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Chinese scholars have always viewed the study of documents printed on paper as separate from that of writing on rock, jade, bronze, bamboo slips, and other materials.¹ This distinction points up an important difference in transmission. Because only books deemed of worth to succeeding generations were reprinted, our source base is shaped largely by traditional historical biases. But stone is more durable than paper; many steles from the Song survived into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover, admirers of calligraphy and compilers of local histories took rubbings regardless of content. Accordingly, the documents in epigraphical compendia are of particular interest to the modern historian exactly because they were not subjected to the editing all printed books were.

Texts carved onto steles differed from other historical sources in that they became part of the physical landscape. Because a stele offered a permanence that paper and brush did not, communities joined together to finance the carving of a text to commemorate certain kinds of events: the death of an important person, or the building or rebuilding of a temple, monastery, school, bridge, or road. The varied subject matter makes it difficult to generalize about format; authors of these texts were free to include different types of material — which is one reason inscriptions can be hard to read. Steles were placed in visible locations by schools, temples, and government offices. Tsien (1962: 68-70) notes that the earliest steles in China dated to 219-211 B.C., when the first Qin emperor put them up; in 210 B.C. his son added commemorative texts. One of these steles is still extant; it is a rounded boulder. In the Han dynasty steles evolved to assume their current shape: a rectangular tablet supported by a base in the ground. The top part of the stele was usually decorated, often with a dragon; the text was carved underneath. Because it cost much more to put up a stone slab than to incise characters on one already standing, an individual stele often contained more than one text. The first was inscribed on the front; others were placed on the back and sides, and occasionally even in the margins of earlier texts.

The complicated format of inscriptions in the Song potentially required the services of six different people: the author of the text (*zhuan* 撰); someone to write the heading in seal script (*zhu* 書); the calligrapher (*shu* 書); the stone carver (*kan* 刊); the geomancer who selected an auspicious day for putting up the stele (*keri* 刻日); and the person who erected the stone (*lishi* 立石). This last term refers more generally to the person who arranged the financing of the stele. In the simplest (and so cheapest) inscriptions, only the author and stone carver were involved. But inscriptions giving the names of all those who worked on and paid for the text shed light on power relations within communities; office-holders and non-office-holders often contributed to the same temples in the Southern Song (Hansen 1987: 129-133).

Most Song inscriptions were drafted by holders of advanced degrees and local

¹ Hence the term for epigraphy: *jīnshíxué* 金石學 (the study of [writing on] metal and stone). See Ma (1967), Ye (1980), and Zhu (1981) for general introductions to the study of epigraphy. My discussion draws in part on an appendix in my thesis about temple inscriptions (Hansen 1987: 259-267).

officials, but they were commissioned by and reflect the interests of local residents. It would be naive to argue that inscriptions speak for the common people; literati, often officials, wrote these texts in classical Chinese and not in the local vernacular. But they do offer a different point of view. The authors of temple inscriptions, for example, mention recent disasters when demonstrating the god's power to minimize the people's suffering. Few gazetteers give such detailed information about disasters; none interpret them from this particular perspective. Space does not allow a comprehensive guide to the entire field of epigraphy; my aim here is primarily to pass on a few hints I have learned over the past three years in the course of my research. Temple inscriptions proved to be a crucial source for the study of popular religion in the Song, and one that I knew nothing about when I began. For those who have never used inscriptions, the first half of this paper briefly outlines the different sources of texts that were originally carved steles. The second half of this paper, where I describe collections in Taiwan, Japan, and China, will be of interest, I hope, even to those already familiar with published inscriptions.²

GETTING STARTED

In a few rare cases the original steles are still in situ, and one can see them well enough to read. More common are rubbings of steles that are no longer standing; more common still are transcriptions contained in epigraphical compendia. Strictly speaking, only the stele is a primary source. Because many rubbings were intended as calligraphic models, those making them copied only the text (and not the lists of donors). A transcription is one step farther removed from a rubbing: not only may the text be incomplete, but whoever copied it may introduce mistaken characters, mix up the order of sentences, or leave out characters or sections. Still, because epigraphical compendia are both available in American libraries and easier to use, I discuss them first and postpone a discussion of rubbings until the last section.

