"The Record of Devotion" is said to have been written by Shi Zhongbin of Wujiang, and was first discovered by Jiao Hong, a Hanlin scholar, in Maoshan. It was later organized by Shi's descendants, Shi Ce and Shi Zhaodou, and circulated in the world. The book is written in the first person of Shi Zhongbin, narrating the process of his serving in the court and fleeing with 21 other ministers during the reign of Emperor Jianwen from the 31st year of Hongwu (1398) to the first year of Hongxi (1425). As soon as the book appeared, it was controversial. Shen Defu was the first to challenge it, bluntly denouncing "The Record of Devotion" as a forgery. He not only questioned the possibility of Emperor Jianwen freely traveling between the southwest and the south of the Yangtze River, but also sharply pointed out: "The forger does not understand the original system, and the official ranks mentioned are all nonexistent in the early days of the country." As a historical work that can withstand scrutiny, if there are major problems in the system, it is intolerable in the eyes of serious scholars. Later, Qian Qianyi and Pan Lei conducted a deeper analysis of the text of "The Record of Devotion". They provided specific evidence for the problems in the system in the book, and based on the actual deeds of Shi Zhongbin recorded in Wu Kuan's "Pao Weng Family Collection" published during the Zhengjia period and Shi Jian's "Xicun Collection", they determined that the so-called "Shi Zhongbin" was actually "Shi Bin", who was not a minister of the Jianwen court, but a grain chief in Wujiang at the beginning of the Ming Dynasty. Not only was Shi Bin's official achievements in the Jianwen court completely false, but the story of his fleeing was also completely unfounded. However, not all literati and scholars were skeptical of "The Record of Devotion". Chen Renxi, Chen Jiju, Wen Zhenmeng, Chen Yidian, Qian Shisheng, Li Rihua and other famous scholars in the south of the Yangtze River wrote prefaces and postscripts for the book, highly recognizing Shi Zhongbin's loyal deeds and the value of "The Record of Devotion", which greatly promoted the circulation and influence of the book. The descendants of the Shi family also used "The Record of Devotion" as a weapon, and successfully enshrined their ancestor "Shi Zhongbin" in the local temples of Jiaxing Prefecture and Suzhou Prefecture during the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

In the early Qianlong period, with the finalization of the "History of Ming", the authenticity of "The Record of Devotion" was finally determined by the "authority" of the official history, stating that "Zhongbin has never been a court scribe, and the record was made later, so it is not credible". Since the 20th century, the authenticity of "The Record of Devotion" has reached a consensus in the academic community, except for a very few scholars. Hu Shi believed that "The Record of Devotion" is "completely in the tone of a novel, with no historical value"; Meng Sen believed that "if the books like 'The Record of Devotion' are considered as forgeries, then the plots they narrate are also forgeries, not worth discussing"; Huang Yunmei also asserted: "'The Record of Devotion' is a forgery, not credible".

In recent years, research trends have taken a new turn. Some scholars, regardless of the authenticity of the text of "The Record of Devotion", have turned to examine how later generations have compiled, reconstructed, and reinterpreted the history of the Jianwen era from the perspectives of text generation, historical narrative, historical memory, reader response, and commercial culture. At the same time, due to the historical fact that the deeds of the ministers of the Jianwen era were constantly excavated by local gentry and officials of the same origin, the perspective of local history has gradually become another important research orientation outside of national history compilation. Ding Xiuzhen is the first scholar to use the "Shi Family Chronicle", a family document of the Shi family in Huangxi, Wujiang, to study "The Record of Devotion". He started from the perspectives of scholar interaction, regional families, and the spread and evolution of Jianwen legends, and conducted valuable discussions on the historical background of "The Record of Devotion" and the regional factors presented in its circulation process. He believes that the special needs of the Shi family to modify family history using local legends to seek new development opportunities are the main motivations for the creation and circulation of "The Record of Devotion". In addition, some descendants of the Shi family, out of clan sentiment, continue to intervene in the research of Shi Zhongbin and Jianwen history from the perspective of family history, becoming another force in the collection and research of "The Record of Devotion" related documents. They may lack the necessary professional skills and may not be discussing important academic issues, but their ability to discover key clues is often not to be ignored.

The "Shi Family Chronicle" referred to by Ding Xiuzhen is officially known as the "Wuzhong Branch of the Shi Family Chronicle". It is a Qing Dynasty copy, now housed in the Historical Documents Department of the Nanjing Library, and was compiled by Shi Jizhong. The original book had 40 volumes, of which 24 volumes remain, with the cover bearing the seal of "Book gifted by Mr. Liu Yazi". The details of Shi Jizhong's life are unknown. According to the genealogy and generation information in the Qing Dynasty engraved "Shi Family Genealogy of Wuzhong Branch", Jizhong is of the 54th generation, two generations later than the 52nd generation descendants Shi Biannian and Shi Wei who were active in the middle and late Kangxi period. Therefore, it can be inferred that Shi Jizhong probably lived during the Qianjia era. The currently existing 24 volumes of the family chronicle start from the eleventh volume and end at the fortieth volume. The genealogy and preface content before the tenth volume are not preserved. The existing parts mainly include poetry, biography, miscellaneous notes, etc. Among them, volumes eleven to thirteen contain biographies, tomb inscriptions, shrine tablets, tomb tables, etc., totaling more than a hundred pieces, which are important clues to fully understand the Shi family in Huangxi, Wujiang. Ding Xiuzhen's aforementioned article only uses nine of them. There are still many mysteries about the development of the Shi family since the Yuan and Ming dynasties, and the complex relationships between different branches within the family have not been deeply explored. The latter is an indispensable link to unravel the mystery of the compilation and circulation of "The Record of Devotion". Volume twenty-two of the "Wuzhong Branch of the Shi Family Chronicle" includes the full text of "The Record of Devotion", and volume twenty-three includes Shi Wei's rebuttal to Qian Qianyi's "Ten No's" and Pan Lei's "Four Errors and Three Falsehoods". It is not an exaggeration to regard it as an "encyclopedia" of Shi family documents. Chen Naiqian, a famous modern cataloger, wrote on the back cover of the book: "The 'Shi Family Chronicle' has forty volumes, with twenty-four volumes remaining. The collected poems and essays often overflow from the special collection, and there are many differences in wording. I want to gather them from various engraved editions, but I haven't had time." The so-called "special collection" here refers to the "Xicun Collection" by Shi Jian. Considering the intense textual conflict between the "Xicun Collection" and "The Record of Devotion", the rich poetry and prose of the Shi family members, including Shi Jian, collected in the "Wuzhong Branch of the Shi Family Chronicle" may become a key to unlock the birth certificate of "The Record of Devotion".