STROLLING IN “CORAL GROVE”: YUAN HONGDAO’S SHANHU LIN
AND THE REVIVAL OF CHAN BUDDHISM
IN THE WANLI PERIOD (1573-1620)

By

Xin Zi

Copyright © Xin Zi 2013

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF EAST ASIAN STUDIES

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2013
STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This thesis has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at the University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this thesis are allowable without special permission, provided that an accurate acknowledgement of the source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the copyright holder.

SIGNED:  Xin Zi

APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

This thesis has been approved on the date shown below:

___________________________________________  05/07/2013
Jiang Wu
Associate Professor
Department of East Asian Studies
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank Professor Jiang Wu for the inspiration and precious photocopies to begin and continue this thesis on the *Shan hu lin*—an interesting and important work recording a famous man of letters of the late Ming China, Yuan Hongdao’s personal thoughts on Chan meditation and cultivation of the mind. In the course of my study on Chinese Buddhism in general and on the Chinese Buddhist Canon and Chan Buddhism in particular, I have received continuous guidance for three years from him. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Feng-hsi Liu and Professor Brigitta Lee for their kind direction and patience. I have benefited immensely from conversations with them.

In writing this thesis I have learned a great deal from discussions with my peers, Shyling Glaze in particular, from the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Arizona. I am indebted to Christopher Oakden who corrected grammatical mistakes of the first draft of this thesis and offered many pertinent and insightful suggestions. I should like particularly to thank my friends, Yinghui Wang, Yuan Peng, Xin Zhang, Juexuan Long, Ran Duan, Guanzhu Han, Kun Zhang, and Ding Ding for their constant encouragement and warm comfort. I am also grateful to my boyfriend, Gongwen Zhu for his assistance in printing out the copies of this thesis. Last but not least, I owe a particular debt of gratitude to my mother, Hongju Liu, who has always been there supporting me in every way.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES..........................................................5

ABSTRACT.................................................................6

INTRODUCTION....................................................................7

CHAPTER I: YUAN HONGDAO’S ASSOCIATION WITH CHAN........13

- A Biographical Note on Yuan Hongdao............................13
- From Two Saints Temple to the Gold Shavings..................18
- Yuan Hongdao’s Contacts with Li Zhi.............................23
- Yuan Hongdao’s Association with Monks.........................28
- Yuan Hongdao’s Visits to Buddhist Temples.....................35
- The Reflection of Chan in Yuan Hongdao’s Poetry.................40
- The Reflection of Chan in Yuan Hongdao’s Epistolary Sources..50

CHAPTER II: WRITING OF SHAN HU LIN.............................59

- Yuan Hongdao’s Reclusion in Gong’an..............................59
- The Days in Deshan....................................................62
- The History of Deshan..................................................68

CHAPTER III: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF SHAN HU LIN..............79

- The Authenticity of Shan hu lin.....................................79
- The Content Analysis of Shan hu lin...............................89
- The Rhetoric Study of Shan hu lin..................................120

CONCLUSION....................................................................127

APPENDIX I: THE ORIGINAL OF YOU DE SHAN JI..............131

APPENDIX II: THE ORIGINAL OF SHAN HU LIN XU..............132

APPENDIX III: THE ORIGINAL OF BA SHAN HU LIN.............133

REFERENCES..................................................................134
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1…………………………………………………………………………….65
Figure 2.2…………………………………………………………………………….69
Figure 2.3…………………………………………………………………………….70
Figure 2.4…………………………………………………………………………….73
Figure 2.5…………………………………………………………………………….78
Figure 3.1…………………………………………………………………………….80
Figure 3.2…………………………………………………………………………….82
Figure 3.3…………………………………………………………………………….87
Yuan Hongdao was an eminent leader of the Gong’an school in the literary circles during the Wanli Reign of the Ming Dynasty. Inevitably influenced by the trend of thought supported by the Confucian scholars who followed Wang Yangming’s (1472-1529) intellectual movement of “learning of the mind” and “innate knowing”, which was closely correlated with the reinvention of Chan Buddhism, Yuan Hongdao became an advocate of free expression of innate sensibility and an expert in Chan meditation. The Shan hu lin was an expression of Yuan Hongdao’s thoughts on Chan practice and self-cultivation and bore a deep meaning of the integration of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. This thesis reveals Yuan Hongdao’s association with Chan Buddhism, examines the writing of the Shan hu lin, and analyzes its textual content, in order to demonstrate the revival of Chan Buddhism in the literati circle during the late Ming period.
INTRODUCTION

Since Bodhidharma initially introduced Chan Buddhism into China, it had been
well-developed and managed to survive the persecution of 845 during the reign of the
Emperor Wuzong 武宗 (814-846) of the Tang Dynasty (617-907), because the
practicability of Chan practice accorded with the earthbound national character of the
Chinese people.\(^1\) While the development of Buddhism had experienced highs and
lows, as a native belief that had taken root in the Chinese core value, Confucianism
remained the mainstream ideology on which the Chinese intellectuals based their
actions, though in history it went through several reforms, one among those was
initiated by Wang Shouren 王守仁 (1472-1529), a philosopher of the Ming Dynasty
(1368-1644), who was well known as Wang Yangming 王陽明. Wang Yangming’s
teaching of “learning of the mind” (\textit{xinxue} 心學) and “innate knowing” (\textit{liangzhi} 良知)
naturally found connection to the Chan concept of the mind and the experience of
sudden enlightenment. Many of Wang Yangming’s followers, especially a group
called the Taizhou school (\textit{Taizhou xuepai} 泰州學派), shifted their attention to
Buddhist scriptures and believed that the study of Chan Buddhism would enrich their
scholarship and improve their practice of self-cultivation.\(^2\) It was under this
background of the popularity of Chan practice among Confucians that the main figure
of this research, Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568-1610) grew mature.

Yuan Hongdao was a major figure of the Gong’an school 公安派, a school of literature that advocated expressing the poet’s innate sensibility. Yuan Hongdao was considered a prominent poet of the late Ming Dynasty while he had strong confidence in his understanding of Chan Buddhism. In both religious thoughts and literary proposition, he was deeply affected by Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602), a representative scholar of the Taizhou school who embraced individualism and finally shaved his head and declared himself a Buddhist monk. Among his works, many poems and correspondences concerned Chan Buddhism, expressed his admiration for the lifestyle lived by Buddhist laymen and monks, and demonstrated his enlightenment in Chan Buddhism. The research subject of this thesis is Shan hu lin 珊瑚林 (Coral Grove), a work recording Yuan’s sayings on topics of Chan Buddhism and the general study of the Way, namely, the way of self-cultivation, and the conversations between him and his fellows, primarily Buddhist monks. The existence of the Shan hu lin had not been admitted at first. With the development of the study of Yuan Hongdao’s Buddhist thoughts, some scholars such as Qiu Minjie 邱敏捷 and Araki Kengo 荒木見悟 obtained archival copies of the Shan hu lin from the Naikaku Bunko 内閣文庫 in Kyoto. The other source of the complete text of the Shan hu lin is Xu xiu si ku quan shu 續修四庫全書 (The Continuation of Complete Library in the Four Branches of Literature). The copy of the Shan hu lin in Xu xiu si ku quan shu is the photocopy of the block-printed edition stored in Beijing Library. That edition was carved by the Qingxiang Zhai 清響齋, literally “the Clear Sound Studio”, during the Ming Dynasty.

---

3 Ray Huang, 1587, a Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981) P.197.
After comparison, I confirmed the copies from the two sources share the same master copy. This thesis is mainly based on the copy collected in *Xu xiu si ku quan shu*. For punctuation of the text, I used Araki Kengo’s book as a reference.

To examine the specific impact of Chan Buddhism on the literati circle spread by the Taizhou school scholars, studying Yuan Hongdao’s life and works will be an appropriate entry point, since Yuan was a leading figure in the Confucian literary circles during the Wanli Reign. And to obtain a direct and detailed impression of Yuan’s religious thoughts, a work as pertinent as the *Shan hu lin* deserves to be studied in depth. How did Yuan Hongdao become devoted to Buddhism? And to what extent was he religious? How did Yuan evaluate the group of the Taizhou school scholars? Is there any indication of the synthesis of Buddhism and Confucianism in the *Shan hu lin*? If so, what roles do they play respectively in the practice of self-cultivation and what portion does each side take?

The first chapter starts with a brief account of Yuan Hongdao’s life, to review how Yuan Hongdao became interested in and learned about Chan Buddhism. The remaining sections introduce the interaction between Yuan Hongdao and people who had inspired his studies on Chan Buddhism, and examine his thoughts and practices of Chan Buddhism, mainly based on the translations and analyses of Yuan Hongdao’s literary works. The main references include *Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao* 袁宏道集箋校 (The Annotated Complete Works of Yuan Hongdao) annotated and proofread by Qian Bocheng 錢伯城, and *Yuan Zhonglang nian pu* 袁中郎年譜 (The Chronological Biography of Yuan Zhonglang) compiled by Ma Xueliang 馬學良.
Qian Bocheng’s compilation of *Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao* made significant contributions to the study of Yuan Hongdao and his literary works, mainly including his poems, essays—travel notes in particular, and correspondences. Yuan’s works were sorted into chronological order, from 1584 to 1610, the year Yuan Hongdao passed away. The poems and essays were listed separately, based on Yuan Hongdao’s personal collections. In supplement to Yuan’s works of which the authenticity was testified, the works that had been declared to be Yuan’s composition but not been collected in his major collections were arranged into three volumes in this *Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao*. In addition to Yuan’s own works, the works writing about him such as the biography written by his younger brother, the prefaces of his personal collections, and the catalogues that recorded his works, were also attached. One of the most valuable resources I found in *Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao*, is the complete text of the *De shan chen tan* 德山塵譚 with an introduction written by Yuan Hongdao himself. The *De shan chen tan*, also known as *De shan shu tan* 德山暑譚 is the extract of the *Shan hu lin*.

Deshan 德山 is located in the south of Changde 常德, Hunan 湖南 Province, about 90 miles from Yuan Hongdao’s hometown Gong’an 公安, Hubei 湖北 Province. From 1601 to 1606, Yuan Hongdao lived in seclusion in Gong’an, spending his days composing poems, going on excursions, and studying Buddhism with the monks from nearby temples. In the eighth lunar month of 1604, Yuan Hongdao took a trip to Deshan and Taohuayuan 桃花源 with several Chan fellows. The trip was pleasant and productive—Yuan Hongdao quite enjoyed the view of Deshan, and his discussions
with his fellows on Chan topics were recorded and collected into a volume of work. After abridging and editing, the work was titled *De shan shu tan* 德山暑譚 (Summer Talks in Deshan) or *De shan chen tan* 德山塵譚 (Mundane Talks in Deshan). The original and complete work was titled *Shan hu lin* 珊瑚林. I infer that *Shan hu lin* was named after a place called Shanhulin 珊瑚林 near Heyeshan 荷葉山 where Yuan Hongdao studied Chan with his fellows before they started the trip to Deshan in 1604.

The second chapter examines Yuan Hongdao’s works composed in 1604, especially his travel notes of the trip to Deshan, in order to rebuild the writing background of the *Shan hu lin*. Besides Yuan Hongdao’s mood and mental state during that time, I also reviewed the cultural history of Deshan with the information I collected through my fieldtrip to Deshan. Some highlights in the history of Deshan include the ancient sage Shanjuan’s 善卷 legend, the patriotic poet Qu Yuan’s 屈原 travel and poetry, and the Chan master Xuanjian’s 宣鑑 Buddhist teaching. Both Yuan’s personal accumulation and the historical legacy of Deshan exerted a positive influence on the accomplishment of the *Shan hu lin*.

Since Yuan Hongdao was generally considered and known as the leader of a literature school, and because of the political environment in the Mainland China, his attainment in religions and philosophy was not received sufficient attention until the 1990s. A Taiwanese scholar, Qiu Minjie confirmed the existence and value of the *Shan hu lin* in her Master Thesis, *Can chan yu nian fo* 參禪與念佛 (Investigating Chan and Reciting Buddha’s Name) in 1993. Her thesis dealt with the relation between Buddhist thoughts and literary composition reflected in the works of literati
of the late Ming. One contribution of her thesis was the analysis of Yuan Hongdao’s
*Xi fang he lun* 方合論 (*The Comprehensive Treatise on the West*), a work focusing
on Pure Land Buddhism. And in 2001, a Japanese scholar, Araki Kengo 荒木見悟
devoted a specific commentary on the *Shan hu lin*, in which the sources of many
allusions are revealed and the text is arranged into 349 natural paragraphs. In recent
years, English academic works on Yuan Hongdao’s Buddhist thoughts and attainments
appeared. These include Jennifer Lynn Eichman’s dissertation writing about a Chinese
Buddhist network in the Wanli 萬曆 Period (1573-1620), Charles B. Jones’s treatises
on Yuan Hongdao’s contributions to Pure Land Buddhism, *Xi fang he lun* in particular,
and Jiang Wu’s book concerning the reinvention of Chan Buddhism in 17th century.

Based on a photocopy of the block-printed edition of the *Shan hu lin* published
during the Tianqi 天啟 Reign of the late Ming Dynasty, the third chapter is devoted to
a thorough textual study on the *Shan hu lin*. First in this chapter, the format of printing
block is examined, and the preface and the postscript are translated and analyzed.
Second, the total 349 paragraphs are classified into three major categories according
to the content. The way how Yuan Hongdao makes explanations is discussed in
particular for each category. And finally the language style and rhetoric characteristics
are discussed.
CHAPTER I: YUAN HONGDAO’S ASSOCIATION WITH CHAN

A Biographical Note on Yuan Hongdao

Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568-1610), courtesy name Zhonglang 中郎, literally “Middle Man”, was a prominent literatus of the late Ming Dynasty, born in Gong’an 公安, Hubei 湖北. He was born on the sixth day of the twelfth month of the second year of the Longqing 隆慶 Reign (1567-1572), and died on the sixth day of the ninth month of the thirty-eighth year of the Wanli 萬曆 Reign (1573-1620). Yuan Hongdao was lineally descended from a respectable family—starting from his great-grandfather, Yuan Ying 袁暎, and followed by his grandfather, Yuan Dahua 袁大化, the Yuan family had been considered generous and chivalrous by local Gong’an people. Yuan Hongdao’s father, Yuan Shiyu 袁士瑜, inherited an unrestrained nature and called himself “the Fisherman of Seven Waters” (Qize yuren 七澤漁人).¹ Yuan Hongdao’s mother, Child Nurturess Gong (Gong Ruren 龔孺人),² used to be a daughter of an official’s family. Her father, Gong Daqi’s 龔大器 highest official position was Provincial Administration Commissioner of Henan 河南左使.³ Yuan Shiyu and Child Nurturess Gong had three sons, Yuan Zongdao 袁宗道, Yuan Hongdao, and Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道. All three sons were gifted with literary brilliance and were called “the Three Yuan Brothers” (Sanyuan 三袁) by contemporaries.

¹ Xueliang Ma, Yuan Zhonglang Nianpu (Tianjin, Tianjin gu ji chu ban she, 1991) P.1.
² Child Nurturess, translated from Ru-ren 孫人, title of honor awarded to the mothers and wives of both civil officials and military officers. See Charles Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1985) P.273.
³ He-nan-zuo-bu-zheng-shi 河南左布政使. Ibid., 391.
Yuan Hongdao was born intelligent. When he was 4 years old, he could appropriately complete poetic couplets given by his uncle, Gong Zhongmin 龔仲敏, who played an important role in Yuan Hongdao’s interest and studies in Buddhism. At the age of 16, he founded a literary society and proclaimed himself the chief of the society. Those society members who were under 30 years old all respected him as their teacher. Yuan Hongdao’s marriage with a daughter of the Li family marked the end of his boyhood when he was 18 years old.

According to Libu yanfengsi langzhong zhonglang xiansheng xingzhuang 吳部驗封司郎中郎先生行狀, the brief biographical sketch written by Yuan Hongdao’s younger brother, Yuan Zhongdao, Yuan Hongdao was initially “enlightened” on Buddhism by his elder brother, Yuan Zongdao, and began his lifelong pursuit of the study of Chan Buddhism at the age of 22, yet the earliest poem recording his experience of Buddhist studies was composed at the age of 18. Based on the above information, we may reasonably conclude that Yuan Hongdao was evidently influenced by Buddhism around his early 20s. Shortly after Yuan Zongdao’s illumination, Yuan Hongdao assembled a collection of kōans, namely the encounter dialogues from Chan recorded sayings, the Jin xie bian 金屑編 (Gold Shavings), at the age of 22. At 23, Yuan Hongdao took the Jin xie bian with him to make a special trip via Xiling 西陵, Yichang 宜昌 to call on Li Zhi 李贄, who he regarded as a supreme mentor. Li Zhi gave him and his book a high evaluation. They stayed

---

4 Xingzhuang 行狀 for short. See Bocheng Qian, Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1981) P.1649-1658. Also see Zhongdao Yuan, Ke xue zhai ji (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1989) P.754-764.
5 Bocheng Qian, 4-5.
together, discussing learning in Longhu 龍湖, Macheng 麻城, Hubei for three months.

In the twentieth year of the Wanli Reign, Yuan Hongdao became a Metropolitan Graduate 進士.⁶ In the following year, before he was granted the post of District Magistrate of Wu County (Wuxian Ling 吳縣令),⁷ he paid a second visit to Li Zhi, who thought very highly of him.

According to his younger brother, Yuan Zhongdao’s record, as a county magistrate, Yuan Hongdao was honored for his effective work and honesty. Under his administration, Wu County maintained a scene of harmony. “In the past two hundred years, there was no such county magistrate as good as him,” said Shen Shixing 申時行,⁸ the Prime Minister of the Wanli Reign. However, instead of enjoying his life as a county magistrate being loved and respected by local people, Yuan Hongdao felt fettered by bureaucratic regulations and always detested bureaucratic behavior. He was so disheartened that he fell ill. In a letter to his friend, Luo Yinnan 羅隱南, he complained, “Another day in official position is another day in hell.”⁹ During his days in Wu County, Yuan Hongdao spent a lot of time on Buddhist scriptures and Chan meditation to pacify his troubled mind. After he submitted seven resignations, Yuan Hongdao’s request for retirement was finally approved in the spring of 1597.

After Yuan Hongdao resigned, he was restored to health and traveled with his friends for one year. He traveled to Wuxi 無錫, Hangzhou 杭州, Huangshan 黃山, Yangzhou 揚州 and other places that belonged to the ancient States of Wu 吳 and

---

⁷ Translated from Wu-xian-ling 吳縣令. See ibid., 242.
⁸ See Xingzhuan.
⁹ Bocheng Qian, 227.
Yue 越. During his trip, he was very productive in literary composition and diligent in Chan studies. The collection of his works composed during the trip was entitled *Jie tuo ji* (The Release Collection). After the long journey, he reunited with his brothers in Beijing and was granted a position of Capital Proofreader (*Jingzhao Jiaoguan*).\(^{10}\) His new position was not as busy as county magistrate, so he founded another literary society called “the Grape Society” (*Putao She*) to discuss Chan studies and compose poems with friends. As his leisurely days went on, he finished writing *Xi fang he lun* (The Comprehensive Treatise on the West), a work concerning Pure Land Buddhism. In 1599 and 1600, Yuan Hongdao was promoted twice—first from Capital Proofreader to National University Instructor (*Guoxue Zhujiao*),\(^{11}\) and then to Secretary of Bureau of Ceremonies under Ministry of Rites (*Libu Yizhi Zhushi*).\(^{12}\) Several months after his second promotion, he returned to Gong’an to see his grandmother whose illness worried him. After a happy reunion, his grandmother did not survive the illness, and died in the eleventh lunar month of that year. At the same time, another piece of grievous news came from Beijing—Yuan Zongdao died in the ninth lunar month.

For his elder brother’s death, Yuan Hongdao began to abstain from eating meat and had no more ambition for office afterward. In 1601, he bought 300 acres of land in the south of his hometown, planted 10,000 willows there, and made his new residence by the spot. He also invited his younger brother and a couple of monks to live with him. They studied Buddhism, chanted and wrote poems, and traveled

---

\(^{10}\) Translated from *Jing-zhao-jiao-guan*. See Charles Hucker, 170, 141.

\(^{11}\) Translated from *Guo-xue-zhu-jiao*. See ibid., 298, 180.

\(^{12}\) Translated from *Li-bu-yi-zhi-zhu-shi*. See ibid., 306, 266, 183.
together. His works composed during those days were collected in the *Xiao bi tang ji* (The Xiaobi Hall Collection). However, peaceful days were mingled with bad news of the deaths of his two mentors—Li Zhi at the beginning and Gong Zhongqing the end of the year 1602.

Although the deaths dealt him a terrible blow, Yuan Hongdao’s life of traveling and writing was as usual. In the summer of the thirty-second year of the Wanli Reign, Yuan Hongdao practiced meditation and studied Buddhism with his younger brother, three monks, and a layman in a village at the foot of Heyeshan, literally “Lotus Leaf Hill”, in his hometown of Gong’an. In the eighth lunar month of that year, the same group of people traveled to Deshan, literally “the Mountain of Virtue”. The product of their conversations during the trip was *De shan shu tan* (Summer Talks in Deshan), the record of questions and answers between Yuan Hongdao and his company on Chan Studies, edited by the layman in the travel group, Zhang Wujiao, courtesy name Mingjiao.

After six years’ rest in his hometown, at his father’s request, Yuan Hongdao went to Beijing and was granted the position of Secretary of Section for Rites (*Yicao Zhushi*) in the year 1606. In that position, he did not have a lot of work to do so that he could spend time drinking, writing, and chatting with friends. In the autumn of 1607, his wife Lady Li (*Li Anren*) died. In grief, he used a business trip to convey her coffin to her hometown. He returned to Beijing and was promoted to the position of Secretary of Bureau of Honors under Ministry of Personnel (*Libu*

---

33 Translated from *Yi-cao-zhu-shi*. See ibid., 270, 183.
34 Translated from *An-ren*, honorific title granted wives of certain officials; normally follows surname. See ibid., 104.
Yanfengsi Zhushi 吏部验封司主事)\textsuperscript{15} the following spring. It happened to be the time to select new officials. Yuan Hongdao discovered some officials who indulged in malpractices for the benefit of relatives or friends and thus exposed their crimes. Because of this accomplishment, Yuan Hongdao was promoted to Vice Director of Bureau of Evaluations under Ministry of Personnel (Libu Kaogongsi Yuanwailang 吏部考功司员郎)\textsuperscript{16} in the spring of 1609. His final official contribution was to host the imperial exam at the provincial level in Shaanxi 陝西. In the thirty-eighth year of the Wanli Reign, Yuan Hongdao returned to his hometown with his final title of Director of Bureau of Honors under Ministry of Personnel (Libu Yanfengsi Langzhong 吏部验封司郎中)\textsuperscript{17}. He moved to Shashi 沙市 soon after, because Gong’an was suffering from floods at that time. After the Mid-Autumn Festival, Yuan Hongdao had a sudden attack of illness and died in his sleep a few days later.

From Two Saints Temple to the Gold Shavings

Since Yuan Hongdao lost his mother at the age of 8, he followed his elder brother, Yuan Zongdao, who was eight years older, as a fine example and was taken good care of by his uncles from his mother’s side—the Gong family maintained frequent and close contact with the Yuan family. One day, when Yuan Hongdao was 4 years old, his uncle Gong Zhongmin 龚仲敏, courtesy name Weixue 惟学, saw him wear a pair of new shoes and thereupon said, “Some clouds are running underfoot.” Yuan Hongdao

\textsuperscript{15} Translated from Li-bu-yan-feng-si-zhu-shi 吏部验封司主事. See ibid., 306, 579, 183.
\textsuperscript{16} Translated from Li-bu-kao-gong-si-yuan-wai-lang 吏部考功司员郎. See ibid., 306, 277, 597.
\textsuperscript{17} Translated from Li-bu-yan-feng-si-lang-zhong 吏部验封司郎中. See ibid., 306, 579, 301.
immediately responded, “The sky is standing overhead.” This clever couplet was recorded in *Xingzhuang* not only as evidence of Yuan Hongdao’s talent, but also the affection of his uncle for him.

The Gong uncles played an important role in arousing the Yuan brothers’ interest in Buddhism. Yuan Zongdao began to learn Buddhism from Gong Zhongmin at the age of 21. He once strolled around a book fair with Gong Zhongmin, saw him only buy a book of Confucian quotations along with several Buddhist scriptures, and thereupon became very confused. At that time Yuan Zongdao was under the pressure of the imperial examination, so Gong Zhongmin showed the Buddhist scriptures to him and told him that he would spend his whole life reading those if it were not for the examination. Since then, Yuan Zongdao’s horizon was widened by Buddhism.

