

Rebirth in the Lotus:
Song Dynasty *Lotus Sūtra* Devotion and Pure Land
Aspiration in Zongxiao's *Fahua jing xianying lu*

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Abstract

Devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra* and aspiration to rebirth in Amitābha's Pure Land are often cast as distinct traditions within Chinese Buddhism. This article examines the intersection between these two traditions as presented in a set of biographical miracle stories collated by the Southern Song Tiantai monk Zongxiao (1154-1214). Zongxiao's collection the *Fahua jing xianying lu* 法華經顯應錄 (The Record of The *Lotus Sūtra*'s Manifest Responses) contains a significant number of accounts from the Song period that explain the attainment of rebirth in the Pure Land through the efficacy of devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra*. The article situates this merging of *Lotus Sūtra* practice with aspiration to rebirth in the Pure Land in the context of Zongxiao's life activities, which are presented as both reflecting and shaping developments within Tiantai Buddhism of the Song period.

Keywords:

Zongxiao, *Lotus Sūtra*, Pure Land, Tiantai, Song Buddhism

法華信仰中的淨土往生 ——宗曉《法華經顯應錄》的法華信仰與往生淨土

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摘要

在中國佛教中，法華信仰與往生彌陀淨土時常被視為兩個獨特而各別的傳統。本文藉由宋朝天台僧宗曉（1154-1214）所編纂的《法華經顯應錄》中可觀的實例，來探討這兩種信仰傳統的交集。此文獻記載了禮誦《法華經》而得以往生淨土的靈驗。本文論題呈現出宗曉因受了宋朝天台宗發展的影響而注重法華信仰與淨土往生的融會。

關鍵詞：宗曉、《法華經》、淨土、天台宗、宋代佛教

Introduction

In East Asian Buddhism, the *Lotus Sūtra* has served as a capacious and luxuriant field encompassing and nurturing a myriad array of interpretations and practices. Among these, the aspiration to rebirth in the Pure Land through devotion to the *Lotus* has inhabited a significant corner of that field. Viewing this relationship from another perspective, however, we might say that Pure Land belief and practice has been the field in which the *Lotus Sūtra* has occupied its own special plot among the numerous scriptures and practices associated with Pure Land Buddhism. Both of these perspectives remind us that these two traditions within Buddhism, though by no means coequal, have been inextricably linked to one another through most of the history of East Asian Buddhism.

Perhaps no other institution within that history has strengthened the bond between the *Lotus Sūtra* and Pure Land belief more than the Tiantai school, both in its Chinese and Japanese incarnations. In China Tiantai played an ever greater role as time progressed in assigning importance to both the *Lotus Sūtra* and to the Pure Land tradition, all the while linking each closely to the other. Ironically, this relationship reached its apogee in Song China (960-1279) at the very same time that these two traditions started going their separate ways in Kamakura-era Japan. The Kamakura paradigm of exclusive practices has had such a powerful influence that it might lead us to forget how closely the *Lotus* and Pure Land traditions have been intertwined through most of history, with each fostering and nourishing the other.

The present study examines one aspect of the longstanding bond between these two traditions as it is highlighted in the Song period of China. Their relationship under the umbrella of Tiantai will be examined through the *Fahua jing xianying lu* 法華經顯應錄 (The Record of The *Lotus Sūtra's* Manifest Responses; hereafter *FHXYL*), a collection of *Lotus* devotion miracle tales compiled by the Song monk Zongxiao 宗曉 (1151-1214) in 1198.

Zongxiao's production of the *FHXYL*, far from representing an isolated accomplishment in his life, constituted an integral part of a larger pattern of activity that was associated with the promulgation of major themes, among which the theoretical and cultivational centrality of the *Lotus Sūtra* and rebirth in the Pure Land as a salvific goal figured prominently. The *FHXYL* thus stands as an important source through which we can view the traditional nexus in Chinese Buddhism between devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra* and the aspiration to rebirth in Amitābha's Pure Land.

Zongxiao and Song Tiantai

Zongxiao's birth in the middle of the twelfth century near Mingzhou 明州 (modern Ningbo) placed him both in location and time at a propitious juncture in the history of the Tiantai school.¹ Mingzhou, as one of Song China's major ports and windows on the world, had boasted a significant Tiantai presence since the Wuyue period (907-978), when the monk Yitong (Korean name: Uitong) 義通 (927-988), having studied with the Tiantai authority Xiji 羲寂 (919-987) at Mt. Tiantai, was entreated to take up residence in this port city instead of returning to his native Korea.² Two of Yitong's disciples, Siming Zhili 四明知禮 (960-1028) and Ciyun Zunshi 慈雲遵式 (964-1032),³ were subsequently responsible for a doctrinal, liturgical, and institutional revival that propelled the Tiantai school to a position of prominence in Song Buddhism. Zhili in particular had deep roots in Mingzhou. He was born in Mingzhou and from an early age spent his entire career in monasteries located in the city. Among these was the Yanqing Monastery 延慶院, which Zhili established as a public teaching monastery in the Tiantai tradition.⁴ As the Song progressed, this monastery became a vital center of Tiantai activity, even replacing the school's traditional center and birthplace Mt. Tiantai in terms of actual influence. It was thus in Mingzhou at the Yanqing monastery that Zongxiao was to spend a significant segment of his monastic life.

Zongxiao's career was launched upon his full ordination at the age of eighteen.⁵ The course of his studies after ordination is obscure since he studied with two men, Master Juan Qiang 具菴強 (d.u.) and Master Yun'an Hong 雲菴洪 (d.u.), about whom nothing is known.⁶ If we can infer from the general pattern of the standard monastic career during this period, in which the study of Vinaya was undertaken right after ordination, Master

¹ See Zongxiao's biography in *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (hereafter, *FZTJ*) T 2035, 239c-240a. Also, Mochizuki Shinkō, *Bukkyō daijiten* 佛教大辭典 (1954-1958, 2230b-2231a). Many of the details in the biography that follows are also presented in Getz (1997).

² See Yitong's biography in *FZTJ* T 2035, 191b18-27.

³ The *FZTJ* biographies of Zhili and Zunshi can be found in T 2035, 191c-194b and T 2035, 207a-209a, respectively.

⁴ On this monastery, see Getz (1994, 130-64)

⁵ *FZTJ* T 2035, 239c16-19.

⁶ A search through the historical section of the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 provided no clue as to the identities of these two men.

Qiang would have been responsible for instructing Zongxiao in the Vinaya. Zongxiao's involvement with Tiantai would then have begun with Master Hong. Under Hong's tutelage, Zongxiao is described as "closely according with the contemplation of principle" (*liguan miqi* 理觀密契), a likely allusion to accomplishment in Tiantai learning and cultivation. Accompanying this attainment, he is recorded as taking up the position of head lecturer (*banzuo* 半坐). His learning was on display shortly thereafter as students flocked to his monastery, the Cuilo si 翠蘿寺, on the coastal island of Changguo 昌國 north of Mingzhou where he had been appointed the abbot.⁷

After two years, Zongxiao abandoned this position for the life of a recluse at West Mountain (Xishan 西山), one branch of the Siming mountain range located west of Mingzhou.⁸ For centuries, the mountain fastnesses of this chain, along with those of the parallel Tiantai range to the southeast, had provided Buddhist practitioners with the solitude and straitened conditions required for spiritual cultivation. In this isolated setting, Zongxiao took up the practice of daily recitation of the *Lotus Sūtra*, a discipline that apparently extended through the rest of his life. Writing in 1198, at a considerably later point in Zongxiao's career, the literati official Lou Yao 樓鑰 (1137-1213) described Zongxiao as reciting the *Lotus* morning and night, and copying the scripture with his blood.⁹

Zongxiao's affiliation with influential literati figures who shared roots in Mingzhou became evident early on in his career. During the stay on West Mountain, Wang Dayou 汪大猷 (1120-1200), a native of Yin county 鄞縣 south of Mingzhou who became a minister in the Southern Song government, bestowed the title plaque "Carefree Tranquility" (Xianjing 閑靜) on

⁷ The *Baoqing Siming zhi* 寶慶四明志, a gazetteer for the Yin 鄞 (Siming 四明) prefecture published in 1227 after Zongxiao's death, lists the Cuiluo si as a hereditary monastery. Since abbotship at hereditary monasteries was transmitted to one's personally ordained disciples, Zongxiao's position as abbot would suggest that this was the monastery where he had been ordained. Since this monastery was not a public teaching (i.e. Tiantai) monastery, Zongxiao's relationship with the Tiantai school at this point in his career is not entirely clear. See *Baoqing Siming zhi* (20:24) in *Songyuan difangzhi congshu* 宋元地方志叢書 (1970, 8:5338).

⁸ *FZTJ* 18, T 2035, 239c18. I am conjecturing that the West Mountain (Xishan) mentioned in Zongxiao's biography refers to that branch of the Siming Mountain chain referred to in *Baoqing Siming zhi* (4:2, 2-3), in *Songyuan difangzhi congshu* (8:5115).

