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Pure Land and the Social Order in Twelfth-Century China:

An Investigation of Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land

Trevor Davis

History 496: The Senior Essay

Professor Valerie Hansen

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Table of Contents

I.	Introduction.....	3
II.	“Others Are at Leisure; I Must Labor”: Clerks, Servants, and Maids.....	10
III.	“Avert Disaster and Purge Your Crimes”: Prostitutes, Criminals.....	17
IV.	“A Compassionate Gentleman with the Resolve of a Bodhisattva”: Literati, Officials, Dignitaries.....	22
V.	“Why Worry That You Will Not Attain Enlightenment?”: Monks, Chan Practitioners.....	28
VI.	Conclusion: Pure Land and the Social Order.....	35
VII.	Bibliography.....	38
VIII.	Appendix I: Bibliographical Essay.....	42
IX.	Appendix II: Selected Translations.....	45

In 1160 C.E., the Song literatus Wang Rixiu 王日休 (d. 1173) wrote a Buddhist treatise on how to achieve rebirth in the upper ranks of the Pure Land.¹ His book presents a diverse social landscape populated by ardent monks, repentant criminals and illustrious government officials. So, too, does it portray failed scholars, misguided Chan masters, and prostitutes who cannot escape their profession. From the high to the low, the virtuous to the sinful, Wang sketches thirty-six different categories of people and provides specific instructions to each one. Although formulaic at times, Wang Rixiu's instructions reveal a great deal about how he felt social status should influence the way people practice Buddhism.

Wang Rixiu, also known as Wang Xuzhong 王虛中, hailed from Luzhou 廬州 in what is now Anhui province.² Because he lived in a district called Longshu 龍舒, he styled himself as the Layman of Longshu (*Longshu jushi* 龍舒居士) and used this name in the title of his of religious treatise, *Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land* (*Longshu jingtu wen* 龍舒淨土文).³ In addition to engaging in Buddhist activities, Wang Rixiu was also a committed scholar of the classics and wrote commentaries on the *Book of Changes* and

¹ Ono Genmyō 小野玄妙, ed., *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten* 佛書解説大辭典 [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Works with Explanations], s.v. “*Ryūjo jōdo mon*” 龍舒淨土文 [*Longshu Treatise on Pure Land*] (Tokyo : Daitō Shuppansha, 1978), 11:233.

² Peng Jiqing 彭際清, *Jushi zhuan* 居士傳 [*Biographies of Laymen*] in *Shinsan dai Nihon Zokuzōkyō* 新纂大日本續藏經 (hereafter abbreviated as X), edited by Watanabe Kōshō 河村孝照 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1973-89), text no.1646, 88: 242b.

³ Wang Rixiu 王日休, *Longshu zengguang jingtu wen* 龍舒增廣淨土文 [Expanded Text of Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land] in *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 (hereafter abbreviated as T), edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al. (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō, 1924-34), text no. 1970, 47: 251-289.

the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.⁴ It is quite possible that during his lifetime he was just as famous for his classical scholarship as he was for his contributions to Buddhism. Wang Rixiu never took office, but passed the *jinshi* examination.⁵ He received the received the honorary title, Gentleman for Discussion on the Right (*You chengyilang* 右承議郎), in 1171.⁶ And although the year of his birth is unknown, he was said to have died in the year 1173.⁷

Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land was originally a work of ten fascicles, exhorting its readers to take up Pure Land Buddhism and live a life in accordance with its principles. The first four chapters discuss Pure Land doctrine and practice while the fifth, seventh, and eighth chapters contain stories about people who attained rebirth in the Pure Land. The sixth chapter offers specific instructions to various social groups, while the ninth and tenth chapters feature miscellaneous discourses on Buddhist and Confucian teachings. Two additional chapters, which mainly consist of quotations from other

⁴ Chang Bide 昌彼得, ed., *Songren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* 宋人傳記資料索引 [Index to Biographical Materials of Song Figures] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), 262.

⁵ Peng, *Jushi zhuan*, X.1646.242b.

⁶ Li Zhiliang 李之亮, *Song liangjiang junshou yiti kao* 宋兩江郡守易替考 [Survey of Prefects in Jiangnan East and Jiangnan West during the Song Period] (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2001), 529. Charles Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, s.v. “*Cheng-i lang*” 承議郎 [Gentleman for Discussion] (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 128.

⁷ Hayashida Kojun 林田康順, “*Ō Nikkyū Ryūjo jōdo mon no kenkyū*(1): *Ō Nikkyū no shōgai kō*” 王日休 《龍舒淨土文》の研究 (一) : 王日休の生涯考 [An Investigation of Wang Rixiu's *Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land* (1): A Study of Wang Rixiu's Career], *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 41, no. 1 (1992): 68.

authors, were added later and comprise the eleventh and twelfth fascicles of the extant version.⁸

This study will focus on the sixth fascicle of his work, for it is here that Wang Rixiu delivers specific instructions to thirty-six groups⁹ of people on how to gain rebirth in the Pure Land. Let us consider the table of contents:

Contents of the Sixth Fascicle of *Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land*¹⁰

Advice for the Literati (*Quan shiren* 勸士人)
Advice for Officials (*Quan youguan junzi* 勸有官君子)
Advice for Clerks (*Quan zaigongmen zhe* 勸在公門者)¹¹
Advice for Physicians (*Quan yizhe* 勸醫者)
Advice for Monks (*Quan seng* 勸僧)
Advice for Chan Practitioners (*Quan canchan zhe* 勸參禪者)
Advice for the Wealthy (*Quan fuzhe* 勸富者)
Advice for the Covetous and Miserly (*Quan tanlin zhe* 勸貪吝者)
Advice for Filial Sons (*Quan xiaozi* 勸孝子)
Advice for Those Who Are Loved by Their Kin (*Quan gurou en'ai zhe* 勸骨肉恩愛者)
Advice for Women (*Quan furen* 勸婦人)
Advice for Servants and Maids (*Quan puqie* 勸僕妾)
Advice for Farmers (*Quan nongzhe* 勸農者)
Advice for Those Who Raise Silkworms (*Quan yangcan zhe* 勸養蠶者)
Advice for Merchants (*Quan shangjia* 勸商賈)
Advice for Artisans (*Quan gongjiang* 勸工匠)
Advice for Those with Many Hardships (*Quan duo zhunjian zhe* 勸多屯蹇者)¹²
Advice for Those Who Are Resented by Their Kin (*Quan gurou yuanzengzhe* 勸骨肉怨憎者)

⁸ Harada Tetsuryō 原田哲了, "Iwayuru Ryūjo jōdo mon no kenkyū いわゆる《龍舒淨土文》の研究" [An Investigation of the So-Called *Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land*], *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 51, no. 2 (2002): 89.

⁹ The sixth fascicle of *Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land* actually includes thirty-seven subsections, but only thirty-six of these represent instructions to specific social groups. The last subsection tells the story of a talking bird and is completely unrelated.

¹⁰ Wang, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.253c-254b.

¹¹ *Gongmen* 公門 refers to the government offices (*yamen* 衙門) in which clerks worked.

¹² *Zhunjian* 屯蹇 is an idiom for hardship that derives from the *zhun* and *jian* hexagrams of the *Book of Changes* 易經.

Advice for Fishermen (*Quan yuzhe* 勸漁者)
 Advice for Bird Catchers (*Quan wang feiqin zhe* 勸網飛禽者)
 Advice for Cooks (勸為廚子者 *Quan wei chuzi zhe*)
 Advice for Those Who Do Good Deeds (*Quan zuofu zhe* 勸作福者)
 Advice for Those Who Recite Sutras (*Quan tongjing ren* 勸誦經人)
 Advice for Dignitaries (*Quan guiren* 勸貴人)
 Advice for Savants (*Quan da congming ren* 勸大聰明人)
 Advice for Wine Sellers (*Quan maijiu zhe* 勸買酒者)
 Advice for Restaurant Operators (*Quan kai shidian zhe* 勸開食店者)
 Advice for Butchers (*Quan tuzhe* 勸屠者)
 Advice for Prostitutes (*Quan zai fengchen zhe* 勸在風塵者)¹³
 Advice for Criminals (*Quan zui'e ren* 勸罪惡人)
 Advice for Those Suffering from Illness (*Quan bingku zhe* 勸病苦者)
 Advice for Hateful People Who Wish to Become Vengeful Spirits (*Quan ji'e weishen zhe*
 勸疾惡為神者)
 Advice for Those in the Army (*Quan junzhong ren* 勸軍中人)
 Advice for Slanderers (*Quan e'kou zhe* 勸惡口者)
 Advice for Boys (*Quan tongnan* 勸童男)
 Advice for Girls (*Quan shinü* 勸室女)
 A Lotus Blooms in the Myna's Mouth (*Baba'er kou sheng lianhua* 八八兒口生蓮華)¹⁴

Unlike the division between “good people” and “mean people” or the traditional four-fold scheme of literati, farmers, artisans, and merchants, Wang Rixiu does not place his thirty-six social categories into any kind of overarching framework. And yet, it is clear that he has larger themes in mind since many sections have a high degree of thematic or rhetorical similarity. Sometimes, thematically similar categories are grouped together. We see this in the case of butchers, prostitutes, and criminals, for example, reflecting their shared identity as morally suspect groups. But this is not always the case. Dignitaries, for example, appear toward the end of Wang's listing despite having much in common with officials.

¹³ Literally, “Advice for those Amidst the Wind and Dust.” This is a common euphemism for prostitution.

¹⁴ A light-hearted story of a myna (a type of starling) that can recite the name of the Buddha.

In view of the broader connections in Wang's work, this study will examine larger groupings of categories, which I have selected on the basis of thematic and rhetorical similarities. Such a comparative approach can shed light on the ways in which social status fits into Wang's vision of popular piety. We will begin by examining his writings on social inferiors such as clerks, servants, and maids. We will then turn to his portrayal of morally suspect groups like prostitutes and criminals. Next, we will consider his accounts of elites including literati, officials, and dignitaries. And lastly, we will examine his depiction of religious professionals such as monks and Chan practitioners.

