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ARTICLE



The portrayal of women in the poetry of Jing'an Eight-Fingers

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ABSTRACT

The last three decades have seen the emergence of a rich literature on the role of gender and sexuality in Buddhism. Compared to the lively debates surrounding the ordination of nuns, and the role of lay women in different Buddhist traditions, the attitudes of male monastics toward their female devotees have attracted little attention. In late imperial China, the discourse on monks and their women lay-supporters emphasized transgression. It was often dominated by the anti-clerical polemics of concerned Confucians, who worried that deviant monks might compromise the chastity of their wives and daughters. Very little attention has been paid to the actual exchanges and the modes of communication between monks and their female supporters. In this article, we discuss how the renowned Qing dynasty poet monk Jing'an Eight-Fingers (1851–1912) communicated with and about women. Jing'an's poems show him as an intellectually astute monastic, who cared deeply about his supporters and their relatives. Although he was not involved in what today would be considered social activism, his views on gender (in)equality were moderately progressive. How are the roles of women in late imperial China reflected in the writings of this elite monk, poet, and administrator?

KEYWORDS

Jing'an 敬安; Jichan 寄禪;
Ascetic Eight Fingers 八指頭陀;
women in Buddhism;
Buddhist poetry; poet monks;
Qing Buddhism

Introduction

Jing'an Eight-Fingers (1851–1912)¹ entered the history books when, in April 1912, he organized a meeting of representatives from seventeen provinces in Shanghai's Liuyun Temple 留雲寺² to found the *General Buddhist Association of the Republic of China* 中華佛教總會, China's first national Buddhist organization. The delegates chose Jing'an as first president and he moved to use his mandate to gain official recognition and resist the various anti-Buddhist policies that the new republic (and indeed the People's Republic) inherited from the Qing.³ His tenure as president, however, was short – he died in October the same year after a heated argument with the Minister of the Interior. His death was subsequently used to exert pressure on president Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859–1916), who as a result passed the legislation which Jing'an had promoted and which granted Buddhist institutions at least a temporary respite against encroachment by the various layers of government.

Decades later, Buddhists still expressed the sentiment that Jing'an had 'exchanged his life' for the legal right of Buddhist institutions to own and safeguard their property.⁴

Consequently, on the twentieth anniversary of his death, Jing'an was remembered by a special issue of *Haichaoyin* 海潮音, the most influential Buddhist journal in Republican China.⁵ The attention bestowed on Jing'an was remarkable considering that in general, there was very little interest in Qing Buddhism during the early Republic (1912–1949).⁶ Even in the 1950s articles on Jing'an were published in China,⁷ and he again became a person of interest again after the revival of Buddhist Studies there since the 1980s.⁸ In English, Jing'an is known to a degree through the work of Holmes Welch,⁹ but so far little effort has been made to understand his life and work.¹⁰

An exception is an early article by Reginald F. Johnston, who describes Jing'an's role not as defender of the faith, but rather as the 'poet-monk of modern China.'¹¹ And indeed, in his day Jing'an's renown rested on his poetry and not on his politics. With more than 1900 known poems, he is likely the most prolific poet-monk of the late Qing and has been compared to the famous poet-monks (*shiseng* 詩僧) of the Tang and Song.¹² Writing poetry had never been an unusual past time for monks.¹³ As Johnston already pointed out, 'those who are acquainted with the religious life of China and the history of its great monastic houses will not be surprised to learn that the poet . . . was a monk, or that the monk was a poet.'¹⁴

In previous dynasties, Buddhist monks that excelled in poetry had often received an extensive secular education before they entered monkhood.¹⁵ Jing'an, however, came from a poor family.¹⁶ Born in 1851, and orphaned at a young age, he entered monkhood in 1868. Soon after his ordination, he met a fellow monk, who wrote poetry and encouraged him to do the same.

Modeled on stories of enlightenment breakthrough experiences, Jing'an gives a description of his awakening as a poet: One day when he stood on the shores of Lake Dongting, viewing the boundless green waters of China's largest inland lake, 'suddenly' a verse came to him 'Here I've come, sent by Lake Dongting's waves' 洞庭波送一僧來.¹⁷ When Jing'an showed his verse to the poet Guo Jusun 郭菊蓀 (d.u.), Guo approved of the line and suggested that Jing'an's talent for poetry must have 'roots in previous lives.' He also presented Jing'an with a copy of a widely read anthology, the '300 Poems of the Tang Dynasty.'¹⁸

In time, Jing'an became a widely respected monk, rose to monastic office and gained recognition in the world of secular literati, not the least because of his poetry. He also must have had considerable skills as administrator and first served as abbot in several large monasteries in Hunan. In 1902, he was invited to serve as abbot of the Tiantong Monastery near Ningbo, historically one of the most famous and influential public monasteries in East Asia. Jing'an held this position from 1903 until his death in 1912.

Below we will focus on what Jing'an's poetry reveals about his attitudes toward the role of women in Buddhism and society. While some of his poems speak to universal issues, such as grief or parenthood, others address issues specific to women Confucian societies, such as the pressure on widows not to remarry or on wives to produce a male heir. Living in times when war and uprisings plagued the dying Qing dynasty, Jing'an also used the motif of the lonely soldiers' wife. Finally, his praise of female lay devotees acknowledged the support rendered by women to the Buddhist cause.

Setting the scene: Jing'an as family friend

This article attempts to trace how a 19th century monk represented women in his poetry. Compared to today's repertoire, the spectrum of attitudes toward women available for Jing'an in the late Qing was as different as were the concrete issues surrounding women's rights (or rather their absence). Women's suffrage (fully realized in China since 1947¹⁹) and changing attitudes toward gender have shifted attitudes and issues significantly, what counted as radical opinions in 1900 is considered self-evident today. The dilemmas have evolved: Foot binding is history, whereas forced abortions have moved into a more recent past, the stigma for remarried widows went the way of foot binding, the stigma for divorcees is on the wane. All the while, true equity, especially in terms of political representation, still seems a long way off.²⁰

Before we attempt to identify what attitudes were available for Jing'an and where he can be situated on the spectrum of attitudes, we should remember there was no recognizable Chinese feminist voice before 1900. The activities of Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927), who organized a society against foot binding in 1892, and Liang Qiqiao's essay advocating public education for women (*Lun nüxue* 1897), are often cited as the beginning of the women rights movement in China, but their advocacy was but a small part of their reformist agenda.²¹ It is not realistic to expect Jing'an to be a 'social progressive' as the term is understood today. He might have heard of socialism or feminism late in life, but these discourses simply did not exist in China during his formative years. What did exist were debates surrounding topics such as foot binding, property and inheritance rights of women, access to education for girls, and the stigma of remarriage for widows. On such issues, gentlemen of the Qing could be of different opinion. Like in 19th century Europe, a small group of intellectuals articulated and condemned the systemic inequalities which the majority accepted as the norm. Jing'an was not among them; his works are neither revolutionary nor even novel. They allow us, however, to see the landscape of gender inequality through the eyes of a 'normal', if high-ranking, late-Qing dynasty monk. As such, Jing'an, who in theory had a privileged outside vantage point from which to observe the 'world of dust', was in close contact with local literati elites both due to his status as abbot and his literary talent.

