

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Reburials of Eminent Masters: The Construction of Quanzhen Daoist Lineages in North China under Mongol Rule

Jinping Wang 

National University of Singapore, Singapore
Email: hiswj@nus.edu.sg

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Abstract

Burials of eminent Quanzhen masters, particularly in the form of extravagant assembly-funerals, served as the initial step in the development of a Quanzhen-style ancestor worship. This ancestor worship functioned as the bedrock of a thriving Quanzhen lineage-building movement in thirteenth-century north China. Quanzhen Daoists attributed great significance to the physical remains of a lineage's founding master and commonly conducted multiple burials of the master. Each instance of reburial presented an opportunity for specific lineage members to assert their lineage identity, as well as ownership over the founding master's spiritual and material legacy. Lineage members commonly materialized their ancestor worship through a series of memorial objects established within a hosting monastery, including tombs, statues, portraits, memorial shrines, and commemorative steles. These lineage-building efforts strengthened dynamic networks of people, monasteries, and material culture, shaping regional interactions and transformations in north China under Mongol rule.

Keywords: Quanzhen Daoism; lineage; assembly-funeral; ancestor worship; north China

In 1247, Song Defang 宋德方 (1183–1247), an eminent Quanzhen Daoist master, died at the Chongyang Palace 重陽宮 (Palace of Double Yang) in Shaanxi, where the Quanzhen founder Wang Chongyang 王重陽 (1113–70) had practiced cultivation and achieved realization. After Song was interred in the graveyard of the Chongyang

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Palace, the issue of his burial seemed to be settled. However, in the following year, the Mongol court issued an order to Quanzhen Daoists, instructing them to relocate Song's remains to the Yongle Palace 永樂宮 (Palace of Eternal Joy) in southern Shanxi. Song's coffin was then exhumed and transported from Shaanxi to Shanxi. What was supposed to be a simple journey turned into a spectacular parade with much drama. First, the escorts of the coffin made detours to pass by many sites in Shaanxi and Shanxi where Song Defang had built monasteries staffed by his disciples, giving Song's disciples and lay followers an opportunity to mourn the master. But something unexpected happened. Many disciples and followers in different localities tried to have Song's coffin stay longer at their particular spot and, if possible, permanently. The trip became bogged down. Eventually, two military officers—subordinates of a Mongolian general stationed in southern Shanxi—led soldiers to meet the coffin procession halfway and escorted it for the rest of the trip. Only then did no one dare to stop the procession or try to keep the coffin for themselves.¹

Meanwhile Song Defang's disciples in the Yongle Palace busied themselves with building a magnificent new tomb and a memorial shrine for their beloved master. They also commissioned a portrait of the master, which was most likely displayed in the shrine for visitors to see. Song Defang's disciple Li Zhiding 李志鼎 (more commonly known by his lay name Li Ding 李鼎) composed a moving eulogy, in which he expressed how he couldn't help but shed tears when he knelt before his master's portrait.² After everything was finally ready, tens of thousands of clerical and lay participants throughout north China gathered at the Yongle Palace in early 1254, holding a grand assembly-funeral (*huizang* 會葬) to rebury Song Defang formally.³ In 1262, Li Ding composed a record about the memorial shrine and the reburial event, comparing what Song's disciples did to what filial sons should do for their deceased fathers.⁴ Both the eulogy and the record were inscribed on steles, marking the first two of several stone monuments dedicated to Song Defang and installed in the Yongle Palace. The tomb, the shrine, and the steles formed a memorial space for worshipping Song Defang and drew numerous followers to come in the following decades. During these years, the Yongle Palace itself became the headquarters of Song Defang's disciples, who developed themselves into one of the most influential Quanzhen lineages in north China under Mongol rule. The tomb built in 1254 was, however, still not Song Defang's final resting place. As we will see later, one of Song's leading disciples would rebury him again in 1275.

Quanzhen sources produced in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries record many similar examples of assembly-funerals and repeated burials. As historians, we might ask why it was necessary for Song Defang and Quanzhen masters like him to be buried more than once? This article argues that reburial(s) of eminent Quanzhen masters

¹Li Ding 李鼎, "Xuandu zhidao piyun zhenren Song tianshi citang beiming bing xu" 玄都至道披云真人宋天師祠堂碑銘并序, *Daojia jinshi lue* 道家金石略, compiled by Chen Yuan 陳垣, edited and supplemented by Chen Zhichao 陳智超 and Zeng Qingying 曾慶瑛 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988), 548.

²Li Zhiding 李志鼎, "Xianshi Xuandu zhidao piyun zhenren Song tianshi zhenzan" 先師玄都至道披雲真人宋天師真贊, *Daojia jinshi lue*, 524–25.

³As Jing Anning suggested, the official reburial of Song Defang occurred five years after the relocation of his corpse in the winter of 1248 because the construction of the memorial shrine had to wait until the completion of the three main halls of the Yongle Palace. See Jing Anning 景安寧, *Daojiao Quanzhenpai gongguan zaixiang yu zushi* 道教全真派宮觀、造像與祖師 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 297.

⁴According to Li Ding's record, in the spring of 1262, three disciples of Song Defang visited him to request an inscription for a stone stele they planned to erect. The stele was installed a few months later. It is unclear why Song's disciples took eight years after the assembly-funeral to create the stele.

were an effective way for specific lineage members to assert their lineage identity, as well as ownership over the founding master's spiritual and material legacy. Such funerals for eminent masters were the first step in the development of a Quanzhen-style ancestor worship, which functioned as the bedrock of a thriving Quanzhen lineage-building movement in thirteenth-century north China.

Lineage building was a point of concern within the thirteenth-century Quanzhen movement as it transitioned into a nationwide monastic order. In the earlier stages of the movement, during the second half of the twelfth century, the notion of a "Quanzhen lineage" existed more as a concept rather than as an institution. However, with the rapid expansion of both the Quanzhen population and the monastic establishments under Mongol rule, the need arose to organize these burgeoning communities on transregional or even national scales. Consequently, Quanzhen lineages evolved from mere conceptual constructs into lived experiences and organizational structures. It is important to note that *Quanzhen lineages* in this article primarily serves as an analytical term referring to the religious and social formation of specific Quanzhen communities that were constructed through the Quanzhen-style ancestor worship.⁵ The establishment of Quanzhen lineages as orderly communities was closely intertwined with Quanzhen leaders' efforts to justify and institutionalize their religion as an orthodox, organized Daoist school with a vast monastic network.

In this article, I explore how Quanzhen Daoists established themselves as an orthodox Daoist school by creating a classic lineage system as a discourse, and more importantly how they brought this discourse to life by constructing lineages as lived experiences, starting from organizing large burial ceremonies for founding masters. While Song Defang himself played a significant role conceptualizing the classical Quanzhen lineage system,⁶ the activities of his disciples across several generations embodied the institutional building of Quanzhen lineages on the ground. As the opening story shows, this lineage-building process was fraught with tensions, negotiations, and competition.

In the following four sections, I first unpack the meaning of *Quanzhen lineages* as a concept and an institution, discussing how the distinctive Quanzhen principle of multi-lineal transmission motivated the reburial practice that characterized many thirteenth-century Quanzhen lineage-building endeavors. The second section explores two significant reburial events, including the one held for Wang Chongyang in 1241, demonstrating how these events established a standardized three-step procedure for the Quanzhen-style ancestor worship. Notably, the first step involved organizing an assembly-funeral for the founding master of a lineage, necessitating the presence of the master's physical remains. The multiple reburials of Ma Danyang 馬丹陽 (1123–84), Wang Chongyang's prominent disciple, which spanned a century, highlight the cultural significance attributed to the remains of esteemed Quanzhen masters. For lineage members, the symbolic value of their founding master's remains connected not only to the master's spiritual legacy but also to his legacy of material wealth, which often included substantial monastic assets. To assert their exclusive control over the

⁵Some scholars have regarded the mid-Ming as the emergence period for Quanzhen lineages. However, this understanding is primarily rooted in the context of late-imperial Daoist lineages, including those of Quanzhen, which are prominently featured in the practice of lineage poems. See Richard G. Wang, *Lineages Embedded in Temple Networks: Daoism and Local Society in Ming China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2022), 40.

⁶Zhang Guangbao 張廣保, *Quanzhenjiao de chuangli yu lishi chuancheng* 全真教的創立與歷史傳承 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2015), 146–49.

master's physical remains, lineage members materialized their ancestor worship through a series of memorial objects established within a hosting monastery. Focusing on the Yongle Palace, which served as the hosting monastery for Song Defang's physical remains and memorial objects, the final section illustrates how the lineage and the monastery developed a symbiotic and mutually reinforcing relationship.

Through accentuating symbolic ties to ancestral masters via recurring burial ceremonies and standardized memorial practices, the initiatives in lineage establishment reconfigured prevailing Quanzhen networks of people and monasteries, while also giving rise to novel ones. Concurrently aligning with the dissemination of a cohesive Quanzhen culture, or ideas and practices typically associated with the Quanzhen, the operation of the Quanzhen networks during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries involved not just the Quanzhen clergy but also a broader sociopolitical world of lay followers and patrons. As a result, they significantly shaped regional interactions and propelled transformations of north China under Mongol rule.

Quanzhen Lineages as a Concept and an Institution

The multiple reburials of a lineage's founding master often arose from a combination of intra-lineage cooperation and competition. The ways that Quanzhen leaders conceptualized the idea of lineage within the broader context of Daoism undoubtedly influenced lineage-making as lived practices on the ground. While bearing similarities to other religious lineage-making practices, Quanzhen Daoists set themselves apart through the principle of multi-lineal transmissions. This transmission principle enabled the existence of numerous major and minor lineages that could still trace their origins back to the same group of immortals and masters, who served as the shared ancestors of the religion.

The understanding of Quanzhen lineages should be situated within the broader contexts of Daoist traditions. The Chinese equivalent of *lineage* is *zong* 宗, which has its roots in the Chinese family system and originally referred to a patrilineal decent group formed on the basis of its reverence for a recognized common ancestor through ritual and/or institutional forms.⁷ This concept has long been used as a longstanding fixture within Daoist traditions, serving to elucidate the intricate interconnections between human beings and the Way (*Dao* 道). As Lowell Skar writes, “

heirs to this Way imagined their sacred learning and the spiritual ties to the Way and its human embodiments as “families” (*jia* 家), “lineages” (*zong* 宗), or “branches” (*pai* 派), whose “patriarchs” or “ancestors” (*zu* 祖) that had emanated from the Way distributed scriptures, talismans (*fu* 符), and ritual systems (*fa* 法) to worthy people.⁸

This idea precisely encapsulates how Quanzhen Daoists perceived their relationship with the Way. They viewed their patriarchs as the founders of a new “family” or “school,” which featured in ascetic trainings of “inner alchemy.”⁹

⁷There is a large body of scholarship on and debate about the definition of lineage in late imperial China. For a brief discussion, see Michael Szonyi, “Lineages and the Making of Contemporary China,” in *Modern Chinese Religion II: 1850–2015*, vol. 1, edited by Vincent Goossaert, Jan Kiely, and John Lagerwey (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 436–90.

⁸Lowell Skar, “Lineages,” in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, edited by Fabrizio Pregadio (New York: Routledge, 2007), 12.

⁹As Zhang Guangbao points out, most Daoist “families” distinguished themselves with their core methods of cultivation, which often derived from one or several of the four basic Daoist cultivation methods

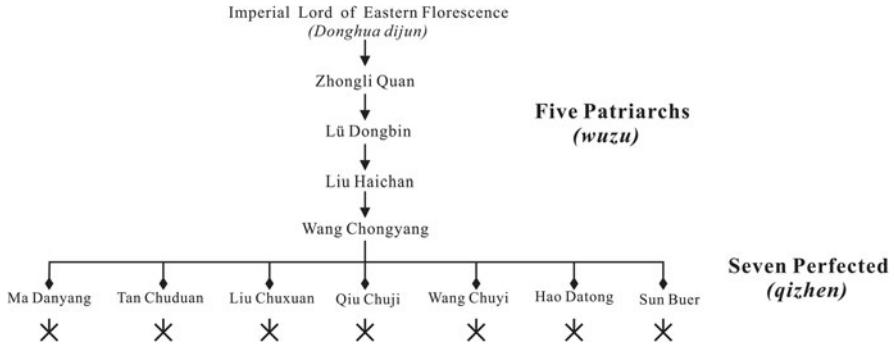


Figure 1. The Quanzhen Lineage Diagram based on the “Five Patriarchs” and the “Seven Perfected.” Drawing by Yu Kang.