This study seeks to demonstrate how Wang Rixiu drew upon social status as a key factor in defining the way people should live their lives and practice their faith. Patricia Ebrey and Peter Gregories note that Pure Land "beliefs and practices. . . cut across the various social strata" and "rendered rebirth in the Western Paradise of Amitābha open to any who would but call on that Buddha's heart."¹⁵ But while Wang Rixiu reached out to all people in society, this does not mean he abandoned social differences. In the ethical and devotional practices he prescribes, Wang Rixiu often emphasizes the debased status of socially marginalized groups. And despite his rhetoric of transcending the social order, Wang's affirms the role of elites as moral and social leaders within the religious sphere. In a text that seeks to attract people of all strata in a communal effort to practice Pure Land, Wang Rixiu is also concerned with promoting a sense of order in society.

Wang Rixiu wrote *Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land* at a time in which the secular elite took an interest in proselytizing Buddhism. This trend was documented by

¹⁵ Patricia Ebrey and Peter Gregory, "The Religious and Historical Landscape" in *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China*, edited by Patricia Ebrey and Peter Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), 17.

the Song monk Zongxiao 宗曉 (1151-1214), who attributed the founding of Pure Land societies to “men of virtue” who sought to raise up the common people.¹⁶ While literated groups in the Tang were few and largely restricted to the elite, this too changed, as Song elites became interested in evangelizing among the populace.¹⁷ This interest was one of the distinctive features of elite religious culture of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Tiantai and Chan monks also expressed an increased interest in spreading Pure Land doctrine during the Song. In his study of mass precept ordination ceremonies given to laymen, Daniel Getz notes, “Among the prevalent trends evident in the Buddhism of [the late Tang and Northern Song] we find a concerted effort on the part of monastic Buddhism to engage laity from all social strata.”¹⁸ Wang Rixiu’s text points to this growing interest in spreading the dharma to all levels of people in society. And while his religious goals may seem rather typical in this regard, the text is unique in the detail it provides as to how a literatus conceptualized the role of status and occupation in the thriving religious culture of his time.

¹⁶ Whalen Lai, “Legends of Births and the Pure Land Tradition in China” in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, edited by James Foard, Michael Solomon, et al. (Berkeley: The Regents of the University of California, 1996), 192.

¹⁷ Lai, “Legends of Births,” 194.

¹⁸ Daniel Getz, “Popular Religion and Pure Land in Song-Dynasty Tiantai Bodhisattva Precept Ordination Ceremonies” in *Going Forth: Visions of the Buddhist Vinaya*, edited by William Bodiford (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), 162.

“Others Are at Leisure; I Must Labor”: Clerks, Servants, and Maids

Let us begin with a discussion of Wang’s writings on socially marginalized groups. How did Wang feel rank and status should influence way these people practice Buddhism and participate in society more broadly? To answer this question, we can look at Wang’s writings on clerks, servants, and maids. Wang’s attitude toward social inferiors is by no means uniform, but there are several common elements in the way he portrays low status. By prescribing ethical and devotional practices that reinforce their debasement, Wang Rixiu treats status as a defining feature in the way social inferiors should practice their faith. And while he suggests that social inferiors can eventually transcend their low rank after death, the practices he prescribes ultimately emphasize their low status in this life.

Wang’s “Advice for Clerks”¹⁹ begins with an idealized depiction of the relationship between clerks and officials. In this passage, Wang defines clerks by the subordinate relationship to the officials they serve:

Clerks should think to themselves: “Others are officials, and I merely serve them. Others are honored, and I am humble. Others are at leisure, and I must labor. If I respectfully serve so that others are always content, I may be without anxiety. If I commit an offense, it will contribute to my condemnation. This is because in former lives that which I cultivated did not reach the level of what others attained.”²⁰

¹⁹ In using the word clerks, I refer, as Chin-shan Wu has done, not just to *li* 吏 but to a wide range of non-degreed government personnel, informally called *gongren* 公人. Wang’s term “Those in Government Offices” seems to reflect this more general pool of low-level employees, whose chief characteristic is that they lack a degree. This also includes what are sometimes called runners (*chaiyi* 差役). See Chin-shan Wu, “Subordinates and evildoers: Song scholar-officials’ perceptions of clerks,” *diss.* (SUNY-Binghamton, 2008).

²⁰ Wang, “*Quan zaigongmen zhe*” 勸在公門者, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.270a.

在公門者當自念。云。彼為有官。我乃事彼。彼尊我卑。彼逸我勞。奉事常喜得以無虞。或有觸忤。加之譴責。是我前世所修不及於彼故至於此。

From the very beginning, Wang emphasizes the wide gulf between clerks and their degree-holding superiors. This difference is not simply one of rank but also one of karma. Wang voices his recurring theme that accumulated merit from former lives explains one's present social position.

The relationship between clerks and their degree-holding superiors was an important issue for Wang Rixiu's fellow officials throughout the Northern and Southern Song. In the Han dynasty, the relationship between clerks and officials had been more fluid. Officials often began their careers as clerks and slowly rose through the ranks.²¹ Even during the Tang and the Five Dynasties periods, clerkship merely represented the lowest tier of the bureaucracy and was not a separate career track unto itself.²² But by the Song, clerks frequently found themselves the targets of attacks by literati. Riding this wave of elitist polemics, officials of the Northern Song prohibited clerks from sitting for civil service examinations and sought to effectively bar their entry into the top ranks of government. These prohibitions were rarely enforced, but the basic distrust of clerks remained.²³

Wang Rixiu's juxtaposition of clerks and officials borrows from a larger cultural tendency to contrast the two groups. In this way, his treatment of clerks seems to confirm Chin-shan Wu's suggestion that "...when Song officials discussed clerks, they liked to

²¹ Jack Dunn, "The Evolution of Government in China" in *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, edited by Paul Stanley Ropp and Timothy Hugh Barrett (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 66.

²² James T.C. Liu, "The Sung Views on the Control of Government Clerks," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 10, No. 2/3 (Brill: Dec. 1967), 321.

²³ John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 55-56.

emphasize the power relation between officials and clerks, rather than between clerks and commoners.”²⁴

Wang also borrows from contemporary polemics against clerks when he implicitly draws a connection between clerks and servants. His prose in “Advice for Clerks” resembles that in his “Advice for Servants and Maids.” Both sections even employ some of the same phrasing. In describing the ideal thoughts of clerks, Wang writes, “Others are at leisure; I must labor”²⁵ 彼逸我勞, and while describing those of servants and maid, he writes, “Others live in peaceful leisure; I must exert myself through labor.”²⁶ 人受安逸。我當勤勞。 This kind of comparison was common in the Song dynasty, a time in which officials often compared low-level yamen workers to their personal servants.²⁷

But while Wang Rixiu’s emphasis on the relationship between clerks and officials borrows from the elitist polemics of his contemporaries, the divide Wang draws between superiors and inferiors is not quite impermeable. He goes on to say that clerks should think to themselves, “Whether my affairs are large or small, I must properly take care of them. If the people before me are pleased with me, I will certainly have no future troubles.” 事無大小。隨宜方便。目前人見歡悅。必無後患。 Wang then directly addresses clerks, saying:

If you accumulate merit without ceasing, good fortune will extend to your sons and grandsons. One should think, of those who work in government offices, if their sons and grandchildren become illustrious, it must be because their ancestors

²⁴ Wu, “Subordinates and evildoers,” 50.

²⁵ Wang, “*Quan zaigongmen zhe*” 勸在公門者, *Longshu jingtū wen*, T 47.270a.

²⁶ Wang, “*Quan puqie*” 勸僕妾, *Longshu jingtū wen*, T 47.271b.

²⁷ Wu, “Subordinates and Evildoers,” 24.

accumulated merit. The way of heaven is bright and luminous. You cannot but believe this.²⁸

積善不已。福及子孫。當思。在公門者。其子孫榮顯必祖上積德。天道昭明。不可不信。

Here, Wang Rixiu slightly modifies the sharp divide he draws between clerks and officials. On the one hand, he maintains hierarchical divisions by entreating clerks to defer to their superiors as a way of achieving rebirth in the Pure Land. But his claim that the descendants of lowly clerks will become illustrious, presumably by becoming officials, allows for some kind of social mobility. As a lay Buddhist and proselytizer, Wang Rixiu hoped to persuade clerks to join his religious movement rather than alienate them with his criticisms.

It is worth noting, however, that Wang does not promise social mobility in this life, but only in future generations. And in this sense, the prospect of social mobility is a distant one. Although Wang suggests clerks and officials have the same ability to gain rebirth in the Pure Land and the same prospects for wealth and power in future generations, there is a dissonance behind the socially restrictive practices Wang prescribes and his more abstract, egalitarian sympathies.

The “Advice for Servants and Maids” section of *Longshu’s Treatise on Pure Land* also establishes a social hierarchy between inferiors and superiors. Just as in the section on government clerks, the debased status of social inferiors defines the practices Wang prescribes for them. Channeling the voice of a humble servant, Wang Rixiu writes, “I will carefully serve [my master], and in doing so protect my person and cultivate future

²⁸ Wang, “*Quan zaigongmen zhe*” 勸在公門者, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.270a.

blessings.”²⁹ 小心奉事以保此身以種後福。 The low rank of servants also influences the way Wang Rixiu asks them to proselytize. While Wang encourages almost every social group to proselytize without any sort of restrictions, he instructs servants to “convert those in your same [social] category.”³⁰ 化其同類。 Ordinarily, Wang Rixiu merely asks people to “turn and convert others” 轉以化人 without specifying who. This departure from one of the most frequently occurring phrases in Wang Rixiu’s writing is striking. Wang defines and restricts the ethical and religious practices of servants and maid according to their rank in society.