In an autobiographic sketch, Jing'an mentions how he once paid homage to Cao E 曹娥, a deified 'filial daughter,' who allegedly lived in the Eastern Han dynasty.²² In a temple dedicated to Cao E, he kowtowed to her statue so enthusiastically that his forehead began to bleed. When his companion asked: 'Why would a great monk pay his respects to a female ghost (*nügui* 女鬼)?' Jing'an replied: 'Haven't you learned the monastic rules about being filial to one's parents? All the Buddhas and sages begin their Way from filial piety. I consider this girl in essence as equal to the body of a Buddha (*yu Foshen deng* 與佛身等體). So how am I at fault, paying my respects to her?'²³

The story, though ostensibly about filial piety, also indicates that Jing'an did not share his companion's view of how the world is gendered. There was no shortage of female deities in China, and the *female* in 'female ghost' might have been added to emphasize how unorthodox the object of Jing'an's veneration was from a Buddhist perspective. Nevertheless, Jing'an makes a point to contradict his companion. In the discursive universe of Buddhism, the story contains echoes of the ancient Buddhist debate about the suitability of a women's body for attaining buddhahood, but also reveals a late

imperial Chinese sensibility concerning orthodoxy.²⁴ Indeed, Confucian orthodoxy was as repressive towards women as it was towards other religions and its social orthopraxy aimed at strictly regulating both.

Judging from Jing'an's biographies, correspondence and poetry, his circle of close friends consisted mainly of monks and literati peers who appreciated his poetry. These friendships tangentially involved him also in the family life of the literati elite. A unique source documenting such a friendship is the preamble written for the posthumous collection of poems by Yaoyun, the daughter of Jing'an's friend Rao Zhiyuan 饒智元.

Preamble to the Poetry Collection by Yaoyun, the Daughter of the Houseman Rao Shiwan²⁵

Houseman Rao is my old friend, our relationship is like that between Zhi Dun and Xu Xun.²⁶ We used to visit each other often, donning bamboo hats and clogs made of wood, and never tired of talking and laughing together.

He taught his daughter poetry before she could read. She could recite by heart any poem after a single glance, concentrating [intensely] like a mad person. It seemed she was interested only in ancient literature; nevertheless she would shyly put on rouge [like other girls]. When she was inspired to write a poem, she sometimes wrote it down and sent it to me to ask for my opinion. I replied: 'I guess extraordinary talent is difficult to attain, but how often is one young and pretty?' When she got my reply in her rooms, she shed tears for some time. She said: 'Alright, I might not be that clever, but what is it to that bald guy!'

Even after she was married, she was still often found behind the curtains of her study.²⁷ Her poems improved greatly, and her marriage was happy. Wrapped in scarfs, walking stick in hand she went on outings, and rivers and mountains inspired her poetry. The lotus in the West Lake touched the jade ornaments on her girdle, intently she gazed at the green Beigu Mountain [in Jiangsu].

The morning clouds had just turned beautiful, the orchid just budded tender shoots – but how unkind is the autumn frost. Suddenly the pretty flowers wither. And the silken shroud holds now her fragrant songs; the green mountains cover her jade-like countenance. [The beautiful] Xie E might have considered her beautiful, and [the learned] sister of [the historian] Ban [Gu]²⁸ would have admired her [for her learning]. I wonder whether the hands with which she once embroidered images of the Buddha still hold on to one of the threads. Her soul will descend to the Island of the Immortals; her chariot will take her to the Jade Pool [in the paradise of the Queen Mother of the West]. The law of sympathetic resonance will not fail. A virtuous woman's faith in Buddha Amitābha is truly miraculous. As your father's friend, I wrote this preamble for you.²⁹

Jing'an was not the only poet to express his grief about Yaoyun's untimely death in verse. Her mother Hu Shu, one of the wives of Yaoyun's father, left nine poems in mourning for her daughter.³⁰

The period between the late 18th and mid-19th century has been called the 'second high tide of women's literature.'³¹ Poetry written by women was appreciated and some literati families prided themselves on a long line of female poets. Jing'an's preamble speaks of how the family patriarch encouraged these pursuits and taught his daughter to recite poetry at an early age, and in this the Raos of Hunan were not exceptional. During the Qing, the growing number of women poets meant that the writing and reading of women's poetry left the 'chamber' and assumed a more public persona. Women's literature was especially prominent in the South (Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui), and, at

least according to the current state of research, it seems there were fewer woman writers in North China.³²

The organization of poetry clubs (*shishe* 詩社) created new forums that allowed women poets to develop and actualize their art beyond the family home.³³ The clubs allowed women to gather for holidays, play games or, like Rao Yaoyun above, set out for sightseeing tours to famous scenic, historical or religious sites.³⁴ Like their male counterparts, they often composed poetry for each other.³⁵ And, of course, poetry continued to be exchanged between women and men as part of the intellectual conversation. In a milieu where the exchange and appreciation of poetry was customary, Jing'an's observations about Rao Yaoyun are personal and perceptive, quite natural for a family friend.³⁶

Jing'an was aware of other women poets as well and on one occasion expressed his condolences on the death of a female student of Li Shangshan 李商山, a Ningbo poet and acquaintance of Jing'an.³⁷ One of the most active promoters of women's literature in the Qing was the famous Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716–1797), who in his elaborate Sui Gardens 隨園 in Nanjing cultivated a group of female pupils whose works he edited and published.³⁸ Yuan Mei held, for his time, liberal views on many issues, he affirmed the right of widows to remarry³⁹ and was opposed to foot binding.⁴⁰

Yuan Mei's liberalism had a certain presence in the 19th century and it is this flavor of literati attitudes that Jing'an seems to endorse. Doubtless Jing'an was aware of the famous 18th century poet and his views. On a journey to Nanjing, he sought out the former site of Yuan Mei's famous Sui Gardens, which had been destroyed in 1853 in the Taiping Civil War (1850–1864). He reflects:

In Baixia Recalling Nanjing's Sui Gardens 白下懷隨園

乾嘉風雅共推袁 Among the poets in the times of Qianlong and Jiaqing, Yuan Mei was much acclaimed.

回首倉山欲斷魂 Now, I am deeply saddened when I turn to Cang Mountain [where Sui Gardens had been].

十載干戈寥落後 After a decade of warfare and desolation,

荒煙無處認隨園 Sui Gardens has vanished beneath a swirl of weeds.⁴¹

Jing'an, unlike Yuan Mei, was always circumspect in his interactions with the other sex, but, like Yuan Mei, he read and critiqued women's poetry and wrote preambles and memorial poems for them. Like the 18th century bon vivant, he endorsed a, for his time, liberal attitude that affirmed the right of women to poetic self-expression.