Quanzhen masters constructed a coherent Quanzhen lineage system through defining their patriarchs. This lineage system was stabilized in the writings of Quanzhen Daoists of the third and fourth generations, with the invention and canonization of two critical concepts: the “Five Patriarchs” (*wuzu* 五祖) and the “Seven Perfected” (*qizhen* 七真). We can depict this classical Quanzhen lineage system in the lineage diagram presented in Figure 1 and see it in two parts. The first part encompasses a lineal succession among five divine beings, collectively known as the Five Patriarchs. The second part includes continuously expanding lineages of mortal beings springing from the Seven Perfected as major disciples of Wang Chongyang, the last figure of the Five Patriarchs.¹⁰

As an institution, the Quanzhen lineage system is in line with what Vincent Goossaert and Richard Wang have proposed to distinguish Daoist schools and lineages. In Wang’s words, “Schools denote textual tradition with doctrinal and liturgical foundations, whereas lineages, whose Chinese equivalent is *fapai* 法派, designate master-disciple transmissions without texts other than their genealogies.”¹¹ In this respect, Quanzhen lineages were, like other religious lineages, “corporate organizations modeled after biological lineages.”¹² While the master-disciple transmissions among the Five Patriarchs were imagined or constructed in literary and revelational texts, those between Wang Chongyang and the Seven Perfected were based on real and historical connections.

We thus should not understand the classical Quanzhen lineage system as historical “fact,” but recognize its importance as a performance of lineage identity. As John

including “outer alchemy” (*waidan* 外丹), “inner alchemy” (*neidan* 内丹), “talismans” (*fulu* 符籙), and “rituals” (*zhaijiao* 齋醮). See Zhang, *Quanzhenjiao de chuangli yu lishi chuancheng*, 201–32.

¹⁰The Seven Perfected usually include six senior male disciples of Wang Chongyang—Ma Danyang 馬丹陽 (1123–84), Tan Chuduan 譚處端 (1123–85), Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (1148–1227), Liu Chuxuan 劉處玄 (1147–1203), Wang Chuyi 王處一 (1142–1217), and Hao Datong 郝大通 (1140–1212)—and one female disciple Sun Buer 孫不二 (1119–83). Earlier scholarship has pointed out that the designation of the two categories has two lists in the thirteenth century. In the second, and less popular, list, the Five Patriarchs include Laozi and exclude Wang Chongyang, while the Seven Perfected include Wang Chongyang but exclude Sun Buer. See Judith Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature, Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1987), 64–65.

¹¹Wang, *Lineages Embedded in Temple Networks*, 8.

¹²Wang, *Lineages Embedded in Temple Networks*, 6.

McRae has claimed of Chan Buddhism, “Lineage assertions are as wrong as they are strong.”¹³ The insight about the polemical role of lineage as statement tool also applies to Quanzhen Daoism. Indeed, the efforts to establish Quanzhen lineages drew significant inspiration from earlier Chinese religious movements, particularly from the innovative practices of Chan Buddhism in conceptualizing and institutionalizing religious patriarchal lineage.¹⁴ The Quanzhen lineage assertion worked at least in two ways. First, Wang Chongyang’s membership in the divine lineage hinted at the legitimacy of his Quanzhen “family” in the broader Daoist world. Second, the systematization of mortal lineages of Wang Chongyang’s disciples under the “Seven Perfected” scheme helped unify the rapidly expanding Quanzhen order while accommodating internal competition.

By constructing the divine lineage of the “Five Patriarchs,” Quanzhen Daoists inserted their whole lineage system within the mainstream Daoist pantheon. Wang Chongyang and some members of the Seven Perfected had propagated the idea that he received instructions from three Daoist immortals—Zhongli Quan 鐘離權, Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, and Liu Haichan 劉海蟾. Wang Chuyi 王處一 (1142–1217), one of the Seven Perfected, suggested that he also received coaching from Imperial Lord of Eastern Florescence (*Donghua dijun* 東華帝君), a deity from the medieval Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity) tradition of Daoism.¹⁵ In the early thirteenth century, Song Defang theorized the five-patriarch transmission chain that originated from Imperial Lord of Eastern Florescence. In his critical text “Eulogy of Quanzhen Patriarchs” (*Quanzhen liezu fu* 全真列祖賦), Song gave this Shangqing deity a new role as the first Quanzhen patriarch who passed the teachings to the second patriarch Zhongli Quan. Song’s theory was later accepted by all Daoists—not just Quanzhen followers—as orthodoxy. It was not only written into most Quanzhen hagiographies and the Daoist Canon but also endorsed by the Mongol-Yuan court through two imperial edicts issued in 1269 and 1310.¹⁶ Quanzhen Daoists thus absorbed other well-established lineages of traditional Daoism.

Making Imperial Lord of Eastern Florescence the first Quanzhen patriarch was a steppingstone for Quanzhen Daoists to proclaim their lineage not just as one orthodox Daoist “family” but arguably the most distinguished one. Song Defang made the most important contribution to this conceptual leap by promoting Imperial Lord of Eastern Florescence as one of the highest-ranking Daoist deities. By the mid-twelfth century, when Quanzhen teaching emerged, the “Three Clarities and Four Sovereigns” (*sanqing siyu* 三清四御) had been recognized as the supreme deities in the mainstream Daoist

¹³John R. McRae, *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), xix.

¹⁴For Buddhist conceptualization and institutionalization of lineage, see Bernard Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy: A Critical Genealogy of Northern Chan Buddhism*, translated by Phyllis Brooks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

¹⁵Pierre Marsone, “Accounts of the Foundation of Quanzhen Movement, a Hagiographic Treatment of History,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 29 (2001), 95–110.

¹⁶“Chongdao zhaoshu bei” 崇道詔書碑, *Daojia jinshi lue*, 593–94; Zhang, *Quanzhenjiao de chuangli yu lishi chuancheng*, 146–55; Only one Quanzhen hagiography, *Jinlian zhengzong xianyuan xiangzhuang* 金蓮正宗仙源像傳 [Illustrated Biographies of the Orthodox Immortal Stream of the Gold Lotus] by Liu Zhixuan 劉志玄 (fl. 1326) and Xie Xichan 謝西蟾 (fl. 1326), identified Laozi instead of Wang Chongyang as one member of the Five Patriarchs, with the rest of four being the same. See Louis Komjathy, *Cultivating Perfection: Mysticism and Self-Transformation in Early Quanzhen Daoism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 39.

pantheon. The Three Clarities referred to three superior heavens where the three highest deities, known as Celestial Worthies (*tianzun* 天尊), resided. While the three Celestial Worthies became the standard trinity of highest Daoist gods from the sixth century, the identities of the Four Sovereigns—the highest celestial functionary after the Three Clarities—changed in different traditions. Song Defang replaced one of the Four Sovereigns with Imperial Lord of Eastern Florescence, thus consolidating the concept of the first Quanzhen patriarch as one of the highest-ranking Daoist deities.¹⁷ Song's efforts subsequently elevated the entire divine Quanzhen lineage in the Daoist pantheon.

The Quanzhen construction of their divine lineage in the Daoist pantheon undergirded the development of their mortal lineages in the human world. Wang Chongyang and the Seven Perfected are the linchpins who connected the divine and mortal lineages into a coherent Quanzhen lineage system. Wang Chongyang—as the last of the Five Patriarchs—became a legitimate heir to Dao by receiving divine instructions from the four recognized Daoist deities and immortals. The Seven Perfected—as Wang Chongyang's closest disciples—inherited learning and spiritual ties to Dao. They in turn transmitted the Quanzhen teaching to their own disciples, becoming patriarchs of several major mortal lineages.

Accepting Song Defang's theory, Quanzhen Daoists thus established the classic Quanzhen lineage system within the Daoist pantheon under the framework of “Three Clarities and Four Sovereigns,” “Five Patriarchs,” and the “Seven Perfected.”¹⁸ This framework was further materialized and visualized in Quanzhen monasteries through the construction of main halls and painting murals representing those exact three categories and their respective themes. Living in such Quanzhen monasteries, later-generation Quanzhen Daoists continued to form more sub-lineages or branches of the major lineages along the line of the “Seven Perfected.”

Within the lineages and sub-lineages of Quanzhen Daoists, there was a clear influence from Chan Buddhist and earlier Daoist practices regarding organizing teachers and their disciples into quasi-family lineages based on father-son inheritance.¹⁹ The Quanzhen Daoist order, as Vincent Goossaert has argued, allowed and institutionalized multiple transmissions, which resulted in the formation of many major and minor lineages.²⁰ As we can see from the Quanzhen lineage diagram, while the divine lineage was characterized by a single-line succession, the mortal lineages featured in multi-lines succession. This Quanzhen model of lineage transmission resembles the orthodox Chan lineage story formed in the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127). In this story, the Chan lineage went from the Buddha Śākyamuni through a single line of twenty-eight Indian patriarchs and five more Chinese patriarchs. After the famous sixth Chinese patriarch Huineng 慧能 (638–713), the Chan lineage branched out into five different

¹⁷For Song Defang's theoretical reconfiguration of the “Four Sovereigns,” see Jing, *Daojiao Quanzhenpai gongguan zaoxiang yu zushi*, 75–78.

¹⁸For the Quanzhen monastic buildings and murals, see Wu Duantao 吳端濤, *Mengyuan shiqi de Shanxi diqu quanzhenjiao yishu yanjiu* 蒙元時期山西地區全真教藝術研究 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2019).

¹⁹See Alan Cole, “Upside Down/Right Side Up: A Revisionist History of Buddhist Funerals in China,” *History of Religions* 35.4 (1996), 307–38, particularly 333–34. This Chan lineage model had influenced not just other Buddhist schools but also Neo-Confucian and Daoist movements in devising their own lineage transmission schemes and institutionalizing their quasi-family community relations.

²⁰Vincent Goossaert, “The Invention of an Order: Collective Identity in Thirteenth-Century Quanzhen Taoism,” *Journal of Chinese Religion* 29 (2001), 114.

“families” or “traditions,” all of which could be traced back to one of two disciples of Huineng.²¹ Wang Chongyang, like Huineng, occupied a critical juncture between the single-line and multi-line transmission. However, unlike the mature form of Chan lineages in the Northern Song, where a Chan master could give transmission to his students only when serving as an abbot at a public monastery,²² the master-to-disciple transmission among Quanzhen Daoists did not have this institutional confinement. Additionally, unlike the Zhengyi 正一 (Orthodox Unity) Daoism order active in the south, which combined blood and religious lineages,²³ Quanzhen lineage did not involve blood relations, as the Quanzhen order upheld celibacy and monasticism.²⁴ In theory, Quanzhen teachers could transmit their teachings to as many disciples as they wanted.

The Quanzhen conceptualization of their lineage system meant that there could be an infinite number of minor lineages created by the major disciples of the Seven Perfected and their respective disciples. However, in reality, the number of established Quanzhen lineages was limited by the institutional capacity required for the creation of a new lineage. Quanzhen lineages were often headquartered at a major Quanzhen monastery, where the ancestral tablet of the founder of the lineage was honored, while lineage members spread to many more monastic establishments in different localities. Goossaert estimated that by the late thirteenth century there were eight major lineages, counting some 250 monastic establishments each, and thirty minor lineages, counting 100 establishments.²⁵ Song Defang’s lineage was one of the eight major ones.

Embracing multiple lateral lineages meant that each generation of Quanzhen clergy asserted their lineage identity and sustained their lines of succession. To achieve this objective, as I will discuss in detail later, gaining access to the founding master’s remains was instrumental. The process of Quanzhen lineage-building encompassed two dimensions: the intangible spiritual transmission and the tangible material transmission of monastic establishments as collective assets. Both dimensions were essential for a major or minor lineage to establish itself within the vast and competitive Quanzhen order, as well as to foster a sense of cohesion among lineage members. These dimensions were primarily anchored in the creation of Quanzhen-style ancestor worship, which commenced with the organization of an assembly-funeral first for Wang Chongyang and most members of the Seven Perfected. Starting from the mid-thirteenth century, such practices extended to commemorate a founding master of a specific sub-lineage that identified with a disciple or grand disciple of the Seven Perfected. While the former reinforced the collective Quanzhen identity and the cohesion of the entire Quanzhen order, the latter facilitated the development of sub-lineages as self-contained Quanzhen entities.

