

## Book Reviews

*The Poetry Demon: Song-Dynasty Monks on Verse and the Way.* By Jason Protass. Kuroda Studies in East Asian Buddhism 29. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2021. Pp. xiv + 334. \$68.00 hardback, \$20.00 paperback.

Monastic literary culture is doubtless an important and intriguing topic in the study of Chinese Buddhism in general and Chan culture from the Song through Ming-Qing periods in particular. It is equally important in the study of Tiantai Buddhism in the same periods. Recent Anglophone publications that revolve around Chan poetry as remarkable cultural and religious phenomena are worthy of scholars' attention. Jason Protass's *The Poetry Demon: Song-Dynasty Monks on Verse and the Way* is certainly a welcome addition to those works. The ambitious book brims with data that supports Protass's heavily research and meticulous study of Song Chan monks' poetizing and his cogent arguments about the inherent tension between the monks' obsession with poetry and their routine religious pursuit.

The book kicks off with a long introduction that delineates the difference between Buddhist or Chan verses represented by *gāthā* or *jisong* 偈頌 vis-à-vis standard literati verses known as *shi* 詩 poetry. Six chapters following this prelude are divided into three parts, each with a special focus that is closely and coherently connected with the thesis of the book—poetry demon, a translation of the Chinese term, *shimo* 詩魔. Part One focuses on *gāthā* in pre-Song and Song historical contexts and on how *jisong* was written, developed, and referred by monks to distinguish itself from *shi* poetry and to enrich its meaning in a way that they considered lacking in standard and mainstream literati poetry. The author argues that, from the monks' point of view, *jisong* surpasses *shi* poetry both in its meaning and function because *shi* poetry is insufficient in expressing the salvific function of *buddhavacana* and in guiding monks to awakening. In the face of the literati's derogatory critique of Chan verses as possessing “a whiff of pickled stuffing” (*suanxianqi* 酸餡氣) or “a whiff of vegetables and bamboo” (*shusunqi* 蔬筍氣), Chan monks took pride in their ability to versify their religious ideas into *jisong* that was otherwise viewed as insignificant or inferior by mainstream Confucian literati and poets whose *shi* poetry was considered genuine, legitimate, and vocational. The author repeatedly emphasizes Song Chan monks' attempt to distinguish *jisong* from *shi* poetry in favour of the former and their writing of *gāthā* in keeping with the admonitions given in Chan monastery's “pure rules” (*qinggui*

清規). He uses all sorts of paratexts, including colophons (*ba* 跋), headnotes or prefaces (*xu* 序), and Chan masters' handwritten manuscripts preserved in Japan known as *bokuseki* 墨蹟 as evidence to support the idea that a conspicuous conceptual difference in viewing and defining verses on the part of Chan masters led to the widely known distinction between *jisong* and *shi*, with the former characterized by its religious functions that pointed to an individual's spiritual liberation.

Part Two of the book is a case study of “literary Chan” or “lettered Chan” (*wenzi chan* 文字禪) in connection with the *shi* poetry penned by the prominent Song poet-monk Juefan Huihong 覺範惠洪 (1071–1128). The purpose is to reinforce the argument that Chan monks were humbled, if not ashamed, by their composition of *shi* poetry, because they were unable to obliterate their “feelings not yet forgotten” (*weiwangqing* 未忘情), which was viewed as an aberration from what they were taught as rule-abiding monks. The author also argues against the common perception of *wenzi chan* as a Song Chan movement that sought to meld words and letters with religious practice aimed at spiritual awakening. Upending the notion that Huihong's use of the term *wenzi chan* was to advocate a new path to liberation, the author proposes that, when discussing Song Chan practice, we must refrain from using the term in doctrinal sense to legitimize the use of words and letters in Chan practice. In his view, the religious connotation of *wenzi chan* did not become prevalent until Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可 (1543–1604) of the Ming dynasty instilled religious sense in the phrase. In the second portion of Part Two, the author treats the issue of poetry as Chan monks' “outer learning” (*waixue* 外學), suggesting that while monks also composed the mainstream *shi* poetry, it was either presented as *kleśa* or *upāya*. In other words, despite being “admonished against composing poetry” unless they possessed “sharp intelligence, a good memory, and a capacity to resist the pleasure” (p. 201), monks' “residual karma,” a translation of Chinese phrase *canxi* 殘習, would prompt them to take pleasure in the forbidden activity of *shi* poetry composition. Viewed as *kleśa* or *upāya*, their poetry could be “an exhortation to ascetic practice” or dispensed with “the purposes of proselytization” (p. 201). Whichever formula was preferred, the mainstream poetry, being Chan monks' “outer learning,” was “adventitious to the Buddhist monastic path of liberation” (p. 201) rather than an obsession with words and letters.