Women without husbands: courtesans, virgins, widows and divorcées

Jing'an's dual identity as poet and monk has been described as contradictory by some.⁴² And indeed, Jing'an himself in one late poem laments: 'I set out to become a Buddhist patriarch, how did I end up as a slave to poetry?'⁴³ This should probably not be taken at face value; it is unlikely that Jing'an was overly concerned about his renown in the secular poetry scene. His fame as poet gained him access to literati circles, which otherwise might have been closed to him, as he did not belong to an influential clan, nor had received a proper Confucian education. As the abbot of several major monasteries, the ability to

produce better than average poetry must have been an important asset in his contacts with the local gentry.⁴⁴

He was of course expected to express a Buddhist posture in his poetry. This was easy when it came to themes like contemplating the evanescence of life, the sorrow of loss and the appreciation of scenic beauty. Other topics, however, were more difficult. It would have been considered transgressive for him to praise the beauty of a woman or the delights of inebriation, for instance. Women must have been something of a precarious subject for him. The literary challenge was to find a poetically interesting treatment, without resorting to the pious admonitions of the pastoral register.

Two types of idealized women were admired – in very different ways – by literati in the Ming and Qing: courtesans and ‘exemplary women’ (*lienü* 烈女). Jing’an struggled to find an appropriate moral timbre for either.

With two quatrains on the tomb of the courtesan Su Xiaoxiao 蘇小小 (479–501), or ‘Little Su’, Jing’an becomes part of a long tradition of poetry that has been written commemorating her grave.⁴⁵ Su Xiaoxiao’s tomb, located near the Xiling Bridge 西泠橋 in Hangzhou, has been a landmark for centuries. Destroyed in the Cultural Revolution it was rebuilt in 2004 and is surrounded today by pillars with inscriptions by contemporary calligraphers. The stone pillars huddle around the tomb as if to protect it from further incursions, while at the same time reasserting the male literati obsession with the young courtesan. Jing’an’s verses read:

Two Quatrains on the Tomb of ‘Little Su’ 題蘇小小墳二首

油壁香車不再逢 Nevermore the gaudy fragrant chariots,

六朝如夢水流東 The six dynasties passed like a dream never to return.

風流回首余青冢 Literary gentlemen glancing back at my green tomb

始信從來色是空 Begin to believe that form has been emptiness – all along.

芳草萋萋小小墳 Fragrant grasses crowd this ‘little’ grave,

往來多少吊斜曛 How many under dusk have grieved her here?

美人畢竟成黃土 Beauties too must turn to ashes in the end,

莫向湖邊泣暮雲⁴⁶ Why wail for twilight clouds at this lake’s shore?

Jing’an’s poems can be read as a denial to mourn the glorified beauty of a young courtesan, much in line with what might be expected from a Buddhist monk. Nevertheless, his reflections operate in the context of poetic conventions in which literati mourn the passing of their object of desire.

Courtesan aesthetics in late imperial China existed next to mores that demanded iron-clad chastity for upper class women. Chastity was demanded not only before and during the marriage, but also beyond it.⁴⁷ It was a lifelong task. Different from the Tang and Song, in late imperial China there was strong social and legal pressure on widows not to remarry, indeed to stay ‘chaste.’⁴⁸ Chastity for widows was seen as especially virtuous where husbands died young, and even extended to cases where the fiance died before the wedding took place. As couples in pre-modern China were

often betrothed in childhood, this happened rather more frequently than today. If the fiancé died before or during the relatively long and complicated wedding ceremonies that Neo-Confucian family ritual proscribed, and to which at least the upper classes aspired, the bride had the option to remain (or was pressured to remain) unmarried for the rest of her life. She would become a ‘Lady of the Inner Quarters who preserves her Chastity’ (*shinü shouzhēn* 室女守貞), a virginal widow. During the Qing, these *shinü shouzhēn* became an increasingly important category of ‘exemplary women,’ as patriarchal Neo-Confucian family customs spread through society.⁴⁹ The issue of those virginal widows was at times hotly debated.⁵⁰ There was concern that some women were pressured into forgoing marriage in order for the whole family to be commended and thereby gain remissions on taxes, military service or corvée.

In Jing’an’s work, the discourse about virginal widows is reflected in two poems on ‘exemplary women.’

Two poems on the biography of Li Sigu, Exemplary Woman of Xiangxiang 題湘鄉烈女李
奴姑傳二首

未及於歸夫已亡 She had not yet entered her husband’s family when her husband died,

誓將苦志比冰霜 Thus with her vows she steeled her will, became like ice and frost.

可憐一掬傷心淚 How pitiful, a few sad tears

滴向黃陵竹也香 Trickle towards the yellow tumulus [of her grave], fragrant bamboo even
there.

悵望蓬山路未遙 Dejectedly gazing towards Pengshan Mountain,⁵¹ the road does not seem
far.

梅花淡月欲魂消 Like plum flowers beneath a dim moon – her soul almost dissolved.

天公有意全貞節 The Lord of Heaven insisted on her remaining chaste [and not to
remarry],

不許嫦娥赴鵲橋⁵² [unlike] Chang’E not even allowed to pass the Magpie Bridge [to meet
her lover once a year].⁵³

Jing’an here does not cast the *shinü shouzhēn* ideal in a positive light – to him Li Sigu’s story is not a happy one, and he emphasizes with the harshness she has to endure. Such sentiments, however, do not amount to social criticism. Not the pressures of patriarchy, but the transcendent ‘Lord of Heaven insisted on her remaining chaste.’ Elsewhere Jing’an does write eulogies for ‘chaste women,’ as after all chastity and celibacy were Buddhist virtues as well. Most of these women were lay devotees. In the short prose eulogy ‘In praise of the chaste women of the Liu family, the Upasikā Juejie’ 劉貞女覺解優婆夷讚 Jing’an confirms that ‘by not giving birth, [she] retains the truthfulness of childhood, and by upholding Buddhism, requites her mother’s love.’ The chaste Juejie is compared to a ‘lotus rising from green water, naturally letting go of worldly prettiness.’⁵⁴ This makes a virtue of childlessness and remaining unmarried, which works in a Buddhist context. From a Confucian perspective, such a lifestyle would be considered a social and even moral failure.

Another group of women without husbands were widows of soldiers. This motif too has a long history in Chinese poetry, and in Jing’an’s time experienced an unhappy

renaissance. Most of Jing'an's poetry was written against a dark background: the Opium Wars (1839–1842, 1856–1860), the vast Taiping Civil War (1850–1864), the Panthay Rebellion in Yunnan (1856–1873), the Dungan Rebellions (1862–1877, 1895–1896) of the Hui in Shaanxi and Western China, the Sino-French War for control of Vietnam (1884–1885), the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Boxer Uprising (1899–1901) – all consumed soldiers and left widows and orphans in their wake. What set these widows apart was the uncertain status of their widowhood. Often a woman could not be sure whether her drafted husband was still alive and would spend years in limbo waiting for his return. Jing'an speaks of their plight in a set of untitled poems. Here the ghost of a dead soldier speaks to his parents saying:

耶娘在家兒遠戍 Father and mother you stayed at home, [I, your] son went to guard distant borders.

生死不得知其故 You cannot know the cause of my death.

兒今已與新鬼鄰 Now that your son is already in the company of ghosts,

兒婦休爲故夫誤 Do not delay your daughter-in-law on account of her former husband.⁵⁵

His sympathy for the victims of war notwithstanding, Jing'an was no pacifist. In fact, he was often praised as 'patriotic monk' on account of some poems that extol the fight against outside enemies,⁵⁶ and which contain lines such as 'this old monk is ashamed because the nation has not yet exacted revenge 國仇未報老僧羞.'⁵⁷

In another poem, Jing'an emphasizes with women who had been divorced or abandoned by their husbands. In 'Song of an Abandoned Wife' he has the female speaker say:

棄置復何道 I was discarded, what more can I say?