Assembly-Funerals for Wang Chongyang and Qiu Chuji

Two significant reburial events in the early thirteenth century established a standard procedure of creating the Quanzhen-style ancestor worship. They were largely

²¹Morten Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2008), 13–14.

²²Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, 10, 39.

²³Vincent Goossaert, *Heavenly Masters: Two Thousand Years of the Daoist State* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2022).

²⁴Jinping Wang, “Cultivation, Salvation, and Obligation: Quanzhen Daoist Thoughts on Family Abandonment,” *History of Religions* 62.2 (2022), 115–55.

²⁵Goossaert, “The Invention of an Order,” 117. For the integration of three major Quanzhen lineages and monastic headquarters, see Zhang, *Quanzhenjiao de chuangli yu lishi chuancheng*, 16–83.

performative and drew hundreds and thousands of participants from both the religious and mundane realms. They were also hybrid in the sense that, instead of inventing their ritual programs, Quanzhen Daoists incorporated existing burial and mourning norms from both traditional Daoism and Confucianism. Among the funeral and memorial practices, three were most characteristic and significant: (1) organizing an iconic ceremony of assembly-funeral, (2) building memorial shrines, and (3) installing commemorative steles. Completing this standard procedure by specific lineage members led to their control over their founding master's legacy as well as helping to reinforce intra-lineage solidarity. The significant stakes involved provided motivations for Quanzhen Daoists in later generations to undertake this process multiple times through reburial.

Wang Chongyang's funeral in the 1170s paved the way for the early development of the Quanzhen-style ancestor worship, in which reburials were heavily featured. Early Quanzhen inscriptions suggest that, right before Wang Chongyang died in 1170 in Kaifeng, Henan, he told his disciples to bury him at Liujiang village in Shaanxi, where he had practiced the cultivation techniques allegedly passed on to him by two immortals.²⁶ Following their master's last will, Ma Danyang, Tan Chuduan, Liu Chuxuan, and Qiu Chuji temporarily buried Wang Chongyang in Kaifeng before heading to Liujiang to build a new tomb. After the tomb was complete, they raised enough money by begging to bring Wang Chongyang's coffin from Henan to Shaanxi to rebury him at the designated site.²⁷ They also built a thatched cottage at the gravesite as their dwelling as they guarded their master's tomb for three years, which was the typical mourning ritual a son needed to perform for his deceased father in the Confucian tradition.²⁸ This episode shows that the Quanzhen practices of multiple burials and three-year mourning had already begun in the early stage of the movement.

However, it was not Wang Chongyang's funeral in the 1170s but rather that of Qiu Chuji in 1228 that introduced the iconic Quanzhen practices of organizing assembly-funerals and building specific memorial halls for eminent masters. Qiu Chuji's assembly-funeral not only attested to his charisma as a religious leader but also to the accumulating clout of Quanzhen Daoism as a transformative religion in a society that had been turned on its head by the Mongol conquest. The whole process of the funeral was brimming with performances that signaled tremendous Quanzhen influence in the northern Chinese society during the Jin-Yuan transition. Of course, the assembly-funeral was not a Quanzhen invention. The term "*huizang* 會葬" had already appeared in ancient Chinese texts, meaning "gathering together to bury [the deceased]." In practice, however, the Quanzhen style of assembly-funeral was distinct. It gathered not only Quanzhen Daoists but also elite and ordinary lay followers to hold a grand funeral ceremony to bury or rebury an eminent Quanzhen master. The extravagance of this event was in direct contrast to the ascetic origins of the Quanzhen movement but nevertheless became a crucial ritual for Quanzhen Daoists.

A grand ceremony for burying Qiu Chuji required significant human and material resources. To prepare for it, Yin Zhiping 尹志平 (1169–1251), who succeeded Qiu Chuji as the new Quanzhen patriarch, mobilized hundreds of Quanzhen Daoists and followers traveling from Shanxi to Yanjing (present-day Beijing) to donate money

²⁶Yu Yingmao 俞應卯, "Huxian Qinduzhen chongxiu Zhidaoguan bei" 鄠縣秦渡鎮重修至道觀碑, *Daojia jinshi lue*, 479.

²⁷Jing, *Daojiao Quanzhenpai gongguan zaoxiang yu zushi*, 179.

²⁸Wang Zongyu 王宗昱, "Quanzhenjiao de rujiao chengfen" 全真教的儒教成分, *Wenshi zhishi* 2006.12, 5.

and materials to build the magnificent Chushun Hall 處順堂 (Hall of Residing in Ease) within the Great Changchun Palace 大長春宮 (Great Palace of Eternal Spring), the national headquarters of the Quanzhen order.²⁹ North China at the time was still devastated by the Jin–Mongol wars with huge swaths of people suffering from violence, hunger, and poverty. In this broader sociopolitical context, the Quanzhen ability to mobilize the needed funds and resources from diverse regions for Qiu Chuji’s funeral was strong testimony to the order’s increasing influence in society.

Building the Chushun Hall was the beginning of the Quanzhen tradition of establishing specific memorial halls to enshrine a deceased master’s coffin. During the assembly-funeral, the Chushun Hall served as the central space of mourning for Qiu Chuji by a large crowd of Quanzhen Daoists and other participants. When the three-day ceremony began in the seventh month of 1228, Quanzhen Daoists opened Qiu Chuji’s coffin placed in the Chushun Hall, allowing mourners, including government officials, Confucian literati, Buddhist and Daoist monks and nuns, and other laity, to view the deceased master the last time. Each day, the Great Changchun Palace received more than ten thousand mourners. Even after the three-day ceremony ended and Qiu Chuji’s body was finally buried, there were still several thousand Daoists and ten times more lay followers present.³⁰ The capacity to accommodate this large number of visitors indicated the magnificent scale of the Chushun Hall and by large the Great Changchun Palace as the gravesite and memorial center for Qiu Chuji.

The 1228 assembly-funeral was more than a normal event of burying a religious leader; it became an important political and social event, as well. Indeed, the official presider of the funeral was not even Yin Zhiping but rather Governor Wang Juchuan 王巨川, a powerful warlord in north China and a major patron of Quanzhen Daoists at the Great Changchun Palace. The governor brought armies to serve as security guards for the assembly-funeral within and outside the city of Yanjing.³¹ The enormous size of the event indicates that the ceremony likely spilled over from the Changchun Palace to the urban and suburban spaces of Yanjing, requiring the dispatch of military forces for security concerns. In other words, the entire city was galvanized for the spectacular funeral ceremony for the eminent Quanzhen patriarch Qiu Chuji. At the social level, this event was a high-profile demonstration of the Quanzhen connections to the powerful and its attractions to the ordinary. It imbued its contemporary participants and observers an indelible impression of marvel. Neither Wang Chongyang nor other members of the Seven Perfected, including Wang Chuyi who had received imperial patronage from Jin-dynasty emperors, had ever generated such a profound sociopolitical impact immediately after death. In this respect, the funeral of Qiu Chuji was a transformative religious event that attested to and fortified new modes of interaction between the Quanzhen order and the lay world during the Jin–Yuan transition.

At the ritual level, the 1228 assembly-funeral for Qiu Chui mixed existing Confucianized family practices and popular rituals of traditional Daoism. Yin Zhiping, who regarded Qiu Chuji as his fatherly master (*fushi* 父師), invoked Confucian familial ethics of filial piety to justify his proposal to build the extravagant memorial hall to enshrine Qiu’s remains. Qiu’s disciples all put on coarse hemp clothes

²⁹Chen Shike 陳時可, “Yanjing Baiyun guan chushuntang huzang ji” 燕京白雲觀處順堂會葬記, *Daojia jinshi lue*, 458.

³⁰Chen Shike 陳時可, “Changchun zhenren benxing bei” 長春真人本行碑, *Daojia jinshi lue*, 457.

³¹Li Zhichang 李志常, *Changchun zhenren xiyou ji* 長春真人西遊記, in *Qiu Chuji ji* 丘處機集, edited by Zhao Weidong 趙衛東 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2005), 402–3.

(*mafu* 麻服) to mourn their master upon Qiu's death. The hemp clothes were the mourning apparel that only the lineal kin of the deceased would wear in Chinese funerals of the laity.³² Using the hemp clothes as Quanzhen Daoist mourning apparel emphasized the equivalence of master-disciple relations to father-son relations. Meanwhile, the three-day funeral ceremony also included popular Daoist rituals at a Daoist altar. The central part of this Daoist liturgical program was the Pure Offering Ritual of the Lingbao tradition (*Lingbao qingjiao* 靈寶清醮); it was performed after midnight of the third day. Clearly, Quanzhen Daoists incorporated the offering rituals of the Lingbao tradition—which had become orthodox Daoist rituals for centuries—into their liturgical program for funerals.³³

The assembly-funeral for Qiu Chuji, as a new burial practice invented by Quanzhen Daoists, aroused controversy both within and beyond the Quanzhen order in the early thirteenth century. The fact that Quanzhen Daoists threw an exorbitant number of resources into the funeral raises two questions. Was it necessary to hold such a grand funeral at a time of devastating political and social turbulence? Wasn't the extravagance of the funeral against the ascetic and austere principles of Quanzhen teaching?³⁴ Contemporaries of Yin Zhiping asked the same questions. Some sided with Quanzhen Daoists to defend the lavish funeral for Qiu Chuji by arguing for the compatibility of Confucian and Daoist principles on this practice; others criticized the practice for contravening essential Quanzhen principles.

An inscription recording the assembly-funeral of Qiu Chuji, written by a Confucian scholar named Chen Shike 陳時可 in 1228, explains both religious and social rationale for the reburial rites.³⁵ Within the concluding lyrics eulogizing Qiu Chuji, Chen depicted the separation of the master's spirit and body after death, highlighting the symbolic value of the physical remains. As Chen wrote:

The Master rode the cloud to ascend to the country of divine lords	師乘雲兮帝之鄉
He left his divine relics at Baoguang [the site where Qiu died]	蛻仙骨兮留葆光
When reburying the master, people opened his jade coffin	將葬茲兮啟玉棺
The appearance [of the corpse] looks as if the master is still alive, and its hair and skin are still complete	貌如生兮發膚完
People dressed [the corpse] with new clothing and hat	既更其衣兮又新其冠

³²Li, *Changchun zhenren xiyou ji*, 402.

³³Li, *Changchun zhenren xiyou ji*, 402. For the use of traditional Daoist offerings (*jiao* 醮) rituals by Quanzhen Daoists, see Komjathy, *Cultivating Perfection*, 53–54.

³⁴The excavation of the 1265 tomb of Feng Daozhen 馮道真, a Daoist leader in Datong, provides archaeological evidence of the opulence in some Daoist burials during the thirteenth century. See Datong shi wenwu chenlieguan 大同市文物陳列館 and Shanxi Yungang wenwu guanlisuo 山西雲岡文物管理所, "Shanxi sheng Datong shi Yuandai Feng Daozhen, Wang Qing mu qingli jianbao," 山西省大同市元代馮道真、王青墓清理簡報, *Wenwu* 1962.10, 34–42. Although the authors of this archeological report describe Feng a Quanzhen Daoist, Bai Bin disagrees and believes that Feng more likely belonged to an old Daoist school featuring the use of talismans. See Bai Bin 白彬, "Shanxi diqu Jin Yuan daoshi mu yanjiu" 山西地區金元道士墓研究, in *Daojiao tuxiang, kaogu yu yishi* 道教圖像、考古與儀式, edited by Li Zhitian 黎志添 (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2016), 155–56.

³⁵Chen was staying at the Great Changchun Palace when Yin Zhiping, in the autumn of 1228, asked him, twice, to write stele inscriptions for Qiu Chuji. The first one was Qiu's biography, and the second one was the record of the assembly-funeral.

People know that [the physical body of] the master does not decay	人所知兮其不朽
People do not know that [the spirit of] the master has achieved never-ending longevity ³⁶	所不知者兮不亡之壽

The detail about the physical body remaining undecayed a year after the master's death similarly appears in the biographical stele of Qiu Chuji, also written by Chen Shike around the same time.³⁷ The theme of an undecayed corpse was a frequently used literary trope by authors of Daoist texts, employed to describe the deceased master's indisputable attainment of immortality. Chen Shike's lyrics emphasize the importance of Qiu Chuji's undecayed physical remains as a symbol of his transformation from an ordinary human body to a spirit immortal. This transformation, as scholars have discussed, was a fundamental aspect of Quanzhen Daoist internal alchemy practice and accomplishment.³⁸ Using the term "divine relics" (*xiangu* 仙骨) to describe Qiu Chuji's physical remains underlines their sacred nature. Reburial rites thus provided Quanzhen communities an opportunity to showcase the effectiveness of their alchemical practices. The necessary step of reopening the coffin of a deceased master allowed the undecayed body—it was claimed—to serve as persuasive evidence.

