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Regional Buddhist Communities in Tang China and Their Social Networks: The Network of Master Fayun (?–766)

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Abstract: This paper investigates the formation of monastic networks in Tang Dynasty (618–907) China, focusing primarily on the Buddhist traditions of Tiantai, Chan and Vinaya, which have yet to be explored as a series of related regional movements. Central to this effort is a dataset that documents over 2000 interactions between some 700 actors that were extracted from stelae inscriptions, monastic biographical collections, historical accounts, letters, and poems. The network data show two clear patterns in the organization of regional Buddhist communities: (1) individual actors bridged cliques of monastics and officials; (2) both monastics and officials contributed to network activities. To illustrate these two patterns, this paper focuses on the ego-network of Fayun 法雲 (?–766), a prominent Vinaya leader based in Jiangsu region, as an example of the formation and evolution of regional Buddhist communities in southern China. Degree centrality indicates that Fayun was one of the central figures in the southern Buddhist landscape of the early eighth century. By tracing his heterogeneous ties with prominent state officials, local authorities, and monastics affiliated with the Tiantai, Chan, and Vinaya traditions, this study outlines general patterns in the formation and legitimization of regional Buddhist communities in Tang China. All three traditions are revealed as intersecting social formations that were sustained through shared ties with local and nationally prominent bureaucrats.

Keywords: social network analysis; Tang Buddhism; Fayun; Fang Guan; Tang bureaucracy

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1. Introduction

1.1. Buddhist "Schools" and "Traditions" in Tang Buddhism

The terms "school" and "tradition" are contested and widely discussed in the field of medieval Chinese Buddhism. Despite their wide usage, a number of scholars have questioned the appropriateness of such distinct categorizations on the grounds that their emergence coincided with the invention of hagiographies and multiple stages of fabrication (see, e.g., Foulk 1992; Sharf 2002; Robson 2011). In addition to problematizing the organization of Chinese medieval Buddhism into distinct "schools" or "traditions," these scholars have expressed the need for a discussion of doctrinal and soteriological issues in connection "to domains of politics, society and economics" (Robson 2011, p. 319). In particular, recent research has increasingly related the formation of distinct monastic lineages and group identities in Tang Buddhism to a wider process of societal "regionalization" that began on a large scale in the mid-Tang and continued into the Song Dynasty (Welter 2006; Wu 2021).

From the mid-eighth century onwards, the development of regional Buddhism in China was boosted by the migration of state bureaucrats to the provinces. The temporary collapse of imperial authority in the wake of the rebellion of General An Lushan 安祿山 (703–757) contributed to these officials' disengagement from the central government and their unprecedented dispersal throughout the empire. Many of these bureaucrats not only became key sources of political and economic patronage for regional Buddhist institutions but also wrote memorial inscriptions that comprise some of the earliest biographical accounts of influential Buddhist leaders. These texts indicate that ever greater interaction

between local monastics and secular officials facilitated the consolidation of regional Buddhist communities and enabled individual monks to enhance their reputations. Yet, generations of scholars have neglected them as primary sources.

Information gleaned from this rich, largely untapped seam of epigraphy sheds new light on the regional history of Chinese Buddhism by facilitating the reconstruction of an extensive monastic–secular network that stretched from southern China to the center of imperial power in the north in the second half of the Tang Dynasty. Following collation of a dataset consisting of some 2000 interactions among 700 actors, the conclusion is that numerous masters who came to be associated with China's Chan, Vinaya, Tiantai, and Esoteric traditions maintained strong ties not only with each other but also with local and nationally prominent secular officials. This finding seems to corroborate the contention that it is advisable to construe Tang Buddhism not in the conventional sense as a number of distinct "traditions" or "schools" but rather as a number of social formations that developed intersecting networks with shared repertoires of ritual practices.

As a case study, the paper focuses on a specific sector of the dataset—the ego-network of Master Fayun 法雲 (?–766). From a network perspective, Fayun established personal ties not only with Buddhist leaders who came to be identified as Tiantai, Vinaya, Esoteric, and Chan patriarchs but also with powerful secular officials who supported monastics of various affiliations throughout the southern Tang Empire.

1.2. Scholarship on Tang Buddhist "Schools": Centre-Oriented and Regional Approaches

The bulk of scholarship on Tang Buddhism has focused primarily on the Tang Dynasty's official records with a view to clarifying the imperial court's policies towards the religion. In particular, it has meticulously charted the formation of Chan, Vinaya, and Esoteric Buddhism (e.g., Ch'en 1964; McRae 1983; Tsukamoto 1985; Weinstein 1987; Jia 2006; Welter 2006) within the dynasty's heartland. These studies consistently define Chan, Vinaya, and Esoteric Buddhism as networks of lineages that formed around influential monks whom later generations of disciples—especially those who were active in the early tenth century—retrospectively established as "patriarchs." For example, scholars of Chan Buddhism have investigated the formation of Chan lineages around the monk Shenxiu 神秀 (?606–706) and Shenhui 神會 (684–758), whom the Tang court recognized as patriarchs (Yanagida 1985; Faure 1997; Ferguson 2011). Meanwhile, other researchers have explored the formation of the Vinaya "school" under the leadership of the scholar–monk Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667), whose unprecedented authority as a reformer of the monastic code at the imperial court earned him a reputation as a de facto "patriarch" of that tradition (Shinohara 2000; Heirman 2002; McRae 2005; Wang 2008). Finally, a host of scholars have concentrated on the emergence of Esoteric Buddhism in the mid-eighth century, when Indian adepts introduced a wide repertoire of apotropaic rituals to China in response to official requests for rites that would sacralize imperial sovereignty. Specifically, they have focused on the first Esoteric lineages that were constructed around a trio of Indian missionaries—Śubhākarasiṃha (Ch. Shanwuwei 善無畏; 637–735), Vajrabodhi (Ch. Jin'gangzhi 金剛智; 671–741), and Amoghavajra (Ch. Bukong jin'gang 不空金剛; 704–774)—who are credited with establishing Esotericism as China's state religion under the patronage of a succession of Tang rulers (see Orzech 1998; Chen 2010; Dessein 2003; Goble 2019).

However, although these studies on the establishment and consolidation of Chan, Vinaya, and Esotericism in the imperial capital and its environs still comprise the bulk of contemporary scholarship on Tang Buddhism, several scholars have taken a different path by exploring non-canonical sources and/or texts and artifacts that have only recently emerged on the peripheries of the Tang state. For instance, analysis of local epigraphy has enabled researchers to identify a series of regional developments that contributed to Chan Buddhism's ascendancy in southeast China—that is, Jiangnan[1]—in the mid-eighth century (see Lee 1979; Suzuki 1984, 1997). Similarly, manuscripts found in the Dunhuang complex have provided scholars with detailed insights into the historical development of Buddhism in northwest China. For example, Ryōsho Tanaka (1983) and Henrik Sørensen (2000) have

both explored Tang-era Chan liturgical texts and meditation caves at Dunhuang, while Seizan Yanagida (1985) and Wendi Adamek (2007) have studied an early eighth-century Chan transmission record that was composed in Sichuan in southwestern China but stored at Dunhuang. The adepts of this group, known as the Baotang faction, pledged allegiance to master Huineng 惠能 (638–713), alleged teacher of Shenhui, through a direct disciple who settled in Sichuan.

There has been comparatively little study of the Vinaya tradition after Daoxuan's death, possibly due to the widespread perception that it declined into irrelevance over the course of the eighth century (see, e.g., Ch'en 1964; Weinstein 1987). However, a small group of researchers have found evidence of a number of sites where robust communities of Vinaya specialists not only survived but thrived. For instance, Enichi Ōchō (1954) and Tatsugen Satō (1986) demonstrated that a significant portion of southern China, including parts of the modern-day provinces of Hubei, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu, witnessed a sharp increase in the number of monastic ordinations within the Vinaya tradition from the mid-eighth century onwards. Later scholars have supplemented these findings by revealing that several of Daoxuan's disciples promoted Vinaya practices after relocating from the Central Plains to these southern regions. For example, James Robson (2009) found evidence of a well-established Vinaya community on Mount Nanyue in Hunan Province in a local record, while local epigraphy and other regional texts attest to the presence of similar groups in Zhejiang and Jiangxi (see Vita 1988; Sokolova 2019).