In Part Three of the book, the author explores monks' participation in two modes of poetizing including parting poems as exemplified in the anthologized poems known as *Yifanfeng* 一帆風, a term actually originated from Tang poet Wei Zhuang's 韋莊 (836–910) poem “Sending Off the Japanese Monk Keiryu on

His Return to Japan” 送日本國僧敬龍歸<sup>1</sup> and translated as *A Sail Full of Wind* (p. 223). Another mode of poetizing is concerned with elegiac lamentation or mourning poems that were also popular in mainstream poetry written by Confucian literati. The difference between the two modes of poetizing and literati's *shi* poems lies in the embedded religious sense in the former that stresses the transcendence of sad feelings, emotions, grief, along with “Buddhist occupational commitment to equanimity” (p. 272), otherwise decried by the latter. The author suggests that monks brought innovations to their parting and mourning poems by showing their non-attachment to their emotions because emotions “were of no benefit to the mourners.”

In this book, the author consistently provides detailed background information and discussion of each poetry-related issue such as the context in which *gāthā* was fashioned and evolved amid the monks' learning of poetry composition. He calls attention to different types of books, including collections of *jisong*, such as *Gāthā of Various Patriarchs of the Chan Schools* (*Chanmen zhu zushi jisong* 禪門諸祖師偈頌), that Song Chan monks compiled in emulation of the “poetry anthology” (*shixuan* 詩選) assembled by Confucian literati. He also engages in a thorough survey of how the term *wenzi chan* was conceived and whether it was put into practice in religious sense throughout the Song and Yuan periods. This is done before he comes to a conclusion that Chinese scholars have erred in boasting of the widespread practice or movement of *wenzi chan* among Song Chan masters and their disciples. The author translates a slew of *jisong* and *shi* poems to bolster his argument for the tension existent in poet-monks' versification that puts more weight on pure religious didacticism and that shuns the unbridled venting of grievous feelings or emotions normally explicit in literati's poems.

There are prodigious amount of verses, both *jisong* and *shi*, composed by Song Chan monks as demonstrated by the *Songdai Chanseng shi jikao* 宋代禪僧詩輯考 listed in the author's bibliography. Despite the many effectively and deftly translated *jisong* and *shi* that enrich the author's monograph, the selected samples that the author translates are nonetheless fractional. The notion that *jisong* often adheres to the regulated forms of *shi* (p. 276) is to shore up the author's premise that “distinctions between *jisong* and *shi* were not, however, based on literary form” and that “*jisong* often, though not necessarily, were carefully composed *shi*” (p. 34). These views are rather specious, given that the majority of *jisong* were more like free

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<sup>1</sup> See Wei Zhuang, *Huanhua ji* 浣花集, in *Sibu congkan chubian* 四部叢刊初編, vol. 1029 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1922), *juan* 1, p. 2a. The last line of the poem reads, “A full boat of moonlight—a sail with a fair wind” 一船明月一帆風.

verses, irregular in form and incomparable to *shi*, even though Song Chan monks might wittingly try to write their *jisong* to resemble or approximate standard *shi*. In other words, compared with free-verse style *jisong*, the number of *jisong* in carefully crafted *shi* form pales in the author's imagination. On the other hand, while it may be argued that the significant amount of *jisong* and *shi* composed by Chan monks were actually intended for liberation from *kleśa* or for general religious persuasion, to what extent the similar works existed among the wide spectrum of themes remain unclear and requires further studies. As far as *wenzi chan* is concerned, whether the term connoted some larger religious sense of liberation in the Song times is a moot point. After all, even Song Chan monks had different conceptualizations of the term. For instance, in his response letter to a certain Bureau Director Chen 陳郎中, Xiatang Huiyuan 瞎堂慧遠 (1103–1176) said,