⁹ This account is described in Lou Yao's preface to the *FHXYL*, R 134, 815a7-8.

Zongxiao's hermitage.¹⁰ Wang's patronage of Zongxiao was accompanied by that of his youngest son, Wang Lizhong 汪立中 (d.u.) and was further enhanced by Wang's nephew, the aforementioned Lou Yao, who was also of Yin county and who, as a prolific literary figure and influential bureaucrat, commemorated several of Zongxiao's accomplishments in verse.¹¹ Zongxiao also had considerable dealings with a prominent Buddhist layman, Zhang Zongyi 張宗義 (d.u.), who was known by the title Zhonglin Jushi 中林居士.¹² For Zhang, Zongxiao personally made a calligraphic copy of the Song emperor Zhenzong's 真宗 (r. 997-1022) commentary on the *Sishier zhang jing* 四十二章經 (Sūtra in Forty-two Sections).¹³ Furthermore, as we shall see below, Zhang contributed artistically to the enhancement of a hostel that Zongxiao established in his later years.

After his residence on West Mountain, Zongxiao went on a three-year tour of monasteries throughout the Western Circuit of the Liangzhe region (present Zhejiang and Jiangsu), which included the area around Hangzhou and Suzhou.¹⁴ Although his biography states nothing about this itinerant period of his career, the area he roamed boasted a significant Tiantai presence, and earlier in the twelfth century had witnessed the initiation of the White Lotus teaching (白蓮教) by Mao Ziyuan 茅子元 (d. 1166).¹⁵ The richness and diversity of this tour undoubtedly contributed to Zongxiao's later work of collecting materials and documenting developments in Tiantai, *Lotus Sūtra* devotion, and Pure Land belief and practice.

Following this itinerant period, Zongxiao returned to Mingzhou, where he received an official appointment from Wang Dayou and Wang Lizhong.¹⁶ In

¹⁰ On Wang Dayou, see Chang (1986, 1.714).

¹¹ On Wang Lizhong, see Chang (1986, 1.717). On Lou Yao, see Chang (1986, 5.3728). Lou Yao is famous for his literary collection, the *Gongkui ji* 攻媿集 (SKPC, 48, 1343). On this work, see Hervouet (1978, 422).

¹² I have been unable to find any information on Zhang Zongyi other than that found in Zongxiao's biography.

¹³ *FZTJ* T 2035, 239c27-28.

¹⁴ *FZTJ* T 2035, 239c20-21.

¹⁵ On this area, see Suzuki (1941) and Haar (1992). On Zongxiao's possible relationship with the White Lotus teaching, see Getz (1997).

¹⁶ *FZTJ* T 2035, 239c22. The nature of this appointment, represented by the Chinese phrase *ming zhu canxiu* 命主參秀, is not clear to me. One reading would suggest that he was appointed abbot of a monastery called Canxiu 參秀. Searches through the *FZTJ* as well as gazetteers have not turned up any monastery by that name. This would suggest the need for another reading in

the end, he resigned this position and took up the post of chief lecturer at the Yanqing Monastery, where he spent the remainder of his life.

In the period preceding his arrival, the Yanqing Monastery had been brought back from near oblivion.¹⁷ The monastery had been abandoned in 1130 when the Jurchen invasion of the South extended to Mingzhou. In the following period, the monastery fell into disrepair as it was used to house officials and their families of the new Southern Song government. In 1142, Yuanbian Daochen 圓辯道琛 (1086-1153) began refurbishing the monastery, establishing it as the premier institution of Tiantai learning, and asserting the central importance of Zhili in the historical development of Tiantai.¹⁸ Daochen's student, Yuetang Huixun 月堂慧詢 (1119-1179), took up the abbotship in 1169 and promoted the monastery and Zhili's doctrinal interpretation of Tiantai received from Daochen.¹⁹ Huixun, in addition, was a dedicated devotee of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which earned his biography a place in the *FHXYL*.²⁰ Zongxiao describes Huixun's daily recitation of the entire *Lotus Sūtra* as taking place without fail in extremes of heat and cold and even in sickness—this despite his heavy responsibilities as abbot.²¹ Zongxiao's lineage in the *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (Comprehensive History of the Buddhas and Patriarchs; hereafter, *FZTJ*) lists him as Huixun's student, though that connection is at best tentative since there is no explicit mention of Huixun in Zongxiao's own biography. There is no doubt, however, of Zongxiao's relationship with Boting Shanyue 柏庭善月 (1149-1241) who had been Huixun's disciple and who was abbot of the Yanqing Monastery at the time of Zongxiao's residence there (1191-1204).²² Consequently, Zongxiao's stay at the monastery during Shanyue's tenure ensured that he witnessed and absorbed the vision of Tiantai that had been propagated in Daochen's lineage.

Zongxiao's work during this period transcended his engagement in lecturing and personal spiritual cultivation. He oversaw the drilling of a charitable well for travelers at the Oak Shrine (*Lishe* 櫟社) located south of

which Zongxiao was appointed an official position titled "*canxiu*". Although I could not find any reference to such a position, the term makes more sense since Wang Dayou is referred to in the biography as *dacan* 大參.

17 On the Yanqing Monastery in this period, see Getz (1994, 147-49).

18 On the restoration of the Yanqing Monastery under Daochen, see his biography, *FZTJ* T 2035, 231a2-5.

19 See Huixun's biography, *FZTJ* T 2035, 235a23-b1.

20 *FHXYL* R 134, 876a-b.

21 *FHXYL* R 134, 876b1-2.

22 See Shanyue's biography, *FZTJ* T 2035, 238b-239a.

the city gate, and in consonance with his devotional regimen, named this site the Lotus Spring (*Fahua quan* 法華泉). Around the well, he erected a pavilion where tea (*tangming* 湯茗) was served to laics and clerics alike. A number of rooms were erected for providing hospitality, and the site was further enhanced with holy images (painted by Zhang Zongyi), a Tripitaka wheel, a bell, and tower. This hostel complex gained its name, Eternal Delight (*Changle* 常樂), through an old title plaque acquired by Zongxiao.²³ This plaque had been produced by the renowned literatus Wei Qi 魏杞 (1121-1184), who had been a close acquaintance and—presumably—a supporter of Huixun when he was abbot of the Yanqing Monastery.²⁴ Furthermore, support for the facility was evidently secured through an increase in fields that were cleared for cultivation. Like his dharma ancestor Zhili, Zongxiao made his disciples foreswear any ambition for taking over the facility.²⁵

Most relevant for the present discussion, the period of Zongxiao's residence at the Yanqing Monastery was marked by the prolific production of texts, many of them compilations of primary materials that he had collected, arranged, and edited.²⁶ In broader historical terms, Zongxiao's work in collecting these texts reflected a common trend within Song society in general and Buddhism in particular to document and interpret the past.²⁷ At the end

²³ *FZTJT* 2035, 240a2-4.

²⁴ On Wei Qi, see Chang (1986, 5.4233). Concerning Weiqi's relationship with Huixun, see *FZTJT* 2035, 235b2-6.

²⁵ *FZTJ* T 2035, 240a4-5. Consult the similar oath that Zhili imposed on his personally ordained disciples, see *Siming zunzhe jiaoxing lu*, T 1937, 908b-909a.

²⁶ Zongxiao's biography (*FZTJ* T 2035, 239c23-26) documents his production of the following texts:

- a. *Fahua xianying lu* 法華顯應錄 (R 134)
- b. *Lebang wenlei* 樂邦文類 (T 1969A)
- c. *Lebang yigao* 樂邦遺稿 (T 1969B)
- d. *Siming zunshe jiaoxing lu* 四明教行錄 (T 1937)
- e. *Sanjiao chuxing song* 三教出興頌 (R 101)
- f. *Zhenzu ji* 振祖集 (T 1937)
- g. *Jin guangming jing zhaojie* 金光明經照解 (R 31)
- h. *Shishi tonglan* 施食通覽 (R 101)
- i. *Zhuzu zan* 諸祖贊 (status unknown)
- j. *Rushi xiaoji* 儒釋孝紀 (status unknown)
- k. *Mingliang chongshi zhi* 明良崇釋志 (status unknown)
- l. *Mingjiao bian* 明教編 (status unknown)

²⁷ Concerning the popularity of anthological literature during the Song, see Hayashi (1936, 7.1-18).

of a century that had witnessed the Fangla 方臘 Rebellion in Zhejiang (1120), the loss of the North to the Jurchen (1026), and the aforementioned Jurchen incursion into southeastern China (1030), Zongxiao was well aware of the vulnerability and fragility of texts and consequently dedicated his career to the preservation of primary historical materials. In terms of content, these collections reveal Zongxiao's preoccupation with major themes and issues in the Tiantai tradition, while at the same time documenting broader religious concerns and practices in Song society. Related to the present topic are three major collections that will be discussed in opposite order to their historical appearance: the *Siming zunzhe jiaoxing lu* 四明尊者教行錄 (1204, hereafter *JXL*),²⁸ the *Lebang wenlei* 樂邦文類 (1200, hereafter, *LBWL*),²⁹ and the *Fahua jing xianying lu* 法華經顯應錄 (1198).³⁰ All of these works contain three intersecting and interlocking themes that will be highlighted below: the doctrinal and institutional primacy of the Tiantai school, the scriptural centrality of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and the superiority of rebirth in the Pure Land as a soteriological choice.