EPIGRAPHICAL COMPENDIA

The first place to look for transcriptions is epigraphical compendia (usually called place-name jinshizhi, jinshilu, or jinshiji, for example Liangzhe jinshizhi 兩浙金石志 (A Collection of Inscriptions from Jiangsu and Zhejiang). Yang Dianxun's 楊殿珣 Shike tiba suoyin 石刻題跋索引 is the most complete index extant; it has 40,000 entries for 140 works. Many, if not all, of the collections Yang indexes are contained in the Shike shiliao xinbian 石刻史料新編, which is a Taiwan reprint of many Qing collections. (Series I & II (1966) have long been available; series III (1986) is just out). Yang breaks down the inscriptions into the following categories: mubei 墓碑 and muzhi 墓誌 (funerary texts), kejing

² Dien (1979) surveys epigraphical collections in Taipei, Tokyo, and Kyoto from the point of view of those working on Six Dynasties; unavoidably, my description overlaps partially with his. I have risked duplication in order to present a self-contained guide.

(inscribed classics), zaoxiangji 造像記 (inscriptions on statues or pictures), timing tizi 題名題字 (inscriptions of names or other characters), shici 詩詞 (poems), and zake 雜刻 (miscellaneous) (Teng and Biggerstaff 1971:50).³

Yang's index provides the easiest entre into the epigraphical collections, most of which date to the Qing. In chronological order, it lists the title of the inscription as it appears in the collection; for this reason the same text can appear under several names. Dates are the best check against this; if inscriptions with different titles were composed on the same day and have similar names, they are very likely the same; (for this reason, always keep a record of the date of any text to the day and month if possible). Following the name of the text is the editor of the compilation, the name of the book, the juan in parentheses and the page number. After Arabic numbers come the sources for whatever commentaries are given; it is best to consult all commentaries, which can give invaluable information about dating, authenticity, the author, provenance, and related inscriptions.

Using Yang's index is not always straightforward. The title betrays one difficulty: this is an index not just to collections of transcriptions but also to collections of commentaries on them. Some of the books indexed do not reproduce the text of the original rubbing but merely give its dimensions or comment on its calligraphy. Rong Yuan's 1930 catalogue of epigraphical sources divides different collections into those reproducing the text of the original rubbings (wenzi 文字) and those with only commentary (mulu 目錄). Ideally, one should assess the reliability of different catalogues by comparing the transcriptions with a few original steles or rubbings from them. Of course, this is rarely possible.

The most detailed collection I have used was compiled in 1927 as part of the Jiangsu tongzhi 江蘇通志: the Jiangsu jinshizhi 江蘇金石志 gives dimensions of the text and the stone, line breaks in the original, and very specific geographic locations. It matches exactly the rubbings I have seen and even includes lists of donors. Otherwise, my experience has been that the following are among the more reliable compendia: Liangzhe jinshizhi 兩浙金石志 (Jiangsu and Zhejiang), Wuxing jinshiji 吳興金石記 (Huzhou, Zhejiang), Kuocang jinshizhi 括蒼金石志 (Chuzhou, Zhejiang), Taizhou jinshi lu 台州金石錄 (Linhai county, Zhejiang), Baqiong shi jinshi buzheng 八瓊室金石補正 (National coverage), and Jinshi cuibian 金石萃編 (national coverage). I would recommend going through a regional compilation before tackling the national ones, which require a thorough knowledge of former zhou and county names. Ruan Yuan's 阮元 Shanzuo jinshizhi 山左金石志 is infamous among Japanese historians for the poor quality of its transcriptions; the Minzhong jinshizhi 閩中金石志 is frustrating because it lists texts contained in other books, often local histories that are no longer extant. All of these are in the Shike shiliao xinbian.

In order to do a full search through the epigraphical collections, one has to look at those not indexed in Yang; there is no other way than to go through them individually. Yang gives a list of the collections he has consulted, so these are

³See the catalogue from the Chicago Field Museum (Tchen 1981) for English translations of many of the terms occurring in the titles of inscriptions. The Chicago catalogue is a good place to to get one's bearings; a glance at it will also give a quick impression of what types of inscriptions exist.

easy to identify. Fortunately most of the unindexed compendia are regional, so one can examine only those of relevance.