Nonetheless, *wenzi chan* is something one cannot but study. In later days, if you try to get to the bottom of it but fail to make sense of your own study, how can it not be permissible to become involved in Buddhist *sūtra* as a student of discursive knowledge or a *śramaṇa* focusing on exegesis?

然文字禪，不可不學。他日參究已事未明，只於教乘中作箇知解宗徒、義學沙門，有何不可。<sup>2</sup>

Although the sentence following this excerpt suggests that Huiyuan was humorously teasing Mr Chen, he unequivocally considered that *wenzi chan* was tied to Chan's religious goals, which made it easier to transition from Chan practice to doctrinal studies if one's effort to reach Chan awakening failed.

As the author suggests in the “Epilogue” of the book, there are clearly other areas of monastic literary culture and other themes found in Chan verses that await study. For instance, some other comparative aspects of *jisong* and *shi*, such as the typical *shi* style *ji* 偈, which Song Chan monks tended to extemporize on different occasions and is probably closer to regulated *shi* than *jisong* does, is also interesting. Chan monks' ingenious composition of “seventeen-character poetry” (*shiqizi shi* 十七字詩) in the spirit of “regulated verses” (*lüshi* 律詩) in its real sense is another potential topic; this is because Chan monks' creative impulse can find its expression in “twenty-three-character poetry” (*ershisanzi shi* 二十三字詩), which Chan monks developed by increasing the number of characters from seventeen to twenty-three on the basis of both regulated verse and “ancient style” verse (*gushi*

<sup>2</sup> See Xiatang Huiyuan *chanshi guanglu* 瞎堂慧遠禪師廣錄, in Kawamura Kōshō 河村孝照 et al., *Manji Shinsan Dai Nihon zoku zōkyō* 卍新纂大日本統藏經 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1975–1989), vol. 69, no. 1360, *juan* 3, p. 583b01–03.

古詩).<sup>3</sup> Other aspects of comparative study may include “mimic poem” or “imitation poem” (*nishi* 擬詩), such as “poems imitating those of Hanshan” (*ni Hanshan shi* 擬寒山詩).<sup>4</sup>

This book is definitively a riveting and thrilling interdisciplinary account of verses written by Song Chan monks. What makes it distinctive is the thoughtful historical contexts provided for each separate but interconnected chapter that deals with different dimensions of poetry and the delicate equipoise of the poetizing among poet-monks. Despite its being a highly specialized monograph, the discussion and analysis of the historical context of monastic literary culture are written in pellucid prose filled with insights. With all its strengths and merits notwithstanding, the book is not infallible, especially when it comes to the translation of prose and poems written in half-vernacular and oftentimes enigmatic Chan language. The text passages excerpted as examples in the book are inevitably bristled with ambiguity, abstruseness, and inadequate punctuation marks. While the author can read and translate them with caution and accuracy, he sometimes falls into the trap of textual obscurity that can puzzle even Chinese scholars. What follows below are this reviewer’s humble suggestions rather than intended quibbles:

First, an excerpt from the *Zuting shiyuan* 祖庭事苑 that reads 是故後世學者因覩此緣，遂妄生穿鑿。然何必爾也 is translated as “Once scholars examine these [examples in] context, there will be no need to fabricate overwrought interpretations” (p. 58; brackets in original). Considering the tone of the original text, one should probably read it as “[f]or this reason, scholars in later times rushed into overwrought interpretations after seeing this [one or two examples] of *jisong*. Why must they do such things?”