徘徊祇自憐 Pacing up and down, I pity myself.

郎心無定好 When a husband's heart is not faithful,

妾貌若爲妍 How can his wife appear beautiful to him?

難使秋風熱 Autumnal winds cannot be warmed,

空悲團扇捐 Deeply saddened I am like a 'discarded fan'.⁵⁸

蘼蕪何處采 If I only could find some Meiwu leaf⁵⁹

長跪故夫前 I could forever kneel before my estranged husband.⁶⁰

In the final couplet, Jing'an alludes to the pressure of producing a male heir, but is unable to envision a happy existence outside of the arranged marriage.⁶¹ Buddhist monks might have had little reason to make pronouncements on the institution of marriage, but nevertheless, as Beata Grant has shown, among Buddhist monks too existed a spectrum ranging 'from a conservative (read Confucian) notion of proper gender roles to a more egalitarian ideal buttressed by the Chan Buddhist rhetoric of non-duality and the irrelevance of gender.'⁶² On this spectrum, Jing'an tends to the latter, 'more egalitarian' end and his views on gender issues were moderately progressive for his day. He was, however, no social activist, the abandoned women in his poem still yearns to 'kneel before my estranged husband.' Nowhere do we see him advocating for

change like Kang Youwei and Tan Sitong (1865–1898), some of his more ‘radical’ contemporaries.⁶³

Women Buddhist devotees

As abbot of major monasteries in Hunan and Zhejiang, Jing’an was in regular contact with literati supporters. He would have met upper class women on occasions when they visited his monastery, when he visited their households as guests of their husbands or during funeral rites performed there. These women Buddhists are at times remembered by him in poems of posthumous praise. Below the fifth poem from a series of ‘Six Elegies for the second wife of Provincial Surveillance Commissioner Tu’:

白首長齋大士前 In later years, she fasted before [an image of] the Great Being
[Avalokiteśvara],

不生佛國定生天 If not in a Buddha Land, she certainly was reborn in a heaven.

西風齊洒孤寒淚 When the autumn wind scatters the tears of the lonely and destitute,

肯拔金釵置義田 Who else would offer golden hairpins to buy land for the poor.

([Jing’an’s note:] The late madam once established a charity school and invited teachers to instruct orphans and children from poor families. 夫人建義塾，延師課孤寒子弟)⁶⁴

From the little that is known about her life, Mrs. Wang was an accomplished and educated lady. Like Jing’an, she was fond of discussing poetry and once funded the reprint of a rare edition of the *Shuijing zhu* 水經注 that had survived as an heirloom in her family.⁶⁵ A vegetarian, she worshiped Guanyin, and founded a charity school for students from poor families. Such levels of social engagement were not encouraged by conservative Confucians, who preferred that women remained in the inner quarters, nor by conservative Buddhists, who did not consider such activities an important part of Buddhist orthopraxy.

An example for the latter is Jing’an’s famous contemporary Yinguang 印光 (1861–1940). Among Buddhist leaders, Yinguang belonged to the conservative end of the spectrum proposed earlier. A prolific letter writer (in part because for many years he refused to receive lay visitors in person) his correspondence reveals a much more patriarchal opinion of the role of Buddhist lay women, whom he advises to stay at home. In a letter ‘To Ms. Xu Fuxian,’ Yinguang said: ‘Women have more obstacles [to their practice] . . . it is appropriate for women to stay at home, keep the precepts, and recite the Buddha’s name.’ He continues: ‘If the family of a women lay-follower is wealthy, and she is able to support herself easily, there is no reason why she not visit temples and receive the precepts. However, if she is from a poor family, why should she do this?’⁶⁶

Another issue that often surfaced in connection with women devotees was how funeral rites should be managed. Women in late imperial China were in general more at liberty to practice Buddhism than upper class men, who were educated in a Confucian world view from an early age, and, while holding office, had to be seen to adhere to Confucian orthopraxy. The question then arises of how Buddhist the funeral rites could become in a family where members had to negotiate different preferences. In late Imperial China,

Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism competed, overlapped and compromised in complex ways when it came to funeral services. Whereas some families insisted on strictly non-Buddhist rites, others called on Buddhist and/or Daoist clergy for the funeral service.⁶⁷

At one time, Jing'an was asked to lead the funeral rites for the wife (née Huang) of Chen Baozhen 陳寶箴 (1831–1900), the Governor of Hunan.⁶⁸ Chen Baozhen was a prominent supporter of the 'Hundred Days Reform' of 1898 and was demoted in the wake of its failure. His participation in the (among other things) anticlerical reforms, which included the suggestion to confiscate the majority of Buddhist and Daoist temples and to convert them into schools, did not prevent Chen from inviting Jing'an and his monks to recite sūtras at his wife's funeral. Obviously Jing'an was well connected in his home province of Hunan. Already as young man, before he assumed high monastic ranks, he had traveled in the company of poets and scholar-officials such as Wang Kaiyun 王闓運 (1833–1916), Guo Songtao 郭嵩燾 (1818–1891), Deng Baixiang 鄧白香, as well as with Chen Baozhen's son, Chen Sanli 陳三立 (1853–1937), and he maintained these relationships after his move to the Jiangnan region.⁶⁹

Another example for the many formal and informal interactions with office holders is his 'Reply to District Magistrate Wei Yuming, who sent his consort Yulian to ask for a poem.' It contains the lines 'Who sent [Su Shi's consort] Zhaoyun to ask [the monk] Foyin? Is this not like with the goddess who knew Vimalakīrti?'⁷⁰

In Section 1, we saw how Jing'an compared his friendship with Rao Zhiyuan in terms of the friendship of Zhi Dun and Xu Xun. Here again he alludes to a historical precedent. The friendship between Su Shi (1037–1101) and the abbot Foyin (1032–1098) has often been used as model or example for the friendship between scholar-officials and monks.⁷¹ Likening Wei's consort Yulian to Su Shi's concubine Zhaoyun means also to compare District Magistrate Wei with one of China's most famous poets. The flattery is extended in the next sentence. Su Shi had on several occasions compared the religiously interested Zhaoyun to the goddess that shares Vimalakīrti's house.⁷² Re-using Su Shi's praise of Zhaoyun Jing'an implies that Magistrate Wei too is like Vimalakīrti.

Women donors also played an independent part as patrons in the network of Jing'an's world. At one point he mentions two sources of donations, one from scholar-officials, the other the money saved from expenses 'for rouge and powder' that came from female devotees.⁷³ One of the most prominent women donors in the late Qing and early Republican period was Luo Jialing 羅迦陵 (1864–1941), the wife of the Shanghai tycoon Silas Aaron Hardoon (1851–1931). She too had a connection to Jing'an. In a poem titled *On Madam Luo Jialing's 'Hardoon Garden'* Jing'an writes:

哈同花木亭臺勝 Resplendent the flowers and trees, the kiosks and pavilions of Hardoon Garden,

帝釋林園恐不如 More so, perchance, than even the gardens of Indra.