The *Siming zunzhe jiaoxing lu* (Record of Venerable Siming's Teaching and Practice)

Zongxiao's *Siming zunzhe jiaoxing lu* (Record of Venerable Siming's Teaching and Practice) is a collection of primary materials either produced by, or related to, the career of Siming Zhili. At the beginning of the Song, when the identity and very existence of the Tiantai school seemed to hang in the balance, Zhili put an indelible stamp on the school's development, and played an integral role in its revival. The *JXL* documents the doctrinal, liturgical, and institutional facets of Zhili's part in this renewal.

Zhili's career involved an affirmation, often within the context of debate and controversy, of the doctrines of mutual inherence and the idea of evil inherence that set Tiantai apart from Chan and Huayan, the two other major traditions of the period.³¹ Later in history, Zhili's position within the Tiantai school became known as the Shanjia 山家 (Mountain School) faction, whereas his Tiantai opponents—most prominently, his disciple Renyue 仁岳—were classified as Shanwai 山外 (Off the Mountain).

28 T 1937, 46: 856-934.

29 T 1969A, 47: 148-229.

30 *FHXYL* R 134, 815a1-896a12.

31 On Zhili's doctrinal stance, see Chan (1999, 409-41); also Ziporyn (1999, 442-76).

Although Zhili's reputation is primarily associated with this theoretical formulation of the school's unique vision of reality, he was equally immersed in the Tiantai system of practice. Even though his contributions were overshadowed by the prodigious liturgical production of his dharma brother and close friend Zunshi 遵式 (964-1032)—who was appropriately titled “Penance Master”³²—Zhili assiduously practiced Tiantai penitential rites and expended effort in codifying manuals for the Bodhisattva precept ceremony and various penitential rites that fit within that system. By Zongxiao's era, Zunshi's historical reputation as a renewer of Tiantai practice balanced Zhili's image as a dharma master. Nevertheless, Zhili's concern with ritual life is on view, albeit in a very limited way, in the *JXL*: his ritual for the bestowal of the bodhisattva precepts, the *Shou pusa jie yi* 受菩薩戒儀 (The Rite of Bodhisattva Precept Conferral), is located at the front of all of his works in the collection.³³

Institutionally, Zhili established the Yanqing Monastery in Mingzhou as a public monastery dedicated to the perpetual propagation of Tiantai teaching and the cultivation of Tiantai penitential rites and contemplative practices. Zhili's efforts in negotiating official recognition for his monastery and in insuring that his disciples would honor the Yanqing yuan as a public monastery is richly documented in the *JXL*.³⁴ The overall effect of Zhili's and Zunshi's work to establish their monasteries in Mingzhou and Hangzhou, respectively, as centers of Tiantai learning and practice was to move the center of focus for Song Tiantai away from Mount Tiantai to new seats of institutional authority.

In light of this content, one of the main effects of Zongxiao's collection was to solidify the centrality of Zhili's lineage and the importance of the Yanqing Monastery in the Tiantai historical scheme that had begun to emerge in the twelfth century. The preeminent position of Zhili and his line was by no means a given, even in Zongxiao's period. Tiantai had begun in the Song as a rather amorphous reality with different lines at scattered monasteries that had survived the chaos and depredations characterizing the end of the Tang dynasty. Besides competition from a Tang patriarchal line that was associated with Mt. Tiantai, as well as from the various lines established by his Shanwai competitors, Zhili's own lineage was shared with his dharma brother Zunshi whose accomplishments, as previously noted, were no less brilliant than

³² On Zunshi and his ritual contributions, see Stevenson (1999, 340-408).

³³ *JXL* T 1937, 858c.

³⁴ See *JXL* T 1937, 907b-910a.

Zhili's.³⁵ In 1155, the Tiantai monk Huiguan 慧觀 (d.u.), a fifth generation descendant in Zunshi's lineage, had gathered Zunshi's miscellaneous works into a collection titled the *Jinyuan ji* 金園集 (Golden Garden Compendium).³⁶ This work, by Zongxiao's own recognition, served as a precedent for preserving scattered materials by Zhili that were in danger of being lost.³⁷

Throughout its documentation of Zhili's doctrinal, liturgical, and institutional efforts, the *JXL* testifies to the preeminence that the *Lotus Sūtra* and Pure Land belief and practice held in Zhili's career. In 1017, Zhili made a pact with ten companions to practice the *Fahua chan* 法華懺, the Tiantai penitential rite based on the *Lotus Sūtra*, for three years. At the end of this period, they were to immolate themselves. Their purpose, attested to in Zhili's biographies as well as various communications with others contained in the *JXL*, was to ensure and hasten rebirth in the Pure Land. Although the practice of immolation, deriving from the *Lotus Sūtra*, had no explicit connection with Pure Land rebirth, this association in China had a long history that continued on into the Song.³⁸

Zhili's dedication to Pure Land practice was not simply a matter of his own personal aspiration: he made a concerted effort to spread this soteriology to the populace of Mingzhou. The *JXL* documents his founding of a Pure Land society at the Yanqing Monastery in 1013.³⁹ Zhili envisioned that this society, dedicated to rebirth in the Pure Land, would consist of ten thousand people enlisted in smaller cadres. Each member was responsible for one thousand daily recitations of the Amitābha's name, the completion of which was recorded with a mark on a calendar. The membership gathered once a year at Zhili's monastery to give contributions, to pray for the dead, and to obtain calendars for the coming year's devotions. The establishment of Pure Land societies became a frequent phenomenon among the Tiantai generations succeeding Zhili, and contributed to the widespread devotion to Pure Land Buddhism in Song society, particularly in the South.⁴⁰

35 Concerning different Song Tiantai lineage schemes, see Koichi Shinohara (1999, 524-76).

36 See Zongxiao's preface to the *JXL* T 1937, 856b10-11. The *Jinyuan ji* is located in R 101. *FZTJ* T 2035, 209c lists Huiguan as Zunshi's fifth generation disciple, but his biography is not included.

37 See Zongxiao's preface to the *JXL* T 1937, 856b16-22.

38 See Getz (1994, 175-89).

39 See the "*Jie nianfohui shu* 結念佛會疏" in *JXL* T 1937, 862a-c.

40 On the proliferation of societies, see Getz (1999, 477-523).

The *Lebang wenlei* (Compendium of the Blissful Country)

The proliferation of Pure Land societies and the spread of Pure Land practice is the background for understanding the second of Zongxiao's collections to be discussed here, the *Lebang wenlei* (Compendium of the Blissful Country) produced in 1200.⁴¹ The *LBWL* contains over 220 short pieces in a wide range of genres arranged according to fourteen different categories.⁴² In 1204, Zongxiao supplemented this work with a second collection, the *Lebang yigao* 樂邦遺稿 (Addendum to the Compendium of the Blissful Country), which contains another 128 works.⁴³ Although Zongxiao evidently intended his collection to cover the full range of Pure Land belief and practice, from its inception in Buddhist scriptures through its various manifestations in the history of Chinese Buddhism, the bulk of the collection is drawn from Song sources.⁴⁴ The preponderance of Song sources in the *LBWL* is undoubtedly partly a function of availability, both because sources from earlier periods had perished and because Zongxiao included many contemporary sources from monasteries in his locale. Yet this imbalance also reveals an increase in Pure Land devotion and practice during the Song, much of it associated with the Tiantai school.

The Song era increase in activities associated with Pure Land belief, particularly the establishment of Pure Land societies, led Zongxiao to create a Pure Land patriarchate based on figures who, in the history of Chinese Buddhism, had either founded societies or were responsible for propagating Pure Land devotion in the general populace.⁴⁵ This schema of a Pure Land patriarchate was later affirmed and accorded an even more secure and

⁴¹ On the content and background of the *Lebang wenlei*, see Hayashi and Takase (1936, 7.1-18).

⁴² See Zongxiao's preface, *Lebang wenlei* T 1969A, 149b29-149c1. These categories are as follows: 1) sūtras (*jing* 經), 2) incantations (*zhou* 咒), 3) treatises (*lun* 論), 4) prefaces and colophons (*xu* 序 and *ba* 跋, respectively), 5) essays (*wen* 文), 6) eulogies (*zan* 贊), 7) stele records (*ji bei* 記碑), 8) biographies (*zhuan* 傳), 9) miscellaneous writings (*zawen* 雜文), 10) *fu* and inscriptions (*fu* 賦 and *ming* 銘, respectively), 11) *gāthā* (*jie* 偈), 12) *gāthā* (*song* 頌), 13) verse (*shi* 詩), 14) verse (*ci* 詞).

