

# Monks and Texts in Stone Inscriptions during the Tang, with Special Reference to the Dazangjing Collection

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Much work has been done in recent years on the “canonical” set of Buddhist scriptures in China, the so-called Dazangjing 大藏經. Thanks to researches by Chinese and Japanese scholars we now know much more about its early history, when the collection was transmitted in manuscript form. In fact, different kinds of written documents help us to understand the ways in which the Dazangjing was copied, edited, catalogued, and kept in monastic libraries all over China. From these we have obtained a clearer picture not only of its formation, but also of the role it played as a cultural element in medieval China, in terms of social practices and institutional environment.

In my paper I will concentrate on the epigraphical sources. These have already been used to some extent, but never systematically. I will then pay special attention to inscriptions —some recently found, others included in classical collectanea of prose works—to provide supplementary sources for this field of research. The items will shed more light on how monks were involved in activities related to specific texts or to the whole canonical collection.