

An Unforgettable Enterprise by Forgotten Figures

The Making of the Zhaocheng Canon 趙城藏 in North China
under the Jurchen Regime

Dewei ZHANG

Master Hongjiao has practiced all kinds of asceticism, taking the carving of a Buddhist canon as her fundamental vow. Those who assisted her in soliciting donations, consisting of Liu Fashan (d.u.) and more than fifty others, all cut off their arms, burned their arms or fingers, gouged out their eyes, or took their lives. There were even cases in which people donated their family possessions or sold their daughters or sons to support the great enterprise of carving the canon. It took as long as thirty years to complete [the project]. Alas, this task was truly difficult. 然今弘教大師備修苦行,以刊鏤藏板為本願。於是協力助緣劉法善等五十餘人,亦皆斷臂,燃臂燃指,剜眼割肝。至有捨家產、鬻男女者,助修經板勝事,始終三十年之久,方得成就。嗚呼,可謂難也哉。¹

The canon mentioned here refers to the Zhaocheng 趙城 canon,² one of the earliest printed Chinese Buddhist canons that still exist. The Zhaocheng canon was lost in history for several hundred years, and its rediscovery in 1932 caused a sensation and has since attracted much attention.³ Short but awe-inspiring, this passage tells what happened over the course of making the Zhaocheng canon, but some questions are raised. Why did Master Hongjiao devote herself to the carving of the canon? Who was Liu Fashan? Who were the others among the fifty-plus persons? Why did they conduct so many self-immolations, one of the

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¹ This paragraph is quoted from Li Jining 李濟寧, "Jinzang xing ziliao kao" 金藏新資料考, in *Zangwai fojiao wenxian* 藏外佛教文獻, ed., Fang Guangchang (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 1997), vol. 3, p. 450.

biggest sacrifices that humans could make? How could it be possible for so many cases to occur? Were they necessary for the project? Few of these questions have been answered to date, and this result is not surprising. So far, studies on the Zhaocheng canon have been focused on its content and its relationships with other editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon,⁴ but paid little attention to the dynamics and mechanism of its creation.⁵ We would find there are more questions if we know that the Zhaocheng canon in its entirety was a huge reposi-

² The Zhaocheng canon examined in this paper is based on the *Zhonghua da zangjing: hanwen bufen* 中華大藏經: 漢文部分, ed. Zhonghua da zangjing bianji ju, 106 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984–1996) [hereafter cited as the Zhonghua canon], which was compiled on the basis of the Zhaocheng canon by taking all of its surviving texts, with only a few exceptions that were mistakenly thought missing. It is worth noting that there was another discovery of Buddhist texts belonging to the Zhaocheng canon in Northern Shajiasi 薩迦寺 in Tibet in 1959. This copy was originally printed in 1256 and placed in Great Baoji monastery 大寶集寺 in Beijing. It has 555 existing fascicles of texts. Except the texts overlapped with those found in Guangshengsi, the rest of this discovery have all been included in the Zhonghua canon. For the close relationship between the Zhonghua canon and the Zhaocheng canon, see Tong Wei 童瑋, *Zhaocheng Jin zang yu Zhonghua da zang jing* 趙城金藏與中華大藏經 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989). For the Shajiasi copy, see Su Bai 宿白, “Zhaocheng Jin zang he Hongfa zang” 趙城金藏和弘法藏, *Xiandai foxue* 現代佛學 2(1964): 13–22.

It also deserves to be known that there is the *Zhaocheng Jin zang* 趙城金藏, which was printed in 122 volumes by Beijing Library Press in 2008. I do not use this new edition because, as Fang Guangchang 方廣錫 has implied, it is an illegal duplication of relevant parts of the Zhonghua canon. Moreover, when compared with it, the Zhonghua canon has detailed notes revealing the textual variants between the Zhaocheng and seven other editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon, and is thus more convenient for use. For the problem in the Beijing Library Press edition, see Fang Guangchang, “Zhonghua da zangjing (shangbian) de bianzuan yu jiantao” 中華大藏經(上編)的編纂與檢討, a lecture that he delivered at Fuguang university in November, 2011 and is available at http://hk.plm.org.cn/e_book/xz-31103.pdf (accessed on December 25, 2012).

³ Ironically, the attention that the Zhaocheng canon drew in Japan made it almost looted a few years later when Japanese armies occupied Shanxi. For the eventful history of the Zhaocheng from its rediscovery in the 1930s to its reprinting in the 1980s, particularly its narrow escape from the seizure of Japanese troops, see Hu Shixiang 扈石祥 and Hu Xinghong 扈新紅, “Zhaocheng Jinzang shiji kao” 趙城金藏史跡考, *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究 2000 (3): 38–48; Li Wanli 李萬里, “Zhaocheng Jinzang babainian cangsang ji” 趙城金藏八百年滄桑記, *Fayin* 12 (1988): 32–37.

⁴ Most scholars believe that the Zhaocheng canon duplicated the Kaibao 開寶藏 in content and format in the most precise way, but Tong, *Zhaocheng Jinzang yu Zhonghua da zang jing*, pp. 1–2, contends that although the Zhaocheng is mostly identical to the Kaibao, it includes about forty fascicles taken from the Khitan canon 契丹藏. The importance of this debate lies in the fact that it will decide the pedigree of the Zhaocheng among the three systems, which scholars have recently identified among those printed editions. For these three distinct but related systems, see Chikusa Masaaki 竺沙雅章, *Sō Gen Bukkyō bunkashi kenkyū* 宋元佛教文化史研究 (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 2000), pp. 271–311.

tory of about 7,000 fascicles of Buddhist texts,⁶ and that the formidable task of carving it was completed in areas which had been lost by the Northern Song (960–1127) to the hands of the Jurchen Jin (1115–1234). Did people other than those mentioned become involved in the project? If yes, what was the social status of these people? How did they participate in the project during the thirty years? And, in a broader view, to what extent does the process of carving this canon reflect the state of Buddhism in general?

These questions concern the dynamics and mechanism behind the creation of the Zhaocheng canon, a significant aspect which has been generally overlooked in current studies on the Chinese Buddhist canon. The translation of Buddhist texts from Indic and central Asian languages into Chinese can be traced back to the second century.⁷ In the subsequent thousand years, the enterprise of translation continued. As the number of translated texts kept increasing over time, there were many attempts to organize them in a meaningful and systematic way. In 730, drawing on previous efforts, Zhisheng 智昇 (669–740) compiled the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (A catalogue of Buddhist texts compiled in the Kaiyuan period) which, after the mid-ninth century, finally became the foundation to standardize the Chinese Buddhist canon.⁸ By the late tenth century, with the adoption of printing technology,

⁵ For example, Li Fuhua 李富華, ed., *Jinzang: mulu huanyuan ji yanjiu* 金藏: 目錄還原及研究 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2012), so far the newest study on the Zhaocheng canon, is primarily to recover its catalogue. This book collects twelve important articles that were written by mainland Chinese scholars from 1934 to 2008. We can see that their main concern is with the content of the Zhaocheng and its status in the history of printed Chinese Buddhist canon. This is also the case with *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu* 漢文佛教大藏經研究, eds., Li Fuhua and He Mei 何梅 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2003), pp. 91–118. Japanese scholars had a strong interest in the Zhaocheng canon shortly after its rediscovery, and a similar tendency can be detected from their research. See, for example, Ono Genmyō 小野玄妙, ed., Yang Baiyi 楊白衣, trans., *Bukkyō kyōten sōron* 仏教經典總論 (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1983), pp. 692–725; Ocho Enichi 橫超慧日, “Shinshutsu Kimban zōkyō o mite” 新出金版藏經を見て, *Tōhō gakuhō* 東方學報 (Tōkyō), 5 (1935), supplement, pp. 283–307; Tsukamoto Zenryū 塚本善隆, “Kinkoku Daizōkyō no hakken to sono kankō: Saikin Shina Bukkyō kai no nidai hakken” 金刻大藏經の發見とその刊行: 最近支那佛教界の二大發見, *Nikka Bukkyō Kenkyūkai nenpō* 日華佛教研究會年報 1(1936): 167–91.

⁶ In addition to Chinese translations of Buddhist texts, the Chinese Buddhist canon also includes works by East Asian authors, which increased in number over the time.

⁷ For the early Chinese translation of Buddhist scriptures, see Mizuno Kōgen 水野宏元, *Buddhist Sutras: Origin, Development, Transmission* (Tokyo: Kōsei Publishing, 1982), pp. 41–52. This enterprise of translation was thought to have started with *Sishier zhang jing* 四十二章經 in the first century, but modern scholars have reached a consensus that this text is actually a collection of excerpts from other Buddhist scriptures and that its appearance cannot be earlier than the fourth century. See, for example, Lü Chen 呂澂, *Zhongguo foxue yuanliu luejiang* 中國佛學源流略講 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), pp. 276–82.

a revolutionary moment came in the history of the Buddhist canon. This marked the end of the era of handwritten sutras, making it possible to produce the canon at a much faster speed and at much lower expense.⁹ The carving of the Kaibao canon 開寶藏, the first printed Chinese Buddhist canon, was finished in 983.¹⁰ After that, more than twenty printed editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon were produced in major countries and regions in East Asia, including China, the Khitan Liao, the Jurchen Jin, Korea, and Japan.¹¹ Their circulation was even wider, including today's Vietnam. Consequently, the formation and diffusion of this canon remarkably encouraged the domestication of Buddhism and profoundly shaped its contours in the pre-modern East Asian context. In this process, woodcarving the canon was absolutely the decisive part. The creation of the Chinese Buddhist canon was one of the biggest print projects taking place in the pre-modern world. To make it required the carving of a great number of woodblocks, ranging from about 80,000 to nearly 170,000,¹² necessitated sustained efforts over several decades and involved vast human and material resources.¹³

⁸ For the formation and development of the Chinese handwritten Buddhist canon, see Fang Guangchang, *Zhongguo xieben da zangjing yanjiu* 中國寫本大藏經研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), pp. 39–118. It was the Huichang persecution of Buddhism, launched by Emperor Tang Wuzong (r. 841–846) during the period from 842 to 846, which facilitated the standardization of the Chinese Buddhist canon. See Fang, *Zhongguo xieben da zangjing yanjiu*, pp. 317–402. In a lecture delivered at Leiden University on March 19, 2012, T. H. Barrett also suggests that restocking Buddhist literature after the massive losses caused by the persecution formed a strong motive for the adoption of printing, despite lack of dynastic support for the new technology. This lecture is entitled “The Last Gentleman: The Huichang Persecution of Buddhism as a Stimulus to the Spread of Printing.”

⁹ After the appearance of the Kaibao canon, hand-written Buddhist canons were still produced occasionally, primarily as devotional acts or artificial work. See Huang Qijiang 黃啟江, *Sizhou dasheng yu Songxue daoren: Songyuan shehui jinyin de fojiao xinyang yu fojiao wenhua* 泗州大聖與松雪道人—宋元社會菁英的佛教信仰與佛教文化 (Taipei: Xueshen shuju, 2009), pp. 235–388.

¹⁰ Only the main body of the Kaibao canon, compiled according to the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, was completed by 983. In the following one hundred years, this canon would continue to take in newly-translated texts. Now, only twelve fascicles of the Kaibao canon exist, and they have been printed together under the title the *Kaibao yizhen* 開寶遺珍 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2010).

¹¹ For so far the most comprehensive and detailed study of different editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon, see Fang, *Zhongguo xieben da zangjing yanjiu*; Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*; Chikusa, *Sō Gen Bukkyō bunkashi kenkyū*, pp. 271–360. For a survey of the printed Chinese Buddhist canon, see Daizōkai 大藏會, *Daizōkyō: seiritsu to henssen* 大藏經: 成立と変遷 (Kyōto: Hyakkaen, 1964); He Mei, “Hanwen da zangjing gaisu” 漢文大藏經概述, *Faying* 法音 3(2005): 30–37.

¹² The numbers of the woodblocks changed vastly with different editions of the canon. For example, the Kaibao canon was carved on more than 130,000 woodblocks, while the second Korean canon 再雕高麗藏 on 81,340. The Zhaocheng canon doubled the number of the Korean, up to 168,113, even before it was supplemented in Beijing.

So, it would be natural to ask questions like the motivations behind people's engagement in this challenging project and the ways in which they manage to finish it. The answers to these questions concern not only the canon itself. They also concern the people and elements working behind its creation, enabling us to take a close look at the interplay of Buddhism and society where it existed and could mobilize the resources. This point is particularly true for those editions carved under the sponsorship of individual common people rather than the state.¹⁴ Unfortunately, our knowledge on these questions proves limited and often incorrect.

Based on newly-discovered epigraphic and textual materials, this paper will thus examine some significant problems concerning the production of the Zhaocheng canon. It starts with a reconstruction of a more reliable and more complete history of the Zhaocheng. In the following three sections, centering on the carving of this canon, it moves on to explore why people became involved in the project, how the leaders set out to mobilize resources and how common sponsors responded to their appeal, and how and to what extent timing and regional elements affected the result of the project. In the process, such elements as charismatic characteristics of the project leaders, public self-immolation, the *she* 社 Buddhist society, and local powerful families are all examined. To carry out such a huge project was a visible comprehensive test of the vitality and mobilization ability of Buddhism. In addition to improving our understanding of the Zhaocheng canon itself, tracing and analyzing the process will also help reveal the dynamics and mechanisms which made it possible to create other canons and drive the evolution of Chinese Buddhism as a whole.

1. New Evidence and New History

The Zhaocheng canon is legendary and, for centuries, little about this canon and its history was known. In the 1580s when the carving of the future Jiaxing canon was being planned, the organizers did mention the Zhaocheng for inspiration, but what they knew was little more than an ambiguous story that the nun Cui Fazhen 崔法珍 (?–1183+) had cut off her arm to sponsor its production.¹⁵ A turning point came in 1932 when 4,957 fascicles

¹³ In the case of the Jiaxing canon 嘉興藏 that was produced in the seventeenth century, for example, the carving expense was an estimated 100,000 taels of silver.