Second, a line in the preface to the *Extensive Records of Cishou of Dongjing Huilin* 東京慧林慈受廣錄序 that reads 世同喜聞而樂道也 is translated as “[m]en of his generation appreciated his learning and delighted in his way” (p. 112). It should read “people in this world liked to hear his preaches [in *jisong*] and took delight in talking about them.” In the same excerpt, the sentence that reads 若其逢場游戲，放言肆說，必眾生隨類得解者，多不見錄 is translated

<sup>3</sup> For this type of poetry and its use by Chan monks, see Xiang Chu 項楚, “Sanjuban shihua” 三句半詩話, in Xiang Chu, *Zhumawu cunqao erbian* 柱馬屋存稿二編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2019), pp. 47–62. The article was originally included in *Zhongguo suwenhua yanjiu* 中國俗文化研究 1 (2003): 13–20.

<sup>4</sup> See Huang Chi-chiang 黃啟江, “Yaoyao hanshan dao: Yingyu wenhuaquan ‘Hanshan yanjiu’ de lishi huigu yu jianping” 杳杳寒山道：英語文化圈「寒山研究」的歷史回顧與簡評, in *Zhengda zhongwen xuebao* 政大中文學報 36 (Dec. 2021): 5–67.

as “[i]f the master chanced on a situation he would respond effortlessly, present unrestrained explanations, and could cause any living being to obtain liberation. Most of these were not recorded” (p. 112). It should read “Whereas the cases like responding spontaneously in any encounters and presenting unrestrained talks to make sure all living beings understand them according to specific class they belong to, most were not recorded.” The phrase 隨類得解 should be understood in the context of the common Buddhist adage such as [如來]一音演說，[眾生]隨類得解，<sup>5</sup> which can be translated as “for the [Tathāgata’s] expounding of the Dharma in a single voice, all sentient beings can understand it according to the specific class they belong to.”

Third, Yuejiang Zhengyin’s 月江正印 (1267–after 1350) statement that reads 惜乎應世機緣，無所記載。豈非當時門庭高峻，不許記錄。抑弟子不為流通，有此失耶 is translated as “[i]t is such a shame that we are without any records of his enlightened responses to the world! Surely it is not because he was not prominent among his contemporaries. Either he did not permit taking notes or his disciples did not circulate them, and thus there was this loss” (p. 114). The second portion of the statement starting from *qifei* 豈非 forms a rhetorical question that should read “Isn’t it because the gate and courtyard of his monastery was so highly prominent in his time that he did not permit his disciples to transcribe [his words] or that his disciples did not circulate them?”

Fourth, in Xu Xi’s 徐禧 (1035–1082) preface to *Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Baojue Zuxin* 寶覺祖心禪師語錄, a quote that reads 其徒子和乃集錄其所嘗聞 is translated as “his disciples gathered and then collected and transcribed what they had once heard” (p. 114). It should read “his disciple, Zihe, thus put together all he had heard,” Zihe being the name of Zuxin’s disciple.

Fifth, in Huihong’s colophon titled “Inscribed after *Fojian Collected My Wenzhi Chan*” 題佛鑑蓄文字禪, the beginning sentence 余幼孤 translated as “[w]hen I was young” (p. 133) should read “when I was young and orphaned,” because Huihong’s parents died when he was fourteen years old. Two or three years later, according to this colophon, he went to Dongshan 洞山 in Junzhou 筠州 (in present-day Jiangxi 江西) to study with Zhenjing Kewen 真淨克文 (1025–1102) and became well-versed in literature and developed exceptional writing skills. The author’s translation of the line 誦生書七千，下筆千言，跬步可待也 as “When I read seven thousand [lines] by Su Shi, I wrote a thousand of my own. I could make progress with regular small steps” (p. 133; brackets in original) is a bit of a

<sup>5</sup> See *Sanzang fashu* 三藏法數, in Lan Chi-fu 藍吉富, ed., *Dazang jing bubian* 大藏經補編 (Taipei: Huayu chubanshe, 1984–1986), vol. 22, no. 117, *juan* 38, p. 668a.

stretch. There is no explanation why 生書七千 should be “seven thousand [lines] by Su Shi.” The phrase is somewhat a hyperbolic reference to “books in seven thousand scrolls that I have never read,” which has nothing to do with Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101). The line should read something like “I read seven thousand scrolls of books that I had never read and was able to indite a thousand words before taking a few small steps.” Huihong was blowing his own trumpet, accentuating his rapid understanding of numerous scrolls and his extraordinary ability to write after a quick study.