The complex relationship between superiors and inferiors also plays out in Wang Rixiu’s biography of “Lady Jing of Song.” In this story, Wang Rixiu reworks a tale by Huang Ce 黃策 (b. 1070) in which a well-to-do woman teaches her maids Pure Land Buddhism.³¹ Although it may not have been originally written by Wang himself, this story sheds light on the way elite laymen imagined the relationship between Buddhism and the social order. In Wang Rixiu’s retelling of the tale, one of Lady Jing’s maids is negligent in her study of Buddhism, so Lady Jing rebukes her. Following this incident, the maid immediately changes her ways. She recites the name of the Buddha with increased fervor and never becomes inattentive again. Here, the mistress’s elevated social standing seems to justify her role as the maid’s spiritual guide. Furthermore, Wang

²⁹ Wang, “*Quan puqie*” 勸僕妾, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.271c.

³⁰ Wang, “*Quan puqie*” 勸僕妾, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.271c.

³¹ Zongxiao attributes this story to Huang Ce in his collection *Topical Anthology of the Land of Bliss (Lebang wenlei 樂邦文類)* T 47, text no.1969. This version is briefly discussed in Charles Jones, “Foundations of Ethics and Practice in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism” in *Destroying Mara Forever: Buddhist Ethics Essays in Honor of Damien Keown*, edited by John Powers and Charles Prebish (Ithaca, Snow Lion Publications: 2010), 147.

portrays the maid's deference to her mistress as ultimately beneficial to her spiritual development.³²

After the maid dies and achieves rebirth in the Pure Land, she continues to respect her mistress's authority by visiting her in a dream and making a deferential display of gratitude. At this point, the mistress asks, "May I go the Western Region?" 西方可到否.³³ The maid answers, "You may go" 可到, and then leads her mistress on a tour of the Pure Land, lecturing her on the different ranks of rebirth. While maid remains deferential to her mistress, Lady Jing is no longer in a position of moral or spiritual authority over her former maid, who technically inhabits a higher level of rebirth. When Lady Jing asks her maid whether she, too, can go to the Pure Land, she assumes an inferior role to her former maid. The maid's response shows that, despite having been previously dependent on her mistress for moral knowledge, she now has the moral intelligence to scrutinize and assess her mistress's morality for herself.³⁴ So although the maid's deferential bearing and Lady Jing's eventual rebirth in the Pure Land both serve to reinforce the mistress's elevated status, the earthly hierarchy does not hold in the realm of the Pure Land. At the same time, this story affirms the idea that rank can only be transcended after one dies. After all, the maid only attained rebirth in the Pure Land by obediently heeding the words of her mistress. In this way, "Lady Jing of Song" reflects the sentiments about status articulated in Wang's "Advice for Servants and Maids."

"Advice for Clerks", "Advice for Servants and Maids," and "Lady Jing of Song" all feature sharp hierarchical differences. And this hierarchy reveals a great deal about

³² Wang, "Song Jing Wang Furen" 宋荆王夫人, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.269a.

³³ The Western Region refers to the Pure Land of Amitābha.

³⁴ Wang Rixiu, "Song Jing Wang Furen" 宋荆王夫人, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.269a.

the way Wang Rixiu and his fellow layman and literatus Huang Ce imagined the role of rank, prosperity, and secular authority within the social landscape of Buddhism.

Although Wang Rixiu sought to promote order and harmony in society by emphasizing adherence to the status system, he adopted a rhetoric of inclusiveness that allowed for the possibility of upward mobility after death.

“Avert Disaster and Purge Your Crimes”: Prostitutes, Criminals

Wang Rixiu’s emphasis on social status also shapes his writings on prostitutes, criminals, and other morally suspect groups. In this case, Wang emphasizes not rank but a different kind of debasement. Although Wang Rixiu explains that morally suspect groups can overcome their negative karma by engaging in Pure Land practices, he ultimately reinforces their identity as moral transgressors by placing repentance at the center of their religious practice. This illustrates another way in which Wang Rixiu emphasizes the social status of Pure Land practitioners.

We will mainly consider Wang’s writings on people who have conducted themselves immorally in this life (as opposed to in previous lives). In these cases, one’s transgressive identity seems to have a particularly significant effect on the religious practices Wang prescribes. In “Advice for Prostitutes,” a somewhat typical example, Wang begins:

Prostitutes should think to themselves: “I was born as a woman, and already lack good karma. Why should I add to my faults amidst the wind and dust?”³⁵ The karma it brings is extremely bad.

在風塵者當自念。云。生為婦人。已非善業。況我處風塵。其業不善甚矣。

If you can awake to reality and give up prostitution, that would be best. If you are unable to give it up, frequently recite the name of Amitābha and wish: “I hope that my bad karma will daily be reduced, and that my good karma will daily grow. May my clothing and food be coarse yet sufficient, so that I can soon leave this profession. After I see the Buddha and achieve the path [out of saṃsāra], may I exhaustively seek to liberate all who succumbed to lust on my account and allow them all to be reborn in the Pure Land.”³⁶

若能省悟斷除婬業。此為上也。如未能斷。常念阿彌陀佛發大願云。願我惡業日消。善業日長。衣食粗足。早離此門。見佛得道之後。盡度一切因我為婬之人。使皆生淨土。

³⁵ A euphemism for prostitution.

³⁶ Wang, “*Quan zai fengchen zhe*” 勸在風塵者, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.273b-273c.

Wang Rixiu then addresses prostitutes directly and explains the reward of taking up Pure Land practices:

If you recite the name of the Buddha without ceasing, you will become well-versed in virtuous thoughts and ensure a birth in the realm of supreme bliss. You should turn and change others, so that more people encourage each other to change. In this way you can avert disaster and purge your crimes. After death the reward will be unlimited.³⁷

念念不絕。念自純熟。定生極樂世界。若轉以化人。使更相勸化。現世必除災滅罪。身後亦福報無窮。

Even at first glance, it is clear that Wang seeks to emphasize the morally dubious nature of prostitutes. Wang Rixiu devotes much of his text to reminding prostitutes how bad their karma is—doubly bad, it seems, since their birth as women already indicates some fault on their part. But their occupation is not only relevant in the sense that it brings bad karma; it also shapes the way they are asked to practice Buddhism.

Take the vow that Wang Rixiu asks prostitutes to make, for example. This vow is far from the standard pledge to liberate all sentient beings (commonly referred to as the bodhisattva vow). Rather, Wang instructs prostitutes to direct their efforts to liberate sentient beings specifically toward “those who succumbed to lust [on their account].” Wang urges other groups who have committed transgressions to similarly modify their bodhisattva vow in this way. Butchers are to seek liberation for the animals they killed.³⁸ Criminals are to “try [their] utmost to liberate everyone [they] harmed since birth, so that

³⁷ Wang, “*Quan zai fengchen zhe*” 勸在風塵者, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.273b-273c.

³⁸ Wang, “*Quan tuzhe*” 勸屠者, *Longshu jingtuwen*, T 47.273b.

they may all be born in the realm of supreme bliss.”³⁹ 盡度從生以來一切所害之人。使皆生淨土。

Even groups like farmers and sericulturalists, who were generally considered “good people” (*liang min* 良民) in Chinese society, are to seek to liberate the insects they may have inadvertently killed.⁴⁰ These formulaic instructions show that Wang deliberately went about creating a discourse of transgression. Although he frames Pure Land practice as a means of “purg[ing] ones’ crimes”⁴¹ and casting off one’s history of immorality, his suggestion that repentance should form the central tenant of their practice serves to reinforce the morally dubious status of prostitutes, criminals, and many other groups he addresses.

Now, let us consider Wang’s “Advice for Criminals.” This passage demonstrates how Wang’s suggestion that people can transcend their debased status actually emphasizes their morally problematic identity:

Criminals should think to themselves: Since the crimes I have committed in my daily life are many, as soon as I shut my eyes, what am I to do? I must hurriedly turn my heart around, and keep Amitābha in mind. I must make a great vow, saying, “After I meet the Buddha and obtain enlightenment, I must try my utmost to liberate everyone who I have harmed since birth, so that they may all be born in the Pure Land.”

有罪惡人當自念。云。我平生罪惡既多。一旦閉眼之後。當奈之何。須急懺悔迴心。念阿彌陀佛。發大願云。願我見佛得道之後。盡度從生以來一切所害之人。使皆生淨土。

If you constantly keep this in mind, your thoughts will undergo maturation. Then, you will gradually eliminate your bad karma and increase your good karma. You

³⁹ Wang, “*Quan zui’e ren*” 罪惡人, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.273c.

⁴⁰ Wang, “*Quan nongzhe*” 勸農者, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.271c; “*Quan yangcan zhe*” 勸養蠶者, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.271c.

⁴¹ Wang, “*Quan zai fengchen zhe*” 勸在風塵者, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.273b-273c.

will definitely be born in the realm of supreme bliss. If you turn and convert others, so that more people encourage each other to change, you will not only purge your crimes, but upon death, your blessed reward will be inexhaustible.⁴² 念念不絕。念自純熟。則可漸除惡業增長善緣。定生極樂世界。若能轉以化人。使更相勸化。非徒現世可以滅罪。身後亦福報無窮。

I have frequently alluded to a tension in Wang's work between his suggestion that people can overcome their compromised status and the practices he prescribes, which often serve to emphasize their debasement. In "Advice for Criminals," we can get a glimpse of the logic behind this paradox. Wang's goal is to create an ideal society in which everyone can gain rebirth in the Pure Land. He promises the same inexhaustible rewards to criminals as he does to those of any other occupation, regardless of their moral history. But just because Wang felt that everyone could be reborn in the Pure Land does not mean he considered personal ethics unimportant. The Pure Land is accessible to all, but Wang demonstrates that one still needs to work toward attaining such a favorable rebirth.⁴³ Criminals must identify their previous faults, amend their ways, and take specific devotional measures to atone for their previous misdoings. Wang's rhetoric of repentance is a way of including and perhaps even attracting morally dubious groups to his movement without explicitly condoning their flaws.