¹⁴ According to the major patrons backing its production, the Chinese Buddhist canon can be generally divided into two categories, individually-sponsored and imperially-sponsored. These two types are different in contents, format, and distribution. Individually-sponsored printed editions include such canons as the Zhaocheng, the Chongning 崇寧藏, the Pilu 毗盧藏, the Yuanjue-Zifu 圓覺-資福藏, the Qisha 磧砂藏, and the Jiaxing. The Buddhist canons that were imperially sponsored include the Kaibao, the Khitan, the court canon of the Yuan 元官藏, the Hongwu Southern canon 洪武南藏, the Yongle Southern and Northern canons 永樂南/北藏, and the dragon canon 龍藏 of the Qing dynasty.

of Buddhist texts were rediscovered in Guangshengsi 廣勝寺 in Zhaocheng, Shanxi. The Zhaocheng canon surfaced as a result, after having been lost to history for several hundred years.¹⁶ Shortly after the discovery, Jiang Weixin 蔣唯心 checked all existing texts of the copy before they suffered further loss and published an article, which remains the most important one in this field.¹⁷ Jiang did not obtain much useful information about the making of the canon, however. He pointed out that it was Cui Fazhen who had taken charge of the carving project and brought the wood blocks to Beijing in 1183, but this was not a firm conclusion because it was made only on fragmentary records. Sixty years later, Jiang's deduction found evidence in an essay collected in the Qisha canon 磧砂藏. That essay, originally carved on a stele (cited as Stele A hereafter),¹⁸ was composed in 1199 by Zhao Feng 趙颯 (?–1201), Vice Director of the Palace Library (*mishu cheng* 秘書丞) and Senior Compiler (*xiuzhuan* 修撰) of the Hanlin Academy in the Jin dynasty. It expressly claims that the canon was made by Cui Fazhen and describes in detail the circumstances of the canon in Beijing, and thus seems to have ended the controversy over who led the project.

This clear image, however, is challenged by another stele that was rediscovered around 2002 (cited as Stele B hereafter). This stele, “The Epitaph concerning the Rebuilding of Taiyinsi by the Managers of Carving the Canon” (雕藏經主重修太陰寺碑), was first erected in Taiyinsi 太陰寺, Shanxi, in Dade 1 (1298) in celebration of a rebuilding of the temple.¹⁹ When tracing the history of the temple, this stele recounts a history of the Zhaocheng canon

¹⁵ Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*, pp. 94–95, 300–302.

¹⁶ The current copy of the canon was shipped to Zhaocheng in Zhongtong 3 (1262) of the Yuan dynasty.

¹⁷ Jiang Weixin 蔣唯心, *Jinzang diaoyin kao: fu jingmu* 金藏雕印始末考: 附經目 (Nanjing: Nanjing zina neixue yuan, 1935). This pamphlet was originally published as an article in *Guofeng zazhi* 國風雜誌 in 1934. Jiang Weixin was a scholar devoting his life to the study of the Buddhist canon. When he went to Guangshengsi to check the Zhaocheng canon in October, 1934, he fell into water when crossing the Yellow River and suffered from eye disease since then. Later, on the way to Shanggusi 上古寺 of Chongqing county, Sichuan, to check the Hongwu Southern Canon, he was kidnapped by bandits and killed.

¹⁸ Stele A quoted in this paper is from Li, “Jinzang xing ziliao kao,” pp. 449–52.

¹⁹ This epitaphic inscription is quoted from Wang Zeqing 王澤慶, “Xiezhou ban Jinzang muke de zhongyao wenxian: diao zangjing zhu chongxiu taiyinsi bei kaoshi” 解州版《金藏》募刻的重要文獻: 雕藏經主重修太陰寺碑考釋, *Wenwu shijie* 文物世界 4(2003): 16–17. I have corrected some wrong characters according to the stele itself.

To my knowledge, it was Yang Mingzhu 楊明珠 who first mentioned Stele B in “Xishi zhibao Zhaocheng Jinzang yu ‘Xiezhou Tianningsi’” 稀世之寶《趙城金藏》與“解州天寧寺”, *Wenwu shijie* 6(2002): 29–31. After that, several papers studying the stele were published in local journals, but they failed to bring the stele to the attention of mainstream scholars. Both the *Jinzang: mulu huanyuan ji yanjiu* and *The Zhaocheng Jinzang* are ignorant of this stele, although they were published in February 2012 and 2008 respectively.

prior to its delivery to Beijing. This is more a challenge than a supplement to Stele A, however. It tells in great detail about how Yin Shi 伊寔 (ca.1100–1176),²⁰ Cui Fazhen's master, led the carving project and about how Wang Ciyun 王慈雲 (?–1180+), her Dharma-brother, made significant contributions to it. But previously we did not even know of the existence of these two key figures.

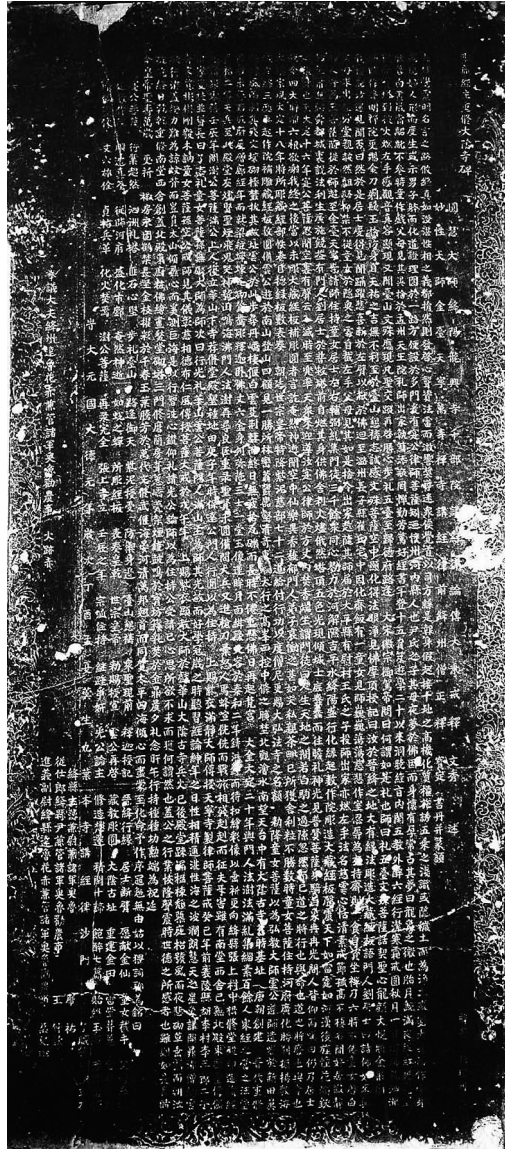
Given that Stele B was erected one hundred years after the project had been completed in Shanxi, we have to first take a close look at it before going into detail. Stele B was composed by Shi Baoding 釋寶定 (d.u.) in Tianningsi 天甯寺 of Jintai 金台 on the basis of what was recounted by Shi Wenxiu 釋文秀 (d.u.) in Longxingsi 龍興寺 of Jiangyang 絳陽 county.²¹ Nothing is known about these two masters except that Shi Baoding was the Buddhist Superior (*sengzheng* 僧正) in Jiangzhou 絳州 (present-day Xinjiang, Shanxi), but due to Jiang Weixin's reminder we do know that Tianningsi was certainly the headquarters of the carving project. Stele B contains some hagiographic elements in recounting Yin Shi's stories. Although this is not unusual in the genre, it becomes necessary for us to check its authenticity against other evidence. Fortunately, some materials, which make little sense when used separately, form a complete chain of evidence for Stele B.

1) In another stele (cited as Stele C hereafter) that was erected in front of Taiyinsi in the third month of Dading 17 (1177), there is a phrase “Ciyun, a disciple of Master Shi, a Bodhisattva, who was the Chief Contributor (*gongdezu* 功德主) for carving the canon” (開雕大藏經都功德主實公菩薩門人慈雲).²² This phrase is important for two reasons. (1) Since the Zhaocheng was the only canon produced in Shanxi during the period under discussion, it confirms that the leading role in the Zhaocheng project was taken by a Master Shi, whose surname we now know from Stele B is Yin. The character 寔 in this epitaph looks different from Stele A, but they are actually interchangeable.²³ (2) Master Shi had a

²⁰ Xian Zhenqiang 咸增強 wrongly claimed that the name of Master Shi was Yin Shinai 尹矧迺. See his “Yizuo burong fushi de chuban shiliao bei: cong *Diao zangjing zhu chongxiu taiyinsi bei kan Jinzang muke de zhuyao renwu*” 一座不容忽視的出版史料碑：從《雕藏經主重修大陰寺碑》看《金藏》募刻的主要人物, *Yuncheng xueyuan xuebao* 運城學院學報 28.3 (2010): 19.

²¹ Zhang Deguang 張德光 erroneously attributed the erection of Stele B to Wang Ciyun, who had already died about one hundred years before the event. See his “Guanyu Zhaocheng Jinzang yankao zhong jige wenti de shangque” 關於趙城《金藏》研考中幾個問題的商榷, *Wenwu shijie* 1 (2006): 34.

²² Yan Fengwu 閻鳳梧, ed., *Quan Liao Jin wen* 全遼金文 (Taiyuan: Shanxi guji chubanshe, 2002; 4 vols.), vol. 4, p. 4043. Xian, “Yizuo burong fushi de chuban shiliao bei,” p. 21, wrongly punctuates the relevant sentence, saying that “the carving of the canon started on the nineteenth day of the third month of Dading 10 of the great Jin.” (大金大定十年三月十九日, 開雕大藏經.) He Mei 何梅 has rightly pointed out that this project started no later than Huangtong 9 (1149). See her “Zhaocheng Jinzang de jige wenti” 趙城金藏的幾個問題, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化 3(2008): 31–32.



Stele B: “The Epitaph concerning the Rebuilding of Taiyinsi by the Managers of Carving the Canon”
 (雕藏經主重修太陰寺碑) (Quoted from Wang Zeqing, “Xiezhou ban Jinzang muke de
 zhongyao wenxian: diao zangjing zhu chongxiu taiyinsi bei kaoshi”)

disciple called Ciyun and, similarly, his surname, Wang, was unknown until we read Stele B. At the end of Stele C, we see that Wang Ciyun was the abbot of Taiyinsi around Dading 17 but is mentioned only as Wang Xingzhe 王行者.²⁴

The authenticity of Stele C is beyond question. (1) It was erected to memorize the rebuilding of Taiyinsi in Dading 10, and the project was finished not only by Wang Ciyun but also by at least thirty other disciples of Yin Shi. Those people would have not kept silent had Wang Ciyun made a wrong claim. (2) The chance is high that Cui Fazhen also participated in the project in a certain way. In fact, she was very likely the second abbot of the rebuilt Taiyinsi, even earlier than Wang Ciyun taking up the post, and was mentioned as Cui Xingzhe 崔行者 in Stele C.²⁵ Given the stele was erected one year before Cui left for Beijing, she would not have let any mistakes appear on it.

- 2) That Wang Xingzhe in Stele C refers to Wang Ciyun can be substantiated by more reliable evidence, an official document carved on a stone pillar (Cited as Stele D hereafter).²⁶ Starting from the early Dading period (1161–1189), the Jin government began to prohibit people from building temples privately, but a temple could be legalized if it had Buddhist murals or statues and paid a fee for an official permit.²⁷ In the eleventh month of Dading 20 (1180), after investigating on the spot, local authorities issued official credentials, which had been certified by the Ministry of Rites. The document says that “There is a Buddhist building that is three bays [in width] and eleven beams [in depth] in Zhangshang village of Jiang County. Its overseer is Wang Xingzhe.” (絳縣張上村佛堂舍三間一十椽，看管人王行者。) This confirms a claim made by Stele B that Wang Ciyun and his disciples built a Buddhist building in Dading 20. More importantly, since the name Wang Xingzhe appeared even in official documents, it seems safe to assume that Wang Ciyun was usually called Wang Xingzhe and that Wang Xingzhe, when associated with the carving project, refers to Wang Ciyun.
- 3) Once we identify Wang Xingzhe as Wang Ciyun, we can easily find that he was actively engaged in the carving from the very start. For example, the earliest existing *fayuan wen* 發願文 (record of vows) in the Zhaocheng canon shows that it was Wang Ciyun, men-

²³ I have no chance to check this epitaph in person, but a possibility exists that the character 寔 is actually used in the epitaph but was replaced with 實 when the editor transcribed the epitaph.

²⁴ Xingzhe 行者 has several meanings, and here it refers to a monk or nun who does not shave his or her head. Stele C lists a “Wang lao xingzhe” 王老行者 (old Wang Xingzhe) as the abbot of Taiyinsi, but he had died before the stele was erected.

²⁵ According to Stele A, Cui Fazhen did not shave off hair and received full ordination until Dading 18 (1178).

²⁶ Yan, *Quan Liao Jin wen*, vol. 4, p. 4008.

²⁷ For this policy, see Nogami Shuujō 野上俊静, “Kin no zaiseisaku shyūkyō kyōdan” 金の財政策と宗教々團, *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 東洋史研究 4.6(1939): 485–502.

tioned as Wang Xingzhe, who mobilized residents in Xiwu village 西毋村 in Puzhou 蒲州 (present-day Yongji, Shanxi) to carve the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. The *fayuan wen* also shows that Wang obtained full cooperation from a person who, as seen from his surname, very likely belonged to the leading family in the village. This case, dated in Huangtong 9 (1149), was not an exception because similar records repeatedly appeared in the following years.²⁸ In this sense, Stele B's claim about Wang's great contribution to the carving project is unquestionable.

The emphasis of Stele B is on what happened to the Zhaocheng canon while it was created in South Shanxi, and now all important points of it are validated. So, combining this stele with other materials and Stele A, which offers important information about Cui Fazhen's activities in Beijing, we are now in a better position to understand how the Zhaocheng canon was made and distributed.

- 1) Although for centuries people have attributed the making of the Zhaocheng canon to Cui Fazhen, who was mentioned as the virgin Bodhisattva (*Tongnü pusa* 童女菩薩) in Stele B, it was in fact Yin Shi who initiated and took charge of the project. Yin Shi started to design the plans in the Northern Song-Jin transition, and reportedly received blessings from Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai at the very start.
- 2) Cui Fazhen did cut off her arm, but not directly for the canon-carving project. She met Yin Shi at her early age, but her request to become his disciple was rejected by her parents. So she acted in this radical way to show her resolution, which finally persuaded her parents to let her go.
- 3) Shortly after, Wang Ciyun also became Yin Shi's disciple.
- 4) Cui Fazhen and Wang Ciyun worked with Layman Liu, probably Yin Shi's earliest follower, and were great assistance to Yin Shi. They attracted a huge number of supporters and built several workshops (*zuoyuan* 作院) to cut the woodblocks for the canon.
- 5) Yin Shi was later invited to Tianningsi in Xiezhou 解州 (today's Xiezhou, Shanxi) to be its abbot. In the monastery they established the *da zangjing banhui* 大藏經板會/*zangjing hui* 藏經會 (The Board for Carving the Buddhist Canon),²⁹ and through it organized and supervised the whole project. Yin Shi was its Chief Contributor.
- 6) When Yin Shi died in 1176, he entrusted his disciples with the task of completing the carving project. Two years later, Cui Fazhen brought a copy of the canon to Yanjing (present-day Beijing), the imperial capital of the Jin dynasty during the period from 1153 to 1214. The canon received a major welcome and was then stored in Great Sheng'an monastery 大聖安寺. In this visit, Cui Fazhen also promised to present the wood blocks

²⁸ For the earliest extant *fayuan wen* in the Zhaocheng, see *Zhonghua da zangjing*, vol. 1, p. 810. The *fayuan wen* with similar content could be seen in *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 856, 883.