⁴³ The *Lebang yigao* is found in T 1969B.

⁴⁴ Hayashi (1936, 9-12) calculates that of 145 pieces, excluding scriptural excerpts, 122 were produced in the Song and of the 89 authors with works in the *LBWL*, 75 lived in the Song era.

⁴⁵ *LBWL* T 1969A, 192c-193c.

prominent position in the recounting of Chinese Buddhist history when Zhipan 志磐 expanded upon and modified Zongxiao's list in the Pure Land section of his *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀.⁴⁶ The creation of a Pure Land patriarchate was thus a byproduct of the increased prominence of Pure Land belief in the Song. In an earlier study on Zongxiao's *LBWL*, I argued that this patriarchate, consisting of eminent monks, was created to assert the primacy of the monastic community within the Buddhist fold, thus counteracting a trend toward a lay-led and lay-centered Pure Land practice most visibly evidenced by the White Lotus teaching that had arisen earlier in the twelfth century.⁴⁷ This theme of monastic primacy is a thread running through Zongxiao's major works that will be revisited below in the discussion on the *FHXYL*.

Finally, the *LBWL*, like the other works by Zongxiao discussed here, acknowledges the preeminence of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Staying true to his Tiantai roots and to his own personal devotion, Zongxiao affirmed the primacy of the *Lotus* by opening the first section of his collection, which contains scriptural excerpts from sūtras, treatises, and commentaries, with a summary of a passage from the Parable of the Conjured City chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*.⁴⁸ This passage relates how the sixteen sons of the Buddha Victorious through Great Penetrating Knowledge (Chinese: Datong Zhisheng 大通智勝; Sanskrit: Mahābhijñāñānābhīhū) hear him preach the *Lotus Sūtra*. Upon the completion of the scripture, the Buddha retreats to a quiet room and enters into *samādhi* for 84,000 *kalpas*, while his sons, the sixteen bodhisattvas, ascend the Dharma Throne to preach and explain this sūtra themselves. In the process, each one of the bodhisattvas converts countless beings. The passage goes on to identify the sixteen sons as having become Buddhas of the ten directions. Zongxiao's excerpt only mentions two of these Buddhas: Amitābha and Śākyamuni. Thus, from the outset of his collection on Pure Land belief and practice, Zongxiao highlights the familial bond between the Buddha of the Pure Land and Śākyamuni, as well as an irrefutable nexus between Amitābha and the *Lotus Sūtra*. In a note appended to this passage, Zongxiao observes that in preaching the *Lotus Sūtra* through 84,000 *kalpas*, Amitābha established a karmic link with all the countless beings that either had been or would be

46 *FZTJT* 2035, 260c.

47 See Getz (1997, 19-24).

48 *LBWL* T 1969A, 151b. For the original passage, see *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 T 262, 22c4-25c6. For an English translation, see Hurvitz (1976, 130-47).

reborn in his Pure Land.⁴⁹ From Zongxiao's perspective, the *Lotus Sūtra* was not just one among many scriptures with a connection to Amitābha and his Pure Land, but rather it occupied the very heart of Pure Land soteriology. As we shall see, Zongxiao had already documented numerous historical instances of this relationship in his collection *Fahua jing xianying lu* (The Record of The *Lotus Sūtra*'s Manifest Responses; *FHXYL*), which he produced two years prior to the *LBWL*.

The *Fahua jing xianying lu* (The Record of The *Lotus Sūtra*'s Manifest Responses): Purpose and Content

In the preface to the *Fahua jing xianying lu* Zongxiao observes: "Today no matter whether renunciant or householder, all recite [the *Lotus Sūtra*] and cultivate it with utmost intent. If numinous merit and great accomplishments are not registered on the printing blocks, then past words and deeds will not be heard throughout the world. How, then, will the entreaty to faith have a start?"⁵⁰ Zongxiao's production of the *Fahua jing xianying lu*, then, was much more than a mere bibliographic exercise. As in the case of his other collections, his motivation derived from a desire for practical consequences—in this case, a deepened devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra* among the collection's audience.

The essence of this collection was the recounting of biographical stories that gave witness to the miraculous efficacy of devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra*. The notion of miraculous efficacy was based theoretically upon the Buddhist concept of karma and the traditional Chinese idea of stimulus and response (*ganying* 感應), in which the actions of the devotee stimulate (*gan*) the numinous realm, creating a resonance that elicits a response (*ying*) in the form of a miraculous manifestation.⁵¹ This dynamic and mutual relationship between stimulus and response was central to Tiantai teaching from its beginnings, and Zongxiao alludes to it in his title "The Record of The *Lotus Sūtra*'s Manifest Responses" (*Fahua jing xianying lu*), which he explains in his preface: "[The title] is taken from the Tiantai tradition's articulation of extraordinary phenomena (*shengxiang* 勝相) elicited by the stimulus (*gan*) of one's actions and speech in the present life, [a relationship denoted] by the

49 *LBWL* T 1969A, 151c13-14.

50 *FHXYL* R 134, 819b11-14.

51 On the genre of *Lotus Sūtra* miracle tales and the notion of stimulus/response, see Stevenson (1995a, 429).

term 'manifest response to a present causal impetus' (*xianji xianying* 顯機顯應)."⁵²

At the beginning of his preface to the *FHXYL*, Zongxiao notes that collections of miraculous biographies for cultivational practices associated with major scriptures had already been compiled for the *Huayan Sūtra*, the *Diamond Sūtra*, the *Lotus Sūtra*, as well as for devotions to Guanyin and Amitābha.⁵³ In the case of the *Lotus Sūtra*, Zongxiao cites two collections that served as a precedent for his own: the *Lingrui ji* 靈瑞集 (Collection of Miraculous Signs) and the *Xu Lingrui ji* 續靈瑞集 (Further Collection of Miraculous Signs).⁵⁴ Since neither of these works has survived, our knowledge of them is dependent on the information that Zongxiao has left us.

From his preface we learn that the *Lingrui ji* consisted of sixty accounts, that its collator was unknown, and that Yang Xi 楊曦 (d.u.) had written a preface for it in the Jiayou 嘉祐 period (1056-1063) of the Northern Song era.⁵⁵ Although the text had been around for over a century, it had only recently been republished. Zongxiao notes that this work had three deficiencies. His three-point critique reveals much about his own priorities and philosophy of collating literature: the *Lingrui ji* failed to indicate the sources from which its biographies had been taken; it made no distinction between lay people and monastics; and it lacked patriarchal biographies—presumably, Zongxiao was referring to the Tiantai patriarchs.⁵⁶ Zongxiao claims that many of these deficiencies were rectified by the *Xu Lingrui ji* that was compiled in the Dagan 大觀 era (1107-1110) by the Tiantai historian monk Yuanying 元穎.⁵⁷ Yuanying organized his collection of more than 100 entries into two fascicles with ten categories:⁵⁸

⁵² *FHXYL* R 134, 819b-820a1. An explanation of the term *xianji xianying* is found in Yanshou's 延壽 *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄 T 2016, 766b23.

⁵³ *FHXYL* R 134, 819a18-b2.

⁵⁴ *FHXYL* R 134, 819b2-3. Neither of these works survives. It is curious that Zongxiao makes no mention of other Tang *Lotus Sūtra* biographical collections: Huixiang's 惠祥 *Hongzan fahua zhuan* 弘贊法華傳 (T 2067) and Sengxiang's 僧祥 *Fahua jing zhuanji* 法華經傳記 (T 2068). On Huixiang's work, see Stevenson (1995a, 427-51).

⁵⁵ *FHXYL* R 134, 819b3-4.

⁵⁶ *FHXYL* R 134, 819b5-6.

⁵⁷ Yuanying produced the *Tiantai zongyuan lu* 天台宗元錄, which was one of the predecessors to the two great Tiantai histories produced in the thirteenth century, Zongjian's 宗鑑 *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統 and Zhipan's *Fozu tongji*. Yuanying's authorship of the *Xu Lingrui ji* in relation to the *Lingrui ji* is

1. Certification by Samantabhadra 普賢證明
2. Fulfillment of miraculous conditions 妙因成就
3. Reverence by demons and gods 鬼神恭敬
4. Obeisance by birds and beasts 禽獸欽伏
5. Fulfillment of wishes 所願成就
6. Apparitional Buddhas coming to greet one at the time of death 化佛來迎
7. Rebirth in the Pure Land 往生淨土
8. Rebirth in heavens 果報生天
9. Preservation of tongues 舌根不壞
10. Manifestations of fragrance and light 香光表瑞

It is not clear from this list of contents how Yuanying improved on the *Lingrui ji*. Zongxiao, however, suggests that Yuanying's Tiantai outlook permeated the collection since at the end of the work he declared,

"If Reality itself (*shixiang* 實相) is the *Lotus*, then all scriptures and all practices are nothing but the *Lotus*. If that which is rare is a miraculous manifestation (*lingrui* 靈瑞), then this body and that body are nothing but miraculous manifestations. For this reason, I have collected [in the *Xu Lingrui ji*] various extraordinary accounts (*yiji* 異蹟). I wish for those seeing or hearing this work that they obtain what sons of the Buddha should obtain."⁵⁹

Since the *Lotus Sūtra*, in Yuanying's view, enveloped all practices within itself, rebirth in the Pure Land would have resulted from devotion to the *Lotus*. Such a view of the relationship between the *Lotus Sūtra* practice and rebirth in the Pure Land seems to have informed Zongxiao in his production of the *FHXYL* and was operative as well in his collation of the *LBWL* that we discussed above.