WENJI

Wenji (collected writings) contain many inscriptions, which are usually in a separate section for ji. These are texts that the author drafted; they may not have actually been carved onto stone. Wenji texts can be difficult to use because they are often undated and do not always give the name of the place they were intended for, but they are especially useful if one is interested in a particular official.

LOCAL HISTORIES

Local histories are a gold-mine for inscriptions; many of the most important texts I used in my thesis were transcribed in nineteenth-century gazetteers and nowhere else. To do a thorough search, one must go through all the local histories from a given place; check especially the yiwen or jinshi section. Series III of Shike shiliao xinbian is a good place to begin such a search; it reprints these sections from selected gazetteers. This series deceptively retitles these chapters without giving the title of the original local history; one must consult a catalogue of gazetteers to identify the source.

One can then proceed to the local histories which are not included in the series. Some give just the titles of the texts (of use in some projects); others, the texts themselves. Even if the local history does not have a section devoted to epigraphy, other sections may include long excerpts from inscriptions; this is certainly true of temples, and it should be true of other religious institutions, bridges, and roads. Gazetteers are especially important if one is looking for post-Tang inscriptions. Because Qing epigraphers did not value Song and Yuan inscriptions, they often left them out of their compilations or included just a few important examples. Compilers of local histories tend to be more thorough; they may give the date or a more exact location for texts you have located in other sources.⁴

COLLECTIONS OF RUBBINGS

It is often a good idea to look at original rubbings, even of texts one has already read in transcription. Rubbings may contain lists of donors not reproduced elsewhere; alas, it is often true that the people doing the rubbings did not bother to copy down the names of the donors either. It can be helpful to check the rubbing against the transcription, partially so that one can learn some of the Qing

⁴For an example of a study based almost entirely on inscriptions contained in local histories and not in epigraphical compendia, see Morita (1983).

terminology describing size and layout of a rubbing. Seeing a rubbing makes one realize how big the original steles were; they were so imposing that it may not have mattered that people could not read the texts on them. Most important are rubbings of inscriptions which have not been transcribed elsewhere. Some texts are written in kaishu and are very clear; other rubbings are faded and torn, or the script is so grassy as to be illegible.

The word for rubbing in Japanese is takuhon 拓本 (in Chinese, tapian 拓片, which can also be read tuopian). In Chinese, tuoben 拓本 refers to rubbings that have been cut up and put into book form for use as calligraphic models. This distinction I learned the hard way when my permission to use the Beijing library said I wanted to use tuoben, and the staff took this to mean that I was not allowed to consult the catalogue for rubbings but was only to look at the books they had of cut-up rubbings. Fortunately, they later relented.

Before going to the collections in Asia I describe below, I would recommend a visit to either Harvard or the Chicago Field Museum. Asian librarians have a hard time believing a foreigner really can read a rubbing and it helps if you can look confident as you unfold one. Rubbings are just like road-maps; in folding them back up, you must follow the original creases. Otherwise the rubbing may be damaged. It is not difficult, but it might be easier to get this experience, if possible, while still in America where one can speak English and ask questions. Bring a copy of Yang's index (or a xerox of the relevant pages) when you visit these libraries; you may want to compare the transcription with the rubbing, and if time is limited, you can skip those inscriptions which are already published. There is some overlap between published inscriptions and the holdings of the archives listed below, but many of the rubbings they contain are not published. Take pencil and graph paper to make an accurate hand copy; almost none of these archives allows photography.

The only sizable collections that have been catalogued and merit a trip are in Taipei and in Beijing; I mention the others I have seen just to give a sense of what is available in Asia. The dates of my visit follow the name of the collection: any information may have changed since that time.

BEIJING TUSHUGUAN (May 1985)

The Beijing Library collection of rubbings is the largest in the world; its thrust is not on inscriptions as calligraphic models but as historical documents. The library has 3,000 tuoben and somewhere between sixty and seventy thousand rubbings (including 5,000 funerary inscriptions), of which only 11,000 were catalogued at the time of my visit. Work is continuing; each text is numbered according to the collection it originally came from. About one thousand rubbings are from a Mr. Gu, who prided himself on taking rubbings of the entire text, including lists of donors.