Siding with Yin Zhiping, Chen Shike also proposed an eloquent argument, which represented the most common social justification at the time for Quanzhen funeral practices modeled on those of lay families. In the inscription, Chen recorded a conversation with an unidentified person, who criticized Yin Zhiping for organizing the high-profile assembly-funeral for Qiu Chuji while mocking Chen's endorsement of Yin's undertaking. The person invoked the reference of Zhuangzi's objection to his disciples' attempt to give him a lavish burial after death, suggesting that disciples of Qiu Chuji went against the fundamental teaching of Daoism. Chen rebutted with what he clarified "Our Way of Confucius and Mencius." He praised the Quanzhen adoption of the fundamental Confucian funeral norm of "*shenzhong zhuiyuan* 慎終追遠." This phrase, originating from the Confucian *Analects*, means one should carefully attend to the funeral rites of parents and follow them with due sacrifices, even when they are long gone. In his defense, Chen juxtaposed Daoist principles (*li* 理) with worldly practices (*shi* 事), contending that it was fitting for Qiu Chuji's disciples to uphold both. Essentially, while Qiu Chuji, as a genuinely enlightened Daoist master like Zhuangzi, would never have expected an extravagant burial upon his demise, his disciples were tasked not only with imbibing otherworldly Daoist principles from their master but also with engaging with the terrestrial practice of *shenzhong zhuiyuan* to express gratitude towards their master.³⁹ In this respect, we may describe the Daoist funeral Yin Zhiping organized for Qiu Chuji a "Confucianized funeral" to highlight two of its traits: material extravagance and the inherent Confucian funeral norm of "*shenzhong zhuiyuan*."

³⁶Chen Shike, "Yanjing Baiyunguan chushuntang huizangji," 459.

³⁷Chen Shike, "Changchun zhenren benxing bei," 457.

³⁸Stephen Eskildsen, *The Teachings and Practices of the Early Quanzhen Taoist Masters* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2004), 139–53; Komjathy, *Cultivating Perfection*, 244–45.

³⁹Chen Shike, "Yanjing Baiyunguan chushuntang huizangji," 458–59. Notably, Yin Zhiping, as a Quanzhen leader, shared the similar view when commenting on the assembly-funeral for Song Defang in 1248, emphasizing the human feelings (*renqing* 人情) of disciples toward master. See Li Ding, "Xuandu zhidao piyun zhenren Song tianshi citang beiming bing xu," 548.

Extending Chen Shike's line of thought uncovers a paradox embedded in the ideological framework of the Confucianized funeral Quanzhen Daoists performed for Qiu Chuji. Although Quanzhen Daoists should, in theory, forego all worldly emotions and mortal bodies, this principle applied only to the Daoists themselves and their biological family—but not to members of their Quanzhen religious family, especially their masters. Instead, they needed to explicitly express their grateful, filial emotions towards their master and honor the master's mortal body in a worldly fashion by organizing a lavish burial and building a memorial shrine. In other words, it was incumbent upon them to treat their deceased masters the same way as the laity treated their ancestors.

The logic of ancestralizing and honoring one's Quanzhen master through a Confucian style funeral intended for parents was particularly paradoxical when considering how Quanzhen masters themselves had refused to participate in funerals for their deceased parents. The hagiography of Ma Danyang in *Qizhen xianzhuan* 七真仙傳 reports that in 1175, when Ma was in Shaanxi, his younger brother sent him a letter asking him to come home to attend the funeral ceremony for burying their parents.⁴⁰ Ma responded by saying “What you bury is merely the skeletons [of our parents], but what I deliver are their spirits. Our actions are different but our intentions of repaying their favor are the same.” (汝所葬者骨, 予所度者神, 所行之跡有以異, 而報德之心無以異也). While Quanzhen Daoists used the concept of filial piety to justify their moral obligations to their biological parents and religious masters, they ironically applied Confucian-style funerals for their masters and Daoist-style ones for their parents.

This irony, nonetheless, pointed to the necessity of Confucianized funeral and memorial practices for ordering the Quanzhen Daoist community at all levels. Importantly, the Confucianized funeral helped establish a hierarchical order within the expanding Quanzhen community by emphasizing the supreme status of a master. As a Quanzhen Daoist wrote in a 1263 inscription:

Ever since Master Changchun [Qiu Chuji], the National Preceptor, outstandingly comprehended Dao and responded to the imperial summons [of Chinggis Khan], he ordered the construction of Daoist palaces and abbeys, propagated [Quanzhen] teachings, determined the hierarchy between the superior and inferior, and solemnized rituals for serving the alive and burying the dead.

蓋自我長春國師卓然了道，應召開闢以來，立宮觀，宣教法，正尊卑之分，嚴生事死葬之禮。⁴¹

Norms of hierarchy and rituals of serving the living and burying the dead were hallmarks of Confucian ethics in Chinese society. In establishing a new monastic order, Quanzhen leaders adopted such Confucian norms and rituals to regulate their communal life, a new life different from but closely emulating many aspects of a natural family.

⁴⁰*Qizhen xianzhuan* 七真仙傳, compiled and edited by Li Ding 李鼎 et al., 1 vol., manuscript held in the Taiwan University Library, Taipei. The manuscript is included in the Collection of the Mountain House of Black Stone (Wushi shanfang wenku 烏石山房文庫). All passages quoted in this article are based on the original text of *Qizhen xianzhuan* that I transcribed from the manuscript copy at the Taiwan University Library in June 2018. For the discussion of *Qizhen xianzhuan*, see Wang, “Cultivation, Salvation, and Obligation,” 131–33.

⁴¹Yang Xiyang 楊希顏, “Sanlao tonggong bei” 三老同宮碑, *Daojia jinshi lue*, 561.

Solemn funeral rituals for deceased Quanzhen masters became a critical component in establishing a strong ancestor worship crucial to Quanzhen lineage building. Yin Zhiping's innovations in burying Qiu Chuji were reenacted in a 1241 reburial of Wang Chongyang, marking the establishment of the distinctive Quanzhen funeral tradition within the entire Quanzhen order. By the time of 1241, Quanzhen Daoists had transformed the thatched cottage near Wang's tomb at Liujiang village to an expanding monastic institution, the Chongyang Palace, also known as the "Ancestral Court" (*zut-ing* 祖庭).⁴² In 1241, Yin Zhiping, as the retired Quanzhen Patriarch, came to the Chongyang Palace to preside over the assembly-funeral of reburying Wang Chongyang in the newly built White Cloud Hall (*Baiyun dian* 白雲殿), which served as Wang's memorial hall. This ceremony also had an enormous size, with tens of thousands of participants from both the Quanzhen and lay communities.⁴³ After the ceremony, Yin Zhiping ordered Feng Zhiheng 馮志亨, the second chief of the Quanzhen church, to take charge of making an assembly-funeral stele to commemorate the event.⁴⁴

Given Wang Chongyang's supreme status as the founding patriarch of the Quanzhen order, the 1241 reburial event accelerated the formation of a mature Quanzhen institution of burial rites. According to a recent study by Song Xueli, in the decades following the 1241 event, Yin Zhiping and other Quanzhen leaders organized more reburial events to bring the remains of distinguished Quanzhen masters to one of the two most prestigious collective burial grounds, which are commonly known as "Graveyard of Immortals' Remains" (*Xiantui yuan* 仙蛻園) in Quanzhen sources. One was located near the Chongyang Palace on Mount Zhongnan in Shaanxi, and the other was next to the Wuhua Abbey 五華觀 (Abbey of Five Florescence) of Mount Wuhua 五華山, north of Yanjing. Wang Changyang's early disciples and several direct disciples of the Seven Perfected, especially Ma Danyang, were buried or reburied at the graveyard of the Chongyang Palace, which was a privilege for accompanying the tomb of Wang Chongyang. The graveyard of Mount Wuhua, on the other hand, became the resting place for many disciples of Qiu Chuji and those who had served mostly at the Changchun Palace in Yanjing, especially after Yin Zhiping was buried there in 1251.⁴⁵

Song Xueli's findings align with the main argument of this article: the reburials of many eminent Quanzhen masters were closely tied to the Quanzhen concerns over emerging lineages that could generate tensions within the collective Quanzhen order. To enhance the cohesion of the two major lineages of Ma Danyang and Qiu Chuji that dominated the Chongyang Palace in Shaanxi and the Changchun Palace in Yanjing, respectively, as Song Xueli argues, Yin Zhiping organized the relocation

⁴²The Seven Perfected and their disciples first expanded the cottage to a state-sanctioned Daoist abbey in the late Jin and eventually the magnificent Chongyang Palace in 1238 with the imperial approval of the Mongol ruler. Liu Zuqian 劉祖謙, "Zhongnanshan Chongyang zushi xianji ji" 終南山重陽祖師仙跡記, *Daojia jinshi lue*, 461; Meng Panlin 孟攀麟, "Shifang Chongyang wanshou gong ji" 十方重陽萬壽宮記, in *Jin Yuan Quanzhenjiao shike xinbian* 金元全真教石刻新編, edited by Wang Zongyu 王宗昱 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2005), 69.

⁴³Meng Panlin, "Shifang Chongyang wanshou gong ji," 69.

⁴⁴Li Zhiquan 李志全, "Qinghe yandao xuande zhenren xianji zhi bei" 清和演道玄德真人仙跡之碑, *Daojia jinshi lue*, 540.

⁴⁵Song Xueli 宋學立, "Quanzhen sangzhi yu zongzu rentong de goujian" 全真喪制與宗祖認同的構建, *Zongjiao xue yanjiu* 2023.5, 52–58.

of the tombs of several of Ma Danyang's disciples from their original sites to the graveyard of Mount Wuhua in 1245. While both graveyards at the Chongyang Palace and Mt. Wuhua accommodated tombs of Quanzhen masters from different lineages to promote the collective Quanzhen identity and heal divisions among lineages, the arrangement of tombs in general followed both generational and lineage lines.⁴⁶ As burial rites became a significant component in the Quanzhen undertaking of identity building, they were inherently connected to the concurrent process of institutionalizing emerging major lineages and sub-lineages.

The 1241 event of reburying Wang Chongyang consolidated the model of burying, reburying, and memorializing an eminent Quanzhen master as a lineage founder. The three-step standard procedure spoke to the physical, material, and spatial dimensions of Quanzhen lineage building in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These dimensions will be explored more fully in the following two sections. The physical dimension was tied to the physical body of the deceased master, who was worshipped as a lineage founder. The material and spatial dimensions, on the other hand, centered on three specific environments where the body was rested, memorialized, and worshipped: a tomb that contained the physical body, a memorial shrine that roofed the tomb and enshrined a spirit tablet or a portrait of the deceased master, and a monastery that hosted the tomb and shrine. All three elements were critical not just in lineage building as a collective enterprise, but also in inter-lineage or intra-lineage negotiations. As I show below, completing the three-step procedure to create the ancestor worship of a Quanzhen master was not always neat, nor was it always amicable.

Competitions over Ma Danyang's Remains

As disciples claimed the spiritual legacy of a founding master through the possession of his physical remains, it often led to heated rivalry within different Quanzhen communities, as they fought for command over the founder's body. This process was challenging when it ran counter to other traditions, such as the kinship practice of burying one's ancestor in their native land and family graveyard. Competition and even conflicts arose around some eminent masters' physical remains, which, as discussed earlier, were commonly considered sacred by Quanzhen followers. In addition to the relics' value as religious symbols, people within and beyond the Quanzhen order tried to monopolize them also for the significant cultural and material values attached to them, as we will see further below. Thus all reburials, especially those in the form of grand assembly-funerals described above, were opportunities for a specific group of individuals to make a public statement about their ownership of the remains and the values associated with them.