Yuan Zongdao’s studies in Buddhism later promoted Yuan Hongdao’s intense interest in Buddhism, while the latter had been inspired by his uncles much earlier. In the northeast of Gong’an County, there was a famous Buddhist temple called Ersheng Si (Two Saints Temple), a place Yuan Hongdao visited and wrote about very often. Yuan Hongdao’s earliest recorded poem that mentioned his Buddhist activities described his visit to Two Saints Temple to examine the Buddhist canon with his two uncles, Gong Zhongmin and Gong Zhongqing, courtesy name Weichang. Below are excerpts from the four verses of the poem in my translation:

Flowing in the empty river are the clear Sanskrit verses; fulfilling the gullies is the resonance of dark bell. People are not willing to leave from discussing sutras; I know your interest in Buddhism is just growing dense. (Verse 1)

---

18 *Chu xia tong wei xue wei chang jiu zun you er sheng chan lin zang you shu* 初夏同惟學惟長舅尊游二聖禪林檢藏有述. See Bocheng Qian, 4-5.
The empty pavilion is listening to the sacred words late at night; the wyched pines are chanting Buddha’s name far in the distance. The ordinary doctrines are all like dreams; why bother to find the visional city? (Verse 2)

For six times a day, the monks worship the lotus timer (Lianhua lou 蓮花漏); from Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist religious backgrounds, people look over the palm-leaf manuscripts. Can you recognize the pearl inside your coat? Once you realize it will shine like bright star. (Verse 3)

The forgotten matters of the Six Dynasties are left outside the bell; the working life of one thousand Buddhas is understood from the sound. I am seeking the sacred fruit in deep thought as well; the dreams of ten years fall at the east of the Tiger Brook.¹⁹ (Verse 4)

The poem shows Yuan Hongdao’s enthusiasm and understanding of Buddhism when he composed it at the age of 18. He described Buddhist activities such as discussing the content of Buddhist sutras, reading manuscripts, and striking the temple bell, in an admiring tone. With regard to the philosophy of practicing Buddhism, Yuan Hongdao had already developed his own ideas, such as seeking truth from one’s own nature, instead of observing doctrines rigidly.

At the age of 19, Yuan Hongdao caught a grievous disease which lasted for three months. During those days he tried to recuperate, he described his pain in three poems: Bing zhong duan ge 病中短歌 (The Short Verse Composed during Illness), Bing qi du zuo 病起獨坐 (Sitting Alone after Rising from Sickbed), and Bing qi ou ti 病起偶題 (Once Composed after Rising from Sickbed). Words showing his appeal to Taoism

¹⁹ The Tiger Brook 虎溪 was located in front of Donglin Temple 東林寺 in Lushan 廬山, Jiangxi 江西. It is said that Huiyuan 慧遠, a Buddhist master of the Jin Dynasty, once saw over his guests there, hearing tiger roaring. .
and Buddhism can be found in the latter two:

I am reading *Zhuangzi* with the door closed; the chapters are *Autumn Floods* and *Horses’ Hoofs*. (Excerpted from *Bing qi du zuo*)

The floating life is like an air bubble; how can I enjoy the youth? (Verse 1, *Bing qi ou ti*)

This body is always suffering in the realm of form; I study Buddhism without any progress. How long can this body last? Seeking honors and awards is in vain. (Verse 4, *Bing qi ou ti*)

*Zhuangzi* is a representative work of Taoist philosophy. The chapter *Autumn Floods* demonstrates that in order to understand the truth of the world, one should break his cognitive limitation continuously, while *Horses’ Hoofs* advocates that we should let nature take its course. While he read *Zhuangzi* to dispel loneliness, Yuan Hongdao felt Buddhism could be one solution to a fragile life, perishable youth, and constant suffering.

Under the influence of his elder brother and uncles, and with the inspiration from his own experience, Yuan Hongdao became strongly motivated in studying and practicing Buddhism, so as to advise others to join him. In a poem given to his abecedarian, Wan Ying, who was talented and diligent yet living in poverty, Yuan Hongdao wrote, “I hope you can learn that even Dharma has neither beginning nor ending, it is still eternal as Buddha’s body.”

At the age of 22, Yuan Hongdao began to study Buddhism intensively with his elder brother and completed the *Jin xie bian* (Gold Shavings), his first work.

---

20 *Bing qi du zuo* 和 *Bing qi ou ti* 病起偶題. See Bocheng Qian, 10-11.
22 Bocheng Qian, 14.
concerning Chan studies. If Yuan Hongdao was influenced by elders passively or was simply touched without deep reasoning, he attained a self-directed research level under Yuan Zongdao’s advice and direction. As Yuan Hongdao explored more profound Buddhist studies, he encountered some problems that still remained unsolvable, even after he read through many Sanskrit sutras and Chinese Buddhist scriptures. One day he became enlightened suddenly as he read the Chan kōan about the encounter dialogue between Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089-1163) and Layman Zhang Jiucheng 張九成 (1092-1159), courtesy name Zishao 子韶, about “investigating the nature of things” (gewu 格物), and this enlightenment was a key turning point in Yuan Hongdao’s study of Chan Buddhism. In both De shan shu tan (Summer Talks in Deshan) and Shan hu lin 珊瑚林 (Coral Grove), he gave an account of this kōan:

Question: Miaoxi 妙喜 once said, “You officials know only that there is ‘the investigation of things’; you do not know that there is ‘the investigation by things’.”

Answer: For illustration, I want to hit him but have been hit by him. Now people use up their energy to consume things, isn’t it interactive?

Profiting from the inspiration, Yuan Hongdao brought his thoughts and the ancient sages’ words together and understood thoroughly. Thereupon, he deliberately chose 72 pieces of Chan kōans and composed a commentary for them, converging

---

23 Puji, 佛 u deng hui yuan, Ed. Yuanlei Su (Beijing, Zhonghua shu ju, 1984) P.1350-1351.
24 See Hongdao Yuan and Araki Kengo, Sangorin: Chugoku bunjin no Chan mondoshu (Tokyo, Perikansha, 2001) P.14. And see Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.3. Also see Hongdao Yuan, De shan shu tan: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai shu dian, 1994) P.44.
25 Miaoxi 妙喜 is another name for the Chan master, Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲. See Puji, Wu deng hui yuan, Ed. Yuanlei Su (Beijing, Zhonghua shu ju, 1984) P.1272-1278.
into a Buddhist work, the *Jin xie bian*, which earned praise from Li Zhi.

Yuan Hongdao’s Contacts with Li Zhi

Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602), courtesy name Hongfu 宏甫, was an iconoclastic Confucian intellectual of the late Ming Dynasty. In the fifth year of the Wanli Reign (1577), he was granted his final official position, Prefect in Yao’an (Yao’an Taishou 姚安太守), in Yunnan 云南 at the age of 51, yet soon after, he resigned to concentrate on studying, giving lectures, and writing in a Buddhist temple called Zhifo Temple (Zhifo Yuan 芝佛院) in Macheng 麻城, Hubei. He was famous for his unyielding spirit and active thinking, from which his theory of preserving “the childlike mind” (*tongxin* 童心) was derived. “The childlike mind is the true heart. If one loses his childlike innocence, he loses his true heart and loses himself as a true man. The best essays of the world are all written by people whose childlike innocence remains,” said Li Zhi. This theory was transformed from Wang Yangming’s 王陽明 theory of extending intuitive knowledge (*zhi liangzhi* 致良知). In addition to his literary attainments, he had considerable knowledge on Buddhism admitted by literati such as Yuan Hongdao—“I admit that I am utterly ignorant of poem and essay, but as for Chan Buddhism, I assume such authority that I have no rivals except Li Hongfu,” wrote Yuan in a letter to Zhang Youyu 張幼于 in the twenty-fifth year of the Wanli Reign.

---

27 Translated from Yao-an-tai-shou 姚安太守. See Charles Hucker, 482.
30 Bocheng Qian, 503.
Due to his bold remark, outrageous behavior, and contempt for conventions, Li Zhi was characterized as a heretic. In 1602, he was accused of spreading misleading ideas and finally put in prison where he cut his throat with a razor.

According to Richard Hong-chun Shek’s dissertation, Li Zhi was an atypical Taizhou scholar who was probably only able to represent himself because his creed of individualism pushed Wang Yangming’s thought to an extreme. Although it developed basing on Wang Yangming’s “innate knowing” (liangzhi 良知), Li Zhi’s theory of “the childlike mind” was a description of an ideal status that focused on basic human desires and somehow ignored the Confucian conception of human relations which was maintained in Wang’s faith.

When Yuan Hongdao first went to take the metropolitan examination in Beijing in 1589, he made friends with another Taizhou scholar, Jiao Hong (1540-1620), the Principal Graduate (Zhuangyuan 畢元) of that time, who was also Li Zhi’s friend. Thereupon, Yuan Hongdao and Li Zhi began to hear about each other through Jiao Hong. One year later, Li Zhi sent Yuan Hongdao a copy of his newly published book, Fen shu (A Book to Burn). Yuan expressed his admiration for Li Zhi and appreciation of the book in his poem, De Li Hongfu xiansheng shu (Receiving Mr. Li Hongfu’s Book), “Like this color of jade flowers, what is the difference from the sound of an empty valley?”

In the winter of 1590, Yuan Hongdao went to Macheng to visit Li Zhi, carrying his first Chan work, Jin xie bian (Gold Shavings). They became confidants at

---

31 Translated from Zhuang-yuan 畢元, designation of the candidate who stood first on the list of passers of the final examination in the civil service recruitment examination sequence. See Charles Hucker, 187.
32 Bocheng Qian, 25.
the first meeting—Li Zhi presented a poem as a gift to Yuan, saying, “Having read the *Jin xie bian*, I am glad even to be your driver. Had I followed your words earlier, I would not have to suffer from my old age.” They stayed together for three months and were still reluctant to part as Li Zhi saw Yuan Hongdao off in Wuchang 武昌, Hubei. After Yuan Hongdao arrived in Gong’an, he wrote several poems such as *Gan xing* 感興 (Rise of Feelings) and *Ou cheng* 偶成 (Once Composed), explicating his thinking of Li Zhi. In those poems, Yuan compared Li Zhi with historic noble hermits such as Fuqiu 浮丘, Zhuangzi 莊子 and Tao Yuanming 陶淵明.

With respect to literature, influenced by Li Zhi’s assertion of the “childlike mind” in literary composition, Yuan Hongdao abandoned his dependence on the traditional patterns and began to emphasize natural disposition and spirit in his writings. With respect to Buddhism, Yuan Hongdao did not only deepen his cognitive degree of Chan philosophy, but also expanded his social network of Buddhist monks. There were three poems composed by Yuan Hongdao as presents for monks in 1591 during his stay in Gong’an, and two of them were for Li Zhi’s monk friends, Wunian 無念, who respected Li Zhi as his mentor, and Changjue 常覺, Wunian’s disciple.

In the twentieth year of the Wanli Reign (1592), Yuan Hongdao took the imperial examination again (he failed his first try three years prior and soon after began to study Buddhism with his elder brother), and obtained the title of Metropolitan Graduate. While he lingered in Beijing, he called to pay respects to Li Zhi’s good

---

33 Eng Chew Cheang, 284.
34 Bocheng Qian, 27-28.
35 Fuqiu, also as Fuqugong 浮丘公, was an immortal living in Huangdi’s 黄帝 period. See Xiang Liu, and Shumin Wang, *Le xian zhan jiao jian* (Taipei, Zhongyang yanjiuyuan zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo zhongguo wenzhe zhuankan, 1995) P. 65.
friend, Jiao Hong, and wrote a poem for Jiao’s upcoming trip to visit Li Zhi. In the third month of 1593, Yuan Hongdao got the opportunity to visit Li Zhi for a second time. He wrote several poems to record this long-expected trip: *Huai Longhu* 怀龙湖 (Missing Longhu)\(^{36}\) expressed his sentimental emotion before the trip; along the way, Yuan Hongdao portrayed the scenery and associated it with his expectations for the meeting with Li Zhi in *Zu yu* 阻雨 (Stopped by Rain), \(^{37}\) *Wen xiao* 聞簫 (Hearing a Flute Playing), \(^{38}\) and *Xi ti Junshan* 戏题君山 (Inscription in Junshan for Fun):

I dare to look for the fine view from heaven to earth; just because Master Li is over there. (Excerpted from *Zu yu*)

The moon is rising from the mountain top, making the dark umber-black; it must be the hermit coming by riding a phoenix. (Excerpted from *Wen xiao*)

This time Yuan Hongdao did not travel alone—among his company, there were Wang Yiming 王以明, Gong Zhong’an 龔仲安, Yuan Zongdao, and Yuan Zhongdao. Wang Yiming was Yuan’s teacher who gave guidance in Yuan’s preparation for the imperial examination. Gong Zhong’an was Yuan’s young uncle whose courtesy name was Weijing 惟静 and style name was Sanmu 散木. However, the group only stayed in Macheng chatting and sight-seeing for about ten days. Li Zhi’s parting remarks for the three Yuan brothers were worthwhile to ruminate on: “The eldest is steady and dependable; the younger is talented and outstanding; they both count as well-known scholars in the world. However, as for studying in every subtle way, only Hongdao can assume the fame due to his unmatched discernment and judgment. What a

---

\(^{36}\) *Longhu* 龍湖 is the name of a place in Macheng. Li Zhi called himself Longhu, when he was living there.

\(^{37}\) Bocheng Qian, 69.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 70.
brilliant and sensitive man!”^39

Apart from the two meetings and mentioning each other in poems, Yuan Hongdao and Li Zhi kept in correspondence. There are five letters in total from Yuan to Li collected in Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao (The Annotated Complete Works of Yuan Hongdao). The first letter was written when Yuan Hongdao was suffering through work as a magistrate in Wu County. In the letter, Yuan Hongdao expresses his loneliness and depression and his appreciation that, thanks to Li Zhi’s Fen shu, he could laugh when anxious, have a good appetite when ill, and keep awake when muddleheaded. The second, third, and fourth letters were written when Yuan Hongdao was in an official post with very little to do in Beijing. At that time, Li Zhi was no longer in Macheng but moved to Nanjing. In those letters, Yuan talks about Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072) and Su Shi’s (1037-1101) collected works, extends his greetings to Li Zhi, and expresses his willing to meet again. According to Eng Chew Cheang, Su Shi was admired as an idol by Li Zhi because of Su’s bold and unconstrained personality and writing. All these letters are very short in length and simple in wording. In 1601, two years after his accomplishment of his work concerning Pure Land Buddhism, Xi fang he lun (The Comprehensive Treatise on the West), Yuan Hongdao wrote his fifth letter to Li Zhi, to request him to write annotations for Li Zhi’s own book written in 1597, Jing tu jue (Instruction in Pure Land), and express his willingness to help him print and publish it. It was very likely that Li Zhi did not start or finish annotating Jing tu jue, for he died

^39 Ibid., 1651.
Yuan Hongdao’s Association with Monks

One of Yuan Hongdao’s best monk friends was Wunian Shenyou (1544-1627), the abbot of Zhifo Temple in Macheng, where Li Zhi stayed for twenty years, reading, writing, and giving lectures. According to Jiang Wu, unlike the usual pattern that Chan monks inspired Confucian intellectuals, the relationship between Li Zhi and Wunian Shenyou was reversed—Wunian’s enlightenment was induced by Li Zhi. The poems and essays titled with Wunian’s name appear frequently in Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao, while other monks are only mentioned by name once or twice. Yuan Hongdao’s earliest poem written for Wunian was Bie Wunian (Farewell to Wunian), composed in the nineteenth year of the Wanli Reign (1591). From the lines “My heart does not hurt for saying goodbye to you if you are not my dear friend”, and “It is not easy for Li Zhi whose hair is grey to find a good friend like you”, we can read into the common friendship of Li Zhi, Wunian, and Yuan Hongdao. To subdivide their relationship, Yuan Hongdao and Wunian belonged to the same generation, since they both respected Li Zhi as a mentor and instructed each other’s juniors—in a poem written for a monk called Changjue, who was Wunian’s disciple, Yuan Hongdao told him to “make acquaintance with heroes” in a teaching tone.

40 Ibid., 45.
Their chances of meeting each other were not remote and they kept in correspondence when apart. Their letters reflected sincere friendship and appreciation of each other, yet usually in a chatty tone, and sometimes bantering. Wunian kept good relation with Yuan Hongdao, even after he left Li Zhi with whom the relation went bad in 1593.41 In 1594, Wunian went to Gong’an and they paid a visit to Two Saints Temple, recorded in the poem Tong Wunian guo er sheng si 同無念過二聖寺 (Visiting Two Saints Temple with Wunian).42 Three years later, they met again in Nanjing and Yuan wrote a poem sighing, “We have not met for five years, so the farewell moment really saddens me.”43 Two years after that, in another letter to Wunian, Yuan Hongdao showed his worries about Wunian’s uncertain whereabouts but in a lighthearted tone: “It seems that you have become far-reaching and magic, so that you can teach the Dharma in different places at one time.”44 In the same year in Beijing, in a letter Yuan Hongdao wrote back to Wunian, he shared what he had learned from Chan studies with Wunian and it seemed that he was somehow disappointed in Wunian: “If you admit you have fallen behind and want to make arduous efforts to catch up forthwith, I am still your friend; if you make no attempt to make progress, I hope you will never write back even a single word.” Although the words seem severe, an event occurring in 1601 showed that they were still close to each other—Wunian accompanied Yuan Hongdao to convey Yuan Zongdao’s coffin. The last letter from Yuan Hongdao to Wunian was written in 1607, when he was in

---

42 Bocheng Qian, 80.
43 Ibid., 527.
44 Ibid., 751.
Beijing, saying, “Recently, I have been very lazy, so I am wondering if the Buddha can tolerate me or not. If the Buddha wants to hit me, I will just let him do it, but I will not be diligent anyway. There is no sage like you in the world. People who study Buddhism here in Beijing are all dabblers. Talking to them is like a man from Macheng talks to people from Fujian—we could not understand each other at all. Therefore, I don’t see visitors very often.”

Many poems in Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao were written by Yuan Hongdao for his monk friends, or monks he met on trips. Those poems can be classified roughly into four types: 1) the poems which have the word Chang 贈 in the title, presented as gift to a monk; 2) the poems of which titles are in the pattern wei 為…(monk’s name) ti 题 / zuo 作, expressing respect to a monk; 3) the poems recording the trips accompanied by monk friends; 4) farewell poems. We can take a close glimpse at these poems to see how Yuan Hongdao treated Buddhist monks and his attitude toward them.

Whenever Yuan Hongdao came across famous temples or eminent monks, he would like to leave some words, usually expressing admiration and esteem. On his trip to Tianmu Mountain 天目山, Zhejiang 浙 in 1597, right after he resigned from the post of magistrate of Wu County, he composed several poems as gifts to the monks he met during the trip. In the poem Zeng Haichan 贈海禪 (To Haichan),

Yuan Hongdao showed his willingness to study with the monk Haichan 海禪, and his respect and admiration for Haichan’s unworldliness and dignity, praising,

“Entertaining guests with thousands of cups of clouds; discussing the mind using a

45 Ibid., 1603.
46 Ibid., 379.
blow and a shout.” Other poems written during this trip include Zeng Lian Xiaoshi 贈蓮小師 (To young master Lotus), Zeng Mo Shangren 贈模上人 (To Master Mo), Yu Shangren 玉上人 (Master Jade), and Yun Shangren 雲上人 (Master Cloud).

For the young monk, Lian Xiaoshi 蓮小師, Yuan Hongdao praised him for his diligence and aptitude, while he focused on the transcendence and nobility of the old monks who were considered masters. In the same year, Yuan Hongdao met a young master and then praised him for his concentration in the poem Zeng Xinzhanyi Xiaoshi 贈心湛一小師 (To young master Heart Clear): “This young man is strong and calm; what can demons do to him?” Yuan Hongdao was discerning enough about Buddhist practices to capture the monks’ key strengths at the first sight.

Also in the twenty-fifth year of the Wanli Reign, Yuan Hongdao composed a group of poems recording slices of a monk’s life. For example, the poem Xilin An wei Congshi Shangren ti 西林菴為從石上人題 (Inscription for Master Congshi in Xilin Temple) describes Master Congshi’s perfect fusion of Chan studies and poetry in his life: “He improvised a new poem in the dawn and composed a Buddhist hymn at dusk; He does not really care if the number of poems is larger than that of hymns or vice versa.” In addition to realistic descriptions, Yuan Hongdao mainly extolls monks’ merits and virtues reflected in their daily life, as in Guanyin An wei Yixinyinzhai Shangren ti 觀音菴為一心隱齋上人題 (Inscription for Master

47 Ibid., 380.
48 Ibid., 381.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., 382.
51 Ibid., 406.
52 Ibid., 526.
Yixinyinzhai in Avalokitesvara Temple)\(^{53}\)：“Avalokitesvara’s 觀音 wonderful Dharma is the most difficult to imagine; therefore, this monk’s merits are not controversial.”

*Qianfo Tang wei Yulun Shangren ti* 千佛山為玉輪上人 题 (Inscription for Master Jade Wheel in Thousand Buddha Hall)\(^{54}\) compares the old monk’s austerity with the Buddha images’ grandeur to reveal his natural purity and nobility. In *Bore Tai wei Wuhuai Shangren zuo* 般若台為無懷上人作 (Writing for Master Wuhuai in Highest Wisdom Platform),\(^{55}\) Yuan Hongdao reproduces Master Wuhuai’s life fulfilled by Chan and books: “Although his Chan and books are not incense, they are aromatic.”

In addition to the poems given to the eminent monks he met in trips, Yuan Hongdao recorded his trips accompanied by his monk friends who were local monks from Yuan’s neighborhood in poems. In the thirtieth year of the Wanli Reign, he travelled around his hometown with his monk friend, Wuji Zhenghui 無跡正誨 (1545-1628), the abbot of Dumen Temple 度門寺, Dangyang 當陽, Yichang 宜昌, Hubei 湖北, and left a group of poems recording that experience. According to Jiang Wu, Wuji Zhenghui once declared to be an heir of the Northern school of Chan Buddhism which was initiated by the Tang master Shenxiu 神秀 (606-706).

Information about activities, times, and places is elaborated in the titles of the poems: *Renri tong Dumen fa zu shang Yuquan* 人日同度門發足上玉泉 ([I] took off with Dumen to Yuquan on the seventh day of the first lunar month)\(^{56}\) records that he went out into the hills to trace the spring with Wuji Zhenghui to Yuquan 玉泉, Dangyang 當

---

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 527.

\(^{55}\) Ibid.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 884.
陽, Yichang 宜昌, Hubei 湖北; Xue ji kan yue he Dumen yun shi jiang fa Yuquan 雪霽
看月和度門韻時將發玉泉 ([After] the snow stopped, [we] watched the moon; [I
wrote this poem] to respond Dumen’s rhyme at the time we were going to Yuquan),

Yuanxi Dumen chu gongzhong yuebing tong fu 元夕度門出宮中月餅同賦 (On the
Lantern Festival, [I] composed [this poem] with Dumen when he took out the
mooncakes from the palace ), and Xue zhong xian yun shi yu Shashi tong Dumen
zuo 雪中限韻時寓沙市同度門作 (Composed with Dumen using the limited rhyme
in snow at the time [I] lived in Shashi) respectively describe the scenes in which
Yuan Hongdao appreciates the moon and the view of the snow with Wuji Zhenghui.

On the Double Ninth Festival of the thirtieth year of the Wanli Reign, Yuan Hongdao
composed Jiu ri xie zhu di ji seng fan zhou zhi he shang qiao 九日偕諸弟及僧泛舟㠣
和尚橋 (Boating with my younger brothers and monks to the Monk Bridge on the
ninth day), saying, “just keep company with gulls and herons; each boat returns
with equal number of monks sharing the moon.” During another trip in the same year,
Yuan Hongdao composed Shi jiadaren you Taihe fa juncheng xieyouzhe seng Baofang
Lengyun Yinsheng ye 侍家大人遊太和發郡城偕遊者僧寶方冷雲尹生也 ([I]
attended to my father to travel to Taihe from the county town; my companions
included the monk Baofang, Lengyun, and Yinsheng). In the poem, Yuan Hongdao
describes the unique family tradition of travelling: “My whole family loves to step on
cloud and mist; we burn incense in temples to form ties with the mountains passed

57 Ibid., 885.
58 Ibid., 886.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., 930.
61 Ibid., 915.
by…People can recognize the Yuan family’s special attire, for there is a monk riding horseback mixing within the procession over which the red flags are fluttering.”

Baofang 寶方, the abbot of Two Saints Temple, who was also Wuji Zhenghui’s disciple, and Lengyun 冷雲, the abbot of Shitou Temple in Gong’an, were Yuan Hongdao’s close friends when Yuan stayed at home in Gong’an (1601-1606).

According to Yuan Zhongdao, Lengyun was a close friend of the Yuan brothers’—when Yuan Hongdao lived by the spot he named “Willow Wave 柳浪” because of the 10,000 willows he had planted there since 1601, Lengyun often joined him in Chan practice in Heyeshan (Lotus Leaf Hill) and Shanhulin (Coral Grove).