Sixth, the colophon titled “Inscribed after Poems Gathered by Venerable Bi” 題弼上人所蓄詩 (p. 135) is about Huihong’s own poems gathered by Venerable Bi. So the translation “I was shown a large scroll of poetry by Venerable Bi” 見弼上人出一巨軸 should read “I witnessed a large scroll of my poetry that Venerable Bi showed me.” After reading the poems, which he had composed during his youth, he “felt dazed and could not but warn the harm of writing excessive words” 讀之茫然，不可諱為多言之戒. The author’s translation that reads “I felt a sense of expansiveness. One could not admonish him for unnecessary speech” is a little wide of the mark. Similarly, the colophon titled “Inscription for a Collection of Poems by Venerable Yan” 題言上人所蓄詩 (p. 138) should read “Inscription for a Collection of My Poems Preserved by Venerable Yan,” because the colophon is about the poems Huihong had written from an early age but he felt ashamed of them in later days. In this light, the translation that reads “Now, Venerable Yan of Baoshan edited his work and compiled a scroll, and I was astonished when I read it. I will not again assess whether [the texts of his poems] are errant or correct, but can this not be taken as a warning against superfluous speech” (p. 138; brackets in original) 寶山言上人乃編而為帙，讀之大驚，不復料理其訛正，可為多言之戒 again misses the point. The excerpt actually means that when Huihong saw his own poems in the collection, they gave him a start, so much so that he simply did not manage to make any corrections and thought that they could be taken as a warning against writing excessively.

Seventh, in Qisong’s 契嵩 (1007–1072) prefatory remarks titled “Verse of Grief for Judge Li Huishu” 李晦叔推官哀辭 (p. 253), the quote from Li Huishu’s statement should end at the sentence 叵自慨相知之晚, which actually means that Li Huishu, after noting that Sengzhao 僧肇 (384–414) was no match for Qisong, lamented his belated acquaintance with the latter. To Qisong, however, Li’s high approbation was disproportionate to his modest achievements, so he had to send Li an epistle to blame his unduly praise. The word *rang* 讓 is “to blame” or “to fault” rather than “let him know.”

Eighth, lines eleven and twelve of Zhiyuan’s 智圓 “Wailing for Ye Shou” 哭葉授 that read 龜鶴本微類，享壽皆千年 are translated as “[t]ortoises and cranes are

auspicious types / that enjoy long lives over a thousand years” (p. 267). Granted, tortoises and cranes are auspicious creatures, but the phrase *weilei* 微類 should be translated as petty, minuscule, and lowly creatures. Zhiyuan was comparing and contrasting lowly creatures and noble Confucian gentlemen, while lamenting Ye Shou’s (n.d.) premature death. The poet’s intent on contrasting *weilei* with Confucian noblemen 君子儒 gets lost in the translation of “auspicious types.”

Ninth, Yayu Shaosong 亞愚紹嵩 (fl. 1229–1232), upon hearing Chen Yingshen’s 陳應申 (n.d.) praise of his poems, replied to the latter by saying 孔墨之道本相為用，況予由儒入釋也， which is translated as “[t]he fundamental trait of the Way of Confucius and Mozi is usefulness. How could I have penetrated Buddhism by following the Confucians?” (p. 274) The translation fails to convey the actual intended meaning: “the ways of Confucius and Mozi are essentially used to reinforce each other. Besides, I am a Confucian who converts to Buddhism.”