Much as he might have admired Yuanying's work, Zongxiao pointed out that *Xu Lingrui ji*'s printing blocks had perished long ago and that few in his

discussed in Zongxiao's preface, *FHXYL* R 134, 819b6-9. A much fuller statement appears in Yuanying's biography within the *FHXYL* R 134, 870b-871a. Also see his biography in the *FZTJT* 2035, 246c.

58 *FHXYL* R 134, 871a2-4.

59 *FHXYL* R 134, 871a6-8.

time had seen the work.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the period of the twelfth century that followed Yuanying had witnessed a significant number of both clerics and laics dedicated to the *Lotus*. Instead of trying to orchestrate a reprinting of Yuanying's work, Zongxiao set about putting together his own collection. Consulting biographies of eminent monks as well as a host of Buddhist and non-Buddhist works, he produced a compendium in two fascicles that contains 239 entries, most of which are biographies.⁶¹ Zongxiao arranged the entries in a rough chronological sequence within five different categories:

1. Ancient Holy Figures (in the *Lotus Sūtra*) (7)
2. Eminent monks (173)
3. Eminent nuns (13)
4. Male faithful (32)
5. Female faithful (14)

In content and format, Zongxiao's collection reveals characteristics that corrected the problems he ascribed to the *Lingrui ji*. Most of his entries in the *FHXYL* are followed by the titles of the works from which the entries are drawn. In citing his sources, Zongxiao thus reveals both an integrity and critical sensibility with regard to texts not evident in earlier Buddhist collections. Furthermore, the categories in the *FHXYL* assert a hierarchical schema in which monastics are set above laics (and in which males precede females). Zongxiao's insistence upon this distinction between clergy and lay people in the *FHXYL* supports the argument that one of his goals was the strengthening of the status of the monastic community, and that his Pure Land patriarchate (in the *JXL*) consisting of eminent monks was in part formed in reaction to the lay-centered leadership within the White Lotus teaching. Finally, in line with Zongxiao's identity as a Tiantai monk and his various efforts to promote the school institutionally and intellectually, as documented above, the *FHXYL* contains the biographies of numerous Tiantai figures: Huisi 慧思 (515-577) and Zhiyi 智顛 (538-597), founding patriarchs of the Tiantai school; Zhiyi's disciple, Guanding 觀頂 (561-632), who was responsible for editing the master's writings; a significant number of Zhiyi's other disciples;

⁶⁰ *FHXYL* R 134, 819b8-9.

⁶¹ *FHXYL* R 134, 819b15-16. Zongxiao speaks of consulting the *Dazang sanzhang sengzhuàn* 大藏三朝僧傳. The *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten* 佛書解說大辭典 (see 10.30c) refers to this as the *Daming sanzhang sengzhuàn* 大明三藏僧傳, presumably denoting the three major *Gaoseng zhuàn* (Liang, Tang [Xu], and Song) since these are cited as the sources for many of the biographies.

and other prominent Tiantai figures through history, particularly from the Song.⁶² The collection also includes patriarchal figures from other traditions, such as Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667) from the Lü 律 school, Xuanzang's 玄奘 (602-664) disciple Kuiji 窥基 (632-682) from the Faxiang 法相 school, and Chengguan 澄觀 (737-838) from the Huayan 華嚴 tradition.⁶³

The richness and variety of practices as well as the full scope of history covered by the *FHXYL* cannot be properly documented here. The discussion below will be confined to treatment of biographies from Song period that either document practices associated with Pure Land or relate deathbed phenomena portending rebirth in Amitābha's realm.⁶⁴ The following table provides a comparative overview of the number of Pure Land-related biographies in relation to the total biographies in each category as well as to the total number of biographies in the *FHXYL*. The table splits the biographies into two major historical periods—those that precede the Song and those in the Song—in order to highlight the proportional increase in mention of Pure Land activity among the Song biographies.

Categories	Totals	Pre-Song Bios	Pre-Song P.L. Bios	Song Bios	Song P.L. Bios
Monks	173	132	15	41	15
Nuns	13	13	0	0	0
Lay men	32	22	3	10	3
Lay women	14	7	0	7	2
Totals	232	172	18	59	20

Table 1: Song Pure Land Biographies⁶⁵

This table demonstrates that Song biographies in the *FHXYL* documenting either Pure Land practice or deathbed accounts occupy about one-third of the

⁶² See biographies of Huisi (*FHXYL* R 134, 825a-b), Zhiyi (*FHXYL* R 134, 825b-827a), and Guanding (*FHXYL* R 134, 830a-b). Curiously, the collection lacks biographies to such central figures as Zhanran 湛然 (711-782), Zhili, and Zunshi.

⁶³ See biographies of Daoxuan (*FHXYL* R 134, 827a), Kuiji (*FHXYL* R 134, 827a-b), and Chengguan (*FHXYL* R 134, 827b-828a).

⁶⁴ I am including within this biographies of figures from Wuyue during the Five Dynasties Period, since many of these stretched into the Song.

⁶⁵ Since the biographies in each category are roughly arranged chronological order, I have based my the tabulation of Song figures on a determination of the following individuals as being the first in the Song period:

Monks: Chengdu Fu Seng 成都府僧 *FHXYL* R 134, 864b;

Lay men: Wuwei jun Li Yu 無為軍李遇 *FHXYL* R 134, 888a;

Lay women: Gao An taishou sao 高安太守嫂 *FHXYL* R 134, 894a.

total accounts dedicated to Song figures. This stands in contrast to the approximate 1:10 ratio for accounts of Pure Land belief in pre-Song biographies. The Song Pure Land biography ratio, although seemingly small, nevertheless represents a significant increase over accounts of Pure Land activity in earlier periods.

The increase in Song Pure Land biographies admittedly is in part a function of the sources explicitly addressing Pure Land that Zongxiao relied upon for his Song accounts. In contrast to the biographies from earlier periods that were drawn from non-Pure Land sources (the overwhelming majority of which are taken from the three great *Biographies of Eminent Monks*), a significant number of Zongxiao's Song accounts are derived from texts explicitly dedicated to Pure Land teaching, in particular from Pure Land biographies.⁶⁶

One of these sources, referred to simply as *Baozhu ji* 寶珠集 (Precious Pearl Collection), bears discussion here, since it far surpasses other texts as the single-most cited source within Zongxiao's collection for Song Pure Land biographies. The exact identity of the *Baozhu ji* from which Zongxiao borrowed is not clear, but I will argue below that it refers to Wang Gu's 王古 (fl. 1084) *Xinbian gujin wangsheng jingtu baozhu ji* 新編古今往生淨土寶珠集 (The Newly Edited Precious Pearl Collection of Ancient and Recent Biographies of Rebirth in the Pure Land). This Pure Land biographical collection represented an important link in the development of Pure Land biographical collections in the Song.⁶⁷

That the Tiantai school played an important role in this development is clear from the outset, since the first Song collection, the *Wangsheng xifang lue zhuan* 往生西方略傳 (Brief Biographies of Rebirth in the Western Realm), was produced by Zunshi in 1017.⁶⁸ This was followed by the *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* 淨土往生傳 (Biographies of Rebirth in the Pure Land) by

⁶⁶ The three great Biographies of Eminent Monks are as follows: Gaoseng zhuan 高僧傳 (known as the Liang Biographies). Huijiao 慧皎. T 2059; Xu Gaoseng zhuan 續高僧傳 (known as the Tang Biographies). Daoxuan 道宣. T 2060; Song Gaoseng zhuan 宋高僧傳 (known as the Song Biographies). Zanning 贊寧. T 2061.

⁶⁷ On the development of Pure Land biographies during the Song, see Takao 高雄 (1975, 115-17; 169-71); also Mochizuki ([1942] 1978, 406-10); also Ogasawara 小笠原 (1951, 107-23).