Yuan Hongdao also said that “For the past six or seven years, I have met doChans of monks, but only Hanhui 寒灰 and Lengyun are of great insight.”62 Actually, during the days Yuan Hongdao stayed in “Willow Wave”, he composed many poems recording the interaction between him and his monk friends. The writing of Shan hu lin or De shan shu tan was finished in the context of travelling with the monks’ company in the autumn of 1604. The background against which Shan hu lin was written will be discussed further in the following chapter.

The last type of poems Yuan Hongdao composed for monks is the farewell poem. Although the theme of those poems is farewell, the different poems lay particular emphasis. Song Yunpu zhi Tongzhou 送蘊璞之通州 (Saw Yunpu off to Tongzhou)63 describes a monk’s simple and frugal life, and awe-inspiring devotion to Chan practice: “His purse is empty while his heart is full of inspiration; ginkgo nuts are

---

62 Ibid., 916.
63 Ibid., 535.
good for his dinner that provides energy for him to meditate by facing a withered tree till midnight.”  *Song Shu seng wang nan hai* 送蜀僧往南海  (Saw off a monk of Shu to the South Sea) places great hopes on a monk who was going to spread Buddha’s words to the South Sea: “It has been twenty years since you first entered Mount Emei; you have been to the places where ice flowers break and stones are exposed; now you are going to transmit what you have learned from arduous practice to those who practice Buddhism in the East Ocean.” On his trip to Mount Wudang, Hubei, Yuan Hongdao bid farewell to the monk Bu’er as soon as he met him, which was recorded in *Hu’er yan feng Bu’er heshang* 虎耳嚴逢不二和尚  (Met monk Bu’er at Tiger Ear Cliff). In this poem, Yuan sighs with emotion about the passing of time and the monk’s constant devotion: “Since you entered the famous mountain with grey hair and grim determination, forty-three years have passed as fast as a flash.”

Yuan Hongdao’s Visits to Buddhist Temples

In Yuan Hongdao’s travels, Buddhist constructions, especially the ones of profound history and those known for historic monks, were his usual footholds, providing him with both good views and chances to worship. One type of poem composed for the Buddhist temples is to give a direct description of their appearances and narrate one’s activities there. For example, in a poem he wrote in Beijing in 1598,
Yuan Hongdao portrays the resplendent constructions of Linghui Temple 靈慧寺 and records his gathering with friends there: “The golden powder painted on the godly stakes is still fresh; the ridge beam embedded in the jade walls looks as if it were flying… I think the temple square is too spacious, so I pour wine and drink with my friend, Cao Jihe 曹季和… Why bother to ask if this is dream or knowledge?”

Another example narrates a night Yuan slept in Biyun Temple 碧云寺 in the poem Su Xishan Biyun si shui ting shang 宿西山碧雲寺水亭上 (One night in a pavilion standing over water in Jade Cloud Temple in Xishan): “My dream soaks in water in the cool night; cold rains blow upon my pillow… I see a celestial being when I look up; he is chasing a squirrel in the clouds… Since I live by the market; once I close my eyes I see only dust. Now I just know that the dreams of those who live in the mountains are even clearer.” According to these poems, the temples became, perhaps a spiritual home for Yuan Hongdao, and protected him from being tarnished by officialdom.

During his trip that was undertaken after he resigned in the twenty-fifth year of the Wanli Reign, Yuan Hongdao visited many places famous for Buddhist figures. In the beginning of his travel note Nanping 南屏, Yuan shortly introduces the view of Nanping, and then reveals Nanping’s importance as the spot where Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904-975) compiled the Zongjing lu 宗鏡錄 (Records of the Source-Mirror), “a significant Chan work that synthesizes various kinds of Buddhist
doctrines”. In the remaining part of the travel note, Yuan reviews Yongming’s enlightenment and discusses the difficulty to keep and spread Buddha’s words.

Similarly, in the note recording his trip to Yunqi 雲栖, Yuan Hongdao summarizes Yunqi’s geographic environment in the first sentence, and in the rest of the poem remarks on Master Lianchi 蓮池大師, namely, Yunqi Zhuhong’s 雲栖祩宏 (1535-1615) contribution to Pure Land Buddhism. According to Yü Chün-fang, Yunqi Zhuhong was one of the four great monks of the late Ming who did significant contributions to the renewal of Buddhism in China “after two hundred years of relative obscurity” by affecting the lay Buddhist movement and leading a monastic reform of synthesizing different Buddhist schools. From these remarks, we can see Yuan Hongdao’s passion, knowledge and ideas about the history and development of Buddhism.

During Yuan Hongdao’s stay in Gong’an (1601-1606), he gave much attention to local Buddhist temples and composed commentaries for several of them. In Sheng mu ta yuan shu 聖母塔院疏 (Introduction of Saint Mother Pagoda), Yuan Hongdao states the relation between Master Zhizhe 智者大師 (538-597) and the Pagoda, and Zhizhe’s historical role in Chinese Buddhism. Puguang si shu 普光寺疏 (Introduction of Universal Light Temple) introduces another local temple related to Master Zhizhe and expressed the Yuan’s willingness to identify the specific time when

---

69 Jiang Wu, 61.
70 Bocheng Qian, 437.
71 They were Yunqi Zhuhong 雲栖祩宏 (1535-1615), Zibo Zhenke 紫mó真可 (1543-1603), 憨山德清 (1546-1623), and Ou’i Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599-1655).
72 Bocheng Qian, 1193.
73 Zhiyi 智顗, the founder of the Tiantai School in China.
74 Bocheng Qian, 1207.
Zhizhe built the temple. According to these two commentaries, Jingzhou, a district adjacent to Gong’an, was Master Zhizhe’s hometown, where he built thirty-six Buddhist temples. Yuan Hongdao wrote those commentaries to catch local people’s attention to donate money, so that the temples would be preserved as historic sites.

Apart from the temples of history, Yuan Hongdao also wrote introductions for other local temples to collect donations. For example, in Puti si shu (Introduction to Puti Temple),75 Yuan Hongdao writes, “I like to visit Puti Temple repeatedly, because it is cleaner than other temples…However, its gates and halls are not artistic enough. Therefore, the monks in the temple who consider me an old friend requested me to write this introduction to raise funds.”

Two Saints Temple (Ersheng Si 二聖寺) was mentioned plenty in Yuan Hongdao’s writings. It was built during the Jin Dynasty (265-420) and had several other names in history—Xinghua Temple 興化寺, Wanshou Temple 萬壽寺, and Guangxiao Temple 光孝寺. It is where Yuan Hongdao started his studies on Buddhism with his uncles. The earliest record of Yuan’s Buddhist activity is the poem recording the experience of Yuan and his two uncles, Gong Zhongmin and Gong Zhongqing, going to check the Buddhist canon in Two Saints Temple, composed by Yuan at the age of 18. Two Saints Temple was not only a Buddhist temple to Yuan Hongdao, but also a nice place to have a party, go for a walk, and even accommodate friends. At the time Wunian Shenyou went to Gong’an, Yuan Hongdao invited him to visit the temple together. Hanshi yin Ersheng si 菩提飲二聖寺 (Drinking in Two Saints Temple on

75 Ibid., 1208.
Cold Food Festival describes the event of the Yuan brothers and their uncles, the Gong brothers, going on a field trip to Two Saints Temple where they composed poems and drank, the day before Pure Brightness Day. During the days Yuan lived by “Willow Wave”, he had parties drinking and composing poems with his laymen friends and monks in the temple very often—“Confucians and Chan monks make good companions together…Buddhist chanting goes on in the stone room; wild geese inspire poets when they fly over the rosy clouds…An intoxicated guest spat in a monk’s robe.” Two Saints Temple was like a home base for Yuan Hongdao when he was in Gong’an.

In return, Yuan Hongdao made great contributions to the construction of Two Saints Temple as well. *Bu zang shu* (Introduction of repairing the Buddhist canon) recorded the deeds of Yuan and his uncles contributing labor to organize the canon and raise funds for the temple: “My uncle Gong Zhongmin and I sorted the catalogue of the Buddhist canon stored in Two Saints Temple, while my uncle Gong Zhongqing supplemented the whole collection.” In the introduction of raising funds to rebuild the Hall of Heavenly Kings in Two Saints Temple, Yuan Hongdao evaluates the temple as the oldest and the most unique among the hundreds of temples around Jingzhou. Even when Yuan was on his deathbed, he was still concerned about an unfinished project in Two Saints Temple.

In Gong’an, in addition to Two Saints Temple, Yuan Hongdao also had other

---

76 Ibid., 80.
77 Ibid., 958.
78 Ibid., 1198.
79 Ibid., 1204.
80 Fangqiu Ren, *Yuan Zhonglang yan jiu* (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1983) P.205.
preferred temples to read Buddhist scriptures and meet friends such as Fahua Temple 法華寺, literally “Lotus Temple.” We can find evidence that he consorted with the monks from Fahua Temple in the poem *Fahua An kan Yuejiang lao na yi baishu* 法華 菡看月江老衲移柏樹 (Watching Yuejiang Monk Replant Cypress Trees in Fahua Temple).\(^{81}\) He admired the monk Yuejiang’s spontaneity and vitality: “[He] planted a couple of cypress trees randomly under the window…His eye brows are like red leaves and his bone is like a mountain range.” Fahua Temple was also a quiet and nice place for Yuan and his friends to spend time on composition and Chan studies: “[We] are addicted to Chan practices\(^ {82}\)…The philosophy of verse can be applied to Chan meditation\(^ {83}\)…I want to be a fish swimming in the sea of books, so as to be buried by the Buddhist canon right after my death.”\(^ {84}\)

The Reflection of Chan in Yuan Hongdao’s Poetry

In many of his poems about studying Chan, Yuan Hongdao mentions a “Mr. Pang 龐公” very often and in those poems, he never hides his admiration for Pang. Pang Yun 龐蘊 (740-808), addressed respectfully as “Mr. Pang” by Yuan Hongdao, also known as Layman Pang, was famous for his religious understanding of Chan Buddhism and his free and easy temperament. His family lived a simple life with impenetrable Chan philosophies. With respect to Chan studies, Yuan Hongdao

---

\(^{81}\) Bocheng Qian, 835.
\(^{82}\) Ibid., 837.
\(^{83}\) Ibid.
\(^{84}\) Ibid., 839.
regarded Pang Yun as his ideal—“Mr. Pang with grey hair is my mentor,” writes Yuan in a poem composed in the twenty-fifth year of the Wanli Reign. Yuan’s earliest poem that mentioned Pang Yun, *Xian ju za ti* (Random composition while living in leisure) was composed after he resigned from the position of Magistrate of Wu County: “Taking off the Confucian coat to worship the Buddha; snatching a moment of leisure makes a man in his thirties to be a juvenile…Without abstaining from alcohol or poems, when have I ever understood Mr. Pang’s Chan philosophy?”

After Yuan escaped from officialdom, he yearned for a disengaged lifestyle, of which some references included the ones led by extraordinary hermits such as Tao Yuanming, Zhuangzi, and Pang Yun:

After studying both South and North schools of Chan, I find that there is a special lamp passed on from the Pang family. (Excerpted from *De ba guan bao* 得罷官報)

Tao Qian (Tao Yuanming) did not end his fate as a beggar; Mr. Pang was not a good provider for his family. (*Shu nei* 述内)

Magistrate Tao (Tao Yuanming) did not have any sons so that his paper and pen were laid aside, while Mr. Pang had a son who could show his wisdom. (*Wang Taigu linglang you fu feng ji fu* 王太古令郎有父風即賦)

It seemed that Yuan Hongdao was inclined to study Pang Yun at the time he was at leisure, such as the days he was in Beijing and Gong’an:

Bai juyi’s poetry is overwhelming; old people who have witnessed big social changes would prefer Mr. Pang’s Buddhist chanting. (*Chang Wang Yiming na zi*

---

85 Ibid., 547.
86 Ibid., 329.
87 Ibid., 340.
88 Ibid., 346.
89 Ibid., 546.
I attend the fire to boil tea on my own and open my window to watch the bamboo…the surname of the old man next-door is also Pang. (He Wang Yiming shan ju yun 和王明山居韻)\(^91\)

I show my Chan philosophy to my wife and children; it is time for me to become Mr. Pang…I look all over today’s gentlemen, but find no one intimate like you. I water my willows with wine and record the man whose surname is Pang in paintings. (He Sanmu yun 和散木韻)\(^92\)

Generally speaking, Pang Yun’s lifestyle and personality were Yuan’s ideal. Yuan’s family was like Pang’s—his wife understood and supported his admiration for Pang’s Chan family, and their daughter, Channa 禪那, was a devoted Buddhist maid, just like Pang’s daughter, Lingzhao 靈照, literally “Spirit Shining”, who was dedicated to Chan under her father’s influence. Last but not least, they were both laymen with exceptional Buddhist understanding who embraced Chan practice and Chan philosophy everywhere in life.

For Yuan Hongdao, Chan was closely woven into his daily life—he integrated the way of composing poems and Chan meditation, applied Chan to chess playing, and even equated drunken talks with Chan allegorical words:

Apart from the major idea implied in the poems, I am frequently enlightened by the Chan philosophy indicated in the lines. (Excerpted from Pan Gengsheng guan tong zhu sheng de qian zi 潘庚生館同諸公得錢字)\(^93\)

The principle of a poem should be put in Chan to ponder over. (You ci qian yun 又

---

90 Ibid., 662.
91 Ibid., 848.
92 Ibid., 954.
93 Ibid., 385.
Who can be enlightened by Huiyuan’s Chan between the black and white chess pieces? (Yuanri Fang Zigong duiyi 元日方子公對弈) 
Drunken talks also can be applied to Chan; both are initial Buddhist allegorical words. (Guo gu si 過古寺)
[I] called domestic singing girls in front of flower and snow; after I was drunk I calmed down to study the old Chan. (Verse 2, Dingyou shier yue chu liu chu du 丁酉十二月初六初度)
In the warm bed in the front of the pavilion holding an old Buddha, [I] am pulling at the red sleeves while talking about Chan. (Verse 4, Dingyou shier yue chu liu chu du)

According to the above lines, Chan practice and meditation penetrated many aspects of Yuan’s life, such as composition of poems, drinking, and dallying with singing girls. However, associating Chan with verse is reasonable and comprehensible, while making comparison between Chan and drunken words somehow has an air of flaunting. His conceit can be traced back to his desire to lead an unrestrained lifestyle. In a letter to his uncle Gong Zhongqing Yuan lists the “five true happinesses in life”, covering all kinds of sensual pleasures.

Yuan Hongdao would absorb nourishment from Buddhist scriptures to enrich his understanding of Chan Buddhism and, to digest it, he would meditate with the cold wind blowing at night when all was still. In his journey to Lushan in 1600, Yuan Hongdao met an old monk and observed his life. In the poem he composed for the

---

94 Ibid., 836.
95 Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416), the founder of Pure Land Buddhism in China.
96 Bocheng Qian, 152.
97 Ibid., 95.
98 Ibid., 547.
monk, he referred to the monk’s lifestyle as his ideal way to meditate: “A string of blue smoke is sinking into the distant hills; [his] Chan mind has been washed as cold as ice… [He] loves to stir the moonlight with his walking stick; [he] does not feel cold even when a mountain breeze blows over his head… [He] often goes to the temple in the bamboo grove and comes back with Buddhist scriptures begged from the monks from the West.”

Another poem that expresses the same admiration for a similar scene and situation is *Huishan seng fang duan ge* 惠山僧房短歌 (Short Verse Composed in the Monks’ Room in Huishan):

> The east wind does not know the Chan mind is steady; it blows over the mountain top and causes the sound of my jade pendants worn on my girdle.”

The verses recording his meditation in the same habit include:

> [My] grey heart accompanies my meditation at night; a puppy barks at my shoes cold and shaking. (Excerpted from *Chongguosi tong Wang Zhangfu Xiaoxiu kan yue* 崇國寺同王章甫小修看月)

> Please remember the willows flicking over the Willow Wave Lake; we hear out the jade silk wind during our meditation at night. (*Liu lang san die* 柳浪三疊)

> The candlelight is going out late at night; the moonlight washes the hills clean. If we study Chan as hard as possible, it will not be that difficult to be enlightened. (*Yuanxi zhou zhong tong Ma Yuanlong ye hua* 元夕舟中同馬元龍夜話)

> I am studying the abysmal Chan alone under the moon. (*Guangong ci* 關公祠)

While standing under the moon at night all alone was Yuan Hongdao’s
preference to perform meditation, it was not based on an empty stream of consciousness, but rather thoughts after reading Buddhist scriptures:

[I] examined the prescriptions but found few magical ones; [I] skimmed the Buddhist scriptures and got a lot of inspiration. (*Zhai ju xi ti* 齋居戲題)\(^{106}\)

[I] do not intentionally erect the whisk; [I] hold up the Lotus Sutra in a relaxed manner. (*Guo Lingfeng* 過靈峰)\(^{107}\)

When Yuan Hongdao felt fettered by temporal affairs, he tended to use the metaphor of a net to describe the numerous things and complicated causes and implications surrounding people. He thought the only way to break through the net was to fall back on Buddhism. This thought kept consistent through all his life and became stronger during the duration of his involvement with officialdom:

If I had known I would get stuck in the net, I would have become a Buddhist monk. (*Su seng fang* 宿僧房)\(^{108}\)

I pity myself being in a tangle, but dare not be engaged in the emptiness. (*Helin si heshang* 鶴林寺和尚)\(^{109}\)

How to disentangle from the net? [The way is to] shave one’s hair and devote oneself to emptiness. (*Bing qi* 病起)\(^{110}\)

I can only rely on the Buddha’s power to save you from the secluded net. (*Bai liu shi wei qiu da fu* 百六詩為丘大賦)\(^{111}\)

The official net covers me from three sides; my Chan mind has been dusty for long. (*Xiang guang lin ji shi yong qian yun* 香光林即事用前韻)\(^{112}\)

---

\(^{106}\) Ibid., 120.
\(^{107}\) Ibid., 357.
\(^{108}\) Ibid., 95.
\(^{109}\) Ibid., 111.
\(^{110}\) Ibid., 122.
\(^{111}\) Ibid., 519.
\(^{112}\) Ibid., 838.
In addition to conventional Confucian education, both Buddhism and Taoism exerted a measure of influence over Yuan Hongdao’s thought. He mentioned Taoist representative figures along with Buddhist concepts in several poems to solve problems caused by Confucian regulations, especially the ones he composed during his term of office in Wu County when he was suffering through officialdom. It seemed that he liked to compare himself or his fellows who shared the same pain with him to Tao Yuanming, Zhuangzi, and other historic figures who were deeply influenced by Taoist ethics and therefore were indifferent to fame and wealth. In the poem Yuan wrote to Yang Dunchu 楊敦初, the previous district magistrate of Wu County, who was unyielding and refused to bow down to people of superior power, Yuan Hongdao compared Yang to Zhuangzi and asked Yang about his Chan studies.113

After Yuan Hongdao submitted his letter of resignation twice and was rejected by a higher authority the same number of times, he complained in the poem Qi gui be de 乞歸不得 (I Begged to resign but was not approved): “You do not let Tao Qian go…As long as Karma is effective; I will sacrifice my blood for the next life.”114 Although Yuan Hongdao resorted to religious sustenance, his pain still would not dissipate during his days in Wu County: “I sit in dull meditation to consume my day…Zhuang Zhou only meets me in dreams. This floating life is just like fire on stone; what on earth can last long?”

After Yuan Hongdao finally resigned from the magistrate position, he turned to look upon Taoism and Buddhism with more sensible and scholarly eyes. He was

113 Ibid., 92.
114 Ibid., 118.
inclined to integrate Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, to make up for each one’s deficiency:

Metaphysics does not have the art to reveal; Chan has the worry of knowledge. 

(Hu shang bie tong Fang Zigong fu 湖上別同方子公賦)\textsuperscript{115}

What I am close to in bed is Laozi and the Book of Changes\textsuperscript{116}, while my Confucian garment is left lonely and cold relatively. (Verse 1, Wu xu chu du 戊戌初度)\textsuperscript{117}

The Chan lamp is lucid against the glass reflecting snow; with Buddhist scriptures I can abstain from concubines…[I] read Zhuangzi with a calm mind for days; every morning I stretch my tongue to recite Zhunti’s teachings. (Verse 2)

In a farewell poem he wrote for Tao Wangling 陶望齡 (1562-1609), style name Shikui 石簣,\textsuperscript{119} his major Chan fellow and close friend, Yuan Hongdao exchanged his opinion on the integration of Confucianism and Chan: “Studying Confucianism without looking at Chan is just like enjoying tune without listening to tone, or like reading books without seeing words…A man who almost reaches the level of the Buddha or Confucius, is neither a Confucian nor Chan fellow.”\textsuperscript{120} In a poem he composed right after he resigned from his position as magistrate of Wu County, he reviews his learning progress as “neither Confucianism nor Chan is thorough; how to compare a young man to Yang Zhu 楊朱?”\textsuperscript{121} On New Year’s eve of the year 1598, he

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 409.
\textsuperscript{116} Laozi is a representative Taoist, one of his only book’s names is also Laozi. The Book of Changes is a representative work of Taoism.
\textsuperscript{117} Bocheng Qian, 616.
\textsuperscript{118} Zhunti 準提 is a goddess in a form of Avalokitesvara 觀音 and a central figure in esoteric Buddhist practice in late traditional Chinese Buddhism. See Robert Gimello.
\textsuperscript{119} Tao Shikui 陶石簣 is also known as Tao Wangling 陶望齡, or Tao Zhouwang 陶周望.
\textsuperscript{120} Bocheng Qian, 403.
\textsuperscript{121} Yang Zhu 楊朱 is a Taoist philosopher of the Pre-Qin Period.
made a summary of the whole year’s studying in Beijing in the poem *Wu xu chu xi* 戊戌除夕 (New Year’s Eve of the Wuxu year)\(^{122}\). “The books about the Way can help to solve puzzles, while the principle of Chan is used to ridicule and make fun,” showing his philosophical approach to life and study.

Thanks to his idle life in Beijing, Yuan Hongdao founded a literary society called Putao She 蒲桃社, literally “Grape Society”, which was named after the grape garden in Chongguo Temple 崇國寺, the gathering place of the society. The main members included the Yuan brothers, Huang Hui 黃輝 (1554-1612), courtesy name Pingqian 平倩, Tao Wangling 陶望齡, Pan Shizao 潘士藻, courtesy name Quhua 去華, Jiang Yingke 江盈科 (1553-1605), courtesy name Jinzhi 進之, who became a Metropolitan Graduate in the same to Yuan Hongdao, and Su Weilin 蘇惟霖. When they gathered together, they discussed Chan and exchanged views on poetry while drinking and sight-seeing. One honest portrayal of their gathering is contained in the line: “The Chan fellows of the society make every effort to practice Chan meditation. Time flies as flashing; warm words are exchanged.”\(^{123}\) During his activities in the Putao Society, Yuan Hongdao was very productive in poetry. In many poems he composed to respond to other members’ rhymes, Yuan often referred to his fellows as “Chan friends” or “Chan guests”, and described their modalities and activities:

> Poor officials love travelling; poor monks love gardening. A white scarf is stained with ink; black gauze caps fall on the couch for meditation. All coats are pawned to buy wine; maybe it turns to monks’ robes for the next round. (Excerpted from

\(^{122}\) Bocheng Qian, 662.
\(^{123}\) Ibid., 619.
He Zhong Junwei hua zi 和鐘君威花字\(^{124}\)

The Chan guests are drinking with delicate wine cups; the men of letters give out their money. (He Huang Pingqian luo zi 和黃平倩落字\(^{125}\)

The shadow under the vines substitutes for a tent; the Chan board replaces musical instruments. (He Boxiu jia zi 和伯修家字\(^{126}\)

The Chan guests are disgusted with luxuriant flowers, so they divert water to plant aromatic grass. (He Xiaoxiu sao zi 和小修掃字\(^{127}\)

The fire protected by stones increases the lingering charm of tea; the sound of pine branches cracking produces Buddhist chanting. Meditation has proved to be the truth; Huiyuan’s Lotus Society is in the wine jar. (Qiuri ji Jiang Jinzhi, Wang Yiming, Fang Zigong, Wang Zhangfu, Xiaoxiu yin Chongguo Si fen yun de bang zi 秋日集江進之、王以明、方子公、王章甫、小修飲崇國寺，分韻得邦字\(^{128}\)

The days Yuan Hongdao spent drinking and talking with his friends were filled with joy and inspiration. However, within a few years, the Putao Society declined with the successive deaths of Yuan’s fellows such as Yuan Zongdao and Pan Shizao.

In the mourning poem Ku Liu Shangshu Jinchuan 哭劉尚書晉川,\(^{129}\) Yuan Hongdao sighed, “How many of my Buddhist fellows are still alive? Many have been taken by heaven in a wink. Last year, I cried for Pan Quhua 潘去華, and now I am crying for Boxiu 伯修,\(^{130}\) my brother!”