The Beijing catalogue is by and far away the most informative of all those I have seen; it is worth looking at it even if you can not see the rubbings, because it provides more information than is available in epigraphical compendia or other catalogues. It gives title of the inscription, its dimensions, date of composition in both the Chinese and Western calendars, the name of author and those writing seal script headings or doing the calligraphy, the type of script (kaishu, xingshu,

or *caoshu*), and the number of sheets. Most unusually and most revealingly, the catalogue is cross-referenced to other rubbings from the same stele and tells which part of the stele the text came from — front, back, or side. This information is important because texts written on the back or sides assume a knowledge of the main text and may refer to it, however obliquely. The catalogue, which is broken down both chronologically and regionally, is not published, but the library plans to issue catalogues for funerary texts (from *Zhonghua shuju*) and all the inscriptions about Beijing (*Wenxian chubanshe*).⁵

At the time of my visit the library was still located at its original site by Beihai and seating in the *shanbenshi* was limited to sixteen. When I laid an inscription out on a table to read it, I displaced three other people. Also, the staff refused to get any rubbings while it was raining; the rubbings were stored in another building and they feared damaging them. I was told the library would move to a site closer to Beida with a special epigraphic reading room (*jinshi yuelan shi* 金石閱覽室), which would have large tables and be reserved for those reading rubbings. The director of the epigraphical section, Ji Yaping 冀亞平, was in his thirties and welcomed foreign researchers. The library did close in June, 1987; I do not know when the epigraphic reading room is scheduled to open.

Also in Beijing is the epigraphical collection of Beida, which consists of at least two Qing collections: that from Yifengtang 藝風堂 and Liufengtang 柳風堂. The catalogue for the Yifengtang is reprinted in *Shike shiliao xinbian* (Miu 1906). These rubbings are in storage in the university library, and there are no plans for cataloguing them.

FU SSU-NIAN LIBRARY, ACADEMIA SINICA, NANKANG, TAIWAN (May 1986)

Originally part of the Beijing library's holdings, this is a major collection of 25,000 rubbings. They are rolled and not folded, which makes them much easier to use but harder to file; the staff had trouble locating all the rubbings I asked to see. The current catalogue, although complete, consists only of a xerox list of the rubbings and their date of composition. It is neither in chronological order nor does it give provenance. Notably, the labels on the originals sometimes tell where the original stele was located. The library is now publishing an updated catalogue that is divided topically and is in chronological order: the preface to the first volume of tomb inscriptions lists the different categories (Mao 1985). The new catalogue is much easier to use. However, in compiling it, Mao and his assistants do not seem to have checked the original rubbings, so that this catalogue gives only the date, and not the provenance, of each rubbing. The strength of this collection lies in its Han, Six Dynasties, and Tang holdings, but there are about three thousand Song rubbings and, most significantly, several hundred from the Jin.

This was the one library I was at where all the staff, many of whom have been

⁵To give a rough idea of the distribution of catalogued inscriptions over time, I list the number of drawers of cards for each dynasty: Shang-Han (1), Han, san Guo, Shiliu Guo (1), Nanbei chao and Sui (2), Tang (6), Wudai and Song (1), Song (2), Liao-Jin (1), Yuan (1), Ming (2), Qing (5), Taiping Tianguo and Minguo (1), (Minguo 1), PRC (1). There are seven drawers of Beijing inscriptions.

trained abroad, really wanted to be of service. The director, Wang Wenlu 王文陸 and Mao Hanguang 毛漢光 are of great help; Mr. Wang arranged for me to have excellent photographs taken at very reasonable cost on the last day I was in the library.

Also in Taipei is the National Central Library, which has published two catalogues of its holdings: Guoli zhongyuan tushuguan jinshi tapian mulu (1982) and Guoli zhongyuan tushuguan muzhi tapian mulu (1972). The latest funerary inscription listed dates to 963.