As for the author’s translation of verses in *jisong* or *shi* poetry, the following also appears to be problematic. First of all, the first line of Xutang Zhiyu’s 虛堂智愚 (1185–1269) parting poem that reads 巖桂初飄好問津 should better be translated as “Gusts of [fragrant] clifftop osmanthus begins—a good time for inquiring about the ferry,” rather than “Since gusts of [fragrant] clifftop osmanthus, you favor inquiring on the road” (p. 85; brackets in original). The third and fourth lines that read 諸方不用多招手，自有尋香逐臭人 should better be translated as “All monasteries need not call and beckon for you / [because] there are naturally the perfume seekers and foul odours chasers” rather than “Wherever you go there is no need to ask others too often;/ You yourself are the perfume chaser pursuing foul odors” (p. 85). Second, Xuedou Chongxian’s 雪竇重顯 (980–1052) “Sending off Layman Yu as He Returns to Sichuan” 送俞居士歸蜀 is indeed a heptasyllabic quatrain that expresses his nostalgia for his home in Sichuan. However, the second line 青城拋却數溪雲, mistranslated as “[i]t is the Qingcheng Mountains casting mist into countless gullies,” does not depict “longing as an act of the mountains themselves” (p. 100), but rather Chongxian’s leaving Qingcheng behind for places like Cuifeng 翠峯 in Suzhou 蘇州 and Xuedou 雪竇 in Siming 四明, where he spent time counting the cluster of clouds over brooks. Third, Yuejiang Zhengyin’s lines 大覺斷絃今復續，可無佛國與參寥 are mistranslated as “Huailian made broken bowstrings taut again, / else there would not have been Foguo [Weibai] or Daoqian” (p. 168; brackets in original). The two lines were taken from a poem that Zhengyin wrote to his dharma friend Youzhu 友竹, which praises Youzhu’s conversion of his quiet residence to a retirement dwelling called Mengtang 蒙堂 following Dajue Huailian’s 大覺懷璉 (1010–1090) example. It was said that Huailian, together with Jiufeng Jianshao 九峯鑿韶, Foguo Weibei 佛國惟白, and Canliao Daoqian 參寥道潛 preached in the Mengtang every day, which was

modelled after by contemporaneous monasteries.<sup>6</sup> In this light, the two lines have no bearing on Daoqian's poetry, nor is there evidence in the author's citations that supports the notion of Daoqian's being "brought back to life" 復生 and once again began traveling and writing freely" (p. 168). The quote from Yuanji Juding's 圓極居頂 (d. 1404) "Account of the Lower Mengtang" 下蒙堂記 actually says that "to bring the three men, Jiufeng, Foguo, and Canliao back to lives is something I would not yield [to others]" 使九峯、佛國、參寥三人者復生，吾不讓焉。<sup>7</sup> This statement indicates that the above two lines were intended to compare Youzhu to Weibai and Daoqian and should be translated as a rhetorical expression like "Now Huailian's broken bowstrings were made taut again, / how could it not have been without Weibai and Daoqian?" Fourth, in Cishou Huaishen's four-line verse that extolls the importance of learning, the second line translated as "[y]ou must clearly discern the mind-ground of a renunciant" 出家心地要分明 (p. 178) should read "as a renunciant, your mind-ground must be clear and bright." The fourth line translated as "[e]very action from moment to moment all self-evident" 事事臨時總現成 should read "every single event will always manifest spontaneously." Fifth, the author's translation of the second line of Gu Feng's 顧逢 heptasyllabic poem addressed to the Tattered-Robed Guangchun 廣淳破衣 reads erroneously as "[i]n recent years you are yet more sentimental" 年來更用情. In fact, the line stresses that the monk, who was fond of writing, "has become even more devoted to writing recently." The translation of the last two lines of the same poem into "And wishing to visit eminent elders, / You have no need to plan a myriad mountain journeys" 更參諸大老，莫計萬山程 (p. 193) is the inverse of the poet's intent. A more faithful translation should read "to further consider visiting some eminent elders, / you don't need to worry about a journey of myriad mountains." Sixth, the last line of "Sending off Venerable Ding on His Return to Kuaiji" 送定上人還會稽 that reads 它年在一鳴 should be translated as "some years in the future, it will be up to you to make a mark at the first shot" instead of "At some future time we will be joined in song" (p. 212). The phrase 一鳴 should be understood as

<sup>6</sup> Yuejiang Zhengyin, "Celebrating Youzhu for Converting His Stone-Shepherd House to a Mengtang" 賀友竹改牧石寮作蒙堂, *Yuejiang Zhengyin chanshi yulu* 月江正印禪師語錄, in *Manji Shinsan Dai Nihon Zokuzōkyō*, vol. 71, no. 1049, *juan* 3, p. 148c. *Mingzhou Ayuwang shanzhi* 明州阿育王山志 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980), *juan* 4, pp. 236–37. *Zenrin shōkisen* 禪林象器箋, in *Dazangjing bubian*, vol. 19, no. 103, *juan* 2, pp. 45b–46a. Note that Youzhu was probably the Stone-Shepherd Old Chan 牧石老禪 mentioned thrice in Zhengyin's recorded sayings.