With the exception of a handful of papers that have identified several disciples of Amoghavajra who relocated from the capital to present-day Sichuan Province in the mid-eighth century and promoted Esoteric practices there (see Orzech 2011; Zhao 1998; Sørensen 2011), the development of Esoteric Buddhism outside the Central Plains remains another largely unexplored area of study, notwithstanding some exciting new source material. For example, in the 1960s, the discovery of a stele at Baodingshan (near Chongqing) inscribed with a local Esoteric lineage that traced its allegiance to Amoghavajra (see Wang 1985; Howard 2001) proved that the master's teaching was at least known—and perhaps even prevalent—in the region. Similarly, a number of Dunhuang texts, such as practice manuals attributed to Amoghavajra himself and murals illustrating important Esoteric rituals, have confirmed that the tradition reached northwestern China, too (see Goodman 2013; Ledderose 2016; Wang 2018).

Some scholars have shown that the development of the Chan, Vinaya, and Esoteric traditions paralleled, intersected, or merged with practices associated with the Tiantai tradition. The foundation of the Sui Dynasty 隋朝 (581–618), which marked the reunion of a politically divided China, provided the basis for the establishment of a form of Tiantai that would supposedly be a grand synthesis of the disparate beliefs and practices that had constituted Chinese Buddhism in the fifth and sixth centuries. Stanley Weinstein (1973) demonstrated that the monk Zhiyi 智顗 (538–597),[2] who is regarded as the de facto founder of Tiantai Buddhism, played a pivotal role not only in the founding of the tradition but also in the political unification of northern and southern China (Weinstein 1973, pp. 274–91). Soon after the Sui Dynasty emerged in the north, it started to expand southwards by absorbing various rival regimes. Ultimately, in 589, the Sui defeated the southern Chen Dynasty and formally unified the empire. Nevertheless, they continued to face considerable resistance in the south. Zhiyi had long been held in high regard by the Chen court, so the new Sui regime attempted to secure support for its takeover among the local aristocracy and clergy through lavish patronage of the monk himself and his disciples in the Tiantai community. However, this ceased when the Tang overthrew the Sui in 618, and the tradition disappeared almost completely from view for the rest of the seventh century. However, as Linda L. Penkower has demonstrated in her research into Zhanran 湛然 (711–782), the sixth Tiantai patriarch, the community regained considerable elite support between 760 and 830 through its efforts to construct a credible lineage and a coherent group identity at its centers in present-day Zhejiang and Jiangsu (Penkower 1993, esp. pp. 142–360).

Although previous studies have provided valuable information on the proliferation of the mainstream Buddhist traditions in a few individual sites, current knowledge about regional monastic communities remains fragmented. Scholars have yet to map regional monastic–secular networks, outline the patterns of regional Buddhist community formation and development, or explore the degree to which these local groups were embedded within larger intellectual networks across medieval China. This paper addresses these lacunae through detailed analysis of a wide variety of non-canonical sources, primarily texts composed by exiled or refugee Tang bureaucrats—especially stelae and *stūpa* inscriptions—that contain a wealth of data on individual monastics and their institutions. These locally produced texts not only counterbalance and complement canonical sources but also compensate for a lack of archaeological source material in certain areas. Above all, they shed new light on the evolution of regional Buddhism in the context of mid-Tang socio-political developments.

The information contained within these epigraphic sources reveals that many regional Buddhist practitioners were key actors within a broad network of local government officials, state bureaucrats, fellow monastics, and members of the imperial elite. This enables contextualization of several prominent provincial Buddhist groups and individuals within the "official"—court-oriented—history of medieval China. For instance, it is evident that the emergence of Buddhist "schools" in the mid-Tang period was one aspect of the gradual evolution of monastic–secular relations, and that these relations were reinforced by a series of socio-political developments, such as the unprecedented dispersal of the bureaucracy throughout the empire and the changing dynamics of interactions between the administrative and territorial center of the imperial state and the provinces. In the context of these developments, relations between China's Buddhist community and secular society were sustained, at least in part, by state officials' composition of monastic biographies that not only enabled individual monks to establish distinctive identities that came to be associated with particular "schools" or "traditions" but also facilitated their entry into elite society.

2. Monastic–Secular Networks of Regional Buddhist Communities

2.1. Sources

Epigraphy from medieval China, which is the main source for this research, falls into two broad categories: excavated (archaeological) and transmitted (textual). With regards to the first category, thousands of epitaphs, including many that date from the Tang era, have been excavated in China over recent decades. The majority of these archaeological findings are contained within Nicolas Tackett's extensive database, *Prosopographic and Social Network Database of the Tang and Five Dynasties*,[3] which includes data on some 60,000 individuals culled from biographies, genealogical tables, and over 3000 excavated tomb epitaphs. However, Tackett's work essentially relates to two major strands of the medieval Chinese elite, from the northwest and the northeast. It does not cover members of the southern elite, as very few of their tombs have been found. This paper attempts to counterbalance this north-oriented view by gleaning information from stelae inscriptions that were composed in central and southern Tang China.

Few Tang-era Buddhist inscriptions and records survive on stone,[4] and extensive copying and editing of the original texts resulted in chronological errors as well as consequent issues relating to location, interpretation, and verification of the sources (Barrett 2021, p. 176). Nevertheless, the extent of Buddhism's impact on the development of Tang literature and the scale of the literati's engagement with the religion are reflected in the two Song-era anthologies of Tang-era belletrist texts (i.e., letters, commemorative tributes, accounts, and inscriptions)—*Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 (*Blossoms from the Garden of Literature*; hereafter WYYH)[5] and *Tang Wencui* 唐文萃 (*Finest Prose of the Tang Dynasty*; hereafter TWC).[6] The compilers of these collections deemed it necessary to distinguish Buddhist texts from the rest by designating them *shishi* 釋氏 (in the WYYH) or *shi* 釋 or *fotu* 佛圖 (in the TWC) and grouping them together as clusters within broad, general categories. These clusters were then subdivided into various subjects, such as inscriptions for monasteries'

sūtra collections (*jingzang bei* 經藏碑), for monasteries themselves (*si bei* 寺碑), for *śarīra stūpa*s (*sheli ta bei* 舍利塔碑), for Buddhist statues (*xiang bei* 像碑), and for Buddhist masters (*dade bei* 大德碑, *heshang bei* 和尚碑, or *shi bei* 師碑).[7]

Tang scholar–officials' Buddhist commissions usually fall into one of two categories: texts written on behalf of individual monks, especially eulogies for recently deceased masters; and texts written on behalf of monasteries, especially accounts of restoration projects, the erection of statues, the construction of ordination platforms, and so on, along with introductions for *sūtra*s and commentaries. The collation of such texts in the WYYH and the TWC points to Tang bureaucrats' extensive monastic literary output and frequent interactions with China's provincial Buddhist communities. Monastic biographies, which are mainly grouped within the "records" (*ji* 記) and "stele inscriptions" (*bei* 碑 or *beiming* 碑銘) sections of the two anthologies, contain the most comprehensive accounts of regional monks and monasteries.[8] Hence, these were the principal sources of information for this study, supplemented with data gleaned from other epigraphic collections as well as catalogues that contain fragments of inscriptions and the titles of lost inscriptions.[9]

Although Tang stelae inscriptions, which are the main source material of this research, can be valuable sources of information on Tang Buddhism, as with all forms of transmitted epigraphy, they should be treated caution. In his recent study on the use of epigraphy in Tang Chan history, Timothy H. Barrett has demonstrated that copying and recopying texts can result in chronological errors and consequent problems with locating, interpreting, and verifying sources (Barrett 2021, p. 176). In addition, transcribers may introduce factual errors and misprints or even deliberately censor and/or amend source material. Consequently, it should be remembered that transmitted texts often describe the events and personalities of one period through the lens of another (Barrett 2021, p. 163). For instance, in his article on the first generation of post-rebellion intellectuals, David McMullen suggests that Song historiographers and anthology editors ensured the survival of texts by certain Tang writers whose work accorded with their own orthodox, Confucian reading of history and allowed others to slide into obscurity. Therefore, it should be noted that inscriptions dating from the mid- to late Tang—and especially the 760s to the 830s—dominate WYYH and TWC for the reasons of censorship of the Song-dynasty editors, and they should further be complemented and checked against other sources (McMullen 1973, pp. 318–19).

2.2. Dataset

Figure 1 is a visual representation of a mid-Tang monastic–secular network that emerged through detailed analysis of these sources. In addition, this network was integrated within a much broader dataset, *The Historical Social Network of Chinese Buddhism*, which traces some 25,000 links between approximately 17,500 actors.[10] This enabled comparisons to be drawn between the networks of individual Tang monastics and those of their counterparts elsewhere in the medieval Buddhist landscape.

