

The Cluster of Excellence
Understanding Written Artefacts
at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)
cordially invites you to the workshop

The Jiaxing Canon in East Asia: Materiality, Mobility, and Modernity

Thursday, 23 July 2026, 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm CEST

Friday, 24 July 2026, 10:30 am – 2:00 pm CEST

Warburgstraße 26, 20354 Hamburg, room 0001 (pavilion)

Organised by Nguyễn Tô Lan (VASS)

Registration:

<https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/register/workshop80>

This workshop focuses on the production and transmission of the *Jiaxing Canon* 嘉興藏 as a promising source for enriching our understanding not only of the spread of Northern Buddhism to East Asian countries but also the cross-cultural dimensions of printing history in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. Printed from woodblocks between the late sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries, the *Jiaxing Canon* represents a unique Chinese collection, or canon, of sacred Buddhist scriptures. Unlike other canons that were state-sponsored, the *Jiaxing Canon* was produced as a private monastic enterprise and it is particularly valuable for including works not found in other canons. Despite being the most widely circulated canon in the history of Chinese Buddhism, the exact number of fascicles in the *Jiaxing Canon*, especially those within the “Sayings” section, remains unknown and understudied due to its complex production history. The recent discovery of a seemingly complete *Jiaxing Canon* set at Ten-Stupas monastery in Gia Lai Province in Central Vietnam has introduced new momentum to research on the carving and printing history, circulation, and transmission of the *Jiaxing Canon* in East Asia. Ten talks by leading scholars from East Asian, American, and European institutions will examine how modern technologies, including artificial intelligence, can generate new knowledge on this topic and help develop innovative methodologies for the study of the material and socio-cultural dimensions of imprinted artefacts in general.

Programme

Thursday, 23 July 2026, 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm

1:00 – 1:05 Welcome and Introduction (Michael FRIEDRICH, CSMC and To Lan NGUYEN)

Panel 1

1:05 – 1:40 Darui LONG (University of the West)
Kezang yuanqi, its Authors and the Jingshan Thread-Bound Buddhist Canon

1:40 – 2:15 Qiyuan WANG (Fudan University)
The History of Books in the Buddhist Canon: Genealogies and Late Minh Jiangnan Families in the Colophons of the Jiaxing Canon

2:15 – 3:00 Kezhen XI (Nanjing Museum)
An Investigation into the Paper Mill Stamps on the Jingshan Canon: Taking Nanjing Museum's Collection as an Example

Discussant Maria LEPNEVA (Ghent Center for Buddhist Studies)

3:00 – 3:45 Tea Break

Panel 2

3:45 – 4:20 Xing HANG & Zheyang LI (Hong Kong Polytechnic University) & Yifan JIANG (Syracuse University)
Conjectures on Chan Master Yuanshao Based on Extant Sources and Field Work

4:20 – 4:55 To Lan NGUYEN (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences; CSMC)
Recarving and Reprinting Jiaxing Canon in Vietnam from 18th Century to Early 20th Century

4:55 – 5:30 Young Hwan PARK (Dongyuk University; University Wisconsin)
A Review of Jiaxing Canon Studies in Korean Academic: Achievements, Limitations, and Future Directions

- 5:30 – 6:00 Jiang WU (Arizona University)
The Jiaxing Canon and the Modern Transformation of the Chinese Buddhist Canon
- Discussant Yi-ling HSU (Chinese Culture University)
- 7:00 – 9:00 Conference Dinner

Friday, 24 July 2026, 10:30 am – 4:00 pm

Panel 3

- 10:30 – 11:05 Ziwei YE (Oxford University)
Tracing the Afterlives of the Fanyimingyi ji: Jiaxing Canon Copies at the Bodleian Library
- 11:05 – 11:40 Kuei-min LEE (National Cheng Kung University)
The Circulation and Transformation of the Jiaxing Canon in Vietnam: A Cross-Regional Study Centered on the Comparative Editions of the Augmented Annotations to the Essentials of the Śrāmaṇera Precepts and Other Ritual Manuals
- 11:40 – 12:15 Xiandu SHI (Hao LIU) (Rushi Institute of Artificial Intelligence Technology)
Digitisation of Buddhist Scriptures from the Perspective of Artificial Intelligence: A Case Study of the Jingshan Tripitaka Digitisation Project
- Discussant Xiaofan LU (Rushi Institute of Artificial Intelligence Technology)
- 12:15 – 1:00 Lunch Break
- 1:00 – 2:00 Final Discussion and Closing Ceremony (Michael FRIEDRICH)
- 2:00 – 4:00 Field Works (for invited speakers only)