<sup>7</sup> See "Lower Mengtang" 下蒙堂, *Zenrin shōkisen*, *juan* 2, pp. 46a–b.

synecdoche for the idiom “amazing the world with an astounding feat” 一鳴驚人. It suggests that the prospect of Venerable Ding’s success is due to his incomparable dedication to study noted in the preceding line that reads “When it comes to hard work and study, who can be your match” 苦學誰如子. Despite its rhetorical nature, it was not so simple as to offer “hopeful valediction” as the author has suggested.

Once in a while, the author reads Chinese disyllabic or polysyllabic phrases as monosyllabic word. This results in the strange translation of verbal phrases like *shanxie* 繕寫 as “fair copies” and “a fair copy” (p. 103), and *shanlu* 繕錄 as “fair transcription” (p. 108), which really should mean “copy” or “transcribe.” One wonders if he may be treating the word 繕 (copy) as 善 (good, fair). On the other hand, while the author is right to say *yongshi* 用識, which should read *yongzhi*, is found in the signature of a letter (p. 105, n. 119), the expression does not form a compound word and should be translated separately as the author does. However, *yongzhi suishi* 用識歲時 as an expression does not stand by itself to mean “I applied myself on the day . . .” but rather linking the preceding sentence to mean “I, Wenzheng, fortunately served as his attendant beside his desk, then composed this preface so as to keep a record of the year and season . . .” 文政幸侍座机，輒述序引，用識歲時. The compound 座机 is a misprint of 座几, which means a small, low table or desk normally prepared for a preceptor to use.<sup>8</sup> Another Chinese expression 臥疾 should also be read as a disyllabic phrase. However, in his discussion of Huihong’s mentioning of Weiqing’s 惟清 (d. 1117) attitude towards the use of language, the author translates this passage 昭默自臥疾後，無他嗜好，以翰墨為佛事 (pp. 147–48) as “ever since Weiqing laid down and quickly passed, no one has delighted in using brush and ink to carry out deeds of a Buddha.” It actually should read “ever since Weiqing was sick in bed, he has had no other hobbies but using brush and ink to perform deeds of a buddha.” The compound 臥疾 should not be translated separately as “laid down and quickly passed.” Nor can the expression 無他, which means “no other,” be translated as “no one,” given that Weiqing remains the subject of the entire sentence. The phrase 踈慵 in line eight, 出門漸覺踈慵, of Li Zhong’s 李中 poem titled “Presented to the Great Master Bai of Donglin [Temple]” 贈東林白大師 is also mistranslated. The line should read “gradually feeling lethargic when you step out of the [temple] gate” rather than

<sup>8</sup> See *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* 勅修百丈清規, in Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡辺海旭, eds., *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 (1924–1932; reprint, Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1983–1985), vol. 48, no. 2025, *juan* 5, p. 1136c23. Also see *Zenrin shōkisen*, *juan* 27, p. 743b.

“But if you step out of the [temple] gates, gradually you will lessen this lethargy” (p. 158; brackets in original). Given that 踈慵 is a disyllabic compound that cannot be translated separately as “lessen this lethargy,” the author’s translation changes the intended meaning. The line suggests that Li Zhong was feeling sorry for Master Bai’s lethargy because Master Bai had gradually lost his youthful vibrancy.

