructional texts for propagators to impart Pure Land teachings to practitioners. The persuasive texts often juxtapose the suffering and impermanence of the Saha world with the bliss and permanence of the Pure Land, making the teachings more relatable and accessible to a general audience. Additionally, some texts, such as those by the Chan master Zongze, talk about the core doctrines of Pure Land Buddhism, emphasizing the importance of faith and the benefits of attaining rebirth in the Pure Land.

In conclusion, *Lebang wenlei*, compiled by the Tiantai monk Zongxiao in 1200 CE, stands as the first anthology of Pure Land texts in Chinese Buddhism. By contextualizing this

anthology within the vibrant anthologization culture of the Song Dynasty, this chapter reveals Zongxiao's pioneering efforts to establish Pure Land teachings as a distinct and legitimate tradition within the Buddhist landscape of his time.

Zongxiao's preface to *Lebang wenlei* highlights the historical and cultural context that inspired the compilation of this anthology. The imperial endorsement of Pure Land practice by Emperor Gaozong and the widespread establishment of Pure Land societies across the empire provided an opportune moment for Zongxiao to assert the significance of Pure Land teachings. Notably, Zongxiao claims to have modeled his anthology after the *Xihan wenlei*, a seminal work in the "Guwen" advocation of the Tang Dynasty, which aimed to reevaluate and restore the literary and ethical values of *wen*.

A close examination of the structure and content of *Lebang wenlei* reveals Zongxiao's multifaceted approach to defining and organizing Pure Land texts. The anthology imposes a religious hierarchy, placing canonical texts like sutras, dharanis, and treatises at the beginning. It also expands the selection criteria to include a diverse range of texts that touch upon various aspects of Pure Land belief and practice, such as painting and embroidering images of Amitabha Buddha. Interestingly, the myth surrounding Huiyuan's White Lotus Society is argued to be an integral part of Pure Land literature, regardless of its doctrinal content.

The final section of the anthology, dedicated to literary compositions on the Pure Land, showcases the richness and complexity of Pure Land literature during the Song Dynasty. It includes liturgical texts for daily practice and deathbed services, as well as two distinct literary traditions reflecting different Pure Land practices: one emphasizing meditation and the other focusing on vocal invocation. The persuasive texts in this section employ vivid imagery and

accessible language to inspire people to engage in Pure Land practices, making the teachings more relatable to a general audience.

Through the compilation of *Lebang wenlei*, Zongxiao not only defines the boundaries of Pure Land literature but also strategically defends Pure Land teachings against criticisms from Chan practitioners and Confucianists. By including a diverse range of texts and authors, the anthology serves as an arena for various ideas to contest and communicate, reflecting a vibrant intellectual landscape in which Pure Land teachings were challenged, debated, and discussed.

Conclusion

As we have traveled through all these materials, we can conclude that the Pure Land tradition underwent several key changes after the mid-ninth century and adopted new features during the Song Dynasty. Specifically, the tenth century in the Wuyue region is crucial for understanding the new directions of the Pure Land tradition during the Song dynasty. These transitions include 1) the shift of Buddhist locus to the Jiangnan region, especially Hangzhou and its surrounding areas; 2) the transformation of patrons from aristocratic families to regional rulers; and 3) the diffusion of Pure Land teaching with various Buddhist lineages. These significant changes prompt us to reconsider the tenth century in the Hangzhou area as a transformative stage of the Pure Land teachings. I argue that the Wuyue region in the tenth century laid the foundation for the trajectory of Pure Land tradition in the Song Dynasty, taking a significantly different path compared to the Tang Dynasty.

Based on existing sources, the Pure Land tradition experienced wider popularization compared to the Tang dynasty. This is manifested in the growing number of Pure Land communities in the Jiangnan region. Interestingly, the model of Huiyuan and his community (which became known as the "White Lotus Society" since the mid-ninth century) rose to prominence amidst the zeal to form Pure Land communities. Some elite monks, like Zunshi, followed Huiyuan's tradition by forming small-scale, meditation-oriented societies and continued the literary practice of writing abstruse poems reflecting on the religious experience of *nianfo* samādhi. Other monks, like Zhili, established large-scale, more accessible communities that mainly propagated the practice of vocal invocation, aimed at the general populace rather than the educated class. However, for both types of communities, Pure Land practitioners unanimously looked up to Huiyuan's White Lotus Society to add prestige and credibility to their

own society. This partly explains Huiyuan's rising status in the Song Dynasty. The symbol of Huiyuan's White Lotus Society also permeated the stratum of literati and eventually became a general cultural symbol, as manifested in numerous poems and paintings on the theme of the White Lotus Society and the "Eighteen Worthies of Donglin". It was transformed into a symbol of Pure Land devotion, religious reclusion, and an idealized retreat that complemented the political careers of scholar-officials, offering them a flexible model to navigate between their religious pursuits and their duties in the secular world.