²⁹ *Zhonghua da zangjing* vol. 10, p. 37; vol. 76, p. 27.

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to the court. In 1181, she did transport all the wood blocks to Yanjing, with financial support from the emperor and the court.

It is unclear how many wood blocks were brought to the capital. Stele A says that it was 168,113, that is, all 6,980 fascicles of the canon. But as to be discussed in 8) below, the carving of the canon was not completed by then. Since Stele B says that Cui Fazhen submitted to the court a complete catalogue of the canon in her first visit to Yanjing, very likely the figures cited in Stele A reflect the planned rather than finished wood blocks.

- 7) The wood blocks were first examined and corrected by five knowledgeable monks, who were led by Daozun 導遵 (d.u.). In Dading 23 (1183), these woodblocks were transferred to Great Haotian monastery 大昊天寺 in Beijing, and henceforth were used for printing.
- 8) After the carved blocks were brought to Yanjing, Wang Ciyun built three new workshops, in Xintian 新田 (present day Xingjiang, Shanxi), Yicheng 翼城 (present-day Yicheng, Shanxi), and Gujiang 古絳 (present-day Jiangxian, Shanxi) respectively, in the hope of finishing carving the canon. During this period, Wang moved the carving center from Tianningsi to Taiyinsi, which was originally built in Yongzheng 1 (650) in the Tang and most recently rebuilt in Dading 10 (1170).³⁰ By Taihe 2 (1202), Taiyinsi had already become a beautiful temple, with all facilities ready. It even had a grand wooden statue of the Buddha entering parinirvāṇa, which is surrounded by murals and still extant.³¹ Wang Ciyun and his disciples also constructed a building in Zhangshang village nearby to make and print the canon. According to Stele D, this building received an official permit in Dading 20 (1180).
- 9) Wang Ciyun and his disciples attempted to finish the carving, but their efforts were repeatedly disrupted by wars taking place during the ending years of the Jin dynasty. In Zhenyou 2 (1214) when Mongol army attacked this region for the first time, buildings in Taiyinsi and the wood blocks that they had carved were burned. Then, Fa Shu 法澍 (d.u.), one of Wang Ciyun's major disciples, made a new effort, but wars broke out once again before he could bring an end to the project. This time the wars destroyed more

³⁰ As for the rebuilding of Taiyinsi in the Jin, Stele C says that it took place in Dading 10 while Stele B in Dading 20. They are not necessary contradictory because, according to Stele D, it was in Dading 20 that Taiyinsi was officially acknowledged. In other words, what Stele C means is the physical rebuilding of the temple, while what Stele B refers to is the official recognition.

³¹ When discussing the question as to what made the Buddha hall in medieval China a distinctly symbolic space, Eugene Wang pointed out that, in addition to ceremonial practices held there, "just as important, if not more, were the statues and wall painting that made the presence of the Buddhist deities more palpable and transported the devotee to other imaginary realms." See Wang, "Pictorial program in the making of monastic space: from Jing'aisi of Luoyang to Cave 217 at Dunhuang," in *Buddhist Monasticism in East Asia: Places of Practice*, eds. James Benn, et al. (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 65.

buildings of the temple, and monks living there were forced to disperse. This experience proved fatal to the project. Taiyinsi would be rebuilt in the early Yuan dynasty, but no additional efforts are recorded to have resumed the project.

Jiang Weixin pointed out that the Zhaocheng canon was repaired or supplemented in the early Yuan, probably under the direction of Yeli Chuchai 耶律楚材 (1190–1244), an outstanding politician who was a devoted Buddhist.³² This surmise has been accepted by all other scholars. According to the analysis above, however, this follow-up project, at least partly, was not to replace those blocks destroyed in wars but to complete the unfinished project.

- 10) Evidence shows that the Zhaocheng spread to Dunhuang and Turfan,³³ but there is no consensus about the fate of those woodblocks after they were taken to Beijing. Most scholars believe that they were later stored in Hongfasi 弘法寺 and thus referred to as the “Hongfa canon.”³⁴ In 2005, He Mei further contended that the making and circulation of the Zhaocheng went through three stages: it was first finished as a complete canon in Shanxi under the leadership of Cui Fazhen, which we now know is incorrect. From Zhiyuan 22 to 26 (1285–1289), on the orders of Emperor Yuan Shizu (r. 1260–1294), this canon was collated and supplemented, increasing in size to seven hundred plus cases and 7,100 fascicles. It was since then called the Hongfa canon in reference to where its woodblocks were preserved. About thirty years later, it was recompiled and called the Yanyou 延祐 canon, which was in circulation until the end of the Yuan dynasty.³⁵ However, Li Fuhua was not convinced, arguing that there is little relationship between the Zhaocheng canon and the Hongfa canon.³⁶

2. Charisma, Self-immolation, and the leaders

According to Stele B, when Yin Shi arrived at Mount Wutai, with the purity of the dharma-

³² Jiang, *Jinzang diaoyin shimo kao*, pp. 13–14. This point has since been accepted by other scholars. See, for example, Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*, pp. 101–103. As for Yeli Chuchai, his official biography can be seen in Song Lian 宋濂 et al., eds., *Yuanshi* 元史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 146: 3455–64.

³³ For Dunhuang, see Li Jining, *Fojing banben* 佛經版本 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2002), pp. 114–18. For Turfan, see Dang Baohai 黨寶海, “Tulufan chutu Jinzang kao: jianlun yizu Tulufan chutu fojing canpian de niandai” 吐魯番出土金藏考: 兼論一組吐魯番出土佛經殘片的年代, *Dunhuang Tulufan yanjiu* 敦煌吐魯番研究 4(1999): 103–25.

³⁴ For the Hongfa canon, see Jiang, *Jinzang diaoyin shimo kao*, pp. 13–16; Su Bai, “Zhaocheng Jin zang he Hongfa zang”; Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*, pp. 103–108.

³⁵ He Mei, “Beijing Zhihuasi Yuan ‘Yanyou zang’ ben kao” 北京智化寺元延祐藏本考. *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 4(2005): 29–32.

³⁶ Li, *Jinzang*, pp. 8–11.

eye (*fayan jing* 法眼淨) he obtained on the spot, he saw Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī touch his head and predict that he would make a canon in the Jin 晉 and Jiang 絳 regions. Although we cannot take this story as a historical fact, it is not surprising to see that Yin Shi would design the carving project during the Northern Song-Jin transition. The Chinese Buddhist canon appeared in a relatively mature form in the late sixth century and then, in handwritten form, was in a widespread circulation. In Taipingxingguo 8 (983), the first printed version of it appeared as the Kaibao canon. With the circulation of the Kaibao, emulators appeared quickly, first in areas outside the boundaries of China, and the results were the Khitan canons and the Korean canons.³⁷ Within China, similar acts did not happen until Xining 4 (1171) when the government transferred the woodblocks of the Kaibao to Xianshengsi 顯聖寺 and no longer paid costs for its printing.³⁸ This change in policy triggered a wave of canon-carving in local societies, which would continue until the thirteenth century.³⁹ In particular, during the one hundred years from the 1080s to 1180s, south China saw the production of three printed canons, the Chongning 崇寧, the Pulu 毗盧, and the Yuanjue-Zifu 圓覺-資福.⁴⁰ It was against this background that Yin Shi took the initiative to produce a new canon, although in north China. In fact, Yin may have consciously intended to fulfill the need for a new Buddhist canon in this area, for the Kaibao had been snatched from Kaifeng by Jin troops in 1126 and then disappeared forever.⁴¹

How Yin Shi was able to lead the project is a major problem. No records exist about

³⁷ Two editions of the Buddhist canon were carved during the Khitan Liao dynasty, one from the Tonghe period (983–1012) to Xianyong 4 (1068) and the other from Chongxi 11 (1042) to Xianyong 6 (1070). See Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*, pp. 127–42. It is controversial as to how many editions of the Buddhist canon were produced in Korea. In 989, the Kaibao canon was sent to Koryo (i.e. Korea) for the first time. In 1011, Koryo started its first effort to carve the Buddhist canon, which was completed about twenty years later. Later, one or two more editions, on which scholars have not reached a consensus, were created. The last edition of the Korean edition is well-known for its good quality, largely because it was created by using the Khitan canon to collate with the Kaibao. For a brief introduction to the Korean canons, see Lewis R. Lancaster & Sung-bae Park, *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. ix–xvii; Lewis R. Lancaster, Kikun Suh, and Chai-Shin Yu, eds., *Buddhism in Koryō: A royal Religion* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California, 1996), pp. 173–92.

³⁸ For the moving of the woodblocks of the Kaibao canon from Yinjing chapel 印經院 to Xianshengsi and its consequence, see Li Jining, *Fojiao da zangjing yanjiu lungao* 佛教大藏經研究論稿 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2007), pp. 143–45.

³⁹ When compared with Fangshan 房山 stone canon and the Jiaying canon, it seems that these canons were made not so much to prepare for the coming of the end of the dharma (*mofa* 末法) as to enhance the status of the host temples and monks. Notably, it was also around this period that the *Zhenghe wanshou daoze* 政和萬壽道藏, the earliest Daoist canon, was published in Fuzhou. See Kristofer M. Schipper & Franciscus Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 28–29.

the overall cost of the Zhaocheng project, but we know that donating one mule afforded enough to make seven fascicles while thirty bolts (*pi* 匹) of cloth would pay for one fascicle.⁴² Since the canon included nearly 7,000 fascicles, in total it was worth about 1,000 mules or 210,000 bolts of cloth. This carving project, as we shall see soon, was supported by soliciting contributions. Its leaders thus faced a huge challenge, and their abilities and strategies to mobilize resources decided the fate of the project. Jiang Weixin already found out that the Zhaocheng project was carried out under the direction of *da zangjing banhui*, but he complained that little was known about its project leader, including its *du quanshou* 都勸首/緣主 (the Chief Convener).⁴³ The *du quanshou*, together with the *du gongdezu* 都功德主 (the Chief Contributor),⁴⁴ were the decisive roles in the donation-based project of this kind and usually assumed by celebrities who were influential, wealthy, or held high status.⁴⁵ Now, since Yin Shi has been identified as the Chief Contributor of the Zhaocheng, we have to ask what kind of figure Yin Shi was and how he led the carving project and bring it to success.

It seems that Yin Shi lacked a prominent status in both the secular and sacred worlds. He was a Vinaya-master, born in Huizhou (present-day Xinyang, Henan). As with miracles that happened to other Buddhist masters,⁴⁶ it was said that his mother became pregnant because she dreamed of the Buddha. This implies that he had an inborn connection with Buddhism. Later, Yin distinguished himself from other children by not playing with them. So his parents sent him to Tianwang temple 天王院 in Mengzhou 孟州 (present-day Mengzhou, Henan), a place not far away from his hometown. After he turned twenty, Yin Shi became versed in

⁴⁰ The relationship between the Yuanjue and the Zifu canons remains controversial. After studying some sutras which has been recently collected by Beijing library, Li Jining argued that the so-called Zifu canon is not an independent edition but a supplement to the Yuanjue canon. I agree with him. For a summary of those debates, see Li, *Fojiao da zangjing yanjiu lungao*, pp. 179–80; Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*, pp. 233–36.

The Chongning canon was cut in Dongchansi 東禪寺 in Fuzhou from Yuanfeng 3 (1080) to Zhenghe 2 (1112), which was followed by the carving of the Pilu in Kaiyuansi 開元寺 of the same city from Zhenghe 2 (1112) to Shaoxing 21 (1151). Like the Pilu, the Yuanjue-Zifu canon was also produced in the Northern-Southern Song transition period. For a brief introduction of these canons, see Kenneth Chen, “Notes on the Sung and Yuan Tripitaka.” *HJAS* 14 (1951): 208–14; Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*, pp. 179, 207, 233–34.

⁴¹ For the looting of the Kaibao woodblocks by the Jin army, see Zhang Xiumin & Han Qi, *The History of Chinese Printing* (illustrated) (Paramus, N.J.: Homa & Sekey Books 2009), p. 102.

⁴² For mule, see *Zhonghua da zangjing*, vol. 44, p. 15. For cloth, see *Zhonghua da zangjing*, vol. 76, p. 151.

⁴³ Jiang, *Jinzang diaoyin shimo kao*, p. 7.

⁴⁴ These two roles could be assumed by the same person.

⁴⁵ See, for example, the Chief Conveners of the Chongning, the Yuanjue-Zifu, the Qisha, and the Puning in Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*, pp. 164–65, 228–29, 264–65, 317–19, respectively. These Chief Conveners were either high-ranking officials or influential monks.

both Buddhist teachings and Confucian classics, and at the same time observed the precepts perfectly. The fact that little is mentioned about his parents and his masters may imply that they were all insignificant figures. In this sense, Yin Shi belonged to the type of monks who were active in rural areas but disappeared from the historical record. His being forgotten is not unusual. In fact, the genre of *Biographies of Eminent Monks* constitutes a major resource for us to find monks in traditional Chinese society, but most monks they collect were those active in urban areas or those who had close relationships with the court.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, Yin Shi was a charismatic figure whose life was full of miracles. When Yin Shi visited Sizhou 泗州 (today's Xuyi, Jiangshu) to pay reverence to Bodhisattva Guanyin, he indeed saw the Bodhisattva in the sky.⁴⁸ Then Yin Shi made a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. Upon arriving, he prayed with great sincerity and, finally, Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī appeared. One day in Dading 16 (1176), music came from the sky, and a voice proclaimed that they came to fetch Yin Shi from *Tuṣita* Heaven, the home of the future Buddha Maitreya. Yin Shi then gave his last instructions to his disciples, and died with ease and peace. Over the course of his dying, music continued and rare fragrance filled the house. After being cremated, his body produced numberless relics. Without denying the hagiographic nature of these stories, there is evidence showing that Yin Shi was surely a charismatic figure. For example, on the way to Mount Wutai, Yin Shi met Emperor Song Huizong (r.1100–1125). After a short conversation, the emperor was so impressed that he decided to assign him a temple, which was accompanied with other precious gifts.⁴⁹ This seems to have been an event that took place in Xuanhe 8 (1126): that year, Emperor Huizong, who had abdicated the throne in favour of his son in the preceding year under the pressure of the invasion by the army of the Jurchen Jin, retreated to Sizhou.⁵⁰ This emperor was well-known for his enthrallment with religious Daoism,⁵¹ but a frustration with the failure of Daoism to help him to resist the invasion seems to have made him seek assistance from Buddhism.⁵² No matter what the reason, this imperial

⁴⁶ For miraculous stories appearing in the lives of eminent monks, see Koichi Shinohara, "Biographies of Eminent Monks in a Comparative Perspective: The Function of the Holy in Medieval Chinese Buddhism," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 7(1994): 479–498; John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997).