Abstracts and Contributors

Darui LONG (University of the West)

Kezang yuanqi, its Authors and the *Jingshan Thread-Bound Buddhist Canon*

Thursday, 23 July 2026, 1:05 pm – 1:40 pm

More than thirty-two years ago, I began to study the *Hongwu Southern Canon* 洪武南藏 in the Special Collection of Manuscripts of Sichuan Provincial Library in Chengdu. By chance, the librarian showed me their collection of *Kezang yuanqi* 刻藏緣起 (The [account of the] origin of production of the Buddhist canon). It is a rare book engraved in the twenty-ninth year of Emperor Wanli (1601): only four libraries in China keep this book: The National Library and libraries of Sichuan, Fujian and Hunan.

He realizes the importance of this book in the long process of constructing the *Jingshan Canon*. Its importance lies in the fact that the book is a collection of prefaces written by eighteen or twenty scholar - officials who called for the project to engrave a set of Buddhist canon by themselves because people had difficulties getting a set of Buddhist canon from the imperial court. The woodblocks other editions of the Buddhist canons were destroyed by incessant wars and natural disasters. These scholar-officials realized the need to carve a new set of woodblocks for the Buddhist canon and print the Buddhist texts by themselves.

Their prefaces, together with four documents, such as “Jian jing huiyue 檢經會約” (Agreements on Collations), “Kezang guize 刻藏規則” (Regulations on the Carving), “Kezang fanli 刻藏凡例” (Regulations on Proofreading), and “Kechang qianliang jingfei hua yi 刻場錢糧經費畫一” (Rules for Payment on Carving) offer specific details in the process of construction of the Buddhist canon. The prefaces to *Kezang yuanqi* written by these scholar-officials and eminent monks mapped up many things, including fund-raising, the set-up of the organizations for engraving the canon, the recruitment of carver and the people who would copy the scriptures, and regulations for the workshops. The *Kezang yuanqi* printed by Zhina nei xueyuan 支那內學院 in Nanjing in 1932 provides a chronological table – it records the process of how the Buddhist canon was constructed from the seventh year of Emperor Wanli (1579) when Venerable Zibo 紫柏 (1543-1603) advised Venerable Huanyu 幻余 (?-?) to start the project until the sixteenth year of Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (1677) when the catalogue of the whole thread-bound canon was worked out after its completion. It took a whole century to accomplish the whole project.

This paper deals with the interactions between these scholar-officials and their involvements in the process of constructing the Buddhist canon in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

After nearly a century, the efforts of nearly three generations, and the political upheavals of two dynasties, the *Jingshan Canon* was finally largely completed. It is the progenitor of modern

printed Buddhist canons, a distinction that sets it apart from the officially compiled canons that preceded it.

Qiyuan WANG (Fudan University)

The History of Books in the Buddhist Canon: Genealogies and Late Ming Jiangnan Families in the Colophons of the *Jiaxing Canon*