The raw material for Figure 1 was organized into three Excel files: Nodes, Edges, and Sources. The Nodes file contains unique IDs for some 700 actors who lived between 537 and c.850 CE. IDs beginning with an "A" correspond to individuals who feature in the DILA Authority Database; those beginning "CBDB" feature in the Chinese Authority Database; and those beginning with a "W" are mentioned in the WYYH. Each ID is followed by dates of birth and death (if known) and identification as either a monastic or a secular official. In addition, main region of activity, main monastery, and affiliation are provided for each monastic actor. The Edge file contains details of some 2432 personal connections—including kinship, mentor–disciple relations, patronage, epistolary and poetic exchange, and so on—among the 700 actors in the Nodes file, with each edge (connection) attested by one or more citations. Finally, the Sources file contains full bibliographic details of all of the citations.

Visualizing this dataset in Gephi (Figure 1) generated a constellation of intersecting networks of monks, local government officials, state bureaucrats, authoritative fellow monas-

tics, and members of the imperial elite. Graph theory (see, e.g., Borgatti and Everett 2005; Bingenheimer 2018) could then be used to determine the "centrality" of each regional monk in his own environment as well as his degree of "connectedness" to individuals in other areas. Two measures of centrality were employed to determine which actors were most central to a particular network: degree centrality (that is, each actor's total number of links in his immediate environment) and eigenvector centrality (that is, each actor's connectedness to other highly connected people).

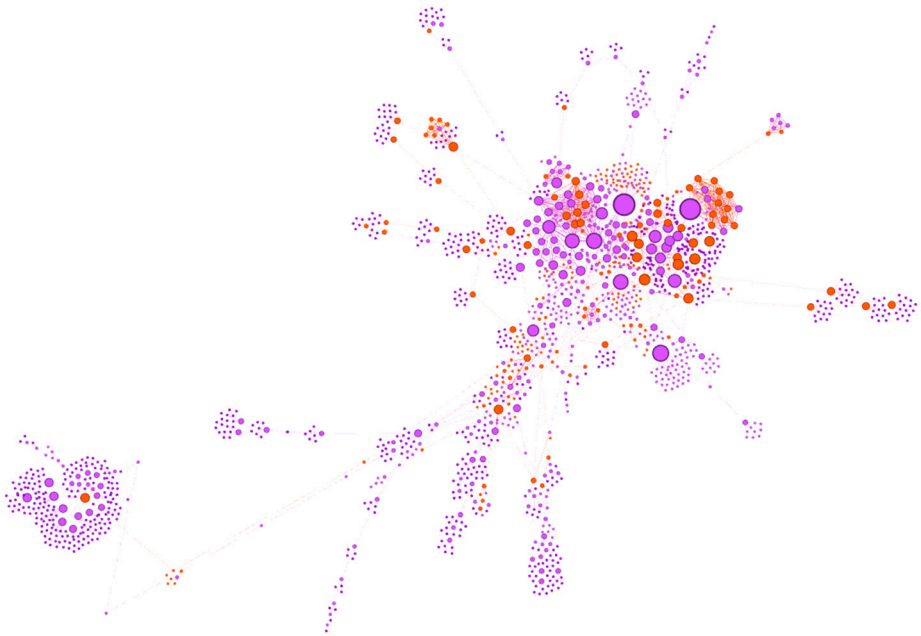

Figure 1. Tang-era monastic–secular network. Notes: purple nodes = monastics; orange nodes = officials and other secular figures. Nodes are sized according to degree centrality.

Connections were traced between each monk and his teachers, disciples, friends, patrons, and/or literary correspondents both within his immediate environment and across the empire to reveal a continuum of dozens of intersecting networks. From this perspective, it may be said that the discrete monolithic formations ("schools") that developed around a few individual monks were only fragments of a much broader, heterogeneous network.

3. Case Study: The Ego-Network of Master Fayun

3.1. Monastic Network

From a network perspective, Master Fayun 法雲 (?–766) may be considered as a "bridge actor" between several clusters of local monastics and officials, nationally prominent bureaucrats, and elite monastics. The most comprehensive account of his life is provided by a stele inscription composed by the scholar–official Li Hua 李華 (?717–?774).[11] The inscription was commissioned to Li Hua by the nephew of the deceased Fayun, a local poet from Runzhou 潤州 (present-day Zhenjiang 鎮江 city, Jiangsu) named Shen Tanggou 申堂構, shortly after his uncle had passed away.[12] According to this text, Fayun was born in Runzhou and studied the *Lotus Sūtra*—the central text of Tiantai Buddhism—while still a youngster.[13] He was then ordained in the local Longxing Monastery 龍興寺 under Vinaya Master Xuanchang 玄昶, who also ordained the prominent Vinaya master Tanyi 曇一 (692–771).[14] Shortly thereafter, Fayun traveled to Mount Song 嵩山, near Luoyang, to study (literally "search for dharma", *qiu fa* 求法) under Puji 普寂 (651–739), the alleged seventh patriarch of the "Northern" Chan school, who himself had studied for six years under Shenxiu (607–706)[15] at the Yuquan Monastery 玉泉寺 in Fuzhoushan 覆舟山 (in present-day Yichang 宜昌 city, Hubei).[16] Later, Fayun accepted an invitation from the Investigation Commissioner Qi Huan 齊澣 (678–750) to return to his native Runzhou and take up resi-

dence at the Tianxiang Monastery 天鄉寺.[17] According to Li Hua's inscription since Fayun came back to Runzhou after he had studied with Puji, "the school of [Master] Dazhao was [established] in the area south of the Yangtze River" (由是江表禪教，有大照之宗焉).[18] It follows from Li Hua's inscription that under Fayun's abbotship, the Tianxiang Monastery turned into an important Vinaya center. Li Hua mentions that Tianxiang was one of the twenty-five monasteries which in the first year of the Qianyuan 乾元 era (758) were selected as permanent lecture-centers on Vinaya (乾元初奏請天下一十五寺，長講戒律，天鄉即其一焉).[19]

Li Hua's inscription for Fayu attests to Fayun's close ties with some members of Tang bureaucracy. For instance, Fayun's friendship with the official Wei Yuanfu 韋元甫 (710–771)[20] is a focal point of the inscription. According to Li Hua, as soon as Wei Yuanfu was appointed to Runzhou,[21] he came to visit Fayun at his deathbed. The master addressed his last words to Wei Yuanfu as follows:

> "The Buddha transmitted the Teaching, [and he] entrusted [those who are] benevolent [and] virtuous [to transmit the Teaching further]. The Poor in Virtue[22] possesses a container with a statue [of the Buddha] made of a sandal wood.[23] [I] offer it to you with respect." [This] deep message was delivered with simple words. [When Wei Yuanfu] heard it, [he] was saddened and [he] shed tears.
>
> 如來遺教，付囑仁賢。貧道有檀像一龕，敬以相奉。意深言簡，聞者淒然。[24]

Another stele inscription records that Fayun, Tanyi, and three other esteemed monks—Lingyi 靈一 (728–762),[25] Mingyou 明幽, and Yixuan 義宣[26]—attended the funeral of Master Fashen 法慎 (669–751), alongside some important state officials.[27] Moreover, there is evidence that Fayun was a disciple of Vinaya Master Jianzhen 鑒真 (Jap. Ganjin; 687–763),[28] a renowned Vinaya authority who is credited with introducing the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* to Japan.[29] All of this biographical information from a variety of sources indicates that Fayun was an influential monastic who was a member of a number of extensive monastic–secular networks in Jiangnan during the mid-Tang. Most pertinently with regard to this study, his engagement with the Tiantai, Vinaya, *and* (northern) Chan traditions reflect the broad-based, syncretic character of southern Buddhism at the time.[30]

Fayun's close association with Tanyi also suggests some Esoteric influence in the two monks' shared environment in the south. The latter's biography states that he traveled to Chang'an in 717 to study Vinaya under Master Daliang 大亮 at the Guanyin Monastery 觀音寺 and received the bodhisattva precepts from the famous Indian master and translator Śubhākarasiṃha (Ch. Shanwuwei 善無畏; 637–735) prior to returning to the south to establish the Kaiyuan Monastery in Yuezhou in 737.[31] Importantly, Śubhākarasiṃha features in a number of stelae inscriptions for other masters who were active in the south around the same time. For instance, we know that Huizhen 惠真 (673–751) studied under him in Chang'an before leaving for Hubei in the mid-eighth century.[32] This suggests that the capital's vibrant Buddhist scene exerted considerable influence that extended far beyond the Central Plains in the first half of the eighth century.