⁴⁷ For the difference between rural and urban monks, see Hattori Katsuhiko 服部克彦, *Zoku Hokugi Rakuyō no shakai to bunka* 続北魏洛陽の社會と文化 (Kyōto: Mineruva Shobō, 1968), pp. 100–105. For the limitation of the Biographies of Eminent Monks as the primary source, see Erik Zürcher, "Perspectives in the Study of Chinese Buddhism," *JRAS* 1(1982): 161–76.

⁴⁸ On Bodhisattva Guanyin in Sizhou, see Huang, *Sizhou dasheng yu Songxue daoren*, pp. 13–79.

⁴⁹ There was a pun embedded in their conversation: The emperor asked Yin Shi, "Why do you make obeisance like this?" The master replied, "[I] am paying respect to Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai." Yin Shi was revealing the intent of his trip, but his words, when said face to face with Huizong, may have made the latter think that he himself was Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.

favor should have advanced Yin's reputation.

Notably, Yin Shi and his major disciples had a particular connection with different forms of self-immolation, which in turn is closely related to relic veneration.⁵³ As mentioned above, Yin Shi burned his left hand in Sizhou after having seen Guanyin in the sky. This act must have had much to do with the cult of Sengqie 僧伽 (628–709). Sengqie, a Buddhist master coming to China from the Western Regions around the year 661, spent more than fifty years in China. In the last years of his life, Sengqie was respected as the state master by Emperor Tang Zhongzong (r. 684; 705–710), who personally became his disciple.⁵⁴ Shortly after his death, Sengqie was viewed as the transformation of Guanyin, very likely the eleven-faced Guanyin, who, in turn, might have been the one Yin Shi saw in Sizhou. A cult surrounding Sengqie rapidly took shape by taking as its center Puguangwangsi 普光王寺 in Sizhou, which was built by the monk in Wansuitongtian 1 (696) and then had his mummified body worshiped in a pagoda within.⁵⁵ Benefiting from the status of Sizhou as a prosperous city with strategic importance, this cult expanded rapidly, first southward and northward along the Grand Canal and then westward along the Yangtze River. By the early Northern Song, the cult of Sengqie had entered mainstream belief of folk religion, and secured strong sup-

⁵⁰ For Emperor Huizhong's retreat to Sizhou, see *Hongzhi Chanshi guanglu* 宏智禪師廣錄, *Taishō shīnshī daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, ed. Takakusu Junjirō, et al., 100 vols. (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–32) [hereafter *T*], 48: 9.120a. Also see Hu Shunshen 胡舜申, *Yisi Sizhou lu* 乙巳泗州錄, in *Yuzhao xinzhī* 玉照新志, ed. Wang Mingqing 王明清 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), pp. 48–50.

⁵¹ For Emperor Huizong's strong interest in religious Daoism and his anti-Buddhism, see Edward Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), pp. 34–38; Michel Strickmann, "The Longest Taoist Scripture," *History of Religions* 17 (1978): 346–50; Miyakawa Hisayuki 宮川尚志, "Sō no Kisō to dō kyō" 宋の徽宗と道教, *Tōkai daigaku kiyō*: *Bungakubu* 東海大学紀要. 文学部 23 (1975): 1–10.

⁵² In another case in the same year, Emperor Huizong ordered the recovery of Puguangwangsi 普光王寺 in Sizhou, which had been converted into Shenxiaoyuqing abbey 神霄玉清宮. See Wang, *Yuzhao xinzhī*, 3.50.

⁵³ In this paper I use the term self-immolation in a wide sense as defined by James Benn in *Burning for the Buddha: Self-immolation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), pp. 8–10, including "all religious practices that involved doing things to or with the body."

⁵⁴ Li Yong 李邕, *Li Beihai ji* 李北海集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 3.25–27, offers the earliest account of Sengqie's life. Zanning 贊寧, *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, *T* 50: 18.822a–823b, also records some stories that took place surrounding Sengqie and his disciples.

⁵⁵ It seems that the rapid spread of the cult of Sengqie benefited its close relationship with the Huayan School and Manicheism, the latter of which was first introduced into China in 695. See Cai Xianghui 蔡相輝, "Yi Li Yong (673–742) 'Sizhou Linhuai xian Puguangwangsi bei' wei hexin de Sengqie (628–709) xinyang kao" 以李邕 (673–742) 〈泗州臨淮縣普光王寺碑〉為核心的僧伽 (628–709) 信仰考, *Kongda renwen xuebao* 空大人文學報 14(2005): 49–93.

port even from the emperors.⁵⁶

The Sengqie cult was closely associated with relic veneration and self-immolation. Puguangwangsi already had a grain of Buddha's finger relic even in the Tang dynasty.⁵⁷ In the early Song, a nun claimed that she saw the miraculous monk at the top of the Sengqie pagoda, and then jumped down from it in homage to him.⁵⁸ In 983, the Sengqie pagoda was reported to shine in daylight.⁵⁹ In response, Emperor Song Taizong (r.976–997) had eunuchs take new Buddha's relics to the monastery and store them underneath the pagoda on the eighth day of fourth month, the birthday of the Buddha. That same day, Huaide 懷德, a monk otherwise unknown, burned himself in homage to the relics.⁶⁰ Moreover, other accounts even say that “people who burn their heads and fingers and cut off their arms number several thousand, and officials could not stop them.” (民燃頂及焚指斷臂者數千人, 吏不能禁.)⁶¹ Evidently, Yin Shi's self-immolation, although taking place later, was conducted in this context.

Yin Shi's self-immolation set up an inspiring example, which was imitated by an astonishing number of his disciples. After leaving Mount Wutai, Yin's trip took him to Changzi county 長子縣, Shanxi, where he begged food from the Cui family. His behavior moved a thirteen-year-old girl, later known as Cui Fazhen, to such a degree that she wanted to become his disciple. She cut off her arm when refused by her parents and finally obtained their permission. After that, Yin Shi continued his travels, probably with Cui Fazhen. When he arrived in Taiping county 大平縣, Wang Ciyun burned his own left hand and became his disciple. Later, more self-immolations were conducted in this group and finally, as cited in the introductory paragraphs, as many as over fifty leading figures cut off their arms, burned their arms or fingers, or even gouged out their eyes and cut out their livers.

The presence of self-immolation was not unusual in the making and distribution of the

⁵⁶ For example, in Taipingxingguo 7 (982), Puguangwangsi was rebuilt with government fund. Later, when the Japanese monk Jōjin 成尋 (1011–1081) visited China in Xining 5 (1072), he noticed that in Qisheng Chan chapel 啟聖禪院, which had been built by Emperor Song Taizong in Taiyuan in Taipingxingguo 5 (980), had a Hall named after Sengqie (泗州大師堂). See Hirabayashi Fumio 平林文雄, *San Tendai Godaisan ki: kōhon narabini kenkyū* 參天台五臺山記: 校本並に研究 (Tōkyō: Kazama Shobō, 1978), p. 131.

⁵⁷ Ennin 圓仁, *Ru Tang qiufa xunli xingji* 入唐求法巡禮行記 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2007), 4.137.

⁵⁸ Zanning, *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T 50: 18.823a.

⁵⁹ Zhipan 志磐, *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀, T 49: 43.399a, claims that this miracle occurred in Taipingxingguo 8 (981).

⁶⁰ For a more detailed account of this event, see Zanning, *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T 50: 23.860c–861a. It was discussed in Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, p. 145, 226.

⁶¹ *Taizong shilu* 太宗實錄 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1980), 27.34. Also see Zhipan, *Fozu tongji*, T 49: 43.398a, 399a.

Buddhist canon,⁶² partly because the latter is seen as Dharma relics and thus has a “natural” and deep relationship with Buddhist bodily relics.⁶³ Nonetheless, that more than fifty such cases appeared in a single project is still unprecedented and cannot be fully understood without relation to the time and region of the creation of the canon.

South Shanxi was under a strong influence of relic veneration, which helps explain the appearance of other immolations. Relic veneration appeared in India shortly after the Buddha entered nirvana, and was introduced into China in the third century. Afterwards, it gained prevalence quickly. In order to worship Buddha’s relics, for instance, Emperor Liang Wudi (r. 502–549) announced two nation-wide amnesties. In addition to personal belief, relic veneration was also used for political causes, particularly the justification of a new regime. In Renshou 1 (601), for example, Emperor Sui Wendi (r. 581–604) launched a relic-distribution campaign and constructed nineteen pagodas all over China. In the following three years, two more movements were launched and more pagodas built.⁶⁴ These campaigns sparked intense enthusiasm for relics, which was further encouraged by relic veneration conducted by the Tang House surrounding Famensi 法門寺 in Chang’an (today’s Xi’an).⁶⁵ A huge number of common people were drawn to relic veneration, and were very active in making donations on such occasions.⁶⁶ In Huichang 4 (844), Emperor Tang Wuzong (r. 841–846), who was launching a fierce suppression of Buddhism, issued an edict in an attempt to curb this enthusiasm,⁶⁷ but his efforts were invalidated after his death two years later and the passion for relics continued.⁶⁸ Shaanxi, where the capital of these two dynasties was located, was a natural center of these campaigns. And Shanxi, separated from Shaanxi only by the Yellow

⁶² A variety of self-immolation was characteristic of the Fangshan stone canon, for example. A stele, erected in Tonghe 23 (1005), says that “each year, there are always several people, either the clerics or laypersons, who burn their fingers [in an attempt to] continue the lamp, who do moxibustion on their heads with Artemisia tinder in place of burning incense, who jump off cliffs to abandon their lives, and who pile up pyres to cremate themselves.” (所燃指續燈者, 所鍊頂代香者, 所墜岩捨命者, 所積火焚軀者, 道俗之間, 歲有數輩.) See Chen Yanzhu 陳燕珠, *Xinbian buzheng Fangshan shijing tiji huibian* 新編補正房山石經題記彙編 (Taipei: Jueyuan chubanshe, 1995), p. 12.

⁶³ For the two kinds of Buddhist relics and the merit collected from the worshipping of them, see *Yufo gongde jing* 浴佛功德經, T 16: 1.800a. Modern scholars have further categorized Buddha’s relics into three groups, say, “bodily relics,” “contact relics,” and “reminder relics.” The remains of the Buddha’s physical body, such as the cremated bone, hair, and teeth, belong to “bodily relics,” and scripture and images are “reminder relics.” See Phyllis Brooks, trans., Bernard Faure, *Visions of Powers: Imaging Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 158–163.

⁶⁴ In addition to Emperor Sui Wendi’s personal interest, these campaigns also reflected his ambition of becoming wheel-turning sage king in imitation of King Aśoka (r.ca 269 BC–232 BC). For an excellent study of these campaigns, see Jinhua Chen, *Monks and Monarchs, Kinship and Kingship: Tanqian in Sui Buddhism and Politics* (Kyoto: Scuola italiana di studi sull’Asia orientale, 2002).

River, was under the influence of the same Buddhist culture.⁶⁹ In fact, three of the nineteen pagodas Emperor Sui Wendi built for Buddha's relics were in Shanxi: one was in north Shanxi and two in south Shanxi, say, Pujiusi 普救寺 where, as we will discuss, Layperson Liu made the auto-cremation for the Zhaocheng project, and Guangshengsi, where the extant Zhaocheng canon was rediscovered.⁷⁰ As a result, the relic veneration was a well-entrenched practice in Shanxi, particularly in Southern Shanxi. It is only a short distance between relic veneration and self-immolation. So, we can find that self-immolations, including auto-cremation, occurred in Shanxi before, simultaneously, and after the production of the Zhaocheng.⁷¹

The timing also contributed to the occurrence of so many self-immolations. Religiously, although doctrinally supported by some important sutras, self-immolation, particularly auto-cremation, was not accepted by Chinese people for centuries. Even in the Tang dynasty, Yijing 義淨 (635–713), a famous monk who had first-hand knowledge of Indian Buddhism through his visit to India, criticized the practice as against the precepts. But this practice

⁶⁵ For imperial veneration of Buddha's relics in the Tang, see Jinhua Chen, "Śarīra and Scepter: Empress Wu's Political Use of Buddhist Relics," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 25.1-2 (2002): 33–150; Huang Chi-chiang, "Consecrating the Buddha: Legend, Lore, and History of the Imperial Relic-Veneration Ritual in the T'ang Dynasty," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 11 (1988): 483–533.

⁶⁶ For example, in Huichang 1 (841), the Japanese monk Ennin 圓仁 (794–864) attended an assembly held in homage of the Buddha's tooth relic at Jianfusi 荐福寺 in Chang'an. He left us with a vivid record about how pious common people were on the occasion and how active they were in making donations. See Ennin, *Ru Tang qiufa xunli xingji*, 3.119.

⁶⁷ In Huichang 4 (844), Emperor Tang Wuzong (r. 841–846) issued an edict prohibiting people from worshipping Buddha's tooth relics, including those preserved in Puguangwangsi. If they made donations, both the donators and the receivers would be punished severely. This prohibition was part of Wuzong's suppression of Buddhism. See Ennin, *Ru Tang qiufa xunli xingji*, 4.137.

⁶⁸ A famous instance happened on the eighth day of fourth month of Xiantong 14 (873/5/8), when the Buddha's finger relic was welcomed into Chang'an. Emperor Tang Yizong (r. 859–873) personally paid homage to it in Anfusi 安福寺 and shed tears. One soldier cut off his left arm in front of a Buddha's statue, held it with another hand, and made a bow each step, with blood spraying on the ground. See Su E 蘇鶚, *Duyang zhibian* 杜陽雜編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 3.25; Huang, "Consecrating the Buddha," pp. 515–22.