\(^{124}\) Ibid., 643.
\(^{125}\) Ibid.
\(^{126}\) Ibid., 644.
\(^{127}\) Ibid., 645.
\(^{128}\) Ibid., 661.
\(^{129}\) Ibid., 905.
\(^{130}\) Boxiu is the courtesy name for Yuan Zongdao.
The Reflection of Chan in Yuan Hongdao’s Epistolary Sources

As an important supplement to Yuan Hongdao’s poems that reflected his association with Chan, his epistolary sources containing firsthand mental processes and direct language provide a large amount of information on his understanding and practice of Chan. Based on the detailed information, we can find out the development of his thoughts and attitude toward Chan.

During his time working in Wu County, Yuan Hongdao wrote dozens of letters to his friends to vent his grievances. Those letters often revealed his aspiration to relieve the pain of illness and officialdom by virtue of Buddhism, and reflected his application of Buddhist philosophy to real life. A letter Yuan Hongdao wrote to Wang Zaigong 王在公, courtesy name Mengsu 孟夙, used a dialectic perspective to view the relation between official responsibility and illness: “It is a fact that my official title and illness came one after another; it is the fun of samsara that bitters and sweets are mutually generated."\(^{131}\) Meanwhile, Yuan Hongdao specified that relation in a letter to Wang Fuzheng 王福徵, style name Yingqiao 漱橋, who became a Metropolitan Graduate in the same to Yuan Hongdao, saying “Illness is a bitter pill, but breaking away from officialdom because of illness is an extreme delight. Official affair is the root—hardship is the root of happiness.”\(^{132}\) This deduction of pain and delight reflected Yuan Hongdao’s realization of Buddhist philosophy of transmigration.

Yuan Hongdao did not abandon the comfort given by Buddhism after he resigned

---

\(^{131}\) Bocheng Qian, 293.  
\(^{132}\) Ibid., 301.
from the magistrate position in Wu County; instead, he travelled in the Buddhist
world more freely and deeply, keeping Buddhism as nutrition of self-cultivation and a
great pleasure of life. During Yuan Hongdao’s rest in Wuxi 無錫 in the twenty-fifth
year of the Wanli Reign, he showed his desire to study Buddhism in a letter to Nie
Yunhan 聶雲瀚, style name Huanan 化南, who became a Metropolitan Graduate in the
same to Yuan Hongdao: “It is indescribably wonderful to break the iron net, smash the
coppersy chains, step out of the mountain of knives and tree of swords, and leap on to
the Buddha land cool and refreshing…I would like to be an unfettered man, free and
easy.” At about the same time, in a letter to Xu Tai 徐泰, courtesy name Yupu 漁浦,
Yuan Hongdao writes, “The way of being an official is like a net, the regulations of
the world are like charcoal fire, and this body and bone are like fetters; the things we
can use to entertain heart, mind, eyes, and ears, are singing, chanting, and writing. If
we can reach those things, there will be extreme happiness. We can explore what is
behind heaven and hell, reveal the mystery of nature and fate, probe into the root of
life and death, and distinguish the differences between Confucianism and Buddhism.
How does it sound?” This letter stated Yuan Hongdao’s delight in the study of
Buddhism—he even raised the comparison between Confucianism and Buddhism as a
research subject. Two years later, in a letter to Jiang Yingke, Yuan Hongdao listed
studying Buddhism as one of three most joyful things. The other two were chatting
with Jiang Yingke and drinking while composing poems with good friends.

Some of Yuan Hongdao’s letters discussed his understanding of some basic

---

133 Ibid., 311.
134 Ibid., 304.
135 Ibid., 759.
Buddhist concepts and connotations of Chan finely and logically. In a letter to Cao Yinru 曹胤儒, courtesy name Luchuan 魯川, Yuan Hongdao demonstrates Chan’s performance of changeability: “I began to pay attention to Chan Buddhism since I was in my 20s, yet I have gotten nothing. However, I heard that Chan is still, and I also heard that Chan is nonstop. For example, the Chan of spring is autumn; the Chan of day is night. Chan is, namely, flowing without self-consciousness, and constantly changing. There is no traceable track, and for those who study Chan, there is no fixed rule to observe. Chan is not going back for sure, and it is not necessary to go forward; Chan is not silent; why should it be noisy? ”

This cognition of Chan corresponds to what he wrote to Tao Wangling: “There is no such Chan that can be studied thoroughly in the world. If Chan can be studied well, then the questions why eyes can see, ears can hear, hair is sticking up, and eyebrows are sideward, can be answered. We must know it is not because it is studied well that hair is sticking up and eyebrows are sideward. Actually, Chan is understandable without being studied well.” The language and reasoning of this letter, and those used in the Shan hu lin 珊瑚林, are very much alike.

Yuan Hongdao’s writings about his thoughts on basic Buddhist concepts and the connotation of Chan were full of logic and insightful, and were usually supplemented by Buddhist sutras. While in Hangzhou 杭州 during the twenty-fifth year of the Wanli Reign, Yuan Hongdao wrote Yu xian ren lun xing shu 與仙人論性書 (A Letter

136 Ibid., 253.
137 Ibid., 733.
Discussing Nature with an Immortal in which he explained the concepts of xing 形 (form), xin 心 (mind), shen 神 (spirit), shi 識 (knowledge), and xing 性 (nature) in a manner of clear reasoning. In a letter to Guan Zhidao 管志道 (1536-1608), style name Dongming 東溟, Yuan Hongdao used Buddhism to demonstrate the Way, defined fang 方 (square) and yuan 圓 (round) supported by theories from Jin gang jing 金剛經 (The Diamond Sutra) and Leng yan jing 楞嚴經 (The Surangama Sutra). According to Jiang Wu, the Leng yan jing was popular among Confucian intellectuals like Guan Zhidao, for “the sophisticated description of the phenomena of mental states and vigorous programs for the training of the mind through meditation and asceticism.” As for the concept ding 定 (meditation), Yuan Hongdao discussed the function of ding, gave his definition of ding, and categorized ding into three levels in a letter to Xu Tai 徐泰 supported with quotations from the Huayan jing 華嚴經 (The Avatamsaka Sutra).

Although Yuan Hongdao showed significant interest in and profound understanding of Buddhism, he was first and foremost a Confucian scholar. Therefore, he would not abandon Confucianism, though he became aware of the benefits of Buddhism. He expressed his admiration for those who remained in an intermediate state between Confucianism and Buddhism in a letter to Xu Dashen 徐大紳, courtesy name Hanming 漢明:

I categorize people who study the Way into four types: those who play in this

---

138 Ibid., 488.
139 Ibid., 235.
140 Jiang Wu, 50.
141 Bocheng Qian, 500.
142 Ibid., 217.
world; those who detach from this world; those who compromise with this world; and those who accommodate to this world… Those who accommodate to this world are detestable marvels. It is improper to say they are practicing Chan, because they are insufficient in religious discipline; it is inappropriate to define them as Confucians, because they do not talk about the study of Yao, Shun, Zhou, or Kong. They are not ashamed of evil deeds nor do they politely decline others. For their studies, they are not proficient in any field; for worldly affairs, they cannot take any task. They are of no great importance. Although they do not rebel or violate anything in the world, gentlemen and sages like to keep away from them. I like this type of people best, because they are satisfied with their status at every moment.

Yuan Hongdao mixed Confucianism and Buddhism together so as to form his personal knowledge structure and ideological system, yet he disagreed with the idea of explaining Confucianism in Buddhist expressions. Yuan Hongdao made his opinion clear in a letter to Tao Wangling talking about the studies of the Way:

The Chan popularized recently has such prevailing abuse that started from Wang Yangming 王陽明 who explained Chan in Confucian expressions excessively and was succeeded by Deng Huoqu 鄧豁渠, who illustrated Confucianism in Chan words intensively. When Chan people see the Confucians drowning in the mundane world, they do not think that is harmful, so Chan has become the Chan that focuses on karma. When Confucians use Chan’s theory of all-harmony for the purpose to discover and express what has not been discovered or expressed, Confucianism then has become uncontrollable. It is not only that Chan is not Chan, but also Confucianism is not Confucianism anymore.

In addition to the discussion about the development of Chan that deviated from

---

143 Ibid., 790.
orthodoxy, the letter also recorded information on Yuan’s writing of *Xi fang he lun* 西方合論, a work on Pure Land Buddhism. His turning to Tao Wangling for advice set the seal on Tao’s Buddhist attainments.

Tao Wangling was a scholarly mentor and beneficial friend of Yuan’s. Yuan mentioned Tao as “a real Chan scholar”\(^{144}\) in a letter to Wang Tu 王圖, courtesy name Zezhi 則之. When Yuan was working in Wu County, they discussed the deficiencies of *Zong jing lu* 宗鏡錄 (Records of the Source-Mirror),\(^ {145}\) written by Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽. They all agreed that Yongming Yanshou had tried to explain, yet the more he explained, the further the meaning deviated from the truth and the more confusing it became to readers. Sometimes, Yuan Hongdao shared the words of their conversations with his elder brother, Yuan Zongdao. In a letter to Yuan Zongdao, Yuan Hongdao reported his journey with Tao Wangling from Wuxi to Hangzhou. They enjoyed the view of West Lake, composed poems, and studied Chan together. “Shikui (Tao Wangling’s style name) sometimes composed a poem, while I did every day; Shikui studied Chan every day, while I did sometimes,” wrote Yuan Hongdao in the letter.\(^ {146}\)

The most common topic of Yuan’s letters to Tao was the review of his progress of Chan studies in a tone of self-criticism. “Recently I felt that most of my previous entries belonged to the realm of purity and wonder. Once of purity and wonder, the knowledge and understanding must be bad. I thought the difference between ‘there is nothing at all’ and ‘strive to polish all the time’ was the same to the distinction

\(^{144}\) Ibid., 1245.
\(^{145}\) Ibid., 279.
\(^{146}\) Ibid., 491.
between sudden and gradual enlightenment. Now I feel what I thought is just an ordinary opinion of low grade,” wrote Yuan to Tao. During Yuan’s quiet days in “Willow Wave”, he questioned his previous way of studying Chan in another letter to Tao: “Due to human nature, it is easier to bustle with noise and excitement than treat coldly. This is why people are even farther from the Way as they pursue harder. My scholarship has changed several times, though it is not easy for a novice like me, I should not change too often.”

Yuan Hongdao had many Chan fellows with whom he exchanged opinions, shared news, and enjoyed the pleasure of Chan studies. Those Chan fellows were also shared by his brothers, so that a network of Chan studies formed around Yuan Hongdao. Some of the major Chan fellows included Mei Guozhen 梅國楨 (1542-1605), courtesy name Kesheng 客生, who was also very congenial to Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道, and Pan Shizao 潘士藻, style name Xuesong 雪松, who received high evaluation from Yuan—“if this man (Pan Xuesong) studies the Way, his achievement will be immeasurable. He can be like the Buddha or create his own school at a hand’s turn.” And there were Huang Hui 黃輝, the “vigorous one”, and Jiang Yingke 江盈科, a very close friend of Yuan.

Apart from Chan studies, Yuan also had some fellows to discuss Pure Land Buddhism with him. In a letter Yuan Hongdao wrote to Fang Wenzhuan 方文僎, Yuan records the scenes of two of his relatives chanting Buddha’s name on their death

---

147 Ibid., 785.
148 Ibid., 1244.
At the beginning of the letter, Fang asked, “I heard that Yunqi Zhuhong said that people can be reborn in the Pure Land by chanting the Buddha’s name, is that true?” Yuan answered, “It is true. There is no need to quote sayings from books. I would like just share what I saw with you.” And then Yuan told the true stories of his nephew and aunt. His nephew told Yuan that he saw a lotus flower as he chanted the Buddha’s name before he died. His aunt knew the exact date when the Buddha was going to take her away, and her words were verified by what happened afterward. These spiritual experiences of Yuan’s laid a psychological foundation of his writing of *Xi fang he lun*.

In addition to the exchanges of opinions and thoughts, Yuan Hongdao shared news and interesting stories with his friends. In the twenty-fifth year of the Wanli Reign, he wrote to ZhuYilong and Jiang Yingke respectively to share what he recently heard about a person who was deeply enlightened and now was living in Huangshan. He also expressed his wish to visit that “amazing person” and his desire to become an outsider of the mundane world in the letters.

In conclusion, Yuan Hongdao’s association with Chan Buddhism was not a happenstance, but a certain event under the climate that Confucian literati, especially the Taizhou scholars among Wang Yangming’s followers, became interested and even sophisticated in Buddhist teaching and Chan practice. Among Yuan’s elder male relatives, Gong Zhongmin and Gong Zhongqing, his esteemed uncles from the Gong family, and Yuan Zongdao, his beloved elder brother, were all

---

149 Ibid., 477.
150 Ibid., 482.
devoted to Buddhist studies. They were influenced by the atmosphere of the synthesis of Confucianism and Buddhism, and young Yuan Hongdao was led by them. As Yuan Hongdao grew up and obtained his own position in both literary and official circles, the people he met were also deeply involved in the trend of the combination of Confucianism and Buddhism. This group of people formed a network sharing the same interest in Buddhism and literary composition. There was no explicit boundary between Buddhist and Confucian thoughts in their mind, because the thoughts from the two sources mingled well in their scholarship and made interdependent parts in their self-cultivation.

Yuan Hongdao found Buddhism beneficial not only in the enrichment of thoughts, but also in mundane life. When he was physically ill, or spiritually painful, he resorted to Buddhism for comfort. When he was in good mood to compose poems, along with scenery and wine, Buddhism became a source of inspiration. He made friends and kept correspondences with Buddhist monks, among whom there were famous masters of that time such as Yunqi Zhuhong 雲栖祩宏 whose contributions to the revival of Buddhism during the late Ming could not go unnoticed. The local temples in Gong’an were places where Yuan Hongdao liked to visit and entertain friends. In return, Yuan also helped to raise funds for the construction and management of the temples. As a poet who was religious and sensitive, Yuan Hongdao embraced spiritual practices such as chanting Buddha’s name advocated by Pure Land Buddhism. Simultaneously, as a Confucian intellectual, Yuan explored Chan philosophy in a technical manner.
CHAPTER II: WRITING OF SHAN HU LIN

Yuan Hongdao’s Reclusion in Gong’an

The period Yuan Hongdao served in Wu County (1595-1597) was painful, as he was suffering through both officialdom and illness. After he left the position, Yuan had a pleasant time traveling around. He summarized his progress in poetry during his traveling period in a letter to Yuan Zongdao: “Recently, my study of poetry has had great progress, my collection of poems has been enriched, my inspiration is gushing, and my horizon has been broadened.” His wandering about at leisure ended as he was granted the position of Capital Proofreader in Beijing in the spring of 1598. In the same year, his son Kaimei 開美 died while his other son Pengnian 彭年 was born. In the winter of 1599, he finished writing Xi fang he lun 西方合論, a treatise to advocate Pure Land Buddhism and correct the abuse of Chan among literati at that time. Yuan’s elder brother, Yuan Zongdao, and grandma, Madam Yu 余, died respectively in the autumn and winter of 1600. He mourned for them in deep sorrow and vowed to abstain from meat. After he received and convoyed Zongdao’s coffin to Gong’an in 1601, Yuan Hongdao started his reclusion living in a place that he set up by planting 10,000 willows and thereafter named Liulang 柳浪, literally “Willow Wave”. During his days at Liulang, Yuan Hongdao lived with his younger brother, Yuan Zhongdao, and a couple of monks, spending their time on short trips, composing poems, writing essays, and studying Chan. The period of “Willow Wave” ended as Yuan Hongdao

---

1 Bocheng Qian, 492.
went to Beijing to seek a new official position in 1606.

Yuan Hongdao became more broadminded, thanks to his leisurely and carefree days in Liulang. In a poem, he made introspection in a tone of self-mockery for he ate some meat after three years’ vegetarian diet. In 1602, Yuan traveled twice to Yuquan—once with Wuji Zhenghui 無跡正誨, and the other with Huang Hui 黃輝. In the same year, after the spring snow, Yuan and his father traveled to Taihe 太和, namely, Mount Wudang 武當山 in Hubei 湖北, accompanied by the abbot of Two Saints Temple, Baofang 寶方, and the abbot of Stone Temple (Shitou An 石頭庵), Lengyun 冷雲. Lengyun was an old friend of the Yuan brothers—he lived with Yuan Hongdao in Liulang and Heyeshan 荷葉山, and they later traveled to Deshan 德山 together. Yuan’s other grandma Madam Zhan 詹 died in the tenth lunar month of 1602. He wrote an essay to cherish the memory of her, for the love and care he received from her from his childhood. She was buried in Heyeshan, with Yuan’s wish that she would be reborn in Pure Land and accompanied by Channa 禪那, Yuan’s daughter who died young and was devoted to Buddhism during her lifetime. Another two deaths that dealt Yuan a heavy blow were those of his two mentors, Li Zhi 李贄 and Gong Zhongmin 龔仲敏. In spite of those deaths, one event worth celebrating was the birth of Yuan’s daughter, Xianglei’er 向累兒 in 1602.

The year 1603 was relatively peaceful—Yuan’s younger brother, Yuan Zhongdao finally passed the provincial examination and nothing significant happened. From New Year’s Day to the Tomb Sweeping Festival of the year 1604, Yuan Hongdao mostly wrote descriptions of scenery. Later he received news that all his younger
brothers failed in the imperial examination. He wrote a poem as a consolation to encourage them to pay more attention to Buddhism and grow old with the company of flowers, birds, clouds and smoke. He spent the summer with Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道, Hanhui 寒灰, Xuezhao 雪照, Lengyun 冷雲, Xizhi 習之, and a layman, Zhang Wujiao 張五教, courtesy name Mingjiao 明教, in a retreat in Heyeshan 荷葉山. Except for Yuan Zhongdao, who went to Huangshan 黃山 in the southeast to Gong’an afterward, the party boated to Deshan 德山 in middle of the eighth lunar month. In Deshan, they studied Chan, discussed the Way, and recorded their conversations into a book entitled Shan hu lin 珊瑚林 (Coral Grove). Its abridgement was named De shan shu tan 德山暑譚 (Summer Talks in Deshan). After visiting Deshan, they went to Taohuayuan 桃花源, a place known for Tao Yuanming’s 陶淵明 Taohuayuan ji 桃花源記 (The legend of Taohuayuan). For the trip to Deshan and Taohuayuan, Yuan Zhongdao made a comment about Yuan Hongdao’s improvement in literature: “After the trip, Hongdao’s poetry had some changes. His poems and essays composed during the trip are extremely elegant and beautiful. They are in musical rhymes, if you read aloud; they have wonderful colors, if you view and admire them; they give off heady scents, if you smell them. Compared with previous works, they scale new heights.”

After Yuan Hongdao lived a leisurely life for two more years, he ended up serving in the Ministry of Rites in Beijing.

---

2 Ibid., 997.
The Days in Deshan

Yuan Hongdao’s trip to Deshan was recorded in detail in several sources, such as *You de shan ji* 遊德山記 (A travel note on Deshan),3 *De shan shu tan yin* 德山暑譯引 (The introduction of *De shan shu tan*)4 by Yuan Hongdao, and *He ye shan fang* xiao xia ji 荷葉山房銷夏記 (A note on the summer holidays in Heyeshan)5 by Yuan Zhongdao. In order to show a complete record of the trip, I translated Yuan Hongdao’s *You de shan ji* as follows:

In the summer of 1604, I was on a retreat with the monks Hanhui 寒灰 and Lengyun 冷雲, Xuezhao 雪照, a layman, Zhang Mingjiao 張明教, a young monk, Xizhi 習之, and my younger brother, Xiaoxiu 小修 in Heyeshan 荷葉山. It was a cool autumn when we went into Deshan 德山. Early in the eighth lunar month, as the summer heat diminished, Xiaoxiu went into Huangshan 黃山, while I took those monks to Deshan, since there was a convenient boat. We started off from Mengxi 孟溪 on the fourteenth day of the eighth lunar month. On the night of the fifteenth day, we appreciated the moon in Mahu 馬湖. Since Mahu was connected with Dongting 洞庭, the shining surface of the water was of a thousand square miles. The view of the moon and water was one the most magnificent [I have witnessed] in my life.

On the morning of the seventeenth day, we arrived at a pool at the foot of Deshan. On the river, the mountain looked like rolling stones and we saw a green grove on it. Afterward, our boat went along the bank and entered a twisting water

---

3 Ibid., 1148.
4 Ibid., 1283.
5 Zhongdao Yuan, *Ke xue zhai ji* (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1989) P.547.
6 Xiaoxiu 小修 is the courtesy name of Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道.
7 A mountain.
8 Huangshan 黃山 was a hill in the southeast of Gong’ an. The name Huangshan literally means “yellow hill”. The place was named so because the earth and stones on the hill were yellow.
9 A brook.
10 A lake.
11 A huge lake.
lane. The trees on the bank covered the sun. There was a hillock that looked like a
griddle and was covered by trees whose branches were as thin as arms. We
climbed up by grasping the stone. In the low-lying area between the hills there
was a stream. It was ahead of the stream where Lady Moli’s Ghost House Mill\textsuperscript{12}
was located. Behind the stream there was a pagoda and its yard, facing a cliff and
backing to a peak, with many old trees in it. And there were fields inside and
outside the yard. The distance between the two hills was so narrow that it only let
go a stream at first, yet could hold the yard and fields backwards, and finally
there was a flatter land upon which a temple was located. Inside the gate, there
were many old cedars and cypresses. The hall was tall and spacious. The
Buddha’s images and altar were surprisingly huge. The hall was just like the
former site of E-Pang Palace\textsuperscript{13}—those who saw this would know it should not
have been built after the Han Dynasty. We walked along the side of the hall to the
right and saw much pretty bamboo. Quiet and secluded cliffs rested tier upon tier.
We climbed up along the winding path to get to the summit where Shanjuan
Altar\textsuperscript{14} is located. On the summit, sweet-scented osmanthus blossomed and gave
off a rich perfume that enveloped the whole mountain. Several collapsing houses
stood there, which had our spirits dampened. When we were about to go down,
we looked down at the view from the altar and cheered up again. We saw the
view under the sun, soon found shade, and went back. The mountain was green
and the water was shining. If some gentlemen abandon their burdens and build
some pavilions here, the site would be superb scenery in Deshan. However, the
monks living in the mountain rarely went to the nice places. Even though they
had reached these places, they did not know their beauty. My fellow monks and I

\textsuperscript{12}Moli is the literal translation of the Sanskrit word “Hariti”. Hariti 鬼子母 was at first a powerful hungry ghost
who later became a patron god for children. It is said that when the Chan master Xuanjian 宣䪂禪師 came to
Deshan, Hariti was milling wheat to make offerings to the public there. See De shan zhi bu 德山誌補.
Also see Ernest John Eitel, and K Takahuwa, Handbook of Chinese Buddhism: Being a Sanskrit-Chinese dictionary of
Buddhist terms, words and expressions, with vocabularies of Buddhist terms in Pali, Singhalese, Siamese, Burmese,

\textsuperscript{13}E-Pang Palace was built during the Qin 秦 Dynasty.

\textsuperscript{14}Shanjuan Tan 善卷壇, the altar to worship and memorialize Shanjuan 善卷, a legendary reclusive sage who
refused to be the leader of the Chinese people.
loved to seek extraordinary sights such as the Three-Osmanthus Grove\textsuperscript{15} where it was quiet and would be a terrific place to build some houses, and Blue-Black Lotus Shrine\textsuperscript{16} where it would be ideal to build a pavilion on the left. It would be wonderful to build a pavilion by the little quiet room which is on the west side of the Dharma Hall, where there is much bamboo. You could not find this reclusive environment elsewhere. Behind the mountain, there was Yangshan 陽山 where there was vast land watering by a river. I saw fields and houses intermingle and smoke from kitchen chimneys rise above the river. If I build a house there, I would also set up a grove. If the Buddhist rite in Deshan wants to thrive, this place would be a nice spot to build a post house for monks.

We stayed in Deshan for two days and saw all the sights. The Long 龍 brothers came to meet us with wine. We all had a good time drinking for three days and nights. After the Long brothers left, the summer heat came again. Thereupon, I stayed in Deshan and talked about Chan with the monks, which was a pleasant experience. We did not go to the town to visit the Long brothers until the sixth day of the ninth lunar month. Deshan was the ancient Buddhist site of Master Jian 鑑.\textsuperscript{17} I felt my mind was sharper after I had a look at his deadee with reverence. The elder of the Long brothers was Long Junchao 龍君超, and the younger was Long Junyu 龍君御. These two mavericks have been good friends with my brothers.