When Fayun's network is visualized (Figure 2), it is immediately apparent that it contained almost equal numbers of monks and secular officials. Moreover, the same may be said of the networks of most of his monastic contacts (see Table 1).

In addition, Fayun's network contains monks with a wide range of doctrinal affiliations. Although most of these masters cannot be defined in terms of discrete groups or rigid identities, their biographers often portray them as either "patriarchs" or heirs of particular traditions. Yet the two dominant groups, Chan and Vinaya, were closely entwined, and their affiliates also engaged with Tiantai practitioners. Śubhākarasiṃha was a crucial bridge actor in many of these connections (see Figure 3).

Table 1. Monastic and secular contacts in the ego-networks of monks with links to Fayun.

Name	Monastics	Officials	Total	Name	Monastics	Officials	Total
Fayun 法雲	15	19	34	Fayu 法瑜	12	13	25
Tanyi 曇一	18	25	43	Yixuan 義宣	12	13	25
Taicheng 台成	12	13	25	Qianyin 乾印	12	13	25
Fashen 法慎	12	14	26	Lingyi 靈一	16	26	42
Mingyou 明幽	12	14	26	Jianzhen 鑒真	11	0	11
Xuanyi 宣一	12	12	24	Puji 普寂	5	0	5
Huiyuan 惠遠	23	20	43	Xuanchang 玄昶	2	5	7

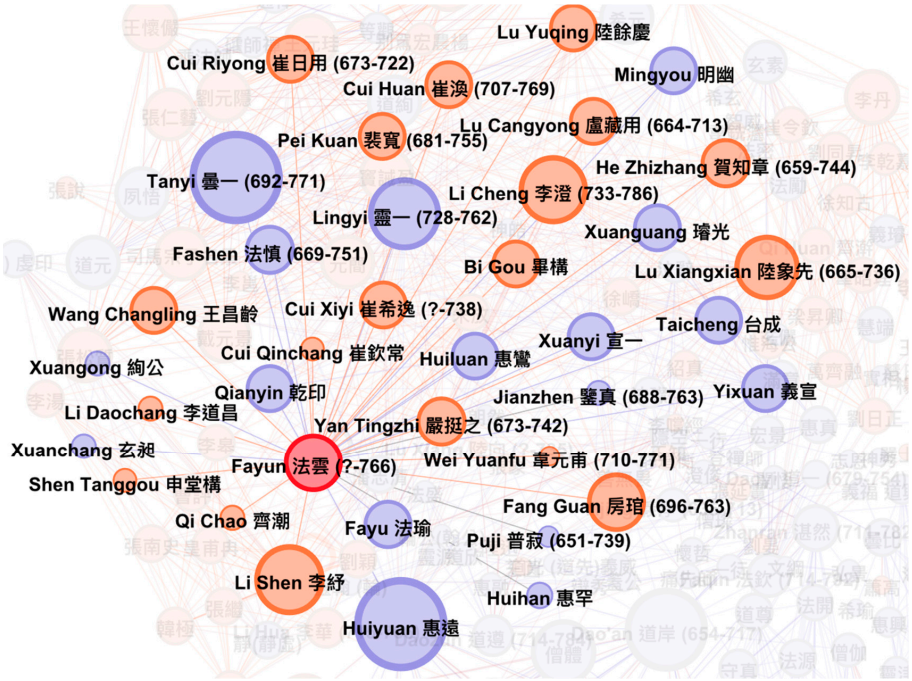

Figure 2. Fayun's ego-network. Notes: purple nodes = monastics; orange nodes = officials and other secular figures; red node = Fayun. Nodes are sized according to degree centrality.

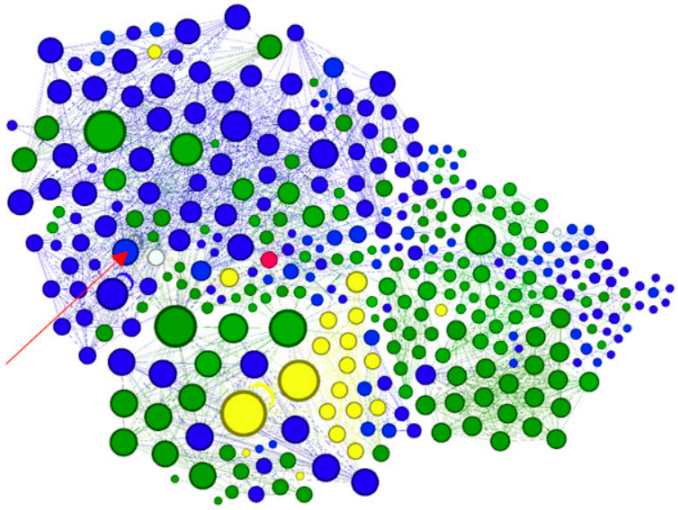

Figure 3. Principal doctrinal affiliations of monastics in Fayun's extended network (the second-degree ego-network). An arrow points to Fayun. Notes: purple nodes = Chan; green nodes = Vinaya; yellow nodes = Tiantai; red node = Esoteric. Nodes are sized according to degree centrality.

Another visualization of Fayun's network illustrates the regional distribution of his secular and monastic contacts (see Figure 4). It is evident that the two largest groups were active in regions that correspond to present-day Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces, with slightly smaller clusters in Anhui, Hubei, and Hunan.

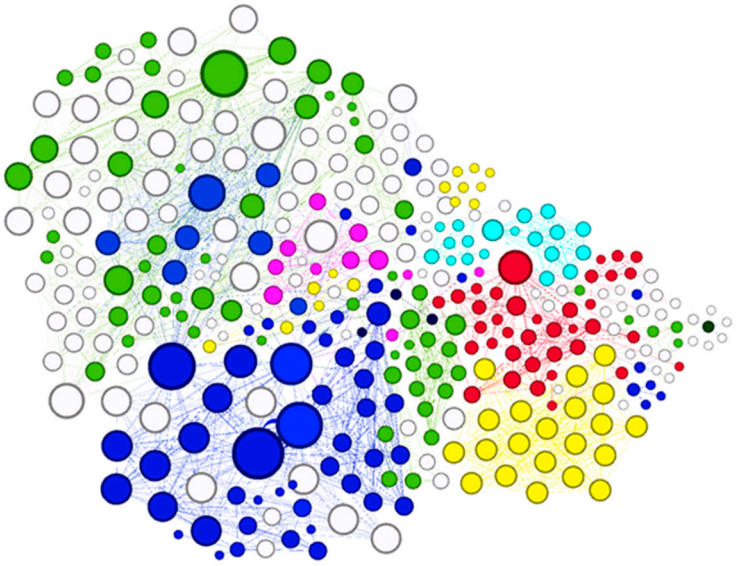

Figure 4. Regional distribution of monastics in Fayun's extended network (the second-degree ego-network). Notes: Colors correspond to each individual's main area of activity: purple = Zhejiang; red = Jiangxi; light green = Jiangsu; yellow = Anhui; pink = Hubei; dark green = Sichuan; turquoise = Hunan; blue = Henan; brown = Guangdong. Nodes are sized according to degree centrality.

At this point, it is worth integrating Fayun's network within *The Historical Social Network of Chinese Buddhism* (hereafter HSNCB) with a view to assessing its members' degree of connectedness and centrality on a wider scale. With the benefit of this expanded perspective, it is clear that several of Fayun's monastic contacts—Puji, Tanyi, Fashen, Lingyi, Yixian, and Mingyou—were extremely well connected. Indeed, it is apparent that all six of these monks were considerably better connected than Fayun himself and therefore almost certainly key players in early eighth-century Tang Buddhism. For instance, Master Puji, who has only 5 (all monastic) contacts in Fayun's network (see Table 1), has no fewer than 48 contacts in the HSNCB (see Table 2). Similarly, while Lingyi has a total of 26 (monastic and secular) contacts in Fayun's network, he is connected to 57 individuals in the HSNCB (see Figure 5).

Table 2. Total number of HSNCB contacts for selected members of Fayun's ego-network.