⁶⁹ For the close relationship of Buddhism in Chang'an area and south Shanxi, see Yamazaki Hiroshi 山崎宏, *Shina chūsei Bukkyō no tenkai* 支那中世佛教の展開 (Tōkyō: Shimizu Shoten Shigenoi, 1942), pp. 237–73, 380–409; Shizuka 滋野井恬. "Juichi seiki igo Chūgoku no bukkyō kyōsen no gaikyō" 十一世紀以後中國の仏教教線の概況, *Ōtani nenpō* 大谷大學研究年報 19 (1967): 255–312.

⁷⁰ For the three pagodas in Shanxi, see Daoxuan 道宣, *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄, T.52: 1.406a–b; 408a; 409a. The two pagodas in south Shanxi are both extant. Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, p. 147, mentions a case of self-cremation conducted by the monk Pujing 普靜 (887–955) in Guangshengsi.

obtained more justification in the early Northern Song, and thus continued in the subsequent times.⁷² Politically, self-immolation was often a deliberate public show, and local authorities were thus in a dilemma: on the one hand, they hesitated to stop it because self-immolation was usually conducted by respectable masters; on the other hand, they had to keep on high alert for the enthusiasm it aroused among Buddhist followers and the great influence it created for the monk and the temple involved. As a result, although self-immolation has continued throughout the history of Chinese Buddhism, there was a tendency for the government to discourage this practice in the hope of avoiding its potential threat to the social order.⁷³ In the case of the Zhaocheng, however, we have to consider an awkward situation facing Southern Shanxi: this region was recently grabbed from the Northern Song, but it received little attention from its new ruler the Jurchen Jin, whose political and cultural center was first in Shangjing 上京 (present-day A'cheng, Heilongjiang) and then in Beijing. Such a slack control over local societies thus became a significant variable, leaving sufficient room for the conduct of self-immolations. In reality, what happened in the Zhaocheng project was not an isolated event. In Taihe 8 (1208), for example, a Buddhist master in Fufeng 扶風 (present-day Fufeng, Shaanxi) burned himself in public. Two years later, its magistrate wrote an essay in praise of this auto-cremation. On a stele that was established on that occasion but is now broken, there are two hundred and seventy-one names listed as patrons, with fifteen civilian or military officials included.⁷⁴ The presence of so many people shows how deeply the passion for self-immolation was still rooted in north China, and suggests a high chance of its eruption in a favorable situation.

These miracles and self-immolations have proven crucial in solving a central problem for the leadership of the Zhaocheng project. The success of a project as ambitious as the Zhaocheng requires strong and effective leadership, but leadership does not originate from nowhere. When examining other individually-sponsored canons, we can always find some particular advantages that guaranteed their success. For example, the Chongning, the Pilu, the Qisha, and the Jiaying 嘉興 all received strong support from high-ranking officials and

⁷¹ For example, an auto-cremation took place in Songling Chan temple 松嶺禪院 of Zhejiang in the Qingli period (1041–1048) of the Song. See Yan, *Quan Liao Jin wen*, vol. 2, pp. 2051–52. An auto-cremation occurred in Falun Chan temple 法輪禪院 in Taihe 6 (1206) of the Jin. See Hu Pinzhi 胡聘之, *Shanyou shike congbian* 山右石刻叢編 (Rpt. 1901), 23.25–28.

⁷² For the protracted and sometime fierce controversy within the Buddhist society over burning the body in medieval China, see James Benn, “Where Text Meets Flesh: Burning the Body as an Apocryphal Practice in Chinese Buddhism,” *History of Religions* 37.4 (1998): 312–18.

⁷³ For the tension between self-immolation and the state, see Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, pp. 1–6, and Chapter 3.

⁷⁴ Li Baiqing 李百勤, ed., *Hedong chutu muzhi lu* 河東出土墓誌錄 (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1994), pp. 94–101.

influential monks.⁷⁵ The Yuanjue-Zifu and the Puning 普寧 canons were even more particular: the former was backed independently by the family of a retired official (ranked 5a), and the latter was completely supported by the White Cloud sect (*Baiyun zong* 白雲宗) which was then in its heyday.⁷⁶ In sharp contrast, Yin Shi had none of these advantages: 1) He carried out the Zhaocheng project in a completely strange region, which implies that he had little connection with the locals when starting the project; 2) Due to his obscure background, he had no existing sectarian forces to rely on; 3) While the project was carried out in south Shanxi, very clearly officials were reluctant to get themselves involved. In fact, the highest (also the only) official, whom we know from Stele C, was a Case Reviewer (*pingshi* 評事) ranked 8a. Obviously, these factors made it even more challenging to mobilize sufficient sources for the Zhaocheng project. In this particular context, it is hard to overemphasize the significance of both miracles and self-immolation because they proved very powerful in provoking enthusiasm among common people to back the carving project.⁷⁷

An exemplary case was Layman Liu, who was very likely the Liu Fashan mentioned in Stele A. Liu witnessed the miracles that Yin Shi stimulated at Mount Wutai, and cut off his/her left hand as a form of worship. In the following years, he/she assisted Yin Shi with the carving project. Finally, he/she decided to burn his/her body before the pagoda in Puzhou in Puzhou, where Buddhist relics had been worshipped since the Sui dynasty. On the scene of his/her self-immolation, it was said that five-coloured lights appeared at the top of the pagoda, and that Bodhisattva Samantabhadra on a white elephant rose up in the miraculous light. People from the Puzhou city and nearby rushed to the site. After witnessing what happened, they all considered that Layman Liu was an embodiment of the Bodhisattva and had even stronger enthusiasm for Buddhism. This act must have provided stronger momentum for the Zhaocheng project.⁷⁸

In the case of the Zhaocheng, therefore, it seems safe to suggest that the appearance of over fifty immolation cases must have greatly enhanced Yin Shi's appeal to the public, and helped him to attract not only his major disciples but as many as over 3,000 followers. It was

⁷⁵ For the major patrons of the Qisha and the Jiaying canons, see Footnote 45.

⁷⁶ For the development of the White Cloud sect during the Yuan dynasty and its carving of the Puning canon, see B. J. ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), pp. 72–113; Chikusa Masaaki, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shakaishi kenkyū* 中國佛教社會史研究 (Kyōto: Dōhōsha Shuppan, 1982), pp. 293–319.

⁷⁷ The Zhaocheng project was not the only case in which the clergy combined miraculous stories and asceticism to boost their appeal to common people. For a very similar instance taking place about Taiping 5 (1025) of the Liao, see Chen Shu 陳述, ed., *Quan Liao wen* 全遼文 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 6.134–35.

⁷⁸ For the psychological and religious motives of laypeople witnessing an auto-cremation and a similar auto-cremation conducted by Huishao 慧紹 (424–451), see Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, pp. 35, 45–48.

the concerted efforts of these people that finally made it possible to complete the main part of the project during a relatively short period of time.

3. The Buddhist *she/yi/hui* Associations and Mass Mobilization

Yin Shi, although ignored for centuries, is fortunate enough to have been rediscovered in Stele B, but this is not the case for thousands of his followers and supporters. These people have disappeared from the historical record and, at best, leave only a few names. Who were those people? How and why did they engage in this enterprise? The answer to these questions concerns the dynamics behind the evolution of Chinese Buddhism.

Let us first check the *fayuan wen*, a genre frequently attached to the end of a text by the sponsor. Usually they are no more than a few dozen words, but they reveal beliefs, intentions, and motivations of those engaged in a project and provide us with a rare chance to hear the voice from those forgotten. In the case of the Zhaocheng, among all donations that we can currently identify, the largest was made by Wang De 王德 (d. u.) in Xiezhou and his wife in Zhenyuan 3 (1155). The relevant *fayuan wen* reads:

For our deceased grandparents, living parents, relatives of many generations, our deceased boy Wang Zhen, newly-married daughter-in-law Madam Hu, grandson named Qiseng, and Madam (?), [we wish that] their minds soar in the lotus-treasure world and realize the ultimate truth. [We wish that they] cultivate the Samantabhadra's six kinds of perfect causes, and match Vairocana's particularizing karma of ten bodies. [We wish that the merits] give our family happiness and realize our wishes. [We wish] the four kinds of compassion, three kinds of existence,⁷⁹ and sentient beings in the dharma-realm all achieve Buddhahood. 奉為先亡祖父祖母, 生身父母, 久遠宗親, 亡男王珍, 新婦胡氏, 孫男乞僧, [?]氏, 伏願神游華藏, 心悟真常, 修普賢六位圓因, 契毗盧十身滿果. 保自身家眷如意吉祥, 願四恩三友, 法界生靈, 同成佛果.⁸⁰

We know nothing about Wang De. Ostensibly, the appeal of sponsoring the carving of Buddhist sutras to Wang and his family lies not so much in the doctrinal teachings of the latter; instead, they deemed it an act of piety through which they could amass merit. The *fayuan wen* comprises an inventory of their concerns. Their major concerns, generally speaking, were with posthumous blessings of deceased family members, the health and safety of the living, and the realization of enlightenment of all sentient beings.⁸¹ Judging from existing

⁷⁹ The term *sanyou* refers to things that exist in the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the formless realm.

⁸⁰ *Zhonghua da zangjing*, vol. 1, p. 591; vol. 10, p. 37.

fayuan wen in the Zhaocheng canon, these wishes are representative for all participants.⁸²

When compared with other canons, the Zhaocheng edition shares common motivations with them but at the same time is distinct because of its clear silence on some important issues. Those motives mentioned above demonstrate a combination of Confucian filial piety and the cultivation of field of virtue advocated by Buddhism, and reveal the urgent need of Buddhists for salvation. So they are frequently seen in other canons,⁸³ and in other devotional acts, such as building stone caves and relic pagodas, erecting *dhāraṇī* pillars, and distributing Buddhist scriptures.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the Zhaocheng canon shows no explicit wishes directed towards the emperor and the state, which, in sharp contrast, was one of the most important agendas to pray for in the cases of other editions.⁸⁵ This may reflect the reluctance of the participants to express loyalty to the Jurchens, who had seized south Shanxi from the Northern Song twenty or so years previously.

Reading the *fayuan wen* and colophons in the Zhaocheng canon also provides us with much information about the composition of its sponsors. We see both male and female sup-

⁸¹ This kind of economy of merit is not unique to Buddhism in East Asia. For similar motives appearing in Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, see Richard H. Robinson et al., *Buddhist Religions: A Historical Introduction* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson, 2005), pp. 143–46.

⁸² For example, see *Zhonghua da zangjing*, vol. 44, p. 112; vol. 61, p. 479; vol. 68, p. 761.

⁸³ For instances in the Pilu, the Yuanjue-Zifu, and the Qisha, see Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*, p. 221, 227, 272, 273, and 276.

⁸⁴ Chen Yanzhu, *Fangshan shijing zhong Liaomo yu Jindai kejing zhi yanjiu* 房山石經中遼宋與金代刻經之研究 (Taipei: Jueyuan wenjiao jijinhui, 1995), p. 170, discussed the desire for salvation behind the sponsorship of Fangshan stone canon. Liu Shufen 劉淑芬, *Miezui yu duwang: Fodingzunsheng tuoluoni jingchuang zhi yanjiu* 滅罪與度亡: 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經幢之研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), pp. 200–208, summarized the motivations behind the erection of *dhāraṇī* pillars. These motives included circulating the canon, atonement for wrongdoings, protection from calamities, praying for longevity, and repayment for others' favor.

⁸⁵ For the explicit wishes for the prosperity and stability of imperial order in the Chongning, the Pilu, the Yuanjue-Zifu, and the Qisha, see Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*, pp. 167–68, 180–81, 209–13, 228, 287; 291–93.

A little more explanation is needed for the use of the term “si'en” 四恩 in the *fayuan wen*. The meaning of this term, although slightly different in different sutras, includes the compassion of rulers (guowang en 國王恩). But its inclusion in the *fayuan wen* of the Zhaocheng does not necessarily mean that the sponsors had wishes directed to the rulers. Similarly, the *fayuan wen* was written in medieval China to commemorate the creation of Buddhist statues. And the patron often expressed in them the wish to transfer his merits to “si'en” or even claimed that he accomplished the project for the interest of the emperor or the state. Liu Shufen convincingly pointed out that they reflected more the Buddhist idea of repaying favors than a genuine wish to the emperor or the state. See Liu, “Xianghuo yinyuan: Beichao de fojiao jieshe” 香火因緣: 北朝的佛教結社, in *Zhongguo shi xinlun: Jichen shehui* 中國史新論·基層社會, ed. Huang Kuanzhong 黃寬重 (Taipei: Nianjing chuban gongsi, 2009), pp. 225–28.

porters who, judging by their names, were all Han people. They lived in rural villages and towns, with most in villages. In many cases, families made contributions as a whole, including father, mother, husband, wife, sons, sister-in-law, and daughters who were already married. And in some cases people donated together merely because they were neighbors or lived in the same village. In addition to laypersons, the clerics were active as well. Some directly donated money, and some worked as carvers or as mentors to train the carvers.⁸⁶ Notably, no evidence shows that officials or the local government became involved in the project in any way. Such absence may partly result from the insufficiency of *fayuan wen* as a genre, but it is still safe to say that the carving project was primarily sponsored by commoners of the Han people.

Such a composition of the donors entails a limited ability for most supporters to support the project. Usually, they each donated enough to carve no more than ten fascicles, most one fascicle, but in some cases only one or a few woodblocks.⁸⁷ It was rare to mention the amount of donated money.⁸⁸ In addition to money, people also donated trees, animals, or Buddhist statues to back the project.⁸⁹ Some of the ways cannot be found elsewhere.

Since the capability of a single supporter was rather restricted but carving the Zhaocheng was a massive project involving vast human and material resources, we must ask how these people maximized their limited strength. Let us first see the *fayuan wen* recorded in Huangtong 9 (1149), the earliest in the extant canon. It says

Xiwu village in the fourth district (*du*) of Hejing county of Puzhou,
 Make donations to carve (?) volume(s) of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.
 Chief Conveners (*du weina* 都維那): Wu Jian. Convener (*weina* 維那):
 Wang Xingzhe.
 Assistant Convener (*zhuyuan weina* 助緣維那): Wu You, Xue Jin ...
 (Twenty-nine persons in total)
 蒲州河津縣第四都西毋村
 施雕大藏般若經 卷
 都維那毋戩、維那王行者
 助緣維那等毋憂、薛謹……(共29人)⁹⁰

⁸⁶ For monks' donations of money, for example, see *Zhonghua da zangjing*, vol. 43, p. 939; vol. 65, p. 839. For monks as trainers of carving, see *ibid.*, vol. 30, p. 254.