⁶⁸ Except for its preface, this work is no longer extant. Zunshi's preface is found in *LBWL* T 1969A, 167b-168b.

the Tiantai monk Jiezhu 戒珠 in 1064.⁶⁹ Jiezhu's work, though considerably larger than Zunshi's (containing seventy-five biographies to Zunshi's thirty), was still limited to monastic figures. In 1084, Wang Gu produced the aforementioned *Xinbian gujin wangsheng jingtu baozhu ji*, a work in four fascicles with 109 biographies, including those of lay people.⁷⁰ Only the first fascicle of this work is extant, but its preface survives in the *LBWL*, thus demonstrating Zongxiao's awareness of this collection.⁷¹ Wang Gu apparently went on to edit and supplement this work, producing another collection in three fascicles with 115 biographies, the *Xinxiu wangsheng zhuan* 新修往生傳 (Revised Biographies of Rebirth).⁷² Over fifty years later in 1155, the scholar Lu Shishou 陸師壽, intending to supplement Wang Gu's work, produced an eight-fascicle text which was also titled the *Baozhu ji*.⁷³ The coincidence of this title with Wang Gu's earlier work poses a problem with regard to the identity of the *Baozhu ji* from which the *FHXYL* biographies was taken, although Zongxiao was clearly aware of Wang Gu's work and there is no mention of Lu Shishou in Zongxiao's work. Lu Shishou's biographical collection was, in turn, edited and supplemented in 1236 by the Tiantai monk Haiyin 海印 who produced a twelve-fascicle work, the *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* 淨土往生傳 (Biographies of Rebirth in Pure Land).⁷⁴ This evolution came to culmination in Zhipan's 志磐 *Jingtu lijiao zhi* 淨土立教志 (Record on the Establishment of the Pure Land Teaching), a three-fascicle collection of Pure Land biographies contained within the *FZTJ* that represents one of our most important and complete extant collections of Pure Land biographies.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ The *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* is T 2071. Jiezhu was the student of Zhili's disciple Huicai (*FZTJ* T 2035, 215c12).

⁷⁰ The first fascicle of the *Xinbian gujin wangsheng jingtu baozhu ji* is found in the *Zoku Jōdoshū zensho* 16 (1974).

⁷¹ Wang Gu's preface is found in *LBWL* T 1969A, 172c-173a.

⁷² The first and last fascicles of this work have survived and are found in *Zoku Jōdoshū zensho* 16. Although the date of this work provided by its preface coincides with that of the *Xinbian gujin wangsheng jingtu baozhu ji*, Mochizuki Shinkō has suggested that the *Xinxiu wangshen zhuan* was produced some seven years later. For a discussion of the production of these two works, see Mochizuki ([1942] 1978, 409-10). Mochizuki's distinguishing of these two collections by Wang Gu is based on a study by Omura Seigai 大村西崖, which I have not seen.

⁷³ *FZTJ* T 2035, 426b25-29. See Takao (1975, 115).

⁷⁴ *FZTJ* T 2035, 432a19-21.

⁷⁵ *FZTJ* T 2035, 260c-290c

This process reveals the paramount role played by the Tiantai school in the formation of Pure Land biographies through the Song. Within this development, the *Baozhu ji* is shown to be an important source within Tiantai circles. Zongxiao's utilization of this work in his *FHXYL* is significant not only because it contains the only extant *Baozhu ji* biographies of post-Tang figures, but it also demonstrates the close connection that existed in Zongxiao's mind between devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra* and rebirth in the Pure Land. Before exploring that connection, however, we must first examine Pure Land characteristics associated with the Song biographies of the *FHXYL*.

Pure Land elements in the *FHXYL*

The *FHXYL* biographies containing Pure Land elements exhibit many commonly acknowledged characteristics of Song Pure Land teaching and practice. Three of these will be discussed below: the soteriological preeminence of rebirth in the Pure Land and the attendant formulaic inclusion of deathbed signs and wonders, the formation of Pure Land societies, and an emphasis on quantity of practice.

The increased visibility of aspiration to rebirth in the Pure Land as a soteriological option that characterizes the Song biographies of the *FHXYL* is accentuated from the outset by Zongxiao's curious placement of a historically earlier biography at the head of the Song biographies in his collection. In this biography, a Dharma Master Daoang 道昂 (565-633) had come to reside at the Kaiyuan si 開元寺 in Xiangzhou 相州, where he frequently lectured on the *Lotus Sūtra*.⁷⁶ One day after lecturing, he saw a group of holy figures surrounded by banners and music who announced to him that they had come to greet him for rebirth in Tuṣita heaven. He responded that the Heavenly Realm was a fundamental part of *samsāra*, and that he therefore had never vowed for rebirth there. Instead, he announced his aspiration to be reborn in the Pure Land. Thereupon music came out of the west that was clearer than the previous melody. Declaring that the time for his departure was imminent, Daoang called upon those present to assiduously invoke Amitābha so as to be reborn in the Pure Land together.

Daoang's biography had appeared first in the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Further Biographies of Eminent Monks), where Daoxuan 道宣 had categorized him as a meditation practitioner (*xichan* 習禪) and placed his

⁷⁶ *FHXYL* R 134, 864b-865a.

biography at the head of the twentieth fascicle. In that biography, Daoang is recorded as dying at the age of sixty-nine in 633.⁷⁷ That Zongxiao, who arranged the *FHXYL* chronologically and who brought critical skills to bear on his work, would have been unaware of Daoang's historical appearance at the beginning of the Tang some three centuries before the Song seems unlikely. His chronologically inaccurate placement of Daoang's biography (in which the Tuṣita Heaven is rejected and the Pure Land is embraced) at the head of the Song biographies might then validly be construed as a symbolic demarcation, creating a transition in which various soteriological options that preceded the Song were now narrowed, particularly within Tiantai, to the singular goal of rebirth in Amitābha's realm.

The previously described miraculous phenomena associated with Daoang's death represent a formulaic pattern common to the entire genre of Pure Land biographies.⁷⁸ The attainment of rebirth in Amitābha's Pure Land is accompanied by signs and wonders that can be construed by those left behind as confirmation of successful crossing. The *FHXYL*'s Song Pure Land accounts that follow Daoang's reaffirm this pattern. Standard deathbed and funeral elements in these biographies include apparitions, manifestations of light, fragrances, music, peaceful passing, and miraculous cremation remains, including numerous jewel-like relics (*sheli* 舍利) and preserved tongues and hearts. In the *FHXYL*, however, such wonders provide an added dimension of karmically linking the rebirth and its attendant manifestations to the devotee's practice of the *Lotus* during his former lifetime. Through this collection of biographies, Zongxiao thus brought a soteriological focus and clarity to *Lotus Sūtra* practice that was not inherent to the sūtra itself. The *Lotus*, which had no distinct salvific goal per se, was thereby made more attractive as a practice, particularly for lay people, with the promise of rebirth in Amitābha's Pure Land with all of its wonders.

While deathbed and funeral narrative elements were characteristic of Pure Land literature cutting across all periods, the formation and proliferation of Pure Land societies was a phenomenon largely associated with the Song era. Zongxiao's aforementioned historiographic commitment in the *LBWL* to understanding the development of Pure Land practice in China through the structure of Pure Land societies is also reflected in the *FHXYL*. In a seemingly symbolic gesture reminiscent of the eminent position given to Daoang's

⁷⁷ See *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 T 2060, 588b20-21.

⁷⁸ On this pattern of deathbed wonders in Pure Land biographies, see Stevenson (1995b, 592-96).

biography discussed above, Zongxiao situates the biography of the Eastern Jin gentry-scholar Liu Chengzhi 劉程之 (d.u.) at the head of all the lay biographies in the collection.⁷⁹ Liu was one of the leading lights involved in the formation of the Pure Land society at Mt. Lu by Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416), whom Zongxiao designated as the first patriarch of the Pure Land teaching in China. Liu's retreat to Mt. Lu after serving as an official was symbolized by the alternate name Yimin 遺民 (Hermit) that he took for himself. He was present on the mountain when Huiyuan formed his society (later called the White Lotus Society) in 402 CE, and he was given the responsibility for drafting the society's collective vow.⁸⁰ His prominence would suggest that his biography should have enjoyed multiple appearances before the Song, but in reality a full-fledged biographical entry for Liu appears for the first time in the Northern Song period in Chen Shunyu's 陳舜俞 *Lushan ji* 廬山記 (Record of Mt. Lu), produced the year of his death in 1072.⁸¹ In Chen's work, this biography is part of the *Shiba xian zhuan* 十八賢傳 (Biographies of the Eighteen Worthies), which details the lives of original members of Huiyuan's White Lotus Society. The degree to which Chen's biography of Liu Chengzhi derives from materials that precede the Song is unclear. However, the version in the *Lushan ji* appears on the scene at the very time in the Northern Song when the mythos of Huiyuan and his society were being promoted as an archetype for the Pure Land societies that were proliferating particularly under Tiantai influence. Although this society preceded the Song by over five centuries, its inclusion in the present discussion is premised on the fact that the premier position of Huiyuan's society in the history of Chinese Pure Land largely derives from Song sources.⁸²

⁷⁹ FHXYL R 134, 882a-b. For a historically critical discussion of Liu Chengzhi's biography, see Zürcher (1959, 217).

⁸⁰ See his vow, the *Lushan Bailianshe shiwen* 廬山白蓮社誓文, in Zongxiao's *Lebang wenlei* (T 1969A, 176a-b).