\textsuperscript{15} Sangui Lin 三桂林.
\textsuperscript{16} Qinglian She 青蓮社.
\textsuperscript{17} The Chan master, Xuanjian 宣鑑禪師.
According to this travel note, Yuan Hongdao and his fellow monks spent about twenty days in Deshan sight-seeing and engaging in Chan studies. It was during those days that the initial content of the *Shan hu lin* 珊瑚林 and *De shan shu tan* 德山暑譚 took form.

In addition to the travel note, Yuan Hongdao composed many poems along the way to record what he saw and felt. The first poem was composed when they appreciated the moon in the boat arriving at Deshan: “The reason why I came to accompany the green hills at this old age is because I was born connected with the White Lotus Society.”¹⁸ In my reclusive room, there are volumes of books; in my boat,
monk fellows are carried year by year.” According to the lines, Yuan Hongdao began to enter into the state of Buddhism right at the beginning of the trip.

Like the first one, many poems Yuan Hongdao composed during the trip describe the beautiful scenery, as well as express his enlightenment at seeing the landscape of Deshan. For example, the last line in the poem *Zhou zhong wang huang shan* (Looking over Huangshan in the boat) states “I only saw the color but not the mountain, because of the mountain’s Samadhi.” When they appreciated the moon in Mahu, Yuan Hongdao wrote the line: “The mountain monks are good at the endurance of concept, making the moon seem even brighter.”

Compared with natural scenery, the historical sites in Deshan were more inspiring for Yuan Hongdao’s thinking of Buddhism. Two days after the Mid-Autumn Festival, Yuan worshiped at the pagoda of Master Jian and composed a four-verse poem. In the poem, Yuan respectfully addresses him as Jingang and praises his teaching tradition of blowing and shouting. Deshan was not only famous for Master Jian, but also a legendary ancient sage Shanjuan. After Yuan Hongdao visited the altar built in memory of Shanjuan, he wrote the line: “Those who respected Shanjuan as their teacher did not necessarily see through the mundane net.”

---

20. Ibid., 998.
22. Bocheng Qian, 999.
23. Ibid., 1000.
25. Shanjuan was Yao’s teacher. After Yao died, Shun requested Shanjuan to be the leader, but Shanjuan rejected him and chose to live in seclusion in Deshan. See Bocheng Qian, 1001.
26. Bocheng Qian, 1000.
Another theme of Yuan’s poems wrote in Deshan is the gathering with the Long brothers, Long Xiang 龍襄, courtesy name Junchao 君超 and Long Ying 龍膺, courtesy name 君御. The Long and Yuan brothers were old friends. Yuan Hongdao’s earliest poem recording his gathering with the Long brothers was written in 1591. It had been thirteen years since the last time they had met. At the feast, Yuan Hongdao lamented the deaths of their common friends and got drunk. They took their time to make sightseeing tours and chat together. To respond to Long Junyu’s line “My house is in Deshan but I cannot live in it”, a phonetic pun, Yuan Hongdao wrote, “I am living high up Wuling Stream 武陵溪, so I do not need to find Wuling Stream.”27 In the farewell poem, Yuan Hongdao praises the living environment of both Deshan and Heyeshan in a carefree mood: “At the top of the hill in Heyeshan, I can hear a cuckoo singing; above the spring of Taohuayuan 桃花源, I bid farewell to the hermits.”28 As a whole, Yuan’s reunion with the Long brothers was pleasant and relaxing.

Apart from the delightful time, there were sentimental scenes and news as well. During his days in Deshan, Yuan Hongdao came across a Li Zhi’s old friend, whose name was not stated clearly in the poem Yuan composed for him but only addressed him Dazhi, literally “great wisdom”. The meeting was bound to cherish the memory of Li Zhi—“The grasses in front of the teaching hall have grown to be three feet tall; we should walk around and weed them out with sickles,”29 wrote Yuan in the poem given to Dazhi. Another piece of melancholy news was the death of Yuan Zongdao’s

---

28 Ibid., 1007.
29 Ibid., 1004.
wife. Inevitably, her death triggered Yuan Hongdao’s thoughts of his elder brother—“Today on the summit of Deshan, I wrote another poem to mourn for my elder brother while gulping down sobs.”

The History of Deshan

Deshan has a long history and a profound culture. According to Dong tian fu di yue du ming shan ji (The Record of Charming Places) edited by a Taoist priest, Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933), Deshan 德山 was the fifty-third blessed place of Taoism, situated in Wuling County 武陵, Langzhou 朗州 (now Changde 常德, Hunan Province 湖南). Du Guangting also wrote that Deshan was originally named Wangshan 枉山 and Shanjuan 善卷 used to live there. This record briefly introduces the geographic location, cultural history, and former name of Deshan. In Shui jing zhu 水經注 (Commentary on the Waterways Classic), there is more information provided: “Yuanshui 湘水 (Yuan River) flows to the east and passes a small bay called Wangzhu 枉渚. About a 里 from the bay, there is Wangrenshan 枉人山 (Wangren Hill). To the west of the hill, there flows a narrow stream about a hundred 里 in length.” Deshan was the place where Shanjuan lived in seclusion, and also the place of departure recorded in Qu Yuan’s 屈原 (343-278 B.C.)

---

30 Ibid., 1006.
31 Changde was named Langzhou under the Tang Dynasty. See Hongmo Chen, Changde fu zhi (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji shu dian, 1964) P.47.
32 Guangting Du, Oyanagi Shigeta, and Guiyi Li, Dong tian fu di yue du ming shan ji (Nanjing, Jiangsu gu ji chu ban she, 2000) P.23.
33 Li is a Chinese unit of length (=1/2 kilometer).
34 Daoyuan Li, Shui jing zhu (Beijing, Hua xia chu ban she, 2006) P.706.
poem *She jiang* 涉江. While Deshan was a blessed place in Taoism, it was also a sacred place in Buddhism—a famous Chan monk of the Tang Dynasty, Master Xuanjian 宣鑒, who was respectfully called Zhou Jingang 周金剛, taught the Dharma at Gufeng Ding 孤峰頂, literally “the top of the isolated peak”.


---

35 Master Xuanjian’s surname before he became a monk was Zhou 周. He was called Jingang 金剛, because he often taught *Jin gang bo re bo luo mi jing* 金刚般若波罗蜜经 (The Diamond Sutra). See Puji, and Yuanlei Su, *Wu deng hui yuan* (Beijing, Zhonghua shu ju, 1984) P. 371. Also see Hongyi Gu, and Daoyuan, *Xin yi Jingde chuan deng lu* (Xianggang, Hai xiao chu ban shi ye you xian gong si, 2005) P.961.
According to *lü shi chun qiu* 呂氏春秋 (Mr. Lü’s Annals), Shanjuan 善卷 used to be Emperor Yao的mentor: “Yao did not grant an interview to Shanjuan as an emperor; instead, he asked Shanjuan for advice by facing north. Yao was an emperor, while Shanjuan was just a commoner. Why did Yao treat Shanjuan with such respect? It was because Shanjuan was a sage and it was not proper to treat a sage arrogantly. With respect to virtue and wisdom, Yao could not compare himself with Shanjuan, so he faced north to listen to his advice.”

After Emperor Yao had abdicated, his successor Emperor Shun 舜 wanted to
give the throne to Shanjuan, but Shanjuan did not accept. A detailed record of the whole story can be found in the chapter *Giving Away a Throne* in *Zhuangzi*:\(^{39}\)

Shun tried to cede the empire to Shanjuan, but Shanjuan said, “I stand in the midst of space and time. Winter days I dress in skins and furs, summer days, in vine-cloth and hemp. In spring I plow and plant—this gives my body the labor and exercise it needs; in fall I harvest and store away—this gives my form the leisure and sustenance it needs. When the sun comes up, I work; when the sun goes down, I rest. I wander free and easy between heaven and earth, and my mind has found all that it could wish for. What use would I have for the empire? What a pity that you don’t understand me!” In the end he would not accept, but went away, entering deep into the mountains, and no one ever knew where he had gone.

In order to commemorate Shanjuan, a gentleman who was capable of governing the country but yearned for freedom, an altar was built for him in Deshan. In addition to Yuan Hongdao’s *You de shan ji*, many other literati who had visited Deshan mentioned that altar in their works, such as Liu Yuxi’s 刘禹锡 poem *Shanjuan tan xia zuo* 善卷壇下作 (Composed under Shanjuan Altar),\(^{40}\) and Wang Yangming’s 王陽明 verse line “Shanjuan Altar stands on the green peak with the clouds surrounding” in the poem *Deshan si ci bian jian yun* 德山寺次壁間韻 (Response to the Rhyme of the Poem Written on the Wall in a Temple in Deshan).\(^{41}\)

Hunan Museum first discovered 44 Chu 楚 tombs and unearthed 287 cultural relics of the Warring States in Deshan in 1956. Soon afterwards, 84 more Chu tombs

---


\(^{40}\) Weisong Jiang, and Yuxi Liu, *Liu Yuxi shi ji bian nian jian zhu* (Jinan, Shandong da xue chu ban she, 1997) P.126.

\(^{41}\) Yangming Wang, and Guang Wu, *Wang Yangming quan ji* (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1992) P.716.
and 990 cultural relics of the Warring States were discovered in Deshan by Hunan Provincial Department of Archaeology. The number of the discovered Chu tombs in Deshan had reached 850 by the year 1989. The density and the large number of Chu tombs discovered in Deshan indicate that there was a large population living in Deshan during the Warring States Period.

If Shanjuan is only a legend, Qu Yuan (343-278 BCE), a historic poet from the Chu State of the Warring States, actually existed. We have known Deshan was originally named Wangshan and the river that embraced the hill was called Wangshui. According to the Xiangzhou ji, Wangshui flowed from Wangshan, and formed a bay called Wangzhu in the west of Wangshan where some ancestral temples of Chu existed. Wangshan was Deshan, and Wangzhu was the bay at the western foot of Deshan. Deshan is located at the eastern end of the Yuan river, an area called Yuanxiang during the Warring States Period. Qu Yuan frequently mentions his activities in that area in his poems:

I crossed Yuanxiang to go on a punitive expedition to the south. (Li sao)

To pacify Yuanxiang till there is no wave. (Xiang jun)

Yuanxiang is mighty and torrential and even its tributaries are gurgling. (Huai sha)

I approached Yuanxiang and reached the abyss. (Xi wang ri)

The examples above reveal Qu Yuan’s appearance in Yuanxiang, the area to

---

42 Fang Li, Tai ping yu lan: [1000 juan] (Beijing, Zhonghua shu ju, 1963) P.311.
43 Tao Wang, and Yuan Qu, Qu Yuan fu xuan (Xianggang, Sheng huo du shu xin zhi san lian shu dian, 1981) P.130.
44 Ibid., 11.
46 Ibid., 106.
which Deshan belonged during the Warring States Period. Qu Yuan explicitly mentions Wangzhu, the bay at the foot of the hill of Deshan in *She jiang* 涉江: “I departed from Wangzhu in the morning and slept in Chenyang 辰陽 in the evening.”

According to Li Daoyuan’s 郦道元 and Du Guangting’s records, Deshan was originally named Wangshan. When was the name Wangshan changed to Deshan? According to *Changde fu zhi* 常德府志 (The Local Records of Changde), Fan Zigai 樊子蓋 (544-616), a Prefect of the Sui Dynasty, changed the name Wangshan to Shandeshan 善德山, in order to commemorate Shanjuan 善卷. Later, local people

---

47 Ibid., 70.
48 Li Daoyuan was the author of *Shui jing zhu* 水經注.
49 Prefect, translated from *Ci-shi* 刺史, head of a Prefecture (zhou). See Charles Hucker, 558.
50 Hongmo Chen, *Changde fu zhi* 常德府志 (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji shu dian, 1964) P.102.
were accustomed to calling it Deshan.

Fan Zigai was an officer who stayed in power under three different regimes. His story was recorded in *Bei shi* (The history of the Northern Dynasties). Both his grandfather and father were prefects. Fan Zigai was prudent in war, so he was said to never have been defeated. He was also strict with his army so that no one under his command dared to deceive him.\(^5^1\) Since Fan Zigai renamed Wangshan to Deshan, literally “the mountain of virtue”, Deshan was endowed with an aura of goodness and therefore became a place of interest attracting outstanding people.

Liu Yuxi (772-842) was a poet and official of the Tang Dynasty, who was famous for his broad outlook expressed in most of his poems. Liu was once relegated to the Adjutant\(^5^2\) of Langzhou and spent about ten years in Langzhou. During that period, Liu appreciated the view of the mountains and rivers and composed many poems. Liu Yuxi was one of the earliest poets who wrote about Deshan in the history of Chinese poetry.

It was the winter of the first year of the Yongzhen Reign (805) when Liu Yuxi was demoted to Langzhou. Deshan became his favored place where he diverted himself from boredom. He paid a visit to the Chan masters to help to relieve grief soon after he arrived at Deshan.\(^5^3\) As Liu Yuxi visited Deshan again and again, he came to know the cultural accumulation of Deshan better and better. What attracted him most was the legend of Shanjuan who gave advice to Emperor Yao and rejected Emperor Shun’s offer of the throne. Therefore, he wrote a poem to cherish the

\(^{51}\) Yanshou Li, *Bei shi* [100 juan] (Beijing, Zhonghua shu ju, 1974) P.2594-2596.
\(^{52}\) Adjutant, translated from Si-ma 司馬, a vice prefect in a prefecture. See Charles Hucker, 452.
memory of Shanjuan:⁵⁴

Mister Shanjuan showed his willingness not to accept the throne; and then left the bustling place.
Since the people had been set, I would settle down in grove.
The Way follows nature; the truth is infinite.
The jade altar was built in this mountain; wise people should look back often.

(Shanjuan tan xia zuo 善卷壇下作)

This poem does not describe the beautiful scenery of Deshan, though it successfully expresses Liu Yuxi’s philosophical mind and admiration for the ancient hermit. The following poem Ti Zhaoyin si 题招隐寺 (Wrote on the walls of Zhaoyin Temple)⁵⁵ speaks of the sublimity of the peak and the glorious view of Deshan:

The dust left by the hermit is still here; the eminent monks’ vihara keeps open.
The shape of the land breaks as it approaches the bay; the momentum of the river returns as it touches the mountain.
The flowers in the field of Chu are sensitive; the birds from the south sound sad.
The highest peak is hospitable; I look out in the direction of my hometown as long as I am free.

The poet ascended the mountain and enjoyed a distant view. Under the impact of Liu Yuxi’s sorrow of being relegated, the flowers looked sad and the birds passed on the sorrowful feeling. Boarding Deshan, “the mountain of virtue”, and thinking of his home were Liu Yuxi’s frequent activities at the time he had just been banished by the court. It goes without saying that Liu Yuxi enriched the cultural connotation of Deshan through his poetry and personality.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 126.
⁵⁵ Ibid., 188.
In addition to Shanjuan’s lofty quality, Qu Yuan’s patriotic feeling, Fan Zigai’s soldierly bearing, and Liu Yuxi’s poetic mind, Deshan was also famous for a “Deshan Stick” grasped by a Chan master, Xuanjian 宣鑾 (780-865), who was active during the Tang Dynasty. Xuanjian blew his stick to spread the Dharma in Deshan, devoting himself to innovation in Buddhism—he was against blind worship of idols and advocated practices within the inward nature.

There are records of Xuanjian in Wu deng hui yuan 五燈會元 and Jing de chuan deng lu 景德傳燈錄. Xuanjian, given the Deshan Xuanjian 德山宣鑾, was the fourth generation of the Chan master Qingyuan Xingsi 青原行思, and the direct Dharma heir of Longtan Chongxin 龍潭崇信. He was born to the Zhou 周 family and became a Buddhist monk at an early age. He had a good command of Vinaya-pitaka, and a thorough knowledge of both the Faxiang School 法相 (Characteristics of the Dharma) and Faxing School 法性 (Nature of the Dharma). He often taught the Diamond Sutra, and he was therefore called Zhou Jingang 周金剛, literally “the Diamond Zhou”. At first, he was not satisfied with Chan teachings such as “becoming Buddha as soon as seeing one’s true nature” and “studying straight to the mind”, so he vowed to demolish Longtan Chongxin’s “lair”. Before he went to provoke Chongxin, he distained to study Chan Buddhism and thereupon made the following comments, “The sea will not be stained, if you dip a hair in it; the blade will not be

---

56 Puji, and Yuanlei Su, Wu deng hui yuan (Beijing, Zhonghua shu ju, 1984) P.371.
57 Hongyi Gu, and Daoyuan, Xin yi jingde chuan deng lu (Xianggang, Hai xiao chu ban shi ye you xian gong si, 2005) P.961.
58 The Tripitaka—a Buddhist canon—consists of three parts—Sutra, Vinaya, and Abhidharma.
59 Hongyi Gu, and Daoyuan, Xin yi jingde chuan deng lu (Xianggang, Hai xiao chu ban shi ye you xian gong si, 2005) P.968.
60 Puji, 371.
dulled, if you throw a string on it. Only I will know whether I am learned or not.”

After his brief meeting with Chongxin, he was about to leave but was persuaded by Chongxin to stay. One evening, Xuanjian was sitting outdoors in meditation. Chongxin asked him, “Why not return to your room?” Xuanjian answered, “Because of the darkness.” Chongxin then lit a candle and handed it to Xuanjian. Xuanjian had barely picked it up when Chongxin blew out the candle. Xuanjian then knelt devoutly before Chongxin. “What did you see?” asked Chongxin. “I will not doubt any old monk’s words from now on,” said Xuanjian. Xuanjian bid farewell to Chongxin the next morning. Chongxin told his disciples, “He is a real man whose eyes are sharp like a blade and a mouth big like a blood bowl. He will not turn his head if he is hit by a blow. Someday he will set up my teachings on top of the isolated peak.”

Chan Buddhism believed that the Dharma was beyond words. Therefore, many Chan masters hit disciples with a stick or shouted at them in order to awaken them from abiding. The way of shouting began with Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709-788), while Xuanjian was the originator of beating with a stick. Deshan became a home of Chan Buddhism since Xuanjian blew his stick there. Xuanjian’s teaching has been passed down until today. Visitors to Qianming Temple 乾明寺 in Deshan can pick up free copies of Deshan bang 德山棒 (Deshan Stick), a newspaper published by the Bureau of Religious Affairs of Changde.

---

61 See Puji, 371. Also see Daoyuan, 961.
62 See Puji, 372. Also see Daoyuan, 962.
63 Daoyuan, 968.
FIGURE 2.5. The copies of the Buddhist newspaper *Deshan bang*. The newspaper is free to pick up in the tearoom in Qianming Temple in Deshan. Photograph by Xin Zi, June 2012.
CHAPTER III: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF SHAN HU LIN

The Authenticity of Shan hu lin

Unlike Shangzheng 觸政 (Rules of Drinking), Pingshi 瓶史 (Notes on Vase-Flower Arrangement), or Yuan Hongdao’s other long works that are acknowledged widely and have been studied thoroughly, the Shan hu lin 珊瑚林 had previously been thought lost.¹ Shan hu lin is neither collected in Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao 袁宏道集箋校 (The Annotated Complete Works of Yuan Hongdao), nor does it exist in the catalogues that contains Yuan’s most works, such as Qian qing tang shu mu 千頃堂書目 (The Catalogue of Qianqing Hall) and Ming shi yi wen zhi 明史藝文志 (The Chapter of Art and Literature of the Ming History).² In Sun Dianqi’s 孫殿起 (1894-1958)³ Fan shu ou ji 販書偶記 (The Record of Selling Books), there is a record about a two-volume edition of the Shan hu lin. According to Sun Dianqi, that edition is written by Yuan Hongdao from Gong’an, and it might be published during the Tianqi 天啟 Reign (1621-1627).⁴

According to the version information provided on the title page, the width and height of the original printing block of the Shan hu lin measure 270mm and 215mm respectively. The type area is bordered with single lines, and there is no “fishtail” (yuwei 魚尾, a kind of mark printed in the shape of fishtail) in the gutter. There are

² Bocheng Qian, 1680.
³ Sun Dianqi, style name Sun Yaoqing 孫巖卿 is a bibliographer and bibliophile.
⁴ Dianqi Sun, Si ku shu mu xu bian: 20 juan (Taipei, Shi jie shu ju, 1961) P.280.
eight columns on either side of the gutter, and each column has the capacity of
nineteen characters. The format of the gutter of each page is fixed—the title
shan-hu-lin 珊瑚林 is carved on the top; the name of the book studio
qing-xiang-zhai-cang-ban 清響齋藏板, the number of volume, and the page number
in the volume are recorded on the bottom. The book is divided into two
volumes—there are 48 pages in the first volume, and 55 in the second. The
information about the author, editor, and proofreader is recorded on the first page of
each volume. While the information about the author and editor keep the same in both
volumes, there is a little change in the proofreader’s name—it is Feng Bi 馮質 for the
first volume, which is consistent with the information given in the postscript, while it
is Feng Huai 馮懷 for the second. This difference is probably a mistake. The picture
below presents the format of the main text of the Shan hu lin:

FIGURE 3.1. Picture of the first page of Shan hu lin. Photocopy from Xu xiu si ku quan shu 續修
四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) no.1131, p.3.
The preface of the *Shan hu lin* comes into view after you flip the front cover over, preceding the main body. The layout of the printed page of the preface is different from that of the main body. The preface takes up four pages. In the gutter of each page, five characters align vertically, marking the title and page number of the preface. There are four columns on either side of the gutter. The printing block of the preface is carved according to the author’s original handwriting. The preface has 283 words, including the title *shan-hu-lin-xu* 珊瑚林序 and the author’s signature *hua-ting-chen-ji-ru-ti* 華亭陳繼儒題. In the first column, below the title, there is a book collection seal with the words *guo-li-bei-ping-tu-shu-guan-shou-cang* 國立北平圖書館收藏, which are inscribed positively. In the column left to the author’s signature, two seals are arranged in vertical order. One is carved in intaglio with the words *chen-ji-ru-yin* 陳繼儒印 (Chen Jiru’s seal), and the other is inscribed positively with the words *mei-gong* 眉公, Chen Jiru’s courtesy name. For intuitive information, refer to the pictures below:
I translate the preface as follows:

The Preface of Shan hu lin

Mr. Yuan’s Shan hu lin 珊瑚林 does not adopt Buddhist expedient means such as nianchui, shufu, or sitongchema. Up to now, I just skimmed through the whole book, still I can imagine the view that under an old locust tree which has graceful foliage, birds are tweeting and bamboos are rustling in the wind—all is nothing but Buddha’s teaching. Recently De shan shu tan 德山暑譚 has been cut

---

5  Nian-chui 拈椎, also written as 拈槌, literally means to pick up a hammer. The Buddha’s disciples were required to pick up a hammer before they can state their matters to him. The Buddha once taught Mahākāśyapa 迦葉 through an expedient means by oversetting Mahākāśyapa’s try to pick up the hammer. See Puji, and Yuanlei Su, Wu deng hui yuan 五燈會元 (Beijing, Zhonghua shu ju, 1984) P.7.

6  Shu-fu 堅拂, literally means to erect a horsetail whisk. Chan masters like to hold whisks as implement to show sublimity when they preach publicly. A Chan master likes to erect a whisk, when he intends to daunt or baffle the audience. Ibid., 143.

7  Si-tong-che-ma 私通車馬, is a Chan jargon. The complete expression is “Guan bu rong zhen, si tong che ma (In public, oversight of a needle is not allowed, while in private, carts and horses can get through)”. Sometimes Chan masters are inclined to help disciples understand the teachings by temporary expedients, which can be referred as “Si tong che ma 私通車馬”. Ibid., 1121.
on blocks for printing. [The text] is exactly culled from this book and sent to be cut on blocks for printing. Why was not the whole book cut on blocks? Actually, I do not resent that I could not see its entireness on that very day, but resent that I can see its entireness only till today. On that day, the lucky chance was not ripe, so that [the precious manuscript] was eaten by worms; today, when fish eyes fill up the market, can anyone recognize the bright pearl? Who knows if this book will be cast like the gold found in Guan Youan’s 管幼安 garden? This is the reason why I hate that the book was not printed and published earlier. There is a Yuanfang 元方 和 a Jifang 季方 who are equally brilliant in Mr. Yuan’s family. All across the land, who can rival Mr. Yuan? Now since the dust on Xu Wenchang’s 徐文長 works has been shaken off, and Li Zhi’s 李贄 idea of nature and life has been clarified, they can definitely match Mr. Yuan. In literary and art circles, although those two gentlemen were not marquises during their lifetime, appropriate respect was given after death. Who does Mr. Yuan depend on in order to pass judgment on these two gentlemen? Even though the three gentlemen have appeared in this world, Shan hu lin only can be found in the collections of the three gentlemen’s works. Common people do not thoroughly know these three gentlemen, so that they cannot recognize the radiance that is emitting from the three gentlemen’s eyebrows, though they bask in it all day long. I am wondering who can judge the merits of this work, except me.