⁸⁷ For example, see *ibid.*, vol. 39, p. 307; vol. 92, p. 442.

⁸⁸ One was thirty and the other twenty. See *ibid.*, vol. 45, p. 807, 859.

⁸⁹ For pear trees, see *ibid.*, vol. 44, p. 684. For the donation of the Buddhist statue, see Jiang, *Jinzang diaoyin kao*, p. 9; Zhou Bokan 周伯勸, "Ji guojia tushuguan shuochang sanjian Jinzang fojing" 記國家圖書館所藏三件金藏佛經, *Foxue yanjiu zhongxin xuebao* 佛學研究中心學報 8(2003): 213–228.

The format of the record is important as it clearly shows that it was the whole village as a unit that made the donations. Judging from the recurrence of *fayuan wen* with similar contents in the following few years,⁹¹ those people belonged to a stable organization. These *fayuan wen* texts disclose little information about the organization, but its mention of the posts of *du weina*, *weina*, and *zhuyuan weina* brings our attention to the Buddhist *she/yi/hui* 社/邑/會 association, which was widely used in medieval China in support of major Buddhist projects.

Chinese people in the medieval period were active in participating in a variety of Buddhist associations. The *she* association first appeared in ancient China as a secular organization for mutual aid and official rituals held by local societies, and then persisted throughout the imperial period. In the fourth century, modeled on this kind of organization, the Buddhist society started creating the Buddhist *yi* and *hui* to organize its adherents and to extend its influence. Starting in the Sui-Tang period, these two kinds of organizations, although distinct in origin, assumed many similarities in their activities, organizational methods, and composition of participants.⁹² The Buddhist *she/yi/hui* association was usually hosted by one or a few eminent monks, who directed its members to recite the Buddha's name, perform Buddhist services, chant sutras, and study Buddhist teachings. Those members, consisting of laypeople and monks, were linked with the temples to which those monks serving as the leaders belonged. Over the time, there was a tendency that the Buddhist association was administered according to written regulations, stipulating how people should conduct themselves and the penalties for violating the rules.⁹³ Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001), a leading monk in the early Northern Song, pointed out that “currently, [people] organize the [Buddhist] *she*

⁹⁰ *Zhonghua da zangjing*, vol. 1, p. 810.

⁹¹ For example, see *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 856, 883; vol. 7, p. 376; vol. 10, p. 37; vol. 14, p. 341.

⁹² For a survey of the formation of different kinds of the *she* association and their development in pre-Song China, see Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 259–77. It was Japanese scholars who set the foundation for the study of the Buddhist association, particularly those in Dunhuang. See, for example, Moriya Mitsuo 守屋美都雄, “Sha no kenkyū” 社の研究, *Shigaku zasshi* 史學雜誌 59.7 (1950): 19–52; Chikusa Masaaki, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shakaishi kenkyū*, pp. 447–557; Naba Toshisada 那波利貞, “Tōdai no sha nitsukite” 唐代の社邑に就きて, *Shirin* 史林 23.2(1938): 15–57; 23.3 (1938): 71–110; 23.4 (1938): 93–157; Nogami Shunjō, *Ryō Kin no Bukkyō* 遼金の佛教 (Kyōto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1953), pp.121–42. In recent years, scholars in mainland China and Taiwan have greatly advanced the study in this field. See, for example, Hao Chunwen 郝春文, *Zhongguo shiqi sheyi yanjiu* 中古時期社邑研究 (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chubanshe, 2006); Liu Shufen, “Wu zhi liu shiji huabei xiagcun de fojiao xinyang” 五至六世紀華北鄉村的佛教信仰, in *Lishu yu zongjiao* 禮俗與宗教, ed. Lin Fushi 林富士 (Beijing: Zhongguo da baike quanshu chubanshe, 2005), pp. 216–61; *idem.*, “Zhongguo fojiao zhengce yu sheyi de zhuanxing” 中古佛教政策与社邑的转型, *Tang yanjiu* 唐研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe) 13(2007): 233–91.

associations in the hope of creating advantageous causes. Their regulations are stricter and more impartial than the official law. Their members encourage each other and work hard for cultivating [themselves] and realizing [Buddhahood]. Thus, the [Buddhist] association is great in advancing goodness.” (今之結社，共作福因。條約嚴明，愈於公法。行人互相激勵，勤于修證，則社有生善之功大矣。)⁹⁴ This advertised effectiveness in maximizing religious achievements greatly enhanced the attractiveness of the Buddhist associations. As a consequence, they gained popularity in medieval China, especially in north China. The numbers of their participants varied from dozens to tens of thousands, among which the so-called *qianren yi* 千人邑 (The association consisting of one thousand people) was common.⁹⁵

Generally speaking, there were two sorts of the Buddhist *she/yi/hui* association, both organized hierarchically. The first kind was organized for the religious cause on a stable basis. The monks who directed it religiously were *yishi* 邑師 (Master of the Association).⁹⁶ The head of the association was called *yizhang/weina* 邑長/維那 (Head),⁹⁷ who may have his assistants with titles like *fu yizhu* 副邑主 or *yizheng* 邑正. At the bottom of the hierarchy were *yizi* 邑子 (common members). Some temples had more than one *yi/she/hui* association, with each having their own Heads. When these associations worked together for a major project, one or several *du yishou* 都邑首 (Chief Head) might be assigned. In addition, the *she* association could be temporarily established for a specific project. When compared with the former, they were comparatively looser, less sacred, and less selective. *Weina/jiushou/quanshou/huazhu*

⁹³ Hao, *Zhonggu shiqi sheyi yanjiu*, pp 169–70. Chikusa, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shakaishi kenkyū*, pp. 495–515.

⁹⁴ Zanning, *Da Song sengshi lue* 大宋僧史略, T 54: 3.250c. Interestingly, in the same text Zanning also launched an attack on the Daoist association.

⁹⁵ For studies on *qianren yi*, see Wang Jilin 王吉林, “Liaodai ‘qianren yi’ yanjiu” 遼代“千人邑”研究, *Dalu zazhi* 大陸雜誌 35.5(1967): 16–18; Jiang Wuxiong 蔣武雄, “Liaodai qianren yi de tantao” 遼代千人邑的探討, *Kongda renwen xuebao* 8(1999): 143–52; Chen Zhijian 陳志建, “Zhangwu Jindai Youxian yuan wei Fujian zangjing qianren yi bei kao” 彰武金代佑先院碑为复建藏經千人邑碑考, *Liaohai wenwu xuekan* 遼海文物學刊 1(1996): 104–107.

⁹⁶ Hao, *Zhonggu shiqi sheyi yanjiu*, pp. 143–46, points out that the *yishi* appeared in about one-third of the *she/yi* associations during the Eastern Jin and Southern and Northern dynasties. According to Liu, “Zhonggu fojiao zhengce yu sheyi de zhuanxing”, p. 245, the title *yishi* no longer appeared in stone inscriptions after the Sui dynasty. It is worth noting that the titles of the leaders of the Buddhist *she/yi/hui* association decreased over the time, which reflects both the change in people’s devotional activities and the maturity of these associations.

⁹⁷ *Weina* (Skt. *karma-dāna*), literally meaning duty-distributor, refers to the monk second in the command of a monastery who directed the general affairs of a monastery. *Weina* was also called *yuezhong* 悅眾, a term used as a title of the monastic official during the Latter Qin (384–417). During the Northern Wei (386–557), *weina* was a post assigned for monastic officials on the local level, and there was a post of *du weina* in the capital. See Wei Shou 魏收, ed., *Weishu* 魏書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 114.3040–43.

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維那/糾首/勸首/化主 (Conveners) were their main organizers. Above these persons were the *du weina/du jiushou* 都維那/都糾首 (Chief Convener), who could be more than one person, and under them were *fu/zhuli weina* 副/助理維那 (Assistant Convener). In many cases we find that each village had one convener, and it was these conveners who directly faced *shizhu/gongde zhu* 施主/功德主 (donator) and accumulated donations from them.⁹⁸ Besides, there was one or a few of *du gongdezu* 都功德主 (Chief Contributors), who made major contributions to the project and who may have simultaneously served as the Chief Convener.⁹⁹

Such structure of the *yi/she/hui* association combined flexibility with strength, giving the project leader huge advantages to carry out their plans. In a major project, different kinds of organized forces frequently appeared side by side. It was also possible for the Buddhist associations led by different temples to act in cooperation. Thus, the basic organizational structure of collecting donations for a Buddhist project appears as follows:

Obviously, such an organization had the advantage of adjusting itself easily to the situation. Moreover, the *yi/she/hui* associations always asked its participants to pay regular fees and to make additional contributions on special occasions.¹⁰⁰ This made them an effective avenue for the host temple or monks to garner resources for some major projects. Zanning thus com-

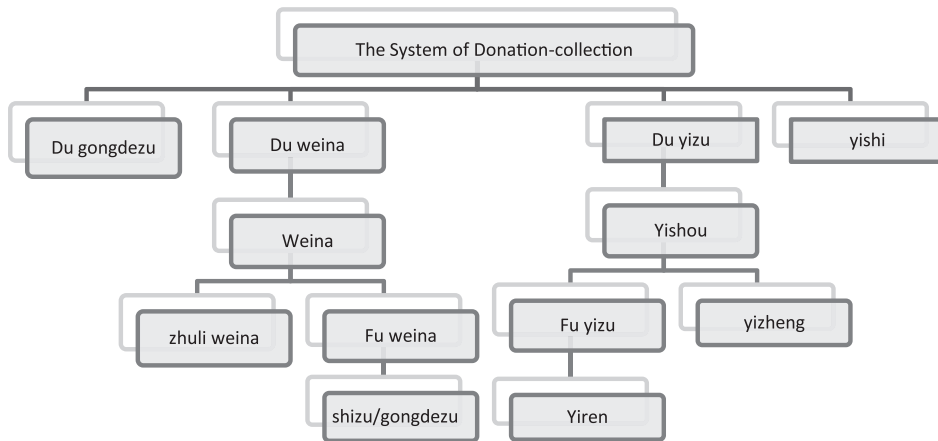


Chart 1: The System of Donation-collection

⁹⁸ The ability of these conveners to collect donations largely decided the fate of the project involved. So, they were aggressive sometimes. To rebuild a branch temple of Guangshengsi, for instance, an essay written in Zhenyuan 1 (1153) says that in the past thirteen years “all people in the temple went out to solicit contributions, and there is no house they did not visit.” (全寺抄化, 家無不到). See, Li Yongqi 李永奇 & Yan Shuanghong 嚴雙鴻, eds., *Guangshengsi zhenzhi* 廣勝寺鎮志 (Taiyuan: Shanxi guji chubanshe, 1999), p. 210.

mented, “The way of the *she* association is to accomplish a huge task through gathering a lot of small [contributions]. To accomplish an enterprise, there is no method more successful than organizing the *she* association.” (社之法, 以眾輕成一重. 濟事成功, 莫近於社.)¹⁰¹

A variety of the Buddhist *yi/she/hui* associations are thus found backing many major Buddhist projects. Starting in the Southern and Northern dynasties, organizing Buddhist associations already proved efficient in supporting such time- and money-consuming projects as building stone caves or making Buddha statues.¹⁰² In the Tang dynasty, some restrictions were imposed on the Buddhist associations an intention of placing them under the surveillance of the government.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, such practice carried over to the Song-Liao-Jin period, and was particularly popular in north China. This was the case with south Shanxi, where the Zhaocheng was carved, no matter it was ruled by the Han or minority regimes. For example, in Huangtong 4 (1144) of the Jin dynasty, Xiangji temple 香積院 in 汾陽 rebuilt a *niepan hui* 涅槃會 (Association for reciting the *nirvāṇa* sutra), which had more than five hundred members and was originally founded in the Northern Song.¹⁰⁴ Another case is even more special. The *fayuan wen* of a sutra preserved in Guangshengsi read:

Due to the illness of his mother Madam Jie, Li Huiji in Dongyi village of Hongdong county, with a sincere heart, convened multiple people to print and supplement the *Lotus sutra* for Guanyin chapel of our county in the hope of completing a Buddhist canon.... With the merits [collected] from supplementing the canon, [we] wish that people live

⁹⁹ The post of Chief Contributor was usually taken up by a single person, but it was also possible by a few. When a Buddha hall was rebuilt in Dingxiang 定襄 county in Zhiyuan 29 (1292), for example, there were two *gongdezu* and three *du weina* 都維那. See Li Xiusheng 李修生, et al, eds., *Quan Yuan wen* 全元文 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1998; 61 vols.), vol. 28, p. 66.

¹⁰⁰ Hao, *Zhonggu shiqi de sheyi yanjiu*, pp. 172–74, identifies a shift in the contribution of the *she* members from voluntary to relatively mandatory.

¹⁰¹ Zanning, *Da Song sengshi lie*, T 54: 3.250c. To rebuild Yunjusi 雲居寺 in Beijing, for example, Qian Feng 謙諷 (d.u.) organized a *qianren yi* in Yinli 15 (965) of the Liao dynasty, pointing out that “It has the precedents of making contribution and the fixed days of paying [the fee]. [All donations] are preserved in a storehouse to meet the need of the temple.” (施有定例, 納有常期, 貯于庫司, 補茲寺缺.) See Chen, *Quan Liao wen*, 4.81. In Dading 7 (1167), Sanxuesi 三學寺 in Xingzhong 興中 prefecture organized a *qianren yi*, stipulating that each member turn in two hundred copper coins and one *dou* 斗 (bushel) of rice to the temple on a fixed day each year. See Wang Jingchen 王晶辰 & Wang Juer 王菊爾, eds., *Liaoning beizhi* 遼寧碑誌 (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 2002), pp. 120–21.

¹⁰² See, for example, Yan Juanying 顏娟英, *Beichao fojiao shike tapian baijin* 北朝佛教石刻拓片百品 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishisuo, 2008). Yamazaki, *Shina chūsei Bukkyō no tenkai*, pp. 767–78.

¹⁰³ Liu, “Zhonggu fojiao zhengce yu sheyi de zhuanxing,” pp. 256–60; 271–77.

¹⁰⁴ Hu, *Shanyou shike congbian* 19, pp. 33–35.