During the Song, the stratum of literati became a powerful political, social, and cultural force, actively engaging in religious activities, most prominently in their erudition of Chan teachings, their literary writings about Buddhist teachings, and their interaction with eminent monks. Literati also engaged in activities related to the Pure Land. In the West Lake Lotus Society organized by Shenchang, I have examined the social network within this community, which manifests a vibrant literati network in the early Northern Song, connected through the civil examination network and the network in academies and institutes. This was made possible by the expansion of the civil examination system and the cultural institutions and projects at the court. This literati network was then connected to the elite monastic network fostered in the Wuyue region in the tenth century. Through this connection, the southern monk Shenchang was able to reach the highest level of state administration and promote his religious community based in Hangzhou. Although he intended to propagate Pure Land teachings, the literati he reached held different ideologies and received his invitation in different ways. However, the model of Huiyuan's White Lotus Society was employed by literati to convey the idea of reclusion and intellectual engagement, thus broadening the scope of the teachings of the Pure Land.

Eminent scholar-officials like Yang Jie propagated Pure Land teachings, but lesser-known people from lower levels of the literati class also actively participated in the propagation of Pure Land teachings. During the Southern Song, print technology became more accessible, making the transmission of Pure Land teachings easier. A notable example is the *Longshu Pure Land Text* compiled by the lay Buddhist Wang Rixiu. This proselytizing text enjoyed popularity in southern China, which was printed repeatedly from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, and had a tremendous influence on the transmission of Pure Land teachings. In this book, Wang Rixiu restructured the doctrines of Pure Land teachings, rephrased key excerpts from sutras, and laid out a step-by-step guide to Pure Land practices, ranging from basic to more advanced practice. He also engaged in proselytizing work by addressing different social classes, arguing that Pure Land practices are suitable and easy for everyone in every vocation. He contrasted this with Chan practice, which he argued was not suitable for everyone because it required talent, while Pure Land practices were accessible to all as a quick path to enlightenment.

The Song Dynasty saw the emergence of the first anthology on Pure Land, *Lebang wenlei*, compiled by the monk Zongxiao. He claimed to model it after the *Xihan wenlei*, which emerged during the mid-Tang and aimed to establish the correct standard of *wen* and impart lessons on the rise and fall of dynastic history to new scholars. Likewise, Zongxiao aimed to establish the right teachings of the Pure Land and guide future practitioners by compiling *Lebang wenlei*. He employs literary categories used in other anthologies, such as prose, miscellaneous writings, and other literary genres like rhapsody, poetry, and lyrics. However, Zongxiao imposes a religious hierarchy on these categories, arranging texts based on their proximity to the classics. Sutras are placed first, followed by exegetical texts on the sutras, texts on doctrines, accounts, and biographies, and finally, traditional literary genres like poetry and lyrics. This arrangement

reveals an implicit attitude of monks towards texts. Zongxiao also attempts to delineate the boundary of Pure Land texts and establish a distinct category of "Pure Land texts." His selection criteria are quite broad, including texts that discuss Pure Land doctrines, accounts of the production of Amitabha Buddha images, and most interestingly, texts on the White Lotus Society and the Donglin community. This shows that by the twelfth century, the myth of the White Lotus Society and the Donglin community was broadly perceived as belonging to Pure Land literature.

Through investigating the relationship between the Pure Land tradition and literati culture, we have gained a deeper understanding of the significant transitions of the Pure Land tradition in the Song Dynasty. We have uncovered the network linking the literati class and monastic elites, the expansion of Pure Land communities, and the agency of lesser-known literati, effectively complementing the picture filled with top-level literati with whom we are familiar. We have also observed the mutual influence of literary and religious traditions, as shown in *Lebang wenlei*. These findings contribute to the broader scholarly debates on the Tang-Song transition model and the historicization of Pure Land teachings as a continuous and coherent tradition. By examining the transformative changes in the Pure Land tradition during the tenth century in the Wuyue region, this dissertation sheds new light on the complex dynamics between religious practices, social networks, and cultural production in medieval China.

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