The century-long ordeal of Ma Danyang's remains illustrates diverse collisions surrounding Quanzhen ancestor worship. Some collisions occurred between different branches of Ma Danyang's lineage, while others took place between Quanzhen Daoists based in the monastery and the laity based in the family. Ma Danyang's religious disciples and biological descendants competed with one another to claim his physical remains, whether through lawsuits or theft.⁴⁷ They did so to fulfill their filial

⁴⁶Song, "Quanzhen sangzhi yu zongzu rentong de goujian," 55–56.

⁴⁷The symbolic and sacred nature of a religious saint's relics was commonly perceived in many societies across time and space, as was the theft of relics. For a classic study of relic thefts, See Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978; 1990).

devotions to Ma Danyang, while also promoting the authority of the monastery or solidarity with their kinship group. In other words, as ancestor worship was crucial in lineage building for both Quanzhen Daoist and kinship groups, the ways in which Ma Danyang was buried and memorialized had a close bearing on who could reap the benefits. It was against this socio-religious backdrop that the drama of Ma Danyang's repeated reburials unfolded.

Wang Chongyang's death-bed instruction gave Ma Danyang a special position among Wang's disciples. Before his death, Wang Chongyang left his last poem to his four closest disciples. The poem, recorded in *Qizhen xianzhuan*, reads:

I have a younger brother, a nephew, and two sons;	一弟一姪兩個兒
We, the five carefree men, have cultivated ourselves.	和予五逸做修持
Having formed the true otherworldly relatives;	結為物外真親眷
We free ourselves from the mortal body belonging to the dusty world.	擺脫塵中假合尸

This poem demonstrates that Quanzhen Daoists, from the very beginning, adopted a family metaphor in their self-fashioning of intra-community relations. Wang Chongyang announced his close disciples as his true family members and differentiated them not by age or generation but by the latter's degree in religious cultivation. A later Quanzhen inscription about Ma Danyang explicitly states that Wang Chongyang called Ma his "younger brother."⁴⁸ By addressing Ma Danyang as his "younger brother" instead of "nephew" or "son," Wang Chongyang clearly did not consider Ma an ordinary disciple but as "Wang's heir for leading the Quanzhen movement."⁴⁹ Subsequently, Tan, Liu, and Qiu addressed Ma not as "elder brother" (*shixiong* 師兄) but as "uncle master" (*shushi* 叔師).⁵⁰ With Ma Danyang being the second Quanzhen patriarch designated by Wang Chongyang, the later competition over his body became significant for Quanzhen Daoists.

As a devoted disciple of Wang Chongyang, Ma Danyang himself faithfully adhered to his master's teachings of detachment from the mortal world. Seeing his body as the last piece of ties to his sanguineous family, he was determined to sever this tie. After completing the three-year mourning for his master in 1174, Ma Danyang continued to stay at the thatched cottage he and his colleagues built during the mourning period. Ma wrote the four-character calligraphy of "[My] Heart Dies at the Ancestral Court" (*Zuting xinsi* 祖庭心死) to express his determined will to forever stay with his master.⁵¹ Sometime between 1174 and 1182, Ma Danyang wrote a lyric poem to express his resolution:

I pledge not to return home to the east;	我今誓不東歸去
But to die in the west, in the land of Qin.	死在西秦

⁴⁸Zhang Zhongshou 張仲壽, "Danyang zhenren guizang ji" 丹陽真人歸葬記, *Daojia jinshi lue*, 740.

⁴⁹Marson, "Accounts of the Foundation of Quanzhen Movement," 101.

⁵⁰Wang Liyong 王利用, "Quanzhen dierdai Danyang baoyi wuwei zhenren Ma zongshi daoxing bei" 全真第二代丹陽抱一無為真人馬宗師道行碑, *Daojia jinshi lue*, 641.

⁵¹Li Daoqian 李道謙, *Ganshui xianyuan lu* 甘水仙源錄, in *Quanzhen shizhuan wuzhong jijiao* 全真史傳五種集校, edited by Gao Liyang 高麗楊 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2020), 1.177.

I would rather have my bones covered in dust;	骸骨雖塵
Than let my sons and grandsons bury me by the coast. ⁵²	不與兒孫葬海濱

Preferring to die and be buried in Shaanxi instead of his coastal hometown in Shandong, Ma Danyang chose his religious family over his biological family for his afterlife. Fully aware of what a deceased man's physical body meant for his biological descendants, he abandoned his kinship family a second time by depriving his sons and grandsons of the chance to fulfill their filial duty to him. And yet, despite these intentions, that was not what ended up happening.

Ma Danyang would have been buried near Wang Chongyang's tomb if he had not left Shaanxi in 1182. In the winter of 1181, he received a government note ordering him to return to his native place. The Jurchen-Jin government implemented this policy to control the expanding Daoist religions at the time. Ma Danyang found himself in a dilemma. His high-profile position as the second Quanzhen patriarch, had attracted too much attention from the Jin government. Thus, the stakes were high should he choose to defy the government order. However, leaving might have meant never having another chance to come back to his master's tomb and die at the Ancestral Court. Originally, he expressed in a poem that he would rather die than submit, but eventually, he did submit.⁵³ He left several of his disciples, whose low status kept them off the radar of the wary government, behind to take care of the Ancestral Court. He himself embarked on the trip eastward to return to his hometown Ninghai 寧海, a coastal county in today's Shandong province. It seemed that Ma Danyang would have been buried near his biological family upon his death after all.

Yet, Ma Danyang's burial became a remarkable drama; he was reburied four times over the span of more than a century—once by his sons and grandsons and three times by Quanzhen Daoists. The tension surrounding Ma Danyang's burial centered on whether he should be buried at the site he himself designated. According to two stele inscriptions concerning Ma Danyang's burial, when he passed by the Youxian Abbey 遊仙觀 in Laiyang 萊陽 county on his way to Ninghai county in 1182, he told the people around him that the abbey would be his final resting place. After that, he stopped visiting other places. When he died the following year, Liu Chuxuan and Wang Chuyi, two members of the Seven Perfected, presided over the funeral ceremony for Ma Danyang and buried him in a gravesite east of the abbey.⁵⁴ In the first month of 1185, Liu Xianwu 劉顯武, who had befriended Ma Danyang and was serving as the magistrate of Laiyang, installed a stone stele to record Ma Danyang's death, which was wrapped in many miracle stories about Ma's several revelations to his followers upon death. This was the earliest source mentioning Ma's initial burial at the Youxian Abbey.⁵⁵ It appeared that all was said and done, that Ma Danyang had met his final resting place according to his own will, and the miraculous stories about his

⁵²Ma Yu, "Bu suanzi" 卜算子, in *Ma Yu ji* 馬鈺集, edited by Zhao Weidong 趙衛東 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2005), 157.

⁵³Ma Yu, "Jingzhaofu diefa huanxiang, gu zuo shishi yi xie tongjun" 京兆府牒發還鄉，故作是詩以謝統軍，"Ji meng diefa budeyi er bie Jingzhao, gu zuo shishi ye" 既蒙牒發不得已而別京兆，故作是詩也，*Ma Yu ji*, 20.

⁵⁴Zhang Zhongshou, "Danyang zhenren guizang ji," 740; Song Fu 宋馱, "Chongxiu danyangdian ji" 重修丹陽殿記, *Jin Yuan Quanzhenjiao shike xinbian*, 63–64.

⁵⁵Zhang Ziyi 張子翼, "Danyang zhenren Magong dengzhen ji" 丹陽真人馬公登真記, *Daojia jinshi lue*, 433–34.

ascendence to immortality had been well preserved and transmitted. Yet soon thereafter conflicts among different forces began to unfold over Ma Danyang's remains.

First, Ma Danyang's followers in Shandong were put on edge by a rumor that Ma's followers in Shaanxi had secretly stolen the master's remains. This rumor was recorded in *Qizhen xianzhuan*, the authoritative Quanzhen hagiographies of Wang Chongyang and his six close male disciples. Ma Danyang's biography in this text mentions an anecdote full of sensational details. In 1185, two years after he was buried east of the Youxian Abbey, local people suspected that Ma's disciples and followers in Shaanxi had come to Shandong and snatched his corpse. Because the locals were increasingly upset by this possible crime, the same county magistrate Liu Xianwu launched an investigation, digging out and opening Ma's coffin to appease the public sentiment. Witnesses marveled at Ma Danyang's body, which, after two years, still looked like it did when he was alive. Somehow it had not decomposed at all! The locals then happily dressed Ma Danyang's corpse with new clothing and reburied it in the original tomb. It is possible that *Qizhen xianzhuan* records the rumor of corpse snatching mainly for the sake of inducing the miracle of Ma's undecayed body. This miracle would subsequently attest to the effectiveness of the Quanzhen cultivation regimen in achieving immortality, as discussed earlier. But the very fact that such a rumor gained traction and was even documented in *Qizhen xianzhuan* alerts us to the significance of the remains in the myth associated with Ma Danyang.

The snatching of Ma Danyang's corpse did eventually happen, and it happened twice: first through legal channels and a second time through outright theft. Several years after Ma Danyang's death, his sons and grandsons brought a lawsuit to the local government, demanding to have Ma's remains back. Winning the lawsuit, the Mas relocated Ma Danyang's body from the Youxian Abbey to Ninghai and reburied him in the family's ancestral graveyard.⁵⁶ Clearly, Ma Danyang's body still meant a great deal to his biological descendants. The fact that Ma Danyang abandoned his family did not necessarily mean that his children accepted the implication that they had cut ties with their father and thus ended their filial obligations to Ma Danyang. For Ma's sons and grandsons, only by having Ma Danyang's body buried within the family's ancestral graveyard could they perform proper funeral and mourning rituals for their father and grandfather—thus fulfilling their own familial obligations following the Confucian “*shenzhong zhuiyuan*” norm. Thus, owning Ma Danyang's physical remains was crucial for the Mas to carry on their ancestral worship, which strengthened their kinship group sodality.⁵⁷ Their victory in the lawsuit indicated governmental support for the family's claim that Ma Danyang's ties to his biological family could never be erased and his remains belonged to the Mas alone. This episode exemplified the cultural significance attributed to Ma Danyang's remains, which became a physical symbol of the ownership of Ma's identity and legacy as a celebrity founder of a lineage, be it a kinship or a religious group.

Indeed, Ma Danyang's Quanzhen followers were equally determined to assert their ownership of Ma Danyang's legacy by reburying their master within the Quanzhen Daost domain. According to a 1313 stele inscription, sometime after the Mas reburied Ma Danyang at their ancestral graveyard, Li Zhichang 李知常, the abbot of the Youxian

⁵⁶Zhang Zhongshou, “Danyang zhenren guizang ji,” 740; Song Fu, “Chongxiu danyangdian ji,” 63–64.

⁵⁷Due to the lack of sources, it remains unclear whether having Ma Danyang's corpse buried in the family graveyard conveyed more than emotional, but also material and social benefits to his descendants, just as it did to the Daoist lineages.

Abbey (now the Youxian Palace 遊仙宮), secretly stole Ma Danyang's body himself and temporarily reburied it in shallow soils within the Youxian Palace.⁵⁸ The inscription does not mention the exact year of this episode of bodysnatching. To further complicate this alleged third reburial of Ma Danyang, a 1282 inscription for a Quanzhen Daoist named Shi Zhijian 石志堅 mentions that Shi once participated in large assembly-funeral ceremonies patronized by Branch Secretariat (*Xingtai* 行臺) Li Quan 李全 (d. 1231) to rebury four masters of the Seven Perfected: Ma Danyang, Liu Chuxuan, Wang Chuyi, and Hao Datong.⁵⁹ As a well-known Shandong warlord, Li Quan surrendered to the Mongols and received the appointment of Branch Secretariat after 1227. Thus, this reburial ceremony must have occurred between 1227 and 1231, when Li Quan died. It was possible that Quanzhen Daoists in Shandong and their patron Li Quan were inspired by the grand assembly-funeral for Qiu Chuji organized by their counterparts in 1227 in Yanjing.⁶⁰ As the 1282 inscription does not specify where Ma Danyang was reburied, it remains unclear whether this reburial event had anything to do with the body stolen by Li Zhichang and temporarily buried in the Youxian Palace. If the answer was yes, Quanzhen Daoists at the Youxian Palace would have participated in the ceremony patronized by Li Quan and formally reburied Ma Danyang.