Name	Total Number of Monastic and Secular Contacts	Name	Total Number of Monastic and Secular Contacts
Fayun 法雲	34	Mingyou 明幽	33
Tanyi 曇一	85	Yixuan 義宣	34
Lingyi 靈一	57	Xuanyi 宣一	24
Puji 普寂	48	Jianzhen 鑒真	13
Fashen 法慎	46	Huiluan 惠鸞	32

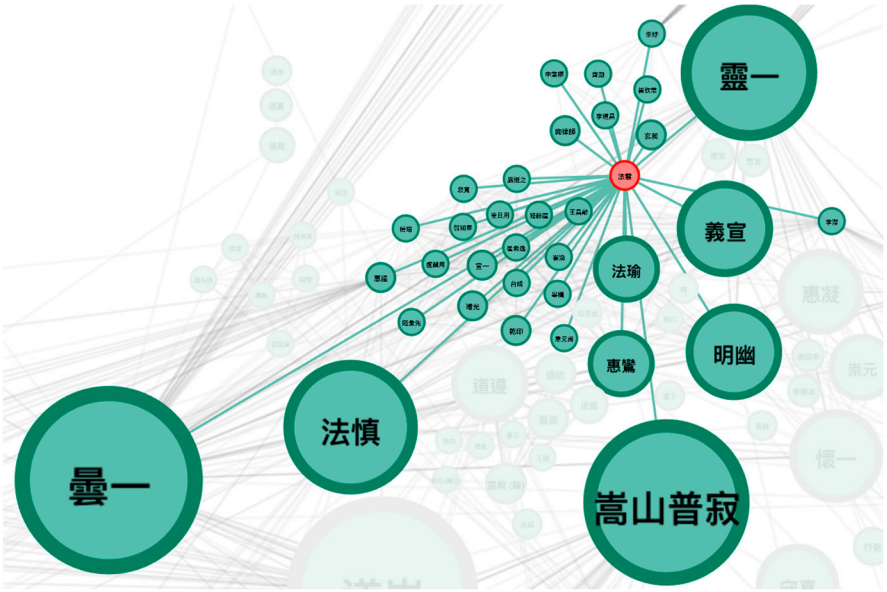

Figure 5. Fayun's ego-network as part of the HSNCB. Notes: red node = Fayun; nodes are sized according to degree centrality.

As the next section explains, such monastics often maintained their lines of communication with one another via their links to prominent bureaucrats, who served as bridge actors across China's religious landscape.

3.2. Bureaucratic Network

The aforementioned sources of biographical information on Fayun indicate that he was also well acquainted with several renowned officials. These individuals occupied central positions not only in Fayun's ego-network but also within a much broader southern Buddhist network. For instance, Fang Guan 房琯 (697–763), who was one of Fayun's principal patrons, was connected to a wide circle of similarly powerful officials and renowned monks, many of whom had links to Fayun himself or his monastic and secular associates (see Figure 6). The acquaintance between Fayun and Fang Guan is attested in Li Hua's stele inscription for Fashen, in which Fayun is mentioned as one of the most esteemed masters among myriads of those who attended the funeral of Fashen (會葬者萬人。其上首), alongside Fang Guan, and other important monks and officials, such as Tanyi and Zhang Yue 張說 (663–730).[33] According to Fang Guan's official biography,[34] he entered government service in 725 on the recommendation of Zhang Yue, climbed the bureaucratic ladder until he reached the lofty position of Imperial Censor (*Jiancha Yushi* 監察御史) in 734, but was then accused of impropriety and demoted to Census Official (*Sihu* 司戶).[35] Thereafter, he served as Magistrate (*Ling* 令) of Cixi 慈溪 (present-day Ningbo 寧波 city, Zhejiang), Songcheng 宋城 (present-day Shangqiu 商丘 city, Henan) and Jiyuan 濟源 (present-day Jiyuan 濟源 city, Henan) before securing a promotion—and a return to Chang'an—in 742. However, five years later, he was again demoted and exiled to Yichun Commandery 宜春 (present-day Yichun 宜春 city, Jiangxi), followed by postings to Langye 琅邪 (present-day Nanning 南寧 city, Shangdong), Ye 鄴 (present-day Handan 邯鄲 city, Hebei), and Fufeng 扶風 (present-day Baoji 寶雞 city, Shaanxi), prior to a second recall to the capital in 755. A few months later, as An Lushan's troops neared the capital, he joined Emperor Xuanzong on his flight to Sichuan, where they were greeted by the prominent official Cui Huan 崔渙 (?–769).[36] Xuanzong rewarded Fang Guan for his loyalty by offering him the position of Chancellor, which Fang Guan accepted. However, he insisted that Cui Huan should be made Chancellor too, and the two men duly occupied the role simultaneously.

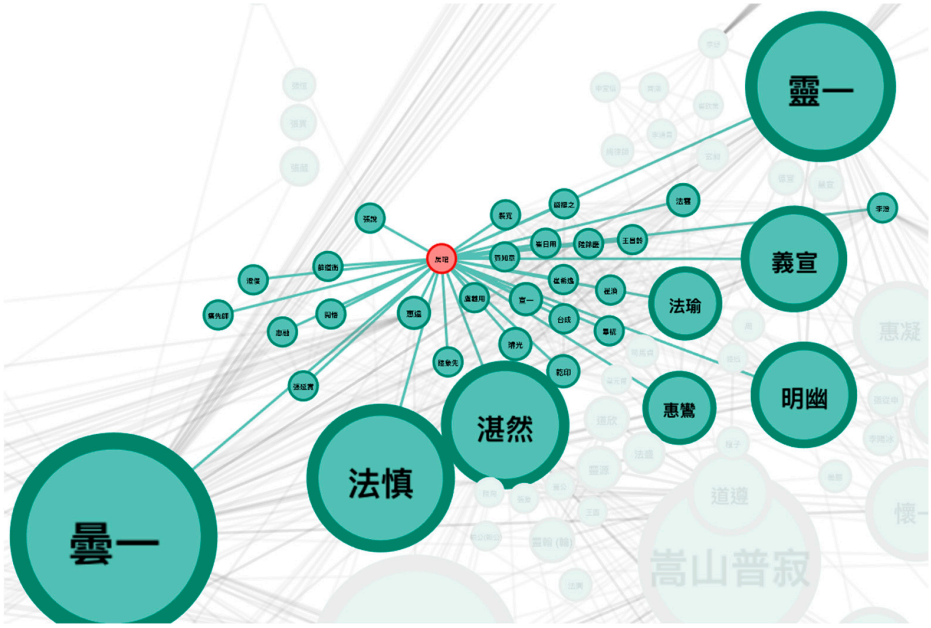

Figure 6. Fang Guan's ego-network in the HSNCB. Note: red node = Fang Guan. Nodes are sized according to degree centrality.

Another member of Fayun's network, the aforementioned Zhang Yue, was a friend of Master Tanyi. Much like Fang Guan, he had a somewhat chequered bureaucratic career. After entering the Legislative Bureau of Government (*Fengge* 鳳閣) during the reign of Empress Wu Zetian, he suffered a period of exile and demotion before her successor Zhongzong recalled him to the capital. Shortly thereafter, Zhongzong's successor Ruizong 睿宗 (r. 684–690, 710–712) made Zhang Yue his de facto Chancellor by elevating him to the position of Joint Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery (*Tong Zhongshu Menxia Pingzhangshi* 同中書門下平章事). However, this was followed by a second series of demotions in the first few years of Xuanzong's reign[37] before Zhang Yue managed to regain his status as one of the most powerful officials in the imperial court by quelling a tribal uprising in Shuofang 朔方 (modern Ningxia) and the rebellion of Kang Daibin 康待賓 in 720 and 721. Specifically, Xuanzong placed him in charge the Academy in the Hall of Elegance and Rectitude (*Lizheng Xiushuyuan* 麗正修書院), which enabled him to recruit several close associates, including He Zhizhang 賀知章 (659–744),[38] who was a friend of Masters Tanyi and Fashen. Such bridging connections to esteemed monastics were nothing new for Zhang Yue. For instance, during his time as Prefect of Xiangzhou 相州 (Hebei), he had forged a close relationship with another of Fashen's contacts, a local official named Li Zheng 李憕 (?–755).[39] Moreover, at the very start of his administrative career in the Legislative Bureau of Government, he had served alongside Song Jing 宋璟 (663–737),[40] a friend of Tanyi who would eventually rise to the position of Chancellor under Xuanzong.

Of even greater relevance to this case study is Zhang Yue's participation in a team of monastics and secular officials who were assembled to translate the *Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra* (*Da baoji jin* 大寶積經) in 711.[41] He and his friend Lu Xiangxian 陸象先 (665–736)[42] both served as overseers (*zongyue* 總閱), while other secular members of the team included Lu Cangyong 盧藏用 (664–713) and Zhang Yue's future colleague at the Hall of Elegance and Rectitude, He Zhizhang, who was one of the project's text polishers (*runwen* 潤文).[43] Later in life, all of these officials and/or their monastic contacts would be important members of Fayun's ego-network. For instance, Lu Cangyong became one of the master's chief patrons.