Inscription by Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 from Huating 華亭

The author of this preface is Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1558-1639), style name Zhongchun 仲醇, courtesy name Meigong 眉公. His hometown is Huating County 華

---

8. This is an allusion from the story of Guan Ning 管寧, whose style name is Youan 幼安. Guan Ning (158-241) flourished some time during the Three Kingdoms period (220-280). He once worked in his garden and happened to find some gold buried there. He immediately threw the gold away as treating bricks. This anecdote is used to extol Guan Ning’s culture and virtuousness in face of money. See Yiqing Liu, and Yong Yang, Shi shuo xin yu jiao jian 世說新語校箋 (Jiulong, Xianggang da zhong shu ju, 1969) P.9.

9. Yuanfang 元方, Chen Shi 陳寔’s elder son. Chen Yuanfang was famous for his virtue. Ibid., 7.

10. Jifang 季方, Chen Shi 陳寔’s younger son. Chen Jifang enjoyed a same fame to his elder brother. Ibid.

11. Xu Wenchang 徐文長(1521-1593), also known as Xu Wei 徐渭, was good at poetry, calligraphy, and painting. Yuan Hongdao admired him very much and once wrote a biography for him. See Bocheng Qian, 715.
亭縣, Songjiang Prefecture 松江府, Jiangsu 江蘇, where he lived in seclusion for most of his time. His wide knowledge and tremendous memory made him accomplished in poetry, literature, painting, and calligraphy. According to their dates of birth and death, Chen Jiru and Yuan Hongdao (1568-1610) were contemporaries, yet neither in Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao 袁宏道集箋校 (The Annotated Complete Works of Yuan Hongdao) nor Chen Meigong wen ji 陳眉公文集 (Chen Meigong’s Collected Works) could I find traces of their correspondence or exchange of poems. However, there is evidence that Chen Jiru had generated interest in Yuan Hongdao’s works—in the notes on the use of Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao, Qian Bocheng mentions that he referenced the edition of Guangzhuang 廣莊 (A Long Essay on the Zhuangzi) and Pingshi 瓶史 (Notes on Vase-Flower Arrangement) edited by Chen Jiru, and following the text of some of Yuan’s works Qian presents Chen’s reviews that he could find from certain books on poetic theories. Chen Jiru’s Shu yuan shi gong ping shi hou 書袁石公瓶史後 (Reflection on Yuan Shigong’s Pingshi), which is a relatively complete review on one of Yuan Hongdao’s most famous works, is collected in both Chen Meigong wen ji and Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao. Compared with Chen’s reflection on Yuan’s Pingshi, this preface of the Shan hu lin is longer and shows more emotion from Chen, yet it is excluded from both Yuan and Chen’s collections. However, the preface is presented in Chen’s handwriting, which is supposed to be anti-counterfeit, if the handwriting is authentic. In addition, the shape and arrangement of Chen’s two seals at the end of this preface look the

13 Bocheng Qian, 5.
same to those presented at the end of the author’s preface of *Chen Meigong wen ji*. As a distinguished scholar and literary critic of that time, Chen Jiru’s preface strengthens the authenticity of the book *Shan hu lin* on some level.

Chen Jiru tries to elevate Yuan Hongdao’s status in late Ming literary circles in the preface that is filled with appreciation for the *Shan hu lin*. The first line throws light on Yuan Hongdao’s straightforward language and rigorous teaching—his words are neither deliberately mystifying, nor accommodating to learners. Chen Jiru finished reading the *Shan hu lin* in one sitting, fondled admiringly, and found himself immersed in lasting aftertastes. Chen also explains the relation between the *Shan hu lin* and *De shan shu tan*, an abridged edition of the *Shan hu lin*. The text of the *De shan shu tan* is an excerpt culled from the *Shan hu lin*, but the former is more popularized and can be traced and found in more recorded sources. Although the *Shan hu lin* should be the complete and original version, it was overlooked because it was not published at the very time it took form. Chen likens the *Shan hu lin* to the gold buried in Guan Ning’s garden and the pearl concealed by fish eyes, wishes it can earn widespread attention. Then Chen’s focus shifts to praise of Yuan Hongdao, comparing Yuan to Yuan’s idol Xu Wei 徐渭 and his master Li Zhi 李贄. At the end of the preface, Chen regards Yuan, Xu, and Li as the three giants of late Ming literary circles and canonizes them with Buddhist similes. In a word, the preface is full of admiration and appreciation for both the work and author.

There is a postscript attached to the main body of the *Shan hu lin*. According to the author’s signature and his seals at the end of the postscript, his name is Feng Bi 馮
金, style name Baiji 白季, and courtesy name Wuji 無咎. And based on the inscription at the beginning of the text of the *Shan hu lin*, Feng Bi is the proofreader of the whole book and he humbly calls himself a younger scholar from Qiantang 錢唐.¹⁴ He might be a layman and had communication with the Chan master Hanyue Fazang 漢月法藏 (1573-1635), also known as Sanfeng 三峰.¹⁵ Hanyue Fazang was famous for his excellent command of Confucian classics and his influence on many literati followers such as Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582-1664).¹⁶ Unfortunately, further information about Feng Bi 馮賁 is unavailable. Like that of the preface, the printing block of postscript is carved based on the author’s original handwriting. Including the title and author’s signature, the postscript is 228 words, making it two pages in total. Its layout is different from those of the preface and the main body—there are five columns on either side of the gutter where the title *shan-hu-lin-ba* 珊瑚林跋 and page number are marked. In the column left to the author’s signature, three seals are arranged in vertical order: the first is carved in intaglio with the words *zi-bai-ji* 字白季 (style name Baiji); the second is also carved in intaglio with the author’s name Feng Bi 馮賁; and the last is inscribed with the words *guo-li-bei-ping-tu-shu-guan-shou-cang* 國立北平圖書館收. For intuitive information about the postscript, refer to the pictures below:

---


¹⁵ Ming ban jia xing da zang jing, vol.34 (Taipei Shi, Xin wen fchu ban gong si, 1987) P.149.

¹⁶ Jiang Wu, 88.
I translate the postscript as follows:

The Postscript of Shan hu lin

Mr. Shigong’s 石公17 Shan hu lin was recorded by Zhang Mingjiao 張明教, a man of Chu 楚. And Mr. Yuan himself chose some content that could be shared by common people to publish as De shan shu tan. This [Shan hu lin] is the complete version of [De shan shu tan]. Layman Pang 龐 has been collectively selected as the master on the top spot among laymen ever. Unfortunately, his words are not common outside his verses. Zhang Wugou 張無垢18 penetrated into the profound meaning and was as good as Miaoxi 妙喜. However, his nephew deleted all his words that were considered abstruse and mysterious. Yangming 陽明 and his respected fellows gained the essence of Chan. It is utterly depressing that they avoided referring to Buddhist teachings or beating around the bush, once Buddhist teachings were involved. When Mr. Yuan talks about both Confucianism and Buddhism, he makes everything clear. Therefore, he once compared himself to rhubarb, a medicinal herb that can help everyone relax the bowels and expel of toxin. This work is straightforward and comprehensive, especially the part talking about effort. And it gives no dogmatic ways to fetter

---

17 Shigong 石公 is Yuan Hongdao’s courtesy name.
18 Zhang Jiucheng 張九成 (1092-1159), style name Zishao 子韶, courtesy name Wugou 無垢, had a conversation with Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲, also known as Miaoxi 妙喜 about the theory of the nature of things. See Puji, and Yuanlei Su, Wu deng hui yuan (Beijing, Zhonghua shu ju, 1984) P. 1350-1351.
people. Learners can benefit a lot from this work, and readers can go straight to the point. You should know that the Buddha sings the same tune with Qu Yuan 屈原, so that you might as well move forward together with Layman Pang and Shigong. Why should we bother twisting and turning, so as to make a grimace of pain?

Inscription by Wujiu-jushi 無咎居士 Feng Bi

Feng Bi reconfirms the connection between Shan hu lin and De shan shu 禅林—namely, the latter derived from the former. Shan hu lin was compiled by Zhang Mingjiao, one of Yuan Hongdao’s Chan fellows who stayed with Yuan in Deshan 德山 in the summer of 1604. According to the inscription at the beginning of the Shan hu lin, the whole book was compiled by Zhang Wujiao 張五教, also addressed as a disciple from the old Ying 鄢, a place used to be the capital of the ancient State of Chu 楚. Since Zhang Wujiao’s courtesy name is Mingjiao, the information about the compiler should be correct. In the postscript, Feng Bi stresses the value of the Shan hu lin, by comparing it with other laymen’s written records—its genres outnumber those of Pang Yun’s works; it covers more topics than Zhang Jiucheng’s writings; and unlike the written records of Wang Yangming and other literati, its language is straightforward and aboveboard when discussing Buddhism, though written by a Confucian scholar as well. In a word, Feng Bi believes that Shan hu lin, a mixture of Confucianism and Buddhism, is beneficial and rich of spiritual nutrition for its readers.

20 Bocheng Qian, 993.
The Content Analysis of *Shan hu lin*

The book *Shan hu lin* is divided into two volumes—there are 158 small paragraphs in the first volume, and 191 in the second. In each small paragraph, a relatively independent topic is discussed. The arrangement and distribution of the paragraphs are not random—in general, the paragraphs concerning same or similar topics gather together. The topics addressed by the book can be broadly classified into three categories: 1) the basic thought and conception of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, and the syncretism of the three religions; 2) some Buddhist concepts and concepts regarding Chan meditation; 3) the precautions and methods of Chan meditation and broad learning.

The first part of this section is concerned with Yuan Hongdao’s introduction to the classics and fundamental thoughts of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, his exploration of the internal connection of the three religions, and his consequent idea of the harmonious integration of the three religions.

The first 19 paragraphs of the book focus on some basic concepts that are drawn from Confucian classics. The first concept Yuan Hongdao discusses in the first three paragraphs is *gewu* 格物, ‘the investigation of things’, which originates from *Da xue* 大學 (The Great Learning), one of the “Four Books”, a collection of four classical Confucian works. He successfully built the connection between Confucianism and Chan, based on Zhu Xi’s 朱熹 annotation, Dahui Zonggao’s 大ewis demonstration,

---

21 The collection of the “Four Books” includes *Da xue* 大學 (The Great Learning), *Zhong yong* 中庸 (The Doctrine of the Mean), *Lun yu* 論語 (The Analects), and *Meng zi* 孟子 (Mencius).
and the application of the concept in Chan meditation. Yuan Hongdao applied the Confucian concept to Chan meditation, digested the two, and thereby concentrated and simplified the general way of learning. The fourth paragraph introduces two concepts from *The Analects*, *kejifuli* 克己復禮, ‘restrain self and return to propriety’ and *ren* 仁, ‘benevolence’, and equates them to a phrase from *The Diamond Sutra*, *xiangfuqixin* 降伏其心, ‘tame the heart’. The fifth and sixth paragraphs states clearly that the main idea of the first chapter of *Zhong yong* 中庸 (The Doctrine of the Mean) exactly accords with the aim of Chan practice—both are to attain a state of harmony. In his discussion of how heaven and earth are in good order, and how all things are nourished, Yuan compares Confucius’s status with the Buddha’s. In the next two paragraphs, Yuan compares Mengzi’s 孟子 and Zisi’s 子思 explanations of the concept *xing* 性, ‘nature’. Up to that point, Yuan has finished introducing the most important concepts drawn from the “Four Books”, and established the connection between Confucian classics and Chan Buddhism.

In his discussion of the similarity between Confucianism and Buddhism, Yuan Hongdao states that Confucianism and Buddhism share the same fountain, echoing Wang Yangming 王陽明 and Wang Ji’s 王畿 words, “the difference between Confucianism and Buddhism is very tiny.” In addition to his affirmation of the similarity between the roots of Confucianism and Buddhism, Yuan Hongdao also connects Confucianism with Chan Buddhism, with respect to guiding significance and methods of practice. For example, he extracts the three great goodness—wisdom, 

---

benevolence, and courage—from the Zhong yong 中庸,\textsuperscript{23} to define the three essential qualities that a learner should have.\textsuperscript{24} Another example is that Yuan advocates practicing Chan in a plain way that complies with xing 性 and tianming 天命, ‘the mandate of heaven’,\textsuperscript{25} and disagrees with the strange and dangerous deeds that are performed by a petty man.\textsuperscript{26} The nineteenth paragraph begins to introduce Daoism and compare Daoism with Confucianism. On the one hand, Yuan points out that many Confucians uphold the Daoist philosophy of “following the nature”. On the other hand, he indicates that the Daoist thought of “doing nothing” can function in society, just like Confucian regulations. In addition to his attempt to integrate Confucianism and Daoism, Yuan Hongdao also tries to connect the Daoist thought of “following the nature” with the Buddhist concepts of the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Consciousness.\textsuperscript{27} Finally, Yuan takes a common person’s daily acts for example, to manifest the reasonable coexistence of the three religions.\textsuperscript{28}

The Shan hu lin is mainly concerned with Buddhism, and therefore much of the book is taken up with introductions of Buddhist sutras, explanations of Buddhist concepts, and teachings of the methods of Chan meditation. From the twenty-fifth to the seventy-fourth paragraph, Yuan Hongdao presents his understandings of seven major Mahayana Buddhist sutras in sequence—Huayan jing 華嚴經 (Avatamsaka Sutra), Fahua jing 法華經 (Lotus Sutra), Lengyan jing 楞嚴經 (Surangama Sutra), Yuanjue jing 圓覺經 (Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment), Jingang jing 金剛經

\textsuperscript{23} Xi Zhu, and Hao Wang, Si shu ji zhu (Nanjing, Feng huang chu ban she, 2005) P.29.
\textsuperscript{24} Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.5.
\textsuperscript{25} Xi Zhu, and Hao Wang, Si shu ji zhu (Nanjing, Feng huang chu ban she, 2005) P.18.
\textsuperscript{26} Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.5.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 7.
(Diamond Sutra), *Lengqie jing* 楞伽經 (Lankavatara Sutra), and *Weimojie jing* 維摩诘經 (Vimalakirti Sutra).

Yuan Hongdao attaches importance to the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, a sutra that he considers as great as the Dharma body of the Buddha.\(^{29}\) Compared with the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, all the other sutras have a flavor of coldness or loneliness. For the concepts drawn from the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, Yuan Hongdao mainly explains *ruding* 入定, ‘enter concentration’, and *guoqu-weilai-xianzai* 過去未來現在, ‘past-future-present’. He imparts his own method of Chan practice, while elaborating his understanding. For the concept *ruding*, he regards *ding* 定 as *hui* 慧, ‘wisdom’, instead of holding on to the literal sense. To explain *guoqu-weilai-xianzai*, Yuan Hongdao borrows another concept *xin* 心, ‘mind’. He thinks that one’s mind should neither cling to the past or future, nor stay in the present, since the past, future, and present cannot be treated separately. His explanations are quite flexible and personalized.

As for the *Lotus Sutra*, Yuan Hongdao focuses on its spirituality and divinity, instead of the reasoning of its content. He uses the simile of a light shining on the east to represent the main idea of the *Lotus Sutra*. To the question that why many people cannot obtain the power to see through heaven and earth, which is supposed to happen after they read the *Lotus Sutra*, Yuan Hongdao’s answer is somehow superstitious at first: “the sutra those people read must not be real.”\(^{30}\) It is his later explanation of how naked eyes see with the help of light that turns his whole answer to be more like

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 7.

\(^{30}\) Ibid., 9.
a meaningful teaching.

Among the Buddhist sutras mentioned in the Shan hu lin, the discussion on the *Surangama Sutra* accounts for the greatest length, and ranges over various issues—from content to language, and from the concepts to historical influence. Compared with the simple text and profound meaning of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* and *Lotus Sutra*, the text of the *Surangama Sutra* is profound while meaning is simple, so that Yuan Hongdao does not thinks that the *Surangama Sutra* imparts a teaching that is clear and easy to understand. In addition, Yuan criticizes Jingjue Renyue’s notes and commentaries of the *Surangama Sutra*, for he thinks Jingjue Renyue has infused too many teachings of the Tiantai School. Yuan does not explain the concepts only for understanding, but also to inspire the audience with common expressions. By the means of making question-and-answer dialogues in simple words with his followers, Yuan makes his teaching part of daily Chan practice. For example, to explain a phrase from the *Surangama Sutra*, Yuan and his follower had the following conversation:

Follower: The perfect understanding of knowledge does not depend on the mind. What does this mean?
Yuan: When someone calls your name, you give him an immediate response. Does that motion depend on your mind?
Follower: Not at all.
Yuan: You eat when you see food, and drink when you see tea. Does that depend on your mind?

31 Ibid., 10.
33 Hongdao Yuan, *Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan]* (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.11.
Follower: No. However, it is easy not to depend on the mind, for responding, eating, and drinking are not difficult. What if I come across any difficulties? If I think and plan carefully, my mind is obviously involved. How can you say it does not depend on the mind?

Yuan: This only matters in quantity. Those things you need to consider again and again make no difference from eating and responding. There is nothing to do with your mind. It is because you are more familiar with eating than planning, if you think they are different.

In addition to his inspiring teachings, like an encounter dialogue that takes place between a Chan master and his disciple, Yuan spills much ink explaining an important concept drawn from the *Surangama Sutra*, namely, ‘the Fifty Skandha-demon’ (*wushizhong-yinmo 五十種陰魔*). The Fifty Skandha-demon derives from the Five Skandhas, or Five Aggregates, that is, the five attributes of every human being—form, perception, consciousness, action, and knowledge. Yuan does not simply present the knowledge of this concept, but to teach others to improve their meditation. He declares that one should get rid of the perception of a self, since the Fifty Skandha-demon stems from the self. He also advocates entering *ding 定*, ‘concentration’ from *hui 慧*, ‘wisdom’, instead of seeking *hui* in *ding*, for the Fifty Skandha-demon is within *ding*. When Yuan concentrates on Buddhist concepts, he does not forget to establish relationship between Buddhism and Confucianism, and summarize their common places that can be applied to routine learning. For example, in the paragraph 51, Yuan tries to prove that a sophisticated scholarship should be

---

34 *Wu-yun 五蘊* refers to *se 色*, *shou 受*, *xiang 想*, *xing 行*, and *shi 識*. See Ernest John Eitel, and K Takahuwa, 155.

35 Hongdao Yuan, *Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan]* (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.10.
flexible and can be expressed in plain words, by using Master Zeng and Confucius as models of peaceful mind, a quality preferred by Buddhist teachings.

Similarly, Yuan Hongdao adopts simple and easy metaphors to illustrate the concepts and verses drawn from the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. For example, he says that the true perception should be as decisive and direct as unconditioned reflex such as closing eyes when a foreign body gets close to the eyes.\(^{36}\) Also, he illustrates the concept of the Four Perceptions\(^ {37}\) using a metaphor of the fan in his hand.\(^ {38}\) While Yuan Hongdao is able to explain most concepts with his own words, he finds some content of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* suspect and records his doubts honestly.\(^ {39}\) He once commented that a certain four-line verse in the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* could be beneficial or harmful as well.\(^ {40}\) His comments on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* show that he is a skeptical reader who does not simply believe everything the sutras say.

The *Diamond Sutra* is shorter yet no less important than other sutras, and therefore Yuan Hongdao seizes the gist focusing on a major phrase “producing a thought which is nowhere supported”.\(^ {41}\) Yuan Hongdao compares the thought unsupported by the Six Dusts\(^ {42}\) with flowing water.\(^ {43}\) As for the role of this phrase,

---

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 12.


\(^{39}\) Ibid., 11.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 12.


\(^{42}\) The Six Dusts refers to sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mind-object. See Ibid., 45.

Yuan Hongdao prefers to take it as an instruction instead of considering it as an abstruse philosophy. Speaking of how to follow the instruction, Yuan easily breaks it up into small steps that can be applied to Chan practice.

From the *Surangama Sutra* to the *Lankavatara Sutra*, Yuan Hongdao always keeps the orientation of gradual practice and sudden enlightenment in mind. For example, on the question whether the *Lankavatara Sutra* advocate sudden or gradual enlightenment, Yuan Hongdao expresses the idea that in the *Lankavatara Sutra*, the concepts about gradual practice only describe certain steps that a learner might reach during his practice but not define any necessary processes. 44 In addition to his explanations of the original text, Yuan also comments on the three translations of the *Lankavatara Sutra*.

The last Buddhist sutra Yuan Hongdao discusses in the *Shan hu lin* is the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. The concepts he chooses to discuss are also associated with Chan practice. One of the concepts is “straight mind and deep mind”, 45 which is primarily discussed in the *Vimalakirti Sutra* and considered by Yuan as the basis of Chan practice. In addition, Yuan and his companions discuss the rhetoric and reasoning of the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. They analyze the rhetorical analogies between fire and “no self”, and between water and “no being”: fire has no body and water is unsupported, so that they perfectly represent what the abstract concepts express. 46 As for the character of reasoning of the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, Yuan Hongdao says it often demonstrates from the reverse side.

44 Ibid., 13.
46 The “no self” refers to *wūo* 無我 and “no being” refers to *wūrén* 無人. See Ibid., 14.
Yuan Hongdao chooses several major Buddhist sutras to discuss some selected concepts and subtly associate them with Chan practice. In addition to the explanations of the concepts, Yuan also examines the rhetoric, translations, and commentaries of those sutras. Particular attention should be given to Yuan’s straightforward language and inspiring teaching. The conversations between Yuan and his friends are as concise and smart as those between a Chan master and his disciples. In the *Shan hu lin*, there are several paragraphs directly showing Yuan’s advice on how to read the sutras. Yuan advocates coming straight to the point without the slightest hesitation: “when reading a sutra, you should ignore the unimportant part and only pay attention to the content that matters; if you read word by word, you are wasting your time and energy; for the difficult places, you can put them aside and return to them later; it is useless to force them on you.”\footnote{Ibid., 14.} ….When reading a sutra, what matters is not the meaning of the text; you can jump the sentences that are irrelevant to main idea.”\footnote{Ibid., 45.} In a word, Yuan Hongdao advocates selectively absorbing knowledge from Buddhist sutras and instantly turning the concepts into Chan practice.

In addition to those Buddhist sutras, Yuan Hongdao also evaluates some historical people and their words and works about Buddhist studies. Some are mentioned only once or twice, such as Longshu 龍樹 (Nagardjuna),\footnote{Ernest John Eitel, and K Takahuwa, 103.} Damo 達摩 (Bodhidharma),\footnote{Ibid., 33.} Sengzhao 僧肇, Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密, Shoushan Xingnian 首山省念, and Shao Yong 邵雍. The names of the others appear repeatedly, such as
Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽, Juefan Huihong 覺范慧洪, Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲, Deng Huoqu 鄧豁渠, Li Tongxuan 李通玄, Su Shi 蘇軾, Wang Shouren 王守仁, Wang Ji 王畿, Luo Rufang 羅汝芳, and Li Zhi 李贄. According to their identities, those people generally belong to three fields: Buddhist monks, laymen, and Confucians. The following two paragraphs will shortly introduce each person and present what Yuan Hongdao values about them in the *Shan hu lin*.

Buddhist monks form the majority of those people quoted by Yuan Hongdao. Longshu 龍樹, Nagardjuna in Sanskrit, styled as a Bodhisattva, was a native of Western India. His most important teaching is “the soul is neither existent nor non-existent, neither eternal nor non-eternal, neither annihilated by death nor non-annihilated.” Yuan discusses the teaching several times and gives his own explanations. Damo 達摩, Bodhidharma in Sanskrit, was the 28th Indian and 1st Chinese patriarch of Chan tradition. Yuan primarily confirms his contributions to spreading the idea of sudden enlightenment and explains his essential teaching of “giving up all the outer reasons” in the plain words “putting forth one’s strength from nowhere supported”. Sengzhao 僧肇 (374-414) was a Buddhist monk active during the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420). Yuan adduces a quotation from his *Wu bu qian luy 物不遷論* (The Theory of Unchangeableness): “When a thing is over there, it exists there presently; when it is moved here, it exists here presently. All things exist

---

51 Ibid., 103.
52 Ibid., 103.
53 Hongdao Yuan, *Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan]* (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.16.
54 Ernest John Eitel, and K Takahuwa, 33.
55 外息諸緣 and 從無些子倚靠處用力. See Hongdao Yuan, *Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan]* (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.33.
presently. This is the so-called unchangeableness, for everything exists presently and therefore they never change.”

Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (780-841) was a famous Buddhist monk of the Tang Dynasty, the fifth patriarch of the Huayan School 華嚴宗 and wrote commentaries of many Buddhist sutras. Yuan Hongdao has a negative attitude toward his scholarship which relies upon knowledge and perception.

Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 was a Chan master of the late Tang and the Five Dynasties. He composed Zong jing lu 宗鏡錄 (The Record of Ancestral Mirror), a work concerning the integration of Faxiang 法相, Sanlun 三論, Huayan 華嚴, Tiantai 天臺, and Chan schools. Yuan Hongdao thinks that people who practice Chan should study koans and Chan masters’ sayings instead of reading the Zong jing lu.