況有龍宮法藏寶 Like the Dragon Palace, [Hardoon Garden] harbors the treasure of the Dharma scriptures,⁷⁴

妙香吹滿天人居 Subtle scents fill the abode of gods and men.

([Jing'an's note:] An [edition of the Buddhist] canon is being printed⁷⁵ in Madam's garden and distributed throughout China 夫人園中石印藏經流通海內)⁷⁶

Luo Jialing, formerly known as Li Rui, adopted the name *Jialing* 迦陵 from the transliteration for Kalaviṅka (Ch. 迦陵頻伽), the Sanskrit name of a mythical species of bird with a melodious voice. Luo was a devout Buddhist, who kept a vegetarian diet, and used the character *ci* 慈 (compassion) in the names of her estates. The Harpoons owned one of the most luxurious private gardens in Shanghai. The Aili Garden 愛儷園 (or Harpoon Garden 哈同花園) was designed with input from the monk Zongyang 宗仰 (1865–1921), who also suggested to Luo the creation of a new edition of the Buddhist canon. The Kalaviṅka Canon 頻伽藏, alluded to in the final couplet, was the first modern canonical edition printed in China. Modeled after Japanese editions it was named after the Kalaviṅka Vihāra 頻伽精舍, the building in the Aili Garden where the compilation and printing was organized by Zongyang.⁷⁷

Conclusion

In spite of an active life, filled with travel and a public role as abbot of major monasteries, Jing'an's biography is free of scandal. As with most monks, his support among the laity depended on him adhering strictly to the precepts. By involving himself in poetry he opened lines of communication with non-Buddhist literati that often came in useful, but it also exposed him to greater scrutiny. One occasion illustrates how closely his poetry was scanned by his friends for allusions that might be considered risqué.

On the ninth day in the year *jimao* [1879], I sent 'Master Autumn' [a poem which contained] the line 'on red leaves verses are well written'.⁷⁸ At that time I did not yet know the story of the court lady [who wrote on a red autumn leaf to her lover⁷⁹] and Master Autumn ridiculed me in his riposte for this. This poem is my reply 己卯九日, 余寄秋公有「一株紅葉好題詩」句, 彼時不知有宮女故事。秋公次韻見譏, 復成一絕答之:

禪心不礙題紅葉 The Chan Mind does not prevent me from writing poems on red leaves,

古鏡何妨照翠娥 Just like an ancient mirror freely [and indifferently] reflects the face of [the beautiful] Cui'e.

險處行吟方入妙 By traversing risky places with a song, one may enter what is subtle and profound,

寄聲岩穴老頭陀 An old ascetic calling out in a cave by the cliff.⁸⁰

In 1879, Jing'an was about twenty-eight, not yet 'an old ascetic,' but rather young and inexperienced. The older poet's ridicule must have hit a nerve, though it is difficult to gauge whether it was more deeply felt because of making inadvertent use of the motif of 'writing on red leaves,' revealing his ignorance of a poetic convention, or whether he felt embarrassed because the motif implies a love poem (which he was not supposed to write). Among Buddhist poets, the worry about impropriety, down to a certain nervousness about an alleged allusion, can be traced back least to the Song.⁸¹

The exchange did not end here, in an addendum to the poem above, Jing'an recorded the following:

When Hu Lufeng heard this [my poem] he was full of praise, and sent me this quatrain 胡魯封聞此事稱賞不已, 贈余一絕:

禪心泥絮恐非真 If the Chan Mind is but mired in quiescence, how can it be true?

悟徹《西廂》始入神 Thoroughly understanding [the play] ‘Romance of the Western Chamber’ one begins to understand the spirit.⁸²

([Jing’an’s note:] Once a monk became enlightened watching the ‘Romance of the Western Chamber’ 昔有僧因看《西廂》入道)⁸³

他日采君入詩話 In the future you [and your work] will feature in literary criticism,

題紅佳話又翻新 And the story of writing poetry on red leaves, will have a further twist!

My reply was the quatrain 余答一絕云:

十年匿跡住深山 For ten years I have stayed in seclusion deep in the mountains

只有孤雲伴我閑 Only a solitary cloud kept me company.

剩得風騷餘習在 All that remains are some literary, romantic habits,

題紅佳話落人間 Thus the story of the lovers and their leaves dropped [like a leaf] into the world of man.⁸⁴

In a time where anti-clerical tendencies among the literati resulted in a sizable literature depicting clerics as debauched lechers, this careful exchange presents a corrective. By steering clear of even the slightest impropriety in his dealings with his scholar-friends, Jing’an positions himself against the caricature of the transgressive monk that circulated widely in late imperial literature.⁸⁵

As pointed out earlier, even within the non-transgressive there was room for a spectrum of attitudes that monks could have toward women. Moreover, the way Jing’an wrote about women in 19th century Jiangnan was not necessary typical for Buddhist monks in other regions and at other times. Beata Grant has discussed the exchanges of two seventeenth-century monks, Poshan Haiming 破山海明 (1597–1666) and Tiebi Huiji 鐵壁慧機 (1603–68), with their female followers.⁸⁶ There are notable differences with Jing’an. The recorded sayings of both Poshan and Tiebi contain an extensive record of spiritual advice to nuns and lay-women. Tiebi (and perhaps also Poshan) even designated a nun to rank among his Dharma heirs. Compared to this, Jing’an’s collected verse hardly contains any records of straightforward instructions to female disciples. This might be partly because of the limits of genre (‘collected poems’ (*shiji* 詩集) versus ‘collected sayings’ (*yulu* 語錄), but probably more so because Jing’an’s identity was modeled around his work as administrator and poet rather than Chan master.

Reaching back into the Song, Miriam Levering has identified a ‘rhetoric of equality’ regarding gender in the Chan school that originated with Dahui Zonggao and which, as Grant has shown, later resurfaced in the 17th century masters Poshan and Tiebi.⁸⁷ We want to suggest that this attitude (as well as its opposite) also existed in the time of Jing’an. As expressed and experienced in his poetry, Jing’an’s attitude tended toward the liberal end of the monastic spectrum. It differed markedly from that of more conservative clerics such as Yinguang, who insisted that: ‘To promote the equality of rights between men and women is not sensible. We should know that men have men’s right, women have women’s right; a woman’s vocation is to help her husband and to educate her children, that is the best right of woman.’⁸⁸

Against that Jing’an agreed with the more liberal attitudes of some early and mid-Qing literati, as well as with Poshan and Tiebi from within the Buddhist tradition. He engaged

with women who wrote poetry, and while respecting ideals of chastity, he sympathized with divorcées and the wives of soldiers, and supported their right to remarry.

Influenced by progressive views, he himself exerted a certain influence on the perception of gender in 20th century Chinese Buddhism. Taixu (1890–1947), the eminent reformer of Buddhist monastic education, once acknowledged his debt to Jing'an, whom he had searched out for guidance at the beginning of his career.⁸⁹ In 'On Organizing the Sangha System (*Zhengli sengjia zhidu lun* 整理僧伽制度論),' Taixu later insisted on the equal status between monks and nuns, laymen and lay women.⁹⁰ Shortly after the founding of the (all-male) Wuchang Buddhist College in Wuhan, Taixu in 1924 also established a school for women as part of the College. This was the first attempt of providing a modern curriculum for nuns and lay-women in Buddhist education.⁹¹ Thus Jing'an, to a certain extent, contributed to the promotion of a more progressive position on gender equality in the Chinese Buddhist sangha at large.