Thursday, 23 July 2026, 1:40 pm – 2:15 pm

The *Jiaxing Tripitaka* is a privately published edition of the tripitaka during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. It stands as the edition with the longest publication duration and the most extensive collection of Buddhist scriptures among all Chinese tripitaka editions. The publication mobilized considerable manpower and financial resources, encompassing a brief period of engraving at Mount Wutai (五台山) and a subsequent lengthy era at Jingshan (径山), during which believers from both the north and south were actively involved. The "Jiaxing Tripitaka" retains a wealth of inscribed information, detailing the identity, region, aspirations, names of the engraved Buddhist scriptures, calligraphers, engravers, and the time and location of engraving for each volume. This information holds significant research value. Focusing on this inscribed data, the author examines the geographical origins of the donors during the engraving period and the chronological experiences of the publication of significant Buddhist scriptures. By studying the geographical distribution of donors for the Tripitaka engraving, one can understand the state of Buddhist belief and its spatial differences in different regions during the same period. It becomes evident that regions south of the Yangtze River, such as Jiaxing, Jintan, Danyang, Changshu, and Wujiang, served as important sources of funding. However, due to previous material limitations, academic circles were unable to investigate the specific circumstances, biographies, and descendants of the He and Sun families from Danyang, as well as the Yu and Wang families from Jintan. Recently discovered are the genealogical records of the Yu, Wang, He, and Sun clans, which, along with records from elite monks and laypeople passed down through generations, clearly illustrate the interactions between prominent families from Danyang and Jintan and Zibai's engraving community during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, as well as the participation and contributions of various family branches in the engraving of the "Jiaxing Tripitaka." Notably, the He clan from Danyang is known to have donated the most volumes for the "Jiaxing Tripitaka," with He Xueli, a second-generation member, likely being the individual who donated the most volumes for the entire Tripitaka. He and his brother Xueyi engraved numerous voluminous scriptures during the late Ming period. Additionally, two other clans from these two regions, the Yu, Wang, Sun, and Jiang clans, also had a significant connection with the "Jiaxing Tripitaka" and maintained close ties with the later returnee Han Shan Deqing. As important towns along the Grand Canal during the Ming and Qing

dynasties, Danyang and Jintan not only served as crucial hubs for north-south transportation but also, due to the facilitation provided by convenient transportation, were interconnected with various aspects of social development in the Jiangnan region during the Ming and Qing dynasties. It can be observed that relationships such as family, marital relations, fellow townspeople, peers, and colleagues played a significant role in the formation of dynamic networks. As an integral part of local research, the exploration of documents and historical facts related to local families and faith life will be an important topic in future studies of Buddhist history and local society.

Kezhen XI (Nanjing Museum)

An Investigation into the Paper Mill Stamps on the *Jingshan Canon*: Taking Nanjing Museum's Collection as an Example

Thursday, 23 July 2026, 2:15 pm – 3:00 pm

Nanjing Museum collects a thread-bound edition of *Jingshan Canon*, whose engraving and printing is privately funded and covers the most extended period. It contains the most extensive collection of Buddhist scriptures with the complete set of volumes and comprises 344 cases in total. On this canon, paper mill stamps of various shapes can be frequently seen, mostly rectangular, along with circular and square ones. They mostly consist of different combinations of red and blue patterns and text. This paper investigates the forms, content and cause of formation of these paper mill stamps, as well as their relationship with local culture and commerce, so as to summarize their characteristics and their value in areas such as edition identification.

Xing HANG & Zheyang LI (Hong Kong Polytechnic University) & Yifan JIANG (Syracuse University)
Conjectures on Chan Master Yuanshao Based on Extant Sources and Fieldwork

Thursday, 23 July 2026, 3:45 pm – 4:20 pm

Chan Master 元韶 was the founder of the 元韶 Chan Sect, a highly successful branch of the 臨濟宗 (Rinzai School) in Vietnam. According to stone inscriptions, 元韶, a Chinese monk of the early Qing dynasty, arrived in Quảng Nam, where he was highly valued by the Nguyễn Lords. He built and led the 十塔彌陀寺 (Thập Tháp Di Đà Temple), and once returned to Lingnan to invite 大汕石濂 to spread Buddhism in Vietnam. Despite his great fame at the time, Vietnamese records about him are scarce and inconsistent, while Chinese historical records do not mention him at all. Although 莫天賜, the Commander of Hà Tiên, brought the Jiaxing Canon (《嘉興藏》) from

China specifically for 十塔彌陀寺, and the famous monk 大汕 recorded his own stay at the temple in his travelogue *Haiwai Jishi* (《海外紀事》), neither record mentions the abbot, 元韶. Therefore, 元韶's real identity remains a mystery. By expanding our search of historical documents in China and Vietnam and conducting fieldwork in 元韶's hometown in Chengxiang County, Guangdong, this study examines the people connected to him. We look into monks such as 本果曠圓, 大汕石濂, 雪樵真樸, 叢山本微, and 成鷲跡刪, as well as Lingnan Literati like 潘耒 and 余錫純, to reconstruct his life story.