However, in the narrative of the 1313 inscription, for reasons unknown, Li Zhichang and his successors at the Youxian Palace chose to keep the secret of repossessing Ma Danyang's remains for another sixty years.⁶¹ The inscription offers no direct explanation for this intriguing silence. Instead, the narrative quickly jumps to the final exposure moment in 1306, when Wang Zhiquan 王志荃, the abbot of the Youxian Palace at the time, broke the secret to the reigning Quanzhen patriarch Chang Zhiqing 常志清. Wang explained his decision, stating, "I am now very old. If someday I pass away and leave the remains and coffin of the immortal master [Ma Danyang] to obscurity, my sin would be immense."⁶² But this excuse still does not explain why Wang and his predecessors had not done so earlier, considering how important Ma Danyang's remains were for the entire Quanzhen order. Regardless of whether the whole "bodysnatching and secret burial" episode was a hoax or not, by 1306, Daoists of the Youxian Palace may have decided that having, or pretending to have, the body was crucial for getting new donations and enhancing their reputation.

Indeed, Wang Zhiquan's statement brought the Youxian Palace more than just fame but also substantial support from Quanzhen leaders. Upon knowing the story, the Quanzhen patriarch Chang Zhiqing sent incense, clothing, and his elegiac address to the Palace, while issuing a formal document informing all Quanzhen leaders at the Changchun Palace and in Shandong. He also ordered local Quanzhen clergy to mobilize donors and resources to prepare for a proper reburial of Ma Danyang.⁶³ The 1313 inscription further reports that Quanzhen Daoists opened the alleged temporary

⁵⁸Zhang Zhongshou, "Danyang zhenren guizang ji," 740.

⁵⁹Li Daoqian 李道謙, "Zhongnanshan Zongsheng gong Shi gong daoxing ji" 終南山宗聖宮石公道行記, *Daojia jinshi lue*, 637.

⁶⁰For Li Quan's patronage of Quanzhen Daoism in Shandong, see Zhang, *Quanzhenjiao de chuangli yu lishi chuancheng*, 314–17.

⁶¹If this story is true, it raises questions about the credibility of the reburial mentioned in the 1282 inscription: what was buried in the supposed tomb of Ma Danyang if his remains were still interred in the Youxian Palace? Regardless of which version of the story is likely the truth, the mystery surrounding Ma Danyang's remains and reburials underscores their paramount importance for all parties involved.

⁶²Zhang Zhongshou, "Danyang zhenren guizang ji," 740.

⁶³Zhang Zhongshou, "Danyang zhenren guizang ji," 740.

tomb of Ma Danyang for investigation. Once they saw the three-bun hairdo, they knew it was indeed the remains of Ma Danyang, who had worn this unique hairstyle that embodied his gratitude toward Wang Chongyang.⁶⁴ This detail, whether real or claimed, served to prove the authenticity of the relics, to justify Wang Zhiquan's claim, and ultimately to reassure the broader world.

The monastic community of the Youxian Palace reaped handsome rewards from their successful “repossession” of Ma Danyang's remains. In 1307, Quanzhen Daoists organized a large assembly-funeral to rebury Ma Danyang at the Youxian Palace, which allegedly drew auspicious clouds appearing in the sky and cranes hovering over the tomb. They also built a hall to accommodate Ma Danyang's new tomb and to enshrine his statue for memorialization, just as their predecessors had done for Wang Chongyang and Qiu Chuji decades earlier.⁶⁵ At last Quanzhen Daoists publicly repossessed Ma's dead body, or so they declared. The flamboyant reburial affair made the Youxian Palace, originally just a local Quanzhen institution, the center of attention of the entire Quanzhen community nationwide. Not only did the abbot of the Donghua Palace 東華宮—the regional headquarter of the Quanzhen order in Shandong—come to the Youxian Palace to co-preside over the assembly-funeral, but Chang Zhiqing, as the reigning Quanzhen patriarch, personally took charge of installing the 1313 stele to commemorate the reburial event.⁶⁶

Reburying a deceased master, sometimes multiple times, was widely practiced among Quanzhen communities in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Quanzhen inscriptions commonly describe disciples building a memorial shrine to (re)bury their master and gathering at the site every year to make offerings to the master.⁶⁷ Similar to Ma Danyang's extreme case, each burial or reburial spoke to various conflicts and negotiations. The performative funeral and memorial practices for founding masters like Wang Chongyang, Ma Danyang, and Qiu Chuji, on the one hand, prompted Quanzhen members to identify with the Quanzhen order as a unified whole. The same practices for later-generation masters, on the other hand, encouraged the identification with particular Quanzhen lineages, major or minor. These latter cases demonstrate how Quanzhen lineages were materialized and spatialized within specific monastic settings.

Materializing and Spatializing Lineage at a Hosting Monastery

Within a lineage community, the question of which monastery deserved the privilege of housing the remains of their founding master became a highly contested issue. This

⁶⁴Wang Chongyang's name was Wang Zhe 王嘉. The character “Zhe 嘉” is a compound word consisted of three same character “ji 吉,” which means auspicious. After Wang Chongyang died, Ma Danyang famously branded his hair with three buns, each resembling the character “ji 吉” to commemorate his master.

⁶⁵According to Song Fu's 1460 “Record of Rebuilding the Danyang Hall,” the memorial hall for Ma Danyang existed for more than one hundred years before it was renovated in the Ming. See Song, “Chongxiu danyangdian ji,” 64.

⁶⁶Zhang Zhongshou 張仲壽, “Baoyuan zhenjing qingpin Li zhenren daoxing bei” 報元真靜清貧李真人道行碑, *Jin Yuan Quanzhenjiao shike xinbian*, 48; Zhang Zhongshou, “Danyang zhenren guizang ji,” 741.

⁶⁷I have so far located about twenty inscriptions recording cases of reburying Quanzhen masters. For a few more examples, see Zhang Ben 張本, “Jian Kaiyang guan bei” 建開陽觀碑, Song Zizhen 宋子貞, “Puzhao zhenren xuantongzi Fan gong muzhiming” 普照真人玄通子范公墓志銘, Wang Lin 王麟, “Chongzhen dashi lingci ji” 崇真大師靈祠記, *Daojia jinshi lue*, 473, 503, 543.

contention was so pronounced that in certain cases, such as that of Song Defang, external forces were required to mediate and resolve the disputes. The story of relocating Song Defang's remains revealed strong tensions among Song's disciples and followers revolving around Song's reburial, in which political forces played a significant mediating role. The story of how Song Defang's lineage was bound up with the Yongle Palace deserves careful analysis, as it exemplified an emerging pattern of Quanzhen lineage building after the mid-thirteenth century, in which the lineage identified with a third-or-later-generation Quanzhen master. In this pattern, the hosting monastery of the lineage's founding master became a key node of the lineage's monastic network, and often its institutional headquarters.

As mentioned earlier, the reburial of Song Defang originated from a 1248 court order issued by the Mongol rulers to relocate the master's coffin. While Li Ding, in his 1262 inscription, did not explain the reason behind this court order, it was likely that some Quanzhen Daoists requested the relocation soon after Song Defang's first burial at the Graveyard of Immortals' Remains of the Chongyang Palace, and this request received the Mongol court's approval. The relocation of Song's remains required court authorization for a reason. As early as 1185 the Jin court was already worried about the ramifications of the increasing social influence of Quanzhen leaders. By the 1240s, in north China under Mongol rule, reburying an eminent Quanzhen master had become not just a religious event but also a political one.⁶⁸ As we have seen in the 1228 assembly-funeral for Qiu Chuji and the 1241 reburial ceremony for Wang Chongyang, such events could easily mobilize tens of thousands of followers, which a wary imperial state often perceived as a potential threat leading to insurgence.⁶⁹ Considering that Song Defang was one of the most prominent third-generation Quanzhen masters, his reburial ceremony was similarly influential for the Quanzhen order, society, and the Mongol state. Meanwhile, court authorization for such a significant event was critical for Quanzhen leaders to demonstrate their submission to the Mongol rulers.

Given that the Graveyard of Immortals' Remains of the Chongyang Palace was already one of the most prestigious Quanzhen burial sites, the new site for Song Defang's remains would have reasonably been equally high-status. The Yongle Palace fit that description. Dedicated to the divine Patriarch Lü Dongbin, the Palace was emerging as the third most important Quanzhen institution after the Chongyang Palace in Shaanxi and the Changchun Palace in Yanjing. However, the procession details recorded in Li Ding's 1262 inscription reveals that there was more to the simple reality of relocating Song Defang's coffin from the Chongyang Palace to the Yongle Palace.

Above all, the internal competition over Song's physical remains among his disciples and followers in different localities became so serious that political intervention became necessary to solve the problem. As Li Ding's inscription writes:

⁶⁸Li Ding, "Xuandu zhidao piyun zhenren Song tianshi citang beiming bing xu," 548.

⁶⁹The 1271 inscription of Yin Zhiping's biography mentions that when organizing the 1241 assembly-funeral for Wang Chongyang, as tens of thousands clergy and laity gathered, opinions were in a hubbub and unsettled. It was Yin Zhiping's moral virtue and high prestige that appeased the criticism and allowed the ceremony to be completed successfully. See Yi Gou 弋穀, "Xuanmen zhangjiao qinghe miaodao guanghua zhenren Yin zongshi beiming bingxu" 玄門掌教清和妙道廣化真人尹宗師碑銘並序, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, 568–69.

The virtue of the Master [Song Defang] for the Daoist community resembles what the Duke of Shao meant to the people of the [Western] Zhou dynasty (1046BCE-771BCE). The love of the Zhou people for the Duke of Shao made them love the sweet pear-tree. How would people of Daoism not love the Master's relics when thinking of him? Daoists residing in both the north and south of the Yellow River all wished to gain the master's remains and make regular sacrifices to it. This was not a feigned intention. When the procession of the master's coffin travelled northward, it passed through Pu and Jiang. After arriving in Pingyang, it changed direction and travelled eastward. Within tens of thousands of *li* in the area from Jingzhao [in Shaanxi] to Hedong [southern Shanxi], when waiting for the procession in suburbs and making sacrifices by roadsides, people had already flocked to hold on to the master's coffin. As a result, the procession could not move fifteen *li* a day. Later, Inspector Jia and two staff officers surnamed Yang and Guo—all subordinates of Brigade Commander Beçügü—rode horses to meet the procession. The procession then went straight south, and only then did no one dare to obstruct it.

且真人之德在玄門，如召伯之於周人。夫周人之思召伯，尚愛其甘棠，豈玄門之人思真人，不愛其靈骨乎？其洪河南北，皆願得而時祭之，非偽為也。當靈柩之北行，既道於蒲，又道於絳，抵平陽乃改轅而東。其郊迎路祭之際，自京兆達於河東等處數千里之內，皆向已爭挽，日不半舍。及別出古萬戶下宣差賈侯、參謀知事楊、郭輩，乘騎而往逆之，長驅而南，至此莫有敢阻滯之者。⁷⁰

This passage sheds light on two important aspects of the drama of Song Defang's disciples and followers competing over his remains in the eyes of Li Ding, who held the dual identity as both a Confucian scholar and a Quanzhen practitioner. First, the competition over the master's remains was serious and publicly displayed. Second, the competition was driven by the genuine gratitude by Quanzhen Daoists and followers because of the master's contribution to the Quanzhen order. This gratitude was manifested in people's love for the master's physical remains, just as the Zhou people's love of the Duke of Shao—because of his services to the country—became attached to the sweet pear-tree beneath which he had rested.⁷¹ In other words, the master's physical remains signify his religious legacy—regardless of how people interpreted this legacy, just as the sweet pear-tree symbolized the cultural legacy of the Duke of Shao in the Confucian tradition.

The seriousness of the competition was also implicitly demonstrated by the intriguing route of the procession. The procession started from the Chongyang Palace and passed through Jingzhao prefecture (present-day Xi'an) of Shaanxi. The next stop mentioned by Li Ding was Pu 蒲, which likely refers to Hezhong prefecture 河中府 (also known as Pu prefecture 蒲州 in various historical periods) of southern Shanxi. Given that Yongle town, where the Yongle Palace was located, was within

⁷⁰Li Ding, "Xuandu zhidao piyun zhenren Song tianshi citang beiming bing xu," 548.

⁷¹The story of the Duke of Shao and the sweet pear-tree originates from the poem "Sweet Pear-Tree" (*gantang* 甘棠) of *Classic of Poetry* (*shijing* 詩經). For the translation of the poem, see Arthur Waley trans., *The Book of Songs: The Ancient Chinese Classic of Poetry* (New York: Grove Press, 1988), 135.