Notes

1. There is some confusion in the sources and reference works about whether his Dharma name was Jing'an 敬安 or Jichan 寄禪. Some (e.g. Dongchu, *Zhongguo fojiao jindai shi*, 100) consider Jichan the Dharma name and Jing'an the posthumous temple name, others give Jing'an as Dharma name and Jichan as style (Welch, *Buddhist Revival in China*, 300 fn19), still others say both names were Dharma names (e.g. Johnston, 'Poet-Monk of Modern China,' 17). The question is settled by Jing'an's autobiographic sketch (BTS 418–420), where he clearly says that his master gave him the Dharma name Jing'an and the style name Jichan. In any case, he was widely called (and called himself) 'Ascetic Eight-Fingers' 八指頭陀, after he had burnt off two fingers of his left hand as an offering to the Buddha in 1879. Born as Huang Dushan 黃讀山, Eight-Fingers also went by the name Fuyu 福餘.
2. This article has benefited greatly from feedback by Jason Protass and two anonymous reviewers.
3. Today named Yunxiang Temple 雲翔寺.
4. Religious institutions in China were under intense pressure since 1898 (Duara, 'Knowledge and Power in the Discourse of Modernity'; Goossaert, 'Beginning of the End for Chinese Religion') and indeed throughout the late imperial period (de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China*). For an overview of the continuities of state control from late-imperial to republican China, see Goossaert and Palmer (*Religious Question in Modern China*, 44–62), for the continuity into the present, see Brook ('Politics of Religion').
5. Dongchu, *Zhongguo fojiao jindai shi*, 103–104.
6. *Haichaoyin* Vol. 13, No.12.
7. A survey of Chinese research on Buddhism in the Qing Dynasty lists merely ten articles for the period between 1912 and 1949 (Ji, 'Qingdai Hanchuan Fojiao,' 243–244). Notable, however is that five of these were on Jing'an. Jing'an also was the last Qing dynasty monk whose biography was included in the humongous *Xinxu gaosengzhuàn* (completed 1923, CBETA/B vol.27, text no. 151).
8. For example, Chen ('Aiguo shiseng bazhi toutuo') and Li ('Aiguo shiseng bazhi toutuo').
9. The CNKI database (www.cnki.net (accessed Fall 2019) lists 28 articles in which '八指頭陀' appears in the title, the first in 1984.
10. Welch, *Buddhist Revival in China*, esp. 28–38.
11. Aspects of Jing'an's life and his poetry are treated in Huang, *Shichan kuangchan nüchan*, Ch. 2–4 (and Appendix 1).
12. Johnston, 'A Poet-Monk of Modern China.'
13. Wang, 'Dongting bosong yiseng lai,' 90.

13. See Protass (*Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poems*) for an overview of the beginning and first flowering of Buddhist *shi* poetry.
14. Johnston, 'A Poet-Monk of Modern China,' 14.
15. Grant, 'Buddhism and Poetry in East Asia,' 412.
16. The most detailed account of Jing'an's life to date is Liu and Sheng (*Bazhi toutuo*). Perhaps the earliest is his biography in the *Xinxu gaosengzhuan*, which dwells in some detail on the difficulties Jing'an encountered in childhood (CBETA/B vol.27, text no. 151, pp. 474a10-475a20).
17. The story is retold vividly in Wang, 'Dongting bosong yiseng lai'.
18. BTS 419. Guo helped Jing'an in various ways, his acquaintance seems to have been an important early connection to secular poetry circles that Jing'an frequented later (Liu, *Bazhi toutuo*, 26).
19. For a detailed account of the struggle, see Edwards, *Gender, Politics, and Democracy*.
20. As of 2019, women delegates comprise 24.9% of the National People's Congress, sadly similar to the 23.6% in the 2019 US Congress, according to data published by the Inter-Parliamentary Union <https://www.ipu.org/> (Jan 2020).
21. Zarrow, 'He Zhen,' 797. For a translation (at long last) of Liang's essay, see Liu, Karl & Ko, *Birth of Chinese Feminism*, 189–203.
22. The short autobiography was published in 1888, or shortly after. Cao E drowned, or rather drowned herself, trying to recover her father's corpse from a river. A temple to Cao E (*Xiaonü miao* 小女廟 or *Cao E miao* 曹娥廟) still exists in the Shanyu district of Shaoxing.
23. BTS, p. 419.
24. On the question of transforming female bodies in the context of the Buddhist path, see Balkwill, 'Sūtra on Transforming the Female Form'. On orthodoxy and its others see the two volumes by Liu Kwang-Ching (*Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China; Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China*). As will become clear below, Jing'an's Buddhist poetry is worlds apart from how women are portrayed in Indian Buddhist texts (Wilson, *Charming Cadavers*), a dimension that we will not further pursue here.
25. *Sheren Rao Shiwan* 舍人饒石頑. Rao Zhiyuan (with the style name Shiwan) was from Hunan, like Jing'an. *Sheren* is a minor official title, 'Houseman' or 'Drafter' (Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, sub voc.).
26. The friendship between the poet monk Zhi Dun 支遁 (314–366) and the writer Xu Xun 許詢 (d. 361) became an often cited precedent for the friendship between monks and lay intellectuals. Thus, Jing'an was able to cast his interactions with his literati friends in terms of a tradition that originated in the Eastern Jin. Zhi Dun was part of the famous group of intellectuals that met in Kuaiji and centered on the powerful Prime Minister Xie An 謝安 (320–385), whose family included a number of strong-willed and highly educated ladies, such as Xie Daoyun 謝道韞 (fl.340–399).
27. Generally, educated women were expected to end their literary pursuits and dedicate themselves to household work after entering marriage (Mann, *Precious Records*, 77–78).
28. Ban Zhao 班昭 (fl. 100CE), the first female historian on record, finished the *History of the Former Han* (*Han shu* 漢書), that her brother Ban Gu had begun. For her use as an ideal in the context of women's writing during the Qing, see Mann, *Precious Records*, 78–81.
29. BTS, p. 455.
30. Sun, *Dao, Xian, Tong, Guang, sichao shishi*, Second Collection 乙集, Vol.7, p. 420. Yaoyun's father Rao Zhiyuan published two collections of his own poetry during his lifetime. Another collection of Rao's poems was published posthumously (Chen, *Xin yulin*, Fasc. 3, p. 48).
31. Idema and Grant, *Red Brush*, 567–577. The 'first tide' the authors locate in the late Ming, early Qing. On women and writing in Late Imperial China, see Widmer and Chang (*Writing Women*), and especially Ko (*Teachers of the Inner Chambers*) for the seventeenth century, and Mann (*Precious Records*, 76–120) for the eighteenth. The study of women's writing in late imperial China builds on the comprehensive catalog by Hu Wenkai (1901–1988). Hu (*Lidai funü zhuzuo kao*) comprises 21 volumes, 15 of which on the Qing Dynasty. He lists