Another associate of Fashen—and therefore potentially of Fayun, too—was the future Chancellor Cui Huan. After beginning his government career as a Civil Service Officer (*Sigong Canjun* 司功參軍) in Bozhou 亳州 (present-day Bozhou 亳州 city, Anhui), he was appointed to a junior role at the Ministry of Justice (*Simen Yuanwailang* 司門員外郎) on the rec-

ommendation of a member of Fashen's circle, the official Yan Tingzhi 嚴挺之 (673–742),[44] but was later demoted and exiled to Baxi Commandery 巴西郡 (Sichuan), where he served as Governor (*Taishou* 太守).[45] While there, in addition to befriending Fashen himself, he became a patron of Huizhong 慧忠 (675–775)[46] and a lay disciple of Faqin 法欽 (714–792).[47]

As the preceding discussion has demonstrated, officials such as Fang Guan, Zhang Yue, and He Zhizhang tended to cross paths frequently in the course of their careers, both in Chang'an and in periods of exile. Moreover, they often engaged with the same diverse group of revered monastics, many of whom had direct links to one another (see Figure 7). As a result, each of them maintained numerous connections to other officials and monastics within a broad network that was characterized by intersecting clusters of actors (see Table 3).

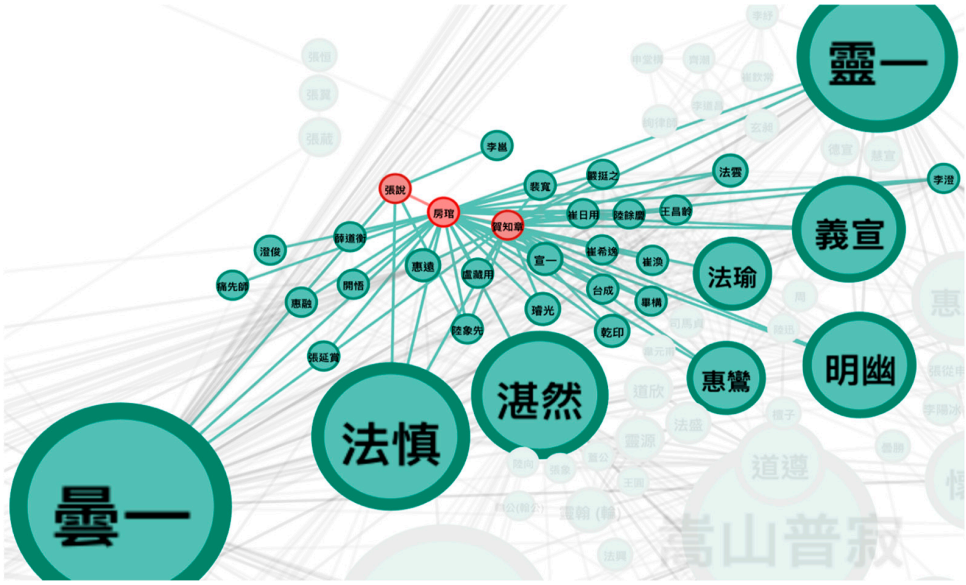

Figure 7. Network of Zhang Yue, Fang Guan, and He Zhizhang. Note: red nodes = Zhang Yue, Fang Guan, and He Zhizhang. Nodes are sized according to degree centrality.

Table 3. Contacts of selected individuals in the network of Zhang Yue, Fang Guan, and He Zhizhang.

Name (Official)	Total Number of Monastic and Secular Contacts	Name (Monastic)	Total Number of Monastic and Secular Contacts
Fang Guan 房琯	34	Lingyi 靈一	57
Zhang Yue 張說	5	Zhanran 湛然	42
Lu Cangyong 盧藏用	26	Tanyi 曇一	85
Cui Huan 崔渙	15	Yixuan 義宣	35
He Zhizhang 賀知章	55	Fashen 法慎	50

In summary, secular officials with close ties to Fayun and other masters, such as Fashen and Tanyi, were also closely connected to one another through their everyday government activities and their involvement in court-sponsored Buddhist projects, most notably the translation of the *Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra*. These shared ties suggest that the rich Buddhist culture of southern China in the mid-Tang period was facilitated, at least in part, by the emergence of an extensive monastic–secular network that stretched from the center of imperial power in Chang'an to the farthest reaches of the empire.

4. Conclusions

This study has analyzed the ego-network of Master Fayun within the context of existing research into Tang Buddhism, with an emphasis on the development of regional Buddhist communities. The dataset contains a wealth of information on interactions between monastics and bureaucrats gleaned from Tang epigraphy, which facilitates exploration of the structures of local monastic communities in Tang China as well as their engagements with secular society at various levels. The local and extra-regional links between monastics and secular figures that can be traced throughout the dataset locate regional monks within broader monastic–secular networks of patronage, collaboration, and literary exchange. In particular, it is evident that a number of highly esteemed monks and senior officials became bridge actors between heterogeneous clusters of monastics, local authorities, and bureaucrats across southern China in the mid-Tang era. Monastics who are mentioned as associates of Fayun in transmitted epigraphy are said to have held Vinaya, Chan, Tiantai, and/or Esoteric affiliations. This leads to the conclusion that the boundaries between the Chan, Tiantai, Esoteric and Vinaya traditions were rather fluid and indistinct on the ground.

The case study of Fayun's ego-network suggests that this master was a key bridge actor between several monastic–secular communities that formed around the leaders of what were subsequently categorized as distinct Buddhist "schools." For instance, the dataset contains ample evidence that he was closely connected to Masters Tanyi, Fashen, Daliang, and Puji, each of whom is primarily associated with one of the dominant traditions—Vinaya, Tiantai, or Northern Chan. Moreover, the communities that developed around these masters were linked to one another by a number of secular bridge actors—powerful imperial or local officials who were active not only in the southern Buddhist centers but also in the capital, Chang'an. Indeed, many of the closest relationships in these networks were forged between regional Buddhist masters and bureaucrats who had served at the heart of government in the imperial court prior to demotion and exile to the provinces. From this perspective, the emergence of Buddhist "schools" in mid-Tang China may be conceived as one aspect of the gradual evolution of monastic–secular relations that were reinforced by a series of significant socio-political developments, such as the unprecedented dispersal of high-ranking bureaucrats throughout the empire.

Further analysis of the dataset may generate fresh perspectives on mid-Tang Chinese Buddhism. For instance, prosopographic study of the actors' common characteristics (see, e.g., Stone 1972; Cameron 2000) would likely shed new light on the Northern Chan, Tiantai, Vinaya, and Esoteric communities' shared features and practices. The lives, careers, and relationships of individuals who engaged with Buddhism could be analyzed collectively in each locality with this information, then compared and contrasted with data from other regions to identify any recurring patterns in the formation of monastic communities and estimate the degree of congruence in the various groups' religious practices. Moreover, integrating this paper's mid-Tang dataset within broader datasets—as was performed here with regard to *The Historical Social Network of Chinese Buddhism*—would help to embed the evolution of regional monastic networks within the general history of Chinese Buddhism.

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Data Availability Statement: This study is conducted based on datasets that are stored in Zenodo, an open-access repository. Marcus Bingenheimer provides a link to these data in his Introduction to this special issue.

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Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Abbreviations

JTS	*Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書. Compiled by Liu Xu 劉昫 et al. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975.
QTW	*Quan Tangwen* 全唐文 (=*Qinding Quan Tangwen* 欽定全唐文). Compiled by Dong Hao 董浩 et al. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983.
SGSZ	*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. Compiled by Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001). T2061.
SKQS	*Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (=*Jingyin Wenyuange siku quanshu*景印文淵閣四庫全書). Compiled by Ji Yun 鴽昀 et al. Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1983–1986.
T	*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. Edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1935.
TWC	Tang Wencui 唐文萃. Compiled by Yao Xuan 姚鉉. Changchun: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 1998.
WYYH	Wenyuan yinghua 文苑英華. Compiled by Li Fang 李昉. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1966.
X	*Dai-nippon Zokuzōkyō* 大日本續藏經. Edited by Maeda Eun 前田慧雲 and Nakano Tatsue 中野達慧. Taibei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1968–1970.
XTS	*Xin Tangshu* 新唐書. Compiled by Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修 et al. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975.
XXSKQS	*Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書. Edited by Gu Tinglong 顧廷龍 et al. Shanghai: Shanghaiguji chubanshe, 2002.