Shoushan Xingnian 首山省念 (926-993) was a Chan master of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). Yuan Hongdao cites his koan of bamboo comb twice in the Shan hu lin. Juefan Huihong 覺范慧洪 (1071-1128) was a Buddhist monk and poet of the Northern Song Dynasty. Yuan compares him with Li Zhi 李贄, Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽, and Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲. Yuan thinks that Li Zhi is better than him in Chan practice, and compared with Dahui Zonggao, like Yongming Yanshou, he still relies on knowledge and perception, toward which Yuan keeps a
Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089-1163), also known as Miaoxi 妙喜, was a Chan monk of the Yangqi Branch of the Linji School 臨濟宗楊岐派. Dahui Zonggao appears most frequently in the *Shan hu lin*. It has been mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis that Yuan was initially inspired by a conversation between Dahui Zonggao and Zhang Zishao 張子韶 and then strolled in the study of Chan. Accordingly, Yuan mentions the conversation at the beginning of the *Shan hu lin*. Yuan and his friends discuss Dahui Zonggao’s sayings a lot, in order to improve their study of Chan. For the most part, Yuan respects Dahui Zonggao’s opinion and appreciates his intelligence. He has always adhered to Dahui Zonggao’s four-line instruction: “One should not seek consciously, nor obtain unconsciously; one should not accumulate with words, nor understand in silence.” Although the Buddhist monks mentioned by Yuan Hongdao are of a high historical status, he is not overwhelmed by their reputation and only accepts their words critically. He boldly points out the deficiencies of some monks’ teachings, while he holds Dahui Zonggao in high esteem.

Besides the Buddhist monks, Yuan cites the words from laymen and Confucians to demonstrate the correct way of Chan practice. Yuan considers those words of equal importance to those of the Buddhist monks’. The fusion of Buddhism and Confucianism is embodied in the origin of Yuan’s thoughts and his spiritual pursuit.

Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (646-722), also known as Master Zaobai 栗柏, was a Huayan 華

---

65 Hongdao Yuan, *Shan hu lin* [2 juan]; *Jin xie bian* [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.42.
67 Hongdao Yuan, *Shan hu lin* [2 juan]; *Jin xie bian* [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.41.
68 Ibid., 43.
Yuan Hongdao addresses him respectfully as Li Zhangzhe 李長者, literally “Elder Li”. Yuan fully affirms Zaobai’s teaching and often cites Zaobai’s words as his own answer to his friends’ questions.

Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011-1077) was a great thinker of the Northern Song Dynasty. Yuan only mentioned him twice in the discussions of the idea of Consciousness-Only and the concept of Vision respectively. Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036-1101), style name Dongpo 東坡, was a man of letters and a layman who had good access to the Buddhist monks of the Northern Song Dynasty. Many of Su Shi’s poems are full of Chan implications such as “the echoing streams are like wide long tongues; isn’t the colorful mountain a clear body”, and therefore he is favored and admired by Yuan Hongdao. Yuan also cites Su Shi’s words to enrich his own answer. For example, Yuan once cited Su’s saying “both anger and joy are delusion, yet joy is different from anger” to answer the question “why should we spread goodness while cover badness if everything is nothing but delusion?” Yuan does not allow others to garble Su Shi’s sayings by quoting a remark out of its context, yet Yuan does not worship Su Shi blindly—his comments on Su Shi’s works are relatively objective: “Dongpo’s works

---

69 Hongdao Yuan, and Kengo Araki, Sangorin: Chūgoku bunjin no Chan mondōshū = San go rin (Tokyo, Perikansha, 2001) P.35.
70 Ibid., 77.
71 Wei-shi-zhi-zhi 唯識之旨 and guangying 光影. See Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.18, 21.
73 Xi-sheng-jin-shi-guang-chang-she, shan-se-qi-fei-qing-jing-shen 溪聲盡是廣長舌,山色豈非清淨身. This couplet is excerpted from one of his Chan verses Zeng dong lin zong zhang lao 贈東林總長老. See Puji, and Yuanlei Su, Wu deng hui yuan 五燈會元 (Beijing, Zhonghua shu ju, 1984) P.1146.
74 Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.16.
75 Ibid., 46.
are so ingenious that he is without a rival through the ages. However, inevitably, his explanations of reason and comments on people have a smell of the Song people.”

Wang Shouren 王守仁 (1472-1529), also known as Wang Yangming 王陽明, was a philosopher of the mid-Ming period. He is regarded by Yuan Hongdao as a greatest sage after Confucius. Yuan does not often quote from Wang Yangming in the Shan hu lin, yet he is greatly influenced by Wang’s thoughts. Among Yuan’s friends, many are Wang Yangming’s successors, specifically the Taizhou scholars, such as Li Zhi 李贄, Jiao Hong 焦竑, Tao Wangling 陶望齡, and Pan Shizao 潘士藻. Besides, Wang Ji 王畿 and Luo Rufang 羅汝芳, who Yuan Hongdao frequently refers to in the Shan hu lin, are two most important disciples of Wang Yangming’s. Deng Huoqu 鄧豁渠 (1498-1578), the author of Nan xun lu 南詢錄, was considered a “literati-monk” of the reigns of Jiajing 嘉靖 and Wanli 萬曆. He used to follow Wang Yangming’s teaching yet finally shaved his head and became a monk. Yuan comments Deng objectively—he queries the clearness of some statements of Deng’s while he confirms the deliberation of Deng’s reasoning. Yuan generally considers him a scholar who seeks clear understanding toward which Yuan’s attitude stays conservative. Wang Ji 王畿, style name Longxi 龍溪, was Wang Yangming’s direct disciple. Yuan values Wang Ji’s words and often compares Wang with other scholars respected by himself such as Luo Rufang 羅汝芳. Yuan thinks Wang Ji’s saying “putting forth one’s

76 Ibid., 16.
77 Yangming Wang, and Guang Wu, Wang Yangming quan ji (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1992) P.1.
78 Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.53.
80 Jiang Wu, 101.
81 Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.42.
strength from nowhere supported” echoes Bodhidharma’s teaching of “giving up all the outer reasons”. Luo Rufang 羅汝芳 (1515-1588), style name Jinxi 近溪, was an ideologist who succeeded to Wang Yangming’s thoughts. Luo Rufang and Wang ji were together called the Two Xi (二溪). Yuan respects them as two sages who enjoy a common life. Even so, Yuan still view Luo’s opinions calmly. For example, he thinks that beginners of Chan practice should not pursue the “vision”, what Luo’s works discuss frequently. Basically, Yuan finds Luo’s words convincing and likes to use those words to express his own opinion. For example, on the question how to be skeptical when studying a key phrase in koan, Yuan cites Luo’s words for explanation: “For those who have not passed any barriers, the stronger faith they have, the bigger progress they will make. For those who have passed a barrier, deeper they suspect, the greater enlightenment they will get.” One reason why Yuan admires Luo might be that Luo’s language is simple and straightforward. For example, Luo once scolded someone who misunderstood his words with the words “a barbaric small man”. Another example is that Luo once chided a follower of his, saying “You poor lowest scholar only have an ugly wife. How come you are fond of women?” Finally, it comes to Li Zhi 李贄. Yuan Hongdao respects him as his mentor, as is mentioned in the first chapter. Understandably, Yuan makes many positive comments on Li Zhi’s sayings and quotes from Li Zhi frequently. Besides Yuan Hongdao’s compliments to

---

82 Ibid., 33.
84 Ibid., 17.
85 Ibid., 31.
86 Ibid., 32.
87 Ibid., 38.
Li Zhi, there are two paragraphs recording Yuan Zhongdao’s appreciation of him. One appraises Li Zhi with the words “profound wisdom”, and the other regards Li Zhi’s work *Cang shu* (The Hidden Book) as “a national treasure that should be shown to common people”.

From the above, we can see the origin of the thought of applying a mixed philosophy of Buddhism and Confucianism to Chan practice in Yuan Hongdao’s mind—by whom he was influenced, and how he absorbed their thoughts critically and applied to Chan practice flexibly. The combination of Confucianism and Buddhism is spontaneously for Yuan Hongdao, because of his mentors, especially the successors of Wang Yangming’s ideology. In principle, Yuan Hongdao is glad to accept the views that are helpful to Chan practice. Meanwhile, he always keeps skeptical to previous words and works.

The second part of this section presents the religious concepts discussed in the *Shan hu lin*, namely, some basic Buddhist concepts and more about Chan practice. With regard to basic Buddhist concepts, such as the Six Dusts, Six Roots, Eight Consciousness, and *tan-chen-chi* ‘greed, anger and ignorance’, Yuan Hongdao tends to let people understand. By contrast, for the concepts involved with Chan practice, such as *guandai* ‘manage and carry’, *wangnian* ‘delusion’, *qiuming* ‘seek clearness’, and *daolizhijian* ‘reason and knowledge’, Yuan focuses on imparting practical methods.

---

89 Ibid., 15, 16.
As fundamental concept, the Six Dusts and Six Roots have already been mentioned in the part discussing the major Buddhist sutras. Many sutras begin with the four-character expression “thus have I heard”. Yuan Hongdao offers his own explanation of the meaning of each character. For the character wo 我, ‘I’ or ‘me’, Yuan explains that wo means not to rely on any of the six sense organs—eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. The six sense organs are collectively known as the Six Roots. When it comes to the main point of the Diamond Sutra, namely, “producing a thought which is nowhere supported”, Yuan Hongdao introduces the Six Dusts—sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mind-object. The Six Roots and Six Dusts are collectively called genchen 根塵, ‘root and dust’. After explaining the meaning of genchen, Yuan applies it to Chan practice: “To undertake the real practice, one should not rely on genchen.” The Six Roots and Six Dusts make the subject and object of cognition respectively. The product of the cooperation between the Six Roots and Six Dusts is called shi 識 ‘consciousness’.

According to Yogacara Buddhism, there are eight consciousnesses—the consciousnesses of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, Manas-vijnana, and Alaya-vijnana. It is easy to understand the first five consciousnesses, since they are based on the five imaginable sense organs, yet the latter three are rather abstract. Yuan Hongdao says that the sixth consciousness is perceptible but not constant, just like

---

91 Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.8.
92 Ibid., 12.
93 Ibid., 23.
94 Ibid., 18.
95 Tingjie Han, Xuanzang, and Dharmapala, Cheng wei shi lun jiao shi (Beijing, Zhong hua shu ju, 1998) P.11.
Confucian regulations—people think of those only when they are awake. Yuan makes an analogy between the Daoist concept ziran 自然, ‘nature’, and the seventh consciousness, Manas, for they both stand for a perceptible and constant state.

Alaya-vijnana, the eighth consciousness, is “constant but not perceptible”, as Yuan says.96 With an intelligible example, Yuan summaries the latter three consciousness:

“There is a man named Zhao Jia 趙甲. His body is made from the eighth consciousness. It is because of the consciousness of ear that he can hear when his name is called. It is because of the sixth consciousness that he can tell what is called is ‘Zhao Jia’. Because of the seventh consciousness, he is the only one that makes a response when the name is called.”97

The concept tan-chen-chi 贪嗔癡, ‘greed, anger and ignorance’ derives from the issues of the Eight Consciousness. Once Yuan’s friend asked, “If the first fifth consciousnesses are unconditioned reflex, why does the tan-chen-chi occur?” Yuan Hongdao answered, “The tan-chen-chi raises because of instinct not awareness. Little kids do not know what flowers and trees are, yet they get delighted at the sight of beautiful flowers because of the greed generated from the consciousness of eye. An infant will cry if he is not given breast milk because of the anger generated from the consciousness of tongue.”98

Yuan Hongdao’s explanations transit naturally and his metaphors are simple and explicit. And Yuan keeps his tradition of applying reasoning to his teaching of the methods of Chan practice. The following will discuss Yuan’s explanations of the

96 Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.17.
97 Ibid., 18.
98 Ibid., 18.
concepts directly involved with Chan practice, the highlight of the Shan hu lin.

People easily fall into “delusion (wannian 妄念)” when practicing Chan meditation. How to deal with delusion is not only a big issue with which a novice of Chan meditation is faced, but also an eternal topic concerned by learners of all levels. Yuan Hongdao and his Chan partners often discuss the same question. Generally, Yuan thinks it is unnecessary to bother about delusion. “If you force yourself to fall in sleep when you are sleepless, you will become more awake. You might as well open your mind and let go of your thoughts. Maybe you will fall asleep then”, says Yuan.99 While he asserts that it is useless to suppress delusion, he reminds people that it is improper to guard against delusion as well: “For example, a man keeps a tiger in his yard in order to guard his household against from robbery. However, the fact is that the robbers may not come but the whole family is eaten by the tiger first.”100 It is thus clear that the thought of preventing delusion is dangerous. To solve the problem of delusion, one should trace back to the source and make sure it is clean. For example, a monk once asked Yuan “How to eradicate delusion?” “Do you want to have a son this year?” said Yuan. “Nonsense!” said the monk. “That is the end of delusion,” said Yuan.101

Should one “manage and carry (guandai 管帶)” the stream of his consciousness when in meditation? Yuan Hongdao disapproves of learners either tending to their mind or rejecting the intent to take care of their mind. He prefers to let nature take its

99 Ibid., 22.
100 Ibid., 33.
101 Ibid., 22.
course treating *guandai* as things like eating and dressing.\textsuperscript{102} One idea state Yuan wants the learners to reach is bearing *guandai* like beard—one ignores its existence naturally while eating and talking, yet it does exist there.\textsuperscript{103}

Should Chan practice rely on certain reason and knowledge (*daolizhijian* 道理知見)? Yuan Hongdao’s answer must be “No”. In his opinion, those who get engaged in Chan meditation should abandon all their previous reason and knowledge. In the 154\textsuperscript{th} paragraph,\textsuperscript{104} Yuan illustrates the reasons why one should renounce reason and knowledge: First of all, Yuan thinks there is no reason to ponder over for worldly things. For example, people take it for granted that they defecate after feeding. And no one can tell the reason why a fetus is perfectly formed though small. It is only because people have seen a lot and become accustomed to the worldly things so that they think the things are with reason, yet actually there is no reason at all. Similarly, the works written by Confucians are without reason, for the reason and knowledge taught in those books are nothing but written records of the worldly things. Secondly, even the Buddhist sutras spread no constant reasons. The Buddhist sutras only “prescribe a medicine special for the disease”. Thirdly, naming is arbitrary. Heaven can be named “earth”, man can be named “woman”, and vice versa. If the names are reversed, people will find it unreasonable, since they are accustomed to the names, yet actually, there is no reason behind the names at all. However, does Yuan Hongdao truly believe that everything has no reason to infer? In a way, Yuan does admit the existence of reason, yet he denies its significance—“The enlightened ones do not need to reason

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 20.  
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 21.  
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 25-26.
since they know everything well; the confused ones are not able to reason since they are ignorant." 105 By what means should the learners seek truth if the daolizhijian is not supposed to pursue? Both Yuan Hongdao and Yuan Zhongdao insist that the learners should focus on their mind and should never abandon it. 106

What should the learners seek from their own mind? It seems that clearness (mingbai 明白) is the thing they should seek. Nevertheless, Yuan Hongdao strongly disagrees with qiuming 求明, ‘seeking the Clearness’, and considers the attempt to seek clearness as “a flying moth darts into the fire”. 107 Why does Yuan oppose the pursuit of clearness so seriously? First, Yuan thinks it unnecessary to seek clearness, just like it is unnecessary to light a lamp when a monk shaves his head. 108 Secondly, seeking clearness usually relies on reason and knowledge. 109 Thirdly, it is not the passions that make people spiritually ill, but the Clearness. For example, a child without knowing too much can be at ease, while a knowledgeable adult may have a lot of scruples. 110 Finally, seeking clearness is a fair current while immersing in darkness is an adverse current. Yuan thinks what a learner gets from the fair current is useless while what he obtains from the adverse current is definitely enjoyable. 111

Yuan and his brothers have reached an agreement that a learner should work on confusion instead of seeking the Clearness, for enlightenment is approaching close when he feels most confused. 112 A learner’s final aim is to get enlightened, yet

---

105 Ibid., 26.
106 Ibid., 28.
107 Ibid., 31.
108 Ibid., 30
109 Ibid., 27.
110 Ibid., 38.
111 Ibid., 44.
112 Ibid., 31.
seeking the Cleanness does not necessarily bring about enlightenment. Therefore, the answer to the question raised in the beginning of this paragraph is enlightenment.

Such matters as birth, death, illness, and misfortune are eternal topics in the world. Like all people, the learners of Chan may encounter illness and will face death someday. When the learners are ill, seriously ill, or critically ill, there will be changes in their mind. Some learners get stupefied and muddled when they are ill, and thus doubt whether Chan practice is beneficial to life. In Yuan’s opinion, a man’s performance when ill depends on the result of his effort. It does not matter whether a learner feels muddled or not, since muddle is a natural product of illness. How to be one’s own master when suffering from a bad illness? Yuan Hongdao suggests treating illness as ordinary state, since those who are physically healthy are also suffering from spiritual illness. If one cannot pacify his mind, then any of his desires will make him ill. What to do to deal with the doubts and uncertainties when facing death? Yuan thinks the key is whether a learner has got enlightenment—if one is enlightened before his death, he will be free from suffering no matter how awfully he dies. As long as one’s mind is peaceful, he will not find himself uncomfortable in illness. Otherwise, one will fall into endless desire—a sick man will think of the days he is healthy, and a healthy man will think of drinking, sightseeing with prostitutes, and so on. Illness and sudden death have little to do with the depth of Chan practice—they may happen to anyone. The key to face death peacefully is to rest the

---

113 Ibid., 29.
114 Ibid., 28.
115 Ibid., 36.
mind, which is not an easy thing. This relates to the concept xin 心, ‘mind’, which Yuan discusses frequently in various ways.

According to Yuan Hongdao’s quotation from the Surangama Sutra, if one is able to pacify his mind, he will then be able to pacify everything. To gain a peaceful mind is not limited to Buddhist practice—Confucians who are patient and do not restrain people with rigid knowledge prove their peaceful mind. Since resting and pacifying a mind is so important, and then what exactly is the “mind”? Yuan Hongdao introduces the concept of xin in his explanation of ru-shi-wo-wen 如是我聞, ‘thus have I heard’. He explains ru 如 as “the harmony of mind and state”. Yuan Hongdao deems that xin is an absolute, constant, and natural existence, though people cannot see it in a concrete shape. Yuan supplements that xin is not the heart beating in the chest nor the “Emptiness and Everywhere” suggested by some people who pursue mystery. It is difficult to give a comprehensive description and definition of xin. Yuan provides the learners with a solution of equal abstraction, which is to penetrate the xinti 心體, ‘substance of mind’. How to penetrate the substance of mind? Yuan says that if one can face illness and death calmly, then he has penetrated the substance of mind. Whether one has penetrated xinti, pacified or rested xin, depends on his performance when facing illness or death. Then what role does xin play in Chan meditation? Yuan cites a saying by Dahui Zonggao, “One should not

---

116 Ibid., 29.  
117 Ibid., 11.  
118 Ibid., 8.  
119 Ibid., 6.  
120 Ibid., 37.  
121 Ibid., 32.  
122 Ibid., 30.
tend to the mind nor forget it.” Yuan explains the saying further, “For example, we have been gathering in my house for several days yet no one ever enters my bedroom. I do not have to pay attention to prevent someone from entering my bedroom, nor leave it unattended.”

Learners of Chan should follow what the *Diamond Sutra* says, “producing a thought which is nowhere supported”, and practice Chan without the mind and consciousness. In a word, learners should take a natural attitude toward *xin*, imposing nothing on the mind. In addition to the single word *xin*, Yuan mentions some nouns of which the head noun is *xin*. The head noun *xin* is different from what has been discussed above. Its meaning changes when the head noun *xin* is modified by different modifiers. Sometimes, it means thought, as represented in the nouns *fenbie-xin* 分別心, ‘the thought of differentiation’, *mingli-xin* 名利心, ‘the thought of fame and profit’, and *renwo-xin* 人我心, ‘the thought of the distinction between others and self’. In some cases, it means effort, as expressed in *jingjin-xin* 精進心, ‘the effort of persistence’. In another case, it means desire, as in the noun phrase “the desire to pursue mystery and dignity”. Additionally, it means state, as in the phrases “the state of future” and “the state of present”. Although these nouns and noun phrases have the same word *xin*, it means different things.

Yuan’s explanations of these concepts involved with Chan practice have a strong flavor of the Daoist philosophy of “letting nature take its course” and come straight to the point without the slightest hesitation. Confucian examples and Buddhist essence

---

123 Ibid., 21.
124 Ibid., 13.
125 Ibid., 7.
126 求玄妙、做門面的心. Ibid., 42.
127 將來之心 and 今日之心. Ibid., 47.
complement each other in Yuan’s explanations. Yuan sees the saint and common as equals and many examples in his explanations are made based on daily life. Actually Yuan has sporadically presented his teachings of the methods of Chan practice while explaining the concepts. Besides these practical explanations, Yuan spends more words on his teachings about how to investigate koans, how to practice Chan, and what a learner of Chan should do, in a more explicit way.

The third and final part of this section will present Yuan Hongdao’s direct teachings about the methods of Chan practice, which is an important source of information on Yuan’s own philosophy of the study of Chan. Yuan’s teachings can be classified into three categories: 1) the instructions of studying koans; 2) the methods of Chan meditation; 3) the general requirements of being a learner. Some content of this section will overlap the concepts discussed in the second section.

A “koan”, literally “public case”, is the record of encounters between Chan masters and their disciples. Koans are often given as meditation questions and therefore paradoxical and not limited to literal meaning. The study of koan is an important part of Chan meditation and a principal channel leading to enlightenment. In the history of Chan Buddhism, there are many famous cases of koan that have enlightened generations of learners of Chan. Yuan Hongdao also mentions several koans in the Shan hu lin such as Zhaozhou’s “a cotton coat weighs seven jin”,

---

Shoushan’s 首山 “bamboo staff”, and Yunmen’s 雲門 “dried shit-stick”. Since koans are usually clueless, it is very difficult to penetrate them. Yuan suggests that if one has spent a lot of time on a koan, he should inquire of an enlightened man about it, instead of searching text for meaning. It is very likely that he will penetrate the koan by having conversations in the form of encounter dialogue with the enlightened man. Yuan also points out that studying koan is not the only thing to do in Chan practice, though it is a matter of critical importance. Besides koan, some guiding principles and theories such as Linji’s 臨濟 “Three Mysteries and Three Gists” and “Four Procedures” are also worth studying.

A huatou 話頭 is the key phrase of a koan. To study a koan is mainly to study its key phrase. Yuan indicates that there is no expedient means of Chan meditation except studying the key phrases. Although studying the key phrases is difficult and exhausting, it is “a good medicine for Chan meditation”. When a learner is almost enlightened, what he shall do is to hold a key phrase. If he gives up the key phrase to look for other solutions, it will be more difficult for him to get enlightened. The following tips for studying key phrases correspond with Yuan’s opinions expressed in his explanations of the concepts in the second section: A learner should not

---

131 幹屎橛. Stephen Addiss, Stanley Lombardo, and Judith Roitman, Chan Sourcebook: Traditional Documents from China, Korea, and Japan (Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, 2008) P.100. Also see Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.38.
132 Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.39.
133 三玄三要. Ibid., 44.
135 Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.22.
136 Ibid., 15.
137 Ibid., 40.
deliberately take care of or reject the delusion generated in Chan meditation. It is unwise to analyze the reason and knowledge behind the key phrases, since they are unreasonable. When studying a key phrase, one should only focus on its text in case of being distracted by reason, knowledge, or consciousness. It is confusion that lead a learner to enlightenment rather than clearness.

Generally, the Shan hu lin is a book to teach people about Chan. Yuan Hongdao uses a metaphor of a running river to explain the definition of Chan—changes are taking place within a relatively constant entity. The mind should generate from nowhere supported just like the running water. The ding 定, ‘standstill’, of Chan is a “general still” rather than “absolute still”. Therefore, Chan meditation is such kind of insipid and inclusive practice that does not discriminate between business men and hermits. Chan meditation should be mild, meticulous, and long-lasting, rather than gaudy, lively, or self-denying—gaudiness is tiring; liveliness is transitory; self-denial is easily abandoned. Corresponding to Confucius’ saying, “the Way is not far from people”, Yuan Hongdao holds that the way of Chan practice should be common and routine, and the desire to pursue mystery and dignity will keep the learners away from the right way. Compared with austerity, transcribing Buddhist scriptures, spreading Buddha’s teachings by sermon, chanting the name of Buddha, and other busy ways of practice, Chan meditation is the most effective and productive one.