⁸¹ See *Lushan ji* 廬山記 T 2095, 1039b-c. Erich Zürcher (1959, 217) makes this observation about the late appearance of Liu's biography. Concerning this work, see Laing (1978, 162). Concerning Chen Shunyu, see Chang (1986, 3.2627-2628). A much shorter and earlier biography of Liu is found in the *Wang sheng Xifang Jingtu ruiying zhuan* 往生西方淨土瑞應傳 (T 2070, 107a-b). On the problematic nature of this work's authorship, see Mochizuki ([1942] 1978, 317). It must be noted that the general details of Liu's life were laid out by Huiyuan himself in a letter titled *Yu yinshi Li Yimin deng shu* 與隱士劉遺民等書 found in the *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 T 2103, 304a-b.

⁸² Concerning the formation of Huiyuan's image in the Song, see Nogami Shunjō 野上俊靜 (1962, 236-46).

Following its debut in Chen's work, Liu Chengzhi's biography appeared again at least twice and possibly more in Song Pure Land biographical collections, finally culminating in Zhipan's 志磐 inclusion of the whole *Shibaxian zhuan* within the Pure Land biography section of the FZTJ.⁸³ Between the earliest appearance and Zhipan's culminating collection, Zongxiao fit Liu's biography into his *FHXYL* in what eventually, in the *LBWL*, was to become his unique interpretive structure of the Pure Land tradition, in which he proclaimed Huiyuan as its first patriarch and assigned his society a paradigmatic role for all that followed.

By placing Liu Chengzhi's biography at the head of all other lay biographies in the *FHXYL*, Zongxiao strengthened the primacy that he would assign to Huiyuan and his society in the development of Pure Land history. This prominent placement of Liu's biography further suggested that in both time and importance Liu Chengzhi's example was meant to be a standard for all laics that followed. Liu's life as an official and scholar are presented in tandem with his submission as a disciple to Huiyuan's guidance and leadership. Huiyuan's superior position in this relationship thus affirmed Zongxiao's implicit insistence upon monastic leadership within Pure Land that emerged, as suggested earlier, from the challenge to monastic authority posed by the White Lotus teaching.

Despite the exalted position granted to Huiyuan and his society in Zongxiao's schema, the societies of the Song—in location, size, membership and practice—often departed significantly from the model set by Huiyuan. One such digression is found in the biography of Mingwu Ruoguan 明悟若觀 (d.u), a Tiantai monk from Huzhou 湖州 who formed a pact with 100,000 people in 1148 to practice Pure Land.⁸⁴ Announcing that he had dwelt in the mountains for twenty years without venturing into the city, and that he had read the *Lotus* and *Jin guangming* 金光明 *Sūtras* 100 times each day for a total of 600,000 times, he entreated members to recite the Buddha's name 100,000 times. Those arriving at the Way first were to assist those coming after, and at death each was to hold a blue lotus blossom. The urban setting of Ruoguan's society, its huge membership, and its practice focused upon

⁸³ See, for example, Jiezhū's 戒珠 *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* 淨土往生傳 T 2071, 111a-b. Also, Wang Rixiu's 王日休 *Longshu jingtu wen* 龍舒淨土文 T 1970, 265c-266a. Also Zhipan's *Jingtu lijiao zhi* 淨土立教志 in FZTJ T 2035, 267c-268a.

⁸⁴ *FHXYL* R 134, 869b-870a. Ruoguan's biography was taken from *Baozhu ji*. See also FZTJ T 2035, 280c.

recitation of Amitābha's name, rather than on contemplation of his attributes, all distinguished it from Huiyuan's group. Nonetheless, in Zongxiao's eyes Ruoguan's group and others like it were all cut from the same cloth that had produced Huiyuan's.

Ruoguan's biography is also instructive in illustrating the emphasis upon quantity of practice that characterized Song Pure Land and religion. The quantification of practice—examples of which abound in the *FHXYL*—applies to recitations of Amitābha's name as well as to recitations of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and are listed in the tens of thousands in many of the biographies. The biography of the monk Congya 從雅 (d. 1115), a Tiantai monk from Hangzhou, contains a particularly long and detailed list of the scriptures read and practices performed:⁸⁵

Lotus Sūtra: five canons worth⁸⁶ (each canon consisting of several thousand fascicles)

Diamond Sūtra: four canons worth

Amituo Sūtra: ten canons worth

Obeisances to Śākyamuni: 300,000

Obeisances to the *Zhenshen ta* 真身塔: ten times⁸⁷

Obeisances to the *Lotus Sūtra*: three times, each character three obeisances

Obeisances to Amitābha Buddha: one million obeisances

Recitations of Amitābha's name: fifty million

Congya's list exhibits an attention to tabulation and a comfort with variety of practice that contrasts with the contemporary Japanese Kamakura Buddhist trend toward exclusive practice. Within this syncretic aggregation, practices directed to the *Lotus Sūtra* and to Amitābha occupy the majority. From this

⁸⁵ *FHXYL* R 134, 871a13-15. See also his biography in *FZTJT* 2035, 212a.

⁸⁶ A note at the end of Congya's biography in the *FZTJ* (T 2035, 212a12-13) parses the word "canon" (*zang* 藏) as representing the number 5048. It is not clear whether this number represents fascicles or works. If the former, then a canon's worth of recitations for the *Lotus Sūtra* (the seven-fascicle version) would be a little over 700 recitations. If the latter, then Congya would have recited the Lotus over 25,000 times (5 x 5048). I therefore find the former interpretation more plausible.

⁸⁷ It is not immediately evident what this practice entailed. One possibility is that the *Zhenshen ta* refers to the Zhenshen Baota Monastery 真身寶塔寺 in Hangzhou. If this is the case, Congya as a Hangzhou monk could have done pilgrimage (*bai* 拜) to this monastery. On this monastery in the Wuyue and the early Song eras, see Ogawa Kan'ichi 小川貫弑 (1936, 45-65).

observation comes the obvious question to be addressed in the following section: What relationship, if any, existed between practices related to the *Lotus Sūtra* and those directed to Amitābha and his Pure Land?

Lotus Sūtra Devotion and Rebirth in Pure Land

The preceding discussion of elements commonly found in Pure Land literature of the Song raises the question of the status of *Lotus Sūtra* devotion in these biographies. Clearly, Zongxiao's purpose in the *FHXYL* was to demonstrate the miraculous efficacy of *Lotus Sūtra* practice. But the incorporation of biographies, particularly the Pure Land ones that often portrayed a range of practices, raises the question of how essential the practice and devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra* was to these biographical narratives. Could it be that Zongxiao went looking for biographical accounts that contained any mention of the *Lotus Sūtra*, however slight? Although this seems to be the case in some biographies, where *Lotus Sūtra* practices and devotions constitute but part of a larger cultivational repertoire or are even peripheral, nevertheless, Zongxiao's view of the *Lotus* as enveloping all other practices within it would suggest a loftier status for *Lotus* devotion in the pursuit of Pure Land rebirth.

A closer examination of Liu Chengzhi's biography is particularly germane in considering Zongxiao's views on the relationship between *Lotus Sūtra* practice and rebirth in the Pure Land. Zongxiao's version of Liu's biography particularly focuses upon the miraculous events that attended the end of his life. The narrative foundation of this account is taken from Chen Shunyu's biography in which Liu, upon getting ill in the first month of his twelfth year on Mt. Lu, dedicated himself to the practice of the *nianfo sanmei* 念佛三昧 and the recitation of Amitābha's name. This practice led, at the beginning of the sixth month, to his seeing first the white tuft of hair on Amitābha's forehead and then Amitābha himself, who touched the crown of Liu's head, a gesture portending his future attainment of Buddhahood.⁸⁸ Liu proceeded to request that his end be hastened. He entreated the monks to recite the *Longer Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* (*Fo shuo Wuliangshou jing* 佛說無量壽經) and the *Lotus Sūtra*. On the twenty-seventh day of the sixth month, Liu announced to the assembly that he would die on that day since his *qi* 氣 was exhausted. He instructed the assembly not to weep and cause disturbance in the community.

⁸⁸ Visualization of the white tuft of hair is called for in the ninth visualization of the *Guan Wuliangshou Fo jing* 觀無量壽佛經 T 365, 343b16-19.