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longer and their good fortune continues forever, and that sentient beings in the Dharma realm all land on the shore of enlightenment. The carving was finished on the seventeenth day of the sixth month of Tianjuan 2 (1139/7/14). The Convener of Sutra-carving Li Huiji, the Treasurer Jie Yu, Yin Wei and his mother Madam Shi donated together to print seven fascicles, and Jie Run in Beibo village printed one fascicle. 洪洞縣東尹村李惠濟伏為母吉氏患安，謹發誠心，糾化多人，印補當縣觀音院法華經，欲成壹藏者…翼補經良因，人增福壽，各保遐昌；法界含識，俱登覺岸。天眷貳年己未六月一十七日印畢。印經維那李惠濟、知庫人吉遇、尹威共母師氏印施經一部計七卷，北柏村吉閏印一卷。¹⁰⁵

We know nothing about these people involved, but judging from their surnames, very likely Jie Yu and Jie Run both belonged to the maiden family of Li Huiji's mother Madam Jie. The presence of posts like *weina* and *zhiku ren* indicates that Li Huiji convened people by means of the *yi/she/hui* association and this carving project can thus be viewed as an act of a family. Specifically, it deserves special attention that this project was carried out exactly in the same region and during the same period time as the Zhaocheng was created.

Apparently, the carving of the Zhaocheng canon was supported by the people organized in the form of *she/hui/yi* association. Although material accessible is fragmentary, we now know that the Association for Carving the Canon was established in Tianningsi as the headquarters, through which resources were first collected from different places and then distributed to carry out the carving project. Yin Shi was the Chief Contributor and, probably, simultaneously served as the Master of the Association. He had more than 3,000 followers, all active in soliciting contributions in an area as wide as South Shanxi and West Shannxi. Wang Ciyun was one of the followers. As shown before, he served as a Convener in a village for at least three years. Above him was the Chief Convener, who probably belonged to the dominant family of the village, and below him were Assistant Conveners, which were up to twenty-nine in number. After 1180, Wang Ciyun moved the headquarters from Tianningsi to Taiyinsi, where he resumed the carving. His influence was obviously less than that of his master, but it seems safe to assume that he would keep the organizational structure unchanged. Finally, as a result of these concerted and organized efforts that extended over three decades, the major portion of the Zhaocheng canon was completed in south Shanxi.

Finance was not the only important concern, however; and there must have been other working sections behind the Zhaocheng project. Unlike such Buddhist ventures as building temples or erecting pagodas, producing a canon as a more intellectual activity had its special requirements. In most cases, the Association for Carving the Canon (*zangsi/jingju/*

¹⁰⁵ This quotation is from He, "Zhaocheng Jinzang de jige wenti," p. 31. The sutra involved is now preserved in Shanghai library.

jingsi 藏司/經局/經司) was established as the headquarters, under which there was a clear division of labor. In addition to the donation-related part, which we have examined, there should have three other sections, with corresponding posts: Collation-related: *Du duizheng* 都對證 (collator-in-chief), *duijing* 對經/*xiang dujing ren*/詳對經人 (collator), *Zhangjing* 掌經/*du goudang zangzhu* 都句當藏主/*jingtou* 經頭 (manager of scriptures). Carving-related: *du goudang jingban* 都句當經板/*gan diaojing* 幹雕經/*diaojing zuotou* 雕經作頭 (coordinator of sutra-carving), *xiegong* 寫工 (transcriber), *kegong* 刻工 (block-cutter). Printing-related: *yinzhao gong* 印造工 (printer), *yinjing zuotou* 印經作頭 (printer-in-chief).¹⁰⁶ Thus, the complete organization leading a canon-carving project was organized as follows.

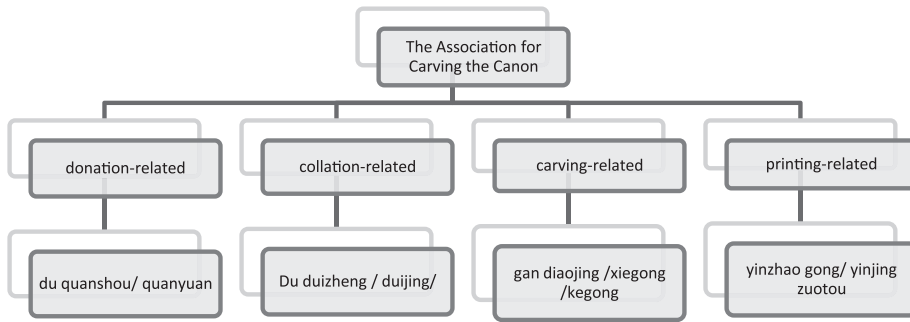


Chart 2: The Association for Carving the Canon

Evidently, the success of a carving project depended on the collective efforts of all these four sections. Although a detailed description of its organizational structure, which may have appeared in its first fascicle, is missing, the Zhaocheng project should also have had this division of labor. For example, although mostly identical to the Kaibao canon, the fact that the Zhaocheng canon corrected some mistakes of the latter suggests the existence of its collation-related section.¹⁰⁷

The process of producing the Zhaocheng shows how highly the project was dependent on a well-organized structure, and there were lessons to be learned. Yin Shi's death appears to have dissolved the leader team which kept the project operating smoothly and effectively. With the relocation of the carved blocks, despite Wang Ciyun's repeated efforts, there was

¹⁰⁶ For the organizational structure within the leader teams who accomplished the Chongning, the Pilu, and the Yuanjue-Zifu projects, see Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*, pp. 164–67; 203–206, 228–231, respectively.

¹⁰⁷ For the Zhaocheng's correction of mistakes included in the Kaibao, see Li Jining, "Jin sanshi nian xin faxian de fojiao da zangjing jiqi jiazhi" 近三十年新發現的佛教大藏經及其價值, in *Dier jie shijie fojiao luntan lunwenji* 第二屆世界佛教論壇論文集, eds. Zhongguo fojiao xiehui, et al. (2009), pp. 91–117.

little progress in the following forty years or so. Finally, the involvement of the Yuan government brought an end to the project, but its distribution of the job to ten monasteries in several provinces made things hard to control.¹⁰⁸ Accordingly, this later portion of the canon is much inferior in quality to that completed earlier in Shanxi.

4. Printing Industry, Salt, and Local Societies

South Shanxi was where in Stele B Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī predicted that Yin Shi would complete the canon. This point is confirmed by Jiang Weixin's survey, which says that most of the donors of the Zhaocheng project surely lived in south Shanxi, centering on Xiezhou.¹⁰⁹ However, current evidence shows that Yin Shi never visited Shanxi before his heading to Mount Wutai. So, his taking an unfamiliar area as the base for the project should have been a deliberate choice and requires explanation.

Several local factors may have contributed to Yin Shi's decision, the foremost of which should be the printing industry that was then flourishing in south Shanxi. In the handwritten period, the Buddhist canon already densely concentrated in this area. For example, when Kehong 可洪 (d.u.) compiled the *Xinji zangjing yinyi suihan lu* 新集藏經音義隨函錄 (Newly-compiled pronunciations and meanings attached in each case of the [Buddhist] canon) from Changxing 2 of Later Tang (931) to Tianfu 5 of Later Jin (940), he took advantage of at least ten copies of the Buddhist canon. These canons were all located in Hezong Prefecture and around,¹¹⁰ the region exactly where the Zhaocheng canon was created. More importantly, south Shanxi started to print books no later than the early tenth century. During the Northern Song-Jin transition, repeated wars in central China drove some skilled workers from Kaifeng 開封 to south Shanxi, thereby further enhancing its ability in this respect.¹¹¹ Quickly, south Shanxi grew into a major printing center in Northern China during the Jin dynasty,¹¹² as represented by the so-called "printing in Pingshui" (*pingshui ke* 平水刻).¹¹³ Besides, this area had a tradition of making paper, which could be traced back to the third century. By the Song dynasty, paper already became a representative local product there. Under the Jin, its paper was so well that it was used to print paper currency.¹¹⁴ In addition, there were factories that produced ink.¹¹⁵ All of these met the technical need of a printing project as huge as the Zhaocheng.

¹⁰⁸ Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*, pp. 102–103.

¹⁰⁹ Jiang, *Jinzang diaoyin shimo kao*, pp. 8–9. Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*, p. 97.

¹¹⁰ Zhong Chong 鐘翀 et al., trans, Takata Tokio 高田時雄, *Dunhuang, minzu, yuyan* 敦煌、民族、語言 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), pp. 404–405.

¹¹¹ For the printing industry in Kaifeng during the Northern Song dynasty, see Su Bai, *Tang Song shiqi de diaoban yinshua* 唐宋時期的雕版印刷 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1999), pp. 12–71.

Financially, Xiezhou and nearby areas like Anyi 安邑 had a unique advantage: they produced salt and obtained considerable income from it.¹¹⁶ Xiezhou had natural deposits of salt (*yanchi* 鹽池), which were as large as one hundred and twenty square *li*,¹¹⁷ and salt produced there was called Xiezhou salt (*Xiezhou yan* 解州鹽). As far back as the Spring and Autumn period (B.C.770–476), Xiezhou salt was already transported to and consumed by the entire North China. Xiezhou salt was monopolized by the central government starting in the Han dynasty, and the policy continued in the subsequent dynasties. In the Northern Song,¹¹⁸ the government sold Xiezhou salt at a price about four times its production cost.¹¹⁹ As Xiezhou fell in the hands of the Jin army in Tianhui 5 (1127), however, things changed greatly: the government paid little attention to salt there, which left opportunities for the locals to benefit from it. It was until 1163 that the Jin government attempted to impose control over Xiezhou salt and to prohibit private persons from producing it, but to what extent this order was enforced is questionable. In fact, judging from the reiteration of the same prohibition in the following years, we can see that local people and corrupt officials were still manipulating the production and trade of Xiezhou salt. People in the area were fond of worshiping gods.¹²⁰ With money relatively easily accumulated from salt, even though these people may have become poor due to the wars, they would not feel too difficult to support the Zhaocheng project financially. In this sense, it may not be a coincidence that the majority of the carving project was carried out when Xiezhou salt was subject to little control by the government, and that Wang De, the biggest donor of whom we now know, was a native of Xiezhou.

Powerful clans in local societies may have had a great contribution to the carving project

¹¹² This region maintained such a status even after the Yuan dynasty reunited China. The Xuandu Daoist canon 玄都寶藏 of about 7,800 fascicles, for example, was carved in Pingyang from 1237 to 1244. For this Daoist canon, see Judith Boltz, “*Da Jin Xuandu baozang* [Precious Canon of the Mysterious Metropolis of the Great Jin], in *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio (London; New York: Routledge, 2008) vol. 1, pp. 291–292.

¹¹³ Pingshui refers to Lingfen 臨汾. As a printing phenomenon, the concept of Pingshui print is usually used in a broader sense and refers to the whole south Shanxi, including Xiezhou and Xinjiang, where the majority of the Zhaocheng was carved.

¹¹⁴ For paper making in the area, see Zhang & Han, *The History of Chinese Printing*, pp. 102–103.

¹¹⁵ Tuotuo 托托, et al., eds., *Jinshi* 金史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 26.629.

¹¹⁶ Yan Rusi 言如嗣, ed., *Xiezhou Anyi xianzhi* 解州安邑縣志 (1764; Rpt. Taipei: Chenwen chubanshe, 1976), 2, 2, 6.

¹¹⁷ Shen Kuo 沈括 (1031–1095), *Yuankan Mengxi bitan* 元刊夢溪筆談 (Rpt. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1975), 3.9.

¹¹⁸ As for the state monopolization of Xiezhou salt, see *Songshi*, 181.4413.

¹¹⁹ Under the reign of Emperor Song Renzong (r. 1023–1063), the government collected Xiezhou salt at 6 to 8 copper coins a *jin*, and then sold at a price of thirty-six coins a *jin*. See *Songshi*, 183.4469.

¹²⁰ Li Yumin 李裕民, *Shanxi gu fangzhi jiyi* 山西古方志輯佚 (Taiyuan: Shanxi sheng difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui bangongshi, 1985), p. 510.

as well. For Cui Fazhen's meeting Yin Shi for the first time, Stele B says that it occurred in *cuishi zhai* 崔氏宅, that is, the house of the Cui family. Given the character 宅 means not only a house but a mansion, the term *cuishi zhai* suggests that the Cui was probably a powerful family in that area. Moreover, in Stele A Cui Fazhen was introduced as "a daughter of Cui Jin in Changzi county of Luzhou" (潞州長子縣崔進之女). In contrast, both Yin Shi and Wang Ciyun were described only in the form of "a son of the x family," without identifying their parents. No information about Cui Jin is available now, but that his name deserves an explicit mention still suggests a relatively high status that he might have had. This may not be that surprising if we consider that south Shanxi was far from a region of the nouveau riche; instead, it was home to some most reputable and influential "great houses" (*shizu* 世族), which had remarkably persisted throughout medieval China. The Cui family in Changzi County originated from the Boling 博陵 (present-day Anping, Hebei) Cui clan, one of the most powerful "great houses" of this kind.¹²¹ The rise of the Boling Cui clan started around the first century. As time passed, their influence extended from local society to the central government. They were so successful in officialdom that this clan, together with another branch of the Cui clan living in Qinghe 清河, Shandong, was called "the family of prime ministers" (宰相之姓). With the introduction of the civil examination system in the Tang dynasty and the purposeful control of the royal house, the Boling Cui clan gradually lost dominance in the political life. Nonetheless, before the founding of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), it appeared that their influence remained in local societies, probably to a lesser extent.¹²²

Although the success of the Boling Cui clan was largely based on their mastery of Confucianism, they also showed increasing interest in Buddhism since the fourth century.¹²³ Such a tendency grew even stronger in the Tang dynasty, and some of its members most successful in the secular life maintained a close relationship with Buddhism.¹²⁴ Notably, Buddhism already became part of the family tradition in some cases. Such belief displayed in the Boling Cui family in a various forms, including chanting sutras and reciting Buddha's name, copying sutras, building Buddha's statues, observing the precepts, donating resi-

¹²¹ For a detailed study of the Boling Cui family, see Patricia Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China: A Case Study of the Po-ling Ts'ui Family* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). For an insightful review of this book, see Zhou Yiliang 周一良, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi lunji xubian* 魏晉南北朝史論集續編 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1991), pp. 191–201.

¹²² Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China*, pp. 112–15, noticed that "there is so little reference to Po-ling Ts'uis (i.e. the Boling Cuis) after about 940." She tried to explain the phenomenon from several perspectives, but did not discuss to what extent the Cui family still remained influential in local society.