We suggest two possibilities: first, 元韶 was a real historical person who was isolated due to conflicts with other monks or the Nguyễn court; second, he might be a "composite figure" put together from several different real people. In this second scenario, 元韶 served as a symbolic substitute to stay in Vietnam, replacing the highly influential 大汕石濂, who had to return to China, to guide and satisfy the spiritual needs of local believers.

To Lan NGUYEN (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, CSMC)

Recarving and Reprinting Jiaxing Canon in Vietnam from 18th Century to Early 20th Century

Thursday, 23 July 2026, 4:20 pm – 4:55 pm

The history of the transmission and influence of the *Chinese Buddhist Canons* (漢文大藏經) in Vietnam—both within the specific context of Vietnamese Buddhist manuscripts and the broader history of Vietnamese Buddhism—has traditionally been marked by two major milestones separated by nearly ten centuries. The first milestone concerns the 11th-to-13th-century *Chinese Canons*, which were introduced to Vietnam through official diplomatic channels between the Vietnamese and Chinese dynasties. Under imperial decrees, these texts were systematically copied or re-carved for distribution to various monasteries across Vietnam through orthodox routes. The second milestone is characterized by the importation of Japanese editions of the *Chinese Buddhist Canon* by the French colonial administration, facilitated by the textual collection initiatives of the École française d'Extrême-Orient, which were subsequently disseminated and utilized by local monasteries and Buddhist associations.

Since 2022, however, the discovery of the *Jiaxing Canon* (徑山藏 / 嘉興藏) at Thập Tháp Monastery by a group of venerable monks from the Liễu Quán Buddhist Center, followed by the textual cataloging and scholarly curation by the Vietnamese Buddhist Manuscripts Digital Repository team, has established a new milestone in the 18th century. This breakthrough effectively fills a significant lacuna in the understanding of the state of medieval Vietnamese Buddhist manuscripts.

This paper focuses on elucidating the presence and influence of the *Jiaxing Canon* in Vietnam prior to the introduction of the *Taishō Tripiṭaka* (大正新脩大藏經) at the beginning of the 20th century, drawing upon re-printed or re-carved editions collected from libraries and monasteries

nationwide. On this basis, the study addresses two critical research questions: 1) How were the texts of the *Jiaxing Canon* partially received and integrated into Vietnamese religious practices before the presence of a complete set at Ten Stupas Monastery? Through which pathways were these texts transmitted into Vietnam, who were the intermediary figures in this transmission process, and what were the underlying motivations behind the selection of specific scriptures for re-carving and re-printing? 2) What impact did the physical emergence of the *Jiaxing Canon* at Ten Stupas Monastery have on the broader role and status of this specific canon within Vietnam?

Young Hwan PARK (Dongguk University; University Wisconsin)

A Review of *Jiaxing Canon* Studies in Korean Academia: Achievements, Limitations, and Future Directions

Thursday, 23 July 2026, 4:55 pm – 5:30 pm

The *Jiaxing Canon* (嘉興藏), a major Buddhist canon compiled during the late Ming and early Qing periods, was first introduced to Joseon through a Chinese merchant ship that drifted ashore in 1681. While some volumes disappeared after being transferred to the royal court, others were preserved, reprinted, and circulated by Korean monks. Surviving copies have recently been identified not only in Korea but also in overseas collections, including the Harvard-Yenching Library.

Research on the *Jiaxing Canon* in Korean academia began in earnest with the publication of the first scholarly article on its transmission to Joseon in 2008. Since then, studies have focused primarily on bibliography, textual transmission, publication history, and the activities of individual monks involved in reprinting the canon.

This paper reviews the development of *Jiaxing Canon* studies in Korea by examining major scholarly achievements and their limitations. Although important progress has been made, research remains relatively limited in scope, particularly regarding the broader impact of the canon on Buddhist publishing culture and the intellectual transformation of late Joseon Buddhism.

Finally, the paper proposes future directions for research, emphasizing international collaboration with scholars in China, Japan, and Vietnam and multidisciplinary approaches integrating bibliography, intellectual history, and cultural history. Such efforts will contribute to a deeper understanding of East Asian Buddhist knowledge networks.