Notes

1 This region encompasses the city of Shanghai, the southern part of Jiangsu Province, the southeastern part of Anhui Province, the northern part of Jiangxi Province, and the northern part of Zhejiang Province.

2 For a detailed study of Zhiyi, see (Hurvitz 1980).

3 See: https://history.berkeley.edu/nicolas-tackett (accessed on 22 September 2022).

4 For a comprehensive study of monastic records and stelae inscriptions composed by literati during the Tang and Song dynasties, see (Halperin 2006).

5 The WYYH was compiled by a team of scholars led by Li Fang 李昉 (925–996) after 980, but not published until 1201–1204. For details of the strategies used in the selection of texts as well as the anthology's compilation and transmission, see (Ling 2005; Owen 2007).

6 The TWC was the work of a single compiler, Yao Xuan 姚铉 (968–1020), who completed the compilation in 1011. His son presented the manuscript to the emperor nine years later, but it was not published until 1039. For recent research into this anthology, see (Shields 2017, pp. 306–35).

7 The compilers' selection strategies and subsequent categorization of texts by genre and subject shed light on perceptions and definitions of literary genres in the post-Tang period. For a general overview of the history of the *ji* ("records") genre, see (Chu 1990, esp. 352–360). For details of the connection between the development of Chinese genre theory and anthology compilation, see (Hightower 1957, p. 512).

8 The WYYH includes five scrolls of *ji* (*juan* 817–821) and nineteen scrolls of *bei* (*juan* 850–868) related to Buddhism. The TWC features nine Buddhist *ji* on a single scroll (*juan* 76) and five scrolls of *bei* (*juan* 61–65) on Buddhist topics.

9 The research involved examination of over 100 stelae inscriptions (*beiming* 碑銘) contained within the following anthologies and epigraphic collections: the WYYH, the TWC, the *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 (*Complete Prose of the Tang*; compiled by Dong Hao 董浩 et al.; hereafter QTW), the *Baoke congbian* 寶刻叢編 (*Compendium of Precious Inscriptions*; compiled by Chen Si 陳思 (1225–1264)), the *Jinshi lu* 金石録 (*Catalogue of Golden Stones*; compiled by Zhao Mingcheng 趙明誠 (1081–1129)), *Songyang shike jiji* 嵩陽石刻集記 (*A Collection of Stone Inscriptions from Songyang*), *Tangwen xushi* 唐文續拾 (*Supplement to the Prose of the Tang Dynasty*), and *Baqiongshi jinshi buzheng xubian* 八瓊室金石補正續編 (*Baqiong Studio's Catalogue of Inscriptions*; edited by Lu Jihui 陸繼煇). All of the texts were accessed via the Zenodo virtual depository.

10 For a detailed study of this dataset, see (Bingenheimer 2021).

11 "Runzhou Tianxiangsi gu dade Yun Chanshi bei" 潤州天鄉寺故大德雲禪師碑 ("Inscription for the Late Bhadanta of the Tianxiang Monastery in Runzhou"), WYYH 861.5418–5420; QTW 320.3242–3244. For more on Li Hua and his engagement with Buddhism, see Vita 1998. Based on Li Hua's inscription, we can tentatively estimate Fayun's birth year. According to Li Hua, Fayun was ordained during the Shenlong 神龍 era (705–707), and he received full ordination (具足戒) during the Jinglong 景龍 era (707–710). Presuming that Fayun attained full ordination around twenty years old, according to a general monastic practice, the year of his birth may be, rather safely, estimated to be sometime between 688 and 691.

12 Some of Shen Tanggou's works had been included in the now lost *Danyang ji* 丹陽集 by Yin Fan 殷璠, a collection of Ruzhou poets, as attested in the XTS 60. 1609–1610.

13 For a discussion of the central role played by the *Lotus Sūtra* in Tiantai Buddhist practice, see (Stevenson 1986, pp. 67–72).

14 Tanyi is regarded as a disciple of two important Vinaya masters: Daoan 道岸 (654–717) and Daliang 大亮. See Liang Su's 梁肅 (753–793) stele inscription, "Yuezhou Kaiyuansi lü heshang ta beiming bingxu" 越州開元寺律和尚塔碑銘並序 ("Stele Inscription, with Preface, for Vinaya Master of the Kaiyuan Monastery in Yuezhou"), TWC 62.16; QTW 520.5288. There are further biographies in SGSZ, T50.2061:798a21–799a14; and *Fozu Lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代通載 (*A Comprehensive Record of the Generations of Buddhist Patriarchs*; compiled by Nianchang 念常 (1282–1341) in 1341), T49.2036:602c22–603a25. He is identified as the next Vinaya patriarch after Daliang in two sources: Yan Zhenqing's 顏真卿 (709–785) "Fuzhou Baoyingsi lüzang yuan Jietan ji" 撫州寶應寺律藏院戒壇記 ("Recollection on the Ordination Platform of the *Vinaya-Piṭaka* Hall in the Baoying Monastery in Fuzhou"), TWC 76.173–175, QTW 338.3422–3423; and *Shishi jigu lüe* 釋氏稽古略 (*An Outline of Historical Researches into the Śākya Family Lineage*; compiled by Juean 覺岸 (1286–?) in 1352), T49.2037:818a29–b16. For a detailed discussion of his relationship to Tiantai Buddhism, see (Penkower 1993, pp. 60–8).

15 See Li Yong 李邕 (678–747), "Dazhao Chanshi taming" 大照禪師塔銘 ("*Stūpa* Inscription for Chan Master Dazhao"), QTW 262.2657–2661. "Dazhao" 大照 is Puji's imperially granted posthumous title. For a detailed discussion of this inscription, see (Yanagida 2000, pp. 46, 57, 95, 116, 883). For a more recent study on Li Yong, with a focus on his stelae inscriptions, see Sokolova and Heirman 2021. Shenxiu and Puji were later recognized as, respectively, the sixth and seventh patriarchs of the Northern Chan "school.". See (Faure 1997; McRae 1986).

16 At the time, this monastery was a highly cosmopolitan institution that hosted masters who were affiliated with the Tiantai, Chan, Vinaya and Esoteric traditions. For a discussion, see (Penkower 1993, pp. 191–93).

17 Qi Huan held this appointment during the Jinglong 景龍 era (707–710). For biographies, see JTS 190 (*zhong*).5036–5038 and XTS 128.4468–4471.

18 QTW 320. 2243.

19 QTW 320. 2242–44.

20 For a biography of Wei Yuanfu, see *JTS* 115.3376. This was just one of a series of appointments he held in Jiangsu and neighboring Zhejiang over the course of his career, including Defender (*Wei* 尉) of the Baima 白馬 District of Huazhou 滑州 (present-day city of Anyang 安陽, Henan), Prefect (*Cishi* 刺史) of Suzhou 蘇州 (present-day Suzhou city, Zhejiang), and Military Prefect (*Tuanlianshi* 團練使) and Surveillance Commissioner (*Guanchashi* 觀察使) of Zhejiang Western Circuit (*Zhejiangxidao* 浙江西道). Imperial Chancellor Du Hongjian 杜鴻漸 (709–769) was one of Wei Yuanfu's main patrons, recommending him for the important positions of Assistant Director of the Right at the Department of State Affairs (*Shangshu Youcheng* 尚書右丞), Censor-in-Chief (*Yushi Dafu* 御史大夫), and Military and Surveillance Commissioner of Huainan as well as his posting to Yangzhou. Wei Yuanfu forged close relationships with many southern monastics while serving in these posts, including Bianxiu 辯秀 (714–780)—a disciple of Jianzhen and Fayi, and master Master Daguang 大光 (?–805), which is attested in Jiaoran's "Tang Suzhou Kaiyuansi lü heshang fenming bingxu" 唐蘇州開元寺律和尚墳銘並序 ("Tomb Inscription, with Preface, for Vinaya Master of the Kaiyuan Monastery in Suzhou of the Tang [Dynasty]"), WYYH 786.4961; QTW 918.9567–9568, and in Li Shen's 李紳 (d. 846) "Huzhou Fahuasi Daguang Tianshi bei" 湖州法華寺大光天師碑 ("Stele [Inscription] for the Imperial Preceptor Daguang of the Fahua Monastery in Huzhou"), WYYH 865. 5440, respectively.

21 According to tang *Tang Huiyao* (84.1549), Wei Yuanfu was appointed as Prefect of Runzhou in 766, the year of Fayun's death.