Figure 2. The likely route of the procession of Song Defang's coffin from the Chongyang Palace to the Yongle Palace. Drawing by Yu Kang.

Hezhong prefecture, it seemed unreasonable that the procession continued northward to Jiang (present-day Xinjiang county 新絳縣) and Pingyang (present-day Linfen 臨汾) rather than going straight to the Yongle Palace, unless taking this long way round was a deliberate plan. While the available sources are not sufficient to draw a definitive conclusion about the exact route the procession took, [Figure 2](#) depicts a likely route.⁷² The illustration highlights the significant detour the procession made in southern Shanxi.

It appears that the detour was made to pass through Jiang and Pingyang, and the selection of these two localities was reasonable. As Li Ding's inscription mentions, the procession enabled Song Defang's disciples in Jingzhao and southern Shanxi to make ritual offerings to their master's coffin. The areas of Jiang and Pingyang held significant monastic establishments that belonged to Song Defang's lineage.⁷³ The Xuandu-wanshou Palace 玄都萬壽宮 (Palace of the Mysterious Capital) in Jiang and the Changchun Abbey 長春觀 (Abbey of Everlasting Spring, also known as the Xuandu Abbey 玄都觀 in some sources) in Pingyang, as I have discussed elsewhere, had played significant roles in the Quanzhen project of printing the 1244 version of Daoist Canon, a project that marked Song Defang's fame in Quanzhen history. The Changchun Abbey was particularly crucial for Song Defang's lineage, as it was not

⁷²A key factor that determined the route was the ferry the procession took to cross the Yellow River. Given that the floating bridge at the critical Pujin Ferry 浦津渡 (close to Pu in [Figure 2](#)) was destroyed during the Jin-Mongol wars (see Tuotuo 脫脫 [1313–55], *Jinshi* 金史 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975], 122.2714), the procession likely had to take another major ferry on the Yellow River to enter Shanxi from Shaanxi: the Dragon Gate Ferry 龍門渡 between Hancheng and Hejin. In addition, on this likely route, Hu county 鄆縣, Jingzhao prefecture, and Pucheng county 蒲城縣 of Shaanxi held, respectively, seven, eight, and one monastic establishments belonging to Song Defang's lineage, according to a 1320 "Chart of Names Belonging to the Lineage of the Perfected Man Piyun" 披雲真人門下法派名氏之圖. For the transcription of the chart, see Jing, *Daojiao Quanzhenpai gongguan zaixiang yu zushi*, 121.

⁷³According to the "Chart of Names Belonging to the Lineage of the Perfected Man Piyun," there were three monastic establishments in Jiang prefecture and five in Pingyang circuit. See Jing, *Daojiao Quanzhenpai gongguan zaixiang yu zushi*, 120, 122.

only the headquarters of the canon project but also held the woodblocks of the canon.⁷⁴ It would not have been surprising that Song's disciples at the Changchun Abbey had hoped to retain their master's remains in their monastery.

Not only Quanzhen Daoists but also political elites in the region were interested in obtaining Song Defang's remains. The procession continued after arriving in Pingyang, turning eastward first before redirecting to south after the intervention of the Mongolian brigade commander Bečügü 別出古, who stationed in southern Shanxi. Bečügü sent his subordinates to lead a troop to escort the procession to go straight to the Yongle Palace. Li Ding did not clarify whether the procession veered off course because of the intervention, which would indicate that the originally chosen reburial site for Song Defang's remains might not be the Yongle Palace. Nonetheless, the move of intercepting the procession itself suggested that local military and political leaders in Hezhong prefecture had stakes in the matter. Adhering to a prevailing trend among local governors in north China during that period, the political elites in Hezhong likely sought to enhance the governance of their jurisdictions by collaborating with Quanzhen Daoists. These Daoists assumed quasi-governmental functions in reconstructing local society during the Jin-Yuan transition.⁷⁵ Due to the unparalleled influence of Song Defang and his lineage in southern Shanxi among all Quanzhen Daoists, retaining the master's remains in Hezhong would facilitate strengthening the ties between those political elites and the Quanzhen order, and indeed, it did.

Relocating Song Defang's coffin to the Yongle Palace involved not just local governors in southern Shanxi but also Quanzhen leaders in Yanjing. According to Li Ding's report, after Song Defang's coffin arrived in Yongle town in the winter of 1248, Brigade Commander Bečügü sent a messenger to Yanjing to inform Yin Zhiping and Li Zhichang—the retired and reigning Quanzhen patriarchs—about the matter. Yin Zhiping acknowledged the established fact that Song Defang's remains were now at the Yongle Palace, echoing a familiar rhetoric of reburial justification, similar to that we have already observed in Ma Danyang's case. According to Yin, Song Defang had mentioned that Yongle town was his favorite site among all the places he had visited. Hence, it was likely that some of Song's disciples intended to fulfill their master's wish by reburying him at his “designated” site, and this act should be honored by reigning Quanzhen leaders.⁷⁶ Most importantly, Yin further decided to relocate the woodblocks of the Daoist Canon from the Changchun Abbey of Pingyang to the Yongle Palace, and Li Zhichang issued an order to construct a new tomb and a memorial shrine for Song Defang.

⁷⁴Jinping Wang, “A Social History of the Treasured Canon of the Mysterious Capital in North China under Mongol-Yuan Rule,” *East Asian Publishing and Society* 4 (2014), 1–35, especially 12–13.

⁷⁵Jinping Wang, *In the Wake of the Mongols: The Making of a New Social Order in North China, 1200–1600* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018), chap. 2.

⁷⁶Yin Zhiping's comment, akin to the redirection of the procession after Pingyang, once again raises the question of whether the original destination of Song Defang's remains was not the Yongle Palace but another site, such as the prestigious Graveyard of Immortals' Remains at Mt. Wuhua outside Yanjing. Despite this possibility, Quanzhen communities eventually embraced the Yongle Palace as the definitive burial site of Song Defang. A later inscription about Song Defang, which was composed by Wang Liyong in 1289 and inscribed on a stele at the Chongyang Palace on Mount Zhongnan in 1320, reports that the order of reburying Song Defang at the Yongle Palace came from the reigning Quanzhen Patriarch Li Zhichang and was carried through by Song's disciple Yang Taichu 楊太初. See Wang Liyong 王利用, “Xuanton hongjiao piyun zhenren daoxing zhi bei” 玄通弘教披雲真人道行之碑, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, 753.

We can understand the unspoken motivation behind the competition among Song Defang's disciples, followers, and patrons in different localities by examining what the monastic community of the Yongle Palace gained after having Song Defang's remains reburied there. The Yongle Palace gained what other rival monasteries potentially lost. The reburial of Song Defang brought the Yongle Palace significant cultural and social capital that derived from Song Defang's rich legacy to both the Quanzhen community and the broader social world. As I have discussed elsewhere, the Daoist Canon served as an essential means by which Quanzhen Daoists sought cultural authority and social power during the Jin–Yuan transition when numerous texts were lost in warfare.⁷⁷ Printing the Daoist Canon was a hallmark of Song Defang and his lineage's contribution to the Quanzhen enterprise. The relocation of the woodblocks of the Daoist Canon led to the domination of this cultural property by the monastic community at the Yongle Palace.

The relocation of the woodblocks of the Daoist Canon also brought about the exchange of personnel between the monastic community of the Yongle Palace and Song Defang's lineage, which had already engaged in the project of constructing the Palace. During the 1240s and 1250s, many of Song Defang's disciples became leaders or permanent residents of the Yongle Palace. He Zhiyuan 何志淵 (d. 1279), one of Song's leading disciples in southern Shanxi, was appointed by the Mongol ruler as a superintendent at the Palace, tasked with managing the newly established canon library.⁷⁸

In addition, the grand assembly-funeral for Song Defang drew sizable donations from powerful officials to the Yongle Palace. Li Ding's inscription documented a long list of donors and their donations: a thousand *hu* of wheat from the couple of Chief Governor of Hezhong and Xiezhou and a general; a stone outer coffin from a salt commissioner of Xiezhou; a piece of land as the burial site from a local resident; three hundred taels of silver by Qinzhou Governor Du and his wife. The couple also sponsored the painting of murals for the memorial shrine dedicated to Song Defang. Additionally, Inspector Jia, who had escorted Song's coffin earlier, paid for furnishing the shrine with statues. On the day of reburial in 1254, the ceremony drew numerous participants, leaving contemporary spectators an impression that half of the country's population had come to the event. Beçügü, the Mongolian brigade commander, served as the chief patron (*du gongdezhu* 都功德主) of the memorial shrine, along with his two sons—one as a brigade commander and the other as a battalion commander—and two daughters-in-law, one with a Mongolian name and the other with a Chinese name.⁷⁹ These details about the donations, powerful patrons, and other participants attested to impressive mobilizing power of Song Defang as an eminent Quanzhen master, even after his death.

Possessing Song Defang's body, tomb, and memorial shrine gave the monastic community of the Yongle Palace an upper hand in inheriting Song's spiritual legacy. As one of the most distinguished third-generation Quanzhen masters, Song Defang was particularly known for monastic construction. He founded or absorbed about five hundred monastic establishments and attracted thousands of disciples across today's Shaanxi,

⁷⁷Wang, "A Social History of the Treasured Canon of the Mysterious Capital in North China under Mongol-Yuan Rule," 23–26.

⁷⁸Li Ding, "Xuandu zhidao piyun zhenren Song tianshi citang beiming bing xu," 548.

⁷⁹Li Ding, "Xuandu zhidao piyun zhenren Song tianshi citang beiming bing xu," 548.

Shanxi, Henan, Shandong, Sichuan, and Gansu provinces.⁸⁰ Among all these monastic establishments, at the significant moment of Song's reburial ceremony in 1254, his identity was explicitly tied with the Yongle Palace alone. The cover of his sarcophagus was carved with an inscription summarizing Song's identity, "Heavenly Master Song Piyun from Donglai, the Mysterious Capital and the Ultimate Way, the Great Palace of Pure Yang of Ten Directions" (十方大純陽宮玄都至道東萊披雲宋天師).⁸¹ In addition to Song's native place (Donglai) and two honorific religious titles granted by two Mongol princes—"Xuandu zhidao" 玄都至道 by Köden 闊端 (1206–1251 or 1253) in 1245 and "Piyun tianshi" 披雲天師 by Hülegü 旭烈 (1218–65) in 1251,⁸² this inscription assigned Song's monastic affiliation only with the Great Palace of Pure Yang, the formal monastic title of the Yongle Palace.

Possessing Song Defang's remains and hosting the memorial space of him also led to the inheritance of his religious and social legacy, including his thriving lineage, his extensive social network, and the resources brought by it. The Yongle Palace became the headquarters of Song Defang's lineage, marking the central node of the lineage's massive monastic network and creating a hierarchical order that directed the flow of human and material resources from and toward the center. In this process, Song Defang's lineage helped the Yongle Palace extend its influence through the lineage's network. He Zhiyuan and his colleagues spearheaded the establishment of the new tomb, memorial shrine, and eulogistic steles dedicated to Song Defang. The elaborate reburial ceremony also served to encourage Quanzhen Daoist pilgrimage to the Yongle Palace to worship both Lü Dongbing and Song Defang. Many of Song's disciples travelled great distances to participate in the reburial event in 1254 and later to pay annual or regular visits to their master's tomb and shrine.⁸³ In the decades following the 1254 assembly-funeral, Song Defang's disciples continued to strengthen their lineage's institutional ties with the Yongle Palace. As the leader of Song's lineage in southern Shanxi, He Zhiyuan led his colleagues and disciples in building new Quanzhen abbeys and taking over existing ones in neighboring villages and counties. These monastic establishments, along with other associated assets such as land, industries, and shops, all became collective property belonging to Song Defang's lineage. Because of the institutional links between Song Defang's lineage and the Yongle Palace, as I have discussed elsewhere, many of the lineage's monasteries often became lower temples of the Yongle Palace.⁸⁴

Throughout the Yuan dynasty, the association between the Yongle Palace and Song Defang's lineage persisted and strengthened through the accumulation of commemorative steles dedicated to Song Defang installed within the monastic space. Many of these steles were installed by top Quanzhen leaders who also belonged to Song Defang's lineage. For instance, in 1274 Qi Zhicheng 祁志誠, a direct disciple of Song Defang and also the Quanzhen patriarch at the time, came to the Yongle Palace to install a new biographical stele of Song Defang after successfully appealing to the imperial court for a new honorific title for his master.⁸⁵ During his stay at the palace, Qi organized yet

⁸⁰Jing, *Daojiao Quanzhenpai gongguan zaixiang yu zushi*, 123, 178.