Jiang WU (The University of Arizona)

The *Jiaxing Canon* and the Modern Transformation of the Chinese Buddhist Canon

Thursday, 23 July 2026, 5:30 pm – 6:00 pm

This paper examines the *Jiaxing Canon* 嘉興藏 (*Jiaxingzang*)—also known as the *Jingshan Canon* 徑山藏 (*Jingshan dazangjing*)—as a critical stage in the transformation of the Chinese Buddhist canon in early modern East Asia. Compiled in the late Ming through a collaborative effort of monks and literati, the *Jiaxing Canon* became the largest printed book series in East Asia and introduced new practices of textual collation, expanded inclusion of Chinese Buddhist writings, and a widely circulating string-bound format (*fangcezhuang* 方冊裝). Its historical significance, however, lies not only in its scale but also in its transregional afterlife. In 1654, the Chinese monk Yinyuan Longqi 隱元隆琦 sailed to Japan and acquired a set of the *Jiaxing Canon*, which served as the textual foundation for the *Ōbaku Canon* 黃檗藏, carved by Tetsugen Dōkō 鉄眼道光 in 1681. The *Ōbaku Canon* subsequently entered global scholarly circulation when a complete set was transferred to the India Office Library in London in 1875. There, it became the basis for the pioneering catalogues compiled by Samuel Beal and later by Nanjō Bun'yū 南條文雄, whose bibliographical work enabled the systematic study of the Chinese Buddhist canon in modern scholarship. By tracing these connections from *Jiaxing* to *Ōbaku* and from Edo Japan to Victorian Britain, this paper argues that the *Jiaxing Canon* laid the material and bibliographical foundations for the modernization of the Buddhist canon, transforming it into a transregional textual system accessible to both Buddhist institutions and modern academic inquiry.

Ziwei YE (University of Oxford)

Tracing the Afterlives of the *Fanyimingyi ji*: *Jiaxing Canon* Copies at the Bodleian Library

Friday, 24 July 2026, 10:30 am – 11:05 am

This paper examines the transregional afterlife of the *Fanyi mingyi ji* 翻譯名義集, a twelfth-century Chinese Buddhist glossary of translated terms, through two copies related to the *Jiaxing Canon* tradition now held in the Bodleian Old Library at Oxford. The first is a Chinese *Jiaxing Canon* edition once held in the renowned eighteenth-century collection *Yiyun shushe* 藝芸書舍. The second is a Japanese reprint of the *Jiaxing Canon*, printed in 1669, and formerly owned by Nanjō Bunyū 南條文雄 (1849–1927), a Japanese Buddhist scholar and Sanskritist. This copy contains poems by Nanjō, Sanskrit equivalents added to Chinese headwords, and notes by William Edward Soothill (1861–1935), who later consulted it while preparing his *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*.

By comparing these two copies, the paper argues that the afterlife of the *Fanyi mingyi ji* extended beyond preservation within the *Jiaxing Canon*. The Chinese copy reflects late imperial interest in

Buddhist lexical works as materials valued for their philological and collectible qualities. The Japanese reprint, by contrast, records two intersecting trajectories: the transregional circulation of a *Jiaxing Canon* text across China, Japan, and Britain, and Nanjō's intellectual journey from Japanese Buddhist learning to Sanskrit-based Buddhist studies. Its poems, annotations, and later notes show how the material traces left by successive readers transformed an individual canon copy into a working tool for modern Buddhist lexicography. In this sense, the copy now housed in the Bodleian Old Library are not merely witnesses to textual transmission, but layered records of reading, annotation, and scholarly reuse across East Asian and British Buddhist studies.

Kuei-min LEE (National Cheng Kung University)

The Circulation and Transformation of the *Jiaxing Canon* in Vietnam: A Cross-Regional Study Centered on the Comparative Editions of the *Augmented Annotations to the Essentials of the Śrāmaṇera Precepts* and Other Ritual Manuals

Friday, 24 July 2026, 11:05 am – 11:40 am

This paper focuses on the transregional circulation and local adaptation of the *Jiaxing Canon* (《嘉興藏》) in Vietnam as its core research topic. It centres on the reception and practical contexts of the *Shami lüyi yaolüe zengzhu* (《沙彌律儀要略增註》; *The Augmented Commentary on the Essential Śrāmaṇera Precepts and Rules of Deportment*) among Buddhist communities across the northern, central, and southern regions of Vietnam, exploring its selective dissemination and textual reinterpretation within diverse sectarian frameworks. Through textual comparison of different editions and local ritual analysis, this paper reveals the pathways of transmission and the practical purposes of the text in Vietnam, which were profoundly shaped by the sectarian structures and institutional demands of local Buddhist communities, thereby demonstrating multi-layered variations.