Although this formula of repentance is most explicitly used in Wang's writings on people who commit faults in this life, such themes also apply to people who committed crimes in past lives. Wang even brings up repentance in his discussions of servants and

⁴² Wang, "Quan zui'e ren" 罪惡人, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.273c.

⁴³ Referring to *Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land* as an example, Charles Jones remarks that reaching the Pure Land in China required more effort than in Kamakura-era Japan, where reciting the name of the Buddha alone was often said to ensure one's rebirth in the Pure Land. Jones, "Foundations of Ethics and Practice in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism," 255.

maids, saying “Servants and Maids should think: ‘In a past life I did not cultivate merit. . . One cannot regret that which has already past, but from henceforth, I will be mindful of virtue and correct my faults.’”⁴⁴ 我前世不曾修福故至貧賤已往者不可悔。自此之後。當念善改過。 Yuan Cai, an elite contemporary of Wang Rixiu’s who also wrote a great deal about society, considered self-criticism to be a moral undertaking that even elites should partake in.⁴⁵ Wang Rixiu, on the other hand, directs most of his exhortations to practice repentance toward socially marginalized groups. His reasoning is clear enough. Since status reflects karma, Wang believes the rich and powerful have little to be repentant about while low-ranking or estranged members of society must have some committed some grave fault in a previous existence. In a particularly extreme example, Wang instructs people who are resented by their kin to think, “My bad karma from former lives has brought about this retribution. I [must have] either killed somebody, incurred a large debt, or injured someone. . . . If I repent my past deeds and severely rebuke myself, I will no longer be considered by others as something to be despised.”⁴⁶ In this sense, Wang’s exhortations to practice repentance emphasize the social status of marginalized groups. It must be noted that there are several exceptions however. Farmers and sericulturists, for example, are generally not considered immoral or marginalized groups. In the Buddhist tradition however, they are conventionally held responsible for the deaths of countless sentient beings.

⁴⁴ Wang “*Quan puqie*” 勸僕妾, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.271b.

⁴⁵ Yüan Ts’ ai, *Family and Property in Sung China: Yüan Ts’ ai’s Precepts for Social Life*, trans. Patricia Ebrey, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 240.

⁴⁶ Wang, “*Quan gurou yuanseng zhe*” 勸骨肉怨憎者, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.272b.

In the end, we see another way in Wang Rixiu emphasizes status in the way people practice their faith. Through a discourse of repentance that ultimately served to emphasize the dubious moral identity of social deviants and other marginalized groups, Wang Rixiu sought to include these people in a unifying vision of popular piety while, at the same time, maintaining a commitment to building a harmonious and well-ordered society.

“A Compassionate Gentleman with the Resolve of a Bodhisattva”: Literati, Officials, Dignitaries

Let us now turn to Wang Rixiu’s writings on social elites, a group of which Wang himself was a part. In his writings on social inferiors and morally suspect groups, Wang exhibited a complex set of attitudes toward status. Although he maintained that people could eventually transcend their low rank or morally problematic identity, the practices he prescribed often serve to emphasize their debasement. Wang’s writings on elites reflect a similar tension between an impulse to transcend the social order and a conviction that everyone has a proper place in society. Although he expresses ambivalence toward the arbitrary, transient nature of rank, he ultimately espouses some degree of elite leadership in the religious sphere.

In investigating how Wang feel rank and status should influence the way elites live their lives, we can look at Wang’s writings on officials (*youguan junzi* 有官君子), literati (*shiren* 士人), and dignitaries (*guiren* 貴人). These groups comprise what are often called the *shidafu* 士大夫. As Patricia Ebrey explains, “In Sung dynasty . . . works, ‘shih-ta-fu’ was used to refer to the category of people who owned, borrowed, read, or wrote books, who performed classic rituals, who aspired to office, and who paid visits to high officials and other powerful people.”⁴⁷ Although Wang doesn’t use this term himself, the sections all contain similar attitudes about the nature of privilege and rank in society.

Unlike elsewhere in his work, where Wang prescribes strict adherence to the social order, Wang’s writings on elite groups sometimes suggests the insignificant nature

⁴⁷ Ebrey, *Family and Property in Sung China: Yüan Ts’ai’s Precepts for Social Life*, 4.

of status and rank. And yet, even as Wang questions the social order, he continues to uphold the notion that elites have a special role to play in their local communities.

Wang articulates the insignificant nature of rank and worldly achievements in his “Advice for Literati.” The passage begins:

Among the literati there are those who do not study in any depth but then earn a high degree. There are also those who study in depth, but in the end they are not recommended for office. Since the merit they planted in former lives differs, should not the outcome also differ? Although the reward of fortune may allow one to earn a degree in one’s youth, attain eminence, and achieve great things for a while, it lasts for a while and then expires.⁴⁸

士人或有未深讀書遂登高科者。有深讀書終身尚不預薦者。豈非前世所種不同故其報不同乎。雖然使少年登科涉華。要功業濟一時福報。亦有時而盡。

While the relationship between status and karma is a common theme in *Longshu’s Treatise on Pure Land*, only in his writings on the upper classes does he imply that rank and honors are ultimately insignificant. Here, his suggestion that worldly accomplishments are based on the merit accrued in former lives is not used to justify distinctions of rank in the way we see elsewhere in his work. Rather, he seems to hint at the arbitrary nature of the social order. Since Wang portrays study as having little bearing on one’s prospects for passing the civil service exam, the pursuit of status and rank comes across as somewhat pointless.

Wang Rixiu continues, “So I offer this advice to next generation: labor at your studies and devote yourself to filial piety and friendship.”⁴⁹ 勤於學問篤於孝友。 The implication here is that literati should focus on everyday relationships rather than official

⁴⁸ Wang, “*Quan shiren*” 勸士人, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.269c-270a.

⁴⁹ Wang, “*Quan shiren*” 勸士人, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.270a.

status and other worldly achievements. One must note, however, that although Wang dissuades literati from blindly chasing after official posts, he still encourages them to study. In this way, even though Wang Rixiu downplays the role of status and rank, he still upholds a sense of literati identity:

Of the extremely high ranking men since ancient times, who is still alive? Better to steal a moment of idleness amidst the bustle. Every morning practice the way of the Western Region when you have a brief period of free time. In this life you can eliminate calamity and accumulate karma. Upon death you will entrust your life to a lotus blossom.⁵⁰

古來極貴誰其在者。不如忙中偷閑。每朝以頃刻之暇修西方法門。現世可以消災而省業。身後託生於蓮華中。

In this passage, Wang portrays status and rank as being in direct contrast with Pure Land teachings. Status, as it is epitomized by the high-ranking men of old, is ultimately meaningless. And although Wang's suggestion that status cannot bring immortality may seem peculiar, it allows the transient nature of worldly achievements to be contrasted with the more far-reaching perspective of Pure Land teachings.

In short, Wang's writings on elites frequently contain messages that suggest the insignificance of status and its irrelevance to Pure Land practices. And yet, the sections of Wang's work that undermine status often turn around and suggest that elite status can be maintained and supported through Pure Land practices. In an interesting rhetorical turn, Wang goes from undermining social status to affirming its significance. Even in "Advice for Dignitaries," which as we have seen expounds upon the irrelevance of rank, Wang writes: "If you take up the resolve of a bodhisattva and turn and convert others so

⁵⁰ Wang, "*Quan guiren*" 勸貴人, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.272c-273a.

that more people encourage each other to change, people will treat you like a dignitary.”⁵¹
若發大菩薩心。轉以化人。使更相勸化人。則以己為貴人。 In this line, which recurs throughout the sixth fascicle, Wang suggests that practice of Pure Land can actually affirm one’s status in society.

The importance that Wang attaches to status can also be seen in the sense of social and moral responsibilities Wang associates with the social elites. This is articulated in the preface to the sixth fascicle, in which Wang says, “If you cannot read, you can fully rely on a compassionate gentleman with the resolve of Bodhisattva. [That is, someone who has vowed to liberate others from *saṃsāra*]. From him, it will be explained.”⁵² 若不識字。全賴慈仁君子發菩薩心。 This statement implies that elite members of society, well versed in literary and religious traditions, should take a special leadership role in their religious communities. While some Song observers use the word “gentleman” (*junzi* 君子) to indicate one’s moral virtue and not his social position, we must remember that Wang Rixiu’s title for officials is *youguan junzi* 有官君子, or gentlemen who have government posts. The phrase seems to imply both moral and social leadership in this particular context.

In “Advice for Officials,” Wang Rixiu underscores that elites have a special role to play in their local communities. After a general statement about the vicissitudes of fortune and the transience of rank, Wang adds:

If you whole-heartedly love the people and cannot bear to abandon them, then you will be born in the Western Region. After you end the cycle of life and death,

⁵¹ Wang, “*Quan guiren*” 勸貴人, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.273a.

⁵² Wang, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.269c.

you will come back to this realm. You will manifest in the body of a state minister and greatly contribute to society. How could this not be the case?⁵³
若切意斯民。而不忍捨去。且生西方。了生死之後。卻來此世界。現宰官身。以大興功利。何有不可哉。

Here, the phrase ending the cycle of life and death refers to nirvana. The concept that someone would chose to come back to this world to help other beings instead of passing into extinction is quite common in Buddhism. Indeed this is the distinguishing feature of the bodhisattva path venerated in the Mahayana tradition. Nevertheless the idea that an enlightened being would come back as a state minister is quite remarkable. And so, while Wang takes a hostile position toward the idea of rank and the arbitrary nature of the social order, he affirms public-minded mores associated with officialdom.