⁸¹Shanxi sheng wenwu guanli weiyuanhui kaogu yanjiusuo 山西省文物管理委員會考古研究所, "Shanxi Ruicheng Yonglegong jiuzhi Song Defang, Pan Dechong he "Lüzü" mu fajue jianbao" 山西芮城永樂宮舊址宋德方、潘德沖和"呂祖"墓發掘簡報, *Kaogu* 1960.8, 23.

⁸²Wang Liyong, "Xuanton hongjiao piyun zhenren daoxing zhi bei," 753.

⁸³Yang Xiyan 楊希顏, "Sanlao tonggong bei" 三老同宮碑, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, 560–61.

⁸⁴Wang, *In the Wake of the Mongols*, 100–104.

⁸⁵Shang Ting 商挺, "Xuandu zhidao chongwen minghua zhenren daoxing zhibei" 玄都至道崇文明化真人道行之碑, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, 613–14.

another reburial of Song Defang in early 1275, moving the tomb from the memorial shrine to the Emei Ridge 峨嵋嶺 northwest of the Palace because of excellent topography of the mountain terrain.⁸⁶ In another case, Wanyan Deming 完顏德明, the last Quanzhen patriarch in the Yuan dynasty, installed two more steles honoring Song Defang in 1347. One bore an imperial edict granting a more honorific title to Song Defang, and the other was a reproduction of the 1274 stele erected by Qi Zhicheng.⁸⁷ In the inscription for the first stele, Wanyan explained that he established these steles to “recognize my identification with the same lineage [of Song Defang]” (表識同宗).⁸⁸ As the reigning Quanzhen patriarch, Wanyan needed to come to the Yongle Palace to formally identify himself with Song Defang as the “ancestral master” (*zushi* 祖師) of his lineage. For disciples of Song Defang, the Yongle Palace, despite its primary dedication to the divine ancestral patriarch of Lü Dongbin, mattered equally, if not more, for them as the site of honoring Song Defang, their lineage’s “ancestral master.”

Song Defang’s disciples also replicated similar commemorative objects in other monasteries within their lineage, even though they did not possess the physical remains of the master. In these monastic institutions, his disciples also erected tombs, memorial shrines, and steles to commemorate Song Defang and to assert their lineage identity. According to Jing Anning’s research, there was a memorial shrine dedicated to Song Defang in the Xuandu-wanshou Palace of Jiang prefecture of southern Shanxi; Song himself built this palace. In the Tongxian Abbey 通仙觀 in Ye county 掖縣 of Shandong, Song’s disciples not only erected a biographical stele of Song Defang but also built a tomb for him. Such a tomb was referred to as “Tomb of Clothing and Hat” (*yiguanzhong* 衣冠冢), as it did not contain the deceased’s remains but only his personal belongings.⁸⁹ Song Defang’s tomb in the Tongxian Abbey had a special meaning as the abbey was located at his birthplace. All such separate tombs and memorial shrines were built not to replace Song Defang’s official tomb and shrine within the Yongle Palace. Rather, they physically delineated the lineage’s regional expansion and served as institutional centers for lineage members in a specific locality. They demonstrate the importance of founding masters’ tombs for Quanzhen Daoists in their lineage-building efforts during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

In short, the historical development of Quanzhen lineages hinged not just on spiritual identification with ancestral masters but also on physical representation of ancestor worship through a range of commemorative objects such as tomb, statue, portrait, and memorial shrine. By possessing the master’s physical remains and memorial objects, the hosting monastery emerged as a focal point of spiritual significance within the lineage, and at times, it also assumed the role of an institutional

⁸⁶Jing, *Daojiao Quanzhenpai gongguan zaoxiang yu zushi*, 67–68.

⁸⁷For Quanzhen strategies of reproducing stone steles dedicated to Song Defang to control the damage caused by the 1281 canon-burning catastrophe, which marked the loss of Quanzhen order’s pre-eminent position at the Yuan court, see Wang, *In the Wake of the Mongols*, 114–15.

⁸⁸Jing, *Daojiao Quanzhenpai gongguan zaoxiang yu zushi*, 92, 102.

⁸⁹Jing, *Daojiao Quanzhenpai gongguan zaoxiang yu zushi*, 138, 177. The biographical stele, entitled “Donglai Tongxian guan Piyun tianshi daoxing bei” 東萊通仙觀披雲天師道行碑, was installed in 1300 and its inscription was composed by Zhu Hui 朱翬 (*Shanzuo jinshi zhi* 山左金石志, 22:16b. in *Lidai beizhi congshu* 歷代碑志叢書, compiled by Zhongguo dongfang wenhua yanjiuhui lishi wenhua fenhui 中國東方文化研究會歷史文化分會編, vol. 15 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1998). These details indicate that the stele was different from two other more commonly known biographical steles of Song Defang, whose inscriptions were written by Shang Ting and Wang Liyong and installed respectively in 1274 and 1320.

center.⁹⁰ Consequently, it acquired substantial material wealth and exerted social and cultural influence stemming from the legacy of the founding master. Replicating certain commemorative objects in other monastic settings became a cherished practice for lineage members in different locations to partake in the shared legacy, even in the absence of the physical remains of the master.

Conclusion

When I first read the story of Song Defang's reburial, which opened this article, I couldn't understand why reburial held such great importance for the various individuals and forces involved. The practice, particularly the extravagant assembly-funeral, seemed to contradict the fundamental principles of Quanzhen Daoism, which encouraged followers to detach themselves from worldly emotions, mortal bodies, and even death itself. Like many of the lay people who lived alongside those Quanzhen Daoists, I found myself questioning the apparent contradiction within their beliefs. It wasn't until I came across many other accounts of similar reburials in Quanzhen hagiographical and inscriptional sources from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that I realized the significance of these funeral and reburial practices to the religion during this period. The fact that people at the time, both within and beyond the Quanzhen order, engaged in debates around these practices made me recognize that they were a serious matter. It is, therefore, crucial that we as scholars also take them seriously as historical subjects.

The reburial events of renowned Quanzhen masters explored in this article tell us a lot about the lived practices of Quanzhen lineage making during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, an area that has not received adequate scholarly attention. These practices illustrate the significance Quanzhen Daoists placed on the physical remains of a lineage's founding master, as they were linked to his spiritual and material legacy. This connection between the founding master's body and his legacy served as the cornerstone for the self-identification of a historically constructed lineage. The Quanzhen principle of multi-lineal transmission allowed for the emergence of multiple branches within a lineage community in every generation. Such a system posed the risk of potential breakdown of the entire lineage when conflicts occurred among different branches. It was crucial to establish structured relationships among these lateral branches and determine who would inherit the leadership of a branch as well as the entire lineage. Because Quanzhen lineages of that time often held substantial monastic assets and other forms of material wealth, the stakes were high.

The solution was to institutionalize the worship of ancestral masters through assembly-funerals and ongoing memorial services, entrusting specific individuals and groups with the responsibility of carrying out these symbolic duties. The burials and reburials conducted by these individuals and groups served as public affirmation of their inheritance of the master's legacy and, by extension, their position of leadership within the lineage. These ceremonies also presented opportunities for the lineage to show its strength and influence to the outside world, in both religious and sociopolitical realms.

⁹⁰In certain cases, a specific lineage came to exert dominant leadership within a historically significant Daoist monastery, which became integrated into the Quanzhen order during the thirteenth century. Over time, this lineage became intricately linked with the identity of that monastic establishment. For examples, see Zhang Guangbao 張廣保, "Yuandai Songshan Chongfu gong de Quanzhen jiao chuancheng" 元代嵩山崇福宮的全真教傳承, *Quanzhen dao yanjiu* 2016.5, 95–105.

Lineage construction within Quanzhen communities also served to underscore the pivotal, yet often overlooked, role that Quanzhen Daoism played in shaping regional interactions and driving transformations across north China during the era of Mongol rule. From the beginning, Quanzhen Daoism was a religious movement that transcended locality. Wang Chongyang required his committed followers to leave their hometowns and travel around the world for ascetic cultivation and propagation. The Quanzhen practitioners were thus immigrants who were constantly on the move. They connected many localities and regions by spreading their teachings, establishing monasteries wherever they went, and forming associations of their lay followers. Through their transboundary activities, the Quanzhen clergy served as historical agents and mediators of diverse regional and local stakeholders, especially after the religion received unprecedented imperial patronage from the Mongol rulers.

As Quanzhen Daoism underwent transformation into a nationwide monastic order during the early thirteenth century, the lineage institution introduced an additional layer of systematic integration, orchestrating the consolidation of widely dispersed Daoist groups into hierarchical but dynamic networks of people and monastic establishments.⁹¹ Over time, many of these lineage networks became regionalized. They displayed strong regional characteristics, strategically focusing their proselytization endeavors on particular geographical areas and consequently solidifying these regions as their spheres of influence.⁹² Meanwhile, many regions became associated with particular Quanzhen lineages.⁹³

These collective efforts catalyzed the widespread propagation of a unified Quanzhen culture, encompassing not only the entirety of north China but extending its influence even farther.⁹⁴ The standardized Quanzhen ancestor worship epitomized the tangible embodiment of the cohesive Quanzhen culture within the confines of monastic settings. The monastery served as the space that brought together physical representations of Quanzhen ancestor worship across different levels and forms. These included notable architectures known as the Hall of Chongyang and the Shrine of the Seven Perfected

⁹¹It is worth noting that Quanzhen Daoists were not the only ones actively constructing religious lineages as organizational entities with cross-regional monastic networks. During the era of Mongol rule, various Daoist communities in north China undertook similar practices with combined imperial and local support. For examples, see Jinping Wang, "Daoists, the Imperial Cult of Sage-Kings, and Mongol Rule," *T'oung Pao* 106.3/4 (2020), 309–57.

⁹²For instance, the Ma Danyang—Yu Shanqing 于善慶 (1166–1250)—Gao Daokuan 高道寬 (1195–1277) line of Quanzhen lineage not only exerted authoritative control over the Chongyang Palace leadership in Shaanxi but also played a pivotal role in propelling the westward expansion of the Quanzhen order extending into the extensive northwestern territories of today's China. See Song Xueli 宋學立, "Gao Daokuan ji xibei Quanzhen dao de zaoqi fazhan" 高道寬及西北全真道的早期發展, *Zhongguo daojiao* 2018.6, 22–26.

⁹³Apart from southern Shanxi's connection to Song Defang's lineage, which is discussed in this article, other noteworthy examples include the broad association of Shaanxi with Ma Danyang's lineage, Yanjing with Qiu Chuji's lineage, and Henan with the Hao Datong—Wang Zhijin 王志謹 line of lineage. In each of these provincial regions, diverse Quanzhen lineages also established their centers of power through monastic networks in different counties and prefectures. See Zhang, *Quanzhenjiao de chuangli yu lishi chuancheng*, 409–14.

⁹⁴In the late Jin dynasty, Quanzhen Daoism had already extended its influence northeastward into Manchuria, the ancestral homelands of the Jurchens. For the development of Quanzhen Daoism in Manchuria in the Jin-Yuan periods, see Wang Guiping 汪桂平, "Kang Taizhen bei' tanwei: jianlun Jin Yuan zhiji Quanzhen dao zai dongbei diqu de chuanbo yu fazhan" 《康泰真碑》探微：兼論金元之際全真道在東北地區的傳播與發展, *Quanzhen dao yanjiu* 2013.3, 137–66.

(often adorned with murals) dedicated to Wang Chongyang and his major disciples in all Quanzhen monasteries. They also included tombs, memorial shrines, portraits, and commemorative steles for a lineage's ancestral masters who were disciples and grand disciples of the Seven Perfected. These shrines, tombs, and steles, exemplified by those for Song Defang established in monasteries across Shaanxi, Shanxi, and Shandong, bore witness to the cultural coherence that Quanzhen Daoism instilled across diverse localities and regions within north China under Mongol rule. As an integral facet of the unified Quanzhen culture, ceremonial funerals and reburials of esteemed masters played significant roles in activating the lineage-building process for disciples. Attracting hundreds and thousands of participants hailing from diverse localities and regions, these events themselves not only upheld regional integration but also fostered social and cultural cohesion in north China under Mongol rule.