The northern region was predominantly influenced by the Linji (Lâm Tế) School, placing a high premium on the monastic precept system and the authority of Han-character (Sinitic) Buddhist canons. The *Shami lüyi yaolüe zengzhu* was widely integrated into monastic education and Sangha regulations, serving as an orthodox textbook for monastic precepts. Conversely, the central region exhibited a more pluralistic teacher-disciple network, where certain communities may have been connected to the lineage of Zen Master Lieu Quan (Liễu Quán). The reception and adaptation of precept texts in this region reflected distinctly local and flexible characteristics. In the southern region, Buddhist communities were potentially influenced by the Chuc Thanh (Chúc Thánh) lineage or other indigenous sects; their utilisation of precept texts leaned more towards ritual pragmatism and sectarian integration, while interacting with the precept concepts of Theravada Buddhism.

This paper argues that the circulation and adaptation of the *Shami lüyi yaolüe zengzhu* in Vietnam not only reflects the cross-cultural adaptability of the *Jiaying Canon* in Southeast Asia, but also uncovers how Buddhist communities selectively received and institutionally restructured precept texts within specific sectarian contexts. Through a cross-sectional analysis of sectarian lineages and local rituals, this paper proposes the key concepts of "sect-oriented selective circulation" and "localised re-compilation of precepts" to facilitate a deeper understanding of the transregional dissemination of Sinitic Buddhist canons.

Xiandu SHI (Hao LIU) (Rushi Institute of Artificial Intelligence Technology)

Digitisation of Buddhist Scriptures from the Perspective of Artificial Intelligence: A Case Study of the *Jingshan Tripitaka* Digitisation Project

Friday, 24 July 2026, 11:40 am – 12:15 pm

As the largest collection of Chinese Buddhist tripitaka in ancient China, the *Jingshan Tripitaka* has extremely high documentary value. The digitization of the *Jingshan Tripitaka* has important contemporary significance. Beijing Rushi Institute of Artificial Intelligence Technology (hereinafter referred to as "Rushi Institute") launched the *Jingshan Tripitaka* digitization project in 2020, and basically completed and released the project in April 2025.

This paper first introduces the main objectives and related technologies of Buddhist scripture digitization. The main objectives include text digitization, digital proofreading, and modern punctuation; the related technologies are sequentially OCR (Optical Character Recognition) technology, multi-text comparison technology, punctuation migration technology, and AI automatic punctuation technology.

Next, it elaborates on the core issues in Buddhist scripture digitization and their solutions. The core issues include proofreading principles, the identification of variant Chinese characters, the problem of missing characters, the conversion of variant characters to standard characters, and the balance between quality and efficiency. Among these, the proofreading principles consist of three types: original character proofreading, unicode character proofreading, and standard character proofreading. The digitization of *Jingshan Tripitaka* adopts the original character proofreading principle. Under this principle, variant characters are proofread as independent characters, which requires identification and judgment based on subtle differences in character forms. If a character in the original images cannot be identified with any character in the computer Unicode system, it is referred to as a "missing character". For missing characters, character creation is required. The result of original character proofread will contain a large number of variant characters and self-created characters. These characters are highly consistent with the character forms in the original images and has great research value in the field of Chinese philology. To facilitate reading for general readers, it is necessary to further convert all

these characters into standardized characters. In addition, for large-scale ancient book digitization projects like *Jingshan Tripitaka*, the balance between quality and efficiency must also be considered. To address these issues, Rushi Institute developed specific solutions such as the original character proofreading guideline, clustered proofreading technology, lightweight character creation technology, and the original character OCR technology, as well as a digitization platform that integrates technological means with manual work.

Finally, it introduces the project achievements of Rushi Institute in the digitization of *Jingshan Tripitaka*, as well as the Rushi Tripitaka Collection Platform developed for the release of these achievements.