This reviewer also finds it puzzling that the author lumps together “ancient style poetry” (*gutishi* 古體詩) and “recent style poetry” (*jintishi* 近體詩) as “regulated verses,” given that he is familiar with rules dictating them, to wit, the latter’s strict tonal and rhyming restrictions (p. 38). For instance, Huihong’s “Venerable Xian Sought a Gāthā” 賢上人覓偈 is not an eight-line “regulated poem” (p. 131), but rather an eight-line “ancient style poem,” because it does not at all adhere to the tonal prosody and parallelism required for the former.

With respect to the reason for Chan monk’s utilization of the terms *chanyu* 禪餘, literally “surplus of Chan,” and *chanwai* 禪外, literally “outside of Chan” (p. 187), one may also see it from a different perspective. Given the zeitgeist of Song and post-Song eras in which monks were enthralled with literati culture that encompassed various forms of belles-lettres including calligraphy, painting, prose, and poetry, the terms were used as religious rhetoric to attenuate their feelings of embarrassment, if not guilt, over their contrivance against the monastic rules that forbade them to use words and letters. Their passion for poetry oftentimes overwhelmed their sense of complacency—that their daily religious or Chan practice was only one thing in their lives, which could be invigorated by their participation in versification. They could partake in literati culture and various poetizing activities when they had spare times.

A number of misprints appear in the book that are clearly due to editing errors. For instance, 文子禪 (p. 122) should read 文字禪. Cai Jingguo 蔡康國 (p. 139) should be spelt Cai Kangguo. The Chinese text excerpted from Zhuanyu Guanheng’s 顓愚觀衡 (1579–1646) letter should read 洪覺範禪師所著僧寶、智證等傳，及石門文字禪諸書 (p. 154). The punctuation in this excerpt is muddled. Line two of poem no. 42 of the *Yifanfeng* 一帆風 misses printing a character 迢 that constitutes a disyllabic compound 迢迢 (p. 232). In other words, the line translated as “You crossed [*as far as*] ten thousand *li* to our master’s seat” (emphasis added) should read 萬里迢迢扣師席。<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The italics “as far as” are mine. See Chen Jie 陳捷, “Ribei ru Song seng Nampo Jōmyō yu Song seng shiji *Yifanfeng*” 日本入宋僧南浦紹明與宋僧詩集《一帆風》, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua luncong* 中國典籍與文化論叢 9 (2007): 85–99. The poem is on page 97.

The above trifling errors notwithstanding, this reviewer believes that they change not one iota of value and contribution of the book. In fact, the book ignites the reviewer's intense interest in the distinction between *jisong* and *shi* poetry and in the diverse understandings of *wenzi chan* as an important constituent of Song Chan monastic literary culture. Readers will do well to add to their knowledge with this captivating book and will be left with many fresh new insights and questions to think about.

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***Empowered by Ancestors: Controversy over the Imperial Temple in Song China (960–1279)***. By Cheung Hiu Yu. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2021. Pp. xii + 216. HK\$620.

At first glance, *Empowered by Ancestors* would appear to be a tightly focused monograph on ritual protocol and performance at the ancestral shrine (*taimiao* 太廟) of the Song-dynasty imperial lineage. By making sacrifices to their ancestors as one component of their annual ceremonial cycle, Song monarchs were performing ideal virtues of rulership as filial sons and descendants, and some more than others were overtly attempting to revitalize the classical Way or *Dao* 道 of the sage-kings encoded within the classical ritual texts collected in the *Book of Rites* (*Li ji* 禮記). With the publication of this book, Cheung Hiu Yu has succeeded in restoring the central importance of ritual theory and practice within the political environments and scholarly milieux of the Northern and Southern Song. More important, his research findings on this seemingly arcane and oddly neglected subject could certainly illuminate many adjacent dimensions of history in middle-period China: conceptions of monarchical authority, political conflicts over state policy, disputes over classical exegesis, broader shifts in political culture, reorientations of elite discourse, and reformulations of social values.

Like all previous major dynasties, the imperial house of Zhao 趙 was a discontinuous patriline, a family tree regrafted with multiple adoptions and fraternal successions. Its first monarchical transition was non-normative, when the founding Emperor Taizu 太祖 (r. 960–976) was succeeded by his brother Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 976–997) under somewhat questionable circumstances. To follow