22 Here Fayun refers to himself. *Pingdao* 貧道 is self-deprecating first-person pronoun for a monk or nun.

23 This is a reference to a legendary statue of the Buddha Śākyamuni that was made by his contemporaneous king Udayana 優填王, who was a great supporter of the Buddha's community. According to the legend, Śākyamuni's disciple Mahā-Maudgalyāyana, using his supernatural powers, sent artists to the heavens to make sketches of the Buddha and to model his statue, which he presented to the king. Udayana was healed from a disease by the statue's supernatural power. The earliest account of this story of this first image-making of the Buddha can be found in the Ekottaragama sūtra (*Zengyi ahan jing* 增一阿含經, T.2, no.125: 706a). Here, the sandal statue of the Buddha is a general reference to the Buddhist Teaching which Fayun entrusted to Wei Yuanfu.

24 QTW 320. 2242-43.

25 Lingyi's biography is in SGSZ, T50.2061:799a23–c1.

26 Yixuan's biography is in SGSZ, T50.2061:794c29–795a7.

27 See Li Hua, "Yangzhou Longxingsi Jinglüyuan heshang bei" 楊州龍興寺經律院和尚碑 ("Stele for the Master of the Vinaya Hall in the Longxing Monastery in Yangzhou"), WYYH 862.5421–5422; QTW 320.3244–3246. The officials in Fayun's network are discussed in more detail in Section 3.2 below.

28 A native of Jiangyang 江陽 in Guangling 廣陵 (present-day Yangzhou 揚州 city, Jiangsu), Jianzhen was a resident of the Dayun Monastery 大雲寺 in Yangzhou prior to his trip to Japan.

29 See Mabito Genkai's 真人元開 biography of Jianzhen, *Tōdaiwajō tōseiden* 唐大和上東征傳 (*The Great Master of the Tang Travels East*; composed in 779), T51.2089. For translations, see (Bingenheimer 2003, pp. 168–89; Bingenheimer 2004, pp. 142–81). For Jianzhen's biography in SGSZ, see T50.2061:797a24–c11.

30 Marcus Bingenheimer has recently demonstrated that Jiangnan's Buddhist practice was similarly broad-based centuries later, during the late Ming Dynasty. See (Bingenheimer 2022).

[31] See Liang Su 梁肅 (753–793), "Yuezhou Kaiyuansi lü heshang tabei bingxu" 越州開元寺律和尚塔碑銘並序 ("Stele Inscription, with Preface, for Vinaya Master of the Kaiyuan Monastery in Yuezhou"), TWC 62.16; QTW 520.5288–5289. For more information on the author of this text, the scholar–official Liang Su, see (Tian 2009, pp. 41–45).

[32] See Li Hua's "Jingzhou Nanquan Dayunsi gu Lanruo heshang bei" 荊州南泉大雲寺故蘭若和尚碑 ("Stele [Inscription] for the Late Master Lanruo of the Dayun Monastery in Nanquan at Jingzhou"), WYYH 860.5412–5413; QTW 319.3236–3237.

[33] See Li Hua's "Yangzhou Longxingsi Jinglüyuan heshang bei", WYYH 862.5422; QTW 320.3246. Zhang Yue's biographies are in JTS 97.3049–3059 and XTS 125. 4404–12. In 703, he was demoted to Qinzhou 欽州 (present-day Qinzhou 欽州 city, Guangdong) for refusing to collaborate with a group of officials against the Chancellor, Wei Yuanzhong 魏元忠 (?–707). He remained in exile until Empress Wu Zetian's death in 705.

[34] JTS 111.3320–3324; XTS 139.4625–4628.

[35] JTS 111.3320.

[36] Cui Huan's biographies are in JTS 108.3280–3282 and XTS 120.4318–4319. He was the scion of a family of high-ranking officials; his grandfather, Cui Xuanwei 崔玄暐 (638–706), had served as Chancellor during the reigns of Wu Zetian and her son Zhongzong 中宗 (r. 684, 705–710), while his father, Cui Qu 崔璩, had served as Deputy Minister during the early part of the reign of Emperor Xuanzong.

[37] In this period of exile, Zhang Yue served as Prefect of Xiangzhou 相州 (present-day Anyang 安陽 city, Hebei), Surveillance Commissioner (*Anchashi* 按察使) of Hebei Circuit 河北道 (modern-day Hebei, Beijing, and Tianjin), Prefect of Yuezhou 岳州 (present-day Yueyang 岳陽 city, Hunan), and Secretary General (*Zhangshi* 長史) of Jingzhou 荊州 (present-day Jingzhou 荊州 city, Hubei). See XTS 125.4407.

[38] JTS 190 (zhong).5033. Zhang Yue recruited He Zhizhang, Xu Jian 徐堅, and Zhao Dongxi 趙冬曦 (677–750) in 722. See He Zhizhang's biographies in JTS 190 (zhong).5033–5035 and XTS 196.5606.

[39] Li Zheng's biography is in JTS 187.4887–4892 and XTS 191.5510–5511. He held a series of provincial appointments—including Prefect of Guangling 廣陵 (present-day Yangzhou 揚州 city, Jiangsu) and Governor (*Taishou* 太守) of Pengcheng 彭城 (present-day Xuzhou 徐州 city, Jiangsu)—in the early Tianbao 天寶 era (742–756), during which time he established numerous monastic connections.

[40] Song Jing's biographies are in JTS 96.3029–3037 and XTS 124.4389–4395. In 706, he was demoted and exiled to Beizhou 貝州 (present-day Xingtai 邢臺 city, Hebei), followed by postings to Hangzhou 杭州 (present-day Hangzhou city, Zhejiang) and Xiangzhou 相州 (present-day Anyang 安陽 city, Henan). Ruizong recalled him to Chang'an in 710 and made him his de facto Chancellor by appointing him to the position of Cooperating with Third Rank Official of the Secretariat-Chancellery (*Tong Zhongshu Menxia Sanpin* 同中書門下三品). However, the following year, he was accused of undermining Empress Taiping and suffered demotion to a series of regional posts in Chuzhou 楚州 (present-day Huaian 淮安 city, Jiangsu), Yanzhou 兗州 (present-day Jining 濟寧 city, Shandong), Jizhou 冀州 (present-day Handan 邯鄲 city, Hebei), Muzhou 睦州 (present-day Hangzhou city, Zhejiang), and Guangzhou 廣州 (present-day Guangzhou city, Guangdong). After six years in exile, Xuanzong recalled him to Chang'an in 717 and eventually made him Chancellor. In addition to his friendship with Tanyi, Song Jing venerated the *stūpa* of Huineng while serving as Military Commissioner of Guangzhou, as attested in the latter's biography in SGSZ, T50.2061:755b27–28.

[41] The team, which was headed by Bodhiruci 菩提流志 (?572–727), was housed in the Ganlu Pavilion 甘露亭 in Chang'an's West Inner Garden.

[42] Biographies of Lu Xiangxian are appended to biographies of his father, the renowned Chancellor Lu Yuanfang 陸元方 (639–701), in JTS 88.2876–2877 and XTS 116.4236–4238. According to JTS 190 (zhong).5034, Lu Xiangxian and He Zhizhang were very close first cousins. The former followed in his father's footsteps by serving as Chancellor until 713, whereupon he was appointed Secretary General (*Dadu Dufu Zhangshi* 大都督府長史) of Yizhou 益州 (present-day Chengdu city, Sichuan) and Surveillance Commissioner (*Anchashi* 按察使) of Jiannan Circuit (*Jiannan Dao* 劍南道). He was a friend of both Huizhen 惠真 (673–751) (see Li Hua's "Jingzhou Nanquan Dayunsi gu Lanruo heshang bei" 荊州南泉大雲寺故蘭若和尚碑 ("Stele [Inscription] for the Late Master Lanruo of the Dayun Monastery in Nanquan at Jingzhou"): WYYH 860.5412–5413; QTW 319.3236–3237), and Yixing 一行 (673–727) in his youth (see JTS 88.2877). Lu Cangyong's biographies are in JTS 94.3000–3004 and XTS 123.4374–4375.

[43] See *Fozu tongji*, T49.2035:372c29–373a3; Xu E's 徐鍔 "Da baoji jing shu" 大寶積經述 ("Account of the *Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra*"), QTW 295.15–18; and (Chen 2007, p. 406).

[44] Yan Tingzhi's biographies are in JTS 99.3103–3107 and XTS 129.4482–4483.

[45] According to XTS 120.4318, Chancellor Yang Guozhong 楊國忠 (?–756) disliked Cui Huan and exiled him to Sichuan for that reason.

[46] Huizhong was a disciple of Huineng. See SGSZ, T50.2061:763a3.

[47] See SGSZ, T50.2061:764c22.

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