In *Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land*, the role of rank and prestige in determining elite religious practices is rather complex. On the one hand, the text denies the significance of the worldly distinctions that distinguished elite classes. But on the other hand, Wang maintains idea that secular elites had a special role to play in their religious communities. We might consider Wang Rixiu's own status as a member of the local elite. The success of his proselytizing activities depended on the assumption that literati had something valuable to offer to their religious communities through either their literary or moral accomplishments. Furthermore his suggestion that wealthy people should part with excessive profits is another way he thought elites could contribute to society.⁵⁴

Perhaps, Wang's criticism of the arbitrary nature of the social order can be interpreted as an argument for a particular kind of elite identity rather than a wholesale criticism of the status system. Robert Hymes has suggested that during the Southern Song

⁵³ Wang, “*Quan youguan junzi*” 勸有官君子,” *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.270a.

⁵⁴ Wang, “*Quan fuzhe*” 勸富者, *Longshu jingtu wen*, 271a.

elite strategies changed from one of national, examination-oriented ambitions to more localized, unofficial means of consolidating and representing authority.⁵⁵ Hymes' distinction between these two types of elite strategies can help us realize that Wang's criticism of the scramble for rank did not mean he was opposed to a more unofficial role for elites in the local sphere of popular religion. In another study of Jiangxi elites, Anne Gerritsen concurs that one of the main ways elites expressed their authority during the Song and Yuan was by taking an active role in local religious culture.⁵⁶ In promoting a special role for elites in proselytizing Buddhism, Wang Rixiu advocates exactly for this kind of local engagement. And so, although Wang's writings on elites carry a more critical attitude toward rank than anywhere else in his work, he accords elites a special place in his vision of popular piety.

⁵⁵ This is the basic argument of Robert Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi in Northern and Southern Sung*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

⁵⁶ Anne Gerritsen, *Ji'an Literati and the Local in Song-Yuan-Ming China*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007). Interestingly, according to a post-script included in the eleventh fascicle of *Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land*, Wang Rixiu died in Ji'an (then called Luling 廬陵). Wang, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.285c.

“Why Worry That You Will Not Attain Enlightenment?”: Monks, Chan Practitioners

As Wang’s writings on elites, social inferiors, and morally suspect groups has illustrated, social status had a significant role in determining the way Wang Rixiu thought people should live their lives and practice their faith. But we have also seen, too, that Wang’s tendency to prescribe religious practices according to social status coexisted with another impulse in his work to transcend such differences.

One place in which Wang overtly challenges status divisions is in his writings on monastics. Here, it is not wealth or rank that is challenged but the distinction between monks and laypeople. Wang Rixiu suggests that the special religious status of monastics should not stop them from practicing the same devotional practices as laypeople. And so, when discussing Wang Rixiu’s attitudes on the social order, we must distinguish between his views about the secular, socio-political order and the monastic establishment.

Wang Rixiu’s skepticism about that the efficacy of Chan and specialized monastic practices makes sense given his leadership of a lay-oriented religious movement. He articulates this message in “Advice for Chan Practitioners”:

If one attains enlightenment by practicing Chan, then one can cast off saṃsāra and the cycle of life and death. Obviously this is the best. But those who reach this are not even two or three out of a hundred.⁵⁷
參禪大悟。遂脫生死輪迴。固為上矣。然至此者百無二三。

Therefore I want to use this text to encourage the clergy and people of superior natural capacity. Outside of practicing Chan, everyday when you have an instant of free time you should practice the way of the Western Region. If you attain enlightenment by practicing Chan, you will cast off saṃsāra. But even then, the realm of Buddhahood will still be extremely distant. You must still go and behold the Amitābha Buddha. But if you pay your respects with reverence, how could

⁵⁷ Wang, “*Quan canchanzhe* 勸參禪者,” *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.270c.

you not? If you have not yet obtained enlightenment and your predestined lifespan will quickly expire, you can still go directly Western Region and behold the Buddha and hear the Dharma. Why worry that you will not attain enlightenment? If you do not practice the way of the Western Region, you cannot avoid following the path of karma. Even Qing Caotang, Chan Master Jie, and Zhenru Ji sunk into saṃsāra. Truly it is a fearsome thing.⁵⁸

故予欲勸僧家。上根器者參禪之外。上根器者參禪之外。每日以頃刻之暇修西方。若參禪大悟。遂超脫輪迴。尚去佛地極遠。更往見阿彌陀佛。展禮致敬。有何不可。若未得大悟。而壽數忽盡。且徑往西方。見佛聞法。何患其不大悟也。若不修西方。不免隨業緣去。雖如青草堂戒禪師真如哲。皆汨沒輪迴。誠可畏者。

This passage is at once complimentary and at the same time dismissive of Chan practitioners. Wang Rixiu flatters his audience by referring to them as “people of superior natural capacity (*shanggenqizhe* 上根器者),” but then goes on to disparage the efficacy of their practices. He does not try to prohibit monks from practicing Chan altogether, but his suggestion that Chan practitioners should be sure to do the same kind of *nianfo* 念佛 practice as laymen detracts from their privileged status within the religious sphere.

Here, Wang Rixiu offers more than just a desultory opinion on religious practice; it is a commentary on the specialized nature of the monastic vocation. After all, although Wang Rixiu addresses Chan practitioners, his example of three Chan monks who descended into saṃsāra reveals that he has a distinctly monastic audience in mind.⁵⁹ Since Wang Rixiu generally considers status to be an important factor in determining one’s religious practice, it is interesting that he downplays the unique status of monks.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Wang, “*Quan canchan zhe*” 勸參禪者, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.270c.

⁵⁹ Wang, “*Quan canchan zhe*” 勸參禪者, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.270c.

⁶⁰ These Chan masters are featured in anecdotes found in the seventh fascicle of Wang’s work. Chan Master Jie, for example, is said to be a former incarnation of the statesman

In “Advice for Monks,” Wang explicitly explains to monks that monastic life is overly ambitious and ultimately risky. Practicing ordinary Pure Land like everyone else is ultimately a wiser option, he implies:

Monks should think to themselves: “As one who has left the home, gaining a deep understanding of the cycle of life and death is my primary task. If I cannot do it then I will sink into the dust of the common world. When the moment of death has come, what will I be able to rely upon?”⁶¹

僧家當自念。云。我為出家人。了達生死。乃本分事不能如此。遂汨沒俗塵。一日大限到來。有何倚賴。

Wang then addresses monks directly, saying:

Ordinarily, although one might have good karma, one cannot escape saṃsāra. When the rewards of karma are exhausted, one will once again descend into depravity. Better to quickly practice Pure Land and escape the cycle of life and rebirth. When you meet the Amitābha in the next life, the act of renouncing the family will be complete. The Chan masters Yongming Shou [Yongming Yanshou], Changlu Ze [Changlu Zongze], and Wannian Yi all practiced this path. As they turned and converted others so that more people became good, how could you but follow their example?⁶²

平日雖有善業。不免逐輪迴去。善業報盡。又復墜墮不如早修淨土。直脫輪迴。面見阿彌陀佛。方是出家事畢。如永明壽禪師長蘆蹟禪師萬年一禪師。皆修此道。又轉以化人。使更相勸化。豈可效彼哉。

While previously the monks he mentions were all examples of people who descended into saṃsāra because of their failure to recite the name of Amitābha, the monks he describes in this section all achieve glory on account of this practice. Nonetheless, his point is the same. The monastic path is not the only route to salvation. It is not even the ideal one. Yongming Yanshou, the first monk listed by Wang Rixiu, was a tenth-century

and poet Su Shi. Wang, “*Jie Chanshi houshen Dongpo*” 戒禪師後身東坡, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.275b.

⁶¹ Wang, “*Quan seng*” 勸僧, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.270b-c.

⁶² Wang, “*Quan seng*” 勸僧, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.270c.

Chan monk and the subject of Albert Welter's *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu: A Special Transmission within the Scriptures*. Welter notes that, as time went on, Yongming came to be considered a Pure Land master, and he even uses *Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land* as an example of the way he came to be re-imagined in this way.⁶³ This further emphasizes the way Wang Rixiu downplays Chan in favor of more generalized Pure Land practices.

Wang Rixiu downplays the efficacy and spiritual authority of monkhood again and again in the seventh fascicle, which examines the later incarnations of several former monastics. Whether they gain rank or wealth or sink into depravity, the overall message is the same: being a monk does not automatically guarantee rebirth in the Pure Land. And although the good merit one accrues as a monk may result in worldly advancements, such advancements are nothing compared to the benefits of the Pure Land.

There is one place, however, where the status of monks seems to have relevance over the way they are to practice Pure Land. In the latter half of Wang's "Advice for Monks," Wang writes, "Normally when one receives a coin as alms or is provided with a meal, one should always speak about the Pure Land to reward the almsgiver's good deed. Even if he doesn't believe it, one should still let him know."⁶⁴ 凡受人一錢之施一食之

⁶³ Welter writes, "With the appearance of the *Longshu jingtu wen* and the *Lebang wenlei*, works decidedly advocating Pure Land ideology, Yanshou's identification with the Pure Land is ascertained and his devotional tendencies, part and parcel of bodhisattva practice, are interpreted exclusively according to Pure Land criteria." Albert Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu: A Special Transmission within the Scriptures*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 42. Changlu Zhongze, the second monk that Wang mentions, was another Northern Song Chan master, who came to be esteemed in Pure Land writings. Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China, An Annotated Translation and Study of the Chanyuan Qinggui*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 101.

⁶⁴ Wang, "*Quan seng*" 勸僧, *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.270c.

供。皆當為說淨土以報其德。縱彼不信。亦使知之。 We can see that Wang Rixiu is recommending a method of proselytism that is specific for monks. However, this particular emphasis on almsgiving does not mean that Wang Rixiu had a differentiated religious path in mind for monks. His calls for proselytism and his insistence that monks will receive respect are actually quite consistent with the variety of other groups he discusses.