THE SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL LIBRARY (July 1986)

The second largest collection in China before the Cultural Revolution could not be used at the time of my visit. A recent college graduate, Wang Hong 王宏, has been assigned the task of organizing the rubbings; he did not know when they would be open to the public. A mimeographed catalogue from the 1950's, called Shanghaishi lishi wenxian tushuguan shike taben fenlei mulu 上海市歷史文獻圖書館石刻拓本分類目錄 breaks 5,000 inscriptions down into 16 categories and gives the title, style of script, author, provenance, and year of each rubbing. This catalogue, which covered only part of Shanghai's total holdings, indicates that most of the inscriptions predated the Song. Perhaps the collection will turn out to be the same as before the Cultural Revolution, and the rubbings merely have to be refilled; equally possible, of course, is that the entire collection has been destroyed. A visitor may look at this outdated catalogue, which could bear no relationship to the actual collection, but a trip to Shanghai hardly seems worth it.

Also in Shanghai is Shanghai shifan daxue, which has a trunk full of rubbings. As of July 1986, these had not yet been catalogued, but Professor Cheng Yingmu 程應錫 assured me that foreigners would be welcome to look through them. He can be reached at: Institute for the Study of Ancient Inscriptions, Shanghai Teachers College, Shanghai 上海市上海師範大學古籍整理研究所.

ZHEJIANG TUSHUGUAN AND BOWUGUAN (HANGZHOU) (May 1985)

I include these two institutions in my list as they are probably typical of regional collections; because many such institutions sent their holdings to Shanghai and Beijing after 1949, they tend to be small. The Zhejiang library has in fact published a catalogue: Zhejiang tushuguan jinshi mulu 浙江圖書館金石目錄 (1982), but it was distributed only in Hangzhou. It gives the name of the text, the author, place when known, and date. The library seems to have several thousand rubbings, mostly from the Hangzhou area; many are lists of donors from a few large Buddhist sites (like Feilai feng 飞来峰 Hangzhou). One can hand-copy a text; photography is forbidden, and the library has no facilities for photography. The Zhejiang library is closed from 1986 to 1988 for moving; it would be best to check to see if they have re-opened before planning a trip. Chen Hua 陈华 is in charge of circulation.

The Zhejiang museum also has some inscriptions and a written list of their holdings which gives only the date and no provenance: they had about a thousand rubbings in all. Although not visited frequently, the curator Zha Yongling 查永玲 (phone 83232) welcomed me. Hangzhou University also has some rubbings, but they

cannot be used at present and there is no plan to catalogue them.

Chicago Field Museum

I have not visited this museum, but I was told that the collection is available for use, provided one gives the curatorial staff sufficient notice and knows the two catalogue numbers (given at the end of each entry) for what one wants to see. Ben Bronson is the person to contact at (312) 922-9410. As mentioned above, the published catalogue (Tchen 1981) is of very high quality and very helpful because so much of it is in English. It is for sale for \$67.50 from the Field Museum of Natural History, Roosevelt Road at Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60605.

Harvard (November 1986)

The Harvard-Yenching library has a small collection of rubbings (about one thousand), mostly from the Six Dynasties. The curator, Mr. Sydney Dai, told me that one must belong to the Harvard community or have a letter of introduction to Mr. Eugene Wu, the director of the library. There is a card catalogue, which gives English translations of the titles; it is also keyed to Yang's index. Photography is forbidden.

The Institute for Humanistic Studies, Kyoto (February 1985)

In 1985, I was told that no catalogue exists, and that the institute has only a few rubbings. Albert Dien (1979:4) reports that the Jinbun collection contains 6,600 items, and that he consulted a catalogue in chronological order and a file of photographic reproductions. The potential user must be forewarned, however, that access to the collection is uncertain, and that it is best to approach a research associate of the institute to see if an introduction can be arranged.

Tôyô Bunko, Tokyo (April 1985)

The Tôyô Bunko is a model for other libraries in terms of the accessibility of its collection. Most of the catalogue is published in 東洋文庫書報 *Tôyô bunko shôhō* numbers 3,4, and 5 (1971: 56-80, 1972: 56-94, 1973: 74-109); a separate card-file for rubbings acquired afterward fits into a shoebox. These catalogues give only the date and title of the text. Unless the title contains a place name, the text itself mentions the site, or a published version gives the original site, it can be difficult to determine where the original stele was located. This small collection has about two hundred Song rubbings, twenty from the Jin, and forty from the Yuan. One can have a photograph taken at exorbitant cost; a slide is cheaper.

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