Upon offering incense, he implored the assembly of monks to make offerings to Śākyamuni in thanksgiving for making him aware of Amitābha. Liu then expressed the wish that Amitābha would come to meet him on that day, after which he briefly joined his hands, faced west, and expired.⁸⁹

In Zongxiao's account, after seeing light pour forth from Amitābha's forehead, witnessing Amitābha on his golden dais, and having the Buddha touch him on the forehead and cover him with the Buddha's garment,⁹⁰ Liu Chengzhi experienced himself being immersed in the jeweled pond of the Pure Land, where he imbibed its miraculous water. Immediately his pores gave off sweet fragrance, and he announced to the assembly, "My karmic bond with the Pure Land is accomplished."⁹¹ Then, offering incense to the Buddha image, Liu proclaimed, "Because I have learned of the Western Pure Land through the teaching of Śākyamuni, I offer this incense first to Śākyamuni. Next, I offer it to Amitābha; may I be included (among those reborn). Third, I offer this incense to the *Lotus Sūtra*. The merit for which I will be reborn (in the Pure Land) derives from this scripture."⁹²

As if this declaration explicitly linking *Lotus Sūtra* practice to rebirth in the Pure Land were not clear enough, Zongxiao's biography concludes with an observation not found in other versions: "Liu's attainment of the Pure Land was entirely through the power of the *Lotus Sūtra*. He requested the community of monks to turn the scripture several hundred times to assist his practice."⁹³ Although Zongxiao attributed this biography to Huiyuan's *Lushan ji* 廬山集 (Collected Writings on Mt. Lu), a non-extant work of unknown provenance that circulated in the Song, the constellation of statements on the efficacy of the *Lotus Sūtra* at the end of the biography leaves the distinct impression that Zongxiao had a hand in shaping this version of Liu's biography to his own purposes, one of which was clearly to present *Lotus Sūtra* practice as the cause for rebirth in the Pure Land. Regardless of

⁸⁹ *Lushan ji* T 2095, 1039c9-18.

⁹⁰ In the twenty-eighth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, Śākyamuni announces that anyone who receives and keeps, reads and recites, recalls, cultivates and practices, and copies the *Lotus Sūtra* has seen Śākyamuni, has made offerings to Śākyamuni, has been praised by Śākyamuni, has had his head touched by the Buddha, and has been covered by Śākyamuni's cloak. See *Miaofa lianhua jing* T 262, 61c22-62a3. Also, Hurvitz (1976, 335). Note that in this case, it is Amitābha who touches the head and covers the devotee with his cloak.

⁹¹ *FHXYL* R 134, 882a11-14.

⁹² *FHXYL* R 134, 882a15-17.

⁹³ *FHXYL* R 134, 881a17-b1.

whether this attribution in the narrative was added by Zongxiao or someone else, it marks a dramatic departure from the original biography, which credits rebirth to Liu's practice of the *nianfo sanmei* and recitation of Amitābha's name, while making no mention of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

The view articulated in Zongxiao's biography of Liu Chengzhi—that *Lotus* practice is the primary cause of rebirth—is repeated time and again in the *FHXYL*'s Song biographies. For example, Lingzhao 靈照 (1028-1082), a Tiantai monk who founded a Pure Land society in the Yuanfeng 元豐 era (1078-1085), dreamt once of Amitābha and his two attendants. Kneeling before them, Lingzhao queried, "My whole life I have recited the [*Lotus*] scripture, hoping to be born in the Pure Land. Is my vow realized or not?" Affirming the efficacy of this practice, Guanyin answered him, "The Pure Land is not far. Your vow has been fulfilled."⁹⁴

The primacy of the *Lotus* practice exhibited in Lingzhao's life is found as well in the biography of Shaoyan 紹巖 (899-972), who came to reside in the Shuixin Monastery 水心寺 of Hangzhou.⁹⁵ There he constantly, night and day, held to practice of the *Lotus*. When suddenly lotus blossoms started coming from the ground, Shaoyan made a vow to imitate the Bodhisattva Medicine King, who in the twenty-third chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* had immolated himself as a sign of devotion to the *Lotus*.⁹⁶ Only upon impassioned entreaty from the ruler of WuYue did Shaoyan—much like Zongxiao's ancestor, Zhili—relinquish his plan. Later he attempted drowning himself to feed fish, only to be foiled again. His eventual peaceful death, which took place in the Kaibao era (968-975), was preceded by his making this observation: "I have recited the *Lotus Sūtra* up to twenty thousand times, having made the decision to seek the Land of Peace and Repose (Pure Land). Now, fortunately, I can achieve that hope."⁹⁷

Despite these affirmations found in Lingzhao's and Shaoyan's biographies of the direct causal nexus between *Lotus Sūtra* recitation and rebirth in the Pure Land, the commonly encountered emphasis upon recitation of Amitābha's name as the primary instrument of salvation created a tension that was not easily resolved. This tension is evident in the biography of the Tiantai

⁹⁴ *FHXYL* R 134, 872a9. See his biography in *FZTJ* T 2035, 242b.

⁹⁵ *FHXYL* R 134, 866b-867a. Also see his biography in Zanning's 贊寧 *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 T 2061, 860b.

⁹⁶ See *Miaofa lianhua jing* T 262, 53b5-10. Also, see Hurvitz (1976, 294-96).

⁹⁷ *FHXYL* R 134, 867a2-3.

monk Sicong 思聰 (d.u.).⁹⁸ As a young monk, Sicong would single-mindedly recite the *Lotus Sūtra* through the night. After his ordination he continued this practice, reciting the *Lotus* twice a day. In his spare time he would also recite Amitābha's name. Someone challenged him about this practice, asking, "Isn't reciting the scripture enough? Why must you further recite the Buddha's name?" Trying to resolve this conundrum, Sicong answered, "At the end of my life I wish to be born in his country. Why would I not keep him in my thoughts?"⁹⁹

The combining of practices found in Sicong's account is accompanied in other biographies with a blending or even blurring of the lines between different scriptural traditions. The biographies merge the promises of the *Lotus Sūtra* with those of the *Sukhāvativyūha sūtras*. This syncretic approach is clearly illustrated in the biography of the Song layman Fan Yan 范儼 (d.u.).¹⁰⁰ Fan was a devout Buddhist throughout his life, holding fast to a vegetarian diet, avoiding worldly encounters, single-mindedly reciting the *Lotus Sūtra* daily without fail, and writing a copy of the scripture. During the Daguan 大觀 era (1107-1110), when he was in his seventies, he instructed his nephew Xu Kan 徐侃 to prepare for his funeral since he only had two or three more days to live. His nephew heard him shout out the name of Samantabhadra in the Buddha hall. Hearing his uncle respond to someone several times with the phrase "Definitely, yes!" (*gushi* 固是), the nephew inquired as to the reason for this response. His uncle replied, "I saw Samantabhadra riding on his six-tusked white elephant. His light shone upon me as pure gold and he said to me, 'Reading the *Lotus Sūtra* and reciting Amitābha's [name] achieves rebirth in the Pure Land. I have therefore come to announce that tomorrow in the *mao* 卯 hour (6-8 a.m.) you will depart. I will come together with the Buddha Amitābha to meet and carry you [back to the Pure Land].'"¹⁰¹

The conflation of Samantabhadra's appearance on his elephant (as promised to those reciting and copying the *Lotus Sūtra* in the twenty-eighth chapter of the scripture) with deathbed visitation of Amitābha (as promised in the nineteenth vow of the *Longer Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*) parallels a

98 FHXYL R 134, 872a-b.

99 FHXYL R 134, 872a12-14.

100 FHXYL R 134, 889a-b.

101 FHXYL R 134, 889b2-5.

convergence of practice in which Fan, on the basis of both his recitation of the *Lotus Sūtra* and his recitation, is promised rebirth in the Pure Land.¹⁰²

Conclusion

In the end, we are left with a question: How did Zongxiao himself understand the relationship between *Lotus Sūtra* and Pure Land devotion? Since he left no treatise on this issue of which I am aware, we can only answer this question through inference from clues in his various collections.

On the one hand, Zongxiao's Tiantai identity leads us to surmise that the production of the *FHXYL* represents a symbolic commitment on Zongxiao's part to the doctrinal and devotional centrality of the *Lotus Sūtra* in the Tiantai tradition. It is perhaps no accident that the *FHXYL* was the earliest of his three major collections. As a popular work dealing with miraculous happenings that result from the *Lotus*, Zongxiao's collection is a provisional device intended to either inspire people to begin *Lotus* practice or to fortify those already engaged in such practice. As such, this collection does not delve into the profundities of Tiantai teaching on the *Lotus*. Yet the Tiantai belief that the *Lotus* reveals the very nature of reality itself underlies all of the miraculous phenomenal events documented in the work.

While this theoretical foundation is no doubt implicitly present in this collection, the focus of the work in terms of actual devotional consciousness and practice reveals the spiritual tendencies of Zongxiao's time. The narratives discussed above demonstrate the contemporary Tiantai preoccupation with rebirth in Amitābha's Pure Land and the practices corresponding to that preoccupation. That Pure Land and the *Lotus Sūtra* are inextricably merged with one another seems beyond question. Although in doctrinal terms Pure Land belief was subsumed under the umbrella of the *Lotus*, in actual and practical terms it was the aspiration to rebirth and devotion to Amitābha that dominated the Tiantai soteriology of the Southern Song. What remains to be explored in future research is the degree to which this relationship between *Lotus* practice and Pure Land aspiration was continued in the Buddhism of the Late Imperial Era.

¹⁰² For Samantabhadra's promise, see *Miaofa lianhua jing* T 262, 61a28-b3. The promise of Amitābha's appearance at life's end appears in the *Fo shuo Wuliangshou jing* 佛說無量壽經 T 360, 268a29-b2.

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