How can we reconcile Wang Rixiu's de-emphasis of monastic identity with his emphasis on other aspects of social status, such as eliteness, social inferiority, and moral deviance? When scholars discuss popular Pure Land movements, they often conflate attitudes about the socio-political establishment with attitudes toward the monastic establishment. In his reflection on Pure Land developments starting from the Song, Galen Amstutz suggests, "The main social role of monastic Buddhism had been support of the elites. . . [while] Pure Land concepts could be promoted in the construction of teachings that could challenge the hegemony of monasticism and all that it stood for"⁶⁵ Although grandiose claims like this may be easy to dismiss, they are emblematic of a more pervasive problem in Buddhist historiography. Even in discussing Kamakura-era Buddhism, Fabio Rambelli suggests that "A fundamental distinction can be made between Pure Land doctrines and practices that supported dominant ideology. . . and Pure Land teachings that offered instead transgressive, and potentially revolutionary, ideological elements against the dominant system. . . ."⁶⁶ Although the circumstances of

⁶⁵ Galen Amstutz, "The Politics of Independent Pure Land in China," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 26 (1998): 35.

⁶⁶ Fabio Rambelli, "'Just Behave as You Like; Prohibitions and Impurities are not a Problem': Radical Amida Cults and Popular Religiosity in Premodern Japan" in

Pure Land Buddhism in China and Japan were very different during this time, there is a common problem in the way scholars have viewed the relationship between Pure Land movements and the social order. When Rambelli discusses the potential for Pure Land teachings to resist the “dominant system,” he provides no clarification of what this dominant system is.

To better understand the differences in the way Wang Rixiu imagines the significance of status and occupation when it comes to different social groups, let us turn to the seventh fascicle of Wang Rixiu’s text in which he relates the story of a nun-turned courtesan. This narrative sketch, entitled, “The Lotus Nun Becomes a Courtesan in her Next Life” (*Huafa ni shenhou zuo guanji* 法華尼身後作官妓), illustrates two contrasting views of how social status plays into one’s spiritual development.⁶⁷

In this story, Wang tells of a monk who could perceive people’s previous incarnations. Upon meeting a courtesan whose breath has the fragrance of lotus flowers (an allusion to the Lotus Sutra), the monk announces that she had been a nun in her former life. Apparently, she had recited the Lotus Sutra for thirty years, but she was short of reaching enlightenment by one recitation. “If only this nun had known teachings of the Western Region, she could have achieved the highest grade of the highest rank of rebirth,” Wang laments. 使此尼知西方法門。則上品上生可也。 “But she did not know

Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha, edited by Richard Payne and Kenneth Tanaka (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004), 170.

⁶⁷ As far as I can tell, Wang Rixiu’s version seems to be the earliest extant version, but it is difficult to say whether he was the original author.

and thus descended into prostitution. Is this not lamentable?”⁶⁸ 不知而墜墮於妓。可不哀哉。

This narrative shows that Wang Rixiu has different ideas about the relevance and impact of status when it comes to monastics. Although the courtesan's status as a nun in her former life is of great interest to the crowd who gather to hear her recite the *Lotus Sutra*, the author indicates that ultimately her former vocation as a nun and its rigorous modes of training were of little consequence. The narrative does not completely deny the value of a monastic vocation or practices like reciting the *Lotus*. After all, she was only short by one intonation. But his point is not that she should have been more diligent in reciting sutras. The real implication behind this story is that there was something misguided about the approach she took to religion when she could have been engaging in popular Pure Land practices.

But while the woman's former status as a nun had little effect on her prospects for salvation, her current status as a prostitute does. Wang's "Advice for Prostitutes" suggests that prostitutes can cast off their debased status, but here at least, the former nun's current identity as a prostitute has a sense of tragic significance to it. This is why he finds the situation so lamentable.

⁶⁸ Wang, "Fahua ni houshen zuo gongji 法華尼後身作官妓," *Longshu jingtu wen*, T 47.276a-b.

Conclusion: Pure Land and the Social Order

How did Wang Rixiu feel that social status should affect the way people live their lives and practice their faith? Although Wang Rixiu downplayed the special identity of monastics, this did not mean overlooked all social differences. In his writings on elite groups, Wang Rixiu makes broad claims about the arbitrary nature of rank, but he ultimately accords elites a special place in their religious communities and affirms their role as moral leaders. And while his writings on social and moral inferiors suggest that people can eventually overcome status differences upon death, Wang emphasizes their debasement in this life by prescribing ethical and devotional practices that ultimately reinforce their inferiority. In his account of clerks, servants, and maids, Wang frames adherence to status differences as a way in which they can gain rebirth in the Pure Land. In his account of prostitutes, criminals, and other morally suspect groups, their status as transgressors plays an even greater role in the practices Wang prescribes for them. It even determines the nature of their bodhisattva vow, the most important element of their faith. In these ways and others, social divisions shape the way Wang felt people should practice Buddhism.

But oftentimes, Wang Rixiu adopts a rhetoric of transcending worldly distinctions even as he emphasizes social status in the practices he prescribes. Here it may be helpful to consider anthropologist Victor Turner's idea of *communitas*, a concept he describes as a "generic human bond" that exists beyond the hierarchical divisions of ordinary life.⁶⁹ Turner's concept of *communitas* has been often been applied to popular religious movements, including Anne Goodwin's study of Buddhist proselytism in medieval

⁶⁹ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Transactions, 1969), 96-97.

Japan.⁷⁰ Turner suggests this bond often exists in religious contexts, which provide a liminal space that is connected but somewhat removed from the ordinary world.⁷¹ It seems fair to suggest that Wang Rixiu's appeals to the Pure Land also evoke a liminal space removed from society in which hierarchical relationships give way to a common religious goal. And yet, this liminal space is removed enough that it does not challenge the hierarchical relationships of the mundane world.

Another, more relevant discussion of the relationship between popular proselytism and the status system can be found in Lori Meek's discussion of the Kamakura-era monk Eison, who converted thousands of people from all ranks to Buddhism. Lori Meeks suggests that Eison reached out to common people through precept conferrals in a way that included marginalized groups but also emphasized their inferior nature. On the one hand, Meeks suggests that "Eison used precepts. . . as a way of integrating a diverse range of people, elites and non-elite, educated and uneducated cosmopolitan and provincial—into the membership of his order."⁷² On the other hand, she notes another function of lay precept conferral—"to bestow specific ranks and roles" that were often hierarchical.⁷³ Though Wang Rixiu's bodhisattva precepts did not include the formalized division of ranks present in Eison's conferrals, there are some similarities between the two. Like Eison, Wang Rixiu's proselytizing approach targeted a wide range of people while simultaneously promoting a sense of order in society.

⁷⁰ Janet Goodwin, *Alms and Vagabonds: Buddhist Temples and Popular Patronage in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 4.

⁷¹ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 96-97.

⁷² Lori Meeks, "Vows for the masses: Eison and the popular expansion of precept-conferral ceremonies in premodern Japan" in *Buddhist Monasticism in East Asia: Places of Practice*, edited by James A. Benn, Lori Meeks et al. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 173.

⁷³ Meeks, "Vows for the masses," 172.

Since I was interested in examining the way Wang Rixiu portrayed social status, I looked at his writings on the lowest and highest members of society as well as monastics, who also occupy a place of distinction within the religious sphere. But in addition, Wang Rixiu discusses many groups of people in between these extremes. Unlike the traditional model of scholars, farmers, artisans, and merchants, which excludes many different groups of people from society, Wang tried to write about all people. Lee Tak-hung Chan addresses this in his suggestion that “Pure Land Buddhism in the Sung was a success story, and that success can be largely attributed to the way it served the needs of the new social groups [like urban laborers].”⁷⁴ Very few sources offer such a comprehensive vision of society during the Song. Nevertheless, there is something problematic about just focusing on the inclusive nature of Wang’s work. Although Wang did seek to shift away from monastic forms of Buddhism to a more, inclusive popular brand of Pure Land, he also was concerned with designing and spreading a different kind of order in society.

Word Count: 9535

⁷⁴ Leo Tak-hung Chan, “Techniques of Persuasion: Proselytism and Pure Land Buddhism in Sung China,” *Chinese Culture* 32.3 (1991): 27.

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Appendix I: Bibliographical Essay

I first heard about *Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land* during Daniel Getz's presentation at a symposium of Stanley Weinstein's students.⁷⁵ His talk, entitled "A Confucian Pure Land?" considered how Wang Rixiu incorporated secular and sometimes specifically Confucian ethics into his Pure Land teachings. Over the course of the presentation, I found myself drawn toward Wang's mundane, humanistic concerns and his intricate depiction of society.

Even before this, I knew I wanted study lay Buddhism, but I was still thinking about which text to focus on. Inspired by Timothy Brook's *Praying for Power* and Yu Chun-fang's *Renewal of Buddhism in China*, I nearly wrote my thesis on the late Ming. I even considered writing on the Six Dynasties period. But after speaking with Professor Getz about the sixth fascicle in particular, I realized that this was the text I was looking for.

This project required extensive reading in Classical Chinese, as the text has never been translated into English. Wang Rixiu wrote in a relatively simple style given his interest in reaching out to the common people. Nevertheless, his frequent use of Buddhist terminology took some time to get used to. Taking several classes with Professor Shinohara has gradually made me more familiar with some of the Buddhist themes in Wang's text. Five semesters of Classical Chinese has also aided me greatly.

In the early stages of my research, I devoted much of my efforts to translating excerpts from the text. In this endeavor, I received frequent guidance from Valerie

⁷⁵ Daniel Getz, "A Confucian Pure Land? Wang Rixiu's *Longshu jingtu wen*," (paper presented at East Asian Buddhist Studies: Recent Trends, Yale University, New Haven, CT, September 15, 2012.)

Hansen as well as Yiwen Li, a graduate student in the History Department. There were a few times in which it was unclear whether the Buddhist or Chinese meaning of a word was being invoked. And in cases like this, I also benefited from Koichi Shinohara's guidance.

In order to limit the scope of my research, I decided to focus mainly on the sixth fascicle. The unique organization of this chapter, in which Wang addresses thirty-six different categories of people, makes it a useful text for considering issues of social status in Pure Land teachings. There were also times when I thought it was valuable to bring in material from other chapters of a more anecdotal nature.