The key to Chan meditation is adhering to the key phrases and caring about

---

138 Ibid., 34.
139 Ibid., 24.
140 Xi Zhu, and Hao Wang, Si shu ji zhu (Nanjing, Feng huang chu ban she, 2005) P.24.
141 Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.42.
142 Ibid., 35.
nothing else,\textsuperscript{143} such as reason and knowledge in particular. Both Yuan Hongdao and Yuan Zhongdao agree that reason and knowledge is a formidable enemy of Chan meditation. It is unwise for a learner to seek enlightenment from reason and knowledge.\textsuperscript{144} A smart learner should cast all his previous knowledge, habits, and efforts into the sea,\textsuperscript{145} in order to avoid the influence of preconceived thoughts. From another angle, as long as reason and knowledge does not come to one’s mind, his Chan meditation is almost there.\textsuperscript{146} Besides reason and knowledge, learners of Chan should also avoid pursuing clearness. “Because of the thought of seeking clearness, there would generate the passions such as pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy. Because of the Clearness, people would feel bound and thus uncomfortable.”\textsuperscript{147} Besides reason and knowledge which is relatively tangible, and the Clearness which is appreciable, the Vision (guangjing 光景) is another thing that learners of Chan meditation should not pursue. A learner need not feel happy when he gets a good vision during Chan meditation nor get worried if he loses the vision.\textsuperscript{148} As for the Delusion (wangxiang 妄想) that naturally emerges from the process of Chan meditation, the learners should let nature take its course. Yuan Hongdao even said, “I do not know how to undertake Chan meditation if there is no delusion?”\textsuperscript{149} In a word, Chan meditation does not require a place that is clean and fresh everywhere, a discipline that is careful and strict, or a thorough understanding of meaning. A proper learner of Chan should be a

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 20.  
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 28.  
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 27.  
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 40.  
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 23.  
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 20.  
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 20.
courageous man of high principles. Yuan Hongdao gives extended application of the methods of Chan meditation and declares that these suggestions are also applicable to Confucian scholarship.\(^{150}\)

_Canchan_ 參禪, ‘Chan meditation’, only belongs in the category of Buddhism, while _xuedao_ 學道, ‘the study of the Way’, reaches a broad scope. “The Way” in the _Shan hu lin_ refers to the general truth of life and thus is not confined to religious significance. The _xuedao_ discussed by Yuan Hongdao and his fellows is a kind of practice that is helpful to accumulation of merits, growth of wisdom, and self improvement, which can be seen from his requirements on the qualities that a learner of the Way (_xuedao-ren_ 學道人) should have: “A _xuedao-ren_ should have all three of wisdom, benevolence, and courage (_zhi_ 智, _ren_ 仁, and _yong_ 勇). The absence of wisdom makes a man a fool; the absence of benevolence makes a man a villain; the absence of courage makes a man a coward.”\(^{151}\) The formulation of the three qualities can be traced back to the Confucian classic _Zhongyong_ 中庸 (The Doctrine of the Mean), where it is addressed as “the distinguished virtue in the world”.\(^{152}\) Yuan’s another wording of the three qualities is “insight, interest, and bravery” (_shi_ 識, _qu_ 趣, and _dan_ 膽). In his explanation of the relationship between the three qualities, Yuan stresses the importance of bravery in particular, “Without bravery, a man cannot undertake his responsibilities; without insight, a man cannot be enlightened thoroughly. A brave man can double his insight, while a coward will halve his

\(^{150}\) Ibid., 36.
\(^{151}\) Ibid., 5.
\(^{152}\) 天下之達德. Xi Zhu, and Hao Wang, _Si shu ji zhu_ (Nanjing, Feng huang chu ban she, 2005) P.29.
Is there any opportune moment for the study of the Way? Yuan Hongdao says that one can start his study at any time and should carry on with it at every moment. The study is supposed to be like a tranquil flow that can never be interrupted. If a learner is easily troubled by social activities during his study, then his method is not correct. To illustrate the state of study, Yuan says, “If a hardworking scholar returns from failing in an imperial examination, his depression will not be relieved by drinking or playing chess.”

The study of the Way can proceed simultaneously with other things and will not be distracted by those things. For example, if a man is hit both on the head and back, the pain will not be halved. Actually there is no such time that a man is totally free from worldly affairs, so it is fine for him to study the Way while entangled by other business. A man should not boast his study of the Way, because there are people out there who are very close to the Way and whose words are inspiring, yet they refuse to declare their status as professional learners.

For those who are interested in studying the Way, Yuan Hongdao points out some mistakes that they tend to make. First of all, learners should not seek clearness from reason and knowledge, which is stressed repeatedly by Yuan Hongdao. Both reason and knowledge, and the thought of seeking clearness are taboos of Chan practice and the study of the Way. Second, like Chan meditation, the study of the Way should not be too bustling. A learner of the Way would better hide his light under a

---

153 Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.41.
154 Ibid., 31.
155 Ibid., 31.
156 Ibid., 194.
157 Ibid., 50.
158 Ibid., 27.
bushel and bide his time, because showing off one’s brilliance and seeking fame will bring upon himself disasters. For example, during Emperor Huan’s 桓帝 reign of the Eastern Han Dynasty, the “Disaster of Partisan Prohibitions” happened to some righteous scholars who resented the eunuchs. And during the Qingyuan 慶元 Reign of the Song Dynasty, Zhu Xi’s 朱熹 Neo-Confucianism was calumniated by Han Tuozhou 韓侂胄 who stayed in political power. All these misfortunes happened because the scholars were too hard-edged. In contrast, Ruan Ji 阮籍 feigned ignorance by drinking and finally avoided trouble. Yuan summarizes this point with the metaphor “If a dragon does not cover its scales and a phoenix does not hide its feathers, they will be captured by a wide net.”

Third, a learner should not be pleased by vision. If a learner likes to pursue the satisfaction that comes with good visions, his mind is still occupied by the thought of seeking benefits and will never be at ease. Last but not least, one of the purposes of studying the Way is to rest the mind. Therefore, the learners ought to be leisurely and carefree during their study instead of staying persistent.

Although there are many matters needing attention for learners of the Way, the following worries are unnecessary. First of all, the study of the Way is spiritual, so the learners need not care about economic condition. Actually it is harmful to one’s study,
if he seems decent, because the more decent he looks, the more worries he may have.  

Second, it is unnecessary for a learner to care about whether he is making progress or not. Some teachings that make the learners feel satisfied are actually useless. And the learners should give up the reason and knowledge accumulated over time. Finally, self-injury such as blood writing is unnecessary for the learners of the Way. The study of the Way is not for merits accumulation, so it is meaningless to sacrifice too much.

There are about 200 out of the total 349 paragraphs in the Shan hu lin directly concerning the methods of Chan practice. It is easy to capture the flavor of Daoist philosophy of spontaneity in Yuan Hongdao’s demonstrations. And Confucian figures, events, and thoughts are frequently cited by Yuan. As a Confucian literatus who speaks one’s mind freely and practices Chan Buddhism regularly, Yuan Hongdao has been influenced by what he constantly sees and hears. The fusion of Confucianism, Daosim, and Buddhism is in Yuan’s blood and bones, forming his unique literature position and religious philosophy.

The Rhetoric Study of Shan hu lin

According to Yuan Hongdao’s preface of the De shan shu tan 德山暑譚 (Summer Talks in Deshan), Zhang Wujiao recorded Yuan’s sayings and the conversations between Yuan and his Chan fellows during their retreat in Deshan 德山.
in the autumn of 1604. Therefore, the text of the Shan hu lin is not Yuan
Hongdao’s written words but spoken language. As the leader of the Gong’an school,
Yuan’s slogan is “uniquely express one’s personality and innate sensibility without
being restrained by convention and form”, so it is not surprising to find that the
language style shown in the Shan hu lin is as straightforward as that has been kept in
Yuan’s essays and poems.

The most common pattern of the paragraphs is question-and-answer dialogue.
The number of those paragraphs is 154, almost half of the total in the Shan hu
lin—the other half is taken by the paragraphs recording Yuan Hongdao’s personal
discussions and statements. There is no mention of specific subject of the dialogues.
According to the background knowledge introduced in the preface and postscript of
the Shan hu lin, the answerer is presumably Yuan Hongdao himself, and the
questioners should be among Hanhui 寒灰, Xuezhuo 雪照, Lengyun 冷雲, and Zhang
Wujiao 張五教, namely Yuan’s Chan fellows who traveled with him during the
summer and autumn of 1604. Mostly one question and one answer form a complete
paragraph in this pattern; only 25 paragraphs contain follow-up questions and answers.
The questions are introduced with the verb “ask” (wen 问) and the answers are marked
by the verb “answer” (da 答) or “say” (yue 曰). The following is my translation of a
typical paragraph in this pattern:

Ask: What is ru-shi-wo-wen 如是我聞, ‘thus have I heard’?
Answer: The harmony of mind and state is called ru 如. Beyond both ends of

---

168 Bocheng Qian, 1283.
170 Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.8.
right and wrong is called shi 是. Not falling into eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind is wo 我. Not entering from language and word is called wen 聞.

Although the subject is omitted in most paragraphs, Yuan Hongdao is directly addressed as “the gentleman” (xiansheng 先生) when there is a need to distinguish between master and pupil, for sometimes Yuan Hongdao likes to ask his fellows questions as a way of heuristic teaching. There are 21 paragraphs marking the subject as “the gentleman”. Some are in the question-and-answer pattern with the questioner addressed as “the gentleman”. In those paragraphs, the subject is put in the structure “the gentleman asks” (xiansheng-wen 先生問) or “the gentleman asks the pupil, saying” (xiansheng-wen-xueren-yun 先生問學人云). Some means to emphasize that the statement is made by Yuan Hongdao by putting the structure “the gentleman says” (xiansheng-yue 先生曰/ xiansheng-yun 先生云) in the beginning of paragraph. In other cases, Yuan Hongdao’s mood is described in order to make more sense of the words, so verbs such as “laugh” (xiao 笑) and “sigh” (tan 歎) are inserted between the subject “the gentleman” and the verb “speak”, making the whole structure like “the gentleman laughs and says” (xiansheng-xiao-yue 先生笑曰) or “the gentleman sighs and says” (xiansheng-tan-yue 先生歎曰).

Yuan Hongdao is not the only authoritative speaker in the Shan hu lin. There are 17 paragraphs recording Yuan Zhongdao’s sayings, in which he is addressed by his courtesy name Xiaoxiu 小修. There are 13 out of the 17 paragraphs starting with “Xiaoxiu said” (Xiaoxiu-yun 小修云). In those paragraphs, Yuan Zhongdao expresses his views on Chan practice and the study of the Way in a tone as firm as
Yuan Hongdao’s. The remaining four paragraphs record the dialogues between Yuan Zhongdao and his Chan fellows, in which he plays the role of an instructor.

There are 24 paragraphs beginning with the quotations from authoritative source of the three religions. Among those paragraphs, thirteen are pure quotations from Buddhist sutras and monks, ten from Confucian classics and scholars, and one from Daoism. Most paragraphs start with the pattern “subject + a verb that means to speak (shuo 說/ yun 云/ yan 言/ suowei 所謂/ suoshuo 所說/ yue 曰)”, no matter the subject is a person or book. In those self-expressive paragraphs, Yuan Hongdao’s voice is hidden while his trust in the words is evident.

In addition to Yuan’s inspiring sayings, the straightforward metaphors used in his explanations make a highlight of the Shan hu lin. Since Chan philosophy is difficult to penetrate and the progress in Chan practice is untraceable, some intelligible analogies and similes will greatly reduce the difficulty of understanding the abstruse concepts and make the practice palpable. Yuan Hongdao draws materials from common physiological and emotional reactions, and simple natural phenomena, to make his fellows suddenly enlightened.

Human body is familiar to people, as well as the basic physiological needs and reactions. As early as in the first paragraph, Yuan Hongdao uses examples of eyebrow, eye, hair, and beard to illustrate the feebleness of reason and knowledge, which sets the “vernacular” tone for the whole book.171 The metaphor used most frequently by Yuan Hongdao is “eating when hungry, sleeping when tired, fanning when warm, and

171 Ibid., 3.
dressing when cold”. He uses the example eating, sleeping, and dressing in the explanations of several concepts such as *guandai* 管帶, *wangnian* 妄念, *xiqi* 習氣, *chengdang* 承當, and *daolizhijian* 道理知見. Other physiological reactions used as metaphors include dreaming, closing eyes when threatened, feeling the pain when hit, and enjoying food with a good appetite. These metaphors are used widely—Yuan does not only apply them to Chan practice, but also to Confucianism and Daoism, establishing a global relationship between different religions.

Moving one step further, Yuan Hongdao makes analogies between human emotional reactions and the states of mind during Chan practice and the study of the Way. For example, Yuan discloses the ridiculousness of pursuing good visions on the analogy of a child’s infatuation with woodcut apple. Also, Yuan uses the changes of a child’s reaction when he is robbed of his toy as he grows up, to analogize how to eliminate greed, anger, and ignorance.

Yuan’s explications of Chan concepts adopt many metaphors of natural phenomena such as blossom, sunshine, birds flying and the property of water. Among the metaphors, the ones comparing water with Chan concepts are really amazing and meaningful. For instance, Yuan explains *buxiangdao* 不相到, ‘never stop’, with the metaphor of running water that is renewed every moment. Water also can be a rough sea whose waves are roaring into thousands of postures, yet the waves are just parts of a whole—this characteristic of water makes a perfect metaphor for the

---

172 Ibid., 7.
173 Ibid., 22.
174 Ibid., 34.
175 Ibid., 34.
Seventh Consciousness. The interaction between water and other materials such as salt can also make a metaphor that deserves to ponder over.

In conclusion, as “a distinctive poet and prose writer but also a man of considerable wit and humor”, Yuan Hongdao’s straightforward language style was incisively and vividly presented in the Shan hu lin, a work that contains his overall reflections on Chan meditation, general Buddhist teaching, and practices of self-cultivation. Inevitably affected by the climate characterized by the synthesis of the three beliefs—Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, Yuan Hongdao did what other literati did at that time—associating with Buddhist monks, studying Buddhist scriptures, debating on techniques of Chan practice and so on. And what was recorded in the Shan hu lin reflected specific methodology and concerns of Buddhist teaching imparted by a Confucian intellectual truthfully and completely. The introduction on the Confucian concept “investigating things” (gewu 格物) at the beginning of the Shan hu lin shows the common concern on Wang Yangming’s learning. And the close following discussion about the connection between the Confucian classics and Chan teachings shows the trend of the synthesis of Confucianism and Chan Buddhism. The Buddhist sutras discussed intensively by Yuan Hongdao were popular among the Confucian intellectuals of that time, for the Buddhist scriptures such as the Surangama Sutra echoed with Wang Yangming’s “learning of the mind”. Most of the scholars cited frequently by Yuan Hongdao such as Luo Rufang 羅汝芳, Wang Ji 王畿, and Deng Huoqu 鄧豁渠, were representatives of the Taizhou school. Some of his

---

176 Ibid., 18.
177 Ibid., 5.
fellows who played the role as the audience of the *Shan hu lin* were monks, which accorded with the phenomenon that some Confucian intellectuals inspired Buddhist monks, just like Li Zhi enlightened his Buddhist fellow, Wunian Shenyou 無念深有. Last but not least, beyond Chan practices, Yuan Hongdao was in pursuit of a general practice of self-cultivation what he called the Way in the *Shan hu lin*. The goal of his teaching was not limited to Chan techniques but also able to be applied to a comprehensive improvement of self.
CONCLUSION

Generally considered a leader of a promising literature school, Yuan Hongdao was a representative personage in the literary circles of the late Ming. His network of literati consisted of people of the same characteristics—most of them had the experience of officialdom, were followers of Wang Yangming's learning of the mind, and profoundly engaged with Buddhism. From different perspectives, the central figure of the network may be different. It could be Li Zhi 李贄, who was iconoclast respected as mentor by the younger intellectuals of the network. Or it could be Tao Wangling 陶望齡, who was considered an expert in Chan Buddhism by Yuan Hongdao and made friends widely with famous Buddhist monks of that time such as Yunqi Zhuhong 雲栖祩宏 and Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清. Or suggested by Jennifer Eichman, it could be Huang Hui 黃輝 who melded Confucian and Buddhist teachings to pursue liberation. And it could be Yuan Hongdao certainly, for his leadership shown in the establishment of the literary society “Grape Society” that offered opportunities for people belonged to the network to gather and communicate. While the common places shared by the members of the network and the network itself as a phenomenon deserve to be studied further, to make that study full and accurate, it is also necessary to focus on the individual cases.

Unlike some Taizhou scholars such as Deng Huoqu 鄧豁渠, and Li Zhi 李贄 who went so deeply on the path of Chan studies that finally shaved their heads to act like monk, Yuan Hongdao stayed rational in the attitude toward Buddhism as a religious
belief, though he had the experience of abstaining himself from eating meat for several years for the deaths of his beloved ones and he embraced the Pure Land Buddhist tradition of chanting Buddha’s name. Although discussion on Buddhist scriptures, concepts, and practice makes a great portion of the *Shan hu lin*, the teaching of self-cultivation, literally “the learning of the Way” cannot be overlooked. The first part of the *Shan hu lin* focuses on the explanations of the basic concepts of Confucian and Buddhism, while the second part explores the ways of Chan meditation and the learning of the Way, which is more pragmatic for his readers. And it is more meaningful to improve oneself in a comprehensive way than spend time and energy on pure techniques of Chan practice only, because self-improvement can be the goal of practices in any form. Melding Wang Yangming’s learning of the mind, Li Zhi’s influence on him as a mentor, the ideal lifestyle led by the layman Pang Yun 龐蘊, and the orthodox Confucian elite culture, Yuan Hongdao grew to be an open-minded individual who could think independently and had confidence in his own scholarship. His constant insist on the pursuit of self-cultivation is always revealed in his writing—in a letter to his uncle Gong Zhongqing 龔仲慶, he moaned for his maternal grandfather Gong Daqi 龔大器 and sighed, “We should hurry to learn the Way while alive.”¹ It is not because Yuan Hongdao wanted to catch up with the trend of the synthesis that the *Shan hu lin* mentions all the three beliefs and tries to connect each other. For Yuan Hongdao, the teachings of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism all served for the goal of self-cultivation.

¹ Bocheng Qian, 276.
The revival of Buddhism during the late Ming period (1550-1644), is different from that promoted by the early rulers of the Ming Dynasty. The first Ming emperor used to be a monk before he held power. He favored the development of Buddhism and often “convened assemblies of monks” to receive lectures on Buddhist sutras from them. The revival of Buddhism during the late Ming is non-governmental, ideological and more comprehensive and penetrative. The common revival of Confucianism and Buddhism is achieved through the inter-explanation between Confucianism and Buddhism. Wang Yangming’s learning of the mind infused new fresh blood into Confucianism while promoted the revival of Buddhism. Externally, many Taizhou scholars such as Deng Huoqu, and Tao Wangling interacted with Buddhist monks actively and became famous Buddhist laymen, which left great influence on literati like Yuan Hongdao. On the other side, prominent monks such as Yunqi Zhuhong, Ouyi Zhixu, Hanshan Deqing and Zibo Zhenke appeared at the same time, making contributions to the revival of Buddhism internally. As a member in the literary circles, Yuan Hongdao was surrounded by Wang Yangming’s followers who were deeply engaged in Buddhism, especially Chan Buddhism and the Buddhist teachings on the cultivation of the mind.

To reveal Yuan Hongdao’s learning of Chan Buddhism, I have examined his poems, essays, and epistolary sources from his boyhood to the year the Shan hu lin took form. However, due to the limited time and space, I did not broaden my discussion on the era significance of Yuan Hongdao that can be further revealed.

---

2 Jiang Wu, 5.
3 Kenneth Ch'en, 434.
4 Yongge Chen, 248.
through the comparison between his peers and him. And a detailed study of the
positions of Confucianism and Buddhism in his mind can be conducted by comparing
the texts of the *De shan shu tan* and *Shan hu lin*, based on his choices made on
whether accept or reject of certain paragraphs.
APPENDIX I: THE ORIGINAL OF YOU DE SHAN JI

遊德山記

甲辰夏，余與衲子寒灰、冷雲、雪照及居士張明教、小僧習之、弟小修，習靜荷葉山中。約以秋涼入德山。至八月初旬，暑氣微滅，小修入黃山，余適有便舟，遂偕諸衲行。十四日，發舟孟溪，十五夕，看月馬湖。湖與洞庭接，水光千里，生平看月，此為雄快。

十七日晨，抵德山潭，江上望山如卷石，微見疏林。已，薄岸行，得委巷，崖綠翳日。有丘焉，如覆鑑，樹蔽之，根獅獅若瘦臂。攀石而上，兩巒之凹為澗，前則茉莉夫人鬼宮道也。塔院踞澗後，負高峯而面層壁，叢菁多古樹。院內外皆田，兩巒相讓而卻，初讓為澗，再為院為田，最後讓益甚，地益坦，兩山之勢益張，遂為佛廬。入門多古杉柏，殿堂高廣，像設亦奇大，辟如阿房舊址，見者知其非漢以後帝王居也。從殿臨而右，多美箭，幽崖相蔽。折而上，即峯頂，頂有善卷壇，崖柱盛開，芳香襲一山。數板架其上，敗人意，幾欲下，而瞰壇上光景，意勃勃。從烈日下望，望復避，避復往，山翠水光，匪而繪之，使有佳士撤其冗室，間為亭榭軒楯，固德山一絕景也。然山中勝處，山僧多不到，到亦不解。余與諸衲徧覓諸奇，如三桂林之幽敞可室，青蓮舍左崖可亭，法堂西之小靜室多方竹處可棚可閣，無論幽邃靜勝，其間百圍之樟，尺圍之篁，亦非他處所也。山後面陽山，地空闊，河流濟其前，直見雉堞田廬，煙嵐疊波而出，葺而盧之，可置叢林。使德山法道再興，當不能舍此為僧郵也。

入德山二日，登覽略盡，兩龍君載酒來飲，極歡，盡夜乃罷。別後暑氣大作，遂坐山中與諸衲極談，慶快無量。至九月六日始入城，詣龍君。蓋此山乃鑑大師舊戰場，風柯水音，爭為敷演，瞻其遺像，不覺鋒穎之頓利也。兩龍君者，長君超孝廉，次君御民部，佬余兄弟有宿好，奇士也。

---

1 Bocheng Qian, and Hongdao Yuan, Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1981) P.1148-1150
APPENDIX II: THE ORIGINAL OF SHAN HU LIN XU

珊瑚林序

袁先生《珊瑚林》不拘椎、不豎拂，亦不私通車馬。至今快讀一過，猶可想見其婆娑古槐下，鳥聲竹韻，無非祖意。頃梓《德山暑譚》，政從此揀出而若刻，若不盡刻何也？蓋予不恨當日不見其全，而恨今日始見其全。當日機緣未熟，或甘飽蠧魚之父，今日魚璣滿市，誰識明珠？焉知不作管幼安園中金一例拋擲耶。此予所以憤然恨行之不早也。先生家有元方，而不能季方。先生家有季方，而不能元方。先生大地茫茫，誰與鼎足？今文長脈望之塵既洗，卓老性命之旨已明，定可與先生鼎足。而兩先生藝林中生，不得封侯。然猶能廟食，伊誰之力？先生且輕重兩先生哉！雖然于閻浮提中現三先生，于三先生諸集中乃有《珊瑚林》，世人那得知三先生盡。則終日在三先生白毫光中，人自不識耳。顧予何人妄生許優劣。

華亭陳繼儒題

宋明思想研討会，“袁中郎《珊瑚林》訳註”, Kyushu University Institutional Repository 九州大学学術情報リポジトリ, (October 1993): 79
珊瑚林跋

石公先生《珊瑚林》，楚中张明教所錄，先生自擇其可與世語者為《德山暑譚》梓行矣。茲其全也。從來居士中第一了手，共推龐公，惜偈頌之外，語不多見。張無垢深入玄奧，與妙喜相伯仲，而語一涉玄，輒為其甥刪去。陽明諸大老，得禪之髓，錄之者諱言只術，語多回護，令人悶悶。先生談儒譚釋，皆是了義，無一剩語，故嘗自況於大黃，能與一切人排盪滯。茲錄無不札諱，其錄向上、商工夫，最明且悉顧，毫無實法可為人繫綴者，其有補於學人甚大。覽者能向是中挾身直入，當知迦文屈原一鼻孔，正不妨與龐老、石公把臂共行。何煩回護，作此委曲之相也。

無咎居士馮賁識

---

3 Hongdao Yuan, Shan hu lin: [2 juan]; Jin xie bian: [1 juan] (Shanghai, Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002) P.54-55.
REFERENCES


Gimello, Robert M. “Icon and Incantation: the Goddess Zhunti and the Role of Images in the Occult Buddhism of China”. *Images in Asian Religions*. 225-256,
2004.


Ming ban Jiaxing da zang jing: Jingshan cang ban 明版嘉興大藏經: 經山藏版.


Qian Bocheng 錢伯城. Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao 袁宏道集箋校. Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1981.


Zhongguo di tu chu ban she, and Daren Zhu 朱大仁. Fen sheng Zhongguo di tu ji 分