- more than 3800 women writers in the Qing dynasty. More recently, regional studies have added to this: Shi Mei ('Qingdai funü') has identified another 110 women poets in Jiangsu, and Xu Hongxia ('Qingren zhuzuo shibu') found 78 more for Zhejiang. Gao Chunhua ('Zhijian lu') provides more information about Shandong.
32. See Hua ('Wanqing nüshiren') for a tally of women poets according to province.
 33. One of the earliest women poetry clubs was created in the late Ming by Fang Weiyi 方維儀 (1585–1668) and her sisters in Tongcheng, Anhui. In the Qing, many more women poetry clubs were formed, such as the Jiaoyuan Poetry Club 蕉園詩社 in Qiantang 錢塘 or the Qingxi Poetry Club 清溪吟社 in Wujiang 吳江 (Guo, 'Mingqing nüxing wenxue,' 73–74).
 34. For women poets on the road, see Fong, *Inner Quarters and Beyond*, Ch. 3.
 35. In a rich study, Beata Grant ('Chan Friends') has documented 'Chan friendships' between laywomen and nuns.
 36. The preamble written for Yaoyun and her father was not his only text for the posthumously published writings of a women poet. There is also the short verse *On the Drafts from the Hongyulou* 題紅雨樓遺稿 in honor of the late wife of his friend Huang Jiading 黃家鼎. BTS, p. 440.
 37. BTS, p.501. A poem by Li Shangshan 李商山 was printed in the newspaper *Qingyi bao* 清議報 (No. 46, May 1900) and his name is mentioned in connection with a 1915 proclamation against Yuan Shikai declaring himself emperor (Ningboshi zhengxie wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui, *Ningbo wenshi ziliao*, Vol. 14: 46).
 38. According to the 'Suiyuan nüdizi shixuan' 隨園女弟子詩選 edited by Yuan Mei and published in 1796, Yuan had at least 28 female students. See Wang, *Yuan Mei pingzhuan*, 267–291. His practice of accepting women as students was roundly criticized by his contemporary, the historian Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1738–1801), who bemoaned that Yuan's disciples did 'not practice the learning appropriate to women' (婦學不修) (Zhang, *Bingchen zhaji*, 98). See also Waley, *Yuan Mei*, 179 f, 210. On the *querelle des femmes* between Yuan, Zhang and others about the correct education of women, see Mann, *Precious Records*, 83–94.
 39. Cf. Yuan Mei's note 'On Remarriage' (改嫁) (Yuan, *Suiyuan suibi* 隨園隨筆, *Yuanmei quanji*, Vol. 5: 228–229). Widows in the Qing were in principle allowed to remarry after a three-year mourning period, but the practice was stigmatized, and women lost all right to their former husband's property as well as to her children, who were to remain in the patrilineal clan family (Sommer, *Sex, Law, and Society*, 172–173).
 40. Yuan, *Duwai yuyan* 牘外餘言, *Yuanmei quanji*, Vol. 5: 11.
 41. BTS, p. 360.
 42. Mei, 'Bazhi toutuo,' 2; Chen, 'Gongshi weibi fei gaoseng,' 59; Huang, 'Bazhi toutuo shi,' 96 ff. For a comprehensive history of the tension between being a monk and a poet and the Buddhist anxieties related to the tension, see Protass, *Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poems*, esp. 62 ff.
 43. 本圖成佛祖 豈分作詩奴. Dated by Mei to 1912 (Mei, *Bazhi toutuo shiwenji*, 440). The line might have been inspired by Su Shi, who used the term *shinu* 詩奴, in a poem praising the poet monk Jia Dao, who left monkhood to serve as official (Protass, *Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poems*, 128–129).
 44. Another skill that could have served as a bridge to literati culture – calligraphy – was not his forte (Wang, 'Dongting bosong yiseng lai', 81).
 45. A famous example is 'The tomb of Su Xiaoxiao' 蘇小小墓 by Li He 李賀 (791–817).
 46. Mei, *Bazhi toutuo shiwenji*, 22; Chen, 'Gongshi weibi fei gaoseng,' 58.
 47. See Lo ('Conversion to Chastity') for how Buddhist notions of purity might have influenced the formation of the ideal of chastity (*zhen* 貞) in late imperial China.
 48. Birge ('Women and Confucianism,' 230–240) shows how the ideal of the 'chaste widow' became pervasive through a combination of Neo-Confucian fundamentalism and Mongol jurisprudence, leading to an erosion of autonomy for women in general and widows in particular. For an overview of the legal rights and duties of chaste widows in the Qing, see Sommer, *Sex, Law, and Society*, Ch. 5.

49. Xia and Xu, 'Qingdai shinü.'
50. The *shinü shouzhen* ideal as promoted by conservative Confucians such as Fang Bao 方苞 (1668–1749) demanded that women married her dead fiancé, and assumed her responsibilities toward her fiancé's family, and, finally, to be buried with the husband she never had (Zhang Shou'an, *Lixue kaozheng*, 444). There was also considerable opposition especially to extreme forms of the custom such as the fiancée committing suicide to follow her deceased fiancé. An early opponent of the *shinü shouzhen* ideal was Gui Youguang 歸有光 (1506--1571). In the Qing, there were Mao Qilin 毛奇齡 (1623–1716), Wang Zhong 汪中 (1745--1794) and Yu Zhengxie 俞正燮 (1775–1840) who asserted the right of women to remarry if her fiancé had died and denied that unmarried women had an obligations toward the fiancé's clan. See Zhang, *Lixue kaozheng*, 437–440; and Zheng, 'Shinü shouzhen,' 28–31.
51. The paradisiacal Island of the Immortals.
52. Mei, *Bazhi toutuo shiwenji*, 62.
53. The line combines two early myths. Chang'e became forever separated from her husband and had to live on the moon. The Magpie Bridge is formed by magpies once a year, allowing the Weaver Girl and the Cowherd a conjugal visit.
54. BTS, p. 466.
55. BTS, p. 415. The last line says the parents ought to let her remarry (reading the *wu* 誤 as *danwu* 耽誤).
56. For example, Chen Nanshi 1956; Mei, 'Bazhi toutuo'; or Gengfa, 'Bazhi toutuo'. The claim to patriotism later qualified by Chen, 'Gongshi weibi fei gaoseng,' 58.
57. BTS, p. 496.
58. The discarded or broken fan is a frequent motif for an abandoned woman. The *locus classicus* for this seems to be the poem 'Yuangehang' 怨歌行 in the collection *Yutai xinyong* 玉臺新詠 (c. 534 CE) (Mu, *Yutai xinyong jianzhu*, Vol. 1: 26).
59. Meiwu or Miwu 靡蕪 is a herb believed to make women fertile and conceive sons (Mu, *Yutai xinyong jianzhu*, Vol. 1: 1).
60. BTS, p. 414.
61. Not providing a male heir was considered a possible ground for divorce (to 'repudiate a wife' *chuqi* 出妻).
62. Grant, 'Women, Gender and Religion', 9. Indeed, Buddhism itself was a factor in the formation of Chinese gender ideals (Hinsch, 'Confucian Filial Piety').
63. Jiao, 'Funü jiefang sixiang,' 118–120.
64. BTS, p. 450.
65. BTS, p. 450. The *Shuijing zhu* (c.5./6. Century), not a Buddhist work, describes the rivers and waterways of China.
66. *Yu Xu Fuxian nüshi shu* 與徐福賢女士書 (Yinguang, *Xinbian quanben Yinguang fashi wenchao*, 193–194).
67. The competition about funeral rites between Confucians on the one side and Buddhist and Daoists on the other is reflected in family codes that have survived in written form. For instance, the manual for funeral rituals of a Du Clan 杜氏 in Anhui mentions five great breaches of ritual, one of which is to invite Buddhist monks for the funeral. Similarly the Xu-Yu Clan of Jixi 績溪 County in Anhui counted including Buddhism rituals in the funeral as one of three kinds of ritual transgression (Feng, 'Qingdai zongzu', 73–84). This was in line with the official Confucian position as exemplified, e.g. by the famous administrator Chen Hongmou 陳宏謀 (1696–1771), who strongly opposed Buddhist or Daoist funeral rites (Rowe, *Saving the World*, 434–437).
68. According to Jing'an's own account, 'Ti Tongyuan ganjiu tu bingxu' 題「桐院感舊圖」并序 (BTS, p. 411).
69. Mei Ji, *Bazhi toutuo shiwenji*, 549–550.
70. 誰遣朝雲參佛印，卻緣天女識維摩 in 'Wei Yuming mingfu qian qiqie yulian suoshi, zuoci yingzhi' 魏玉銘明府遣其妾玉蓮索詩，作此應之 (BTS, p. 459).
71. Next to Xu Xun 許詢 (d. 361) and Zhi Dun 支遁 (314–366) mentioned in Section 1, and Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) and Foyin 佛印 (1032–1098) here, other pairs included Han Yu 韓愈