Although *Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land* was collected in the Taishō version of the Buddhist canon, it has received little scholarly attention. I was able to find a few Japanese articles that addressed Wang Rixiu's life and work in particular. For the most part, however, I used secondary sources to shed light on contemporary Pure Land developments and larger issues of social status during the Song.

In discussing Wang's views of clerks, for example, I have considered James Liu and Chin-shan Wu's writings on perceptions of clerks.⁷⁶ In discussing Wang's views of social elites, I referenced Robert Hymes' classic *Statesmen and Gentleman*.⁷⁷ These sources allowed me to evaluate Wang's portrayal of status within a greater historical

⁷⁶ Chin-shan Wu, "Subordinates and evildoers: Song scholar-officials' perceptions of clerks," diss. (SUNY-Binghamton, 2008); James T.C. Liu, "The Sung Views on the Control of Government Clerks," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 10, No. 2/3 (Brill: Dec. 1967).

⁷⁷ Robert Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentleman: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi in Northern and Southern Sung*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

context. Given the significant amount written about proselytism in Kamakura Japan, I occasionally considered these sources as well.

There were also times when I took issue with some of the ways social status has been handled in discussions of Pure Land. Although *Longshu's Treatise on Pure Land* is by no means representative of how all laymen felt about the social order, I hope this study can allow us to reconsider some common generalizations about the egalitarian nature of popular Pure Land movements.

I offer special thanks to Valerie Hansen and Pauline Lin for their revisions of this paper. I must also note that taking Sinological Methods with Pauline Lin this semester has helped me a great deal. It has exposed me to a wide of variety of research strategies as well as specialized bibliographies, dictionaries, and encyclopedias. This was especially useful when it came to tracking down specific pieces of information like the titles of Wang Rixiu's non-extant works or the nature of his official title, which turned out to be merely honorary. I am very grateful to have had this opportunity.

Appendix II: Translations

勸在公門者

在公門者當自念。云。彼為有官。我乃事彼。彼尊我卑。彼逸我勞。奉事常喜得以無虞。或有觸忤。加之譴責。是我前世所修不及於彼故至於此。我但小心謹行。以保此身。事無大小。隨宜方便。目前人見歡悅。必無後患。積善不已。福及子孫。當思。在公門者。其子孫榮顯必祖上積德。天道昭明。不可不信。更常念阿彌陀佛。願生極樂世界。又轉以此化人。使更相勸化。非徒現世獲福。身後可 [淨土] 中上品生。

Advice for Clerks

Clerks should think to themselves:

Others are officials, and I merely serve them. Others are honored, and I am humble. Others are at leisure, and I must labor. If I respectfully serve so that others are always content, I may be without anxiety. If I commit an offense, it will contribute to my condemnation. This is because in former lives that which I cultivated did not reach the level of what others attained. Nevertheless, I must be careful and behave prudently in order to protect this body. Whether my affairs are large or small, I must properly take care of the matter. If people before my eyes are pleased with me, I will certainly have no future troubles.

If you accumulate merit without ceasing, good fortune will extend to your sons and grandsons. One should think, of those who work in government offices, if their sons and grandchildren become illustrious, it must be because their ancestors accumulated merit. The way of heaven is bright and luminous. You cannot but believe this. Furthermore, constantly reflect on Amitābha and hope to be born in the realm of supreme bliss. If you turn and convert others, so that more people mutually encourage each other to change, you will not only obtain good fortune in this life. Upon death you will also be reborn into a high grade of rebirth.

勤僕妾

為僕妾者當自念。云。我前世不曾修福故至貧賤。人受安逸。我當勤勞。人享美味。我食麤糲。人服輕細。我著麤惡。此皆前世業緣。已往者不可悔。自此之後。當念善改過。忠直勤謹。小心奉事。以保此身以種後福。常念阿彌陀佛。念念不絕。念自純熟。定生極樂世界。又以化其同類。使更相勸化。則福報無窮。必[淨土]中上品生。

Advice for Servants and Maids

Servants and maids should think to themselves:

In a past life I did not cultivate merit. As a result, I am poor and of humble station. Others live in peaceful leisure, and I must exert myself through labor. Others enjoy delicious foods, and I eat coarse food. Others wear light and delicate things, and I wear rough and loathsome things. This is all due to the karma of past lives.

One cannot regret that which has already past, but from henceforth, I will be mindful of virtue and correct my faults. I will carefully serve [my master], and in doing so protect my person and cultivate future blessings.

Frequently recite the name of Amitābha. If one recites this without ceasing, one's virtuous thoughts will undergo maturation and ensure a rebirth in a realm of supreme bliss. One should convert others in the same [social] category, mutually encouraging each other to change. The reward will be unlimited, and one will certainly attain a high rebirth.

勸在風塵者

在風塵者當自念。云。生為婦人。已非善業。況我處風塵。其業不善甚矣。若能省悟斷除婬業。此為上也。如未能斷。常念阿彌陀佛發大願云。願我惡業日消。善業日長。衣食粗足。早離此門。見佛得道之後。盡度一切因我為婬之人。使皆生淨土。念念不絕。念自純熟。定生極樂世界。若轉以化人。使更相勸化。現世必除災滅罪。身後亦福報無窮。

Advice for Prostitutes

Those amidst the wind and dust should think to themselves: “I was born as a woman, and already lack good karma. Why should I add to my faults amidst the wind and dust? The karma it brings is extremely bad.”

If you can awake to reality and give up prostitution, that would be best. If you are unable to give it up, frequently recite the name of Amitābha and wish:

I hope that my bad karma will daily be reduced, and that my good karma will daily grow. May my clothing and food be coarse yet sufficient, so that I can soon leave this profession. After I see the Buddha and achieve the path [out of saṃsāra], may I exhaustively seek to liberate all who succumbed to lust on my account and allow them all to be reborn in the Pure Land.

If you recite the name of the Buddha without ceasing, your virtuous thoughts will undergo maturation and ensure a birth in the realm of supreme bliss. You should turn and change others, so that more people encourage each other to change. In this way you can avert disaster and purge your crimes. After death the reward will be unlimited.

勸罪惡人

有罪惡人當自念。云。我平生罪惡既多。一旦閉眼之後。當奈之何。須急懺悔迴心。念阿彌陀佛。發大願云。願我見佛得道之後。盡度從生以來一切所害之人。使皆生淨土。念念不絕。念自純熟。則可漸除惡業增長善緣。定生極樂世界。若能轉以化人。使更相勸化。非徒現世可以滅罪。身後亦福報無窮。

Advice for Criminals

Criminals should think to themselves:

Since the crimes I have committed in my daily life are many, as soon as I shut my eyes, what am I to do? I must hurriedly turn my heart around, and keep Amitābha in mind. I must make a great vow, saying, “After I meet the Buddha and obtain enlightenment, I must try my utmost to liberate everyone who I have harmed since birth, so that they may all be born in the Pure Land.”

If you constantly keep this in mind, your thoughts will undergo maturation. Then, you will gradually eliminate your bad karma and increase your good karma. You will definitely be born in the realm of supreme bliss. If you turn and convert others, so that more people encourage each other to change, you will not only purge your crimes, but upon death, your blessed reward will be inexhaustible.

勸士人

士人或有未深讀書遂登高科者。有深讀書終身尚不預薦者。豈非前世所種不同故其報不同乎。雖然使少年登科涉華。要功業濟一時福報。亦有時而盡。奉勸後生者。勤於學問篤於孝友。遠念吾曾高以來。誰其存者。亦留心此道。日月長而積累之功多。久則自有可樂。及年高者。當念已往之事皆如夢幻。日復一日。其誰免者。豈可不急留心此道也。不問老少。若能轉以化人使更相勸化。現世獲福。身後必上品生。

Advice for Literati

Among the literati there are those who do not study in any depth but then earn a high degree. There are also those who study in depth, but in the end they are not recommended for office. Since the merit they planted in former lives differs, should not the outcome also differ? Although the reward of fortune may allow one to earn a degree in one's youth, attain eminence, and achieve great things for a while, it lasts for a while and then expires.

I offer this advice to next generation: labor at your studies and devote yourself to filial piety and friendship. Since the distant memories of my ancestors, who has ever survived? And so, you should carefully adhere to this teaching. As the days and months pass, your merit will accumulate, and in time you will be able to rejoice. Upon reaching old age, you will become aware that past experiences are like a dream. The passage of time from one day to another—who can avoid this? How can one but calmly adhere to this teaching? No matter if you are old or young, if you turn and convert others so that more people encourage each other to change, you will gain good fortune in this life and upon death you will certainly attain a high rebirth.

勸有官君子

有官君子無非前世修種作福故受此報。譬如春時下種秋乃收獲。若不修福。何緣得此。然此報有盡。若更修福。行種種方便愛人利物之事。以此迴向西方。則直出輪迴之外。壽樂無窮。豈世間福報所能比哉。若切意斯民。而不忍捨去。且生西方。了生死之後。卻來此世界。現宰官身。以大興功利。何有不可哉。若能轉以此化人。使更相觀化人。則以己言重。必樂從之。據大慈菩薩偈。生世可以消災獲福。身後必上品生。

Advice for Officials

There is no official who receives this reward without cultivating merit and performing good works in former lives. For example, in spring you plant the seeds, and in autumn you reap the harvest. If you did not perform good deeds, how could you have been fated to obtain this? But this reward will expire. If you further cultivate good fortune and do all kinds of convenient things that others can receive benefit from, you will advance toward the Western Region on account of this. Then you will directly escape saṃsāra, and your longevity and bliss will never be exhausted. How could the blessed rewards of this world compare with this?

If you whole-heartedly love the people and cannot bear to abandon them, then you will be born in the Western Region. After you end the cycle of life and death, you will come back to this realm. You will manifest in the body of a state minister and greatly contribute to society. How could this not be the case? If you can turn and change others in this way, so that more people mutually observe and change people, then others will consider your words weighty and will certainly delight in following them. According to the gatha of the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion: upon being born into this world, if you can eliminate calamity and reap good fortune, after death you will certainly attain a high rebirth.