¹²³ The Boling Cui clan even produced two important Buddhist masters, Baogong 保恭 (543–622) and Huishun 慧順 (488–577), who have biographies in *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, T 50: 11.512c–513 and T 50: 8.484b, respectively.

dences as Buddhist temples, taking Buddhist terms as their names, and burying underneath pagodas.¹²⁵ It is worthwhile to know that women played a crucial role in forming this kind of family tradition. A case in point was Madam Cui 崔氏, the mother of Wang Wei 王維 (699–759) who was one of the most famous Chinese poets. Madam Cui was born in the Boling Cui family, and moved to Puzhou in south Shanxi after getting married. Her husband died young. During a period as long as thirty years, she took as her personal master Puji 普寂 (651–739), a native of Hedong and the seventh patriarch of the Northern Chan Buddhism. Under her influence, both Wang Wei and his younger brother Wang Jin 王縉 (700–781), who once served the prime minister, were well known as devout lay Buddhists.¹²⁶

By the early Jin dynasty, Changzi County seemed to be such a location where the Cui family remained influential and Buddhism part of its family tradition.¹²⁷ For example, when an essay was written in Dading 10 (1170) in praise of Wu Tang 烏塘 (d.u.), the magistrate of Changzi County, his chief achievement, in the eyes of the author, was his curbing of the interference of powerful lineages (強宗大族) in local affairs.¹²⁸ Probably, the Cui family was one of these powerful lineages. Moreover, these families should not have felt unfamiliar with the Buddhist canon and relics. From Xianheng 4 (673) on, Faxingsi 法興寺, thirty *li* southwest of the seat of Changzi county, had started to worship thirty-seven Buddhist relics and a set of handwritten Buddhist canon which were up to 3,000 fascicles.¹²⁹ Obviously, Cui Fazhen's strong belief in Buddhism and her cutting off an arm could be better understood in relation

¹²⁴ Some cases of this kind are recorded in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*. The people involved include Cui Xuanwei 崔玄暉 (638–705), Cui Lingqin 崔令欽 (fl. 713), Cui Huan 崔渙 (?–769), and Cui Hang 崔沆 (?–881). A similar trend occurred in the Qinghe 清河 Cui clan, another important branch of the Cui family, as evidenced by the experiences of Cui Qun 崔群 (772–832) and of Cui Shenyou 崔慎由 (fl. 856).

¹²⁵ Chen Jianping 陳建萍, “Tangdai Boling Cui si gean yanjiu” 唐代博陵崔氏個案研究 (Hebei Normal University, M.A. thesis, 2006), pp. 12–16.

¹²⁶ Wang Wei was a disciple of Shenhui 神會 (684–758), the seventh patriarch of southern Chan Buddhism. After the death of his mother, Wang Wei submitted a memorial requesting a permission from the emperor to convert his residence into a monastery in memory of her, which was approved. For Madam Cui, see Peng Jiqing 彭際清, *Shan nüren zhuan 善女人傳, Wanzi xuzang jing 讖藏經* (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi 新文豐出版公司, 1968–1970), 88:1.401c–402a. For Wang Wei's memorial to the emperor, see *Wan Youchengji jianzhu 王右丞集箋注* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1961), 17.320–21. For the biography of Wang Jin and his belief in Buddhism, see Liu Xu 劉昉, *Jiu Tangshu 舊唐書* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 150.3416–18.

¹²⁷ The Cui family seemed to concentrate in Changzi area until the early Ming, when the government forced Shanxi people to move out to other areas to offset the great loss of population caused by the late Yuan wars. In some genealogical books of the Cui family currently living outside Shanxi, Changzi County is still taken as the cradle land. Even now, there are still two villages named after the Cui family in Changzi County: the first is the 崔家莊村 and the other 崔莊村.

¹²⁸ Guo Shoufang 郭守邦, et al., eds., *Changzi xianzhi 長子縣誌* (printed in 1705), 6b: 28–29.

to the family tradition and local surroundings.

Such an assumption about Cui Fazhen's family cast new light on some significant puzzles in the Zhaocheng project. Shown above, Stele A and Stele B are supplementary, with the former recording Cui Fazhen's activities in Beijing and the latter recounting what happened in Shanxi before and after the delivery of the woodblocks.¹³⁰ This result seems reasonable because Zhao Feng was in Beijing when composing Stele A, while Shi Wenxiu was in Shanxi when dictating Taiyinsi-related stories. But questions still arise in the blank between the two: Why did Cui Fazhen transport the woodblocks to Beijing and present it to the court before the project was completed? Since in the following years Wang Ciyun made repeated efforts in Shanxi to finish the carving, it is hard to imagine that he would agree with Cui to do so. Furthermore, why were Yin Shi and Wang Ciyun not even mentioned in Stele A? There were only a few years between Zhao Feng's composing Stele A and the arrival of the woodblocks in Beijing. More importantly, Zhao expressly indicated that what he wrote is only a record of what he was told by Cui Fazhen's disciple.¹³¹ And, given this stele was erected in Hongfasi, where Cui Fazhen resided while in Beijing and where the Zhaocheng canon was stored, Zhao had little if any chance of making any major mistake. So, it is safe to assume that Stele A exactly reflects what Cui Fazhen and her disciples wanted other people to know about the canon. In other words, the omission of Yin Shi and Wang Ciyun was not by accident but on purpose. Why did they do so?

A speculation I would like to make is that the Cui family was a significant supporting force behind the carving project, or even the *du quanyuan* who is missing from current material.¹³² They made great contributions to the project and, during the process, acquired the power of controlling and manipulating it for their own sake. Yin Shi, the soul of the project, could counterbalance their influence while living, but his death made lost the balance among the project leaders in favor of the Cui family.¹³³ Against this background, as far as Cui

¹²⁹ Ji Zaipu 紀在譜 & Huang Lishi 黃立世, eds., *Changzi xian zhi* 長子縣誌 (printed in 1778), 15.31.

¹³⁰ Stele B uses two sentences to summarize Cui Fazhen's activities in Beijing but, according to Stele A, it clearly makes some mistakes. For example, it does not distinguish Cui Fazhen's two visits to Beijing and says that the woodblocks were transported to Beijing in Dading 18.

¹³¹ Stele A is cited in a piece of prose currently contained in the Qisha canon. The prose was written by the monk Bao Shanhuai 鮑善恢 (?–1411+) of Xianlinsi 仙林寺, Hangzhou, who was then fixing destroyed woodblocks of the Qisha canon. Immediately after the citation, Bao had comments explaining why he fixed the canon. Li Jining was the first who discovered and studied this important essay, but he made a mistake when explaining it. For the sentence “己門人慧仁等, 具言刊經本末, 謁文於東平趙颯述記, 時歲次己丑,” Li said that Bao Shanhuai had a disciple called Huiren, who first read the stele written by Zhao Feng and then told Bao about the content. In fact, Huiren was Cui Fazhen's disciple, and Stele A was composed by Zhao Feng based on what Huiren and Cui's other disciples told him.

Fazhen's presenting a copy of the canon and its woodblocks to the court are concerned, a high chance is that she was acting on the behalf of her clan in the hope of linking it with the imperial court of a minority regime.¹³⁴ Nobody exactly knows how successful the strategy was to the Cui family. What we know is that, when the copy of the canon was presented to the court, Cui Fazhen was summoned into a nunnery in the inner court and met the emperor, who arranged her to be ordained with full precepts. When the woodblocks arrived in Yanjing, they were welcomed by highest monastic officials. Two years later, Cui Fazhen was granted a purple robe and the title *Hongjiao dashi* 弘教大師 (Master of Glorifying the Teaching). Seventy-two of her disciples were all ordained, and the woodblocks were placed in the most prominent monastery in the capital for printing. On the part of Wang Ciyun and those remaining in Shanxi, they seem to have been simply ignored and obtained no reward. In this sense, Cui Fazhen's activities related to Beijing and the court were not so much religious as political, and Wang Ciyun's subsequent effort in Shanxi had the implication of resisting the influence of Cui Fazhen and her family.

The interruption caused by the moving of the woodblocks to Beijing turned out to be a major blow to the project, preventing the Zhaocheng canon from being finished in time and with good quality.¹³⁵ Such a high price reveals how profoundly local societies could exert influence on the making of the canon, positively and negatively, and how sensitive the project was under the external pressure. The Zhaocheng was not an exception in the making of the Buddhist canon, however. Another instance is the Jiaxing canon, which was started carving at Mount Wutai in 1589 but would not be finished until more than one hundred years later.¹³⁶

¹³² Jiang, *Jinzang diaoyin shimo kao*, p. 8, says that there were five cases which include the *fayuan wen* by Changzi people. Unfortunately, all of them are missing now.

¹³³ It is not surprising to see that the secular power a clan secured had a favourable effect on the religious careers of its members. For some remarkable case studies related to Shanxi, see, for example, Chen, *Monks and Monarchs, Kinship and Kingship*, pp. 34–40; Otagi Hajime 愛宕元, “Tōdai Katō Bunki no Hashi to bukkyō shinkō-Chūken no Haishi Sangaikyō wo chūshi toshite” 唐代河東聞喜の裴氏と佛教信仰—中眷裴氏の三階教を中心として—, in *Tōdai no shūkyō* 唐代の宗教, ed. Yoshikawa Tadao 吉川忠夫 (Kyōto: Hōyū Shoten), pp. 35–62; Shengkai 聖凱, “Lun Wei Jin Beichao shiqi Taiyuan Wangshi yu fojiao zhi guanxi” 論魏晉北朝時期太原王氏與佛教之關係, *Hualin* 華林2(2002): 69–86.

¹³⁴ For example, Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China*, p. 117, points out that “to argue that the aristocratic families were dependent on the privilege of access to office, one could note that from the Northern Wei on, having tasted the prestige and influence of high office, the Ts'uis (i.e., Cui's) made great efforts to continue to hold office, bowing to whatever new demands were placed on them by the court.”

¹³⁵ According to Jiang Weixin's survey, about one-fourth of the existing Zhaocheng were carved in places other than Shanxi.

5. Concluding Remarks

This article has examined the making of the Zhaocheng canon, with an emphasis on a variety of forces and elements that were working behind the process. The experiences of this canon bear on many characteristics of the regions involved and of the time, but what has been learned from it has an implication for our understanding of the making of other canons, Buddhist and non-Buddhist alike, and the carrying out of other Buddhist projects.

First, we have seen a more complete and more reliable picture about how the Zhaocheng canon was created. The main body of this canon was finished during the Jin dynasty, but it was first planned in the late Northern Song and finally completed in the early Yuan dynasty. It was the result of the concerted efforts of Yin Shi, of his disciples of several thousands, and of even more participants responding to their appeal. South Shanxi, particularly Xiezhou, was where the headquarters was and where people made the most contributions. We also see participation from a bigger region, including west Shanxi and north Henan where Yin Shi came from. These people, no matter what roles they played in the project, in the following eight hundred years, shared the same fate of being forgotten in history. Henceforth, except those discussed above, the majority of them will remain unknown.

Second, in order to find some most potent ways to establish their authority and to attract their supporters, Yin Shi and his major disciples all paid a considerable price, as suggested by the appearance of as many as over fifty self-immolations. The majority of those patrons had only an obscure background, which made it more of a challenge for them to mobilize support from clerics and laypersons. As a result, over the course of making the canon, we see that both the relic veneration and miracles played a unique role and were immensely helpful. The appearance of so many miracles and self-immolations is not universal in the making of other editions of the Buddhist canon; in other successful cases, the involvement of high-ranking officials and influential monks could play a similar leading role.

Third, the conflict between Cui Fazhen and Wang Ciyun, although not ultimately substantiated, frustrated the carving project from being completed in time. It has also misled us for centuries about the origins and making of the canon. This is a good reminder that we should not assume that project leaders always worked together in a harmonious way. The Buddhist canon means differently to different audience, a sacred thing for devout Buddhists but a tradable commodity for ambitious others. This situation increases the intricacy of history and, at the same time, its attractiveness. Conflict among leaders is actually part of

¹³⁶ For the donors of the Jiaying project on Mount Wutai, see Zhang Hongwei 章宏偉, *Shi liu-shi jiu shiji Zhongguo chuban yanjiu* 十六—十九世紀中國出版研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe), pp. 175–240. The Jiaying project was deeply influenced by court politics and conflicts within the Buddhist society, which I will discuss in detail in a paper I am now working on.

the reality of many projects. Seeing things from this perspective will help us to tackle some puzzles in the history of Chinese Buddhist canon, such as why it took much longer time than planned to complete the carving of some other editions.

Fourth, although easily neglected, both local elements and the timing exerted profound effects on the process of making the Zhaocheng. A professional, mature and flourishing printing industry explains, to a large part, why south Shanxi was chosen to carry out the project. Constant incomes from Xiezhou salt also enhanced the ability of the locals to back the project. Such a strong technical and financial support has proven crucial to the success of any major carving projects. In this sense, it is not surprising to see that most editions of the Buddhist canon were carved in the Jiangnan region, the area which could meet those requirements relatively easier than other places. In time, a slack control over south Shanxi taking place during the early Jin contributed to the success of the Zhaocheng project in two ways. It revived the passion for Buddhist relics, which had somewhat abated in the Northern Song. Moreover, it made possible the appearance of as many as over fifty self-immolations. The Zhaocheng may not be an exception in this regard if we recognize that most versions of the Buddhist canon were made either in the early or ending years of a dynasty, but this point awaits more research.

Fifth, judging from its rise and fall over about one hundred years, the Zhaocheng project showed a considerable reliance on well-organized participants, and was highly vulnerable to external influence, social and political alike. This result comes as no surprise if we consider that making such a canon by individual people usually required efforts that extended several decades and involved vast human and material resources. This observation can be applied to the making of other canons.

Finally, in the Zhaocheng project, on the part of common participants responding to the appeal, the motivations behind their involvement are kind of universal. Not only did those aspirations appear in the creation of other editions of the Buddhist canon, but they are frequently detected on occasions when people engaged in other kinds of devotional acts, like building a stone cave, erecting a *dhāraṇī* pole, or renovating a temple. Moreover, those people organized themselves to maximize their efforts in a way that combined strength and flexibility, and that had been widely used for centuries and would continue to be used throughout the imperial China. These constants show continuities in the history of Chinese Buddhism. On the other hand, the design and launch of the Zhaocheng project, although benefiting from the relic veneration, reflects kind of an undergoing shift in the focus of the devotional act from those in vogue in medieval China to the cult of the book. Such a change, although not a replacement,¹³⁷ still reveals the vitality and creativity of Chinese Buddhism.

¹³⁷ James Benn has convincingly argued that relic veneration did not abate in late imperial China. See his *Burning for the Buddha*, chapter 6.