- (768–824) and Wenchang 文暢 (fl. 800), as well as Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) and Huijin 慧勤 (fl.1070). The two latter pairs were mostly cited to soften the well-known fact that Han and Ouyang had actually been stridently hostile toward Buddhism in their writings. Nevertheless, these precedents were widely used (Wanquan, *Mingzhou Ayuwang shan xu zhi*, 402; or Ye, *Hanshansi zhi*, 20.).
72. CBETA/T.14.475.547 c. For Su Shi and Zhaoyun, see Lin, *Gay Genius*, 312ff.
 73. ‘To the Temple Built by the Nun Sengjing’ 苾芻尼僧淨募建蘭若疏, BTS, p. 523.
 74. According to Buddhist legend the Dragon King build the Dragon Palace under the ocean as a temple for the Buddha and to store Buddhist scriptures. Cf. the Sutra of the Ocean Dragon King (*Hailongwang* 海龍王經, T. 598).
 75. Lit. ‘printed lithographically’ *shiyin* 石印. Perhaps a mistake, as the Kalaviṅka Canon 頻伽藏, printed between 1908 and 1912, was typeset. See Li and He, *Dazangjing*, 536ff; Scott, ‘Pinjia Canon,’ 107–127.
 76. BTS, p. 503.
 77. The canon was closely modeled on a popular Japanese edition, the *Shukusatsu ban* 縮刷版, that had been published in 1880–1885. The Kalaviṅka Canon comprised 1916 texts, presented in 414 string-bound booklets enclosed in 40 cases. Work commenced in summer 1908, the canon was published in 1913. For a detailed account, see Scott, ‘Pinjia Canon’.
 78. ‘Master Autumn’ was Wang Kaiyun 王闓運 (1833–1916), whose pen name was Renqiu 壬秋. Wang was a prominent poet in the late Qing Dynasty and a friend of Jing’an.
 79. The origin of this motif seems to be the anecdote *Ti hong yuan* 題紅怨 that is part of the Tang Dynasty collection *Yunxi youyi* 雲溪友議 by Fan Shu 范攄 (9th century) (Fan, *Yunxi youyi*, 69).
 80. Mei, *Bazhi toutuo shiwenji*, 52.
 81. For which period Protass even posits ‘an anxiety that runs throughout the literary output of monks’ (Protass, *Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poems*, 2).
 82. The ‘Romance of the Western Chamber’ by Wang Shifu 王實甫 (1260–1336) tells the story of a secret love affair between Zhang Sheng, a young scholar, and Cui Yingying, the daughter of a chief minister of the Tang Dynasty court.
 83. This legend is mentioned in a commentary to the Chinese *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (CBETA/X.16, no. 318, p. 824b13–14). Its author Zeng Fengyi 曾鳳儀 (1556–?; *jinsi* 1583) was, like Jing’an, from Hunan. For other versions, see Wang, ‘Interactions and Negotiations,’ 1–2.
 84. Mei, *Bazhi toutuo shiwenji*, 52.
 85. For an overview of the literary depiction of sexually transgressive monks and nuns in the 16th and 17th centuries, see Rummel (*Der Mönche und Nonnen Sündenmeer*, 85–132); for a study of the motif in 17th and 18th century literature, see Durand-Dastès, ‘Desirés, raillés, corrigés.’
 86. Grant, ‘Women and Gender.’ See also Grant, ‘Women, Gender and Religion’; idem, ‘*Da Zhangfu*’.
 87. Levering, ‘Lin-chi (Rinzai) Ch’an and Gender,’ 57.
 88. Yinguang, *Xinbian quanben Yinguang fashi wenchao*, 336.
 89. Taixu & Huang, *Taixu ji*, 75–76.
 90. Taixu, *Taixu dashi quanshu*, Vol.18: 70–72.
 91. He, ‘Nüxing guan’, 289–290; Yuan, ‘Chinese Buddhist Nuns,’ 382.

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Abbreviations

BTS = *Bazhi toutuo shiji* 八指頭陀詩集 [Collected Poems by Ascetic Eight-Fingers]. Cited to the page number in the *Xuxiu Siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 [Supplement to the Complete Library in Four Sections] Vol. 1575. Edition. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1995. This is a reprint of a woodblock edition published by the Fayuan Temple 法源寺 (Beijing, 1919), which contained three collections:

1. *Bazhi toutuo shiji* 八指頭陀詩集 [Collected poems by Ascetic Eight Fingers] in 10 fascicles (pp. 354–420), which was first published in 1888 or soon thereafter.

2. *Bazhi toutuo shixuji* 八指頭陀詩續集 [Collected poems by Ascetic Eight Fingers continued] in 8 fascicles (pp. 420–508).

3. *Bazhi toutuo wenji* 八指頭陀文集 [Collected papers by Ascetic Eight Fingers] (八指頭陀禪文 in the table of contents), mostly letters, in 1 fascicle (pp. 509–526).

(For more on the publishing history of Jing'an's works see Mei (1984: 2–3))

BTY = *Tiantong Bazhi toutuo yulu* 天童八指頭陀語錄 [Recorded Sayings of Tiantong's Ascetic Eight Fingers], published in *Foxin congkan* 佛心叢刊 [Heart of the Buddha] Vol.1 (1922), reprinted in *Minguo fojiao qikan wenxian jicheng* 民國佛教期刊文獻集成 [Collection of Republican Era Buddhist Journals] Vol. 8 (269–282).

CBETA = CBETA corpus of Chinese Buddhist Texts 中華電子佛典協會電子資料庫 (<http://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/>)

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