勸參禪者

參禪大悟。遂脫生死輪迴。固為上矣。然至此者百無二三。故予欲勸僧家。上根器者參禪之外。上根器者參禪之外。每日以頃刻之暇修西方。若參禪大悟。遂超脫輪迴。尚去佛地極遠。更往見阿彌陀佛。展禮致敬。有何不可。若未得大悟。而壽數忽盡。且徑往西方。見佛聞法。何患其不大悟也。若不修西方。不免隨業緣去。雖如青草堂戒禪師真如哲。皆汨沒輪迴。誠可畏者。詳見第七卷。若不忽此道。精心修進。仍轉以化人。使更相勸化人。則以己為名僧。必樂從其言。其為利益無窮。己必上品上生。

Advice for Chan Practitioners

If one attains enlightenment by practicing Chan, then one can cast off saṃsāra and the cycle of life and death. Obviously this is the best. But those who reach this are not even two or three out of a hundred.

Therefore I want to use this text to encourage the clergy and people of superior natural capacity. Outside of practicing Chan, everyday when you have an instant of free time you should practice the way of the Western Region. If you attain enlightenment by practicing Chan, you will cast off saṃsāra. But even then, the realm of Buddhahood will still be extremely distant. You must still go and behold the Amitābha Buddha. But if you pay your respects with reverence, how could you not? If you have not yet obtained enlightenment and your predestined lifespan will quickly expire, you can still go directly Western Region and behold the Buddha and hear the Dharma. Why worry that you will not attain enlightenment? If you do not practice the way of the Western Region, you cannot avoid following the path of karma. Even Qing Caotang, Chan Master Jie, and Zhenru Ji sunk into saṃsāra. Truly it is a fearsome thing.

Carefully read the seventh scroll. If you do not ignore this doctrine and cultivate oneself to the utmost. and if you turn and convert others, so that more people each other to do good, the people will than consider you an eminent monk. They will certainly

delight in following your words. Its benefits will be inexhaustible, and you will attain the highest grade of rebirth.

勸僧

僧家當自念。云。我為出家人。了達生死。乃本分事。不能如此。遂汨沒俗塵。一日大限到來。有何倚賴。平日雖有善業。不免逐輪迴去。善業報盡。又復墜墮不如早修淨土。直脫輪迴。面見阿彌陀佛。方是出家事畢。如永明壽禪師長蘆蹟禪師萬年一禪師。皆修此道。又轉以化人。使更相勸化。豈可效彼哉。凡受人一錢之施一食之供。皆當為說淨土以報其德。縱彼不信。亦使知之。耳根漸熟。久而自信。若或便信。其利益大矣。常如此化人。現世則為人所敬。己之善緣愈見純熟。又能精心觀想。不久必見佛之真身。此報身盡後必上品上生。為不退轉地菩薩矣。古語云。此身不向今生度。更向何生度此身。當常念此意。不可懈怠。

Advice for Monks

Monks should think to themselves, “As one who has left the home, gaining a deep understanding of the cycle of life and death is my primary task. If I cannot do it then I will sink into the dust of the common world. When the moment of death has come, what will I be able to rely upon?” Ordinarily, although one might have good karma, one cannot escape saṃsāra. When the rewards of karma are exhausted, one will once again descend into depravity. Better to quickly practice Pure Land and escape the cycle of life and rebirth.

When one meets the Amitābha in the next life, the act of renouncing the family will be complete. The Chan masters Yongming Shou [Yongming Yanshou], Changlu Ze [Changlu Zongze], and Wannian Yi all practiced this path. As they turned and converted others so that more people became good, how could you but follow their example?

Normally when one receives a coin as alms or is provided with a meal, one should always speak about the Pure Land to reward the almsgiver’s good deed. Even if he doesn’t believe it, one should still let him know. His auditory faculties will gradually mature, and after a while he will believe it for himself. If he immediately believes it, his benefit will be great indeed. If you constantly convert others in this manner, you will receive the respect of the people in this world. Your good karma will further undergo maturation,

and you will gain the ability of careful contemplation. In no time you will certainly see the Truth Body of the Buddha. After your Reward Body has expired, you will attain a higher grade of rebirth and become a higher level of Bodhisattva that does not regress [into the lower levels of rebirth]. In antiquity, it was said, “If in this body, you do not attain transcendence in this life, then in what life will you transcend this body?” You should reflect upon this idea. You cannot be remiss.

勸富者

富者當自念。云。我今生富足。皆由前世修種。譬如今年所食之穀乃去年所種也。然人生衣食財祿陰司皆有定數。徐徐營生合有之數亦自然來。其來之遲乃可延壽。如水淺流則久也。若急急貪求亦只此數。數外得之則禍生而去。如水過滿則溢也。宜隨分為生。不使滿溢。少損濟物以防滿溢。非徒可以享現世之安。又可種後來之福。仍當念。世間福亦有盡。若以迴向西方則無盡。況世間富足亦不能色色如意。唯留意西方。則自有可樂。更相印施西方文字。以廣勸人。使更相勸化此為種無窮之福。現世可以消災禳難。鬼神亦敬而祐之。身後必上品上生。

Advice for the Wealthy

The wealthy should think to themselves:

My wealth in this life is all the result of my cultivation in former lives. For example, the grain that I eat this year is the grain that I planted last year. But every person's food, clothing, money, and rank is fated in the netherworld. While slowly making a livelihood, the amount that is destined will naturally come. The delay of its coming just means that one's life will be prolonged.

If water flows shallow then it will be long lasting. If you anxiously covet and pursue profit, you will still have the same amount. That which you achieve beyond fate will be met with calamity, and you might even lose your life. If water is filled to the brim it will overflow. So one should be content with one's status and position in life. Do not cause it to overflow. By lessening it in order to prevent it from overflowing, one can not only enjoy the security of this life but also cultivate future blessings.

But keep in mind that the blessings of this life can also be exhausted. If one uses these blessings to advance toward the Western Region, then they will not be exhausted. Moreover wealth and sufficiency in this world cannot make manifest the various things that one wishes. Only by concentrating on the Western Region can one have that which brings joy. Furthermore one should engrave the texts of the Western Region and give alms. By broadly converting others so that more people encourage each other to change, you will cultivate inexhaustible blessings. In this world you can eliminate misfortune and

avert calamity. The ghosts and spirits will solemnly protect you, and after death you will certainly attain the highest grade of rebirth.

勸貪吝者

得人三千而不以為多者貪也。自費兩千而遂以為多者吝也。貪吝之失眾人所同而不自覺。若能去此。方為賢者。如是則善業無不可為。惡業無不可戒。何則。不吝財以為善。不貪財以為惡。故也。若如是以修淨土。必不在下品生矣。又能轉以化人。使更相勸化人。則以己無貪吝之心。必加尊敬而樂從其化。所化必廣。上品往生復何疑哉。生前之福報亦可立而見矣。此不可以言盡。行者當自知之。

Advice for the Covetous and the Miserly

He who gains three thousand and does not consider it to be a lot is covetous. He who spends two thousand and does consider it to be a lot is miserly. The defects of covetousness and miserliness are something the masses all share but are not aware of. If one is able to get rid of this defect, he may be considered a worthy. If this is the case, there is no good deed that cannot be done and no bad deed that cannot be avoided by observing precepts. Why? If you are not miserly, you will be virtuous. If you do not covet money, you will not be evil. This is the reason.

If you are like this in the practice of Pure Land, you will certainly not attain a low grade of rebirth. If you turn and convert others, so that more people encourage each other to change, then others will consider you to have a heart that is neither covetous nor miserly. It will certainly increase their respect and cause them to delight in their change of observances. Those who convert will certainly be vast in number, and you will attain a high rebirth. Again, how can this be doubted! The blessed reward gained prior to rebirth will be evident immediately. This cannot fully be discussed, but those who act in this way should know it for themselves.

勸軍中人

當念。我輩受國家所養。其錢糧綿帛皆自民力辛苦得之。我輩所以日食飽足衣裝溫涼。上得以奉親老。下得以養妻兒者。皆國家之賜。皆生民之力。無事常修整兵器。馳習騎射。震軍威於可畏。消寇亂於未萌。期於國家安榮生民休息。每日默念阿彌陀佛千聲。願冥冥中。資其氣力。壯其軍容。有難則力以禦之。雖損軀而不顧。無難則靜以鎮之。非貪功而妄殺。期於國家常安生民常保。而後已。是為菩薩心。發為將軍行。又能轉以勸人。使更相觀化。如此則善念純熟。福祿日增。身後必於淨土中上品生矣。

Advice for those in the Army

Those in the army should think:

We receive the support of the empire, whose money, grain, cotton, and silk all are obtained from the bitter toil of the common people. As a result, we eat our fill each day, and our clothes are adequate for the heat and the cold. We are able to provide for our parents and support our wives and children. This is all granted by the emperor. This is all due to the labor of the people. Even when there are no incidents, we will constantly maintain and repair our weapons as well as practice horsemanship and archery. The shaking might of the army will inspire awe, wiping out banditry and uprisings before they arise. We hope for peace and prosperity for the empire and rest and tranquility for the common people.

Every day we will silently recite the name of Amitābha a thousand times. We hope that from the other world we may receive his power and be made strong with his soldierly discipline. When we encounter difficulties may we have the strength to prevent it without a second thought even if it means harming our bodies. When there are no such difficulties, we will still silently guard against them. We will not covet fame nor kill rashly. We hope that the nation will always be at peace, and that the common people will always be protected until the end.

This is the resolve of a bodhisattva manifested in the actions of a general. And if you turn and convert others, so that more people encourage each other to change, then your virtuous thoughts will mature, your fortune and status will daily grow, and upon death you will certainly attain a high birth in the Pure Land.